Karamono as a Theoretical and Practical Concept

~Towards Local-global Approaches to the Silk Roads Material Culture in Museums in Japan~

By Kiyoka Koizumi

Cover; The *Daitō Saiiki* Murals on display. Courtesy of Asahi Shimbun.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

> "Even if we are deprived of Chinese goods, we should not miss them, except for medicines...It is the height of foolishness that Chinese ships should not make the dangerous journey over here, crammed with cargoes of useless things. I believe it is written in in the classics somewhere, "He did not prize things from afar", and again, "He did not value treasures that were hard to obtain"." –– Yoshida Kenkō "*Essays in idleness*" translated by Donald Keene (1998).

There are some commodities in this world valued simply because of their exotic origins. This was particularly true in pre-modern Japan, when contacts with the world outside the archipelago were historically and geographically limited. For the majority of the population, the foreign material culture was almost the only source through which they knew the outside world. In recent scholarship, the concept of *Karamono* (唐物) or "Chinese Goods" has been revisited by Japanese scholars for its potential as more than a designation of a specific genre of material culture (Murai 2013: Minagawa 2014: Kawazoe 2014: Seki 2015). Previously, the use of this term had been limited to the discussion of the elites' enthusiasm towards the Chinese goods, which consisted mostly of ceramic wares favored in the tea ceremony culture throughout the Kamakura to the Muromachi periods (Nakagawa and Tanaka 1967: Kawakita 1972: Zainie 1979: Sasaki 1992: Sasaki 1993: Inoue and Takeuchi 1999: Yabe and Imai 2000). The demand was so high that Yoshida Kenkō, an eminent Buddhist monk and essayist of the time, was astounded by the Chinese ships unloading massive amounts of goods at a port in Japan. Still, this tendency was not limited to that single period. A recent diachronic study suggested that *Karamono* functioned as a strategic tool in the socio-political context throughout the history of Japan before the modernization (Kawazoe and Minagawa 2011: Kawazoe 2014). This goes for not only Chinese goods, but also commodities from Europe –– such as guns –– which considered as *Karamono* in a wider sense of foreign material culture (Seki 2015). The inclusiveness comes from the fact that the term *Karamono* was originally for goods from the Tang dynasty but later also designated those from the successive dynasties as well as Europe, as the geographical recognition from Japanese perspective had expanded.

There are several different yet related meanings attached to *Karamono* in terms of provenance. It is roughly defined as; "The commodities imported from China and other countries. Imported goods. It can also be read as *tōbutsu*."[1] "*Tōbutsu* is another way of

[1] "から-もの【唐物】", デジタル大辞泉, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com.

reading from the Edo period."[2] According to the earliest usage of the term, it can be traced back to an entry in *Nihon Kōki* (日本後記) in 808, in which the sumptuous use of *Karamono* brought by the Tang Envoys (遣唐使) among the court musicians were banned by official order (Minagawa 2014, 26). The original pronunciation is unknown, since this record was written entirely in Chinese characters. The *Hiragana* examples in literary sources, such as *Tales of Genji*, suggest that the common way of reading in the Heian period was "karamono".[3] It should also be noted that foreign commodities had been indeed brought to Japan long before these textual records, as seen from the lists of the imported goods by the Tang envoys (Kawazoe 2014, 3). Still, it was from the records of the Kamakura to the Muromachi periods, in which the term appeared most frequently as the influx of the amount of Chinese goods increased.[4] Even though *Karamono* includes the products from "other countries", the Chinese connotation is inarguably strong. It seems plausible that China had long been admired as a primary source of progressive culture in Japan before the arrival of the West. This influence is evident even today. For example, the contemporary writing system is composed of Chinese characters as well as *Hiragana* and *Katakana*, the simplified Japanese forms of letters or syllables.

The foreign connotation of the *kara* (唐, also pronounced as tang)" is not limited to the case of *Karamono*. There are countless similar examples with the same prefix, such as 唐絵 (*kara-e*, Chinese style paintings), 唐織 (*kara-ori*, Chinese textiles), 唐衣 (*kara-koromo*, Chinese clothes), 唐船 (*kara-fune*, Chinese ships), 唐草 (*kara-kusa*, Chinese arabesque patterns) and many others. These vocabularies too, originated under the influence of the Tang dynasty and were later expanded, while maintaining their original Tang implication. However, in *Karamono*'s case, some might question why the term had been continually used even after the more suitable words to designate "imported goods" or "material culture from overseas" in general, such as 舶来品 (*hakuraihin*), became available. In this thesis too, *Karamono* will be intentionally employed to communicate the specific cultural-historical background in accordance with the previous studies.

The secret behind the *kara* ≒ foreign formula has already addressed in the field of Art History of the Heian period in Japan by Chino Kaori (1994). The double binary structure (fig. 1) was proposed as an underlying mechanism to incorporate foreign material culture throughout the history of Japan. She considers the Heian period as the starting point of this mechanism, when Japan and other neighboring countries in Asia struggled to

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2 "唐物", 世界大百科事典, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com.

3 "から-もの【唐物】", 日本国語大辞典, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com.

4 "唐物", 世界大百科事典, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com.

establish their own identity after the collapse of the Tang Empire in 907, which had been functioning as a formidable cultural role model in the entire region for a long time (Chino 2003, 22). In seeking for this individual “Non-Tang-identity", Japan chose to maintain and embrace the Tang-ness already deeply entrenched in Japanese culture instead of fully rejecting it (Chino 1993, 5). In doing so, the symbiotic structure was proposed to accommodate both foreign and domestic components to constitute Japanese culture as a whole (Chino 2003, 22-25). They were mutually reinforcing rather than exclusive to one another. For example, 唐絵 (*kara-e*, Chinese style paintings) and 大和絵 (*yamato-e*, Japanese style paintings) were often juxtaposed and appreciated in the same room (*Ibid*, 23). It can be also considered as a defense mechanism in dealing with continually existing external culture superior to its own (Chino 1996, 663). This choice also had numerous positive effects on Japan. While on the one hand they suffered by this inferiority complex towards the phantom of the invincible *Kara*, through their strategy of adaptation Japan could enjoy freedoms by taking initiative in selecting what to incorporate to its secluded cultural sphere on the other. Interestingly, this strategy remained more or less persistent in the history of Japan with the shifting actors in the role of *Kara* (“A” in fig. 1). In this process, the previous opponent was internalized in Japanese culture to make space for the new one;

> “This complex structure was like a safety valve that allowed for the acceptance of the Tang’s advanced art and literature into the Yamato context. With a prepared place for the acceptance of the Tang within-Yamato, there was no threat to the art from more ancient times, the Yamato-within-Yamato. Japan could take in and adopt only what it liked and wanted of the newly arrived art of foreign countries. No matter how enthusiastically new arts were taken in, the Japanese identity was never at stake, since the Yamato-within-Yamato and the Kara-within-Yamato were designed to coexist. Then, as the newly adopted arts were assimilated, they became gradually equated with the previous, existing arts, and they then shifted to the category of Yamato-within-Yamato, which allowed room for yet another absorption of newly arrived art in the space known as Kara-within-Yamato. Because this arrangement effectively renews itself as it absorbs arts and cultures from without, the category of Yamato-within-Yamato undergoes constant change and stubbornly survives.” (Chino 2003, 24-25)

In this way, the answer to the still observable *kara* essence in the terminology of the foreign material culture in Japan can be attributed to the experience of identity crisis as a marginal country that lost its first and the most important cultural anchorage. *Kara* was intentionally assigned a place within a sphere of *Yamato* (大和). [5] It is noteworthy that Chino's theory was not based on nationalism as a part of anti-west movements in the discipline of Japanese art. One of the major concern in dealing with this concept is that the cultural specificity of Japan might encourage us to reduce it to exceptionalism rather than bringing it into the trans-national discussion, especially in disciplines developed under the influence of the West (Chino 1995, 557-558: Mostow 2003, 8-9). It is indeed easy to regard *Karamono* as esoteric and praise its Japanese-ness. However, as Chino herself suggested, there should be possibilities to explore the middle ground, in which *Karamon*o can be placed within theoretical frameworks relevant but external to Japan, while being attentive to the locality.

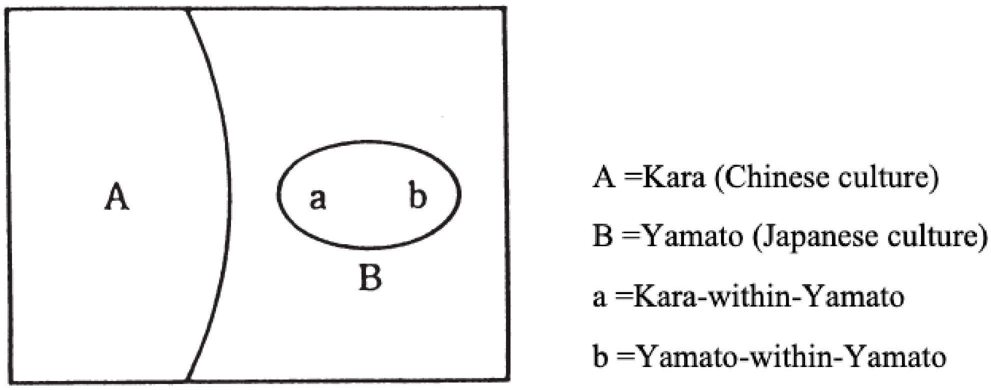

Fig. 1 Double Binary Structure after Chino (2003)

Research Aims and Questions

The main aim of the thesis to introduce and incorporate *Karamono* into the wider discussion in the study of material culture and museum representations. Although recent studies, such as that of Kawazoe (2014) and Seki (2015), emphasized the agencies of *Karamono* in the history of Japan, there is a tendency to focus on textual records rather than the objects *per se*. In understanding the role of material culture within history, it is important to look at them empirically as well as through contextualization. The data derived from the multidirectional approach in this research can contribute further to understand objects in more public settings, such as in museums. It is in fact in this context that the primary narrative of the object is consistently constructed and perceived by the wider audience. This interactive communication entails revisions every time more suitable ways

[5] Yamato is known as "the clan from which all the emperors of Japan are descended" while in this context, it is rather understood as a metaphor of the traditional Japanese culture in contrast to that of China. ("Yamato." In Kerr *et al.* (eds.) 2015, https://www-oxfordreference-com.)

of presenting objects is proposed. Therefore, two main questions can be asked; (1) what have *Karamono* done so far?, and (2) what can they do in present and future? The former can be approached by looking at the actual objects, whereas the latter can pave the way for the various potentials of their individual object biographies.

Methodology and Data

Karamono is a technical term which encompasses a wide variety of material. In dealing with it within a single dissertation with several limitations, it is necessary to narrow down the scope. Based on the aforementioned definitions, it can be further classified into three categories; 1) Tang Goods, the literal translation of *Karamono* or the objects from the Tang dynasty period, 2) non-Tang but foreign commodities such as from the Song dynasty China, Portugal and the Netherlands and 3) Japanese replications of the two mentioned above. The third category will be discussed in case studies as the primary focus of this thesis, although objects from the other two will be referenced as needed. This is to rectify the imbalance in the study of *Karamono*, in which first two categories are often favored as 'genuine' examples. The general preference is at odds with the above-mentioned incorporative mechanism, in which both foreign and indigenous culture are appreciated equally within the single cultural sphere. This is particularly the case for the material culture from the Silk Roads. This cross-continental network has significant contributions in the formation of Japanese culture in relation to its perception of the outside world. However, critical reviews of thematic exhibitions in the major national museums in Japan suggest that there is an inclination to present the objects that are distant from Japan chronologically and geographically. As a theoretical background, the overview of the scholarship on the Silk Roads in Japan will be provided to delineate the development of this particular gaze towards exotic goods or so-called Japanese Orientalism.

Chapter Summaries

The next chapter will be dedicated to the empirical analysis of material cultural examples to provide a concrete idea of what *Karamono* can look like. Three objects have been selected to investigate their active roles played in the specific historical contexts. They are different from each other in terms of time period and genre but all of them are Japanese replicas of foreign objects (the third category of *Karamono*). *Karakusa* (唐草) decorations on the surface of each object are suggested as notable actants as well. In Chapter 3, the study of the Silk Roads in Japan will be critically investigated in relation to its own localized Orientalism. It sets off by questioning the paradoxical standpoint of Japan in the discourse. How did the country geographically and often conceptually recognized as the East gain an orientalists' gaze? One of the keys to answer this question can be found in the discipline dealing with the history of interaction between the East and the West developed in the modern period. The final chapter proposes the practical applications of the material and theoretical analysis of the preceding discussions in the museum context. Three different exhibitions themed the Silk Road from the early twenty-first centuries will be critically reviewed in light of the concept of *Karamono* and Japanese Orientalism. The approach reliant neither on nationalism nor a Western perspective is necessary in exhibiting the objects from the Silk Road in Japan. The aforementioned double binary structure will be occasionally touched upon throughout the thesis when applicable.

Chapter 2: Case Studies

In this chapter, three case studies from different periods in pre-modern Japan will be presented; *Maki-e* Box from the Heian period, *Koseto* Ware from the Kamakura period and *Kinkarakawa* from the Edo period, respectively. This will serve to show the concept of *Karamono* in material form, rather than only text. Even though the case studies are quite different from one another in terms of time period and material, they are good examples of Japanese material culture which internalized and developed foreign aspects on its own (the third category of *Karamono*). All of them are the result of attempts to emulate progressive foreign technologies, which eventually ended up creating highly equivocal yet "Japanese" objects. After introducing the historical backgrounds, each object will be analyzed empirically to delineate its unique incorporative processes.

One of the determining factors in the selection of the case studies was a shared ornamentation present on all objects. *Karakusa* (唐草), otherwise known as Chinese arabesque, was chosen as one of the prototypes of Japanese decoration that also shares the Tang (唐) ideograph with *Karamono*. It served not only to decorate the surface of the objects but also as a determining factor in structuring the shape (*Maki-e* Box), combination with color (*Koseto* Ware) and distribution (*Kinkarakawa*) of the objects. In the field of material culture, the significance of the agency of objects as well as empirical analysis of the objects are yet to be explored in Japan. Below the brief background of the study of ornamentation both in the West and Japan will be introduced to provide a theoretical background before working with the case studies.

2.1. Study of the Ornament

2.1.1. Previous Studies

Interestingly, we can trace the history of the study of the ornament by employing the terminology used in the development of archaeological theory. In fact, even though most of the earliest systematic studies on ornaments were done by Art Historians in Europe, such as that of Owen Jones (1809-1874) and Alois Riegl (1858-1905), their career backgrounds in museums indicate a connection between the ornament and archaeology as well as museum studies. Jones, the renowned British theorist and an architect, was in charge of an interior design of the Crystal Palace built for the Great Exhibition in 1851 (Jones

2016, 14).

“The Grammar of Ornament” (Jones 1856) took the shape of an encyclopedic visual catalogue of ornaments in full color. The characteristics of ornaments were classified and juxtaposed by region and time period. In the preface, the general principles of patterns were articulated, which was used as a reference by younger contemporary Victorian designers, such as William Morris (1834-1896). His approach had similarities to Processualism in Archaeology, in which “universal laws” of the ornament appear as the main focus; “True beauty results from that repose which the mind feels when the eye, the intellect, and the affections, are satisfied from the absence of any want.” (*Ibid*, 24). Study of “psychology of perception” (Gombrich 1979, 51) was already at the dawn. As later mentioned by Gombrich, Japanese ornaments were "conspicuously absent" from his book, even though the high demand of Japanese crafts would soon be evident at the London International Exhibition in 1862 (*Ibid*, 56). Nevertheless, the particular view towards “Orient” is observed in this writing (Jones 2016, 25).

Alois Riegl went further into analytical approach in *Stilfragen* (“Problems of Style”) in 1893, as a reaction to the followers of Gottfried Semper (1803-1879), who emphasized material and technique as underlying factors in the consistent development of ornament (Riegl 1993, 4). Instead, Riegl argued it was *kustwollen* (creative artistic impulse) independent from other factors which contributed to and created “the endless, tireless, compulsive reiteration of a very few fundamental motifs” (Riegl 1993, xxii). Riegl’s analysis brought a more humanist aspect. In Riegl’s approach, some general trends can be observed, such as the worldwide tendency of the stylistic depictions of natural plants as a starting point of the ornament originated in Greece (*Ibid*, 8-9: Gombrich 1979, 180-190). The dualistic concept of the Orient and the Occident is also clearly mentioned (Riegl 1993, 10-11). This can be attributed to Riegl’s background as a curator of textiles at the *Kunsthistorisches* Museum in Vienna and his first book dedicated to oriental carpets. However, neither Japanese nor Chinese ornaments were touched upon in his work. The term “orient” was used to refer to Byzantine and Islamic art, the culture developed arabesque pattern that was “the grand finale of an autonomous progression of vegetal forms” (Riegl 1993, 229-226: Necipoğlu 2016, 133). This is contrary to the fact that it has a variation in Japan that is called *karakusa,* which was brought and developed in the later time period.

The discussion on ornaments continued even after the infamous anti-ornament movement advocated by Adolf Loos (1870-1933). As a Modernist architect, he went so far as to regard it as immoral, let alone unnecessary, inappropriate and irrational (Palma 2016, 22). Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001), in his historic work, “Sense of Order” (1979), debates the development to the consistent attractiveness of the decorative designs, based on human's perceptual and cognitive process. The key is the identification of contrasting concepts; "(t)here must be a link, between ease of construction and ease of perception, a link that accounts both for the tedium of monotonous patterns and for the pleasure we can obtain from more intricate constructions...." (9). Order and disorder in the patterns were considered to be two sides of the same coin, which continually attracted humanity throughout the history. Here again, exploring the factors behind the trans-cultural ubiquity of ornament became the main interest. It is noteworthy that Gombrich acknowledged the multilinear influence of the ornament by providing the example of Chinese cloud band assimilated into oriental rugs (*Ibid*, 190).

The diachronic overview of the history of the study of the ornament in the past two centuries enables us to recognize some problematic aspects; anthropocentrism and Orientalism. Aside from Riegl's humanist concept, even the scientific approaches by Jones and Gombrich could not fully escape the limitation of ontology limited by human aspects. It was only recently that the ornament has started to be liberated from the anthropocentric mindset after the theory of agency by Alfred Gell (1998) rose to prominence. Objects, as well as ornaments attached to objects, are no longer considered to be only passive human-made things, but rather agents that activate the interaction between human, object and ornament itself (Necipoğlu 2016, 132).

2.1.2. Study of Kazari

Similarly to this discussion in Europe, ornaments have been also disregarded, or even under threat, in Japan. Not only the several restrictions of decorations under the sumptuary laws throughout the history, but also the general portrayal of Japanese art as primarily minimalistic, as seen in *zen* and *wabi sabi*, underplayed the importance of ornamental artworks (Santorī bijutsukan *et al.* 2008, 16-17). This segregation of decorative and non-decorative art in Japan has been prevalent until Tsuji Nobuo (1932-), a prominent Japanese art historian, had a huge success in a small exhibition in a shopping mall in Ginza (an upper-class district in Tokyo) in 1988. This, as well as successive exhibitions in New York (Japan Society) and the United Kingdom (British Museum) raised awareness for the importance of *Kazari* (飾り, decoration in Japanese), as an essential part of the history of Japanese art (*Ibid*, 14). The etymology reveals both the innate positive and negative connotation of *Kazari* in Japan. *Kazashi*, a hair accessory enjoyed in mundane contexts, developed as a noun, *Kazaru*, and later *Kazari* as a verb, whereas a contemporary related vocabulary *Kasa* (過差) in Heian period was the word for extravagance of elites to be criticized (*Ibid*, 18-19: Tsuji 1998, 10). In addition, the modern connotation of *Kazari* is 'superficial' or 'counterfeit', in addition to its definition of meaning simply 'decoration' (Tsuji 1998, 7).

Given the worldwide tendency of the recognition and interdisciplinary approaches to ornaments and emerging interests in Japan, one of the best ways to study Japanese decorative patterns would be the incorporation of the western academics, while taking the local and unique aspects into consideration. In fact, as seen below, there have been several discussions regarding the origin of ornaments or act of decoration itself in Japan. On the one hand, the foreign influence (such as the Silk Road) is emphasized, while on the other ornamentation had been practiced far before the influx of external material culture.

2.1.3. *Karakusa* as Archetype

What is *karakusa* (唐草)? Not only its origin but also its exact definition are extremely difficult to discern, partially due to its numerous subcategories and different meanings. It is often the case that the usage of *karakusa* in the study of material culture, for example from the Silk Roads, does not provide sufficient contextualization (Hayashi 1966 : Kurita 2004). Still, the hypotheses indicating its foreign origin is widely accepted even after the assimilation to the vocabulary of Japanese ornament.

Here again, the significance of the Tang (唐) ideograph should not be overlooked. Similarly to *Karamono*, *Karakusa* entails the strong foreign connotation inherent to its name. The term is composed of two ideographs, *kara* (唐) and *kusa* (草), with "Tang plant" as a direct translation. However, the Tang implication has faded away after the decades of the internalization process into the dictionary of the Japanese patterns. Still, it appeared as decoration on the surface of Japanese as well as foreign material culture which has been continually considered as exotic. In other words, it is possible to communicate the highly evaluated foreignness simply by the presence of this symbol in decoration. This fantasized view correlates with the nature of the pattern itself and the related ones in the Orient, which often "bear(s) no resemblance to the actual plants" (Riegl 1993, 9).

Patterns similar to *karakusa* can already be recognized in the Jōmon period, far predating the Chinese influence through the Silk Road (Ito 2005, 106). According to the typological study of Jōmon pottery by Imafuku (2001), the pattern started to develop around 4,800 BC together with various other decorative patterns. The pottery from the Iwate prefecture can be described as both "geometric" or "karakusa" (fig. 2.1). From the

Yayoi period on, however, bronze mirrors with *karakusa*-like patterns started to be imported from China and this practise continued until around the Kofun period (fig. 2.2). However, a style of roof tile decoration that became widely used in the Buddhist architecture in the capitals of the Heian period (fig. 2.3 and fig. 2.4) suggests a Chinese origin of this type of ornament. The installment of the band decorated with vegetal patterns as fillings of the supportive component is similar to that found in the Yungyang cave (fig. 2.5) (Rawson 1984, 37). In any case, there is a risk in using the same terminology for objects from different time period with different origins. Given the fact that it was only from around the Heian period that the term *Karakusa* came into use, applying it to the material culture from the preceding time period might not reflect the contemporary perception towards the pattern.

2.1.4. Note on Rawson (1984)

Aside from the aforementioned anthropocentrism and Orientalism, there are additional perspectives to overcome: philhellenism and architecture-centrism. Although this tendency has been largely revised in the studies of ornaments in India and Persia, this is not yet the case in current discourse in Japan and China. For example, "Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon" by Rawson (1984) can be referenced in the study of ornamental pattern in Asia until today, especially when looking as *karakusa* patterns but only with the full awareness of her specific perspective towards the objects. Her extensive research on the cross-cultural analysis of vegetal and floral ornament of Greek, Chinese and Islamic countries developed in the book deserve due respect. The connection between Chinese ornamental motifs with those of Japan, such as the Shōsōin artefacts, are also noteworthy as one of the earliest English works on the topic. However, it should also be noted that her research was conducted under the influence of obsolete perspectives. One of them is the overstress on the Greek influence on the material culture in the other regions. Not only did she dedicate a whole chapter to attribute almost all of the characteristics of the patterns used in China to Hellenistic culture, anything outside of the Greek cultural sphere is regarded as "debased" (Rawson 1984, 54-55). It disregards local variabilities and multidirectional cultural interactions among the regions. This view might be derived from the deviation in the research material, in which architecture is considered as the main source. This is not only because of the emphasis on Greek architectures but also its static nature in terms of materiality. This perspective becomes particularly visible when she denotes silverware as a 'legitimate heir' of the architectural patterns, as opposed to textiles, without almost any convincing reasons (*Ibid*, 76-77). Her research is preoccupied with an idea of the genealogy, in which patterns can be transmitted only through single origin to the other. As a counterpoint to this, the following case studies will emphasize the more flexible nature of ornaments, which transcend all of these restrictions and binary interpretations.

Fig. 2.1 Deep-pot Type Pottery. Tsunagi, Iwate Prefecture. Mid-Kofun period. (morioka.iwate.jp)

Fig. 2.2 Bronze Mirror with Arabesque-Patterned Band. 23.0 cm (D).
The Akatsuka Tumulus, Ōita Prefecture. Kofun period. (http://www.emuseum.jp/)

Fig. 2.3 Roof Tiles Fragment. Heiankyō palace. Heian period. (http://www.emuseum.jp/)

Fig. 2.4 Eaves Tile with Arabesques in Green Glaze. 34.2 cm (W). Heiankyō palace. Heian period. (https://colbase.nich.go.jp/)

Fig. 2.5 Ornaments in Yungyang Grottoes. East wall in Cave 7. Shanxi province. After Rawson (1984).

2.2. Case Study 1: Maki-e Box

2.2.1. Kentōshi and Kokufū Bunka

The Japanese missions to Imperial China during the Asuka and Nara periods, also known as *Kentōshi* (遣唐使), were a defining factor of relationship between China and Japan throughout history. Together with those which were sent to the Sui dynasty (581-618 AD), the history of the envoys lasted approximately three hundred years, during which sixteen missions were undertaken (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2010, 6). During the Asuka period, Prince Shōtoku (574-622 AD), the advocator of the national diplomatic missions, strived to establish the imperial family political system with the Buddhist mentality in Japan in order to settle down the inner disputes (Mori 1986, 53). For this purpose, he thought it necessary to emulate the Chinese political system, and sent the first official envoy to Sui dynasty in 607 AD after a hundred years of diplomatic disputes (Matsuda 1966, 6: Sakayori 1993, 44). From this period on, China and Japan treated one another as equals, whereas other countries conformed to the tribute system centralizing China (Mori 1986, 54-55). Furthermore, Japan located itself above the neighboring countries such as Shilla and Baekje. This meant that it recognized itself as *Hua*, the center of the world, in its own version of *Hua-yi* (華夷) order (Sakayori 1993, 45).

It was also in this era that self-acclaimed *Nihon* (日本) was proposed as the official name for what we now call Japan towards the foreign countries, as a part of *Taika Reforms* (645-650 AD), instead of *Wanokuni* (倭の国) (Matsuda 1966, 13-14). It was named after the diplomatic text sent to the Chinese Sui dynasty through envoys, in which the prince described himself as “The Son of Heaven where the sun rises”, in contrast to the emperor Yang as “the Son of Heaven where the sun sets”, which of course was met with an extreme resentment of the Chinese court (Mori 1986, 54). Despite this audacious attitude, the envoys were allowed to execute their purpose to study the Chinese culture through the Sui to Tang dynasties (Matsuda 1966, 74-75). Japan was now represented as *Nihon* (日本) and somewhat forcibly made Tang emperors acknowledge it as an independent country with its own name and emperor (Nagahara 1993, 9). Japan was not a part of the Chinese tributary system, but Japanese products were offered to the Chinese emperors as a representation of the official diplomatic relationship (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2010, 55). In this way, authentic products were exchanged, varying from literature to luxurious or exotic items, which were kept in the inventories of Tōdaiji and Hōryūji (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2005, 28). Sakayori (1993, 48) argues that this unique Japanese foreign policy until around the middle of the seventh century functioned as a response to an urgent demand to present itself with a superiority over the neighboring states, when there were vast influxes of foreign culture as well as constant inner and outer disputes.

Under the Emperor Xuanzong (685-762 AD), Changan — the capital of Tang dynasty — reached its pinnacle as one of the cosmopolises on the Silk Roads (Mori 1986, 68). The eighth century was also the golden age for the Tang envoys in its middle phase (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2010, 56). The international culture brought to Japan through envoys in this period is known as *Tenpyō* culture, and flourished during the reign of Emperor Shōmu, who was based in Heijō-kyō during the Nara period (701-756 AD). Shōsōin treasures in the Nara prefecture are the best example of this exotic material culture, some of which are now available only in Japan (Mori 1986, 69: Kawazoe 2014, 11-12). They have been kept remarkably in a good condition because they were treated as heirloom or *denseihin* (伝世品) of the royal family (Nishikawa 2014, 1). These are remarkable not only as treasures but also as examples of early decorative designs and technologies from the golden age of the Tang dynasty (Tsuji 1998, 7). So far over nine thousand objects have been classified as Shōsōin treasures, but the total number is still being added to.[6] The artefacts can be divided in terms of material, provenance and category (Hayashi 1964). However, even though Shōsōin goods were often viewed as "exotic" objects, not all of them were of foreign origin but rather artefacts imitated by Japanese craftsmen, some of which were so similar it was in fact difficult to determine whether they were made inside or outside of Japan (*Ibid*, 143). They were equally treated as *Karamono* throughout ages (Kawazoe 2014, 7-8).

While it was very beneficial for Japan to dispatch envoys regularly, there were also significant drawbacks. The main concerns was the higher risk and the cost of the traveling all the way across the sea (Mori 1986, 197). It has been the common understanding that together with these constraints, the unsettling political situation in China, which eventually led to the downfall of the Tang dynasty in 907 AD, were the main reason for the official abolishment of the envoys in 894 (Suzuki 2010, 58). It is also often assumed by modern researchers that there was no further need to study Tang culture, as Japan itself had reached the higher level of culture it had aspired to with the vast amount Chinese knowledge acquired through hundreds of years (Mori 1986, 197). Japan became 'mature' enough to establish its own material culture, known as *Kokufū* culture (国風文化), which flourished in the Heian period and no longer had to imitate Chinese culture

[6] https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp.

(Tsuji 1988, 7: Kawazoe 2014, 48). For example, in terms of writing system, *Hiragana* were preferred to be used in mundane contexts such as literature, while Chinese characters were still in use for official documents (Kawazoe 2014, 87). Nevertheless, the recent research shows that this cultural transition was not as clear-cut as it may seem.

The characteristics of the cultural exchange between China and Japan changed significantly in the Heian period. As seen above, the Tang envoys were the national project under the control of kingship with diplomatic connotations, the main purpose of which was to emulate cultural and political aspects of Tang. Majority of the imported goods were priceless and treated as treasure, as seen in Shōsōin material culture (Kawazoe 2014, 28). However, from the end of the eighth century on, this top-down system gradually became unstable due to the political disputes and was replaced by the pursuit of commercial profit (Suzuki 2010, 57). In 863, *Karamonotsukai* (唐物使い) were sent to the ports in Hakata by the imperial court to reserve the unshipped commodities in advance (Kawazoe 2014, 45-46). Furthermore, in the early ninth century, the private traders from Tang and Silla started to appear in the south sea (Mori 1986, 211-218). The Japanese elites took advantage of this situation by sending emissaries on the returning foreign ship to purchase personal commodities (Kawazoe 2014, 45-46). The fact that in 911 the number of Tang merchant ship was regulated to once in two years suggests the popularity of the *karamono* among the elites (Mori 1986, 3). This is how the key player of *karamono* was shifted from the court to the elites.

There is also assumption that the concept of Tang envoys gradually faded away after the last project was cancelled rather than having a definite endpoint (Mori 2008, 159). It could be naturally abolished because it was possible to secure the far greater amount foreign material culture than the envoys could, through unofficial yet less costly routes controlled by merchants and elites (Mori 1986, 209: Kawazoe 2014, 49). In this way, even though the official connection between Japan and the Tang dynasty seemed to have been disrupted, the interaction was continued by different players. Even in the period of *Kokufū* culture, the admiration for foreign commodities never ceased and kept having a huge impact on Japanese society (Nagahara 1993, 11: Kawazoe 2014, 49). Emperor Uda from the Heian period (897-931) did not give up collecting them despite the situation, as seen from the treasures in Ninnaji Temple.

2.2.2. Kūkai and Ninnaji Temple

Kūkai (空海) (774-845 AD) was a high priest known to be highly admired by his followers throughout the ages in Japanese history (Yamamoto 1999, 10). At the age of 34, in 804, he was sent to Tang dynasty as one of the Japanese envoys, which was the last and the third period of the history of the Tang envoys which had been sent over the course of two hundred years, and is known for the diligent figures devoted themselves to study Tang culture (Kawasaki 2016, 10). After spending one year in Changan to study Esoteric Buddhism, he went back to Japan and propagated the *Shingon* sect (真言宗) throughout Japan, basing Mount Kōya (Yamamoto 1999, 11). He brought back a large variety of Tang material culture to Japan, such as statue of Buddha, sutra, ritual implements, and scrolls (*Ibid*, 12). Enthusiastic follower of the *Singon* sect included emperors in the Heian period, such as Uda (897-931 AD) and his son Daigo (885-930 AD). The former established the Ninnaji Temple in Kyoto (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan and Yomiuri Shimbunsha 2018, 19) and the latter gave Kūkai a posthumous name in 912, Kōbōdaishi (弘法大師) (Kawasaki 2016, 37). The sutra box beautifully decorated with lacquer technique (fig. 3.1-a~c) is one of the treasures from the Ninnaji temple. It was originally used to keep Kūkai's study note of sutras used in his time in Changnan called Sanjūjō Sasshi (三十帖冊子) (fig. 3.2). This precious manuscript was once lost, but Emperor Daigo relocated it and ordered a new box to be made to keep the manuscript safe (Asanuma *et al* 2017, 375). This box is quite important for its historical background but also for the clear chronology it provides researchers today. According to the text on the lid, it was donated in 919 AD, the period in which the above-mentioned cultural transition started, after the abolishment of the Tang envoys.

2.2.3. Historiography of Maki-e Technique

Maki-e (蒔絵), is Japanese decorative techniques involving lacquer (*urushi*) and gold. It is "the drawing of patterns in *urushi* on an *urushi* ground with gold and silver powder sprinkled on those patterns to create decorative design" (Matsuda 2019, 58). The technology was developed in order to serve mainly for decorative purpose. Even it is now widely recognized as a Japanese traditional craft technique, its actual origins can be traced back to the Warring States period in China (475-221 BC), though the technology during that time and those which were brought to and developed in Japan became quite different (*Ibid*, 237-238). However, a Japanese origin is also known. The usage of *urushi* has a long history on its own starting in the Stone Age in Japan (*Ibid*, 52). It can therefore be said that ancient Japan had its own sufficient background to develop the imported technology further. Still, what we understand as *maki-e* today was not fully developed until the Asuka and Nara periods. They are also present in the Shōsōin *t*reasures. Over 800 objects decorated with techniques employing *urushi* are kept in the repository, constituting the majority of the artefacts in this collection (Murose 2011, 1). Among various techniques, the earlier form of *maki-e* is called *makkinru* (末金縷), a technique in which gold powders are spread on a wet *urushi* surface (Matsuda 2019, 57). *Kara-tachi* (唐太刀), a sword with gilded silver fittings and inlay is known as one of the earliest examples of *makkinru* technique (fig. 3.3-a). The *makkinru* are applied on the sections of the scabbard (fig. 3.3-b). The recent experimental material analysis by Murose (2011) indicated the possibility that the *maki-e* technique was named after the introduction of cylindrical tool to spread (蒔く, ma-ku, the infinitive verb) gold (Murose 2011, 15). In this way, Japan did not simply emulate the technique from China but improvised and established its own.

2.2.4. Sutra Box from Ninnaji Temple

From the Heian period on, the *Maki-e* technology became virtually a synonym with the Japanese *urushi* art as a whole, for its popularity and intensive technological development (Matsuda 2019, 59). While *Karatachi* and other Shōsōin *urushi* objects were subject to limited accessibility, *maki-e* started to be more widely available and popularised through the small boxes for personal usage. The beautifully decorated boxes were favored by monks and elites to accommodate religious goods or personal belongings. While the Nara period boxes are decorated with symmetrical or centripetal pattern within each side of the box with distinct outlines (fig. 3.4a-b), Heian craftsmen favored the pattern applied across the boundaries with reduced edges (fig. 3.1-a). The sutra box shown in figure (Fig. 3.1-a) is a good example of material culture of the "transitional period", in which Chinese influence can be observed in terms of the selection of the motifs and their symmetrical composition, while the shape of box is smoothened as per the Heian style (Hidaka 1998, 131). The production technique is called the *kanshitsu* (乾漆) method or dry lacquer, in which "the substrate is modeled with hemp cloth and *urushi*" (Matsuda 2019, 57), which was one of the popular techniques in the Nara period under the Tang influence and made possible the remarkably light weight of the box (Asanuma *et al* 2017, 375). This production technique is applied on the majority of the lacquerware in the Shōsōin treasure (Matsuda 2019, 57). The value of the contained objects can be estimated from the degree of the decoration of the surface. In the Heian period, the boxes to accommodate sutras called *kyōbako* are developed (Ikuma 2018, 260). The technology to create them is called *togidashi maki-e*, (研ぎ出し蒔絵) on a coarse gold infilling (*Ibid*, 31). This polished-put technique was developed during the Heian period, in which "the surface of the object was covered with many layers of *urushi* and then polished smooth and flat to reveal the underlying pattern of gold or silver" (*Ibid*, 58). *Urushi* is used in <u>both</u> the substrate and the decoration.

As Hidaka (1998) indicated, *maki-e* decoration in the early tenth century went through some interesting modifications. As angular shapes became popular and edges were clearly bordered, the artisans preferred to decorate each section distinctively, rather than covering the entire box with the same continuous pattern, such as *hōsōge* (宝相華), one of the variants of *karakusa* pattern. This phenomenon is often considered as a part of the transition from *Tenpyō* to *Kokufū* culture (Hayashi 1964, 140-141). However, the *maki-e* example shows that the transition in ornamental motifs was not entirely due to the *Kokufū* movement but rather for practical reasons, such as change in the structure of the box itself (Hidaka 1998, 125).

It would be helpful to have a look at the history of *hōsōge* pattern itself as well. Translated as "flower of precious appearance" (Baird 2001, 87), *hōsōge* is an imaginary motif that resembles various flowers such as peony vines, pomegranates, and lotus flowers (Hayashi 1964, 123). As with the sutra box's case, it has a Buddhist or ritual connotations and the earliest examples are mostly available from the collection of Shōsōin treasures. Together with *karakusa, hōsōge* became a fundamental motif in the lexicon of Japanese ornament (Baird 2001, 86). They were first introduced to increase the limited vocabularies of decoration in Japan but what contributed to the long-standing popularity was its versatility (*Ibid*, 87). Since it can be composed continuously almost infinitely, it can be used for decorating irregular surfaces, such as octagon (fig. 3.5) and music instruments (fig. 3.6-a~b) (Hidaka 1998, 132: Rawson 1984, 125-126: Kawazoe 2014, 11-12). It is also possible to combine with other motifs, such as phoenix, butterflies and birds and in sutra box's case, *Kalavinka* (**迦陵頻伽**), the fantastical half-human and half-bird creature that attracts humans with its beautiful voice and dance (fig. 3.1-c) (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan and Yomiuri Shimbunsha 2018, 260). There are in total 28 of them with distinctive features from each other (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2017, 375).

The cultural transition from foreign to Japanese style can be observed even on the patterns itself. For example, *Dankamon* (団花文), the aggregation of the small motifs resembling the shape of flower, and *Marumon* (丸文), the circular outlined pattern composed of various motifs inside (Seyama 2002, 70). Even though they seems similar at first glance, the main structural difference is that while the former often develops centripetally, while the latter is composed from the outline and sometimes the central part can be left unfilled (*Ibid*, 72). More generally, *Dankamon* is characteristic of Tang or foreign influence in a way it fills in the surface almost completely, while *Marumon* is unique to Japanese patterns developed in the period of *Kokufū* culture, in which decoration are combined with intentional blank spaces. *Hōsōge* can be applied as both the former and the latter. For example, in the octagonal mirrors case, the inner part is *Dankamon* and the space in-between the petal is filled with *Marumon* (fig. 3.5). In the case of the sutra box, though elliptical rather than circular, *Marumon* is applied on the center of the lid with the clear borders with the surroundings with the same motifs.

2.2.5. Blurring Boundaries

Chronologically speaking, the sutra box from the early tenth century is situated in the transitional period between *Tenpyō* and *Kokufū* culture (Hidaka 1998). However, it should be noted that the term "transition" presupposes the two distinctive periodical categories, in which the one developed earlier than the other. This separation is possible only in retrospect, long after the difference between the two became clear. The impression of "the abolishment of Tang envoys" is so strong both historical and diplomatic sense that cultural aspects have been exposed under this influence. However, the political incident, no matter how significant it may look, often does not represent the contemporary socio-cultural aspects quite well. As seen above, the abolishment of the diplomatic missions had almost had no impact on the material cultural exchange between the Tang dynasty and Japan.

The strong point of *Karamono* concept is its ambiguous affiliation regardless of actual origin. In fact, the discussion of "nationality" or "provenance" of objects is the product of modern science, which, most of the time, was not important to the people in the past. As seen from the Shōsōin treasures, not only did the objects in different modern categories show almost no difference from technological perspective, but were also treated in the same way regardless of origins. If one attempts to attribute several aspects of the Sutra box to either country, its 'Chineseness' appears in the motifs, composition and technology, while the actual provenance of the box was the tenth century Japan. This shows the limits of dividing objects by provenance alone. Nevertheless, most of the scholars attempted to locate this box in "transitional period" for its convenience.

What matters here is that objects from the period in-between are often regarded as inauthentic or equivocal, and therefore non-representative and insignificant of the time period, though this is not the case for the sutra box. Even in this object's case, it is highly possible to be trapped in this stereotype, if there were not for the historical eminence of

Kūkai or the supporting evidence for the absolute dating of the object. In this sense, *Karamono* as a trans-national term still available today could be a great help in comprehending the treatment of the exotic objects in during this time period, in which they were appreciated equally as long as certain Tang influence or exorcism is observed.

Fig. 3.1-a Maki-e Lacquered Sutra Box with *Hōsōge* Flowers and *Kalavinka* Designs (c.919 AD). 37.0×24.4×8.3 cm. Ninnaji Temple, Kyoto. Courtesy of Kyoto National Museum.

Fig. 3.1-b Lid with Inscription. Courtesy of Kyoto National Museum.

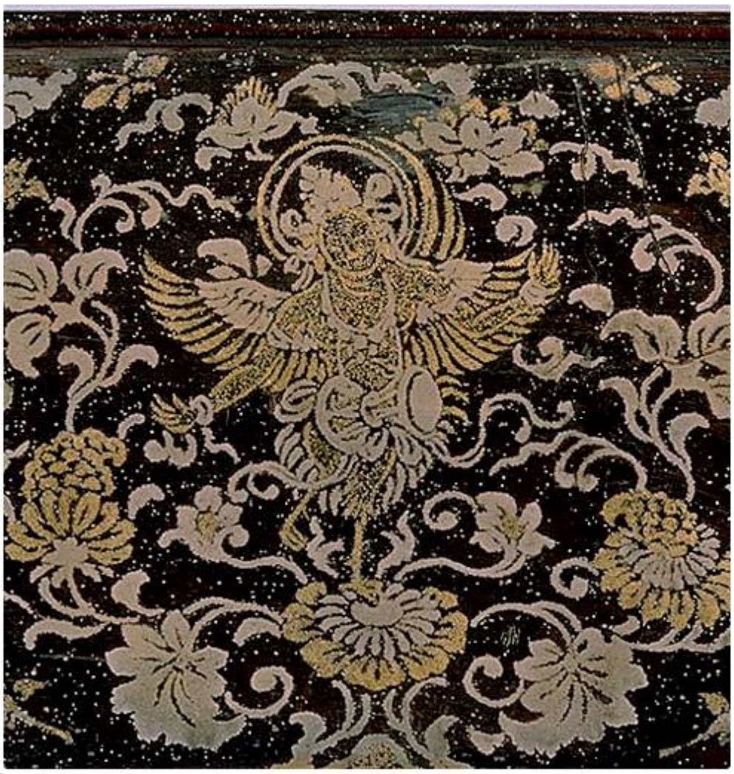

Fig. 3.1-c Close-up of *Kalavinka* Design. Courtesy of Kyoto National Museum.

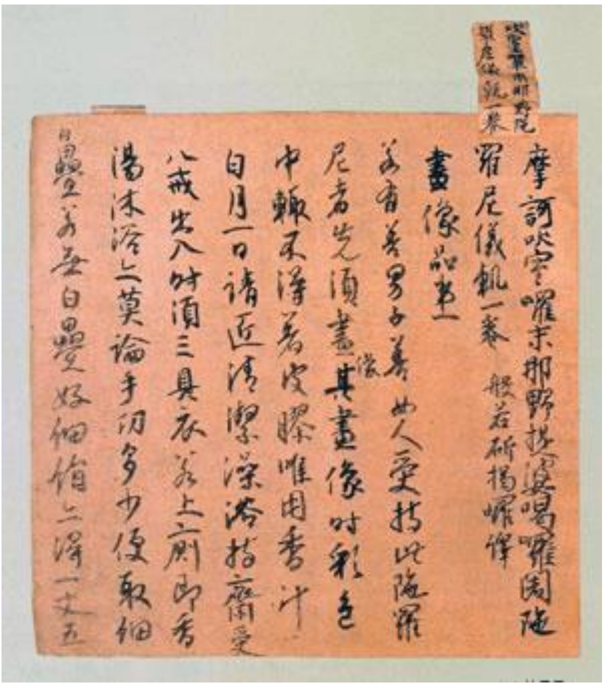

Fig. 3.2 Sanjūjō Sasshi. 9th century AD. Courtesy of Ninnaji Temple.

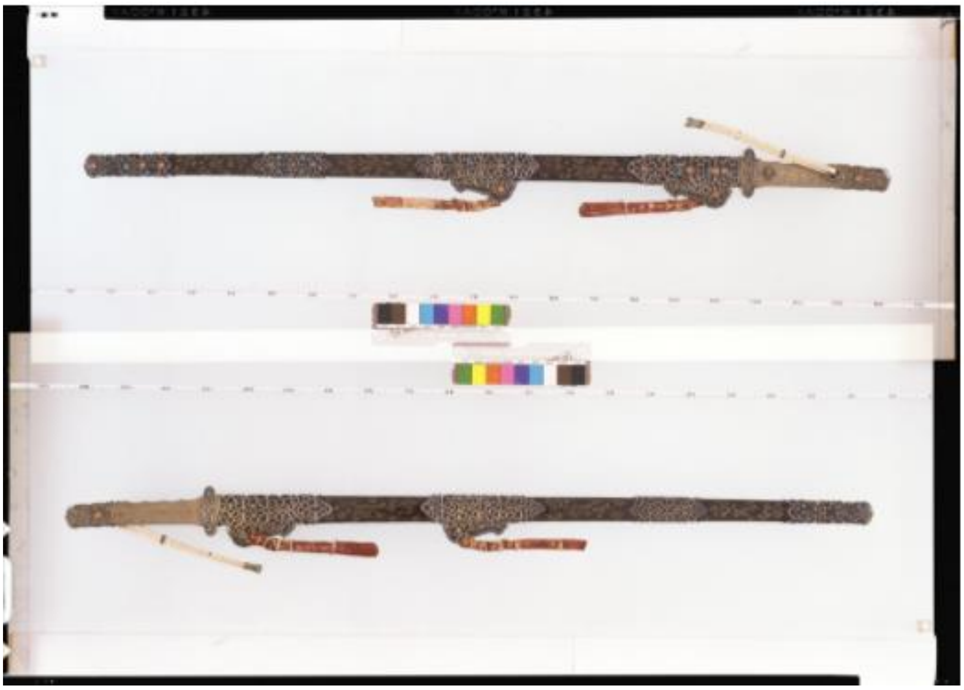

Fig. 3.3-a *Kara-tachi* Sword with Gilded Silver Fittings and Inlay. 99.9 cm (L). Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 3.3-b Scabbard. 81.5 cm (L). Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 3.4-a Lacquered Hide Box Decorated with Gold and Silver *Heidatsu*. 33×27×8.6 cm. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 3.4-b Lid Design. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

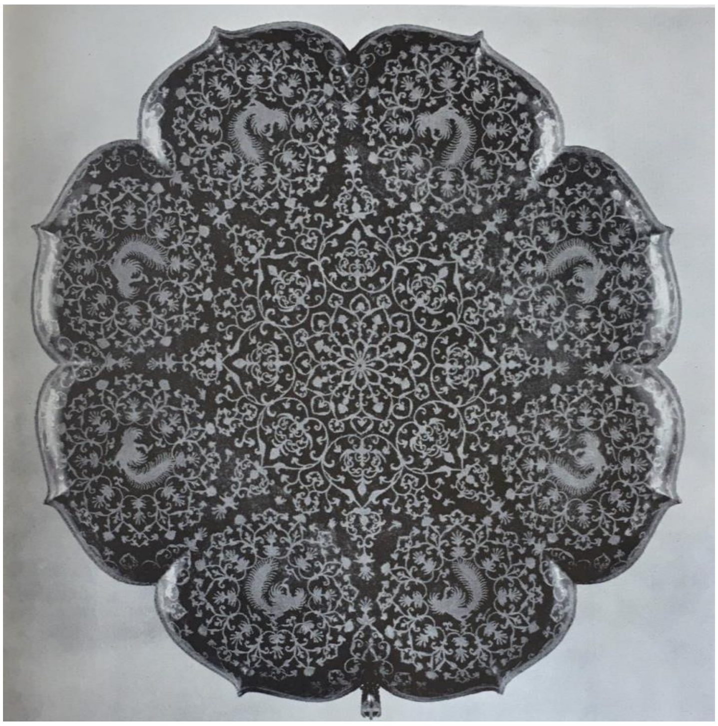

Fig. 3.5 Octagonal Mirror Box with *Heidatsu Maki-e* Decoration. 36.5 cm (D). Tang Dynasty period. After Hayashi (1964, 124).

Fig. 3.6-a Five-stringed *Biwa* Lute. 108.1×30.9 cm. Tang Dynasty. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 3.6-b Backside Design Inlaid with Mother-of-pearl. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

2.3 Case Study 2: Koseto Ware

2.3.1. Trade with Song and Yuan Dynasty

As seen in Case Study 1, the influx of *Karamono* was maintained even after the abolishment of the Tang envoys. Even though the etymological origin of the word *Karamono* can be traced back to the Heian period, it was in fact in the Kamakura and Muromachi period the term started to be widely used. It is well known that Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1350), a prominent essayist of that time, criticized the overemphasis on *Karamono* among the elites as "nonsense", after observing tremendous number of commodities unloaded at a port all the way from China (Kawazoe 2014, 121: Mori 2008, 111: Tsuji 1998, 10). Nevertheless, even for him, the Chinese medicine was an exception considering its necessity (Murai 2013, 171).

After the political and cultural disruption since the collapse of the Tang dynasty, the Song dynasty achieved government-lead technological advances in China to manufacture silk textiles and ceramics to export (Mori 1986, 10). Civil as well as tribute trades were actively promoted to compensate for economic crisis caused by 'barbaric' invasions (*Ibid*, 11). During the Southern Song dynasty, even the payment for the imported commodities was made by ceramics, in order to prevent outflow of coins and silks (*Ibid*, 4). Private merchants actively engaged in trades with Japan, so that the number of the ship counted more than hundred times (*Ibid*, 11). It was at odd with the common understanding that there were hardly any diplomatic relations between the Song dynasty and Kamakura Japan (Seki 2015, 20). Here again, the top-down approach is not applicable in comprehending the actual material cultural exchange took place between the two countries. It was the general public, especially the merchants who became the protagonist of the trades instead of a handful of elites (Yabe 1993, 125). Strictly speaking, the official starting date of trading among the Song dynasty and Japan was 978 AD, the first appearance of the Song merchant, to 1277 AD, when the entire ports of the Southern Song dynasty were subjugated to the Yuan dynasty but the trading with Yuan dynasty also continued until 1367 AD (Mori 1986, 123).

Even after the Mongol Invasions in 1274 and 1281, the Yuan dynasty and Kamakura Japan maintained trading (Kawazoe 2014, 114). Similar to the aforementioned relationship between the Tang dynasty and *Kokufū* culture, the historical disruptions were of no concern to the merchants at all, who slipped through the restrictions to freely enjoy their activities. The increased amount of imported coins suggests that the commercial connection had rather activated than the previous period (Nagahara 1993, 25). Still, the overall characteristic of the trade remained as private serving for the demands of luxurious commodities by the ruling class (Sasaki 1992, 55). From the Nara period on, Kōrokan (鴻臚館) in Hakata in the northern Kyūsyū region had flourished as a primary trading and diplomatic center (Kawakita 1972, 172-173). This style of trade took place in the twelfth until the middle of the thirteenth century is called *Ōban Trade* (往蕃貿易), which was controlled by the Chinese residents in Japan (Murai 2013, 19). However, it became difficult for them to stay in Japan for a longer time period, due to the government's stronger restriction on foreigners after the Mongol Invasion (*Ibid*, 264). What became active instead was the personal cooperation between the merchants and Japanese authorities (*Ibid*, 267).

2.3.2. Sinan Shipwreck

The Sinan shipwreck is a good example of the Kamakura-Yuan trade within the context of the wider maritime trade network in the Middle Age East Asia. It is a Japanese vessel which sank on the southern coast of Korea in 1323 on its return from Ningbo (Glahn 2016, 17). Local fisherman discovered a piece of ceramic in 1975, and an investigation was initiated by the national cultural heritage administration of Korea, which took nearly eight years to complete (Lee 2011, 105-106). This was because of the enormous amount of the artefacts and the terrible environment for the excavation (*Ibid*, 106). Among the entire salvaged objects numbered more than 26,000, ceramics and earthenware composed 57%, with around 12,000 celadons from *Longquan* kiln (竜泉窯) (Cultural Heritage Administration 1988, 144). They were almost perfect *in situ* condition, thanks to the individual packaging in squared wooden boxes (Murai 2013, 185). The entire number of commodities brought to Japan from China during this time period must have been beyond our imagination, given the fact that the size of the Sinan shipwreck would have been merely one of many ships carrying such materials (Kawazoe 2014, 115-116).

The provenance and date calculation of the ship were based on the inscriptions on the wooden strips functioned as shipping tags inscribed with Tōfuku-ji Temple and other temples, which were loaded between the fifth and sixth month of 1323 (Lee 2011, 107). This is considered as a typical trading ship called as *Jisyazoeiryou-tousen* (寺社造営料唐船), which started to be appeared in greater number in the former half of the fourteenth century (Kawazoe 2014, 114: Murai 2013, 267). It is defined as "the trading vessels sent to China commissioned by major temples under the protection of the court and Kamakura bakufu, in order to finance the construction costs" (Murai 2013, 191). Even though it had "Tang ship" in the name, it was a Japanese ship in terms of administration. However, as

Murai (2013) argues, determining the "nationality" of this kind of ship in a modern sense demands great caution. At that time, "Tang Ship" appears on the textual records simply meant the departing point, so that it could designate both those which came from and go to China (*Ibid*, 193). In the Sinan Shipwreck's case, the financial support for the religion was only a part of several other purposes, in which Chinese merchants were entitled with priorities in transactions under the official acknowledgement by the Japanese authorities (*Ibid,* 192-193). In practice, it was nothing more than a commercial vessel with the nominal title given by the authorities (*Ibid*, 196). In sum, it is generally accepted that the ship left Ninbo in 1323 for Hakata on route to Kyoto (Lee 2011, 108). This is in the late Kamakura period in Japan and the late Yuan dynasty China respectively.

2.3.3.Longquan Celadon and Koseto Ware

While Chinese ceramics were already brought to Japan from the eighth century on, it was from the latter half of the twelfth century in which innumerable numbers of celadons were imported (Sasaki 1992, 193: Itakura 2015, 192-193). Together with incenses and textiles, ceramics were one of the most favored objects that continually imported throughout the period (Mori 1986, 133). Around this time in Zhejiang province, where it was previously known for Yue ware (越州窯), *Longquan* kilns were developed and became the mecca of celadons, one of the most favored and influential Chinese ceramics in Japan (Itakura 2015, 193). The expansive demands can be estimated from the fact that they are found almost all over the archipelago (Sasaki 1992, 198). Especially the celadons produced from the end of the Southern Song dynasty were called *Kinuta Seiji* (砧青磁), which were handed down over generation as *denseihin* (伝世品) (fig. 4.1) (Kawakita 1972, 175-179). The technology was inherited by the late Yuan dynasty but in the same kiln but with different glaze color called *Tenryūji Seiji* (天龍寺青磁) (fig. 4.2) (Yabe 2011, 391). However, one might find it difficult to clearly distinguish these two solely by the color. In addition, they were both found from the Sinan Shipwreck. The difference would be more clearly attributed to the usage. While *Kinuta Seiji* were considered to be quality goods, *Tenryūji Seiji* were the products for the mundane contexts (*Ibid*, 955). In the salvaged vase's case (fig. 4.2), it is a part of the former type imported to Japan to satisfied the Kamakura literati's taste, who collected relatively smaller objects, such as flower vases and incense burner (Yabe 2011, 391). This tendency is in line with the overall tendency of the cargo of the shipwreck (Kungnip Chungang Pangmulgwan, 1977). Still, both of them were continually produced through the Yuan Dynasty period in the *Longquan* kilns (Yabe 2011, 391).

Some scholars argue that Japanese craftsmen attempted to copy the Chinese celadons immediately after the enormous amount of inflow but they "could not make it" due to the limited technology (Yabe 1993, 127: Nakagawa and Tanaka 1967, 45). *Koseto* ware (古瀬戸) is often attested as an example of degraded copy of celadons (fig. 4.3 and 3.4) (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 33). This relationship of "original" and "copy" was already criticized by Fujisawa (2011) by suggesting that they were rather enjoyed separately and in different time periods. In fact, this intended segregation can be observed already from the production technique. The main difference is the color. While the celadons was grazed with deep olive-green color, *Koseto* ware is known for *kaiyū* (灰釉), the ash glazes.

The history of glazed pottery in Japan can be traced back to the Nara period, when the technology of *Tang Sancai* (唐三彩) was imported through the Silk Road, which later developed in Japan as *ryokuyū* (緑釉), the green color from lead glaze in the Heian Period (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 2-3). In the meantime, in order to reproduce celadons from the Zhejiang province, Heian artisans explored the new glazing technique with ashes, which ironically led to produce *kaiyū* ceramics (Kawakita 1972, 172-173). It was in fact the archetype of ceramics and porcelain developed in Shang dynasty China (Yabe 2011, 258-259). Instead of reaching the contemporary technique, the artisans somehow rewound time and rediscovered an ancient technique. After few centuries, *Seto* kilns (瀬戸窯) in Aichi prefecture succeeded and localized the technique as *Koseto* in the early Kamakura period (fig. 4.5) (*Ibid*, 539). *Setomono* (瀬戸物) almost became the synonym of the entire corpus of ceramics produced in Japan (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 31) after more than three hundred kilns were established in the region (Yabe 2011, 781). The pride as a birthplace of glazed ceramics had been maintained even after the other different kilns emerged with their own unique characteristics. Among the major six kiln sites which evolved around this period, Seto was the only province that produced glazed and decorated ceramics for elites, whereas the other five kiln locations served for the practical and daily commodities (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 31).

2.3.4. Koseto as Karamono

As "China" is understood as a synonym of ceramics until today, even those found everywhere outside in China cannot be discussed without referencing the Chinese ceramics. While the significance of China in the invention of the technique cannot be overemphasised, the local varieties uniquely developed in other regions should not be disregarded as secondary products or lesser copies. Unfortunately, this sinocentric view in the discussion of ceramics is quite prevalent worldwide, as well as in Japan, one of the neighboring countries hugely influenced by China in numerous ways. However, this is again the product of the modern science. These days, scholars are eager to discern the exact origin of artefacts, as the aforementioned Tang Ship's case showed, it often did not matter to those who enjoyed *Karamono* in Middle Age Japan. In the preceding case study, *Karamono* as a blurring concept was suggested. In the case of *Maki-e*, intentional imitation of Tang objects was attempted, successfully executed, and later modified in its own manner. *Koseto*, on the other hand, clearly differentiated itself from the celadons from the very beginning of the production process. Rather than questioning the intentionality of the artisans, it would be helpful to revisit what 'copy' meant for them.

At a first glance, one of the most striking difference between the *celadon* bottle (fig. 4.3) and the *Koseto* jar (fig. 4.4) is the color. There are several other differences discernible even for non-experts, such as for example the lid, the width of the mouth, the interval between the stripes. Although similarities can be observed in terms of roundish shape and size, it is highly possible that viewers without any background knowledge would assume that they are different from one another. Even if each production date was provided so that they can tell which one predates the other, they would find it difficult to imagine that the latter were created in order to exactly resemble to the former. Experiencing this virtual space is almost impossible given the fact that the historical information, such as the hegemony of Chinese ceramics in the world history, are now widely understood as a common knowledge, which often precedes the empirical experience with the artefacts *per se*.

In terms of technology, while *Longquan celadons* were made with turntable, *Koseto* employed coiling technique in the earlier phase (Yabe 2011, 540). Yabe (1992, 127) criticized this as "the nature of Japanese artisans", in which together with the usage of *kaiyū*, obsolete and inefficient technique were intentionally employed. However, the shape itself shows a unique soft impression in harmony despite the seemingly odd attempt to use ancient technique in order to reproduce the contemporary *celadons* (Nakagawa and Tanaka 1967, 45) (fig. 4.5). This technological differentiation is often attributed to the different type of clay available in Japan, but it is also suggested that they preferred slow yet secure coiling technique because the imitation of the shape was prioritized than the productivity (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 37).

2.3.5. Incised Difference

The second aspect which characterizes *Koseto* wares is the decoration technique (Nakagawa and Tanaka 1967, 157: Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 31: Yabe 2011, 540). Here again, while the repertoire of motifs is mentioned with Chinese influence, a different technique was employed. As for the Song porcelain vase (fig. 4.6) and *Meiping* style *Koseto* Vase (fig. 4.7), the major difference aside from the color glaze is that the former is decorated in convex, while that of the latter is concave. Although the *karakusa* pattern is quite similar, there is a clear difference between embossing and incision. The patterns on the porcelain vase (fig. 4.6) is decorated by contouring the petals and leaves, so that it can express the solidity. The unevenness of the surface gives a good contrast in the gloss of the applied graze. On the other hand, the surface of the *Koseto* Vase (fig. 4.7) is relatively subtle. Although it is certain that the patterns were applied for the decorative purpose, they were literally as well as technically behind the layer of the glaze. There are mainly four decorative techniques for *Koseto* ware and those that used for this vase is called *Kakka* (劃花). It is characterized with thin lines incised often with spatulas (Yabe 2011, 296). *Kokka* (刻花) is the similar but different technique used for the Song vase (fig. 4.6), in which the carving is deeper than the other by applying the blade diagonally (*Ibid*, 546). Both techniques were originally from the Song dynasty China and arrived in Japan through the imported vases with the *Botan Karakusa* (牡丹唐草), the peony scrolls (*Ibid*, 296). Another example from the earlier period (fig. 4.8) suggests that *Kokka* (刻花) was favored in China to give a contrast on the surface by creating the shadow even on the surface covered with the light-colored glaze. In Japan however, the available glaze in the contemporary period was with dark color, so that the decoration can be intelligible without deep incisions. As long as the pattern is visible on the surface, it would have been unnecessary to employ exact same technique.

What was prioritized the most by the Seto artisans in copying the model from China? From the several examples discussed above, the imitation of the shape must have been fundamental. In other words, the production technique did not have to be exactly the same as original, as long as it resembled to the original. In terms of decoration and glaze, the color of *kaiyū,* which is often considered as inauthentic and crude compared to the aesthetic and sophisticated blue of *celadons*, showed contradicting aspects. Even if the reproduction of the blue color was impossible, *Koseto* successfully incorporated every other aspect of *celadons* and invented an entirely new genre of ceramics unique to Japan. The differentiation of glaze color entailed the differentiation in the surface decoration technique to enhance the uniqueness. However, there is also a possibility that the reproduction of *celadon* blue was unnecessary, if the imitation of the decoration was primary for the artisans. They already had ash color at hand, which allowed relatively simple technique to imitate the patterns. This is supported by the fact that the majority of *Koseto* ware is decorated with the *kakka* technique (fig. 4.9) (Inoue and Takeuchi 1999, 42-43). Given the fact that *celadons* were later produced in the early seventeenth century as one of the *Imari* Ware (伊万里焼き) (Yabe 2011, 757), the Kamakura period Japan might have enjoyed exploring the creativity within the certain limitation, rather than rushing to the pursuit of the perfection. When *Koseto* and *Celadons* are juxtaposed to one another, what we can see is the beauty of improvisation accumulated through try and errors, which eventually led to the creation of similar but distinctive counterparts. The uniqueness of the finished product is too remarkable to disregard them as a failed attempt.

Fig. 4.1 Celadon Vase with Applied Peony Scroll Design. 19.0×6.3 (mouth)×8.3 (bottom) cm. *Longquan* Kiln. Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum.

Fig. 4.2 Celadons Vase with Applied Peony Scroll Design. 25.4×11.7×8.3 cm. Yuan Dynasty period. Sinan. Courtesy of National Museum of Korea.

Fig. 4.3 Celadon Ribbed Bottle. 23.5×25.5×17.0 cm. Yuan Dynasty period. Sinan. Courtesy of National Museum of Korea.

Fig. 4.4 Celadon Ribbed Jar. 30.0×16.4 (mouth) cm. Mid-14th century. Seto Kiln. Courtesy of Osaka Ceramic Museum.

Fig. 4.5 Large-mouthed Jar Yellow Glaze with Peony Arabesque Design. 27.1×16.7×14.3 cm. Fourteenth century. Seto Kiln. Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum.

Fig. 4.6 *Qingbai* (Clear Blue) Porcelain Vase with Chinese Arabesque. Song dynasty. 29.5×10 cm. Courtesy of Kyoto National Museum.

Fig. 4.7 Ash Glazed Vase in '*Mei-ping*' Style, Incised with Peony Scroll Design. Kamakura period. 26.7×17.2 cm. Courtesy of Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum.

Fig. 4.8 White Porcelain with Carved Peony Design. 32 cm (H). Northern Song dynasty. Din Kiln. Courtesy of The Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka.

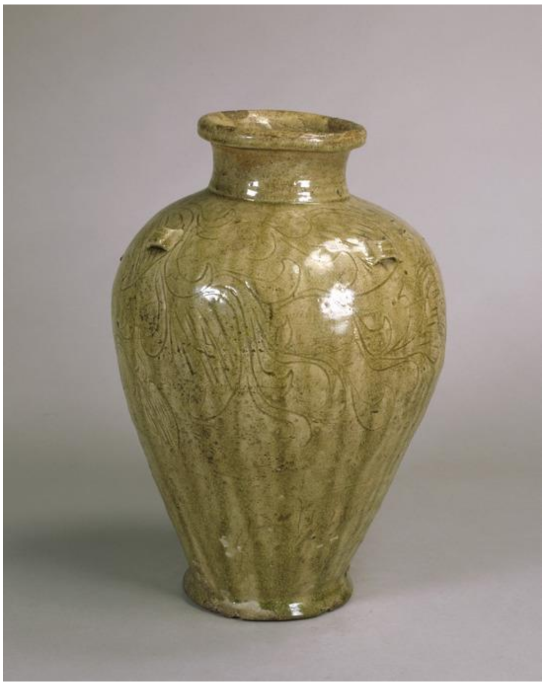

Fig. 4.9 Jar with Four Lugs with Design of Arabesque with Yellow Glaze. 14th century. Mori-machi, Shuchi-gun, Shizuoka prefecture. Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum.

2.4. Case Study 3: Kinkarakawa

Encounts with Nanban and Kōmō

In the middle of the sixteenth century AD, Japan experienced encounters with "aliens" from other part of the world. Particularly notable were the Portuguese and the Dutch. They were called *Nanban* (南蛮) and *Kōmō* (紅毛) respectively (Miyanaga 2019, 256). This discovery of an entirely new world, though passively for Japan, was quite fundamental for both the West and the East, not only because of the new technologies and knowledge exchanged, but also in terms of the expansion of the geographical understanding of the world through the actual people, rather than from fictional characters or descriptions in literature, such as "Book of the Marvels of the World" by Marco Polo (Naramoto 1963, 3).

"Nanban" was originally a generic term for what the Chinese termed the 'barbarians' in the south in Chinese *Hua-yi* order (Nakajima 2013, 3). In Japan, too, it had long been used as a term for the range of ethnic groups in the south (Mori 1986, 278). The earliest textual evidence in Japan emphasized its implication of a barbaric nature, referring to bandits (*Ibid*, 291). It is at odds with the fact that Europe is geographically located in the west to Japan. In fact, it was based on where they were first found by Japanese people — Kyūsyū region and the southern archipelago (Nakajima 2013, 3).

Until around the Muromachi period, it had been understood and accepted in Japan that the world is composed of India, China and Japan (Mori 1986, 287-288). Tobi (2019) explained this drastic shift in the cosmological recognition as "Three Realms" (*Sangoku*, 三国) to "Myriad Realms" (*Bankoku*, 万国), as the latter accommodates the wider sense of *terra incognita* (Tobi 2019, 198). "Neither a simple Wa-kan dichotomy, nor a tripartite *Sangoku* cosmology...could adequately resolve or rationalize the "conceptualizations of the exotic and the domestic …, [which] are inextricably intertwined," in Japanese discourse as elsewhere" (Tobi 2019, 251). Previously there was a fundamental difference between *kara* (Tang) and *Tenjiku* (India), as the former is foreign yet familiar, whereas the latter was perceived as "the other world" (*Ibid*, 196). *Nanban* came from the far west from India, so that there was no way but categorize them temporarily in the existing terminology for convenience (*Ibid*, 191).

The famous incident known as the starting point of *Nanban* trade is that a Portuguese crew in a Chinese merchant ship drifted ashore on Tanegahima island in 1543, which eventually led to the distribution of guns across Japan (Naramoto 1963, 3). In the meantime, Portuguese catholic missionaries also arrived in Japan through Goa for the propagation of Christianity under their king's order (Mori and Besshi 1968, 188-190). After Portugal was admitted to trade in Macau in 1557, the trade between Portugal, China and Japan was initiated (Kawazoe 2014, 166).

Interestingly, the most favored commodities imported to Japan through this trade system were raw silk threads or silk textiles from China, rather than from Europe (Kawazoe 2014, 176). Even though the preference to Chinese commodities gradually shifted towards the European goods after their technology and arts attracted huge interests in Japan, it should be noted that the concept of China as a principle foreign country remained strong throughout the ages (*Ibid*, 173). Though indirectly, China had been virtually Japan's biggest trading partner, and produced the commodities which were the most popular in Japan (Tobi 2008, 130).

In contrast to the Latinx people, who were characterized with black hair, Germanic peoples were called *Kōmō*, "the red-haired people" (Nakajima 2013, 4). They were mostly the Dutch and the British, who arrived relatively later than *Nanban* people. When a Dutch ship appeared for the first time in Japan in 1600, they were allowed to see the general Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the enterprise specialized in the trading with the Netherlands (Naramoto 1963, 10-11).

2.4.1. Sakoku Reexamined

It has been common knowledge that the Netherlands was the only European country that was allowed to trade directly with Japan under the seclusion policy or *Sakoku* (鎖国) (Tobacco and Salt Museum 1987, 8: Tanaka-van Daalen 1989, 38). It is often understood in the context of exclusiveness or xenophobia prevalent in pre-modern Japan, in contrast to its westernized and hence modernized state in the later period. Some go as far to say that the policy completely divided the world into the inside and outside the archipelago (Tsujimoto 2017, 5). In fact, this was not a concept only observable in Japan, but can also be seen in the history of China and Korea (Boot 2017, 49)

The Edo period (1603-1868) is often characterized by the *sakoku* (鎖国) policy, which constituted strong restrictions on foreign trade, in comparison to the later *kaikoku* (開国) policy in the middle of the nineteenth century. This dichotomous "closed" versus "open" gate description often gives us the idea that Edo Japan was almost completely closed off from the world. However, in the recent scholarship, the term 海禁 (*kaikin*) or Maritime Prohibition is employed instead, after the policy in Ming and Qing dynasty, in accordance with the fact that Japan only strengthened their control over trade, rather than completely shutting itself down towards foreign countries (Tobi 2008, 105). The contacts were regulated and limited but not prohibited entirely (Knoest 2016, 89). At present, this approach is often used in the study of maritime trade in the Middle Ages, in which scholars are attempting to recapture Japan as a part of the wider trading network in the East Asia. The concept of "Four Gates" has been widely acknowledged in recent scholarship, in which Nagasaki Tsushima, Satsuma and Matsumae functioned as trading districts with different counterparts (Tobi 2008: Tsujimoto 2017). However, it has been noted that this concept is also constrained by the *sakoku* itself, in which the hegemony of Edo *bakufu* is presupposed despite other important actants (Knoest 2016, 89).

The word "sakoku" did not even exist in the early seventeenth century in Japanese nor is it derived from the Japanese language at the time the so-called "sakoku policies" were actually posed. It was only after the translation from the German book by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), a medical doctor worked in a Dutch trading company in Nagasaki (Tobi 2008, 79-80) that this policy was given its name. The process went through a number of misinterpretations, after it was translated into several languages. When the Japanese translator referred to the Dutch translated version based on the English translation, the original German text did not have as strong connotation as *sakoku* had (*Ibid*, 80). Furthermore, it was only in the early nineteenth century the Japanese translated text was published (*Ibid*, 81).

The trade with the Dutch too, was in fact under the strict control (Iwasaki 1989, 32). It is often stated that the Tokugawa *bakufu* specifically selected the Netherlands as a trading partner. However, they were the only one left that was deemed acceptable after the several elimination processes, in which countries with the potential to violate the *bakufu's* conditions, such as a stop of the propagation of Christianity, were gradually ruled out (*Ibid*, 32). This well matched with the original purpose of the Dutch side too, who exclusively sought commercial benefits and had no interest in causing religious reform (Matsui 2018, 282).

2.4.2. "Tōjin" Concept

The more western people arrived in Japan, the more vocabularies for foreign visitors were invented. It was necessary to understand them on more individual basis, rather than putting them altogether as "foreigners" (Tobi 2008, 193). They were generally classified based on the physical attributes, fashion, language, etc. However, it should be noted that the perception of foreign people traced the same path as the material culture and imported commodities that ended up being called *Karamono* regardless of the provenance. The Portuguese culture was positively incorporated into Japanese culture. For example, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) is known for his admiration with Nanban-style fashion (fig. 5.1), even though he was the first general to ban Christianity (Kawazoe 2014, 169-170). This imitation or "playing" Nanban people by putting on their clothes became popular among the commoners as well, until the Portuguese were persecuted under the seclusion policy (Tobi 2008, 200). Interestingly, however, is that what changed first was the interaction rather than completely inhibiting the act of imitation. The Portuguese were started to be called and recognized as *Tōjin* (唐人), the Tang people (*Ibid*, 200). "Catalyzed by Christophobia and Iberophobia, Europeans were reinscribed as subcategories of less-threatening Others, as a variant form of 'Chinese'." (Tobi 2019, 120)

This assimilation process is also seen in the previous time periods. In the eighth century, *Tōjin* was exclusively used for the Chinese people in the Tang dynasty, who were clearly differentiated from those who in Silla and Koryo (Seki 2015, 211). However, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, "the Song people" and "the Tang people" were used interchangeably, even after the collapse of the Tang dynasty (*Ibid*, 199). Later in the sixteenth century, not only the Korean but also the *Ryūkyū* people were described as such (Tobi 2008, 208-209). In this way, regardless of familiarity or the actual ethnic origin, foreign communities tend to be absorbed into the holistic concept that regarded Tang as the synonym foreigners as a whole. They were classified individually at first yet eventually "Tang" as a representative of the foreign became dominant. Still, it is also the fact that both the divergent and the convergent concept could coexist without contradicting to each other.

2.4.3. Kinkarakawa

Kinkarakawa (金唐革) is another imported technology that later took the shape of unique Japanese form. As the "Tang" ideograph (*kara*) suggests, this is again one of the foreign objects named under the influence of the concept of Tang as holistically foreign (Tobacco and Salt Museum 1996, 35-36). *Goudleer* in Dutch, it was originally a gilded leather material used as wallpapers and to decorate furniture, often with vegetal patterns shined with gold (fig. 5.2). The technology was originated in Spain and Portugal and spread throughout Europe. In the seventeenth century, the Netherlands became one of the countries with the highest level of the production technique (Koldeweij 1989, 15). Specialized workshops were established across the country to respond the demand not only within Europe but also China, Japan and India (*Ibid*, 19). It was developed during the Dutch

Golden Age, when the interior decoration became affordable for the bourgeoisie, though on a much smaller scale (fig. 5.3-5) compared to public buildings (Scholten 1989, 13). The decorative patterns were based on exotic motifs from the East, such as *karakusa* patterns appeared in carpets, ceramics and lacquer ware brought via southern Europe (Scholten 1989, 13-14).

Among the imported objects, *Kinkarakawa* were treated as *rariteiten* or rare articles, which were occasionally and sometimes unofficially brought in response to the domestic exoticism towards Europe (Tanaka-van Daalen 1989, 40-41). The earliest records of a transaction involving these objects in Japan can be found in 1621 but the import continued until the nineteenth century, long after the industry was no longer prosperous in the Netherlands (*Ibid*, 41-43). They were at first brought in the form of mirror boxes (fig. 5.6), as gifts for shoguns ,but fell out of favor due to their fragility and low profitability (*Ibid*, 44). The imported leather goods were of much higher value and unaffordable for full wall decoration, so they were often cut into pieces and used in much smaller portion, such as on tobacco pouches (Morishita 1989, 53) (fig. 5.7). This usage would be also related to Edo Japan, in which they literally "repaired almost everything over and over again until no more use could be made of it." (Ochiai 2007, 8). It is not hard to imagine that the Edo people, who had the strong interest in recycling and novelty, could come up with the idea to reuse *kinkarakawa* torn apart in the broken mirror boxes instead of wasting it. In fact, what made them more accessible to the citizens was the reduction of the size and price, which was also reflected in the general tendency in the Dutch trade. Edo people strangely preferred pieces of *kikarakawa* that were often considered as a waste from renovation (Tanaka-van Daalen 1989, 115). The pouches were popular especially due to Japan's strict sumptuary laws, as that they could be enjoyed as a smaller luxurious accessory without being a legal liability (Iwasaki 1989, 60).

However, the Edo people were not satisfied with this simple modification. What they did was to change the material into paper. This became known as *kinkarakawakami* (金唐革紙) or *gikakushi* (擬革紙), "fake leather paper" in the Meiji period (fig. 5.8) (Wailliez 2016). In fact, it was one of the variety of imitations of leather material by using paper (*Ibid*, 60-61). What made this collaboration of European technology with Japanese paper easily possible was that the paper industry already well-developed in Japan (Kume 1989, 71). The usage of paper is observable everywhere in the Japanese lifestyle in varying scale, from umbrellas to *fusuma* (襖), the sliding screens or partitions (Obata 2011, 4). Yet it would not be until the period of World Exposition in the nineteenth century that its full potential was shown (Wailliez 2016, 61). Similar to the leather *kinkarakawa,* the *gikakushi* had also been in use for the smaller objects in previous periods. It was after the Vienna and

Paris exhibition in 1870s that European craftsmen found the potential of *gikakushi* as a material for wallpaper. In order to respond to the both foreign and domestic demand, the production process was industrialized and eventually exported to Europe (Wailliez 2016, 64: Obata 2011, 4).

The brief history of *kinkarakawa* (kami) tells us about the worldwide popularity and trans-materiality of its patterns. They were perceived as exotic everywhere, and therefore favored regardless of the provenance. This everlasting foreignness would mostly be because of the patterns appeared on different surfaces. Fascinated by ubiquitous yet exotic motifs, artisans across the world have established a perpetual system in which the patterns were continually recontextualized and reproduced through the cross-cultural exchange of materials. Paradoxically, ornaments with the attested Asiatic origin perceived as "exotic" in Europe were also welcomed in Japan for its foreignness and again later in Europe, by traveling to different materials to one another.

2.4.4. Sarasa

While *kinkarakawa* is a Dutch product brought from the Netherlands, there was a precursor in terms of the "patterned textiles", which were cut into pieces to made into tobacco pouches (fig. 5.9). *Sarasa* (更紗) or *calico* is a generic term for exotic printed cotton textiles from overseas (Ishida 2018, 17). These were mainly manufactured in India and Java but the term includes those which from Thailand, Persian China and Europe.[7] It would be appropriate to define it as "printed and dyed textiles brought to Japan from around the early seventeenth century through Edo period" (Ogasawara 2005, 6). However, it is highly possible that *sarasa* was already imported in the middle age, before the arrival of the western merchants (*Ibid*, 76). The term could have been derived from *srasah* (Javanese), *sarassa* or *saraçs* (Portuguese) and *saraza* (Spanish) or *Slat* (Ishida 2004, 171), one of the most prosperous ports in India, yet the exact etymological remained unknown. [8] The Dutch enterprise opened its branch in this port in 1620 (*Ibid*, 207). Majority of *sarasa* brought to Japan in the seventeenth century until the end of eighteenth century was from India (*Ibid*, 223). The term was brought into Japan by Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutch merchant and the author of "East Indies" or *Toho Annai Ki* (東方案内記). [9] The textiles

[7] "更紗", 日本大百科全書 (ニッポニカ), JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com, accessed on 2020-08-08.
[8] "サラサ【更紗】", 国史大辞典, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com.
[9] "更紗", 日本大百科全書(ニッポニカ), JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com..

with Asiatic origin was imported to Japan in the earlier Edo period though the Dutch, and later in nineteenth century, European *sarasa* became popular (Ishida 2016, 70).

Interestingly, the usage of *sarasa* is quite similar to of *kinkarakawa*. The patterns of these textiles too, are copied and manufactured in papers as well as textiles in Japan. They were both popular in Europe for interior decorations and later in Japan redesigned in smaller scale, such as on tobacco pouches or other accessories (Ogasawara 2005, 38-39). The popularity of *sarasa* in Japan can be observed from the fact that in the eighteenth century, it composed more than eighty percent of the gross of the Dutch-Japanese trade (Ishida 2004, 212). Due to the political conflict in India, the Indian industry gradually stagnated so that the Dutch started to copy and export it to Japan (*Ibid*, 224-226). Nowadays, these textiles are discussed in relation to the maritime Silk Roads, which emphasize the material exchange with the South East Indonesia (silkroad-museum-collection.jp).

The tendency of repurposing foreign material, which was originally used for a different purpose can be observed in the exotic objects from Asiatic origin and later those from Europe. Still, all of them came from trading routes that were controlled by the Europeans. In the tobacco pouches' case, what enabled Japanese artisans to come up with using the Dutch leather could be based on earlier the Indian or Javanese textiles. In fact, though the material is different, the exotic repetitive patterns were quite similar to one another, so that they could be reformed into the same shape and size. What attracted the Edo people the most would not have been the actual origin but rather the exoticism that the objects projected by way of the ornaments on the surface, which were still recognizable even in a smaller size.

2.4.5. Tobacco Pouches

There are three main types of shapes, *kaichū* (懐中), *sage* (提げ) and *koshizashi* (腰差し). *Kaichū*, a simple pouch without any extra accessories, is put inside of the neck of a kimono, so that it was not merely accessories (fig. 5.9). In the latter two could be hung from *obi* or sashes and were considered fashion items together with accessories, such as *netsuke* (Tabako to shio no hakubutsukan 1987, 27-28) (fig. 5.10). The elongated part was to accommodate a pipe and slung in sashes, while the leaves were put in a small pouch (Ogasawara 2005, 132). Netsuke functioned as a stopper on obi, so that the pouch could hang from it (fig. 5.11). The *Kinkarakawa* Tobacco pouch (fig. 5.7) is a good example of those which served for practical and omental purpose. The elongated part and the pouch itself are decorated with the same leather to give a sense of unity. The buckle decoration is also in a good harmony with other metal part, such as chain and netsuke toggle. The original *kinkarakawa* was decorated with tulip patterns of four colors, red, green and white and black (Tanaka-van Daalen 1989, 123). From its relatively larger size and full application of leather on the surface, it could have been possessed by professional gambler or sumo wrestler (www.tabashio.jp/). Still, it is highly doubtful that these pouches were understood more than an exotic commodity, given the fact that the original pattern was almost unrecognizable. They were rather admired from the value attached on each ornamental part enjoyed as an identifier of the class of the owner. Still, the incongruousness of the material with traditional Japanese garments must have been highly eye-catching, no matter small it was.

2.4.6. Clothed in Exotic

Based on both historical and material analysis delineated above, we can see a rather unique acculturation pattern in pre-modern Japan. While during the period of Portuguese trade, immediate imitation was preferred (in for example dressing as foreigners), during trade with the Dutch a more transformative form of acculturation was preferred. These factor behind these differences might partly lie in the socio-economic and practical aspects. There would be more chances to make alterations to existing materials as the general amount of import increased throughout the time. The value of the commodities was quite high in the earlier phase of the trade, so that they were not distributed widely to the middle class. It would be relatively easier to look like the Portuguese by changing the outfit than the Dutch, for the former at least share the same hair color as the Japanese. However, it can be argued that there is still a fundamental difference in scale and the way of accommodating the newly brought culture. The imitation of the Portuguese fashion can be understood as the attempt of “being” foreigner, while carrying around the tobacco pouches as an exotic accessory have entirely different implication.

Here again, the practical aspect of *karakusa* pattern cannot be underestimated, by which the portability and the wider distribution of *kinkarakawa* were made possible. There is also the fact that originally the tobacco case was nothing more than a utilitarian object that did not need to be decorated, as long as it functioned as a container. The term “tobacco pouch” would become the distinct proper noun after it started to function as an accessory with foreign adornment. It would be also possible that the smoking became popular in Japan, not only because of the tobacco itself but also as an excuse to possess the tobacco case as a fashionable item. Cigarettes, too, must have been perceived as a highly exotic commodity brought by the Portuguese. Inside and out, putting on the tobacco pouch would have represented the exoticism and opulence. Furthermore, in terms of idea and depends on the phase of the production technique, it can be considered as partially a Japanese product. In order to find a space in Japan as a foreign object, objects could not be allowed to maintain their original state. They had to be modified with a hint of Japaneseness, though not entirely, so that their foreign provenance could still be discerned. In *kinkarakawa's* case, the foreignness can be seen in the material and ornaments. Rather than allowing foreigners and their commodities to remain as they were, the Japanese people found ways to incorporate this foreignness into their own culture, and construct a Japanese version of foreignness comfortable to them.

Fig. 5.1 *Jinbaroi* Vest with Bird and Animal Designs. 99.4 × 59.4 cm. Momoyama Period. Courtesy of Kyoto National Museum.

Fig. 5.2 *Goudleer* from Delftse Schouw. 1649. Courtesy of Museum De Lakenhal.

Fig. 5.3 “The Love Letter” by Johannes Vermeer. 1669-1670. 44×38.5 cm. Courtesy of Rijksmuseum.

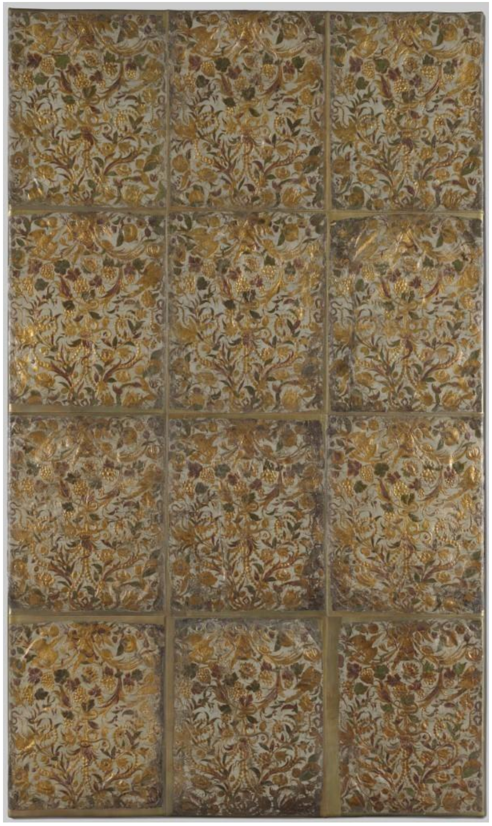

Fig. 5.4 *Goudleer* Panel. ca. 1680-1700. 327×193.5×3 cm. Courtesy of Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 5.5 Armchair Decorated with *Goudleer*. ca. 1650-1700. 117×64×60 cm. Courtesy of Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 5.6 *Kinkarakawa* Mirror Box with *Karahana* Patterns. 35×30.5×2 cm. Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum.

Fig. 5.7 *Kinkarakawa* Tobacco Pouche. 11.5×17.3cm. Courtesy of Tobacco and Salt Museum.

Fig. 5.8 *Kinkarakawakami* i.e. Japanese Gilt Leather Wallpaper. Modern reproduction by Ueda Takashi with the original wooden roller kept at the Paper Museum (Tokyo, Japan), Illustration drawn from Suga, 2007.

Fig. 5.9 Indian *Sarasa* Tobacco Pouche. 6.5×11.0cm. Courtesy of Tobacco and Salt Museum.

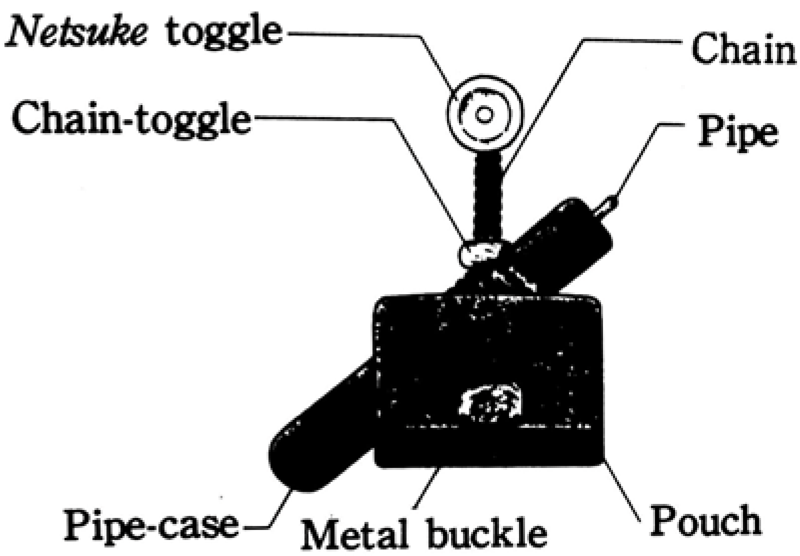

Fig. 5.10 Names of Parts of Tobacco Poche. After Tobacco and Salt Museum 2001, 28.

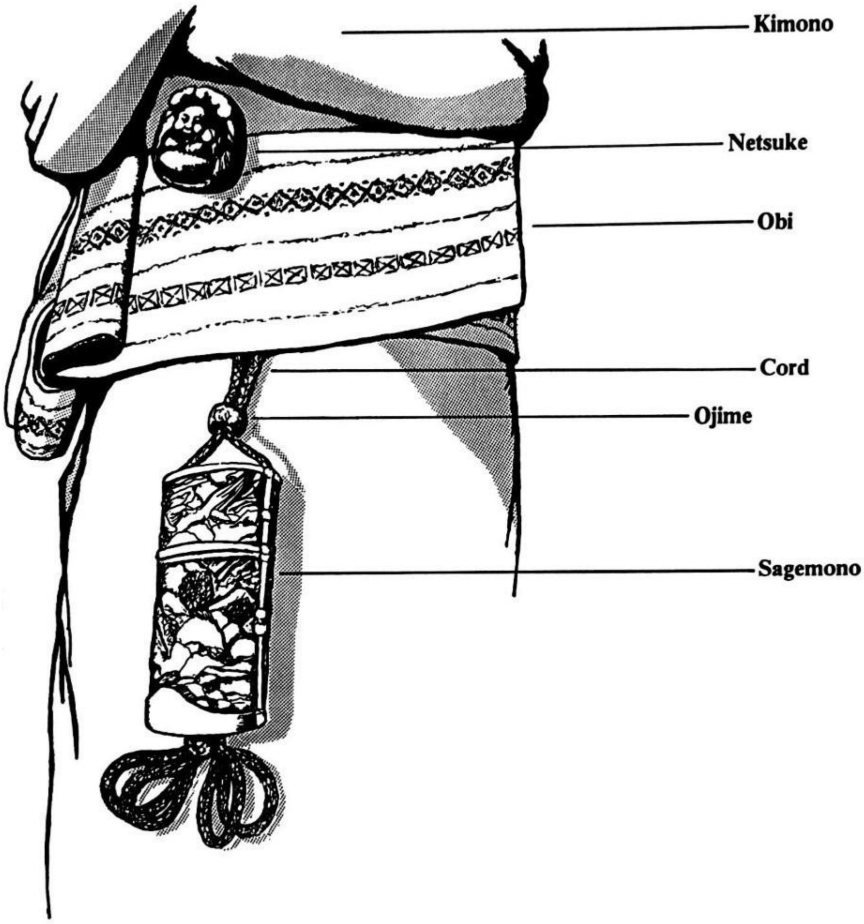

Fig. 5.11 *Netsuke* and *Sagemono*. After Bjorkman and Dursum 1999, VI.

2.5 Discussion

Reflecting back to the double binary structure by Chino (1994), the three types of objects discussed above are good examples for looking at the transformative process of “a” becoming “b” (fig. 1). It was argued that “a” needs to be internalized into “b” first, so that the new “a” can find a space within “B”. The reason behind this transition was attributed to “A”, such as the shift in dynasty in China. This explanation could give an impression that the change in material culture within Japan (A) could happen, only after the alternation in the role of *Kara* (B) in the mechanism. In other words, changes in material culture required a historical catalyst. However, the case studies indicate the possibility of active engagement of the object in its history. The transition from *Tenpyo* to *Kokufu* culture can be better understood in the modification of design of *Maki-e* box than from the single historical event. The unique development of *Koseto* Ware is contradictory to the massive amount of the imported ceramics in the golden age of China. In *Kinkarakawa’s* case, accessorizing the Europeanness in mundane context could be more familiar than the foreign ships drifted on the coast. This is highly indicative of *Karamono* as an active agency in the history of Japan, rather than a mere exotic commodities.

Chapter 3: The Silk Roads and Japanese Orientalism

The previous chapters delineated both theoretical and practical aspects of *Karamono* in the historical context of Japan. In this section, the perception of 'foreignness' and 'otherness' will be discussed, before this will be applied to discussions in museum contexts. Investigating the background behind the specific gaze is essential before exploring the ways to exhibit exotic artefacts. The extensive works by Said (1978) and his successors will be of great help in looking at *Karamono,* together with the aforementioned double binary structure. It is widely known that in *Orientalism* (Said 1978), the unilateral imagination and objectification of the East by the West was problematized. On the other hand, it has also been suggested that this dichotomic framework is not entirely applicable to Japan, the country which played both roles despite its geographic position in the East. The study on the Silk Roads will be discussed as one of the most actively and world widely acknowledged platforms to investigate this perception developed in Japan. By denoting itself as the terminal of the expansive trade network, Japan strategically established contradictory and fluid identity that can orientalize the *Other* as well as itself.

3.1. Orientalism before *Orientalism*

There are two main theoretical frameworks behind Chino (1994)'s theory; Feminism and Orientalism. Her renowned work "Gender in Japanese Art" ("Nihon bijutsu no jendã", 1994) translated in English by McCormick (2003) shed a new light on the way of seeing of Japanese art. She brought about a paradigm shift by rediscovering the underlying cultural mechanism unique to Japan by using non-Japanese terminologies. Chino (1994) identified the applicability of the separate use of sex and gender in the Heian elites' society. Japanese men (a) were obliged to switch their gender in accordance with counterparts (fig. 1); "When "a" is in relationship to "A," it pairs with "b" to form "B," which is then Yamato = feminine (in contrast to the masculine Kara). Conversely, when "a" is paired with "b" inside of "B," it takes on the contrastive function of "A" and signifies the Kara-within Yamato = masculine." (Chino 2003, 27). Most importantly, it was demonstrated not by the application of western theories in explaining Japanese culture without paying attention to the regional uniqueness but rather uncovering the ancient indigenous mechanism that can be readily explained by the current theoretical frameworks at hand.

In the same way, there had been a kind of Orientalism in Japan before the arrival of *Orientalism*, in which Said (1978) criticized the West's imagination and marginalization of the East. Orientalism is "not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice..." (31). In this discourse the Orient was desired, invented and reiterated in a variety of modern media, some of which are still available today without being questioned. However, the standpoint of Japan (*Yamato*) within the relationship with *Kara* is different from that of the West and the East, since *Kara* was indeed fantasized but not marginalized in Japan. In fact, Japan's admiration towards the great *Kara* went hand in hand with the self-marginalization (Chino 1995, 556). This so-called Japanese Orientalism continually existed contingent to the external influential entities, namely China and later the West. The underlying structure throughout the history had been overlooked in Orientalism studies of Japan, which primarily focuses on the post-war period.

3.2. *Orientalism* in Japan?

Before applying *Orientalism* in a regional context, it would be necessary to reflect on the theory itself, as it has been criticized and updated throughout the decades. Here, particularly the dichotomic and period-specific nature will be revisited in relation to the discussion of Japanese Orientalism.

Paradoxically, the more scholars employ Said's theory, the more the gap between the West and the East in discourse is deepened. While its original purpose was likely to delineate the demarcation of the world as constructed but skillfully disguised by the West. However, the contemporary post-Orientalism scholars (Debashi 2009: Pouillon and Vatin 2014: Ko 2018) call attention to not to emphasize the dichotomy to the extent that it can marginalize a country or a region does not belong to either of them. "The world can no longer be divided into the imaginary categories of East and West, or between West and the rest." (Almarcegui 2014, 141) The future discussion on Orientalism should not blindly follow the standard narratives.

Another problem lies in the overall research tendency to put the focus on the post-war period. This is partly because of Said's (1978) own specialization in postcolonialism. It was indeed in this time period the Orientalists' discourse was evidently constructed and became dominant on a global scale. The discussion on Japan too, has almost exclusively focused on its characteristics as a colonialist power during and the after the wars (Bonnett 2005: Nishihara 2005: Toyoyama 2012: Watanabe 2019). This is closely tied to the essentialist's nature of *Orientalism* itself, in which the West and the East are supposed to be clearly differentiated. There is also a problem in the prevalent approach that the vulnerability of Japan was hardly depicted. In attempting to discuss Japanese Orientalism throughout the history, however, one would find its contradictory roles as both self and the *Other*.

It is regrettable that the majority of the previous studies omitted pre-modern Japan, which was located in the periphery but Orientalized the center (*Kara*) in order to establish a seemingly coherent narrative, instead of delving into the uniqueness. What is essential in pursuit of the actual consistency is not selectivity but explanatory theories that can accommodate what were previously regarded as exceptional and excluded from the target of research.

3.3. China before the West

The complexity of the power politics of Japan with China and the West were already observed long before the apparent colonialism. It is well known that the *Hua-yi* Order (華夷秩序) had long been in effect in the entire East Asia (Nishijima and Yi 2002). In this cosmology, *Zhong Hua* (中華), the conceptual China was considered as the center of the world in terms of cultural supremacy, while the tribes in the "outer fringes" were called such as *Yi-Di* (夷狄) with the strong connotation of their barbaric nature (Sun 2007, 54). It was necessary to be a part of the Sino centered tribute system to be recognized as a civilized nation. Contrary to this, Japan was never fully subjugated to China, unlike the other neighboring countries (Case Study 1). However, this was only true for some aspects in politics, as the overall Chinese culture had been understood as far superior to that of Japan, as seen from the long-standing enthusiasm towards *Karamono*. In fact, there were many cases that Chinese culture was demanded and supplied outside of the official diplomatic relations (Yi 2013, 53).

It was by the attempt of rejecting the double binary structure (fig.1) that Japan accomplished the de-marginalization from the Sinocentric order. Within the structure, Japan could infinitely incorporate the new "Kara" culture as long as the previous counterpart was internalized into its own. As Japan was connected to the world outside of Asia, not only China but also countries in Europe could be placed in the system (Case Study 3). Japan was no exception as the surrounding countries in the *Hua-yi* Order that created their own version of the concentric universe in a smaller scale. Still, the self-identification as periphery was persistent until the modern period, in which Japan went so far as to become part of 'the West' by geographically and conceptually conquering the neighboring countries. There is a significant difference between the *Hua-yi* Order and the 'Giant Killing' is that they were forcibly subjugated by Japan, while China established loosely tied, reciprocal and relatively peaceful world system that would automatically attract them without military force (Chino 1996, 691). This act of colonization is nothing more than unusual, given the inherent self-recognition as marginal within the long-standing region wide structure.

The 'success story' of Japan as the earliest modernized country in Asia is often described in two similar idioms with the difference in the single but ideograph makes significant difference; *Wakon Kansai* (和魂漢才) and *Wakon Yōsai* (和魂洋才). Translated as "the ideal of adopting and applying Chinese (漢)/Western (洋) learning and knowledge in conformity with native Japanese cultural traditions (和)" [10], the enterprising spirit of Japan seems to correlate well with the incorporative mechanism (fig. 1). On the other hand, it can also be argued that the simplistic alternation of the letter indicated the effort of Japan to unlearn Chinese culture in the Meiji period to stigmatize it as obsolete in contrast to that of the West. Deliberate or not, what is not communicated here is deeply embedded Chinese culture in Japan after the thousands of years of historical connection.

The ongoing discussions on this matter are too extensive to cover in this section but hopefully this brief overview will have provided sufficient contextualization on the way in which Japan is exceptional in light of localized Orientalism. It is extraordinary because what Japan did as a part of modernization was against both the international system in Asia and its locus within it, rather than the swift change of the standpoint within the dichotomic framework. What needs to be addressed further is the discourse established to emphasize Japan's ability to change as a leader of the region, part of which are widely approved in various contexts to this day.

3.4. Connecting the East and the West

The study on the Silk Roads is one of the most active fields of study that successfully endorsed and developed the Orientalist's discourse from the nineteenth century. It is surprising that the majority of Japanese literary sources hardly question the construction of the Silk Roads by Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905), a German geographer and traveler who "invented the term...in his work on the geography of China in

[10] *Wakon Yōsai* was created in Meiji period based on Wakon Kansai from the Heian period. ("wakon yosai 【和魂洋才】", Encyclopedia of Japan, JapanKnowledge, https://japanknowledge-com).

1877, where he designated the routes of inter-continental trade in the precious commodity of silk, which he thought was much in demand in the Roman Mediterranean.” (Esenbel 2017, 4). This perspective implies not only the fact the interactions of the different regions were activated and expanded through the network but also that the idea of the Silk Roads connecting the East and the West is an invention based on the presumption of the two distinctive culture and civilization, in which one is often superior to the other. Nowadays Richthofen’s view might not prevalent as it once was but it persistently “lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental” (Said 1978, 26).

Here again, what allowed Japan to establish its own gaze towards the Silk Roads is based on the surrounding dominant narratives switched by one another throughout the history. While the literature written by western explorers were widely popularized in the early twentieth centuries Japan (Nagasawa 1992, 49-50), the ideas from ancient China were already in effect. Historians such as Shiratori Kurakichi (1865-1942), Haneda Toru (1882-1955) and Ishida Mikinosuke (1891-1974) are well-known for their contributions in the research on West Asia (Egami 1992). This particular interest in the region was derived from the concept “the Western Region” (西域, *saiiki* or *seiiki*) from the Han Dynasty, which originally designated the extensive *terra incognita* spreading throughout the west from Chinese perspective (Inoue 1963, 3-5: Haneda 1992, 325). In contrast to the West’s construction of East in the distant past, Japan discovered its own East (although it is geographically located on the west) within its neighbor. Still, this time the amalgamation of the Western and Chinese knowledge was suitable for satisfying the potential desire for the emerging imperialism;

> “As Meiji Japan came to be seen as the new “rising star of the East” toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese turned their gaze towards Asia including the peoples and geography of the Silk Road that was part of Japan’s quest to be among the great powers. The Japanese endeavor to acclimate to the West and find its foothold in the coming age as one of the major powers included imperial Japan’s vision of Central and Inner Asia as a significant strategic and cultural arena of engagement because these areas were territorially close to Japan and constituted a kind of “buffer zone” between the Russian and Chinese empires. “ (Esenbel 2017, 7)

Nowadays this original hidden motive is almost only discussed from the self-reflective perspective in the postcolonial studies in Japan. However, it also persistently survived by disguising itself with less controversial and recognizable discourses in the field of the Silk Roads, such as Buddhism and Pan-Asianism. Count Ōtani Kōzui (1876–1948), a Buddhist monk and a scholar of the time, is known for the series of private expeditions in the Central Asia in the beginning of the twentieth century, in search for the cultural identity of Japan in the religion (). On the other hand, Okakura Tenshin (1863-1913), a prominent theorist of Japanese arts, advocated the idea of Japan as "the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture" (Okakura 1903, 5). These are still observable, for example in the description of Shōsōin as the "terminal of the Silk Roads" (Maejima and Kato 1975) and Nara as "the first historic capital of the Japanese monarchy 710–784 AD which became a center for the flow of Buddhism and artifacts from the Silk Road trade during the middle ages." (Esenbel 2017, 15). At a first glance, their idea might not seem problematic, since there are no obvious colonialist nor imperialist connotations. However, as Said (1978) demonstrated himself, Orientalism can be found in mundane contexts such as in literature and still holds a lot of power over the discourse. In essence, Pan-Asianism associated with Buddhism was based on the same gaze as that of colonialism justifying the territorial invasion of the *Other* by the modernized country as 'enlightenment'. In order to identify itself as a new leader of Asia and legitimate heir of Buddhist legacies, the depiction of "the superiority of a modern Japan over an unchanging China" (Tanaka 1993, 9) was eventually necessitated.

The justification of the marginalizing neighboring regions in academic context reached its culmination when the interaction of the East and the West in history was established as one of the legitimate fields of study in 1970s. 東西交渉史 (*Tōzai Koushou shi*) became highly popular after the successive publication by the prominent scholars, such as Mori (1970), Maejima (1971) and Matsuda (1975). They were considered as useful references for beginners on the subject. The typical characteristic of these kind of books are the expansive geographical and chorological coverage, so that the readers can grasp the idea of how each region and time period was different from one another. It is particularly the case in a series of books titled "Tōzai Bunmei no Kōryū "(『東西文明の交流』1970-1971). The first volume was edited by Mori Masao (1921-1996) and titled "Han Dynasty and Rome" (1970), which was followed by "Tang Dynasty and Persia" (1970), "Islamic Heritage" (1970), "Mongol Empire and the West" (1970), "Western Civilization and East Asia" (1971) and "Japan and the West" (1971). It goes without saying that the very concept of interaction here is based on the premise of the two entirely different geographical domains, much less the titles themselves are quite boldly indicative about it.

It should also be noted that created its own idea of the East and the West, 東洋 (*Tōyō*) and 西洋 (*Seiyō*) (Tanaka 1993, 4), as a country which identifies itself as a part of the former while having the authority comparable to the latter. Japan is indeed the East that is fairly and observably close to the West, who has the privilege to be able to discover and classify itself and the *Other* in its own manner. It is surprising that even the West was objectified in this manner, after Japan obtained the power of objectivity. It is particularly effective in (dis)associating itself with the Silk Roads, the cross-continental network, some part of which is easy to relate, while the other was quite distant in every sense.

3.5. Discussion

In this chapter, the brief overview of the historical background of the Japanese gaze towards the *Other* and the double binary structure by Chino (1994) were combined, in order to delineate the Japanese's uniqueness and effectiveness in approach which is still in use today, particularly in the academic context. By conceptually placing China and the neighboring regions within its own discourse, Japan overcame the inferiority complex and justified colonialism, while maintaining the historical connections with them for convenience. Whether deliberate or not, there is a problem that the majority of contemporary research on the Silk Roads favor the old paradigm. There should be more awareness of the privileged position built upon often invisible sacrifices. This tendency needs to be revised. Not only for the future of the Japanese academics, but also to pay attention to the voices of the marginalized.

Chapter 4: Museum Application

Museums and exhibitions constitute an important space and tool that can be examined to comprehend the interpretation and communication of material culture of contemporary society. In this chapter, recent exhibitions relating to the Silk Roads will be critically reviewed in order to investigate the modern-day Japanese perspective towards the Silk Roads with reference to localized Orientalism discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter also brings the objects from the case studies into Japanese museum settings to explore the alternative ways of presenting the objects.

The Silk Roads exhibitions have maintained continuous popularity from the very beginning of the national museum in Japan. For example, the Shōsōin treasures are exhibited annually in the Nara National Museum (www.narahaku.go.jp), whereas the most recent thematic exhibition in Tokyo National Museum attracted more than three hundred thousand visitors (https://www.tnm.jp). There is a museum dedicated to Hirayama Ikuo (1930-2009), one of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors, as well as a prominent painter known for his lifelong travel along the Silk Road region in pursuit of tracing the transmission route of Buddhism (www.silkroad-museum.jp). The growing interests and attempts in providing multiple narratives of the Silk Road can be observed from the fortieth anniversary exhibition of Ancient Orient Museum in 2018 with the title of "Silk Road Revisited; Humans Created Eurasia" (aom-tokyo.com).

According to the list of past special exhibitions in Tokyo National Museum, there are three distinctive key words in exhibitions regarding the Silk Roads: Central Asia, Buddhism and Shōsōin (https://www.tnm.jp). It is also possible to apply the double binary structure (fig. 1). Central Asia would belong to outer Kara (A), the region that used to be under the control of China, both geographically and conceptually, similarly to the above-mentioned the Western Region or *saiiki*. The Shōsōin repository in today's Nara prefecture, on the other hand, is a representative of Kara-within-Yamato (a), in which Tang material culture was preserved in Japan for centuries and some of them were replicated and incorporated into Japanese culture (b). Buddhism can be in fact put everywhere in the structure but in the Silk Roads context, India as the birthplace is often emphasized, which makes "A" with strong connection with "B". Based on this, three exhibitions representing each three key words were selected. They are good examples to look into the wider socio-cultural and political aspects in the early twenty-first century Japan as well as the objects representative of the Silk Road material culture communicated in Japan.

1. "Shiru kurōdo : kinu to ōgon no michi" (The brocade and gold from the Silk

Road) in 2002 in Tokyo National Museum and Osaka Museum of History.

2. “Hirayama Ikuo to bunkazai hogo : bunkazai hogohō seitei 60-shūnen kinen” (Hirayama Ikuo and the Preservation of Buddhist heritage: the 60th memorial of the legislation for protection of cultural properties) in 2011 in Tokyo National Museum.
3. *Shōsōin* ten: Dai 61-kai (The 61st Annual Exhibition of Shōsōin Treasures in 2017 in Nara National Museum.

These exhibitions will be critically reviewed based on the catalogue and other relevant sources, such as museum websites and categorization of exhibited collections. This is to obtain broad background information and the trends observed in presenting and understanding what is considered as the Silk Roads in modern-day Japan. As an extended discussion, the case studies in Chapter 3 will be revisited in light of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks and museum settings, in order to find possible connections among them and suggest alternative ways of presenting the objects.

The key is to delve into the potential of *Shiruku Rōdō* objects rather than the Silk Roads. The concept of the Silk Road itself can be considered as one of *Karamono*, which was brought from outside of Japan and later developed its own unique agency in a local context. It is noteworthy that the term itself shows its transformative nature, in which *katakana* reading of the English word, *Shiruku Rōdō* (シルクロード) is widely acknowledged rather than the Japanese translation, *kinu no michi* (絹の道). The main difference between the two would be the foreign connotation. *Shiruku Rōdō* is indicative of the Japanese perception towards the Silk Roads under the influence of the West.

4.1. Exhibition Review 1

"The Brocade and Gold from the Silk Road"

Tokyo National Museum. 20.08.-05.10. 2002. / Osaka Museum of History. 23.10-16.12 2002.

4.1.1. Motivation Behind Exhibition

A part of the subtitle of the exhibition "commemoration of the 30th anniversary" indicates that there have been preceding exhibitions held in association with the contemporary Chinese-Japanese diplomatic relationship. The second-year anniversary was celebrated in 1974 under the sponsorship by China, which attracted more than four million visitors (www.cn.emb-japan.go.jp). Mainichi Shimbun newspaper company and Japan-China Friendship Center, a public interest incorporated foundation, collaborated to organize the exhibition of the Dunhuang Mural as the tenth anniversary (Mainichi Shimbun 1982). The focus on the Silk Road relics in China continues in the "Loulan Kingdom and the Eternal Beauty" exhibition in 1992 in National Museum of Nature and Science featuring the four-thousand years old female mummy discovered from Lop Nur Lake in Central Asia (database.asahi.com).

These site-specific exhibitions of the Silk Roads in the latter half of the twentieth century were also motivated by interest from literature and academics. Historical novelist Inoue Yasushi (1907-1991) published fictions titled *Loulan* (1958) and *Dunhuang* (1959) consecutively, which established "Western regions (Seiiki) tales" genre in the post-war Japanese literature (Esenbel 2017, 13). In *Loulan* (1958), the fight for the survival of the kingdom is illustrated with the severe survival condition of the oasis region (Inoue translated by Seitensticker 1981, 7-45). Nagasawa Kazutoshi (1928-2019), the leading specialist on the Silk Road in Japan, published his work on these two sites in 1960s (Nagasawa 1963 and 1965). Therefore, the thirtieth anniversary exhibition can be situated as a culmination of the series of exhibitions with the emphasis on the specific geographical domain, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Province.

4.1.2. Exhibition Overview

All the exhibited objects were brought from museums in China, with the majority coming from the Xinjiang Regional Museum in Urumqi (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 202). The artefacts were exhibited in accordance with the main routes of the Silk Road on steppe and oasis. The Silk Road was explained as the road which "connected Rome in the west and Nara in the east", whereas the modern-day Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Province was situated in the central hub of these routes (*Ibid,* 18-19). Describing Japan as a terminal of the Silk Road is quite prevalent. Although the objects were from outside of Japan, the link was intelligible by referencing some of the objects with Shōsōin and Hōryū-ji. The title is after the platitude "silk was exchanged for the same weight of gold" to overstate the Roman's admiration towards the Chinese silk (Mori and Besshi 1968, 86).

The coverage of 155 objects was diverse in terms of time period, genre and material. One of the earliest objects is Bronze Figure of a Man dated around the fifth century to the third century BC (fig. 6.1), while there is the Manichaean Letter in Sogdian (fig. 6.2) from the tenth century. Exhibited artefacts included plaque, accessory, tile, textile, jar, scroll, statue, clothing, coffin, coins, stamps, manuscripts and so on. As the exhibition title suggests, artefacts such as Golden Mask (fig. 6.3) and Woven Silk (fig. 6.4) were featured as the typical object from the Silk Roads.

The exhibition started from the Steppe Route that flourished as the East-West trade from the prehistoric period. The route expanded from the Black Sea to the Tian Shan Mountains controlled by the Scythians, the nomadic people often associated with golden goods (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 170). It is noteworthy that Tokyo National Museum held an exhibition titled "Sukitai to Shiruku Rōdō (Scythian, Persian and Central Asian art from the Hermitage collection, Leningrad)" in 1969 (www.tnm.jp), suggesting that the association of the ethnic group and the Silk Roads were already perceived in the earlier time. Under the description of Gold Mask (fig. 6.3), the expansive territory of the ethnicity after the Migration Period was mentioned through the several findspots of the relevant objects (*Ibid,* 27).

In the second section, objects from the Northern Oasis Route were introduced with the emphasis on its function of the transmission of Buddhism from the renowned relics, such as the grottos in Dunghang (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 172). The route was explained from the Chinese perspective, from the east to the west, as this region was of strategic importance in managing the Western Region under the Han dynasty and the Tang dynasty (*Ibid,* 34). Still, not all the exhibited artefacts were related to Buddhism nor in accordance with the non-linear design of the exhibition, so that the visitors could comprehend the region from different time period and angle. For example, the 'western' influence from the opposite direction was illustrated in Glass Goblet (fig. 6.5), in which Sassanian and Persian characteristics can be observed (*Ibid,* 45).

The number of the objects exhibited in section three is the largest and also site-specific. All 48 objects were from the Astana Tombs, which is known for rich resources kept in a remarkably good condition thanks to the arid weather (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 56). After thirteen excavations organized between 1959 to 1975, 456 tombs yielded more than 27,000 fragmented documents, together with clothing maintaining its original brilliant colors still today (*Ibid*, 173). Especially the objects from the time under the control of the Tang dynasty were featured, such as the woven silk dyed with a motif of hunter (fig. 6.4). While the hunting motif itself implied the western influence, it appears on silk items not on the silvers as the Sassanians had done (*Ibid,* 89).

Section four zoomed out to the entire region around the Southern Oasis Route. Here again, multidirectional aspects in trade were highlighted. Comparable were wool tapestry (fig. 6.6) and silk garment (fig. 6.7). Interestingly, the former was found after it was remodeled into a pair of trousers (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 108), suggesting that both of them were wearable. It can be imagined that they could choose diverse materials from both the west and the east to tailor its own cloth. Buddhism must have flourished as much as in the northern route but the majority of its heritage has been lost after the destruction of the wooden temples. One of the cave paintings which survived this tragedy was the Seated Buddha (fig. 6.8), a precious source in comprehending the unique characteristics of Gandharan cave paintings (*Ibid*, 135).

The last section called "Languages and Cultures along the Silk Road" attempted to reconstruct the inclusive characteristic of the Xinjiang Province through diverse written records. According to one theory presented at the exhibition, 17 languages and 24 lettering system were used in this region at that time (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2002, 144). Manichaeism was also spread to China after it was propagated in Persia, its birthplace, and Roman Empire (*Ibid*, 160). Although it is presumed as an official document, the combination of the Sogdian letters and colorful illustration can attest the high standard in their arts.

4.1.3. "Silk Roads"

Overall, the sections were organized along the routes to show the uniqueness of each region. Contrary to in Yuba (2002), the multiplicity of the Silk Road was fairly well presented in the exhibition although the inclination towards the Han and Tang dynasties period was prevalent. In fact, the regional specificity rather emphasized the plurality within the Xinjiang province. Still, as the title suggests, what is exhibited was not the plural Silk

Roads but the singular Silk Road. The characteristic of the Silk Road as a static bundle of major routes are illustrated rather than as dynamic networks, as widely acknowledged today (en.unesco.org). Nara period Japan as the "terminal" of the Silk Roads would also be a part of this discourse, even though there were objects that traveled further to the east and were exported from Japan. This multi directional connectivity cannot be visualized if the Silk Road only concerns the Han or Tang dynasty period China. It seems that this limitation on the time frame was derived from the fact that the Silk Roads objects were often too exotic to relate to Japan. Apart from the attractiveness and the contemporary diplomatic connotations, there needs to be reasonable relation between them and Japan in organizing an exhibition. However, this case suggests that leaning on the connection can led to tone down the multiplicity of the Silk Roads.

Fig. 6.1 Bronze Figure of a Man. 5^{th}-3^{rd} century BC. 40cm (H). Fishery Unit of the 71st Army Unit, Xinyuan Country. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.2 Manichaean Letter in Sogdian. 10^{th} century AD. 26×268 cm. Bezceklik Grottoes, Turpan City. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.3 Gold Mask with Precious Stone Inlay. 4^{th}-6^{th} century BC . 17×16.5 cm. Tomb at Boma, Zhaosu Country. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.4 Resist-Dyed Hunter on Plain-Wave Silk. Tang dynasty, 7^{th}-8^{th} century AD. 44×29 cm. From Tomb 191 Astana, Turpan City. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.5 Glass Goblet with Disks. 6^{th}-7^{th} century AD. 10.4×19.6 cm. Collected in Kaxgar (Kashi) City. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.6 Wool Tapestry with Warrior and Centaur. 1^{st}-3^{rd} century AD . 116×48 cm. Tomb 1, Cemetery 1 at Sampula, Lop Country. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.7 Long-Sleeved Garment with Checkered Pattern in Brocade. Han-Jin dynasties, 1^{st}-5^{th} century AD. 122×225 cm. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

Fig. 6.8 Seated Buddha. Han-Jin dynasties, 3^{rd}-5^{th} century AD . 55×37 cm. Temple 61 at Karadong, Yutian Country. Courtesy of Osaka Museum of History.

4.2. Exhibition Review 2

“Hirayama Ikuo and the preservation of Buddhist heritage: the 60th memorial of the legislation for protection of cultural properties”
Tokyo National Museum. 18.01-06.03 2011.

4.2.1. Hirayama Ikuo (1930–2009)

As a prominent Japanese-style painter in the post-war period Japan, Hirayama dedicated his life to the dissemination and the protection of the Buddhist and Silk Roads culture. Born in Hiroshima, his experience of the exposure to the radiation of the atomic bomb was the starting point to achieve world peace through the widespread protection of the heritage across the world (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2011, 5). It is known that “*Bukkyō Denrai* (仏教伝来)” (Transmission of Buddhism), one of the earliest works that destined his career as an artist, was inspired by a small newspaper article suggesting “the carrying of the Olympic torch for the Tokyo Olympic Games via the Silk Road” (hirayama-museum.or.jp). He supported young artists and scholars through the private organization in the late twentieth centuries, after he himself became the first recipient of the UNESCO fellowship in 1961 (Esenbel 2017, 15). The majority of his achievement and collection are now kept in Hirayama Ikuo SilkRoad Museum and Hirayama Ikuo Museum.

4.2.2. Exhibition Overview

The exhibition provides an overview of Buddhist culture that Hirayama wished to preserve, by focusing on the statues and the murals along the transmission route stretching from India to Cambodia (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2011, 5). This exhibition was organized approximately one year after his unexpected death, so that it eventually emphasized the commemorative aspects rather than celebrating the legislation for protection of cultural properties (fig. 7.1). It is composed of “Care and Continuity of Cultural Heritage: The Path of Buddhism” (Part I) and “Realizing the Fruits of Cultural Heritage Preservation; The *Daitō Saiiki* Murals” (Part II) (*Ibid*, 188-183). In PartI, 49 Buddhist and the Silk Roads cultural artifacts were exhibited together with his 6 works painted during more than one hundred-fifty times of travel across the world throughout his life. The majority of the objects were statues kept in Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum (fig. 7.2 and 7.3). It has five subsections according to regions; 1. India and Pakistan — Mathura and Gandhara 2. Afghanistan — Bamiyan 3. China — *Saiiki* (The Western Regions) 4. China — Dunhuang 5. China — Xi'an, Luoyang, and Datong 6. Cambodia — Angkor Wat. These were chosen based on his private funded projects, such as Japanese Committee for the Protection from Dispersal of Cultural Properties for Bamiyan Caves (*Ibid*, 43), Dunhuang Grottoes Preservation, Research, and Exhibition Center (*Ibid*, 79), Angkor Heritage Site Rescue Committee (*Ibid*, 105). These accomplishments take shape in a series of thirteen massive paintings measuring 37 meters in total, which took more than twenty years to complete (*Ibid*, 119) (fig. 7.3). The "*Daitō Saiiki* Murals" was inspired by and named after "*Daitō Saiiki ki* (大唐西域記)" (Great Tang Records on the Western Region) by Xuanzang (玄奘), the Buddhist monk and traveler of the Tang dynasty period, and this was the first presentation of the entire mural to the public after it was dedicated to Yakushi-ji Temple in Nara prefecture in 2000 (*Ibid*, 183) (fig. 7.4). The paintings were composed along the travel routes of Xuanzang from Xi'an to Naranda reflecting the landscape at day and night (*Ibid*, 120-121).

4.2.3. Westernized Perspective

Contrary to Hirayama's strong interest in preserving Buddhist culture, the earliest religious inspiration was Christianity in European countries where he studied as a first recipient of the fellowship in 1962 with the thematic research of "Comparison of Eastern and Western Religious Art"; "His contact with the tradition of religious art in Europe crystallized within him the idea that the future of Japanese-style paintings should be based on eastern traditions of India, the Silk Road and China, including Buddhism, just as western art is based on the Christian tradition." (hirayama-museum.or.jp). It is noteworthy that his Buddhist-oriented works as a Japanese painter were formed based on the strong connectivity of western arts with Christianity. He attempted to transcribe western ideas into Japanese culture in pursuit of its cultural and religious origin in Dunhuang caves (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2011, 164-165).

The narrative of Buddhism and the Silk Roads in Japan that Hirayama advocated was highly under the influence of western knowledge and concept or Japanese Orientalism (Chapter 3). In fact, this is visible not only in the above-mentioned relation of Buddhism with Olympic games, but also in his official entry to "the Silk Road" through Afghanistan was after the expedition to the cave monasteries in Cappadocia, Turkey in 1966 (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan *et al.* 2011, 166). His concept of the geographical and chronological Silk Roads was formed in the perspective from west to east, not the other way around. Although this exhibition is composed solely from the artefacts from Asia, its underlying aspiration for Asianism and expedition were not formed within Asia but born out of the Japanese attempts to become the West (Chapter 3).

This perspective is well reflected in the organization of the exhibition. It started from India as the primary starting point of the propagation of Buddhism and Cambodia as the easternmost endpoint of the transmission. In addition, the fact that no exhibited artefacts were from Japan, except for Hirayama's works, indicated that his commanding view towards the Silk Road merely as a bystander rather than a part of it. Even his own paintings, especially the "*Daitō Saiiki* Murals" were a reflection of another Orientalism by China (e.g. *Hua-yi o*rder) that was dominant before the arrival of the West, in which *Saiiki* was created and marginalized as a periphery. These features are tied to Said (1978)'s argument problematizing the power relationship in which "the Orient is *watched"*, while "the European, whose sensibility tours the Orient, is a watcher, never involved, always detached..." (Said 1978, 138). Whether the Orient is 'orientalized' or not in a strict sense, what matters is the fundamental power relationship in terms of objectification. The achievement of the Japanese artist towards the Silk Road heritage can only be understood in the context that Hirayama almost unconsciously participated in reinforcing the controversial Japanese Orientalism (Chapter 3).

Fig. 7.1 Poster of "Hirayama Ikuo and the Preservation of Buddhist Heritage Exhibition. (http://www.asahi.com)

Fig. 7.2 “Destroyed Great Buddha of Bamiyan” by Hirayama Ikuo. 116.7×80.3 cm. 2003. Courtesy of Hirayama Ikuo Museum.

Fig. 7.3 “Statue of the Buddha in a Sitting Position”. Pakistan, Gandhara in the 3^{rd}-4^{th} centuries AD. 97.0 cm (H). Courtesy of Hirayama Ikuo Silk road Museum.

Fig. 7.4 The *Daitō Saiiki* Murals on display. Courtesy of Asahi Shimbun (2011).

4.3. Exhibition Review 3

"The 61st annual exhibition of Shōsōin treasures: the 20th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor"

Nara National Museum 24.10-12.11 2009.

4.3.1. Imperial Connotations

This exhibition is a part of the annual seasonal public presentation of the Shōsōin material culture that takes place in Autumn (www.narahaku.go.jp). It is surprising that there were still several objects presented for the first time, even after seventy exhibitions. The association with the Imperial Family can be seen from the exhibitions celebrating the eightieth birthday of the royal couple in 2014 and the ascension to the throne of the new emperor in 2019. The relevant exhibition was held in Tokyo National Museum in 2019, which also celebrated the new regime of the Imperial Court (www.tnm.jp). This relevance seems plausible given the fact that Shōsōin is under the jurisdiction of Imperial Household Agency, as a part of the cultural property inherited in the court from the Nara period (www.kunaicho.go.jp). However, in terms of presentation, the primary organizer and the venue of the annual Shōsōin exhibition is not the repository, but rather the Nara National Museum that is known as the largest collection of Buddhist statues (www.narahaku.go.jp).

4.3.2. Between Imperial and National

The history of national museums in Japan cannot be discussed without mentioning the World Expositions in the nineteenth century Europe. The antecedent of today's Tokyo National Museum organized the very first modern exhibition of Japanese crafts as a rehearsal for the upcoming Vienna Exposition in 1874 (https://www.tnm.jp). A similar exhibition was held in Nara as well, but rather to raise the awareness of the cultural heritage in Japan, such as Buddhist statues and Shōsōin treasures (www.narahaku.go.jp). Contrary to the earlier motives of Tokyo National Museum, in whose work the eyes of the West were the central attention, Shōsōin and its artefacts now targeted the Japanese citizens. The 1875 exhibition presented 17,025 objects and attracted more than 170,000 visitors within two months (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 10). It took several decades for the treasures to be open to public in the national museum context. The administrative jurisdiction of the repository went through several changes until it became

Nara Imperial Museum (today's Nara National Museum) in 1908 (*Ibid*, 11). The first annual Shōsōin exhibition was held in Nara National Museum in 1946, after the special exhibition in Tokyo National Museum in 1940, which marked more than forty thousand visitors in twenty days (*Ibid*, 11-12). It seems that presenting the previously recognized as sacred treasure to public took some efforts but eventually played an important role to establish the basis of modern-day national museums across Japan.

4.3.3. Exhibition Overview

In the 61st exhibition, 12 out of 66 objects on display were displayed to the public for the first time (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 1). The main attractions included Emperor Shomu (701-756)'s beloved objects, such as the penknife (fig. 7.1), the calligraphy scrolls handwritten by Empress Kōmyō (1322-1380) (fig. 7.2), whereas the Biwa Lute (fig. 7.3-a and 7.3-b), the offering box (fig. 7.4) and the round bronze mirror (fig. 7.5) were featured as "exotic" objects (*Ibid*, 1). Majority of the objects were crafts even though there are paper scrolls, panting and clothing, possibly in accordance with the featured objects. As *Kokka Chinpō Chō* (国家珍宝帳), the "List of the Nation's Rare Treasures" did (*Ibid*, 7-8), the exhibition paid a great attention in the order of the artefacts, in which the featured or renowned appeared within the first twenty objects.

The penknife (fig. 8.1) was originally attached to a leather belt together with four other knifes and a medicine bag, which were enjoyed mostly as fashionable item among the elites (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009b, 12). This is relevant to *Kinkarakawa* in a sense that the originally the practical items became a part of a fashion trend (Chapter 2, Case Study 3). The green-blue handle and the sheath were decorated with the *Bachiru* technique, by which design motifs were engraved on the dyed surface of the ivory (shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp). Swords in various size and decorations were dedicated to the repository often as a treasure (fig. 3.3-a).

The works of Wang Xizhi (王羲之) (303-361) or "Saint of Calligraphy" were highly praised and emulated by the Nara elites (*Ibid*, 13). His continuous reputation in today's Japan can be presumed from the special exhibition in 2013, which was held for the fortieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China as well as the 140th anniversary of the establishment of Tokyo National Museum (https://www.tnm.jp). While the Japanese replication often attempts to imitate Wang' style, this version (fig. 8.2) was highly differentiated, so that the originality of the handwriting of the empress is highlighted (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 18).

The four-fret lute with four strings is called *Biwa* (琵琶) in Japanese and became popular in Japan after the influence from the Sui and Tang dynasty (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009b, 16). Together with the lute from the Case Study 1 (fig. 3.6-a~b), there are in total five *Biwa* kept in the repository and all of them are characterized with pear shapes and curved neck (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 28). "Lotus motifs, *hōsōge* flowers, six-petal flowers with leaves, as well as various birds are magnificently rendered in marquetry on the body, neck and tuning pegs....and on the head piece and other parts carved from boxwood" (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009b, 16) (fig. 8.3-a). Hunting scene (fig. 8.3-b) depicted in the backside are noted with the Western Asian influence, which also has a closer resemblance to the tomb wall in Goguryeo (BC37-AD668) dynasty (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 28).

Precious materials, such as black, white and red sandalwood as well as aloes wood or 沈香 (*jinkō*), were amply used to decorate the treasure box (fig. 8.4-a) (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009b, 40). These woods were cut into the lozenge shape on the surface, whereas the dyed ivory technique was used on the foot and the inside was covered with silk textiles (fig. 8.4-b) (shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp). Although the material used was different from *maki-e* technique in Case Study 1, the stylistic distinction by Hidaka (1998) can be applied. The angular shape with distinctive patterns differentiating each facet are clearly that of the Tang style.

The bronze mirror too, was made of exotic materials, such as amber, turquoise and mother-of-pearl in applying *karahana* pattern on the surface (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009a, 25) (fig. 8.5). It is also one of the objects with clear provenance among the Shōsōin treasures, which was made in Tang dynasty China and brought to Japan, according to the chemical composition analysis (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2009b, 16). Seyama (2002)'s argument is helpful here as well, in which the patterns with frames developing inwards were characteristic of Tang period flower ornament.

4.4.4. Widening Possibilities

Overall, the exhibition well represented the multiplicity of *Karamono* in Shōsōin with a focus on the local specificity. Although the objects discussed here are limited in number, some connections with case studies can be found. The Shōsōin artefacts are understood as a good example as a platform that accommodates and intermediates both Japaneseness and foreignness, in communicating the objects which are technically property of Japan but with foreign provenance. In discussing the Silk Roads in Japanese context, Shōsōin artefacts can continually be referenced and the possibility of their potential applicability should not be underestimated. However, at the same time, asserting the repository as the "terminal" requires due diligence, since it can also connote the imagery of anywhere but Japan as a legitimate heir of Asian or Buddhist culture. Other countries establish their own narratives that constitute multiplicity with in the region. The artefacts did not cease to develop their agency even after they arrived in Japan. Not to mention the objects from the different time period and region as well as Tang dynasty artefacts can definitely contribute to expand the perspective.

Fig. 8.1 Knife with Green-stained Ivory Handle and Sheath with *Bachiru* Decoration. Handle 9.0 cm, Sheath 14.0 cm, Blade 7.9 cm (L). North Section 5 in Shōsōin repository. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.2 Gakkiron (essay). Dated October 3rd, 16th Year of Tenpyō (744 AD). 25.3×84.0 cm. North Section 3 in Shōsōin repository. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.3-a Biwa Lute with Back of *Shitan* Decorated with Marquetry, No.2. 98.7×41.7 cm. South Section 101 in Shōsōin repository. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.3-b Backside Design of Biwa Lute. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.4-a Box Covered with *Jinkō* and Decorated with Marquetry, No. 12. 28.0×44.6×14.6 cm. Middle Section 142 in Shōsōin repository. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.4-b Inside of *Jinkō* Box. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

Fig. 8.5 Round Bronze Mirror Decorated on the Back with Mother-of-pearl Inlay, No. 2. 39.3cm (D). South Section 70 in Shōsōin repository. Courtesy of Imperial Household Agency.

4.4 Discussion

Several key points can be identified from the three different Silk Roads thematic exhibitions reviewed above. The commemorative aspects are prevalent in diplomacy, prominent figures and imperial identity respectively in the exhibition titles. However, in doing so, they often impose restrictions in the way of representation of objects. This is particularly the case in "The Brocade and Gold from the Silk Road", in which Central Asia was focused on as a core region of the Silk Roads, in accordance with the continuing strong Japanese interest in the heritage from the Xinjiang province. Even with the reference to the artefacts in Japan, such as the Shōsōin treasures, it is obvious that the Silk Roads in this context is exclusive to multivocal perspectives culturally and geographically. The relevance seems to be forcibly made to justify the Japanese exoticism towards the foreign objects. This orientalizing gaze can be observed in "Hirayama Ikuo and the Preservation of Buddhist Heritage" as well, even though it places Buddhism as a main subject, which is generally considered to be an easier way to make the connection to Japanese culture rather than the Silk Roads alone. In fact, Hirayama's view reflects Japan as the West that carefully excluded itself to maintain the authoritative orientalists' perspective towards the objects from the Silk Roads. The projection of Hirayama as a savior of the cultural heritage needs to be examined carefully, since his standpoint as an advocator of Asianism is deeply rooted with Japanese Orientalism. In contrast, the annual Shōsōin Exhibition is relatively helpful in suggesting the alternative approaches in presenting the Silk Roads in Japan, given its long tradition as Japanese exhibition of the foreign artefacts in Japan as well as the relation to the objects discussed in the preceding chapter. Nevertheless, the relevance is almost only applicable for the objects in Nara period brought from the contemporary Tang dynasty.

What would be a better way to present the Silk Roads in Japanese museum context? As discussed earlier, *Karamono* as a unifying concept of foreign objects in Japan including their remodeled Japanese objects would be of importance. In fact, the concept of the Silk Roads itself can be considered as one of those brought outside from Japan and developed uniquely in a local context. Nevertheless, the Silk Roads have not been conceived as *Shiruku Rōdō*. Even long after being incorporated into the Japanese vocabularies, the difference between the two was merely alphabetical not conceptual. As long as the concept is communicated in the museum context, it will be necessary for museums and scholars to revisit and develop their own perspective towards *Shiruku Rōdō*, rather than continually endorsing the foreign concept with all of its problems.

The development of New Museology in the past few decades is highly helpful to address the issues. 'Free-choice learning' (Falk *et al.* 2006) is one of the emerging ideas borrowed from external disciplines to enhance visitor experience by encouraging active and spontaneous participations. This is in line with the shift in the function of museum; "(t)he museum became what it had rarely been: delightfully contentious. Gone, so it seemed, was any notion of the museum as trusted purveyor of knowledge and learning- 'disinterested' and apolitical; who could now claim anything as neutral?" (Knell 2007, 3). If the museum as a concept is transforming itself to platform that invites and coordinates active discussions on controversial topics, it should also be the case in Japan.

Overall, a bottom-up approach would be helpful for the future interpretation and communication of *Shiruku Rōdō* in the Japanese museum context. Not only what *Shiruku Rōdō* implies in particular context in relation to the exhibited objects, but also the unique historical background of the term in Japan should be explained with reference to the danger of Orientalism and exoticism. In providing this view, however, it is necessary that the organizer assists the visitor rather than imposes a particular idea, so that visitor themselves can actively question the conventional perception they have had towards *Shiruku Rōdō*. For instance, as an introductory section in the exhibition, the Silk Roads in different language can be juxtaposed, such as (the) Silk Road(s), Seidenstraße, 絲綢之路 and シルクロード, so that the visitors can experience the various narrative in linguistic level and possibly come up with the questions, such as "How are they different from one another when they share the same literal definition?" Encouraging an active learning process in this way, one that is multidirectional could be highly effective in expanding narratives instead of simply attempting to inform viewers, such as by showing textual information available on the internet.

The imagery of Japan as a mere recipient of material culture should also be revised. *Karamono* have been recontextualized and remodeled after stepping into the archipelago (Chapter 2), so does *Shiruku Rōdō*. This is also to encourage the potential to develop local narratives yet to be materialized. How were objects differently perceived in the post-Shōsōin period? The object biography is being written right at the moment as objects are presented in the exhibition after they arrived in the repository. The foreign commodities can affect the contemporary material culture without even changing the shape of itself. For instance, *Koseto* ware was made with the reference to Celadons but they did not look exactly the same in the end, so that the former cannot necessary be equated as the "copy" of the latter (Case Study 2). The same thing can apply to the relationship between Shōsōin and our perception of *Shiruku Rōdō*. The formation of general imagery of the repository has developed by referring to the collection but it must have gone through several changes since the Nara period. Experiencing the objects with at our own eyes as well as those of the Nara people can helpful and both of them coexist as the ceramics or the binary structure (fig.1) did. Here again, it would be important to encourage the contemporary visitors to develop their own view rather than reinforcing the point of view from the distant past.

It is also important to focus on various agencies of the objects as well as historical background. As seen with *Kinkarakawa* (Case Study 3), what enabled them to be perceived as “foreign” even after they were transformed into Japanese product was the exotic material and patterns. The material was reused in the reduced size overtime, but their exotic materiality had been continually in effect. It was necessary to look at the objects in different contexts, from the original wallpaper to tobacco pouches, to empirically understand the materiality. The historical information regarding trade with the Portuguese and the Dutch can be presented too, but not in a dominant way to delimit the potentiality. In the Shōsōin themed exhibition too, treasures and the relevant objects can be looked at by themselves. For example, in introducing the patterned boxes from different background, the exhibition specialists can set out an interactive section. The visitor could face the two boxes with different shapes, the angular one with distinctive sections or Tang style and the other with reduced edges, the Japanese style. They will be first presented without any surface decoration, so that the visitor as craftsmen can choose the variety of patterns for decoration. Each visitor can exchange the opinions as to their selection of the specific patterns in the particular shape of the box. In this way, a visitor can experience to what extent the shape of the box can affect the selection of the decoration technique.

The museum communication on the Silk Roads in Japan can be improved from various directions, such as linguistic, biographical and kinesthetic approaches. The concept of *Karamono* is highly operative in both theoretical and practical level. It helps to bring foreign material culture in Japanese context and enabling them to add various perspectives in object biographies and materiality. This approach can also contribute to revise Orientalism in Japan, by exploring the balance between local specificity and global academic outlooks.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

There were inherent limitations to this research in the scope of a master's thesis, which entails debatable components as well as improvements. The alphabetical order is in accordance with the degree of the achievement. Key attempts explored in the preceding chapters were;

a. Collaborating the local mechanism of perception of foreign culture in Japan and global theoretical frameworks, such as Material Cultural Studies and Orientalism
b. Highlightening the active agencies of foreign material culture and decorative designs in Japanese cultural sphere through empirical analysis of case studies
c. Challenging the Orientalist discourse in academic and museum context of Japan by providing alternative ways of presenting the Silk Road objects

Even though there is always a risk to bring the indigenous concept into a global context, it was demonstrated that incorporating 'foreign' methodologies and theories can be highly helpful in the study of Japanese culture. However, in doing so, sufficient contextualization of terminology is essential to engage inclusive discussions. *Karamono* is a good example in widening the possibility of the cross-cultural collaborative approaches in the future, in a way that the term designates and entails *the Other*. It was this otherness that constitutes the Japanese culture together with its own. Initially as a reaction to the loss of external but fundamental cultural identity, contrasting but mutually reinforcing *Kara* and *Yamato* eventually became the core of the cultural identity of Japan throughout the history (Chino 1994). The Japanese was never satisfied with simply appreciating the foreignness as it is but rather actively incorporated the favorable aspects, so that it could maintain the symbiotic mechanism with shifting counterparts. This tendency can be observed in the scale of object as well as on textual records. Not only humans but also objects were active actants in the cultural historical context and the mechanism.

There is always a power relationship in looking at exotic commodities in a specific manner. It is widely understood that the West had orientalized the East through discourses. However, majority of the scholars is nowadays reluctant to accept the highly dichotomized theory proposed by Said (1978) to develop broad discussions in response to indigenous multiplicity. Strict persistence on the binary can create exception, such as those which has characteristics of both the East and the West. The act of Japan in the East as the West during modern period too, had been discussed without reflecting on the underlying double binary structure continuing from the preceding period. Upon establishing itself as a leading country in Asia, Japan replaced China with the West by stigmatizing it as the country belongs to the past. It was skillfully executed by rephrasing the desire of imperialism into the convincing narrative that can also retain the interrelationship of Japanese and Chinese culture. To describe and reiterate Japan's triumph over China in any level should be regarded as complicity in Orientalism which entails marginalization to denote itself as the center.

Unfortunately, the Silk Roads implemented the Orientalism discourse in both academic and museum context in Japan rather than revisiting the problematic aspects. It can be observed from the preference in the foreign objects in organizing exhibition, to the reiteration of the controversial imperialist perspectives. The current status can be partially revisited by utilizing the methodology and data from case studies. The empirical analysis enabled us to see the active agency of material culture took place during the incorporative process in Japan. This means that the objects from the distant past does not entirely belong to the provenance but continually update their biography even after imported to Japan or kept in museums. The concept of the Silk Roads as well, has been and will be transformed in the local manner. Rather than conforming to the western perspective, delving into *Siruku Rōdō* in Japan will be the key to develop discussions in prospect. Still, it is with regret that the suggestion remained rudimentary within this thesis.

The questions as to the role of *Karamono* in the past and the future can be answered by focusing on its agency. Chapter 2 illustrated its active engagement in the history of Japan, which is not often visible from the textual records. It was often understood that the contact with the outer world was determined by key historical events and therefore was the inflow of exotic material culture. On the contrary, they were continually imported and recontextualized regardless of the incidents and contributed to the formation of the local gaze towards foreignness. Based on this notable agency and the theoretical framework from Chapter 3, the final chapter suggested the potential of *Karamono* as conceptual and functional tool to ameliorate the current museum settings in Japan. Particularly recommendable are the bottom-up approaches that encourage the visitors to dig into various aspects of the exhibited objects to formulate each own interpretation. This enable to add numerous entries in the biography of foreign objects in the future, instead of fixating it in the distant past.

There are several publications to recommend for further research. In "The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World" (Riello and Gerritsen 2016), we can see the various perspective in contemplating the mobility and the material agency. "(V)iewing objects as traded commodities that have been moved from

A to B is not enough" (*Ibid*, 7). In *Karamono's* case too, "A" became "a" and further to "b" (fig.1). It is also possible to trace the other way around, as there are several cases that Japanese replication was exported to the provenance, or moved "b" to "A". The temporal exhibition titled "Encounters; The meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800" in 2004 in Victoria and Albert Museum was indicative of the ongoing studies on the agency of material culture in local and global scale. What is illustrated is the mutual exoticism across the regions beyond the unilateral orientalist's gaze towards the East. Finally, as one of the most influential and potential researches on the Silk Roads in Japanese scholarship, "Siruku Rōdō to Tōteikoku" (The Silk Roads and The Tang Empire) by Moriyasu (2007) can be suggested. In order to overcome both Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism, he attempted to investigate the Silk Roads with the indigenous data from the Central Asia.

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Abstract

The idea of *Karamono* is widely revisited by the recent Japanese scholarship. Often understood as a specific genre of Chinese commodities populated among elites in middle age, it also designates foreign material culture imported by Japan in general. Similarly, majority of the Japanese words with *kara* prefix has the connotation of "Tang" as well as "foreign". The origin can be traced back to the collapse of the Tang dynasty, when the contemporary subordinate countries experienced the loss of the cultural anchorage and struggled to establish their identity. Japan created a unique cognitive structure that can accommodate both deeply entrenched Chinese culture and its own. This strategy was persistent with numerous alternations of the counterparts. *Karamono* too, can be studied in line with this specific mechanism and cultural background..

This thesis aimed to collaborate *Karamono*, the local specific term, with global theoretical frameworks, such as museum communication and material cultural analysis, to explore the broader applicability in prospect. Especially the Silk Roads objects brought to Japan are targeted for its cross-continental and contentious characteristics. The empirical analysis of the case studies suggests the significance of *Karamono* as an active agency throughout the history of Japan, rather than merely an exoctic commoditiy. At the same time, the localized Orientalism was discussed to delineate the Japanese gaze behind the perception of foreign objects in relation to the establishment of the study of the Silk Roads in the modern period, which contributed to satisfy the desire of colonialism, albeit conceptually. The controversial standpoint of Japan as a country in the East with the power of the West is still prevalent in museum context as well.

Museums functions as active platform for potential debades instead of implanting information. In organizing museum exhibitions, it is desirable to setup an environment that can encourage the visitors to ask questions on the subject. This is particularly the case in the Silk Roads thematic exhibitions in Japan, in which discourse is often transmitted as a common knowledge and the displayed objects are fixated in the distant past devoid of the possibilities of up to date interpretation. It can be approached from the revision on the way of contextualization to incorporate multi perspectives but also by interactive communications with artefacts, rather than simply looking at them.

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