

Key Concepts in Understanding Japanese Culture

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Introduction

How do we present Japanese culture to other countries? Japanese cultural policy changed dramatically. To sustain industry and the local economy with cultural resources, the Agency for Cultural Affairs elevated its efforts by making cultural resources available as part of sustainability initiatives. We should also consider that Japan is expected to accommodate about 40 million tourists during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.

How do we take advantage of increasing foreigners and promote Japanese culture effectively to the rest of world? It is important to set up a framework to promote thorough understanding of Japan and to provide opportunities for foreigners to understand Japanese culture amidst the prevalent stereotyping of Japan. Redefining new cultural policy as a part of industrial policy and external policy will be a necessary step in order to enhance the influence of Japanese culture both inside and outside of the country.

I suggest primarily the three priorities:

1. Set up new approaches to elevate values of Japanese cultural assets such as craftwork and integrate them into new industries
2. Create new national brand to promote high quality crafts products with better design and historical values
3. Train producers of cultural program and designers

Due to the fact that Japanese culture was influenced by technical and cultural elements from the Middle East, India, China and the West from ancient times, it would be more persuasive to have specific “angles” to systematically characterize these influences through understanding traditional craft skills and designs: Japanese “artisanship”. Furthermore, if we can put them into logical and historical framework, it would allow us to create greater educational impact. Therefore, it will be important to highlight the key concepts and terminology in detail.

I would recommend to integrate these key concepts to create storylines in various cultural activities such as tourism, organizing exhibitions and export artisanal products. With regard to key concepts, it is better to understand them historically, putting opposite characteristics during historical transition, such as from Jomon to Yayoi, from hunting to farming, from court nobles to samurais, from Emperors to Shoguns, and from Shinto to Buddhism. At the same time, important to focus on multilayered aspects of cultures, a good example being *Shinbutsu-Shugo*, a syncretism of Buddhism and local Shinto worship: Buddhism's *Kshitigarbha* (or *Jizo Bosatsu* in Japan) and the *Acala* (or *Fudo-Myo* in Japan). There are many native gods rooted in local customs and legends, and exploring the folklore reveals the cultural ideals, roots, and psyche that formed the layers of Japanese culture.

If we articulate the attributes of a regional culture in this way logically, we should be able to highlight distinctive features. Then link them to Japanese craftwork and culture.

At this juncture, I will reiterate two approaches for systematic understanding Japanese culture.

The first approach is a big historical transition of values. The second is changes in leading concepts often contrasted and opposite. Third one is integration and combination of different elements on the regional levels.

To assist with the process of seeking historical roots, I recommend using a compilation approach based on *Fudoki*, which are the regional records on culture and climate dating back to

the Nara Era (7-8th century). *Fudoki* has been a revolutionary tool for keeping track of history for specific regions. The regions were uniformly named with two characters, and the entire country was divided based on major roads. Examples were the *Sanin-do*, *Sanyo-do*, and *Hokuriku-do*. The ancient broad administrative system was composed of *five regions* and Kinai, Kyoto and Nara area. It detailed locations of shrines, oral traditions, local vegetation, minerals, and local color. Many elements of the *Fudoki* remain useful today.

Cultural assets play an essential role in constantly connecting memories from the past to the future. A close analysis of cultural assets entails assessing the inventories of the each era. This process links the past and present and helps tie regional cultures together.

Some, like the poet Sakutaro Hagiwara and philosopher Kitaro Nishida, believe that it is worth making Japanese-style innovations a part of the chain of Western civilization. Japanese cultural identity is not a particular issue, but it is strongly correlated with overseas' perspectives. Japanese cultural assets attract a lot of international attention, and could also be used as an investment to maintain the nation's competitiveness.

Thus, it is essential to reinforce efforts by working closely with cultural institutions to install a baseline of Japanese culture so that interested people are capable of discussing it. Collaboration with private sectors is important in that regard.

In 2011, I went to France as President of the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris. I realized that the French understood our country more cohesively and deeply than we did back home. I therefore formulated a way to promote Japanese culture internationally based on discussions I have had in Europe.

Chapter One

Historical Links

I began by dividing the history of Japan into five parts, focusing big transition of values.

1. Shift from Jomon to Yayoi cultures

Jomon and Yayoi cultures are crucial to understand the foundation of Japanese culture. It is often said that the development of a village-based collectivism in Japan resulted from its inception as an agricultural society. However, this only addresses the cultural characteristics after the Yayoi Era, when rice farming was introduced. As philosopher Takeshi Umehara, and folklorists Kunio Yanagida and Shinobu Orikuchi pointed out, Jomon culture before the Yayoi Era underpinned Japanese culture and art for more than 10,000 years. We cannot discuss Japanese culture without understanding Jomon origins.

* Jomon was a civilization between 12,000 B.C. and 6,000 B.C., and often described as “a green civilization” or “a civilization that coexisted with nature.” The culture relied heavily on tree bark for its architecture, and developed a system to manage acorns, chestnuts, and other nut resources. Jomon people were hunters, and we see distinctive Jomon characteristics in the Tohoku region.

At the same time, the culture had deep connections with mountain and other deities, animism, and shamanism. Jomon people delineated sacred boundaries between routine living and an extraordinary spiritual world to ward off evil spirits. These two worlds sometimes interacted through magic, and the source of this Japanese concept is the mountainous world of the dead and mountain hermits. There are also design elements. One is the motif of running water (*Ryusui-mon*), which represents purification from evil spirits.

* In the Yayoi period subsequent to earlier Japanese agricultural culture and civilization, the Yayoi people, depicted as *Amaterasu* (the major deity of Shinto, a goddess of sun and universe), ruled the Jomon people, depicted as *Susanoo-no-mikoto* (a Shinto god of the sea and storms). This period saw the emergence of rice farming communities in the low lands and the introduction of bronze and iron.

2. From Nara to the Heian Era

This era was the time when Japanese civilization flourished and were critical for the formation of the Japanese cultural consciousness. Buddhism spread under an imperial system during the Asuka and Nara periods. During the Heian period, Buddhist culture changed into *Wafu* (Japanese-style) culture.

Nara Era

Chronicles of Japan, such as *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, were compiled in discussing Japan and its origins. The story of Japan's birth begins with the deities Izanagi and Izanami, and many universal gods of the wind, trees, mountains, sea, rivers, rock, and fire. People viewed fire god Izanami as the source of lava, volcanic eruptions, and hot springs, which are integral elements of the Japanese view of nature. After Izanami dies, Izanagi gives birth to Amaterasu.

Amaterasu is the apotheosis of the sun, enshrined at Ise Shrine, and is still worshipped as the ancestor of the imperial family, often being depicted as a goddess. The opening of *Kojiki* is a mythological tale itself and is often associated with Greek mythology, so non-Japanese people find this topic particularly interesting. The compilation of such chronicles raised the people's awareness of Japan as a nation, as shown in the name changed from *Wakoku* to *Nihon-koku*.

When Emperor Keitai (from whom today's Emperor descended) took the throne in 507, Japan proceeded its efforts in nation-building through Buddhism under the imperial system. The

Ritsuryo legal system (based on Confucianism and Chinese legalism) established a form of centralized government. Thereafter, nation-building efforts accelerated from Prince Shotoku's seventeen-article constitution and system that ranked officials into 12 levels. The country was renamed during the eras of Emperor Tenmu and Tenchi. There were the Taika Reforms, *Dajokan* (or the Great Council of State system), and the completion of ancient bureaucracy.

In art and architecture, Japan encountered Greek, Persian, and Eurasian cultures through Asuka styles. While Japan shared the world view of Hinduism and that of India during that time, it also was influenced by the Buddhist cultures all across Asia. Buddhist architecture, large construction projects, and tree-based statues of the Buddha fostered Japanese foreign diplomacy throughout Asia. In line with Asiatic values, the Buddha statue worship expanded to more regional areas. The rise of Japan's awareness as a nation prompted the Japanese to press their case for equal partnerships with China.

Rice became Japan's principle diet, although it was not yet available to the general public. The diet was principally rice and fish, and meat eating became a taboo.

The introduction of *Kanji* (Chinese characters) propelled the emergence of literacy in Japan through chronicles¹ like the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. At the same time, the phonetic *Manyogana* was created concurrently with the use of Kanji, and people made great progress in handling both Kanji and Manyogana at the same time.

The introduction of *Kanji* also made it possible to signify ambiguous content with a single character, and allowed people to communicate in written form across time, space, and national boundaries.

Forms of product-making became popular. One example was plant-dyeing, especially in indigo and red. At this time, the national flower changed from the plum to cherry blossom.

Heian period and Japanese style (国風-Kokufu) culture

Abolition of Japan's diplomatic mission to China, the birth of traditional Japanese aesthetics

During the Heian period, the Japanese reconsidered their distance from Chinese culture and created a more Japanese-style *Kokufu* culture. In 894, the Japanese diplomatic mission to China was abolished at Michizane Sugawara's suggestion, adding momentum to the emergence of this Japanization.

The first step was a revolution in writing. In addition to *Kanji*, *Heian-kana* was invented, and the concurrent use of *Kanji* and *Kana* became common. Paintings were coupled with writing, and the simultaneous use of stories and scroll paintings made communication more effective.

Nyobo (court lady) literature appeared amid the writing revolution. Noblewomen serving as court teachers freely employed *Heian kana*, building the foundations of Japanese literature. Emotions, aesthetics, and such concepts as *Miyabi* (refinement), *Utsuroi* (the transitory), and

¹ * *Kojiki* (early eighth century): A compilation of *Teiou-no Hitsugi* (Imperial Sun Lineage up to Emperor Suiko) and *Sendai-no Kuji* (Ancient Dicta of Former Ages - oral tradition, myth and legend) that Hieda-no memorized by order of Emperor Tenmu. The main texts were mostly written as Japanese versions of classical Chinese. Words difficult to describe in classical Chinese, and the phonetics of songs, were written by applying one character per sound.

* *Nihon Shoki* was written in classical Chinese, and covers mythological times through Emperor Jito. The compilation was driven by politically influential circles.

* *Manyoshu* (around 760): *Manyo* culture and a collection of poetry of *Kibutsu Chinshi* (metaphorical expression of sentiments using things around us). Expressed in short poems and with minimum words, through *Manyo-kana*.

Mujo (transience and impermanence), and *Mono-no aware* (pathos and empathy for ephemera), were engaged in master works like Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* and Sei Shonagon's *The Makura-no Soshi* (*Pillow Book*), which have dominated Japanese culture for more than a millennia.

We should also note that illustrations in picture scrolls during the Heian period gave rise to *ukiyo-e* woodprints, Manga, and eventually Japanese animation (or *anime*).

During this period, Buddhism from China became an undercurrent of Japanese culture. High priests, Saicho and Kukai, introduced Tantric Buddhism, which spread as Tendai and Shingon Buddhism, and initiated Buddhist art in Japan. A cosmic awareness based on *Dainichi Nyorai*, Mandala, and other elements provided a structure of consciousness in Japanese culture through sculptures of the Buddha, murals and designs, and Buddhist architecture.

The concept of *Gokuraku Jodo* (or the Buddhist's paradise) also influenced Japan's gardening culture, as shown in the Byodo-in Temple in Uji, Kyoto, and Konjikido at Chuson-ji Temple. Some say this reflects the Japanese view that spirits of the dead from the mountains visit the city, however, it also indicates the reach of Chinese Buddhist concepts in Japan, manifested as a mainstream religion.

The original form of what is thought to be as "Japanese food" took root during this time.

3. Kamakura Period: From dynastic to samurai culture

The transition period from the end of the Heian period to the Kamakura period was important, as Japan changed from a dynasty culture to a samurai culture.

The appearance of the samurai immensely transformed the history of Japan. Samurai were initially private guards of the Emperor, but they eventually gained independent existences as families. Throughout the Middle Ages, samurai values and lifestyles influenced Japanese culture. Ancient animism was dismantled, and the principles and realism of the samurai took its place.

The logic of sacrificing oneself for the public good created a vertical master-subordinate power dynamic. The roadmap for antagonism between the imperial court and the reasoning of the shogunate, which pressed forward with samurai thinking, was completed. The development of copper mines accelerated, and the circulation of money facilitated the distribution of goods, giving power to certain groups that ran transaction, transportation, and distribution processes. Priests like Eisai and Dogen introduced Zen Buddhism, and the Japanese culture was then represented by the culture of tea ceremonies, *sumi-e* ink painting, and *Gozan* (five mountains) Zen literature, among others. Zen Buddhism amassed massive influence from Mount Hiei in Kyoto to Eihei Temple in Hokuriku. Zen Buddhism became the foundation of Japanese philosophy, elevated to that of Japanese spirituality by Daisetsu Suzuki. Later, Zen became an internationally influential concept for explaining the ideology of Japanese culture.

Zen Buddhism developed into *Shinbutsu-shugo*, a syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism, and a concept of *Honji Suijyaku* (local manifestations of Buddhist deities as Shinto through merging with the deities of the land gods). According to *Shintoshu* (Middle Ages Nanboku-cho Period, 14th century), the Shinto notion of shrines of worship and explanation of the origins of the manifestations of the eight million gods of Shinto gradually merged and created religious views that were particular to each region.

These stories were later developed into *Otogi Zoshi* (books of illustrated stories) during the Muromachi period and permeated *Jyoruri* music during the Edo Era.

People began annual double-cropping and making progress in agricultural techniques, notably by plowing with cows and using cut grass as fertilizer. The creation of fermented foods like miso and soy sauce became more systematic.

4. Muromachi to Edo Era

During the Muromachi period, the Japanese Renaissance bloomed around the Higashiyama culture led by Shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga. There was a shift in the cultural power landscape, with merchants gaining influence over the samurai. They formed public autonomy, rights to self-government, *Rakuichi-Rakuza* (free markets and open guilds), and independent cities.

Overseas trade bloomed, and by the era of Hideyoshi Toyotomi, even tea ceremonies became a political tool. Golden tearooms and *Chayoriai* tea-gathering, produced with *Sen-no Rikyu*, appeared on the political forefront. Tempura and Castella cake, and other foods, guns, cannons, and other weapons, and Christianity entered Japan from the West. Trading along the Korean Peninsula and with Ming China became popular. Domestically, the Kitamaebune shipping route system was established, structuring the nation's distribution networks with ships, cargo collection, and the maintenance of anchorage sites.

As opposed to utensils imported from China, people started to value the asymmetry of items shaped by hand, *Raku* ware being a good example. Pottery production focusing on local clays as materials developed, and *Wabi-cha* tea ceremonies brought new values to Japanese culture.

When Japan entered the Edo Era and was free of wars, Japanese culture entered a peak of cultural aesthetics. The completion of Edo Castle in 1639 granted Edo, the former name of Tokyo, recognition as a cultural center. The Edo culture of the Tokugawa Shogunate rivaled that of Kyoto's court noble culture.

Kyoto was the center of the upper side (or the Kansai area), furthering a cultural renaissance through collaborations between rich merchants and court nobles. Examples include *Wagoto*, an elegant and delicate style of Kabuki, *Oribe* ware, and tea ware and gardens by such masters as Enshu Kobori. Following the Kanou School, led by Eitoku Kanou, the styles of the Rinpa School (notably from Korin Ogata, Kouetsu Honami, and Soutatsu Tawaraya) brought innovation to the Japanese art scene. They built the cornerstones of aesthetics that characterize the nation's modern culture and patterned designs.

During the Edo period, urban planning that centered around Edo Castle proceeded. During this period, the Nakamura-za Kabuki-theater was founded. Popular Kabuki writers at the time included Saikaku Ihara and Monzaemon Chikamatsu. In the late Edo period, Edo's aesthetics and lifestyles became more popular, associated with words like *Iki* (cool) and *Tsu* (well-versed).

As the Edo population expanded, so did its food markets. *Edo Nishiki-e* (brocade pictures) and *Ukiyo-e* wood prints were the popular culture trendsetters. Cultural leaders were no longer court nobles. Instead, Edo artists joined with merchants to foster public cultural markets for goods sold to the public. At the same time, luxurious craftworks developed in different styles to the public culture style, through purveyors to the government, noble houses, and temples. However, craftwork markets missed out on the wave of popular culture and commercialization, thus frequently facing declines. The same holds true today in some respects.

Wholesalers in Edo and Osaka dominated rice distribution. There were numerous improvements in breeding everything from cherry blossoms, rice plant, chrysanthemums, and morning glory to long-tailed roosters and goldfish. In particular, *Yoshino* cherry tree and other private breeding efforts expanded. The embedding of *irori* (open hearths) in floors and kitchen equipped with *hettsui* (furnaces) became popular.

5. From Edo feudalism to the Meiji Restoration; toward a Global era; the place of modern Japan in war and peace

The Edo Era, the foundation of modern Japan, was based on popular culture. However, modern Japan produced a social culture that was completely different from the 1,500 years

which followed the Asuka Era.

While the industrial revolution sparked massive development in the West, Japan's industrialization lagged significantly. Noting the delay during the Meiji Restoration and the arrival of Admiral Perry's black ship, Japan rapidly came closer to Western civilization, setting out to become an Eastern democratic country. It adopted a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary system, promoting prosperity and military strength to encourage new industry. Various thought systems emerged in light of Japan's newfound relationship to the rest of the world. For instance, Japan attempted to link traditionalism and modernism and Japanese and Western styles, as demonstrated by Yukichi Fukuzawa in *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, through *Wakon Yosai* (a Western-minded Japanese spirit) in *Datsu-A Nyu-O* (shedding Asia for the West), and through Taisho era democracy.

Japan responded to globalization by adopting the metric system, establishing a standardized language, constructing the Rokumeikan building, and opening the Imperial Hotel. Industrial progress started with the Tomioka Silk Mill and hydroelectric power plants. The development of coal mines, and fertilizers, and railroads ensured, while agriculture progressed with testing stations.

During the Meiji Era, the Japanese became more patriotic in an effort to compete with the great powers. After a movement to separate Buddhism and Shintoism and abolish Buddhism, State Shinto became stronger. The Imperial Rescript of Education enhanced *Kokutai* (Japan's nationalistic identity).

Without being fully aware of its industrial differences with the West, Japan ultimately remilitarized and pursued expansionism throughout Asia. This continued into the Pacific War, ending with Japan's defeat in World War II.

This was a turning point for *Kokutai* (国体), leading Japan to adopt a new constitution, renounce war, usher in women's suffrage, and make the Emperor as a symbol of the state. Japan incorporated bread in the diet and began serving lunches at schools to compensate for a post-war food shortage. In reconstructing, Japan saw a large migration of workers from rural areas to cities, mass youth employment, standardization of housing through public condominiums, and an overall Westernization of lifestyles. Japan experienced high economic growth from the 1960s. Population growth prompted the breeding of fish and special cultivation techniques to accommodate greater demand for food. All of these changes had a great impact on Japanese food culture.

How did the "technical" craftsmanship that had been cultivated until the Edo Era lead to modern technology when Japan devoted itself to building a modern nation and introducing Western technologies? Tenshin Okakura's *The Book of Tea* explored how to fuse Japanese and Western aesthetics. During this period, Japan explored and distinguished Japanese values from exclusively Western values.

The modern age in Japan was also a peculiar period, in which Japan's culture of art was conspicuously divided from its political and economical systems that expanded across Asia and competed with Western powers. After defeat, Japan forged ahead with postwar economic growth and diplomatic strategy without reconfirming its traditions. This division remains today.

Communicating Japanese concepts overseas is a process where we ask ourselves how we can overcome this division and retrieve Japanese cultural values prior to a more nationalistic modern period.

Chapter Two

Key Japanese Cultural Concepts

Chapter One showed that there were always dual structures in Japan depending on its external relationships in certain periods. Duality is central to driving paradigm shifts and fostering regional cultural differences in Japan. Below, I present key concepts from Chapter One to make it easier to formulate core storylines when discussing regional cultures.

1. Gods, demons and evil spirits; the mortal and supernatural worlds

- Mountain gods, rice field gods, hermits and spirits from a different world all existed in parallel with evil spirits through the Jomon era. This is the foundation of the nation's folklore.
- This is the source of many things, including such dual structures as the extraordinary and ordinary (*Hare and Ke*), the sacred and profane, a holy mountain separated from ordinary places by Shinto straw festoons (*Shimenawa*) or Torii shrine gates, warding off evil spirits with sacred water, and fertility festivals. There is also a notion of the separation of progressing and regressing people. The regressing people, who are also the weaker people, were pushed aside from society.

2. Heaven and earth (and man), physicality and post-physicality

- Heaven and earth have a special meaning in Japanese culture. This can also be explained by the *Marebito*² faith, nature worship, and spirit worship (animism). *Miya*, (shrine welcoming gods), *Miyako* (where the imperial palace is), *Yuniwa* (sacred gardens), and Shinto rituals were also created.
- Japanese myths—Izanagi, Izanami, Amaterasu, Susanoo, Ama-no-Iwato—are stories of the birth of deities and are often compared with Western mythology.
- Okina is the old man who communicates with the gods. Linking heaven and earth enables the gods to assume physical form. *Noh* and *Kyogen* are means to summon gods from heaven.

3. Male and female characters; *Wa* (Japan) and *Kan* (China)

- Parallel use of *Kanji* (Chinese characters) and *Heian Kana* (Japanese characters). *Kana* were created during the Heian period as fundamentals for Japanese culture. The latter brought about literature, including *Waka* (Japanese poetry), *Monogatari* (stories), and diaries. *Kana* ignited a revolution in calligraphy and contributed to such masterpieces such as *Waka* anthologies (notably, *Kokin Waka Shu* and *Shin Kokin Waka Shu*).
- The combination of *Kanji* and *Kana* promoted a happy medium between Japanese and Chinese. Calligraphy was a source of Japanese aesthetics and was added to picture scrolls in combinations of sounds, characters, and shapes, enabling compact communication and artistic expression.

4. Oral and documented *Katari* (stories)

- Parallel existence of documented *Katari* representatives in Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* and Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book* (*Makura-no Soshi*) written in Heian Kana, with *Katari* by Okina around the regions. In the *Tale of Genji*, Prince Genji notes that the world has been here since the times of the gods, and *Nihonki* is only part of the picture.

5. God and Buddha, amalgamation of Shinto with Buddhism

- The amalgamation of Shintoism with Buddhism from the latter half of the 7th century is a religious structure with layers of Buddhist and *Jingi* (indigenous) worship. It is often drawn on in saying all things have the nature of Buddha, suggesting the universality of gods. One can also refer to the notion of Buddhist paradise.

6. Interpretation of *Mono* in cultural and historical terms

² *A term by Shinobu Origuchi that refers to a spiritual or divine essential existence visiting from the world of death at a set time. It is a pivotal concept for discussing his ideology, and is ethnologically significant in exploring Japan's views on religion and death.

- In Japanese culture, *Mono* is neither a “thing” nor a “spirit”, and refers to an indistinctive combination of physical and spiritual matters. *Mononoke* generally means feeling the presence of *Mono* but can also refer to ghosts, evil and living spirits, apparitions, and change that were said to haunt people and inflict pain, sickness and death.
 - Seigo Matsuoka wrote “at the time *mononoke* appeared and *mujo* (transience and impermanence) prevailed. *Mono* that controlled the Heian story of Genji from the outside. The ancient *mono* changed into something that curses people in the Heian period.”
 - This thinking would develop into *Monono-aware*, as explained during the Edo Era by Shinto Scholar Motoori Norinaga.
- “*Mono* is attached to phrases to refer to a wide variety of things such as *monoiu* (saying things), *monogatari* (storytelling), *monomoude* (praying), *monomi* (viewing things), *monoimi* (purification)” (From the Complete Works of Motoori Norinaga, Volume 5)

7. *Monono-aware* and *appare*

- Norinaga famously condensed the point of the Tale of Genji into a sentence (*Monono aware wo shiru*, know pathos and empathy for ephemera,) and he identified the story's aesthetic values as a single concept. Norinaga explains Monono-aware in his work as our awe from sight, sound, and touch. This is *Kibutsu Chinshi*, a metaphorical expression using things around us. Samurai called this *Appare*.

8. *Mujo* and eternity

- Kamo no Chomei wrote in *Hojoki* (Visions of a Torn World) that, “The flowing river never stops, and yet the water never stays the same. Foam floats upon the pools, scattering, reforming, and never lingering for long. So it remains with man, and all his dwelling places here on earth.” *Mujo* (transience and impermanence) is different from Taoism's *Wu wei*, but transience also connects to eternity.

9. The Meaning of blankness (*Yohaku* : 余白)

- In calligraphy, Kukai (空海) introduced the notion of breathing, and Sesshu (雪舟) established the image of expanding and shrinking space in *sumi-e* (ink painting). This was new recognition of the beauty within a composition and in incompleteness. The Japanese also called this blankness a *ma* (interval). This concept is also relates to the *Pine Tree Screen* by Hasegawa Tohaku (長谷川等伯).
- Tenshin Okakura (岡倉天心) expressed *Yohaku* as an intentional state for the imagination to become complete and the heart be filled. *Ma* is not a state of nothingness and is a potential connection. It's a tension in a paired structure, a state with dual sides.
- Okakura's *The Book of Tea* explains that it is essentially worship of the imperfect, as it is a tender attempt to accomplish something in a seemingly incomprehensible life. It defines our proportion to the universe, representing the true spirit of Eastern democracy by making all its believers noble in taste.

10. *Yoriai-no-cha* and *Wabi-cha*

- Tea ceremonies respect decorations and value locations where people assemble to enjoy paintings and Chinese ware. Tea drinking culture came from the golden teahouse of Hideyoshi Toyotomi, later flavoring dynastic aesthetics like poetry reading, color, word, and incense matching, and competitive games). Emperor Uda's court salon was particularly famous.
- The development of a social tea culture created another standard called *Kirei-Sabi* (elegant imperfections) in places like Kanazawa. People called *Sukisha* protected the arts and collected national treasures and cultural assets. One theme was integrating Japanese and Chinese notions.
- *Wabi-Cha* ceremonies continued to celebrate the beauty of subtlety, as at small teahouses or when seeing the mountains from the city. The thought is that having the moon behind the

clouds offers a better atmosphere than when the moon is full and shining. Zen Buddhism was pivotal to fostering this concept of withered beauty.

11. Symmetric and asymmetric beauty

- *Chanoyu* (Japanese tea ceremonies) counterpose handmade pottery and other Chinese and Japanese artworks. The ceremonies connect Japanese culture to asymmetry, which is said to evoke greater freedom, notably with handmade ware.

12. Noble and public cultures, festivals, Joruri, and Kabuki

- Japanese theatrical art is based partly on court culture, including *Noh*, *Chanoyu*, gardening, flower arrangements, festivals to welcome the gods, and other indigenous celebrations. Japanese music is also important, and old *Shakuhachi* flute songs have no sheet music. It is important to be in a state of coming together and dissolving into oneness in chanting Buddhist hymns. From the Kamakura through the Muromachi periods, professional groups appeared and people like Kan-ami and Ze-ami helped evolve Japanese stage arts. Later, people who liked to *kabuku* (do something outside an existing social framework) developed a prototype for professional performances, which became Kabuki.

13. Hierarchical society (samurai society) and *Za* (guild) culture and the origins of Japanese democracy

- Japanese-style democracy derived from unions of merchants and craftsmen during the Muromachi period. Freedom, autonomy, free markets and open guilds, and other factors generated liberal trade networks beyond the constraints of hierarchical society. Townspeople with business acumen gave rise to the consciousness of public autonomy, fueling a Japanese cultural renaissance.

14. Samurai and court noble society

- The feudal morality of Samurai society formed after the Kamakura period, urging loyalty and subservience to people in authority, such as the Shogun. This morality became known outside Japan as Bushido. There was also a trend of dynastic culture, where parallel existence and fusion of Samurai and court nobility characterized Japan. As has happened in Kanazawa, there was a Samurai cultural model that stemmed from the independence of samurai from the Tokugawa Shogunate.

15. Migration and settlement

- The notion of *Kacho Fugetsu* (living a life amid nature) originated from a culture of travel. The perspectives of *Suki* (quirkiness) and *Mujo* (transience and impermanence) by people renouncing the world created a structure of consciousness in the lifestyles of the poets Saigyō and Bashō. Networked people are at the bottom of Japanese cultural values, separate from the settler-model society.
- The following is a pertinent poem from Saigyō:
How I hope to see it again—
the cherry blossoms chase
the moors of Katano
when flowers fall like snow
at the daybreak of spring

16. Kamigata and Edo, or Kyoto and Tokyo

- Since the early Edo Era, Japan has maintained Kyoto and Edo as capitals. Even today, there remains a duality between the two. Kyoto's culture stems from the Higashiyama influence of the Muromachi period, continuing an ethos of craftsmanship while valuing integration between Japanese and Chinese cultural elements. At the same time, distribution networks expanded through a design revolution in the Edo era, leading to the evolution of big enterprises. Edo (now called Tokyo) reaped benefits by being an economic engine.

- Kyoto's *Miyabi* (court nobles and wealthy merchants) and Edo's commerce form an interesting duality that has fused to shape Japan's politics and economy. Edo has its unique *Iki* (cool) and *Tsu* (well-versed) aesthetics, and in Tokyo one finds cultural traditions that have deep roots in places like Nihonbashi and Asakusa.

17. Wakon Yosai (a Western-minded Japanese spirit), maintaining ties with the West, and embracing Western technology

- As seen in the concept of *Datsu-A Nyu-O* (shedding Asia for the West), there are various perspectives for associating with the West. Even today, dual structures remain. Examples include Western versus Japanese painting, the establishment of the Toyo Institute of Art & Design, the notion of Japan as part of Asia, integrating skills and technology, a focus on Japanese versus the English language, and homogeneity versus internationalism.