

Empress Meishō (1623–96) and Cultural Pursuits at the Japanese Imperial Court

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Abstract: In 1629, a seven-year-old girl was selected as Japan's Empress Regnant. Known as Empress Meishō, she was the daughter of the current emperor and, on her mother's side, she was the great-granddaughter of the founder of the Tokugawa warrior government. Although scant scholarly attention has been paid to Meishō, surviving documents and artifacts reveal that she participated in a rich material culture at the Japanese imperial court. Extant sources tell of her engagement with art works, entertainments and diversions, particularly during her retirement. Even though Meishō was in many respects an exception, her case is indicative of the unique role of the sovereign in Japan's early modern political and ideological landscape. This article—meant both for specialists and a larger reading audience—thus provides insights on traditions of the Japanese court.

Keywords: Meishō, empress, court, art, Tokugawa, Edo

One noteworthy member of the Japanese imperial family during the seventeenth century was Empress Regnant Meishō (1623–96; r. 1629–43).¹ Meishō was the daughter of Emperor Go-Mizunoo (1596–1680; r. 1611–29) and Empress Tōfukumon'in (1607–78), both of whom were renowned in their lifetimes. Go-Mizunoo is remembered even to this day for his numerous attempts to resurrect imperial prestige during an era in which military lords of the Tokugawa clan were establishing a new regime centered in Edo (present-day Tokyo). Meishō's mother, Tōfukumon'in, was famous as the daughter of the second shogun of the Edo period, Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632). This made Meishō exceptional in yet another way; she was the first close relative of a military leader to be born into the imperial family in hundreds of years.² Meishō came to the throne in 1629, at the age of seven, as the first woman in over eight hundred years to be installed on the throne as Empress Regnant (*jotei*).³ In fact, Meishō's name was formed by combining the last parts of names of two previous empresses: Gemmei (660–721; r. 707–15) and her daughter, Genshō (683–748; r. 715–24).

Following in the footsteps of her father and mother and other prominent aristocrats and warriors, Meishō was actively involved with art; she was a recipient, a sponsor, and a creator of artworks. Numerous objects made by or associated with Meishō are found at temples in and near Kyoto, including not only possessions and furnishings, but also paintings and calligraphic works.⁴ These pieces exhibit a traditional, even conservative quality, revealing that Meishō followed time-honored practices in collecting and creating art. Examination of the pieces also suggests that Meishō learned to produce and appreciate art from those close to her, especially her mother Tōfukumon'in. There is, however, a more private aspect of Meishō's engagement with art, especially in her later years.⁵

Although few modern historical accounts offer detailed commentary on Meishō, several aristocratic diaries of the seventeenth century make repeated reference to her.⁶ Two diaries, in particular, provide intimate glimpses of Meishō's sequestered life in retirement: the *Dividing Plant Record* (*Kakumeiki*),

a daily journal kept by tonsured nobleman Hōrin Jōshō (1593–1668), and the *Diary of Mujōhōin* (*Mujōhōin-dono gonikki*), written by Meishō's half-sister Shinanomiya Tsuneko (1642–1702).⁷ Yet, there is limited discussion of Meishō's life after retirement in official Edo-period records. This leaves us with several key questions. Did the Tokugawa accept that Meishō would only be a short-term place-holder on the throne? Knowing all along that she would not be allowed to marry or have children, did her father and mother discourage Meishō from maintaining extensive social ties outside of her family or from moving about freely in the world? Given that her story no longer addressed a pressing need of elite parties, did later leaders even conspire with chroniclers in an erasure of Meishō from the written record? And does Meishō's obscurity relate to the very practices that were meant to preserve the prestige of court and shogunal institutions?

This article expands upon what has been published about Meishō, focusing on her life in retirement from 1643 to 1696. Meishō's birth and enthronement, examined in an earlier publication, are summarized below to provide a context for readers.⁸ Elaborated upon here are little-studied objects and texts related to Meishō's adult years, which tell us about the role of sitting and retired sovereigns in the changing political and ideological landscape of seventeenth-century Japan. Recent publications have significantly enhanced our understanding of the close but conflicted relationship between emperors and warlords in this era.⁹ Additionally, a number of sources have provided new information on the value attached to artistic and cultural activities.¹⁰ In the past few decades, research on women and Buddhism has also blossomed, including the recovery of treasures long held in storage at imperial convents.¹¹ Although these sources provide a broad background for the study at hand, they offer only scattered evidence on the life of Meishō. This article thus fills a need in the existing scholarship by examining artifacts left to posterity by Empress Meishō, along with documents on her life in retirement.

Background: Meishō's Early Years and Enthronement

Meishō's immediate predecessors on the throne—her father and her grandfather, Emperor Go-Yōzei (1571–1617; r. 1586–1611)—had labored to reassert the venerated status of the imperial court, a status that often revealed itself in interactions with warrior leaders. Military overlords upheld age-old practices suggesting that the emperor was uniquely able to minister to divine imperial ancestors in seeking beneficial results for the country. While it is unclear whether the warrior lords personally revered the emperor, by word and deed, they implied that the emperor performed valuable, even sacred functions, and presumably that is why they insisted on sealing an arrangement for Go-Mizunoo to marry Tōfukumon'in—the shogun's daughter—in 1620, after years of negotiation.¹²

Despite the coerced circumstances of their marriage, Go-Mizunoo and Tōfukumon'in learned to live together in apparent harmony, and Tōfukumon'in gave birth to nine of Go-Mizunoo's children, including their first child—Meishō—and several sons who died in infancy. Although Tōfukumon'in was at first considered an outsider at court, she persevered. She is said to have been

protected by her mother-in-law, Chūkamon'in (1575–1630), reportedly a wise and kind-hearted woman, the one responsible for the success of her son's marriage to Tōfukumon'in.¹³ As a consequence of having provided an imperial Tokugawa offspring, Tōfukumon'in rose to the rank of "Center of the Palace" (*chūgū*), and two years later, the Tokugawa hosted the imperial family for a five-day reception at their Kyoto stronghold, Nijō Castle.¹⁴



Fig. 01. *Imperial Procession for the Nijō Imperial Excursion*

One of the first appearances of Meishō in art occurs in a set of painted handscrolls of the *Imperial Procession for the Nijō Imperial Excursion* (fig. 01).¹⁵ Strictly speaking, however, it is not the figure of the two-year-old future empress that is pictured here; instead, it is her ox-drawn carriage, shown following those of her mother and grandmother.¹⁶ The inscription above begins with the girl's designation: First Princess (*Onna Ichinomiya*). The Nijō Imperial Excursion was one of many ways in which the Tokugawa, headquartered far to the east in Edo, demonstrated they could be generous patrons of the imperial court in the old capital of Kyoto; all the while, the Tokugawa also pressured the emperor to comply with their dictates. If the marriage of Go-Mizunoo and Tōfukumon'in were not enough to reveal Tokugawa plans for the imperial family, the Nijō Imperial Excursion of 1626 made those plans unmistakably clear. Since the emperor was rarely called out of his special, secluded place in the palace, the procession of carriages that moved through the streets of Kyoto transporting the emperor and his family to Nijō was an overt display of Tokugawa power.

Only three years after the Nijō Imperial Excursion, Emperor Go-Mizunoo announced his decision to abdicate, frustrated by demands and constraints placed on him by the shogunal overlords. The suddenness of Go-Mizunoo's actions has been interpreted as an angry refusal to tolerate any further encroachments on imperial authority. That said, retirement was also an opportunity for Go-Mizunoo to free himself from endless duties and to exercise his authority as imperial guardian and patron.

With his precipitous abdication, Go-Mizunoo named his young daughter Meishō as his successor, and thus a Tokugawa dream came true: a Tokugawa descendant had been named imperial sovereign. Several seventeenth-century pairs of screen paintings, entitled *Enthronement Ceremony of Empress Meishō and a Procession*, are thought to illustrate Meishō's advancement at the palace.¹⁷ In

these pairs, one screen shows the Accession Audience (*sokui*), at which Meishō's investment was officially recognized. The ceremony announced to the spirits of imperial ancestors, as well as the human world, that yet another descendant of the Sun Goddess had taken the throne. The other screen shows a procession, likely one in which Meishō visited her retired parents soon after being named empress. The screens convey a sense of stately grandeur, expressing the seriousness that leaders of the shogunate and residents of the palace attached to these events.

Go-Mizunoo had made careful plans for Meishō's expensive enthronement ceremony, which was funded by the Tokugawa. Although the accession had always been one of the most significant rites of the court, for his daughter's enthronement Go-Mizunoo revived an ancient, formal version of the ritual that had not been practiced since the fourteenth century. Dignitaries from Edo were among the select party that attended Meishō's accession rites. Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–51)—who had been appointed shogun in 1623 and who was Meishō's uncle—sent a number of governmental officials to the ceremony, and he ordered Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), a respected specialist on Chinese scholarship, to document the proceedings in detail. Razan elaborates upon the events in his *Record of the Imperial Accession of the Kan'ei Era*.¹⁸ Additional information on the ceremonies is included in later compilations entitled the *True Tokugawa Records*.¹⁹

According to the *True Tokugawa Records*, Edo authorities ordered the ranking official artist, Kano Tan'yū (1602–74), to produce a painting illustrating Meishō's accession. It is possible that one of the extant pairs of screens of *Enthronement Ceremony of Empress Meishō and a Procession* is the original work that Tan'yū painted.²⁰ Tan'yū had already participated in a number of major commissions for the Tokugawa, even though he was only twenty-eight years old when Meishō took the throne. Over ten years earlier, he had been appointed official painter to the Tokugawa, and several years after that, he had moved from Kyoto to Edo. In addition, Tan'yū painted screens for Meishō's new chambers at the Kyoto imperial palace in 1629, and he would return again on three occasions to participate in the decoration of interiors of new and refurbished imperial structures.

Empress Meishō's Palace Surroundings and Abdication

Meishō was never far from her parents. After retiring, Go-Mizunoo and Tōfukumon'in established their base of operations adjacent to the imperial palace on separate precincts: Go-Mizunoo lived at Sentō Goshō and Tōfukumon'in at Nyoin Goshō.²¹ They could thus direct their daughter, the young empress, and her court ministers from close by. For more than fifty years after abdicating, Go-Mizunoo and Tōfukumon'in continued to involve themselves in court affairs as guardians and advisors of successive monarchs—first Meishō and then three of her half-brothers—each of whom was a child of Go-Mizunoo. Only Meishō, however, was born to Tōfukumon'in and thus a Tokugawa descendent.

We can partially reconstruct Meishō's imperial quarters from extant fragments of palace painting and documentary sources, which reveal the elegant luxury of her rarified surroundings. A set of eight panels with paintings of *Red Maples at the Tatsuta River*, attributed to the leading court painter Tosa Mitsuoki

(1617–91), survives in the Shoin of Kajūji in Yamashina, one of two buildings relocated from the imperial palace (fig. 02).²² Buildings at Kajūji, an imperial temple, had been destroyed in a fire, and were restored in the late-seventeenth



Fig. 2. Red Maples at the Tatsuta River

century with imperial and shogunal support. Thus, like many other temples associated with the imperial family, Kajūji became the recipient of structures



Fig. 03. New Year Festivities at Sumiyoshi Shrine

that had originally stood on palace grounds. The Kajūji Shoin panels capture a scene with autumnal colors on the banks of the Tatsuta River, one of the admired “famous sites” (*meisho-e*) of Japan. Several clusters of figures—young and old, male and female—enjoy this enchanting setting. The painter used sprinkled gold dust for mists and squares of gold leaf for clouds stretching across the upper and lower composition, providing a brilliant atmospheric effect. The painter also employed fine brushwork to delicately delineate the red maple leaves, demonstrating techniques similar to those in documented works by Tosa

Mitsuoki, who was a direct descendent of the main line of Tosa painters in the employ of the court.²³

Another of the buildings that still survives from the imperial palace further indicates that Meishō benefitted from her mother's legacy as a recipient of gorgeous art and architectural ornamentation, much of which was paid for by the Tokugawa. This building is the Otsubone, a structure reserved for the empress's attendants that had formerly stood on her mother's palace grounds. Tōfukumon'in's Otsubone was incorporated into Meishō's palace in 1629, and was later donated to Enman'in, a subtemple of Onjōji located in Otsu in Shiga Prefecture.²⁴ Panel paintings from the interior of that building at Enman'in, the Shinden, feature figures in landscape, including some playing battledore and shuttlecock in a lower zone and others near a sacred precinct in an upper zone of *New Year Festivities at Sumiyoshi Shrine* (fig. 03).²⁵ The scenery with tall pines, along with the distinctive arched bridge in the upper part of the composition, confirms that the location is Sumiyoshi Shrine, another famous site. The figures and landscape details are painted in a meticulous style comparable to that of panels picturing Sumiyoshi Shrine ascribed to a prominent artist, Kano Sadanobu (1597–1623), installed in the Taimenjo of the Honmaru Palace at Nagoya Castle. Based on similarities with the Nagoya Honmaru panels, some scholars assign the Enman'in Shinden paintings to Sadanobu as well.²⁶

Although the panels from Kajūji and Enman'in—which were likely painted by leading artists and likely ornamented Meishō's palace—are among the oldest large-scale genre scenes from elite interiors that survive, records indicate that artists had been decorating certain palace chambers with scenes of famous sites for some time and point to a conventional tendency in the rich ornamentation of Meishō's surroundings at the palace.²⁷ Other court furnishings and utensils of the empress were presumably of similar sumptuous appeal and traditional manufacture, although most have been lost.

A few rare items said to have been owned by Meishō—and likely preserved by her since her childhood—do survive, including two dolls, one with silk garments intact.²⁸ For centuries, it had been customary for dolls to be made for a child at birth and to serve as protective talismans throughout life. The main body of the dolls consisted of wood or bamboo dowels arranged in a "T" shape, with facial features painted on the round heads and a small robe draped over the form and tied around the waist. A small number of other objects related to the young Empress Meishō also survive; most extant items associated with Meishō are thought to date, however, to her years following abdication.²⁹

After serving as Empress Regnant for fourteen years, Meishō stepped down from the throne in 1643, at the age of twenty-one, presumably because now a male successor had reached an appropriate age to replace her. Her successor was the eleven-year-old Emperor Go-Kōmyō (1633–54; r. 1643–54), her half-brother. For the remainder of her life, in other words for more than five decades to come, Meishō would remain unmarried. In fact, none of the previous reigning empresses had married after their abdication, although several had been married before ascending the throne and had even given birth. Meishō, however, had been much too young for that. Meishō's family likely discouraged her from marrying to avoid disputes over succession. After abdicating, Meishō took the

Buddhist vows known as bodhisattva precepts, likely on the advice of her father and mother.

Meishō's parents maintained the long-standing imperial practice of finding a home for unmarried sons and daughters at prestigious temples and convents affiliated with the court (*monzeki*); nearly half of Go-Mizunoo's thirty-some children took Buddhist vows and became abbots or abbesses. At the *monzeki*, they undertook religious duties such as daily prayers, funerary observances, ceremonial services, seated meditation, and maintaining the legacy of their institutions. However, many tonsured princes and princesses also studied Confucian texts, read classical narratives, composed court poetry, participated in annual festivities, mastered games and pastimes, entertained relatives and friends, and kept abreast of developments at the palace. Life at the *monzeki* thus allowed many imperial offspring to train in cultural and scholarly pursuits as they would at the palace; in fact, many of the imperial temples and convents were essentially an extension of the palace.

Meishō, however, did not join a convent; instead, she was granted a retirement palace of her own. There, she led a cloistered life, but apparently not one involving severe abstinence or discipline. Indeed, she enjoyed much of the aristocratic lifestyle to which she was accustomed, practicing cultural pursuits such as writing poetry and creating paintings. Meishō did observe religious devotions, though, like most of her relatives.

Retired Empress Meishō and Religious Activities

In her spiritual life, Meishō was most closely affiliated with the Tendai temple of Jūzenji in Yamashina, a centuries-old institution that was rebuilt under its abbot, Kōgyoku Shinkei (late 16th–mid 17th century). Meishō trained under Shinkei and assisted in restoring Jūzenji. During the ceremony celebrating completion

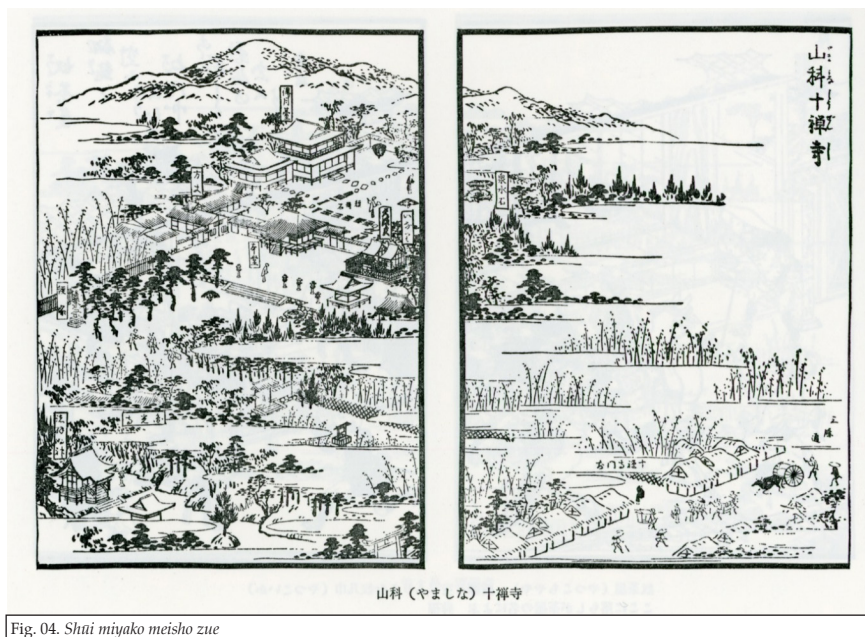


Fig. 04. *Shūi miyako meisho zue*

of construction at the temple, Shinkei is said to have appeared riding an ox and wearing a garment formerly owned by Meishō.³⁰

Meishō's role in refurbishing Jūzenji is recounted in pages of the woodblock printed volumes of the *Shūi miyako meisho zue* (*Supplement: Illustrations of Famous Places of the Capital*), a 1787 Kyoto guidebook by Akizato Ritō (late 18th–early 19th century).³¹ The *Shūi miyako meisho zue* and other Edo-period guidebooks serve as frequently-cited sources of information on temples and their collections and were often augmented with illustrations, such as the rendering of the Jūzenji grounds (fig. 04). Text in the *Shūi miyako meisho zue* explains that Meishō was inspired by a dream and, in 1655, she ordered the construction of a two-storied pavilion at Jūzenji, the Tokugeitsudai (shown at upper left in the rendering). The text continues, stating that the main icon of Amida Nyorai housed in the

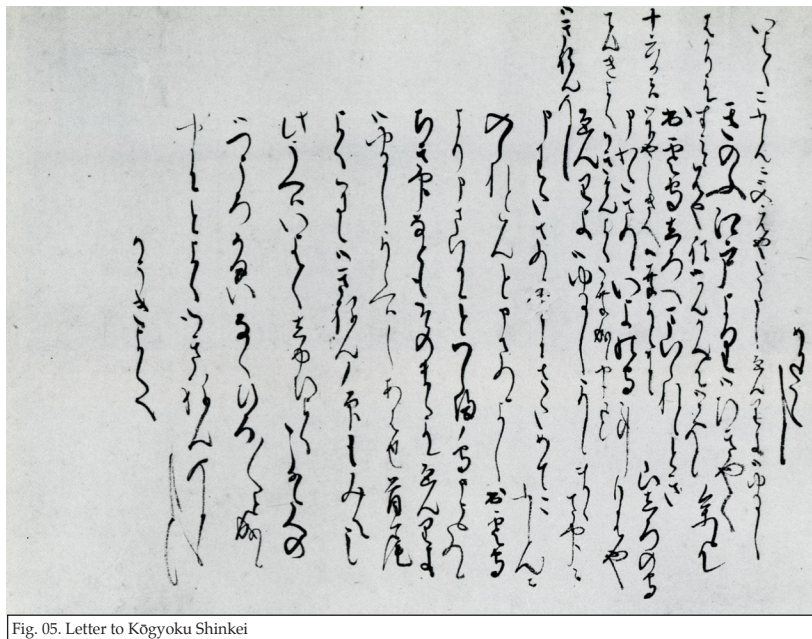


Fig. 05. Letter to Kōgyoku Shinkei

Tokugetsudai was created by Emperor Go-Yōzei, Meishō's grandfather. Meishō is said to have visited here frequently and to have loved the scenery nearby. Preserved at Jūzenji are a number of items documenting Meishō's spiritual pursuits, including scriptures, letters, poems, and paintings.³² One of these is her inscription of a mystical Buddhist incantation known as the *Zuigu darani*, or "wish-fulfilling spell" of the *Zuigu Bodhisattva*.³³ To create the *Zuigu darani*, Meishō copied five lines of Chinese characters in gold ink on dark blue paper, and then donated this to Jūzenji following her mother's death. Meishō and other women from her family copied Buddhist *darani* and sutras praying for the repose of relatives who had died and gave these to temples once frequented by the deceased individual, requesting that memorial services be held on designated days. These transcriptions were meant to aid in accruing spiritual merit for one's self and others. Meishō also presented Buddhist sutras that she had written in

gold on blue paper to the Kyoto temple of Unryūin, where services were held for her parents. Joshū Chōrō (b. 1594), abbot of Unryūin, had gained the respect of many members of the imperial family, including Meishō.³⁴

Several letters that Meishō wrote to Jūzenji's abbot, Shinkei, survive at his temple in Yamashina and elsewhere.³⁵ One of the letters, which is tentatively dated to 1665, refers to guardians of the Izumo and Yamashiro Shrines and also conveys Meishō's wishes for the safe travels of Shinkei, who was about to depart on a trip to the villa of Emperor Reigen (1654–1732; r. 1663–87) (fig. 05).³⁶ Meishō wrote the letter mainly in *kana*, or Japanese syllabary. The calligraphy reveals her reliance upon a delicate script employed by court women, as well as her debt to the sophisticated and graceful calligraphic manner of her father.³⁷ Another letter she wrote to Shinkei is found in the Fujii Eikan Bunko in Kyoto, and concerns a Buddhist icon Meishō had commissioned, documenting her activities as a disciple and as a patron presumably patterned after the sponsorship practice of her parents (fig. 06).³⁸

Furthermore, Meishō produced a calligraphic hanging scroll with seven Chinese characters of the "Icon Name" that pays homage to the bodhisattva Jizō (J: Kṣitigarbha) (fig. 07).³⁹ This follows a pattern seen in many aristocratic inscriptions with the names of Buddhist deities written out and used as incantations; the physical substance of the scroll was revered as a manifestation

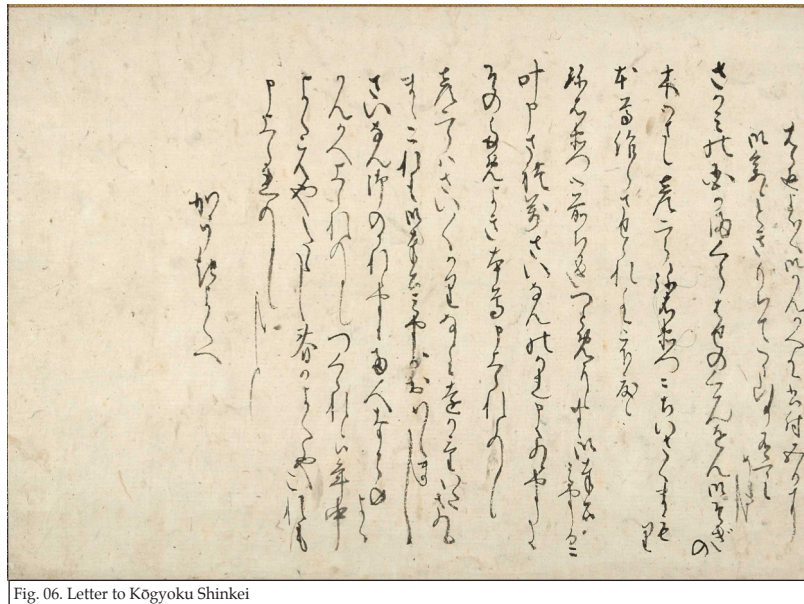


Fig. 06. Letter to Kōgyoku Shinkei

of the divine being. Meishō relied upon this piece, which was apparently an object of personal devotion, during stays at Katsura Villa in southwestern Kyoto.⁴⁰ What is remarkable about the piece is its tiny scale; it is only about eighteen centimeters (roughly seven inches) in height.⁴¹

Making use of her calligraphic skills, Meishō also created an image of a Buddhist deity, employing small Chinese characters from a Buddhist sutra for the contours of the form.⁴² The work, a hanging scroll found in the collection of

Jūzenji, pictures a seated figure of the bodhisattva of compassion, Kannon (S: Avalokiteśvara). The technique can be traced back to earlier eras in which sutra inscriptions were used to form the outlines in pictorial representations of pagodas.



Fig. 07. "Icon Name"

Meishō shared her interest in painting with other members of her family, including her parents and several siblings. Although her father is known to have created a small number of paintings, works by her paternal grandfather Emperor Go-Yōzei survive in larger number.⁴³ Go-Yōzei reportedly studied painting with Kaihō Yūshō (1533–1615), an artist born into a warrior family, raised in a Zen temple, and independent of any artistic lineage. Go-Mizunoo, on the other hand, is not recorded as having trained under an established painter, although one of his surviving works—a monochrome ink sketch of the Daruma, the founder of Zen, which is preserved at Hōkyōji in Kyoto—features a style similar to that seen in paintings by the Zen cleric of Daitokuji, Isshi Monju (also read Bunju or Bunshu; 1608–46). Isshi delivered sermons at the palace to members of the imperial family. Like her father, Meishō may have practiced painting under Isshi, or copied works by him. Alternatively, it may have been her mother who taught Meishō

to paint and make pictures from pieces of cut fabric, an artistic form known as "pressed pictures" (*oshi-e*).⁴⁴

Notable among Meishō's sisters who created paintings were Daitō Bunchi (Princess Ume; 1619–97) and Shōzan Gen'yō (Princess Mitsuko; 1634–1727). Bunchi took religious vows under Isshi Monju and likely learned to paint from him. Gen'yō was a student of the professional painter Kano Yasunobu (1613–85) and the Ōbaku priest-painter Takuhō Dōshū (1652–1714).⁴⁵ Both sisters established Zen imperial convents (*bikuni gosho*); Bunchi founded Enshōji in Nara and Gen'yō founded Rinkyūji in Kyoto. Among the treasures held at their convents are objects donated by Meishō, including a pair of framed inscriptions on silk that she personally wrote and gave to Rinkyūji. The two inscriptions, which are dated to 1691, give temple names—one reads "Shōmyōzan" and the other reads "Rinkyūji"—each written vertically with three large Chinese characters rendered with strong and lively brushstrokes.⁴⁶ As in other cases, Meishō's presentation of these two inscriptions to Gen'yō reveals how she fostered familial relations in part by bestowing her works as gifts.

In addition, Meishō likely gave one of her paintings to Bunchi. The work—a hanging scroll picturing the Daruma—is preserved at Enshōji, which had been founded by Bunchi (fig. 08).⁴⁷ Meishō pictured the Daruma seated in meditation and shown in profile, using a few brushstrokes for the patriarch's robe and a few

darker brushstrokes for his face. In this, Meishō likely followed ink sketches of the Daruma painted by the aforementioned Zen cleric Isshi Monju. Isshi created a number of paintings of the Daruma with pale ink in a manner known as “apparition painting” (*mōryōga*). On Meishō’s painting, her half-brother, Emperor Gosai (1637–85; r. 1654–63), inscribed four lines of Chinese characters above the figure, referring to the Daruma as the “cliff-gazing priest.”

A subject that Meishō turned to repeatedly in pictorial work is *Tenjin Crossing the Sea to Tang China*, which captures the divine form of the courtier and poet Sugawara no Michizane (845–903).⁴⁸ Michizane had long been revered as a Shinto divinity (*tenjin*), yet he is typically represented wearing a Daoist hooded robe and holding a branch of flowering plum, as in Meishō’s representations. Her ink paintings of this figure are found in the collections of Jūzenji and Yōmei Bunko. There is also a

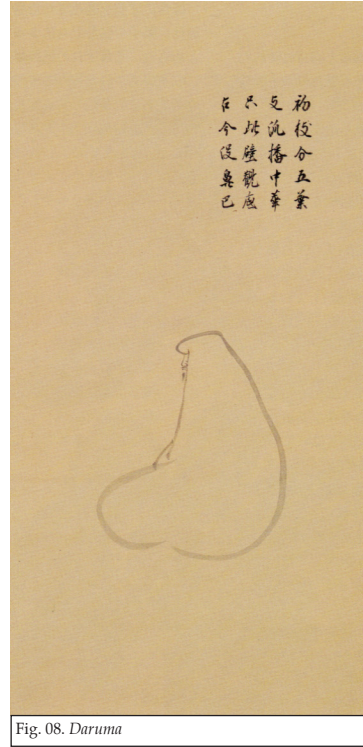


Fig. 08. Daruma



Fig. 09. *Tenjin Crossing the Sea to Tang China*

hanging scroll by Meishō with *Tenjin Crossing the Sea to Tang China* preserved at Kōshōji, which she fashioned from pieces of fabric (fig. 09). At the top of the scroll, Meishō inscribed a poem by Michizane. Related to this, the aristocratic diarist Hōrin Jōshō mentions in his journal, the *Kakumeiki*, that Meishō bestowed upon him an *oshi-e* of red maples, perhaps made by her.⁴⁹ He also refers to a folding fan that the retired empress had made, likely with an ink sketch or inscription.⁵⁰

Not all of the artistic works associated with Meishō are depictions of religious figures. Several of her extant paintings feature scenes from nature, including the undated *Splashed Ink Landscape* in

a private collection in Osaka.⁵¹ Meishō used quick dashes of a wet brush to create the elegant effect of a misty mountainous vista.

A piece once owned by Meishō that is secular in nature is the six-fold screen with a large red bunting painted on a gold ground preserved at the Kyoto temple of Sennyūji; according to temple records, it was formerly in the possession of the retired empress (fig. 10).⁵² The bunting in the Sennyūji screen is an outdoor curtain set up for picnics and other gatherings. It is studded with three white emblems—imperial crests of *uragiku* (a chrysanthemum flower seen from the back)—rendered on a grand scale. With its bold graphic design, this screen could readily function as a dramatic backdrop to court events, and palace and villa residents may have draped hanging scrolls over the top for display. Screens, often meant to be used as backdrops and props, were gifts frequently given to prominent individuals. Several other items that reportedly once belonged to Meishō also survive at Sennyūji, where the graves of Meishō, her parents, and

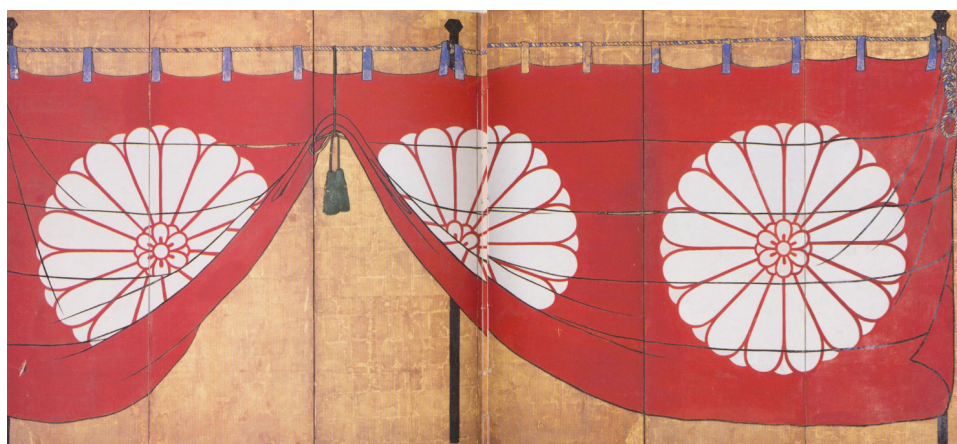


Fig. 10. Bunting

many other imperial figures are found. Sennyūji had served for centuries as a temple dedicated to memorial services for emperors and their consorts. In this capacity, Sennyūji received a variety of imperial gifts, including paintings and sculptures.

At one time, Sennyūji also preserved a set of shelves said to have been among Meishō's possessions. These shelves, decorated in *maki-e* or sprinkled lacquer, are featured on the pages of an illustrated book, the *Collected Works of Enkōan* (*Enkōan gashū*), produced in 1785 to document an exhibition of objects from Sennyūji held at the Nagoya temple of Dairyūji (fig. 11).⁵³ According to a caption above the shelves, seen at left behind a monk who lectures on the exhibited objects, these were in the collection of the retired Empress Meishō. Seven illustrated pages feature the Sennyūji treasures—including reliquaries, statues, calligraphic inscriptions, rosaries, and costumes—many formerly owned by members of the imperial family.

Examining Meishō's belongings—along with her paintings, letters, and related sources—we can begin to reconstruct her interests and a group of acquaintances that she maintained through her life. Among her associates were



Fig. 11. Collected Works of Enkōan

members of her own family and a small circle of others they trusted, including a cohort of religious figures. The clerics with whom she and her sisters interacted came mainly from leading temples of Kyoto, who were called to the palace by her parents, and while a majority of the imperial princesses who entered convents were followers of Rinzai Zen priests, Meishō adhered to the teachings of a Tendai cleric, Shinkei. The two aforementioned sisters of Meishō, Bunchi and Gen'yō, adhered to the disciplined, spartan lifestyle of Zen. Meishō, though, was apparently less intensely involved in religious devotions. Instead, she preferred pleasurable pastimes such as making fabric pictures and planning fashionable diversions and entertainments (*fūryū*).

Meishō and Diversions

Based on entries recorded by tonsured nobleman Hōrin Jōshō in his *Kakumeiki*, we know that Meishō participated in many cultural activities. Hōrin regularly attended gatherings in the ancient capital, including at the imperial palace and residences of retired emperors, which made him familiar with elite cultural circles in Kyoto. In the years from 1643 to 1668 (from Meishō's abdication to Hōrin's death), he mentions Meishō over fifty times in diary entries. These entries often describe ceremonies, banquets, and other gatherings with members of the imperial family, and in many cases both Meishō's father and mother were present.⁵⁴ In an entry of 1662, for instance, Hōrin makes note of a palace event attended by Go-Mizunoo, Tōfukumon'in, and Meishō with a Kuchikiri Tea party to celebrate the opening of a fresh jar of tea leaves.⁵⁵ On nearly an annual

basis in the early 1660s, Hōrin records that he was present for Meishō's visits to Iwakura and Shugakuin in the northeastern hills outside Kyoto, where members of her family kept villas.⁵⁶ In addition, Hōrin was invited to Meishō's retirement palace in central Kyoto on at least three occasions in 1668.⁵⁷ These gatherings often featured such sophisticated pursuits as Nō drama, poetry composition, tea preparation, incense appreciation, and performance of music and dance. Rarely, however, does Meishō's name appear in diary entries recording events that took place outside the palace or aristocratic villas.

Among the pursuits that Meishō enjoyed was creating ensemble installations populated by toys in dioramas or by her personal attendants in landscape settings. Assembling this sort of playful arrangement had been a pastime of courtiers for centuries. In the tenth century, for instance, Minamoto Tōru (822–95) had ordered that salt from Osaka Bay be brought to the garden of his Kyoto residence, the Kawara'in, to simulate a shoreline with a salt flat. Simulacra of town settings and commoners at work also suggest Meishō's interest in the larger world, fueled perhaps by her inability to move about freely in society. These and other of Meishō's activities are described in the *Diary of Mujōhōin*, written by her sister Shinanomiya Tsuneko.

Tsuneko speaks of visiting the retired empress at her Kawara Imperial Villa, which Meishō established as her retreat along the Kamo River in central Kyoto in 1688. In that year, Tsuneko started to call at her sister's villa and, over the next nine years, she made more than twenty visits to the residence. In a 1688 diary entry, Tsuneko exclaims:

There is a wonderful sense of style in the garden and in the exquisite pavilions [of my sister's Kawara Villa]. It's so interesting! We spent the whole day touring her palace. There's a fabulous view of Sanjō Bridge from the east side of the river.⁵⁸

Recording her experiences on another visit later that year, Tsuneko relates how the sixty-six-year-old Meishō had fabricated an arrangement of objects to imitate a fishing village, which she had set up on her estate:

We ambled through the garden [of the Kawara Villa], and took in the views at each of the pavilions. A number of maids served us meals. On an island in the pond, there was a structure imitating a beach hut built near salt works (*shioya*) and smoke was coming out of the boiler. Along the shore were scattered shells, and fishing nets were laid out with seaweed strewn here and there. It was all quite wonderful. It really looked like a beach.⁵⁹

From the diary of Tsuneko—as well as that of her husband, the prominent aristocrat and head of the Fujiwara-Konoe family, Konoe Motohiro (1648–1722)—we learn that there were enactments staged by people at Meishō's villa, such as maids dressed as rice planters and guards outfitted as fishermen.⁶⁰ Meishō also assembled a townscape with figurines and shop-settings decorated with toys and artificial flowers, displayed inside her garden tea pavilion.⁶¹ In addition, Meishō enjoyed observing passersby beyond her garden walls, like her father who had asked Tsuneko to order a bay window for her home so that he could watch the pedestrians outside her compound.⁶²

Tsuneko and Motohiro frequently gave the retired empress gifts. Tsuneko sent Meishō a tall picnic box, which was topped with miniature ornaments. The ornaments included a figure of the legendary Urashima Tarō and his boat, along

with a metal sake container shaped like a tortoise. Motohiro sent Meishō treats to eat, arranged on a tray set on short legs, resembling a low table. This was topped with a miniature landscape that contained sculptural forms shaped as auspicious plants and animals.⁶³ It was customary to decorate the tops of trays of this type—known as *suhamas* trays or as *shimadai* (island stands)—with small landscapes, such as that of Mount Hōrai, realm of the immortals. Although originally used at ceremonies as places for the gods to descend and bring blessings, by the seventeenth century such trays had come to serve a secondary role at outdoor gatherings as tables for elaborate picnic arrangements. In exchange for the items she received, Meishō bestowed gifts upon Tsuneko and Motohiro, including a stringed musical instrument, or *koto*. In an entry recorded late in Meishō's life, Tsuneko asked her sister if she might have the unused *koto* that she had seen at her sister's residence. Meishō sent Tsuneko the *koto*, which boasted a venerable pedigree.⁶⁴

From Tsuneko's diary, we learn that Meishō's brother, Reigen, presented the former empress with painted screens on the occasion of her seventieth birthday in 1692, just four years before Meishō's death.⁶⁵ These were screens of *Flowers of the Twelve Months* by Yamamoto Soken (fl. ca. 1683–1706), an artist who trained in the Kano-school style under his father Sotei.⁶⁶ The screens, which survive in the collection of Konbuin in Nara, feature themes of the twelve months (*tsukinami*).



Fig. 12. Scenes of the Twelve Months

Tsukinami had long served as inspiration for composing poems, and since at least the twelfth century, *tsukinami* screens had often been given as gifts. Furthermore, Soken painted a second pair of screens to celebrate Meishō's seventieth birthday, *Scenes of the Twelve Months* in the collection of Enshōji (fig. 12).⁶⁷ Soken added his signature and seal on the lower edge of each of the two screens. The screens capture figures in the out-of-doors amongst plants and animals, with each panel illustrating a separate month, starting with a New Year's scene on the first panel of the right screen. Attached above are verses inscribed on squares

of colored paper, composed by acclaimed poets. Soken's screens in Konbuin and Enshōji testify to the refined, traditional nature of art works made for Meishō in retirement. Up to her last days, she was surrounded by luxurious accommodations and age-old imagery of a vaunted court culture.

Conclusion

Meishō's production and collection of art works—and, more generally, the material cultural associated with her—are key to our understanding of the former empress. These objects and texts tell us a great deal about the value attached to artistic and cultural activities in the early-modern court, as well as the role of sitting and retired sovereigns.

Over the course of Meishō's life, Tokugawa shoguns successfully fashioned their regime into a well-tuned organization, and by her late years, the supremacy of their rule was undeniable. Through this phase, the shoguns maintained cordial but increasingly distant relations with the imperial family, including with their direct relative Meishō. The two elite parties were interdependent: the shoguns still relied upon the legitimacy that emperors granted and the emperors required the financial support that military overlords provided. While the shoguns extended generous support to the imperial family, they simultaneously maneuvered to limit the political power and the physical movement of court leaders. Nevertheless, members of the imperial family—male and female—expressed the continued significance of a courtly legacy in artistic, cultural, and religious practice.

By the time of Meishō's abdication, the Tokugawa had apparently come to accept that Meishō was merely a place-holder on the throne, that court leaders would select her successor, and that no Tokugawa descendants would follow her as sovereigns. Meishō's parents, while themselves connected with numerous individuals from different backgrounds, seemingly encouraged their daughter to lead a sequestered life. Meishō came to terms with her circumstances and, even though many of her interests might strike us as frivolous, she embraced her life, perhaps fatalistically but without complaint. Diary entries verify that she maintained a small circle of acquaintances and rarely ventured out beyond palace and temple grounds. Indeed, few of Go-Mizunoo's children revealed an interest in mixing with individuals outside the military and civilian aristocracy.⁶⁸

Recognizing that Meishō would cause problems for the imperial line if she were to bear children, her father and mother likely recommended that Meishō take religious vows and limit her movements in the world. Like many of her sisters who became celibate nuns, Meishō never experienced motherhood, but she had two long-lived, devoted parents and a large group of siblings to provide familial support and companionship. In later generations, leaders of the imperial court focused on a male order of succession to the throne, interrupted only once again during the early-modern era, when Go-Sakuramachi (1740–1813) was named Empress Regnant. The emphasis on a male-dominated imperial lineage seems to explain the abbreviated treatment of Meishō in most historical accounts. Her story no longer addressed a pressing need of the shogunate or the court, and after her death, her name was seldom mentioned in writing. Thus, in the end, we sense that Meishō remains hidden, even more so than are her mother and sisters,

and it is undeniably the very nature of her position as Empress Regnant that made an enigma of her. The obscurity of Meishō as an historical figure owes to patriarchal practices that were meant to ensure the preservation and continuity of elite institutions in early-modern Japan, as in so many places in world history.

Figures

- Fig. 01.** *Carriage of the First Princess from the Procession for the Nijō Imperial Excursion*; detail of scroll two from a set of five handscrolls with ink, colors, and gold on paper; H. 33.5 cm., 17th century. Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shōzōkan, Tokyo.
- Fig. 02.** Tosa Mitsuoki, attrib., *Red Maples at the Tatsuta River*; detail from eight painted panels with ink, colors, and gold on paper; 192.9 x 93.2 cm., 17th century. Kajūji, Yamashina.
- Fig. 03.** Kano Sadanobu, attrib., *New Year Festivities at Sumiyoshi Shrine*; detail of painted panels with ink, colors, and gold on paper; 248 x 380 cm., 1619–20. Kyoto National Museum. Important Cultural Property.
- Fig. 04.** Jūzenji, two pages from the *Shūi miyako meisho zue*; woodblock-printed pages with ink on paper, 1787.
- Fig. 05.** Empress Meishō, Letter to Kōgyoku Shinkei; hanging scroll with ink on paper; 28 x 40.5 cm., ca. 1665. Private collection.
- Fig. 06.** Empress Meishō, Letter to Kōgyoku Shinkei; hanging scroll with ink on paper; 32 x 45 cm., 17th century. Fujii Eikan Bunko, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto.
- Fig. 07.** Empress Meishō, “Icon Name” in praise of Jizō; hanging scroll with ink on paper; 18.1 x 7.5 cm., 17th century. Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shōzōkan, Tokyo.
- Fig. 08.** Empress Meishō, *Daruma*; hanging scroll with ink on paper; 61.9 x 31.6 cm., 17th century. Enshōji, Nara.
- Fig. 09.** Empress Meishō, *Tenjin Crossing the Sea to Tang China*; hanging scroll with fabric and ink on paper; 64 x 27 cm., 17th century. Kōshōji, Uji.
- Fig. 10.** *Bunting*; six-panel screen with ink, colors, and gold on paper; 176 x 384 cm., 17th century. Sennyūji, Kyoto.
- Fig. 11.** Kōriki Tanenobu, *Collected Works of Enkōan*; two pages featuring an exhibition of art objects from Sennyūji; book printed in ink and colors on paper, 1785. Nagoya City Museum.
- Fig. 12.** Yamamoto Soken, *Scenes of the Twelve Months*; detail of a pair of six-panel screens with ink, colors, and gold on paper; 141.5 x 255.3 cm., 1692. Enshōji, Nara.

Notes

- ¹ As a child, she was known as Ichinomiya Okiko; it was only later, after stepping down from the throne, that she was given the name Meishō.
- ² The most recent instance in which something similar had occurred was when the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408) had maneuvered to have his wife named mother of the emperor.
- ³ The most recent Empress Regnant had been Shōtoku (also known as Kōken, 718–70; r. 764–70).
- ⁴ Surviving paintings, inscriptions, letters, and poems attributed to Meishō are also found in private collections and museums, such as the hanging scroll preserved in the Umi-Mori Art Museum; <http://www.umam.jp/en/japanesecalligraphy.html> (accessed 06-04-2013).
- ⁵ While many women's engagement with art in pre-modern Japan was largely private, the case of Tōfukumon'in is an exception; she exhibited a wide range of social connections in her sponsorship and collecting of art. For more see Elizabeth Lillehoj 2011, pp. 147–53.
- ⁶ Two of the few recent publications that focus on Meishō are an abbreviated biography in Fujii Jōji and Yoshioka Masayuki 2005, and the catalog to an exhibition held in 1997 at the Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan, entitled *Jotei: Meishō tennō to shogun Iemitsu—Matsudaira Nobutsuna to sono jidai*.
- ⁷ Hōrin, who kept the *Kakumeiki* from 1635 to 1668, was the aristocratic abbot of Rokuonji in Kyoto; Hōrin Jōshō, *Kakumeiki*, ed. by Akamatsu. Tsuneko recorded entries in her diary from 1666 to 1700; for more see Cecilia Segawa Seigle 2001 and 2002.
- ⁸ I discuss Meishō's birth and enthronement in *Art and Palace Politics in Early Modern Japan, 1580–1680*, pp. 199–204, 217. In the book, I also introduce basic information about Meishō's later years, but I give few details. This article explores new ground, focusing mainly on art works and diary entries not discussed in the book.
- ⁹ For more on recent re-evaluation of the court's restored standing in the seventeenth century see, among others, Kumakura Isao 1982; Lee A. Butler 2002; Hashimoto Masanobu 2002; and Nomura Gen 2006.
- ¹⁰ See, for example, the exhibition catalogs: Kasumi Kaikan 1995; Kanagawa Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan 1996; Kendall Brown 1989; and John T. Carpenter 2006.
- ¹¹ Much of this research has been organized by the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies based at Columbia University, which sponsors the Imperial Buddhist Convent Survey Team. See, among others, Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies 2009.
- ¹² Kumakura 1982, pp. 56–67; Butler 2002, pp. 201–2, 228.
- ¹³ See Imaizumi Atsuo 1968–76, p. 52; and Takeda Tsuneo 1980c, p. 58.
- ¹⁴ Although usually translated simply as “empress,” *chūgū* was the highest rank that a woman could attain while married to the reigning emperor. Tōfukumon'in's appointment as *chūgū* was a rarity at the time; it had been centuries since a woman had been granted the title.
- ¹⁵ For more on the scrolls, known in Japanese as *Kan'ei sannen hinoe tora Tōfukumon'in jūdai ni tsuke Go-Mizunoo tennō Nijō e gyōkō robo oyobi Tokugawa nidai shōgun Hidetada jōraku emaki-mono*, see Lillehoj 2011, pp. 155, 161–63. Illustrated in the book are scenes of Nijō Castle and Go-Mizunoo's palanquin (plates 61, 64–66). See also Kanagawa Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan 1996, p. 108.
- ¹⁶ In fact, there is no known surviving portrait of Meishō from the premodern era. In contrast, portraits of her father, mother, and many siblings are preserved at temples in and around Kyoto.
- ¹⁷ One pair of screens that pictures Meishō's accession is found in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City; for illustration see Lillehoj 2011, plate 87. Another pair is found in the Imperial Household Collection, Sannomaru Shōzōkan, the title of which is read *Meishō tennō gosokui gyōkō-zu byōbu*; Nakamachi in Mainichi Shinbunsha, *Gobunko gyobutsu: Kōshitsu no shihō*, vol. 2, *Kaiga*, pp. 206–7. A pair of nearly identical screens formerly belonged to the Mannō

Collection in Hyōgo Prefecture; see Takeda 1980a, plates 31–32. In addition, a single screen attributed to Kano Shunsetsu (1614–91), entitled *Imperial Procession: The Enthronement Ceremony of Empress Meishō*, is found in the William Sturgis Bigelow Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/imperial-procession-the-enthronement-ceremony-of-empress-meisho-25853> (accessed 06-04-2013). I use the term “enthronement,” but to clarify, there was no throne-chair at the palace.

- ¹⁸ See Hayashi Razan, Kan’ei sokui ki. In addition, a surviving album entitled the *Record of the Accession of Empress Meishō (Meishō tennō gosokui ki)* is kept by the Imperial Household Agency; see Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, pp. 11–13.
- ¹⁹ *Tokugawa jikki*; official annals compiled in the early nineteenth century. Nakamachi in Takeda 1980a, pp. 110 and 113, note 6.
- ²⁰ Unfortunately, there is no corroborating documentation, and so the most we can say is that several of the screen pairs exhibit a manner similar to that employed by a number of Kano artists working soon after Meishō took the throne. Nakamachi in Takeda 1980a, p. 95.
- ²¹ The Nyoin Goshō is now known as Ōmiya Goshō. Only two original structures are thought to survive on these compounds: the Seikatei and the Yushintei.
- ²² Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, p. 28. Another theory holds that the Kajūji Shoin panels derive from the Hirogoshō palace of the later, retired Emperor Gosai, moved to Kajūji in 1697; it is nevertheless likely that the panels were first placed in a building on Meishō’s palace grounds and that building was later incorporated into Gosai’s Hirogoshō before being moved to Kajūji; see Fujioka Michio 1968, p. 156.
- ²³ See, for example, the pair of screens of *Flowering Cherry and Autumn Maples with Poem Slips* by Tosa Mitsuoki in the Art Institute of Chicago; for illustration see Janice Katz 2009, entry 12.
- ²⁴ The Otsubone was incorporated into the palace of Meishō after Go-Mizunoo abdicated, and was refashioned again in 1647, when it was donated and moved to Enman’in. Fujioka 1967, plates 116–19; Lillehoj 2011, pp. 140–41.
- ²⁵ *Sumiyoshi shatō shōgatsu fūzoku-zu*; the paintings are now housed in the Kyoto National Museum.
- ²⁶ See, for example, Fujioka 1967, pp. 404–5. Other scholars, while praising the quality of the painting, refrain from assigning the Enman’in panels to a particular Kano artist; see Saitō Ei 1979, p. 206.
- ²⁷ One early reference is found in a 1479 diary entry by nobleman Mibu Harutomi (1422–1504), mentioning a painting with famous sites. Entry from the 3rd day, 7th month, 1479, in the *Harutomi sukune ki*; see Takeda 1966, p. 10; and Matthew Philip McKelway 2006, pp. 241, 242, note 78.
- ²⁸ Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, pp. 26–27.
- ²⁹ The young Meishō wrote and signed a prayer sheet that served as a record of a ceremony asking for long life (*Tensōchifusai tojō*), for instance; see Imperial Household Agency 1991–92, vol. 5, plate 60.
- ³⁰ See Sakakibara Yoshio et al. 1988, p. 198.
- ³¹ *Shūi miyako meisho zue*, in Takemura Toshinori et al. 1981, vol. 8, pp. 275–76.
- ³² See, for example, Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, plates 7–10, pp. 16–19.
- ³³ The full title is: *Fuhenkōmyō shō jōshijō nyōihōin shinmunō daimyōō daizūigu darani kyō*. For illustration see Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, plate 8.
- ³⁴ See Sennyūji 1992, pp. 17–18.
- ³⁵ See, for example, Sakakibara 1988, entry 78.
- ³⁶ This letter is held in a private collection. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- ³⁷ See Shimozaka Mamoru 1988, p. 25.
- ³⁸ See John T. Carpenter 2006, pp. 132–33.

- ³⁹ The inscription reads *Namu Jizō daibosatsu*; Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, p. 15.
- ⁴⁰ Carpenter 2006, p. 132.
- ⁴¹ This piece, like a majority of extant works by Meishō's hand, is undated, and whether she was creating images such as this while she was empress is possible; however, she was young and the ceremonial duties and cultural responsibilities of sovereigns were so numerous and time-consuming that it seems unlikely she had much leisure time for such activities while empress.
- ⁴² Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, p. 24.
- ⁴³ For illustration of a painting of the Daruma attributed to Go-Mizunoo, see Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies 2009, p. 153. For more on paintings by Go-Yōzei, see Lillehoj 2011, pp. 77–79.
- ⁴⁴ For more on works created by Tōfukumon'in, see Lillehoj 2011, pp. 150–51.
- ⁴⁵ Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies 2009, p. 290.
- ⁴⁶ See Kyōto-fu Bunkazai Hogo Kikin 1985, vol. 1, p. 268.
- ⁴⁷ *Daruma-zu*; Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies 2009, p. 153.
- ⁴⁸ *Totō tenjin-zu*; Saitama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan 1997, p. 21.
- ⁴⁹ Entry from the 9th day, 6th month, 1668, in the *Kakumeiki*, vol. 6, p. 651. Whether this was a fabric construction or another type of “pressed picture” remains unclear.
- ⁵⁰ Entry from the 11th day, 4th month, 1665, in the *Kakumeiki*, vol. 6, p. 58.
- ⁵¹ *Haboku sansui-zu*; see Patrica Fister 1994, plate 63, p. 193.
- ⁵² The screen bears no signature or seals, but according to temple tradition it was painted by Kano Tan'yū; Sennyūji 1992, p. 134.
- ⁵³ This is a seven-volume set of printed books with text and images produced by Kōriki Tanenobu (1756–1831), who used the literary pseudonym “Enkōan.” Nagoyashi Hakubutsukan 2006, vol. 13, pp. 18–19, 64. Part one of the fifth volume of the *Enkōan gashū* focuses on the art-viewing event held at Dairyūji in Nagoya in October of 1784; it includes eleven scenes, many stretching across two pages. Another item displayed at this event was a white garment identified as having belonged to retired Empress Meishō; Nagoyashi Hakubutsukan 2006, vol. 13, pp. 20, 64.
- ⁵⁴ *Kakumeiki*, vol. 2, pp. 553 and 556; vol. 3, pp. 165, 301, 360, and 382; vol. 4, pp. 232, 272, 483, and 632; vol. 5, pp. 19, 315, 374, and 636; vol. 6, pp. 53 and 62.
- ⁵⁵ Entry from the 21st day, 10th month, 1662, in the *Kakumeiki*, vol. 5, p. 315.
- ⁵⁶ Entries from the 9th day, 2nd month, 1661; 23rd day, 3rd month, 1663; and 11th day, 9th month, 1664, in the *Kakumeiki*, vol. 5, pp. 28, 374, and 636.
- ⁵⁷ Entries from the 5th day, 1st month; 21st day, 3rd month; and 1st day, 5th month of 1668, in the *Kakumeiki*, vol. 6, pp. 569, 626, and 637.
- ⁵⁸ Entry from the 26th day, 3rd month, 1688, in the *Mujōhōin-dono gonikki*; Seigle 2002.
- ⁵⁹ Entry from the 14th day, 10th month, 1688, in the *Mujōhōin-dono gonikki*.
- ⁶⁰ *Motohiroki*; see Tanaka Akira 2011, p. 74.
- ⁶¹ See Tamamushi Satoko 2009, p. 45.
- ⁶² Tanaka 2011, p. 8.
- ⁶³ Tamamushi 2009, p. 46.
- ⁶⁴ Seigle 2002, p. 21.
- ⁶⁵ Entry from the 29th day, 9th month, 1692, in the *Mujōhōin-dono gonikki*.
- ⁶⁶ *Tsukinami hana-zu byōbu*; see Tanomura Tadao 1961, pp. 133–41. For more on Soken see Kendall Brown 1989, p. 37.
- ⁶⁷ *Meishō'in tsukinami-zu byōbu*; see Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan 2002, p. 160.

- ⁶⁸ For example, records of tea gatherings hosted by retired Emperor Gosai in the 1660s and 1670s indicate that participants belonged exclusively to the nobility. Kumakura 1989, p. 159.

Glossary

- bikuni goshō* 比丘尼御所, imperial convent
chūgū 中宮, Empress
Daitokuji 大徳寺
Daitsū Bunchi 大通文智
Edo 江戸
Enman'in 円満院
Enshōji 円照寺
Go-Kōmyō 後光明
Go-Mizunoo 後水尾
Gosai 後西
Go-Yōzei 後陽成
Hayashi Razan 林羅山
Hōrin Jōshō 鳳林承章
Isshi Monju 一糸文守
jotei 女帝, Empress Regnant
Kaihō Yūshō 海北友松
Kano Sadanobu 狩野偵信
Kano Tan'yū 狩野探幽
Konoe Motohiro 近衛基熙
Kōshōji 興聖寺
koto 琴, stringed musical instrument
Kuchikiri 口切, opening of a fresh jar of tea leaves
Kyōto 京都
Meishō 明正
meisho-e 名所絵, illustration of famous sites
monzeki 門跡, temples and convents affiliated with the court
Mujōhōin-dono gonikki 無上法院殿御日記, *Diary of Mujōhōin*
Nijō Castle 二条城
Nyoin Goshō 女院御所
Ōbaku 黄檗
oshi-e 押し絵, “pressed pictures”
Otsubone お局
Reigen 靈元
Rinzai 臨濟
Sannomaru Shōzōkan 三之丸尚蔵館
Sennyūji 泉涌寺
Sentō Goshō 仙洞御所
Shōzan Gen'yō 照山元瑤
Shugakuin 修学院
sokui 即位, Accession Audience
tennō 天皇, Emperor

Tōfukumon'in 東福門院

Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康

Tokugawa jikki 徳川実記, *True Tokugawa Records*

Tokugawa Masako 徳川和子

Tosa Mitsuoki 土佐光起

Unryūin 雲龍院

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