Charles Ricketts and Japan:
British Japonisme of the Second Generation from the 1880s to the 1930s

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Abstract

Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) was a versatile British artist who worked as a theatre designer, painter, sculptor, book designer, art critic, connoisseur, and collector. This thesis explores Ricketts’s Japonisme: the interaction between Ricketts and Japanese art and people through his work and collection from the 1880s to the 1930s. This represents the comparatively little-explored period of the second generation of Japonists, who flourished in London.

Chapter 1 examines the development of the Japanese art collection that Ricketts and his partner Charles Shannon jointly established. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the collection bequeathed to the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Chapter 2 focuses on Ricketts as a scholarly Japonist. Following an exploration of his interaction with Japanese people in London, the chapter explores Japanese art studies in Britain at that time and Ricketts’s Japanese art criticism regarding ukiyo-e artist, Kitagawa Utamaro and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 in London.

Chapter 3 discusses Ricketts’s artworks and their connection to Japanese art. It explores his theatre designs, book designs, paintings, and sculptures, especially theatrical costume designs.
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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis, “Charles Ricketts and Japan: British Japonisme of the Second Generation from the 1880s to the 1930s” is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.
Introduction

Historical Context of Britain and Japan

The beginning of Anglo-Japanese relations dates back to the end of the 15th century. In 1600, British navigator, William Adams arrived in Japan. He met Tokugawa Ieyasu who became the first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, who designated Adams as a diplomatic advisor. This situation made the East India Company interested in Japan, and Captain John Saris visited the country on one of the company’s voyages in 1613. Saris presented a diplomatic document by James I and gifts to Ieyasu, and Ieyasu approved, for the first time, trade with Britain.

The Tokugawa shogunate strengthened international trade regulations from the latter half of the 1610s. Additionally, there was a Japanese trade race between Britain and the Netherlands, causing Britain to imagine that trade with Japan was likely to yield low profit, Britain closed its trading house in Japan in 1623, and 17th-century trade relations between Britain and Japan lasted only 10 years.

In the Edo period (1603-1868), the shogunate adopted a national seclusion policy for more than 200 years. The next opportunity for Japan and Britain to re-establish diplomatic relations came in the middle of the 19th century. From the early 19th century, Western ships often approached Japanese ports because of the increase of commerce in the Pacific Ocean. At that time, British military force and economic power was stronger
than Japan’s. Eventually, Japan concluded the Anglo-Japanese Convention in 1854 and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858, unequal treaties for Japan advantageous to Britain.¹

In 1859, the British counsel general, Rutherford Alcock opened the consulate general in Edo. In 1868, the Tokugawa shogunate was overthrown and the Meiji era commenced (1868-1912). As a result, interactions between Britain and Japan began to intensify. For Japan, Britain was the biggest importing and exporting country. Japan imported wool, cotton fabrics, spinning machines, and steam engines from Britain, British imports multiplying more than 20 times from 1873 to 1920.²

As a result, the Japanese government pressed forward with Westernisation and modernisation. Between 1894 and 1895, Japan was fighting, ultimately successfully, the Sino-Japanese War, revealing its increase national wealth and military power. In 1902, Britain and Japan, both seeking to stop Russian extension in the Far-East, concluded the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; Japan successfully defeating Russia in the Russian-Japanese

War of 1904 to 1905. At the beginning of the 20th century, the remnant of the Edo era in Japan had faded.

At the same time, in the middle of the 19th century, British government officials were involved not only in Anglo-Japanese diplomacy but artistic exchanges, acquiring a rich array of Japanese cultural artefacts. For example, Laurence Oliphant, assistant to the British diplomat, James Bruce, the 8th Earl of Elgin who concluded the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce, included reproductions of Katsushika Hokusai, Utagawa Hiroshige, and Utagawa Kunisada in his travelogue of Japan in 1859.

In addition, interpreter and diplomat, Ernest Satow collected rare Japanese books and ukiyo-e prints by Torii Kiyonaga, Toshusai Sharaku, Kitagawa Utamaro and other artists, and brought them back with him to Britain. His art and book collections are now stored in the British Museum and the University of Cambridge library.

Moreover, in 1863, Alcock published The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three

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Years’ Residence in Japan, discussing Japanese artists, such as Hokusai and Hiroshige.⁶ Alcock also helped to collect exhibits for the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, the Japanese court displaying some 623 Japanese artworks,⁷ famously stimulating British interest in Japanese art and culture. Through his experience at the exhibition, Alcock published Art and Art Industries in Japan in 1878, which introduced many kinds of Japanese artefacts to British audiences.

Furthermore, in 1910, the Japan-British Exhibition was held in London to strengthen the cultural and industrial relationship between Britain and Japan, following the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. The Japanese government attached importance to this exhibition as the opportunity to display their national power, and the government permitted the transport and exhibit of Japanese national treasures in London. Compared with the Japanese section, the British section was comparatively modest. However, over 8 million people visited the exhibition, many seeing for the first time rare Japanese artefacts.

Peaceful relations did not last very long. In 1914, Japan participated in World War I because of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In 1921, Britain, Japan, France, and the United States, the victorious nations of the First World War, concluded the Four-Power

⁷ The International Exhibition of 1862: The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industrial Department, (London: Clay, son & Taylor; Clowes & Son; Peter & Galpin; Spottiswoode & Co., 1862), Vol.4, 89-101.
Treaty. However, in the 1930s, the relationship between Britain and Japan became tense, and, in World War II, the countries became adversaries. It was not until 1951 that Anglo-Japanese diplomatic relations were normalised based on the Treaty of San Francisco.

**Britain and Japan from the Late 19th Century to the Early 20th Century: Art Historical Contexts**

As the trade between Japan and Western countries grew, Japanese art spread around the world in the late 19th century, inspiring many artists, a trend that became known, initially in French, as “Japonisme.” The period, when the central figure of this thesis, multi-talented artist Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) lived, was in the middle of this age of Japonisme, and the studies on Japanese art by the Japanophiles flourished. Watanabe Toshio examined the history of the use of the term “Japonisme,” which seemed to have been employed for the first time in 1872 by Philippe Burty and Jules Claretie.8

In the 1980s, the study of Japonisme accelerated its development.9 In 1985, Kawamura Joichiro reported that he found a leaflet of the exhibition, which displayed

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Ricketts and Shannon’s Hokusai collection in Paris in 1909, at the British Library.\(^{10}\)

Despite this interesting finding, the study of Ricketts’s Japonisme did not gain much ground after 1985. The mainstream study of Japonisme and its public recognition was French Japonisme, especially the relationship between Japonisme and Impressionism, making art historically canonical the French term and experience.\(^{11}\)

French Japonisme began in earnest in 1867, following the Japanese exhibits at the International Exposition that year. Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh famously collected ukiyo-e prints, and have been frequently featured in books and exhibitions, detailing their debts to the colour schemes and compositional strategies of Hokusai and Hiroshige.\(^{12}\)

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1988 also witnessed the major *Japonisme* exhibition in Paris and Tokyo which displayed about 420 artefacts from Western countries and Japan. The exhibition included various Japonisme artists, alongside copies of ukiyo-e prints by Symbolist artist, Gustave Moreau, who Ricketts respected, as we shall see. Among the exhibits, there were artworks by James MacNeill Whistler and British artists, including Simeon Solomon, Christopher Dresser, Ford Madox Brown, Mortimer Menpes, Albert Moore, and, most importantly for this thesis, Ricketts’s book design for *The Sphinx* in 1894 (Fig. 1), which I return to in Chapter 3. The exhibition catalogue characterised Ricketts as follows:

Illustrator, engraver, painter, and critic in Britain. After a stay in France, he entered the Lambeth School of Art in London in 1885. At the school, he met his life-time friend and collaborator, Charles Shannon. In 1891, he painted illustrations for Oscar Wilde’s book with Shannon. […] They were interested in typography and wood engraving. They were also collectors of Japanese art. […] Their collection is now housed in the British Museum.

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This limited summary focused on the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the first half of Ricketts’s life, making no mention of his important theatrical design in the early 20th century, which I return to centre stage in this thesis.

Scholarly interest in British Japonisme, meanwhile, was also growing at the beginning of the 1990s, British art studies frequently following on belatedly in the wake of canonical French art history in this period. Between 1991 and 1992, the exhibition *Japan and Britain – An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930* was held at the Barbican Art Gallery in London and the Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo. This included about 400 British and Japanese artefacts, revealing the art interaction between the two countries.16

This exhibition showed various aspects of Ricketts’s works, especially his theatre design, including Ricketts and Shannon’s magazine, *The Dial*, no. 1 (1889); their book design for *The Sphinx*; as well as Ricketts’s stage and costume design for *Salome* (1919), and *The Mikado* (1926). The catalogue characterised Ricketts as:

a versatile artist, painter, sculptor, wood-engraver, book-illustrator and stage designer. He also wrote on art, and together with his friend Charles Shannon (1863-1937) built up an exquisite art collection ranging from antiquities and Old Masters drawing to Japanese paintings and prints.17

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Whilst the exhibition briefly acknowledged Ricketts as one of the most notable Japonisme artists in the West, the artist has not been featured in Japonisme studies on a large scale as a star figure of Japonisme, even in British Japonisme studies.

At the same period, in 1991, Watanabe Toshio demonstrated comprehensive research of British Japonisme in the 19th century in *High Victorian Japonisme*.\(^{18}\) Looking at British Japonisme history, as we have seen, the International Exhibition of 1862 in London triggered the trend of Japanese art, inspiring the Aesthetic Movement and Aestheticism. For example, Elizabeth Aslin argued that Japonisme was connected with the Aesthetic Movement strongly in the 1870s, becoming only more popular among British people in the 1880s.\(^{19}\) In this movement, designer, Christopher Dresser and architect-designer E. W. Godwin created sophisticated Anglo-Japanese designs. Aestheticism was also inspired by Japanese art, and Whistler played a central role in the field of British Japonisme.\(^{20}\) Whistler spread Japonisme among his circle of British painters, especially Albert Moore and the Rossetti Circle including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Frederick Sandys. *High Victorian Japonisme* featured these artists of the Aesthetic Movement and Aestheticism.

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18 Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*.
Following the pioneering Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue exhibition and Watanabe’s High Victorian Japonisme in 1991, in the 2000s further scholarly literature focusing on the interaction between Aestheticism and British Japonisme appeared. Tanita Hiroyuki explored the relationship between Japanese art and Rossetti, Whistler, Moore, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Frederic Leighton and Punch cartoonist, George du Maurier. At a moment in which British art studies were seeking to differentiate itself from its French parallels and precedents, Tanita used the word “Japanism” to distinguish British interest in Japan from French Japonisme. He mentioned Ricketts in the chapter on Rossetti’s book design as Ricketts’s book design was inspired by Rossetti’s. In addition, Watanabe gave Ricketts’s name as one of the leading Japonisme illustrators along with Aubrey Beardsley. Furthermore, Ono Ayako investigated the British Japonisme of Whistler and Menpes. Her research led to the exhibition, James McNeill Whistler Retrospective in Kyoto and Yokohama, Japan in 2014.


23 Ono Ayako, Bi no Koryu: Igirisu no Japonizumu [The Interaction of the Beauty: Japonisme in Britain] (Tokyo: Gihodo Books, 2008). She demonstrated the connection with Japanese art of Whistler’s etchings and paintings, such as Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks (1864), the painting series of Symphony in White, Nocturne.

In 2008, meanwhile, Itabashi Miya explored the reception of Japanese art from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century, mentioning Ricketts’s responses to the Japanese paintings on display at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 in London, and his printing house, the Vale Press.25

In the 2010s, whilst literature on British Japonisme continued to be published, Ricketts remained marginalised. Yamaguchi Eriko examined the relationship between Victorian and Japanese art using the context of Medievalism. She also investigated the Rossetti brothers’ ukiyo-e print collection.26 Kume Kazusa further explored the relationship between Aestheticism and British Japonisme, and Japanese art collections in Britain by Augustus Wollaston Franks, William Anderson, and James Lord Bowes. She also explored the place of a wider British public in Japonisme, especially women.27

As reasons why Ricketts remains marginal, Ricketts was not as famous as Rossetti or Whistler. In addition, Ricketts was a multi-talented artist, collector, and critic like a kaleidoscope, making him further difficult to characterise and pigeonhole.

From 2015 to 2016, the *Aubrey Beardsley and Japan* exhibition was held in Japan, and the catalogue of this exhibition included a section about Rockets and Japonisme based on an article on Ricketts’s from 1985. Kawamura investigates Ricketts’s diary and reveals how he built up a part of his Japanese prints collection from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. In addition, Kawamura states that Ricketts was inspired by Japanese actress, Sada Yacco, and that Ricketts was asked to design costumes for a production of Wilde’s *Salome* by a Japanese company, areas of research that this thesis expands, and not merely as an adjunct to Beardsley.

In 2017, the major *Hokusai and Japonisme* exhibition was held in Tokyo, examining how Hokusai’s artworks inspired Western artists in various fields. Regarding British Japonisme, books by Oliphant, Alcock, Dresser, and Anderson appeared; however, Ricketts’s name did not because Hokusai’s art stimulated too many artists in various countries to introduce one exhibition.

Furthermore, in 2022, the *Hokusai from the British Museum* exhibition was held in Tokyo, displaying 110 of Hokusai’s artworks. Along with Hokusai’s art, the exhibition introduced 6 Hokusai collectors in Britain: Anderson, Laurence Binyon,

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Ffranks, Shannon, Arthur Morrison, and Jack Hillier. However, curiously, the exhibition featured Shannon only. Although the exhibition catalogue admitted that Ricketts and Shannon collected together, it emphasised that Shannon bequeathed their Japanese art collection to the British Museum.30

Shannon went into a coma following an accident in 1929, and Ricketts, who worried about Shannon’s future, decided that he would bequeath their collection. However, Ricketts passed away in 1931 before Shannon six years later. Based on Ricketts’s will, their collection went to the museum in 1937 when Shannon passed away, his name, rather than Ricketts, subsequently attached to the bequest. The importance of Ricketts to the bequest is the subject of Chapter 1 of this thesis.

**Ricketts and Studies on Japonisme in the 21st Century**

Japonisme, as we have begun to see, was not just a British phenomenon, and books and exhibitions on Japonisme in various countries beyond began to appear in the 1990s. In 2000, the Society for the Study of Japonisme published an introductory book of Japonisme, *Japonisumu Nyumon* [The Introduction to Japonisme], which reflected the development of studies in the 1990s. *Japonisumu Nyumon* comprehensively contains studies on Japonisme of each country and field: France, Britain, America, Holland,

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Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Russia, across the fields of architecture, music, photography, and fashion. In this book, Ricketts was just mentioned as one of British illustrators along with Beardsley as mentioned above.31 In 2022, as a sequel to *Japonisumu Nyumon, Japonisumu o Kangaeru: Nihonbunka Hyosho o Meguru Tasha to Jiko* [Japonisme Reconsidered: The Other and the Self in Representations of Japanese Culture] was published, exploring studies on Japonisme. This book contains a chapter on Japanese writer, Noguchi Yonejiro to examine how Japanese people responded to Japonisme, which mentions that Ricketts inspired Noguchi regarding Japanese art.32 The chapter, however, focuses on Noguchi, and Ricketts plays a supporting role. In addition, there are a number of academic journals dealing with Japonisme, including *The Society for the Study of Japonisme: Report* (1981-1997), *Studies in Japonisme* (1998-), and *Journal of Japonisme* (2016-). However, the main topics of these journals did not centre on Ricketts.

After entering the 21st century, studies on Japonisme developed more and more, and studies examining Japonisme in the 20th century, appeared: these included Watanabe

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31 Watanabe, "Igirisu: Gosikku Rivaivaru kara Nihonhuuteien made," 87.

Because previous Japonisme studies, especially Japonisme painting studies, tended to pay attention to the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, these projects and symposia aimed to present the importance of Japonisme after the beginning of the 20th century. The project and symposium featured a wide variety of material. Regarding British Japonisme, they explored potter, William Staite Murray; architect and designer, Wells Coates; and woodblock printer, Urushibara Mokuchu. Ricketts was not mentioned. This fact shows that Ricketts remains a marginalised figure in studies on Japonisme in the 20th century, whose contribution still needs to be explored and emphasised, as I do here, contribution to not only studies on British Japonisme but also studies on Japonisme as a whole.

Ricketts and Japan: Art Historical Contexts

As we have begun to see, Ricketts’s name sometimes appeared in the catalogues of the exhibitions focused on significant art collectors, which intermittently mentioned his relationship with Japan. For example, the 2002 exhibition catalogue, *Nineteenth-Century British and French Art from the Winthrop Collection of the Fogg Art Museum* includes Ricketts’s drawings.34 American Lawyer Grenville L. Winthrop (1864-1943) collected about 3,700 artworks, and bequeathed them to the museum. The Winthrop Collection possessed many 19th-century British drawings. The exhibition included the costume designs for *Macbeth* in 1926, and the catalogue pointed out the inspiration of Japanese art on Ricketts’s design for the play. The exhibition also displayed Ricketts’s book illustrations. The exhibition selected 86 artworks by 18 artists. Among these, Ricketts’s works played a key role as representations of the past, the Orient, and mysteriousness.

In addition, Ricketts’s work appeared in the exhibition catalogue of *The Matsukata Collection: A One-Hundred-Year Odyssey*.35 This exhibition, which commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo in 2019, illuminated businessman and art collector Matsukata Kojiro (1866-1950)

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whose collection formed the basis of this museum. Matsukata collected various European artworks including British art in the early 20th century, and the exhibition displayed Ricketts’s colour lithograph *Italia Redenta* (Fig. 2). The exhibition showed one Ricketts’s work, one of the few examples of the collection surviving a fire at the warehouse storing the collection in London in 1939. As this thesis will examine further, Matsukata met Ricketts in person in London, leading to a moment of significant Anglo-Japanese cultural exchange.

Literature on Aestheticism, however, frequently overlooked the connection between Ricketts and Japanese art although Ricketts’s art already had relations with Japanese art in the 1890s, and designed *The Sphinx* (Fig. 1) in 1894. The exhibition catalogue, *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* introduced Ricketts thus:

Book illustrator, painter, sculptor and theatre designer who with his partner Charles Haslewood Shannon (1863-1937) founded the art journal *The Dial* featuring their own wood engravings; they went on to set up the Vale Press in 1894. Ricketts produced symbolist paintings and sculpture and designed extensively for the theatre.36

Here, Ricketts was examined in the context of domestic art history, and the catalogue did not view the relationship between Ricketts and Japonisme although it had a section

on British Japonisme which mentioned Whistler, Rossetti, Godwin, and Beardsley.

Ricketts’s Japonisme remained inconspicuous.

Similarly, during his own lifetime, the scholarship on Ricketts overlooked his interest in Japan. In 1897, Gleeson White paid attention to Ricketts’s book design in the article “At the Sign of the Dial: Mr. Ricketts as a Book-Builder.” Ricketts’s main work was book design in the 1890s, and White primarily regarded Ricketts as an important book designer in Britain.

C. Lewis Hind’s 1910 article, “Charles Ricketts: A Commentary on His Activities” concentrated on Ricketts’s paintings and sculptures, rather than his Japonisme. Hind described the difficulties in writing about Ricketts: “he is a difficult subject to discuss. […] Mr. Ricketts has many activities, and his energy is so unquenchable, that he can turn from one to the other, always with zest and zeal.” This comment shows that the multi-talented Ricketts proved challenging to define from the early 20th century.

In 1925, Herbert Furst surveyed Ricketts’s theatre design in “Charles Ricketts, ARA, and His Stage Work.” He mentioned Ricketts’s design for Salome, an unperformed production in Tokyo, as we shall see, but Furst did not consider Ricketts’s

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inspiration from Japanese art in this context. The article was published before Ricketts’s
designs for Gilbert and Sullivan’s The Mikado of 1926, which this thesis considers in
some detail.

In the 1930s and the 1940s, literature on Ricketts, which touched upon the
connection between the artist and Japan, began to appear, with Ricketts’s friend, Gordon
Bottomley publishing articles on the artist including his intersecting interest in Japanese
art and theatre. Another of Ricketts’s friends, Thomas Sturge Moore, however
emphasised Ricketts’s European, rather than Japanese, sources, when it came to his
book illustrations, paintings, statuettes, and theatre designs.

In 1966, Denys Sutton wrote an article, “A Neglected Virtuoso: Charles
Ricketts and his Achievements.” As Sutton’s title suggests, scholarly interest in the
artist had faded in the 1960s. The article chronicles the outline of Ricketts’s birth,
school life, the encounter with Shannon, book design, and the beginnings of the Vale
Press. In terms of Japanese art, Sutton introduces the start of Ricketts and Shannon’s
collection of Japanese art, and the presence of Hokusai’s illustration there. Concluding,
however, Sutton emphasises Ricketts’s minor contribution to English art.

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44 Denys Sutton, "A Neglected Virtuoso: Charles Ricketts and his Achievements," Apollo 116
In 1967, Ifan Kyrle Fletcher examined Ricketts’s theatre design with a chronological list from 1906 to 1931. He sorted out Ricketts’s various theatre works and briefly referred to the relationship between *The Mikado* and Japanese art. In 1970, Michael Brooks investigated Ricketts’s book design for Wilde, again briefly touching upon Japanese elements in Ricketts’s design.

In the same year, Giles Barber examined book designs by Rossetti and Ricketts in the late 19th century, and suggested Japanese tastes as one of the elements in Ricketts’s *Sphinx*. In 1977, Richard Harold Quinn focused on *The Dial*, launched by Ricketts and Shannon. Ricketts wrote an article on Utamaro in *The Dial*, again only briefly mentioned by Quinn.

In 1979, Stephen Calloway integrated various aspects of Ricketts’s career into the monograph, *Charles Ricketts Subtle and Fantastic Decorator*, which highlighted the artist’s decoration and design. While *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (2011) did not pay attention to the relationship between Ricketts and Japan, Calloway pointed to the artist’s interiors, book design, stage design, and Japanese art.

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collection. Specifically, the monograph examined Ricketts’s costume design including Japanese-styled design, to which I shall return in more detail.

An exhibition, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon: An Aesthetic Partnership was held at the Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham, to accompany Calloway’s 1979 monograph, whose catalogue was written by Calloway and Paul Delaney. This exhibition featured 144 works by Ricketts and Shannon respectively. Although the catalogue was unillustrated, in the section on Ricketts’s theatre design, the catalogue mentioned the relationship between Japan and his design for Salome in 1919 and The Witch Dancer around 1920.

In the same year, 1979, there was another exhibition related to Ricketts, All for Art: The Ricketts and Shannon Collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum. The exhibition catalogue was based on an exhibition curated by Joseph Darracott. In 1966, the Fitzwilliam Museum had earlier held a small exhibition to mark the 100th anniversary of Ricketts’s birth, and, at the 1979 exhibition, there were 29 works by Ricketts, Shannon, and their friends, and 232 works from Ricketts and Shannon’s collection. The exhibition focused on their collection, including Egyptian and Classical examples, Old Masters, and Oriental art, rather than their own art. The exhibition displayed 20 Japanese prints,

including five works by Utamaro and four by Hokusai. 1979 was, then, a noteworthy year, presenting several aspects of the links between Ricketts and Japan, although not exploring them in any depth in more synoptic accounts of the artist’s life and work. This thesis focuses specifically on Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese collection, but future scholarship might want to return to the collection in a comparative study of the artists’ wider collecting practices.

1980 witnessed the publication of Darracott’s monograph, *The World of Charles Ricketts.* This examined Ricketts and Shannon’s collection and Oriental art. In the chapter on collecting, Darracott presented information about the bequest of Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection: after Shannon’s death in 1937, most of their collection of Japanese prints moved to the British Museum under Shannon’s name, as we have begun to see. Moreover, the chapter on Oriental art described the various connections between Ricketts and Japanese art, such as Ricketts’s relationship with Binyon who was a curator at the British Museum dealing with Japanese artefacts and his publication of Japanese art criticism. However, although Darracott wrote about Ricketts’s interest in Utamaro, Hokusai, and Harunobu, he did not examine the details of Ricketts’s article on Japanese art. Furthermore, Darracott mentioned Ricketts’s encounter with Japanese people in London, mentioning a single name “Kohitsu.” He

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also described Ricketts’s preferences for Japanese painter, Ogata Korin. All in all, Darracott’s monograph gives useful suggestions about Ricketts’s collection and his reception of Japanese art. However, the information about the relationship between Ricketts and Japan remained fragmentary.

In the 1980s, articles on Ricketts’s theatre design were noticeable. In 1981, Sybil Rosenfeld made a list of 111 Ricketts’s theatre designs in the National Art Collections Fund which were distributed to museums and galleries in Britain. In 1985, Michael Barclay examined scenery designed by Ricketts. Barclay presented the scenery of Salome for its 1919 Japanese production, but did not mention Japanese elements in Ricketts’s stage sets. In the same year, Barclay wrote the exhibition catalogue, Catalogue of the Works of Charles Ricketts R.A. from the Collection of Gordon Bottomley with an exhibit list of 51 works including paintings, book illustrations and theatre designs. In 1985, Eric Binnie published a book on Ricketts’s theatre design based on his 1979 PhD thesis. He focused on Ricketts’s works from 1906 to 1924, and he referred to Japanese tastes in Ricketts’s costume for Salome. However, he did not examine Ricketts’s successful designs for The Mikado.

Delaney’s 1990 book, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography* is the latest significant biography of the artist.\(^5\) This focused on Ricketts’s personal life, personality, and tastes, based on his and his friends’ diaries and letters. In the 13 chapters written in chronological order, Delaney described Japanese taste in Ricketts and Shannon’s house, Ricketts’s inspiration from book and theatre designs, Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection, and the interaction between Matsukata and Ricketts. This book presented various possibilities regarding the relationship between Ricketts and Japan. However, at the same time, some of the descriptions of Japan in Ricketts’s diary and letters which appeared in the book are ambiguous. This shows the necessity to return to the primary sources as well as for the examination of materials about Ricketts from the Japanese side, and from Japanese language sources, two significant revisionary approaches this thesis adopts.

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, studies on Ricketts began to diversify. David Peters Corbett investigated Ricketts from various angles, including his criticism, illustrations, and sexuality.\(^6\) Ricketts’s sexuality was also of concern to Matt Cook, in relation to Ricketts and Shannon’s interior decoration, and Petra Clark, who

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focused on *The Dial.* In addition, in 2004, Maureen Watry presented a bibliography of Ricketts’s book design and the Vale Press. In 2012, Christina Rozeik examined Ricketts and Shannon’s collection of ancient Greek and Roman artefacts at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

To date, then, whilst various articles and books on Ricketts have been published, his Japonisme has not been the main subject. Previous studies have briefly and intermittently indicated the existence of Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese collection, and the inspiration of Japanese art on Ricketts’s stage and book design. However, there is no comprehensive study of Ricketts and Japan investigating what kind of Japanese artefacts Ricketts had, how he understood Japanese art, and how he adopted his knowledge of Japanese art in his artworks. Specifically, Ricketts’s Japanese art criticism has not been sufficiently examined. Therefore, it is significant to synthesise together his collection, criticism, and artwork, and to clarify his reception of Japanese art.

Furthermore, compared with British Japonisme from the 1860s to the 1880s, the era of Aestheticism, when the first generation of Japonists, the Rossetti brothers and

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Whistler, played an active part, previous studies have not paid much attention to Japonisme at the end of the Victorian era, and during the Edwardian era, First World War, and interwar periods, when Ricketts lived. Therefore, this thesis aims to illuminate how Ricketts developed and expressed British Japonisme as part of a key second generation of Japonists.

The Way to Ricketts and Japonisme

This thesis defines Japonists who lived in the period of the International Exhibition of 1862 in London and of 1867 in Paris, such as Alcock, Rossetti, Whistler, and Dresser, as the first generation of Japonists. It also defines Japonists who played an active part in the art world from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century and did not experience these international exhibitions in the 1860s, such as Ricketts, Shannon, Binyon, and Beardsley, as the second generation of Japonists. I seek to rediscover Ricketts as a leading Japonist of the second generation from the 1880s to the 1930s, especially in the early 20th century. Ricketts covered a broad range of artistic activities inspired by Japanese art, such as collection, criticism, and design. As a result of rethinking Ricketts’s Japonisme, my thesis demonstrates that second-generation Japonisme blossomed in London, expressed in a wide range of forms, not only design.

60 The trend of Japonisme had waned in the period of the World War II, however, Japonisme still continued, and British potter, Bernard Leach (1887-1979) is one of examples of the third generations of Japonists in this period. After the War, the interaction between Japan and other countries were resumed, and the new generations of Japonisme started to bloom, such as in the field of design and animation. For the details, see Watanabe, “Forgotten Japonisme,” 20-28.
and theatre, but also art collecting and criticism. At the same time, the bearers of Japonisme were various. For example, Kume paid attention to British middle-class women as important figures in the trend of Japonisme. Moreover, the state of interest in Japan diversified as Minami Asuka argued that Japonology, which is to say, Japanese studies, flourished from the end of the 19th century to 1920 in the West. To clarify what kind of people existed in Japonisme, I categorise, for the first time, these Japonist into four types:

1. **Business Japonist:** People, who had visited Japan as diplomats or government advisors from the middle of 19th century onwards, developing an interest in Japanese art through their experience in Japan (e.g., Alcock, Oliphant, Satow, and Francis Brinkley).

2. **Artistic / Aesthetic Japonist:** People inspired by Japanese art and culture. They were mainly artists, and Japonisme studies often feature them (e.g., Rossetti, Whistler, Moore, and Beardsley).

3. **Collector / Consumer Japonist:** People who collected Japanese objects. These were not only people who acquired many artefacts eagerly and professionally, but also people who purchased one Japanese round fan to decorate a fireplace (e.g., Alcock, Satow, Brinkley, Rossetti, Whistler, Beardsley, Anderson, and Bowes).

4. **Scholarly Japonist:** People who dealt with Japanese art as studies, “Japanology.” They often had a connection with museums, and contributed to the preservation of Japanese artefacts in Western countries. (e.g., Anderson, Morrison, Binyon, and Edward F. Strange)

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61 Kume, *Bi to Taishu: Japonisumu to Igirisu no Josei tachi.*

Ricketts was a multi-talented Japonist as a collector, artist, and scholar. To understand his full significance, I have investigated in detail the Ricketts and Shannon Papers in the British Library. These contain Ricketts’s diary, letters, postcards, and so on. In the library, there are other related papers: the Ricketts, Shannon and "Michael Field" Transcripts; the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company Archive; the George Bernard Shaw Papers; the Gordon Bottomley Papers; and the Laurence Binyon Reports. Specifically, the Bottomley Papers include not only letters from Ricketts but albums of photographs of Ricketts’s designs which Bottomley made. It was vital to return to the archival sources because the autobiography, *Self-Portrait: Taken from the Letters and Journals of Charles Ricketts*, published in 1939, did not include all of Ricketts’s relevant Japonisme materials.63

To get to know Ricketts better as a Japonist, I conducted surveys at the British Library to examine papers, articles, and books related to Ricketts. At the National Art Library, I explored books and auction records from while Ricketts was alive. At the V&A Prints and Drawings Room, the V&A Theatre and Performance Archives, and the V&A Reading Room, I looked for materials relating to Ricketts’s theatrical art. At the British Museum Japanese Galleries and the British Museum Central Archive, I investigated the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese art collection and official museum

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records related to Ricketts and Binyon. At the Fitzwilliam Museum, I examined their Japanese art collection and Ricketts’s theatre design. At the Ashmolean Museum, I explored his theatrical costume design. In addition to these more usual Anglophone sources, at the National Diet Library, Tokyo, I explored literature regarding Noguchi Yonejiro, Matsukata Kojiro, Yashiro Yukio, and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910. At the same time, I analysed all the data for the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese art collection in the British Museum’s collection online using Excel.

Developing these researches, Chapter 1 explores how Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection was established. As Collector Japonists, the two collected Japanese artefacts together, and shared ideas about how to collect artefacts. First, I examine how they became interested in Japanese art and started collecting it. In the early 1890s, they had already purchased several ukiyo-e prints by Kitagawa Utamaro. They then increased their collection at auctions, such as the sales of the Frederic Leighton collection in 1896 and Francis Brinkley in 1898. After acquiring sufficient quality and quantity in their collection, they held an exhibition of drawings by ukiyo-e artists in Paris in 1909, and Ricketts displayed Hokusai’s works at the Century of Art Exhibition in 1911.

In Chapter 1, I also analyse the contents of their Japanese art collection. After Ricketts and Shannon passed away, their Japanese artefacts were bequeathed to the
British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, as we have seen. Almost all their Japanese collection went to the British Museum, and at present, the museum houses more than 330 of their collected artworks. The main content of their Japanese collection comprises ukiyo-e prints. I investigate the character of their collection, and reveal Ricketts and Shannon’s ability as Japanese art connoisseurs.

In addition, in the first chapter, I explore Ricketts’s connection with museums regarding his Japanese art collection. Ricketts was friends with Binyon, as we have briefly noted, who was a curator of Oriental prints and drawings at the British Museum, and Sydney Cockerell, who was a director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. In particular, the relationship between Ricketts and Binyon was close, and Ricketts advised the British Museum about the improvement of its Japanese art collection. Finally, I compare Ricketts and Shannon with other Japanese art collectors at that time in Britain, and I clearly demonstrate Ricketts and Shannon’s significant position in the British world of Japanese art collectors.

Chapter 2 explores Ricketts’s interactions with Japanese people and his criticism in *The Dial* vol.5 (1897) and *Pages on Art* (1913), to ascertain more about his reception of Japanese art and culture. As a Scholarly Japonist, Ricketts made use of his experience of collecting Japanese artefacts, and extended his activities to Japanese art criticism. First, I pay attention to some of the Japanese people who met Ricketts.
Ricketts had opportunities to interact with several Japanese intellectuals, such as Kohitsu Ryōnin, Yashiro Yukio, and Noguchi Yonejiro in London, who stimulated his interest in Japanese art. Using their diaries and books, I clarify what kind of Japanese knowledge Ricketts gained through interactions with them and how perhaps surprisingly well they evaluated his insight into Japanese art. In this period, many Japanese art study books were published by Binyon, Charles Holmes, Arthur Morrison, and others, demonstrating the increasing interest in collecting Japanese art. The second generation of Japonisme was the age of collection and research.

In addition, I examine Rickett’s most significant 1897 article “Outamaro.” In it, Ricketts indicates his awareness of Edmond de Goncourt, who wrote *Outamaro: Le Peintre des Maisons Vertes* in 1891. Ricketts’s article is the earliest criticism about Utamaro written by the British author, emphasising the significance of Ricketts as a Japanese art critic. Finally, I consider Ricketts’s article about the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 in London. This was a large-scale exhibition of Japanese artefacts from various periods, as we have begun to understand, and Ricketts’s article shows his broad, but particular, knowledge of Japanese art.

Chapter 3 discusses the relationships between Ricketts’s artworks and the Japanese art that he collected and criticised, and emphasises further Ricketts’s role as a second-generation, British “artistic Japonist.” At the beginning of the 20th century,
Ricketts began his career as a stage designer, working on more than 50 productions before his death. The first section of the chapter describes Ricketts’s theatre design, focusing on the 1926 revival of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* (1885), which, perhaps unsurprisingly, reveals the strongest inspiration from Japanese art. But Ricketts was also commissioned to design productions of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (1606) and Wilde’s *Salomé* (1893) by a Japanese stage production company. At the same time, Ricketts attended performances by Japanese actress Sada Yacco, and interacted with Japanese dancer Itō Michio in London. In addition, like many in his generation and the generation below him, Ricketts had a great interest in noh plays, evident in his letters with Oswald Sickert and Ricketts’s theatre commissions.

In the second section of the chapter, I explore Ricketts’s book designs, focusing on his design for Wilde’s *The Sphinx* (1894), again the artist’s most Japanese book, which was inspired by an earlier Japanophile, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as we have begun to see. Although Ricketts’s book designs, paintings, and sculptures were less inspired by Japanese art than his stage design, I show how the more minor significance of Japan across these genres of Ricketts’s work. Taken as a whole, the chapter examines how Ricketts adapted his knowledge of Japanese art and dance to his design as an artistic Japonist.

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64 Calloway, *Charles Ricketts Subtle and Fantastic Decorator*, 23.
Chapter 1

Forgotten Treasure: The Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection

The Beginning of Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese Artefact Collection

The two are inseparable; they live together; they collect together. […]

But let me first indulge in an impression of these inseparables seen years ago, long before I knew them. A sale of Japanese prints had been announced, and I Autolycus-like, strolled into the auction-room soon after the dispersal had begun. The prints, a frowzy-looking lot, were tied up in bundles of twenty-five. I bought three of the bundles for a ridiculous price, and was wondering how I should convey the awkward purchase home, when suddenly I was vouchsafed an object-lesson in the method of the true collector. Already I had observed two young men who looked like amateurs in the auction-world. One seemed feverishly active, mentally not physically—he, I learned later, was Charles Ricketts; the other appeared to garb his interest under a look of sweet indifference—he was Charles Shannon. Plainly they knew precisely what they wanted and what they were waiting for; they did not buy the bundles as I had done, as if the prints were apples and one pound weight was as good as another- No, they waited for one particular bundle which, presumably, they had examined beforehand. When it was dumped upon the table, the sweet indifference of Charles Shannon vanished, and Charles Ricketts ineffectually tried to conceal his feverish eagerness. He bid quickly, short, sharp bids, while his companion looked on with anxiously benignant approval. The hammer fell. The feverish Charles seized the bundle and cut the string. His long, quick fingers flitted through the items, picked out one print, and instantaneously the benignant Charles indicated another. The remaining prints were tossed aside, left on the table, the rejected of the collectors, and the twain departed hastily with their two treasures.¹

Ricketts collected artworks with his life partner, Shannon. Their joint collection included a wide range of art from a range of periods and places, and it consisted of

ancient Egyptian and Greek arts, the old masters, the Pre-Raphaelites, and Japanese art, as we have begun to see. Their Japanese art collection amounted to more than 300 items.

The above passage is an eyewitness report of Ricketts and Shannon bidding for Japanese prints around the early 1900s. At the auction, they already had a clear target, and their bidding was quick, subtle, and effective. Every move they made attracted the eyewitness’s considerable attention, but seemed to have passed beneath the attention of most people at the auction. Although Ricketts and Shannon were still relatively young, they already had emerged as collector Japonists.

Ricketts and Shannon developed their shared Japanese art collection together throughout their careers. Their early interest in Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e prints (Japanese woodblock prints), was already active when they were students of wood engraving at the City and Guilds Technical Art School in Lambeth in the early 1880s. In 1888, Ricketts and Shannon moved to the Vale at Chelsea, Whistler’s former home. According to their friend, the artist and critic, William Rothenstein, they decorated one of the walls of the Vale with a fan-shaped watercolour by Whistler and Hokusai’s artworks, their first treasures. Rothenstein’s recollection also reveals that there was a connection in terms of Japonists and Japonisme decorations between Whistler, a pioneer of Japonisme in Britain who, most famously, decorated the Peacock Room in 1876-1877,

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and Ricketts and Shannon. They respected Whistler; they did not change an apple-green coloured dado and yellow walls designed by the older artist in the Vale. 

With the remaining decorations chosen by Whistler, who was a first-generation Japonist, it was a suitable environment for Ricketts and Shannon to develop an interest in Japanese aesthetics. Moreover, Ricketts respected Edmond de Goncourt, who was a representative Japonist in France in the late 19th century, as a specialist on ukiyo-e prints, and likely admired and was inspired by Goncourt’s house decorated with many Japanese artefacts.

The Vale’s decoration with ukiyo-e prints by Hokusai also reveals that Ricketts and Shannon had started to collect Japanese artefacts by the end of the 1880s at the latest. Furthermore, the fact that Rothenstein considered that Ricketts and Shannon treated Hokusai’s works as their first treasures indicates that they had a strong attachment to Hokusai from their early days. In addition, Ricketts’s memoir of Wilde, who visited the Vale for the first time in 1889, was published in 1932, where he noted that Wilde praised its interior decoration: “What a charming old house you have, and what delightful Japanese prints!”

When Ricketts reminisced about the interior of the Vale at that time, he wrote that yellow walls and a few cheap prints by Hokusai gave the

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5 Charles Ricketts (Charles Sturt), “Outamaro,” in *The Dial*, No. 5, 1897, 22.
Although Ricketts and Shannon were beginners in Japanese art, and Ricketts paid attention to Hokusai in the 1880s, they gradually deepened their knowledge about ukiyo-e prints and developed their interest in various ukiyo-e artists from the 1890s. In 1892, Ricketts and Shannon acquired ukiyo-e prints by Kitagawa Utamaro.\(^7\) This acquisition of Utamaro’s prints shows that they might have been inspired by Goncourt’s book on Utamaro in 1891, *Outamaro: Le Peintre des Maisons Vertes*. Goncourt, especially his *Outamaro* provided great inspiration to Ricketts regarding collecting and writing criticism of Japanese art as we shall see in Chapter 1 and 2. Ricketts frequently read books on Japanese art for many years in his life.\(^8\) However, in Ricketts’s diaries, books, and articles, he did not write that he was inspired or affected by these books except for Goncourt’s, and does not mention that he gained knowledge about Japanese art from specific books or articles by contemporary art critics or Japanophiles. This fact means that Ricketts read books on Japanese art to check the latest information, however, he did not get great inspirations from these books in contrast to Goncourt’s. As other routes to acquire knowledge about Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e prints for Ricketts, there is a high probability that he learned them through seeing real Japanese artefacts at auctions.

\(^7\) Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 114.

\(^8\) Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 4 August 1901, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/3/18, fol. 116r-117r, British Library.

and museums. In fact, Ricketts and Shannon often visited auctions from the 1890s, and gained experiences of Japanese art. Then, in the second half of the 1890s, they embarked in earnest on activities as Japanese art collectors. On 16 July 1896, Christie’s held a sale of the collection of painter Frederic Leighton, who was vice-president of the Japan Society of London. After his death in January 1896, there were 12 ukiyo-e prints for sale, including prints by Hokusai, Yashima Gakutei, Suzuki Harunobu, Torii Kiyonaga, Chōbunsai Eishi, Totoya Hokkei, and Utagawa Kuniyasu. According to the annotations of the auction catalogue, in the collection of the National Art Library, Ricketts and Shannon won bids for one ukiyo-e print by Harunobu and four by Kiyonaga for three pounds, and five prints by Hokusai for five pounds. These auction results indicate that Ricketts and Shannon focused on artworks by great masters of ukiyo-e, since Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Hokusai were all ukiyo-e artists who represented the age of the Japanese art world in which they lived. Their taste at this point was relatively canonical. The results also show that the number of ukiyo-e prints of the Ricketts and Shannon collection started to increase steadily.

While they were mainly attracted to ukiyo-e prints, however, famously beloved of the first generation of Japonists, they also bought Japanese paintings. At an auction

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on 10 July in the same year, they acquired “A Cock and A Study, by Walanabe” for six pounds.10 “Walanabe” in the auction catalogue likely refers to Japanese painter Watanabe Seitei, who often painted birds and flowers, especially hens and cocks, because many of Seitei’s works appeared on the British art market in the 1890s.11 Seitei created traditional Japanese-style paintings with elements of Western realism based on his interaction with French painters during his travel to Europe. His paintings, which were mixtures of Japanese and European, and traditional and Modern styles, acquired high praise in the world, and Seitei won several medals from world exhibitions, such as those in Japan, Amsterdam, Chicago, and Paris. As Seitei became popular in Europe and America at the end of the 19th century, Western art markets began to deal in Seitei’s artworks, and museums and individual collectors bought them. Again in a comparative mainstream, Ricketts and Shannon wanted to acquire the famed Seitei’s works, and their acquisition of them reveals that they had an interest not only in ukiyo-e prints of the Edo era but also in contemporary Japanese art.

Ricketts and Shannon acquired further important Japanese artefacts the following year. On 18 November 1897, they attended Captain Francis Brinkley’s sale. Brinkley, who was a newspaper owner and a collector of Japanese and Chinese art,

11 For example, art dealer Thomas Joseph Larkin put 61 of Seitei’s works up for sale in 1892, 111 in 1893, and 112 in 1894 at the Japanese Gallery in London.
often sold items from his collection at auctions. Ricketts wrote about the 1897 auction in detail in Shannon’s diary.

Acquired Japanese Drawings.

Captain Brinkley Sale. One of the great hauls of our life Hokusai’s *Suikoden* Book of drawings and six other volumes of miscellaneous drawings some of the greatest importance – out of the 11 volumes sold we got 7. Out of the 5 best volumes we got four – volume we did not get drifted (Chinese Emperors) to Holme (the ass who edits the “Studio”)15, 1 to Rothschild, 2 to Rothenstein, Tadema having refused one of these. Prints went for nothing for the most part very damaged – were unable to bid for any because they came before the drawings. Spent £60, had to raise money from all quarters, Holmes for instance lent us £20 in Sale Room. […] Both our banking accounts vanished in this sale.16

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Brinkley, who was from Ireland, joined the Royal Artillery and visited Japan as an aide to the Governor, Sir Richard MacDonnell in 1867. In Japan, he became a gunnery instructor and an English teacher for the Japanese government. In 1880, he purchased a Japanese newspaper company, the *Japan Mail*, and became a newspaper owner and a journalist. He also worked as an overseas correspondent for the London *Times* beginning in 1885. He published *An Unabridged Japanese-English Dictionary* (1896), *Japan and China: Their History, Arts and Literature* (12 volumes, 1901-1904) and *A History of the Japanese People from the Earliest Times to the end of the Meiji Period* (1915). He lived in Japan from 1867 until the end of his life.

13 Ricketts and Shannon were close. Adding notes to Shannon’s diary by Ricketts who shared art collections with Shannon shows their positive relationship.

14 *Suikoden* [*Tales of the Water Margin*] is one of the four greatest Chinese novels written in the Ming dynasty. In the Edo era, *Suikoden* was imported to Japan, and it became popular among Japanese people in the 18th and 19th centuries because of the spread of Japanese translation and adaptations. In response to the popularity of *Suikoden*, Hokusai painted many illustrations of it. For more details, see Takashima Toshio, *Suikoden to Nihonjin: Edo kara Shōwa made* [Suikoden and Japanese people: From the Edo Era to the Shōwa Era]. Tokyo: Taishukan Publishing, 1991.

15 Charles Holme (1848-1923) was a founder of art design magazine *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Arts* in 1892. *The Studio* usually had a low opinion of Ricketts’s artworks, and Ricketts was hostile towards this magazine. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that Holme made a bad impression on Ricketts. In addition, Holme had a connection with Japanese art. He worked with Christopher Dresser in dealing with Eastern artefacts. He stayed in Japan for several months, and he was also a Japanese art collector and one of the founders of the Japan Society, which Ricketts never joined, in 1892. For more details, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 62; Julie F Codell, "Holme, Charles (1848–1923), Magazine Editor," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, accessed November 18, 2019, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33950.

16 Charles Shannon’s Diary, 18 November 1897, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XXVI, 1898, Add MS 58110, fol. 5r, British Library.
The journal entry displays Ricketts’s discerning excitement about the contents of the auction, as Ricketts and Shannon owed 20 pounds to their friend Charles Holmes, who was a painter and art critic and assisted at the Vale Press, which Ricketts set up in 1894. Previously, Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection mainly consisted of ukiyo-e prints. Whereas many ukiyo-e prints appeared on the art market in Europe, the *Suikoden* book contained many original drawings by Hokusai. Purchasing such drawings was difficult even at the end of the 19th century because of their rarity. Therefore, Ricketts and Shannon gave high priority to the acquisition of this book to keep the precious artwork at hand, to see real Hokusai figures, to learn how Hokusai drew lines, and to approach the essence of Hokusai’s art.

Also worth noting is that this diary entry from 18 November 1897 was written on the page of the first week of January 1898. Hence, the edited book of Ricketts’s diaries and letters, *Self-Portrait*, presents the entry in the section on 1898,17 whereas Brinkley’s sale was held in 1897, according to the auction catalogue. In the catalogue in the National Art Library, the section labelled “Drawings. A Series of Ten Albums Containing Black and White and Coloured Drawings by Hokusai” shows the artefacts which Ricketts and Shannon acquired:

26 A book, containing 31 [drawings] of artisans and mythical subjects

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29 A book, containing 38 [drawings] of figures
30 A book, containing 53 [drawings] of landscapes, animals and studies of figures
33 A book, containing 22 [drawings] of figures, animals and flowers
34 A book, containing 22 [drawings] of Oni and other mythical personages
39 A book, containing 53 drawings of the personage of Suikoden, by Hokusai

As stated in the above diary entry, Shannon and Ricketts secured seven books, including Hokusai’s Suikoden. These books of drawings deal with various subjects, from landscapes to figures, animals to artisans, and they were excellent resources with vast amounts of information for Ricketts and Shannon in their study of Eastern art and culture. Importantly, the drawings range more widely than the kind of decorative bric-a-brac and studies of female actresses and courtesans that had preoccupied the first generation of Japonists. The character of what the Japonists understood by Japan was changing.

Ricketts and Shannon bequeathed this Suikoden to the British Museum in 1937. It is a drawing album in which drawings are attached to mounts decorated with gold leaf. Following a preface with Hokusai’s signature and seal, the book contains 53 preparatory drawings for a printed publication. Originally, this book was not for sale, so it contains

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19 Oni is a Japanese word meaning an ogre.

19 The printed book Ehon Suikoden based on this Suikoden is in the collection of the British Museum (Museum number: 1979,0305,0.435). For more details, see Timothy Clark, ‘Ehon Suikoden’ Gako.

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more free and energetic character depictions than his ukiyo-e prints. For example, lively brushwork can be seen on the page depicting a scene in which a strong man, Lū Zhishēn, defeats a bandit, Zhōu Tōng (Fig. 3) and a female character, the goddess of war, Jiutian Xuannü (Fig. 4). Ricketts was fascinated with Hokusai’s expressive portrayal of characters. While talking to Japanese writer Noguchi Yonejiro about the *Suikoden* book, Ricketts praised Hokusai’s art: “Look at the power of Hokusai’s figure. It is as good as Rembrandt.” Rembrandt has been regarded as the great master, and it is clear that the *Suikoden* book gave Ricketts opportunities to pay more attention to Hokusai’s artworks and to learn from Hokusai’s vivid depictions of body movements. Ricketts’s comparison of Japanese art with canonical early modern European art and literature will be a leitmotif of this thesis, as we shall see, suggesting perhaps a Japonist Renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth.

In April 1899, Ricketts and Shannon visited Italy. Before this visit, they made their will as a precaution. In their will, regarding their Hokusai collection, they promised to bequeath it to the British Museum. At that time, the British Museum already had a large Japanese art collection because of the purchase of the Anderson

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collection in 1881. For Ricketts and Shannon, their recent acquisition of Hokusai’s *Suikoden* was important, and they considered that the museum was the appropriate place to leave their Hokusai collection.

Ricketts and Shannon continued to collect Japanese artefacts. Ricketts wrote in his diary on 17 July 1900:

Shannon secured the Outamaros and Harunobus Wisselingh\(^{22}\) had purchased: the “Mother and Child” by Outamaro is perhaps the most beautiful print we have seen. Thence to furniture-dealer whence the prints had come: secured in all three first-rate Harunobus, ten first-rate Outamaros, one first-rate Hokusai.\(^ {23} \)

“Outamaro” is a French spelling of Utamaro. Ricketts always used “Outamaro” in his diary, inspired by *Outamaro: Le Peintre des Maisons Vertes* [Utamaro: A Painter of the Pleasure Quarters] (1891), by de Goncourt. Regarding “Mother and Child,” Utamaro often depicted this subject; his Mother and Child prints are iconic works among his many portraits of beautiful women, to which we shall return.

Furthermore, Ricketts and Shannon acquired more ukiyo-e prints in the same year, and Ricketts recorded in his diary on 30 October and 12 November:

\(^{22}\) Dutch art dealer Elbert Jan Van Wisselingh (1848-1912), from the offices of E. J. Van Wisselingh and Co. in London and Amsterdam. In the 1890s and the 1900s, he often held exhibitions including Ricketts and Shannon’s artworks at the Dutch Gallery in London. For more details, see Pamela Fletcher, and Anne Helmrreich, ed., *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), 300-301.


\(^{23}\) Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 17 July 1900, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XIV. 1900, Add MS 58098, fol. 45v, British Library.
Looked through more of those perfect prints belonging to a German, in this case in the hands of a thief who asked high prices for them. Bought two: one Outamaro, and one Harunobu.\textsuperscript{24}

Town with Shannon to see his picture at the show thence to hunt up Haronobu [Harunobu], bought 7 first-rate prints, saw Kakemonos and Screens by Hoitsu, Korin, and Sotatsu.\textsuperscript{25}

These entries reveal that Ricketts and Shannon purchased nine ukiyo-e prints one after another for two weeks. Their interest in other fields of Japanese art also developed as they gained contact with artworks by Sakai Hōitsu, Ogata Korin, and Tawaraya Sōtatsu, who were painters of the Rimpa school which created decorative artworks with bold compositions, vivid colours, and gold and silver leaf in the Edo era.\textsuperscript{26} Ricketts and Shannon’s intoxication with ukiyo-e prints is noticeable, displayed vividly in the diary entry for 4 November: “We gloated over Hokusai.”\textsuperscript{27}

Ricketts also sometimes failed to acquire Japanese artefacts at auctions. His diary entry for 27 March 1901 describes such an occasion:

Have asked Holmes to bid for Kakemono by Ukiyo Matakei, Sixteenth century, and for two magnificent paintings by Suitoku, Fifteenth century. Got nothing.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24} Ricketts’s Diary, 30 October 1900, Add MS 58098, fol.69v.
\textsuperscript{25} Ricketts’s Diary, 12 November 1900, Add MS 58098, fol.71v.
\textsuperscript{26} The Rimpa school was started in the 17th century and flourished throughout the Edo era. Its art is decorative, and there is usually gold leaf in the background of paintings. Rimpa artists used audacious patterns with natural subjects.
\textsuperscript{27} Ricketts’s Diary, 4 November 1900, Add MS 58098, fol. 70r.
\textsuperscript{28} Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 27 March 1901, Add MS 88957/3/18, fol. 97r.
This time, Ricketts himself did not attend the auction; instead, he asked his friend to acquire Japanese paintings. Regarding artist names, it is difficult to identify which Japanese artist “Suitoku” is. On the other hand, “Ukiyo Matakei” probably means Ukiyo Matabei, whose official name is Iwasa Matabei, who was an ukiyo-e artist at the beginning of the Edo period. American art historian Ernest Fenollosa praised Matabei in his catalogue written in English, *The Masters of Ukiyo: A Complete Historical Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School* in 1896, and there is a small probability that Ricketts showed an interest in Matabei through this Fenollosa’s work. Ricketts did not express disappointment or frustration with his poor auction result in the diary, perhaps not yet having a strong emotional attachment to Matabei and Suitoku, in contrast to Hokusai and Utamaro. Regarding Suitoku, Ricketts mentioned his works again on 1 April:

To town to bring back Kakemonos by Suitoku and Chinese Bronze. (N.B. The paintings by Suitoku are of the 17th century, they have been given to the British Museum. – C.R. 1913.)

This shows that Ricketts and Shannon already possessed Suitoku’s works before 1901.

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29 The name of “Suitoku” slightly resembles a name of Japanese painter, Kano Eitoku. However, Eitoku is a painter in the 16th century, and this does not match with the description of Ricketts’s diary. 
30 Ernest Fenollosa, *The Masters of Ukiyo: A Complete Historical Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1896), 1-2. Fenollosa also praised Matabei in "Ukiyo-e shi ko," which was an article of an Oriental art journal, *Kokka*, vol. 1, no. 4 in 1890, however, this article was published in Japanese, therefore, Ricketts could not read this article in 1890.
31 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 1 April 1901, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XV. 1901, Add MS 58099, fol. 14v, British Library.
However, Ricketts wrote that his work was created in the 17th century, which is contradictory to the description “paintings by Suitoku, Fifteenth century” in the entry from 27 March; a characteristic combination of Ricketts’s precision and carelessness when it came to Japan, as we shall see.

Moreover, Ricketts later added a note that he had donated Suitoku’s paintings to the British Museum, but at present there is no record of this in the museum collection. This also indicates that Ricketts did not mind excluding these Suitoku paintings from his and Shannon’s collection, whereas they kept almost all their collection at hand while they were still alive.

By his mid-thirties, Ricketts had become a recognised Japanese art connoisseur. On 5 August 1901, he was consulted about an acquisition for the British Museum by Sidney Colvin, who was a keeper of the department of prints and drawings in the museum:

Up to town, Colvin of the British Museum wishing to consult me on the purchase of some Japanese prints for the Museum; these turned out to be Earnest Heart [Hart] rubbish, flagrant reprints and old tired re-issues of those side-aspects of Jap[anese] art which all Englishmen seem to get hold of: Kuniyoshi, Shighemasa [Shigemasa], obscure followers of Shunsho, — one or two Shunko’s tone of late Toyokuni, Yezan [Eizan] and Kounisada [Kunisada]. I fancy the British mind shies at the large lines of Kiyonaga [Kiyonaga] and Outamaro, and seems insensible to Harunobu and his imitators. Outamaro seems to be collected when he has become Outamaro 2, and Yeshi [Eishi] when he is indistinguishable from his pupils. In about six portfolios there was one tolerable Outamaro, ditto Koriousai [Koryūsai], two
good Shunko’s, a small set of actor-heads put down to Shunsho, and one good bridge by Hokusai. I felt some embarrassment in explaining to Colvin, who was obviously taken by Yezan, that the things were all rubbish, that when they were not vile they were re-issues.\textsuperscript{32}

Ernest Hart was a British surgeon, medical journalist, and great Japanese art collector. After he passed away, his widow, Alice Hart, sold his collection of Japanese paintings in 1901 and ukiyo-e prints in 1902, totalling about 400 Japanese artworks, to the British Museum.\textsuperscript{33} As seen from Ricketts’s choice of the word “rubbish,” his opinion on Hart’s collection was severe in terms of the condition of the ukiyo-e prints. Another reason for Ricketts’s bitter criticism in his diary was the difference in taste in Japanese prints between himself and Hart’s collection which went to the British Museum. The British Museum Collection Online shows the details of them, and Hart collected various prints by more than 90 ukiyo-e artists, regardless of the artists’ fame. In terms of ukiyo-e prints in Hart’s collection, the most represented artist is Utagawa Hiroshige, including his series, \textit{the Pictorial Guide to Famous Places in the Sixty-odd Provinces}, as well as 120 prints.\textsuperscript{34} On the other hand, Ricketts attached importance to ukiyo-e masters, especially Harunobu, Utamaro, and Hokusai. “One good bridge by Hokusai” would mean one of four prints from the series of \textit{Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges in

\textsuperscript{32} Ricketts’s Diary, 5 August 1901, Add MS 58099, fol. 41v.
Various Provinces or Under Mannen Bridge at Fukagawa from the series of Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. However, Hart’s collection acquired by the British Museum contained few ukiyo-e prints by these artists.

Ricketts’s description in his diary shows that he had his own firm taste and eye for ukiyo-e prints at that point. Moreover, it seems likely that rivalry further motivated Ricketts’s low praise for the Hart collection, with institutional recognition by the British Museum. In 1901, Ricketts was still developing his own Japanese art collection, and he did not have as many Japanese objects as Hart although Ricketts became popular as a Japanese art connoisseur. In addition, the spelling of ukiyo-e artists’ names in Ricketts’s diary differs from the current spelling based on the Hepburn romanisation system. This is because “Shighemasa,” “Yezan,” “Kounisada,” “Kionaga,” “Yeshi,” and “Koriousai” were the English spelling based on Japanese pronunciation without the Hepburn system, except for “Outamaro,” which came from the French spelling, as mentioned above.

There was no specific spelling rule concerning Japanese artists’ names at that time: the auction catalogue of the Goncourt’s Sale in 1897 indicated the absence of a universal convention of orthography for Japanese names, and many auction catalogues used various ways of spelling these names. Therefore, Ricketts sometimes spelt the same artist’s name in different ways in his diary – for example, “Harunobu” and

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“Haronobu.” This shows that the European art market was still in the development phase of Japanese art history studies.

The connection between Ricketts and the British Museum was strong; in 1903, he donated artworks from the Ricketts and Shannon collection to the museum. Ricketts wrote in his entry from 24 November: “To British Museum with Hokusai drawing and Tiepolo drawings; they seemed fairly pleased to have them.” By mentioning that the staff of the British Museum were pleased, the diary reveals that the museum recognised that the Ricketts and Shannon collection was of high quality. I have identified “Hokusai drawing” as a sketch of a Chinese warrior (Fig. 5) by the Katsushika school (Museum number: 1903,1126,0.1) and “Tiepolo drawings” as three drawings of a landscape and male figures (Fig. 6, 7, 8) by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (Museum number: 1903,1126.2, 1903,1126.3, and 1903,1126.4). In the diary, Ricketts indicated his belief that Hokusai himself drew this sketch. However, at present, it is reasonable to assume that the sketch was in fact drawn by a pupil who tried to improve his skill by copying Hokusai’s work; the British Museum regards this drawing as an artwork by an unidentified artist of the Hokusai school. Besides, Nagata Seiji argued that most of Hokusai’s sketches and drawings had been scattered and burned down in the fire while Hokusai was alive.  

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36 Ricketts’s Diary, 12 November 1900, Add MS 58098, fol.71v.
37 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 24 November 1903, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XVII. 1903, Add MS 58101, fol. 63v, British Library.
38 Hokusai had more than 200 pupils, and they drew many existing Hokusai style sketches and drawings. Around 1839, most of Hokusai’s sketches and drawings were destroyed by the fire. After
Therefore, Hokusai’s original artworks, such as his *Suikoden* from the Ricketts and Shannon collection mentioned above, are rare and precious. Furthermore, the combination of Japanese and Italian artworks donated by Ricketts is notable. These artworks seem to be unrelated to each other at first glance because of differences in their periods and places of creation. However, the Hokusai school’s sketch and Tiepolo’s figure drawings have several points in common. For example, both Hokusai and Tiepolo depicted dynamic body movements and captured an impressive moment from a non-frontal angle. Ricketts could identify these common points and decided to donate the drawings by Hokusai and Tiepolo to the British Museum together.

In 1906, Ricketts wrote the following in his diary: “Shannon bought the two superb Jap[anese] screens Koitsu recommended to us 2 years ago.”39 I consider that “Koitsu” refers to a Japanese connoisseur of painting and calligraphy, Kohitsu Ryōnin. Kohitsu worked at the Art Department of the Tokyo Imperial Museum, and visited London to learn about European art and museums.40 Ricketts had a connection with Kohitsu, whom he met several times to discuss Japanese and European art. However, this fire, Hokusai stopped keeping his sketches and drawings at hand, instead scattering them by giving them to his pupils. For more details, see Nagata Seiji, *Hokusai to Katsushika-ha no Shiitae* [Sketches of Hokusai and Hokusai School] (Tokyo: Iwasakibijutsusha, 1987), 81.

39 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 13 February 1906, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XX. 1906, Add MS 58104, fol. 8v, British Library.

the length of Kohitsu’s stay in London was from December 1901 to July 1903. “2 years ago” means the year of 1904, and Kohitsu had already returned to Japan in this year. Therefore, there are possibilities that Ricketts wrote “2” incorrectly in his diary, or Kohitsu sent Ricketts a letter about the suggestion for purchasing Japanese objects in 1904. Furthermore, as of 1900, Ricketts and Shannon only “saw Kakemonos and Screens by Hoitsu, Korin, and Sotatsu,” and they could not acquire them. However, in February 1906, Shannon could finally purchase screens and add them to their collection.

Japanese screens were dealt at a higher price than Japanese prints in art markets. That Ricketts and Shannon were able to purchase large-sized screens shows that their finances were improving. At present, there is only one Japanese screen in museum collections from the Ricketts and Shannon bequest. I believe that the Rimpa style screen, *Hares and Autumn Grasses* depicting 12 hares (Fig. 9), which is currently in the British Museum collection, is the same artwork which Ricketts mentioned in his diary in 1906. Although *Hares and Autumn Grasses* is a six-fold screen, Murashige Yasushi noted that this screen was possibly originally one of a pair of screens, which is consistent with the numbers of screens between *Hares and Autumn Grasses* and “the two screens” in

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42 Ricketts’s Diary, 12 November 1900, Add MS 58098, fol.71v.
Ricketts’s diary description.

Exhibiting Japanese Artefacts in London and Paris

Ricketts’s existing diaries in the British Library are from 1900 to 1906, and 1914 to 1918. Therefore, it is difficult to trace Ricketts’s actions between 1907 and 1913 and after 1919 using his diary alone. However, exhibition catalogues related to Ricketts still exist in the collection of the National Art Library and the British Library. Based on these catalogues, in this section I explore the development of the Ricketts and Shannon collection around 1910.

In 1909, 20 years after Ricketts and Shannon had started to collect Japanese artefacts, they exhibited their collection to the public in London and Paris. From February to March of the same year, the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers held the Fair Women Exhibition at the New Gallery in London. The society was established in 1898 to promote international art exhibitions. Whistler was the first president of the society, while the president in 1909 was Auguste Rodin. Ricketts and Shannon joined the society as committee members in 1898, and Ricketts was in charge of the exhibition in 1909.

As its name implied, the Fair Women Exhibition mainly consisted of female

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44 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, Add MS 58098-58109, 12 volumes, British Library.
46 Delaney, Charles Ricketts: A Biography, 124, 234.
portraits in both Eastern and Western art. According to the catalogue in the National Art Library, the Western art sections presented 318 artworks, including Whistler’s *Symphony in White, No.3* (1865–1867), John Everett Millais’ *The Eve of St Agnes* (1863), Francisco Goya’s *Portrait of Donna Maria Martinez del Puga* (1824), Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s *Madame Chocquet* (1875), Berthe Morisot’s *Woman with a Fan* (1876), and John Singer Sargent’s *Portrait of the Duchess of Sutherland* (1904) alongside contemporary works by John Lavery, Shannon, and Ricketts.

In addition, there were 88 Japanese artworks. Of these, 82 were lent by Ricketts and Shannon, while six Utamaro ukiyo-e prints were lent by the American artist and writer Joseph Pennell who wrote Whistler’s biography. This shows that Ricketts and Shannon had already collected more than 80 Japanese artefacts as of February 1909. Table 1 provides the details of 82 works from the Ricketts and Shannon collection. As can be seen, most of the exhibited ukiyo-e prints were by Utamaro, with 35 works. The second most represented artist was Harunobu, with 22 works. The reason for the large number of ukiyo-e prints by Utamaro is that Ricketts and Shannon tried to match the exhibition topic, “Fair Women,” and chose many prints by the famous artist of *bijin-ga* – artworks depicting beautiful women. In contrast, Hokusai painted many landscapes. Although Kiyonaga was also a *bijin-ga* artist, only one of his prints

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was displayed at the exhibition because Ricketts and Shannon did not have as many of
his ukiyo-e prints.

In addition, the Fair Women Exhibition was also notable because not only did it
represent a rare opportunity to see ukiyo-e outside of the British Museum and the V&A,
which possessed large-scale ukiyo-e collections, but also because it displayed bijin-ga
alongside late 19th-century modern Anglo-French portraits; a new paradigm of an ukiyo-
e exhibition in the early 20th century.

Furthermore, the catalogue listed six drawings and two watercolours by
Hokusai, and one painting by the Harunobu school. It categorised two of Hokusai’s
works as “watercolour,” but when Hokusai was alive, there were no watercolour
paintings in Japan. The technique of watercolour was only introduced at the end of the
Edo era, and it spread among Japanese artists in the Meiji era. Instead, it is possible that
“watercolour” means ink paintings (suiboku-ga) using a gradation of ink to contrast
shades. It is also possible that paintings using Japanese colour pigments (iwa enogu),
which did not contain oil, were roughly classified as “watercolour.” The catalogue did
not include images of exhibits, and it only listed a few titles of Japanese artworks:

Hokusai
27 “The Invention of the Flute” Original Drawing
28 “The Bad Conscience” Original Drawing
29 Study for “Chinese Princess” Original Drawing
30 “Chinese Princess” Original Drawing
Hokkei
31 “Mother and Child” Original Drawing

Harunobu (School of)
59 “The Love Letter” Painting

Hokusai
71 “A Fan” Original Water Colour
73 “A Fan” Original Water Colour

Compared with the existing Ricketts and Shannon bequest collections in museums, there is no Hokkei drawing depicting a mother and a child and no Harunobu school painting, though there are ukiyo-e prints by Harunobu illustrating letters. Regarding the “water colour” paintings, which were possibly suiboku-ga, listed as No. 71 and 73 and titled “A Fan,” the Fitzwilliam Museum possesses Still Life (Fig. 10), which is a painting that served to decorate a Japanese round fan. While this is speculation, Still Life matches two descriptors – “A Fan” and “Original Water Colour” – and there is a strong likelihood that No. 71 or 73 refers to it. Furthermore, in the British Museum collection, two sketches, Chinese Woman Seated with Head Resting on Hand, beside a Balustrade (Fig. 11) and Head of a Chinese Woman, Wearing Jewellery (Fig. 12), are

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49 International Society, A Catalogue of the Pictures, 51, 55-56.  
50 International Society’s catalogue and the Fitzwilliam Museum recorded Hokusai as the artist name of Still Life. However, it is very likely that Still Life was painted by Katsushika Taito, who was a Hokusai’s pupil because there is a sign “米華道人” which Taito used as another name at the lower right part of this drawing. “Taito” was previous Hokusai’s pseudonym from 1810 to 1820, and Hokusai gave it over Taito in 1820. Taito’s painting taste is similar to Hokusai, and it is difficult to distinguish between Taito’s and Hokusai’s works. For more details, see Edmond de Goncourt, Hokousai: L’art japonais au XVIIIe Siècle [Hokusai: Japanese Art in the 18th Century] (Paris: G. Charpentier and E. Fasquelle, 1896), 342; Kazuo Inoue, ed, Ukiyo-e Shi Den [Biography of Ukiyo-e Artists] (Tokyo: Watanabe Hangaten, 1931), 117.
similar to the title descriptions of No. 29, *Study for “Chinese Princess”* and No. 30, *“Chinese Princess,”* respectively. Ricketts and Shannon believed both artworks were painted by Hokusai, but in fact, their artists were again pupils of Hokusai, as in the case of *Chinese Warrior* (Fig. 5). In particular, *Chinese Woman Seated* was squared in red ink, and Japanese characters were added on the upper end and Japanese numbers on the left side as gradations, for the artist to copy an artwork by Hokusai precisely, marks left by pupils using Hokusai’s painting for their practice; Ricketts’s desire to understand Hokusai’s methods, to get close to the hand of the master, blinded him in this instance.

When the Fair Women Exhibition opened, various newspapers reported on it, mentioning ukiyo-e prints and drawings from the Ricketts and Shannon collection. These Japanese artworks were displayed on the balcony of the gallery. Although this exhibition was in London, and *The Times* wrote about it, it was also featured in regional newspapers, and it indicates that the exhibition received attention across Britain.

*The Western Daily Press Bristol* and *The Manchester Courier* described their impressions as follows:

> Not only are Japanese colour prints to be seen there in lovely sequence, but there are some original drawings by Hokusai, Hokkei, and Hokuba, which for inerrancy, flexibility, and purity of line are supreme in this exhibition, as they would be anywhere save in the company of other drawings and nearly all the colour prints are from the collection of Mr Ricketts and Mr Shannon.⁵²

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⁵¹ “‘Fair Women’ at the New Gallery,” 14.
A collection of Japanese colour prints on the balcony by Utamaro, Hokusai, Harunobu, Yeishi [Eishi], and others, also adds interest to a notable exhibition.53

Neither of the newspapers ignored the Japanese artworks, and they reviewed them favourably, even though Japanese artefacts were not exhibited in the main rooms of the gallery, where European artworks were displayed. Moreover, the drawing lines by ukiyo-e artists which fascinated Ricketts also left a strong impression on the reporter. Japanese art traditionally often used paint brushes and black ink to outline painting objects, and the black lines especially are indispensable to depict objects for ukiyo-e arts.

Ukiyo-e artists put a strong emphasis on line drawing. For example, Hokusai published many edehon, which were books to show how to draw paintings, and he often demonstrated the drawing lines of figures, animals, and landscapes in his edehon. The drawing lines by ukiyo-e artists are elaborate, and like Hokusai’s Suikoden, these free and lively lines captured the reviewer’s heart. Although this exhibition and the International Society have not received much attention at present, it was a unique attempt to display both Western and Far Eastern objects in the same exhibition at the beginning of the 20th century, and it is significant that the Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection contributed to cross-cultural elements of the exhibition; cross-cultural elements that we shall return to in the next chapter.

In the same year, 1909, Ricketts and Shannon’s ukiyo-e prints went to Paris for another exhibition. The Paris exhibition’s catalogue and newspaper cuttings from the exhibition’s review are among Ricketts’s papers and diaries in the British Library. According to the exhibition catalogue, from the 1st to the 30th of June, the Galeries L. & P. Rosenberg managed by French art dealers, the Rosenberg family held “The Exhibition of Originals of Hokusai and Hokkei: Collection of MM. Charles Ricketts and Shannon from London.” 54 Whereas the Fair Women Exhibition displayed ukiyo-e prints on the balcony, this exhibition showed Japanese drawings as special feature objects. As Kawamura Joichiro mentioned, 55 the catalogue had a note detailing a condition: “This collection being bequeathed by their honourable owners to the British Museum, none of the originals on display is for sale.” 56 The organiser of the exhibition wrote about the bequest to the British Museum on another page:

Since the happy owners of the remarkable originals which we have the honour of exhibiting had the great generosity of bequeathing them to their country, we believe that it is our duty, before the “cold tomb” of the British Museum opens to receive these drawings and allow them to be enjoyed by those who do not have the leisure time to visit a museum across the Channel, to show our compatriots, friends of Japan, these remarkable documents of the art of Yamato, and they will appreciate how interesting they are from our exhibition

54 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles par Hok'sai & Hokkei [Catalogue of Drawings and Watercolours by Hokusai and Hokkei], Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. I. 1909, Add MS 58085, fol. 129r, British Library.
56 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 130r. I translated from French into English.
These texts reveal key facts regarding the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection. Firstly, Ricketts and Shannon’s will of 1899 to bequeath their Hokusai collection to the British Museum was still effective, and the text clarifies that it is certain that by 1909, Ricketts and Shannon had promised to bequeath their Japanese art collection to the British Museum, an institution where Ricketts had acquaintances as recorded in his diary in 1902, he and Sidney Colvin friends. Moreover, Laurence Binyon, who worked in the department of prints and drawings under Colvin and had great knowledge of Japanese art, was Ricketts and Shannon’s close friend. The mutual trust between the museum and Ricketts and Shannon encouraged the promise of the future bequest. In addition, Ricketts and Shannon did not want to scatter their Japanese art collection through auctions after their death like Leighton, Brinkley, Whistler, and Goncourt, the first generation of Japonists. As the second generation of Japonists, they hoped to leave their collection to museums they could trust and, in so doing, contribute to Japanese art studies in Britain and establish their names as collectors of high-quality Japanese artefacts.

Secondly, this exhibition in Paris was the first and last exhibition of their

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57 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 131r. I translated French into English. “Yamato” is the old name of Japan.
collections outside Britain while Ricketts and Shannon were alive. The organiser wrote that opening their Japanese art collection to the public in France was “our duty,” and attached the highest importance to their collection, intending to promote the significance of Hokusai and Hokkei’s original artworks: the exhibition was not an ukiyo-e prints exhibition, but an original drawings exhibition.

The organiser also introduced the exhibits from the Ricketts and Shannon collection that used to be “the property of Lord Leighton, Ernest Hart, and Dr Anderson.” The exhibition review of the newspaper cuttings in the British Library collection also wrote that “Ricketts and Shannon were the owners of these drawings from the collections of Lord Leighton, Ernest Hart, Dr Anderson and Captain Brinkley.” As mentioned earlier, Ricketts and Shannon acquired Japanese objects at the auctions of Leighton and Brinkley. Whereas Ricketts had levelled bitter comments concerning the collection Hart bequeathed to the British Museum in 1902, exhibiting objects from the Hart collection shows that a now more level headed Ricketts recognised the considerable contribution of Hart as a Japanese art collector. Ricketts and Shannon would have acquired drawings through one of the Hart sales held in the late

58 After their deaths, their collection was exhibited across the world. For example, in recent years, 13 ukiyo-e prints from the British Museum collection, which was formerly the Ricketts and Shannon collection, have been displayed at the exhibition “Hokusai—Fuji wo Koete—[Hokusai – beyond the Great Wave]” at the Abeno Harukas Art Museum in Osaka, Japan in 2017.
59 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 131r.
60 “Dessins Japonais,” Newspaper Cuttings, Add MS 58085, fol. 137r.
1890s, for example, the auctions at Phillips, Son & Neale in 1896\textsuperscript{61} and Christie’s in 1898.\textsuperscript{62}

“Dr Anderson” is William Anderson who was an English surgeon and Japanese art collector. In 1881, he sold approximately 3,000 Japanese objects to the British Museum, these objects becoming the foundation of its Japanese art collection.\textsuperscript{63} Among the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection, there are two objects: Chinese Warrior (Fig. 5, Anderson number: 2051) and Eagle on Rock (Museum number: 1910,0530,0.3, Anderson number: 1154) with the Anderson number which catalogued Anderson’s collection in the British Museum in 1886. This reveals that Ricketts and Shannon also acquired Japanese artefacts from Anderson’s collection.

Examining the detailed contents of the exhibition, the catalogue reveals the presence of 39 of Hokusai’s works and four of Hokkei’s (Appendix 1). On the front page of the catalogue, there is an image of a drawing of a Buddhist figure with arms folded with a glaring face like Kongōrikishi\textsuperscript{64} which are guardians of Buddhism (Fig. 13), the only image in the catalogue, a sign of the growing prestige of Buddhist art in Japan.

\textsuperscript{63} Princess Akiko of Mikasa, “Uirimu Andå son Korekushon Saiko,”124.
\textsuperscript{64} Statues of Kongōrikishi are often standing under a temple gate to protect the precincts of a temple in Japan. The oldest Kongōrikishi statue in existence in Japan was made in the 8th century, and it was installed under the gate of Hōryū-ji, Nara.
the West in the period between 1850 and 1950. Although there were other drawings depicting various subjects, for example a beautiful woman and a landscape, the fact that the exhibition organiser selected a manly and religious figure for the front page shows that European people’s tastes of Japonisme were diversifying, not only iconic ukiyo-e representation such as feminine prostitutes which the first generation Japonists, Whistler and Rossetti preferred and were inspired with Orientalist elements, but also muscular Buddhism which was a new tide of the second generation Japonists, the Ricketts circle.

As a clue to identify the drawing, there is a painting in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art (Fig. 14) depicting the same figure, and the gallery considers that Hokusai painted it. However, the catalogue image is again squared with ink. Again, Ricketts and Shannon did not realise that the drawing was not Hokusai’s artwork in 1909 despite more than 20 years’ experience of collecting Japanese objects, indicating the difficulty of distinguishing Hokusai’s works from that of his pupils.’ A reason for this difficulty was that the number of original drawings by ukiyo-e artists was less than that of ukiyo-e prints at that time in Europe, and the study of these drawings remained comparatively underdeveloped.

Furthermore, it is notable that the exhibition catalogue stated that there are four drawings regarding *Hokusai Manga* in the exhibition:

2. Tiger caught in a waterfall. (Great study published in the Mangwa).
31. Temple guardian. (Study for a figure of the Mangwa).
32. Bronze. (Study for a figure of the Mangwa).

In these titles, “Mangwa” means *Hokusai Manga*, which is a 15-volume sketch and drawing collection by Hokusai, the first volume of which was published in 1814. Its publication attracted huge long-term popularity in Japan, and the fifteenth volume was finally printed in 1878 after Hokusai’s death. *Hokusai Manga* was not only popular in Japan but also in the West, and it contributed to the spread of Japonisme in the 19th century. For example, figures from *Hokusai Manga* inspired Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Examining each exhibit regarding *Hokusai Manga*, Kawamura indicated that “Tiger caught in a waterfall” was based on a drawing in the 13th volume of *Hokusai Manga* (Fig. 15). At present, in the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, there are works that depict a tiger standing under a waterfall (Fig. 16, Fig. 17), and I believe that work from either museum’s collection was displayed in the exhibition.

Moreover, although the exhibition catalogue stated that Ricketts and Shannon planned to donate their Japanese art collection to the British Museum, some works displayed in the exhibition are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, where its director and

65 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 132r. I translated French into English.
their friend, Sydney Cockerell, worked. Looking for “Creeping tiger. (Sketch for the Mangwa),” there is a drawing depicting a tiger with a strange posture (Fig. 18) and based on Running Tiger from volume 13 of Hokusai Manga (Fig. 19). This drawing is again not by Hokusai himself but one of his pupils. Compared to Running Tiger, the drawing does not illustrate the sense of the tiger’s powerful sprint because Running Tiger’s strong wind was not painted on the background. Without this background, the tiger of the drawing looks odd. Therefore, it may be considered appropriate that the writer of the exhibition catalogue described the drawing as “Creeping tiger.”

Hokusai Manga depicted various figures and subjects in a lively manner, and the exhibits fascinated newspaper reporters:

One simple fact among a thousand will allow you to understand their nature and significance. In the West, when an artist does a first draft, it’s to make a great composition out of it, and to add detail later to the final work. You will see that here, on the other hand, some of these heroic designs have been drawn to be reduced and simplified. A warrior, an animal, a serene, divine figure that could be projected onto the walls of the Sistine Chapel, have become thumbnails on a page from Mangoua. And these admirable drawings which will enter the British Museum were meant to be torn up as if they were only one step on the way to something unpretentious!68

“Mangoua” means Hokusai Manga. The above article referred to the Sistine Chapel, and the reporter considered that Hokusai was as talented as Michelangelo and Botticelli, who decorated the chapel. Furthermore, another article praised the exhibits, and wrote

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about elaborate depiction of *Hokusai Manga*:

In these forty frames, there is first, incomparable beauty, and then precious teachings. It is superfluous to point beauty out to our readers. How could these sketches of warriors, wild beasts, fabulous animals, alternating with heads of incomparable calm and majesty, not strike the attention of any observer with a bit of sensitivity?

As for what they tell us, among other things, these drawings show how spontaneous Japanese art is in its design, but deeply methodical in its study and execution, which ultimately gives everything the appearance of spontaneity.

Thus, some little character of *Mangoua*, before being drawn, required that Hokusai do a big, detailed drawing which would have been worthy of decorating the most glorious walls. In the West, we make a first draft of a drawing so that it can be reproduced much larger on the final surface. Among the Japanese, the opposite happens, and admirable, grandiose drawings are reproduced small and simple on a corner of an album page!

The deference to and appreciation of *Hokusai Manga* reveal that Hokusai was highly regarded as an ukiyo-e master in France. As mentioned above, *Hokusai Manga* was already regarded highly in the West in the 19th century. Specifically, Japonists in France in the 19th century paid attention to *Hokusai Manga*, and appreciated highly its depiction of the casual and humorous daily life of ordinary citizen in Japan. On the other hand, French audiences at the exhibition in 1909 had a high opinion of *Hokusai Manga*’s beauty which drew small figures magnificently and elaborately. There is a

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difference in high praise points of *Hokusai Manga* between French people in the 19th century and in 1909. It shows that the exhibition of the Ricketts and Shannon collection brought new viewpoints to France. In other words, it indicates that Anglo-Japonist currents affected French-Japonists’ appreciation of Hokusai.

Besides, both articles mentioned warriors, and in fact, the exhibition catalogue lists a work: “17. Meditation warrior leaning on his spear.” I identified this work in the British Museum’s collection as *Warrior Leaning on a Spear* (Fig. 20), depicting both a man of sturdy build and a minutely detailed illustration of Japanese body armour. Furthermore, related to depicting a strong figure, “13. Shinsi-Shoki killing a demon” is included in the British Museum’s collection as *Shoki the Demon Queller, about to Kill a Horned Demon with a Sword* (Fig. 21). There is also another drawing illustrating a god. The catalogue wrote, “30. Hotéi,” and the British Museum has *Daikoku Emerging from a Sack* (Fig. 22). *Daikoku* and *Hotei* are figures in Japanese mythology’s Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Both are plump male gods and have a sack when they are painted, and *Daikoku* resembles *Hotei*. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the catalogue writer mistook *Daikoku* for *Hotei*.

The Ricketts and Shannon collection exhibited in Paris included not only figure

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71 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 132r.
72 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 132r.

*Shoki* is a Chinese god who drives away bad luck, and was believed in by Japanese people since about the 14th century. *Shinsi* means the highest degree of the Chinese imperial examination.
drawings but also landscape drawings, and the exhibition catalogue includes “9.
Landscape in the style of Seshiu” and, “10. Fuji seen behind the trunk of a tree” in the
Hokusai section.73 “Seshiu” means Sesshū who was a Japanese Zen Buddhist priest and
a master ink wash landscape painter in the 15th century. His artworks are famous for
depicting mountains and rivers and, comparing them with Ricketts and Shannon’s
bequest, there is a landscape painting Mountain Peaks above the Clouds (Fig. 23) by a
painter of the Hokusai school in the British Museum. Regarding “Fuji seen behind the
trunk of a tree,” the Fitzwilliam Museum has Mount Fuji and a Pine Tree (Fig. 24) by
Hokusai with the label on the back noting: “Fitzwilliam Museum Ricketts & Shannon
Collection 1933.” The title description of this work in the exhibition catalogue is
specific, leading to more certainty that the painting in the museum is the work in the
catalogue.

Furthermore, although the catalogue has only one illustration, the exhibition
review in the newspaper cutting presents three images of artworks cited earlier,
including two of Hokusai’s works and one of Hokkei’s.74 The two Hokusai works are
“Study for Chinese poets” and “Two monsters appearing to a woman.” They are
currently in the British Museum collection as Head of a Chinese Woman, Wearing

73 Catalogue des Dessins et Aquarelles, Add MS 58085, fol. 132r.
74 “La Semaine Artistique,” Newspaper Cuttings, Add MS 58085, fol. 136r.
Jewellery (Fig. 12) and Woman Accosted by a Kappa and an Octopus (Fig. 25). Head of a Chinese Woman was also exhibited in the Fair Women Exhibition, suggesting that this drawing was one of Ricketts and Shannon’s favourites. The image of Hokkei’s drawing is “Bird study” (Fig. 26). The caption of this drawing states, “Donation Rickets and Shannon.” At present, it is not found in museum collections. Therefore, there is a possibility that the drawing was donated to the Galeries L. & P. Rosenberg and lost.

In contrast to Hokusai, the exhibition reviews in the newspaper cuttings did not mention Hokkei specifically, perhaps because Hokkei was a pupil of Hokusai, or the number of Hokkei’s works was less than Hokusai’s. However, the descriptions of Hokkei’s works in the catalogue detailed subjects which Hokusai’s works did not depict. This reveals that Ricketts and Shannon demonstrated the variety of the art of Hokusai and the Hokusai school. In this way, this Hokusai and Hokkei exhibition in Paris was a rare showcase in which viewers could see various kinds of Japanese figures and landscapes. Whereas we currently know that the exhibition included artworks by Hokusai school artists, the exhibition displayed only drawings and paintings by ukiyo-e artists relating to Hokusai, and notably, the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection was recognised for its importance by both the overseas gallery and the public, the first sign of the contemporary acclaim accorded to Ricketts’s collection in Europe.

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75 Kappa is a Japanese water sprite appearing in old folk tales. It has a green body with a dish on the head.
be matched by its acclaim in Japan, as we shall see.

In 1911, Shannon and Ricketts organised the “A Century of Art” exhibition at the Grafton Gallery, where approximately 300 artworks were exhibited. *A Century of Art, 1810-1910* by Ricketts, an explanatory booklet, described the exhibition rooms:

Room 1 showed mainly French painters of the Romantic movement along with John Crome and John Constable; Room 2 included J. M. W. Turner, William Holman Hunt, Millais, Édouard Manet and Whistler; whilst the End Gallery, Drawings and Prints displayed William Blake, Goya, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Turner, Constable, Eugène Delacroix, Puvis de Chavannes, and Hokusai.

In this way, Hokusai’s works were exhibited in the company of canonical Western art, even if Hokusai was the only Eastern artist who appeared in the exhibition.

Ricketts wrote about these artworks, selected by himself and Shannon, in the preface:

> In every field of observation in the quality of character behind the work, there have been masters in the nineteenth century, men of volcanic force like Hokusai, Goya, and Turner, of profound feeling like Millet, Rodin, poets and visionaries like Rossetti, Delacroix, and Blake; whole movements have been devoted to the search after beauty, beauty of fact, beauty of emotion and thought, and to the revaluation of the scope of art as the emotional equal of the great literature of our time.\(^6\)

In the above sentences, the artists Ricketts respected, such as Hokusai, Rodin and Rossetti, appeared, and we can see Ricketts regarded elements of beauty and literature

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as significant. However, reviewers did not understand Ricketts’s enthusiasm for these artists, and they described the impression of this exhibition as an ordinary retrospective exhibition summarising a century.\textsuperscript{77} Focusing on reviews of Hokusai’s works, The Times wrote a positive comment although it was short: “there are a few fine works here, the great Hokusai, of Japan, drawings of extraordinary vigour, brimming with life.”\textsuperscript{78}

Regarding the meaning of the exhibition, Delaney described it as Ricketts’s answer to Roger Fry’s Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1910, also held in the Grafton Gallery, which showed artworks by Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Van Gogh.\textsuperscript{79} The artworks Ricketts and Shannon presented in the exhibition were deliberately conservative and aestheticist countermeasures against post-impressionism, which was a radical modern art form although Ricketts did not mention Fry or the Post-Impressionist Exhibition in \textit{A Century of Art, 1810-1910}.

While Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh, whose works appeared in the Post-Impressionist Exhibition, were inspired by Japanese art, interestingly, Ricketts argued for Hokusai in the context of traditional art lineage with a severe comment on Turner:

> It is a common belief that the development of landscape-painting has been the chief achievement of the last hundred years. This is so far true in that no other epoch has equalled it in the constant effort and success achieved in that direction. […] If we can say no painter has surpassed Turner in technical skill,

\textsuperscript{79} Delaney, \textit{Charles Ricketts: A Biography}, 263.
we can say also no sculptor has surpassed Rodin in emotional range. Turner’s faculties of invention were immense, but as a designer of landscape, he is surpassed by Hokusai, his contemporary, who was also a great figure-draughtsman.  

Moreover, Ricketts commented:

The contemporary of Goya and Turner, Hokusai acted not only as an example in his own country but as a stimulus upon the art of Europe. Two of these drawings, Nos. 275, 279, figure in microscopic form in the Mangua. The others are later, and recall something in the art of Signorelli, and even Dürer.  

Ricketts pointed out Hokusai’s inspiration on European countries, what we call Japonisme and again parallels with artists in the Renaissance period. *A Century of Art, 1810-1910* does not attach a list of artworks in the exhibition, and it is difficult to identify exhibits; however, it is considered that “Nos. 275, 279” depicted figures with great individuality which were displayed at “The Exhibition of Originals of Hokusai and Hokkei” in 1909. Ricketts juxtaposed Hokusai with Signorelli and Dürer. He often compared Hokusai with European masters, as we have begun to see, and this time, he found Signorelli’s dynamic figure depiction and Dürer’s nature observation echoed in Hokusai’s works.

Hokusai was the only Eastern artist in “A Century of Art” exhibition displaying artworks which caught Ricketts’s eye, and it shows that he regarded Hokusai highly not only as a curious Japanese artist but a key nineteenth-century artist and an artist having

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a great influence on European art. In addition, the fact that Ricketts again exhibited Hokusai’s drawings reveals that Ricketts attached importance to drawings showing Hokusai’s brushwork vividly. Therefore, although the exhibition did not receive high praise at that time, Ricketts, as a collector and connoisseur of Japanese art, was a significant individual in Britain in terms of contribution to the spread of ukiyo-e art.

The Development of the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection

In 1911 – the same year as “A Century of Art” exhibition – Ricketts inherited £100 from William Llewellyn Hacon, a business supporter of the Vale Press, who had passed away, and Ricketts and Shannon purchased his ukiyo-e prints collection.82 Regarding the contents of their acquisition, Ricketts wrote that:

Before leaving London, we acquired Hacon’s two Delacroix sketches you liked at the Grafton, and his entire collection of Japanese prints, this represents about forty first-rate Harunobus and other desirable prints. We are contemplating a total re-arrangement of our Greek things and require a new chest for the prints. Our set of good Harunobus is now over sixty, which is not bad for practically the rarest and most costly of the print masters.83

Harunobu was a key figure for Ricketts and Shannon, and they could not let this great opportunity to acquire so many of Harunobu’s works pass them by. While there were more than sixty of Harunobu’s prints in the Ricketts and Shannon collection in 1911, at

82 Delaney, Charles Ricketts: A Biography, 272.
83 Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 17 September 1911, Ricketts, Shannon and "Michael Field" Transcripts Vol. III, Add MS 61715, fol. 116r, British Library. Jap is a discriminatory word; however, Ricketts sometimes used it in his letters and diary.
present, there are fifty of his prints in their bequest to the British Museum. Therefore, most of Harunobu’s prints in the existing Ricketts and Shannon collection in the museum are from the Hacon collection, and Ricketts took pride in these prints as top-quality works.

Ukiyo-e art was rich throughout art markets in Britain around 1910. On the title page of the 1910 Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Japanese Colour Prints Illustrated Books and Original Drawings: The Property of a Well-known Amateur by Sotheby’s London, which is housed in the National Art Library, there were newspaper clippings stuck in the page. One of the cuttings, titled “Japanese Prints,” wrote that:

Last year the famous Happer sale at Sotheby’s of Japanese colour prints vindicated the cult of Western amateurs, and, incidentally, shifted the market from Paris to London. He would have been a rash man five years ago who would have dared to say that in 1910 both Christie’s and Sotheby’s would be holding two important sales of Japanese prints within five days of each other.

Happer refers to the American ukiyo-e prints collector, John Stewart Happer, alias “Hiroshige Happer” because he was known as an authority of Hiroshige. Sotheby’s held big auctions from Happer’s Japanese art collection in 1909, and the auctions in April and June offered 708 and 726 items, respectively.84 These items mainly consisted of

ukiyo-e prints, but there were also hanging scrolls and illustrated books by various
ukiyo-e artists. The art market in London was stimulated by this large supply of ukiyo-e
art. Japanese art sales, especially of ukiyo-e prints, were frequently held at auction
houses from around 1910. For the second-generation Japonists in Britain, prosperity of
Japanese art trading in London was an ideal opportunity to collect Japanese artefacts.

At the same time of the influx of ukiyo-e art into Britain, Ricketts and Shannon
acquired many Japanese artefacts. The quantity and quality of the Japanese prints in
Ricketts and Shannon’s collection saw some progress in 1912. In a 1913 letter to
Cockerell, Ricketts wrote that: “Our Jap[anese] collection […] has almost doubled itself
in the last year.”85 Twenty-two Japanese artefacts were added to the collection at the
Frank Swettenham sale at Sotheby’s from 1 to 9 May 1912,86 and Ricketts boasted of
the new acquisitions in a postcard to Cockerell: “Shannon has secured, for a fair price,
some four or five very valuable Jap[anese] books by Outamaro and Hokusai.”87

According to the auction catalogue, the details of Japanese books which entered the
Ricketts and Shannon collection are as follows:

85 Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 11 August 1913, Ricketts, Shannon and “Michael
Field” Transcripts Vol. IV, Add MS 61716, fol. 59r, British Library.
86 Frank Swettenham was a British colonial administrator. He was also an amateur watercolour
painter and a writer depicting Malaysia. For more details, see H. S. Barlow, “Swettenham, Sir Frank
Athelstane (1850-1946), Colonial Administrator,” Oxford Dictionary of National
com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-
36387.
87 Charles Ricketts’s Postcard to Sydney Cockerell, 10 May 1912, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add
MS 88957/3/13, fol. 306r, British Library.
£3 3s  1010 Hokusai (Katsushika): Yehon Kyoka Yama Mata Yama, “Comic Poems —Mountains upon Mountains”; First Edition, Yedo, 1804, 3 vol. 60 pp. of illustrations in colours; signed Hokusai

£2 2s  1011 Hokusai (Katsushika): Yehon Sumidagawa Ryogan Ichiran, “A Synopsis of [the scenery of] the two sides of the Sumida River”; First Edition, Yedo, 1806, 3 vol. in 1, 23 double-page illustrations in colours

£3 3s  1012 Hokusai (Katsushika): Fugaku Hyakkei, “The Hundred Views of Fuji,” vol. II of the First Edition in original covers, known as the “Falcon’s feather” edition, published in 1835; also the 3 vol. of what is probably the second edition on rather whiter paper; very fine and sharp impressions, in silk brocade case

£15  1014 Hokusai (Katsushika): Genroku Kasen Kai-Awase, “Shell game of the Poets of Genroku” (period), a Series of 36 fine Surimono, printed in colours, metal and gauffrage, each print having a small fan-leaf with shells on it; signed Gettchi Rojin Iitsu; in case

£4  1028 Utamaro (Kitagawa). Shiohi no Tsuto, “Presents of the Ebbtide,” a picture book of shells, with the exception of the first and last: Ladies Gathering shells on the sea-shore, and Ladies playing the game Kai Awasi; Yedo, no date, 1 vol. 8 double-page prints in colours, metals and gauffrage; signed Kitagawa Utamaro ***Although a very pretty book, this must not be regarded as a first edition.

£18  1030 Utamaro (Kitagawa). Yehon Mushi-Erabi, “Pictures of Selected Insects”; First Edition, Yedo, 1787, 2 vol. in 1, 15 double-page illustrations in colours, mica, and gauffrage; preface by Yadoya Meshimori; published by Tsuta-ya Juzaburo; signed Kitagawa Utamaro

£8  1032 Utamaro (Kitagawa). Seiro Yehon Nenju Giogi, “Pictures of Brothels all the year round by the Umpire,” or The Book of the Yoshiwara; First Edition, Yedo, 1804, 2 vol. 19 double-page illustrations in colours; text by Ippensha Ikku; signed Kitagawa-sha Murasaki Utamaro with the assistance of his pupils Kikumaro, Hidemaro and Takemaro88

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Hokusai and Utamaro are famous ukiyo-e prints artists; however, they also produced illustrated books – specifically, Hokusai published many illustrated books. His “The Hundred Views of Fuji” (*Fugaku Hyakkei*) are illustrated books in three volumes published in 1834, 1835, and unknown, after his well-known ukiyo-e print series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* were printed between 1830 and 1834. These books demonstrate 102 multiple views of Mount Fuji with bold composition and a rich printing technique.

More than 100 of Hokusai’s iconic Mount Fuji views fascinated Ricketts and Shannon. Hokusai’s most expensive work, which they acquired in this auction, is “Shell game of the Poets of Genroku” (*Genroku Kasen Kai-Awase*). Its price was £15 in 1912, which was approximately £1,726 in 2019.\(^9\) It was categorised as “Books” in the auction catalogue, however, it is a series of *surimono*, which is a made-to-order print usually ordered by comical and satirical poets to hand out to their friends (*kyōka*). In contrast to mass production ukiyo-e prints depicting landscapes and beautiful women, *surimono* often depicted still lives based on the subject of *kyōka* with delicate colours, elaborate techniques, and high-grade paper. Therefore, I consider that this high-quality *surimono* series led to Ricketts’s words cited above: “very valuable.”

Another valuable artwork, Utamaro’s “Pictures of Selected Insects” (*Yehon Mushi-Erabī*), cost £18. This is an illustrated book with *kyōka* and is one of the

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masterpieces. Utamaro used his experience of playing with insects during his childhood, and he painted insects with an observant eye. Ricketts and Shannon already collected Japanese artworks depicting hares, tigers, and birds; therefore, *Yehon Mushi-Erabi* is related to these artworks in terms of Japanese creatures. It reveals that Ricketts and Shannon not only had an interest in Japanese landscapes and figures but also animals and insects, and they paid attention to the various expressions of their favourite artists, such as Hokusai and Utamaro, when they collected Japanese artefacts.

At the Frank Swettenham sale, Ricketts and Shannon also purchased ukiyo-e prints: fourteen Hokusai prints, four Utamaro, one Eishi, and one Harunobu. Many other ukiyo-e artists’ prints, including Hiroshige’s, came up for this auction; however, they focused on their respected artists. Looking at their acquisitions, there are three important series of Hokusai’s ukiyo-e prints. First, three prints from the series of *Tour of Waterfalls in Various Provinces* included *The Kirifuri (falling mist) Fall*, *The Yoshitsune Horse-washing Fall*, and *Robe Fall (after the name of the Founder of the Temple Todaiji) Oyama, Province of Soshu.* Second, four prints from the series of *Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces* included *The Reflected Bridge of the Moon at Arashiyama, Province of Yamashiro; The Spider-web Bridge at Guido[Gyodo] san; The Yahagi Bridge of Okazaki, on the Tokaido; and The Bridges at the Mouth of the*
Aji River, Tempozan, Osaka.\textsuperscript{91} Third, one print from the series of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets, Explained by the Nurse included Poem.\textsuperscript{92} Comparing these prints with the Ricketts and Shannon bequest in the British Museum, at present, all of them are in the museum collection. Like Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the Tour of Waterfalls and Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges are artworks in which Hokusai captured the ultimate beauty of nature’s creation with his unusual composition and impressive Prussian blue colour. The series of One Hundred Poems is Hokusai’s last ukiyo-e print series from when he was 76 years old, and it is the crystallisation of the last several decades of his landscape and figure artworks. The fact that Ricketts and Shannon acquired these series shows that they recognised these prints were Hokusai’s masterpieces, and they had the intention to try to collect prints of Hokusai’s important series.

In February 1914, Harunobu’s ukiyo-e prints were again added to the Ricketts and Shannon collection. Ricketts wrote about their Harunobu collection:

Shannon has added greatly to our Japanese print department, our Haronobus are now are more numerous and of a higher quality than those belonging to Harmsworth or the British Museum Print Room.\textsuperscript{93}

Harmsworth refers to Robert Leicester Harmsworth, who was a British politician,

\textsuperscript{91} Sotheby’s, Catalogue of a Large and Important Collection of Japanese Colour Prints, 68-69.
\textsuperscript{92} Sotheby’s, Catalogue of a Large and Important Collection of Japanese Colour Prints, 88.
\textsuperscript{93} Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 2 February 1914, Add MS 61716, fol. 70r.
businessman, and art collector, and he had a fine quality ukiyo-e prints collection which had been exhibited in the V&A. Ricketts had confidence in the number and quality of their collection and compared it to the great ukiyo-e prints collector, Harmsworth, the British Museum and the V&A in having the biggest collection of Harunobu works in Britain. In fact, looking at existing Harunobu prints from the Ricketts and Shannon collection in the British Museum, there are the *Eight Views of the Elegant Floating World* and *Poets of Elegant Four Seasons* series, which are Harunobu’s symbolic works depicting lyrical and delicate women. Ricketts’s confidence shows that his and Shannon’s Japanese art collection was virtually completed at the beginning of 1914. After February 1914, there is no description of collecting Japanese objects in Ricketts’s letters and diaries. One of the reasons was that World War I started in July 1914, and it was difficult for them to acquire artworks. There is also a possibility that they were satisfied with their collection at that point.

**The Bequest of the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Collection to Museums**

According to Ricketts’s letters and diaries, Ricketts and Shannon did not make any further big changes to their Japanese art collection until the late 1920s. In January 1929, Shannon fell from a ladder when he was hanging a painting in Ricketts and Shannon’s house. This accident caused serious brain damage, and Shannon did not recover. Although Shannon narrowly escaped death, his condition was unstable, and this difficult
situation affected their precious collection. To cover the cost of Shannon’s medical
treatment, Ricketts sold miniatures by Fragonard and Isabey and a painting by Hopper.\footnote{Delaney, Charles Ricketts: A Biography, 399.}

In addition, Ricketts, who thought that this sale was insufficient for Shannon’s treatment,
gave his executors instructions:

I should like the Greek things and Pre-Raphaelite drawings to be kept to the last. Let Egypt go first, Piero di Cosimo second, and Japan third, and old master drawings fourth.\footnote{Letter from Ricketts to F. E. Jackson and T. E. Lowinsky, 16 May 1931, quoted in Delaney, Charles Ricketts: A Biography, 400.}

Setting the priority order of selling their collection would be hard for Ricketts; however,
we can find instructions in Ricketts’s will to not dispose of the entire collection.

Furthermore, he placed their Japanese collection between Piero di Cosimo and old master drawings. Ricketts had traditional ideas about art; therefore, it is easy to understand that his high priority was Greek, Pre-Raphaelite, old master artworks, and there was an artistic barrier between classical Western art and Far-Eastern art. However, the fact that Japanese artefacts have a higher priority than Piero di Cosimo indicates that their Japanese collection was of adequate quantity and quality to have value to future ages.

On 7th October 1931, Ricketts passed away before Shannon’s death in 1937.

The \textit{Scotsman} reported the following about Ricketts’s will:
By his will, dated March 6, 1929, he leaves everything he may die possessed of to Charles Shannon. Should he predecease him then he gives to the British Museum his collection of intaglios and cameos, his collection of Japanese prints and half of drawings by Hokusai, his Japanese screens and Oriental drawings, the wood blocks cut by Charles Shannon and himself, and the vellum copies of the Vale Press; to the Fitzwilliam Museum his collection of Egyptian and Greek antiquities, his collection of drawings, ancient and modern, except drawings by himself and Charles Shannon, his Japanese books, and the other half of the Japanese drawings by Hokusai […] The executors are to destroy all his unfinished works, and sell the remainder together with any objects declined by the Public Museums.96

In this way, after Shannon’s accident in 1929, Ricketts prepared for the future prior to passing away. Focusing on Japanese artefacts, the British Museum obtained most of Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection, and the Fitzwilliam Museum also acquired some drawings by Hokusai and some Japanese books from their collection. As for the reason why all their collection did not go to the British Museum, Cockerell put efforts into enriching the Japanese art collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum when he was a director from 1908 and 1937. He requested the bequest to the museum from Ricketts and Shannon, and the two accepted his request by 1911;97 Ricketts and Shannon admiring Cockerell’s Cambridge collection.

The British Museum Archives has the records regarding the bequeathing of the Ricketts and Shannon collection. After Ricketts’s death, Binyon, a representative of the Japanese art section of the British Museum, was involved in dealing with their

96 “Sculptor Leaves over £36,000,” editorial, Scotsman, December 21, 1931, 11.
97 Delaney, Charles Ricketts: A Biography, 122.
collection with Ricketts’s executors and the official solicitor. The *Minutes of Meetings of the British Museum’s Trustees* dated 11th February 1933 shows the deposit on a loan of Shannon’s Japanese prints, drawings, and wood blocks bequeathed from Ricketts to the museum:

Deposits on Loan: The Ricketts-Shannon Collections, Major and the Misses Linton, Mr. L.A. Lawrence, Mr. H. W. Scarth.—On reports by Mr. Binyon, 3rd February, and Mr. Reginald Smith, 4th February, the Trustees accepted with thanks the following deposit on loan, viz., the collections destined by Mr. Charles Shannon to the Museum, comprising—

(a) The collection of Japanese Prints and Oriental Paintings;
(b) One half the collection of Japanese Drawings by Hokusai; and
(c) The wood-blocks cut by Ricketts and Shannon for the Vale Press.

By his will, Mr. Shannon had bequeathed these works, which he had inherited from Mr. Ricketts, to the Museum. Mr. Shannon being now insane, and not expected to recover, Mr. Ricketts’ executors, with the approval of the Official Solicitor, proposed to deposit them in the Museum, on the understanding that if at any time during Mr. Shannon’s life it should become necessary to realize or otherwise dispose of them, they might be withdrawn.98

Two-and-a-half years after Ricketts’s death, his and Shannon’s Japanese art collection went to the British Museum. At that time, Shannon did not have the ability to maintain their collections because of his accident. The British Museum was one of the few museums collecting and researching Japanese artefacts. In addition, Binyon, also a

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98 British Museum, "Deposits on Loan: The Ricketts-Shannon Collections, Major and the Misses Linton, Mr. L.A. Lawrence, Mr. H. W. Scarth," *Minutes of Meetings of the British Museum’s Trustees*, February 11, 1933, c4945.
friend of Ricketts and Shannon, worked in the Prints and Drawings Department of the museum, and he could grasp the Ricketts and Shannon collection without trouble. He also regarded their Japanese art collection highly in his report on 3rd February: “The Japanese prints and drawings will form a large and very valuable enrichment to the Museum collection.” This report reveals that Binyon was highly active in contributing to the Ricketts and Shannon bequest. Therefore, the British Museum was the appropriate place to deposit a large part of their Japanese art collection.

Another entry in the Minutes of Meetings related to their collection was made on 11th March 1933. It records the collections of Japanese prints and drawings provisionally accepted on loan by the Trustees:

Loan of Ricketts-Shannon Collection. —Read a report from Mr. Binyon, 4th March 1933, on the Ricketts and Shannon collections provisionally accepted on loan by the Trustees. They comprised 292 Japanese woodcuts (Harunobu, Hokusai and Utamaro chiefly); 3 Japanese screen-paintings, 17th or 18th century; 6 Persian and 5 Indian miniatures; 27 drawings by Hokusai, 7 of his school, a small lacquer-painting by Zeshin and 2 small Chinese paintings; an album of 53 drawings by Hokusai; and 225 woodblocks engraved by Ricketts and Shannon.

This entry describes the details of the contents of Ricketts and Shannon’s collection. Compared with the current British Museum collection from their bequest, there are

99 Binyon Report, 3 February 1933, Laurence Binyon Reports, British Museum.
100 British Museum, “Loan of Ricketts-Shannon Collection,” Minutes of Meetings of the British Museum’s Trustees, March 11, 1933, c4953.
“Zeshin” refers to Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891), who was a Japanese painter and lacquer artist.
small differences in the number of items. For example, *Minutes of Meetings* indicates that there were three, but at present, there is one screen painting in the museum. This screen painting was presented by a body of subscribers as a tribute to Binyon on his retirement in 1933, and it shows that it is not one of “3 Japanese screen-paintings.” In his letter, Binyon wrote that the lawyers thought that the screens may have to be sold, and these three screen paintings were sold to supplement Shannon’s medical and living costs. Additionally, according to Delaney, all the Japanese woodblock books, such as the illustrated books mentioned above including Utamaro’s *Pictures of Selected Insects*, were sold or put up at auction. *Minutes of Meetings* also refers to “a report from Mr. Binyon, 4th March 1933,” and this report contains more details of ukiyo-e prints and Binyon’s comments:

292 Japanese woodcuts, including 58 by Harunobu, 101 by Hokusai, and 58 by Utamaro. A few other masters only are represented. Most of the Hokusais are already represented in the Museum but often in impressions printed in a different colouring and sometimes inferior to those in the Ricketts collection. Of the Utamaros, a small number are duplicates of impressions in the Museum; of the Harunbus, only one or two.

The breakdown of ukiyo-e prints reflected Ricketts and Shannon’s interests in Hokusai, Utamaro, and Harunobu. In the 1930s, the British Museum collected many ukiyo-e

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102 Letter from Binyon to Hill, 14 March 1933, Laurence Binyon Reports, British Museum.
104 Binyon Report, 4 March 1933, Laurence Binyon Reports, British Museum.
prints by purchase and donation. Compared with the museum collection, Binyon specifically appraised Hokusai’s prints from the Ricketts and Shannon collection as high-quality works in terms of colour. The colours of Hokusai’s prints in the museum collection might have already had advanced fading when they were acquired because most pigments used in ukiyo-e prints were made with natural materials, and they were quick to fade if collectors were not careful handling them, for example, by avoiding sunlight. On the other hand, Ricketts and Shannon not only selected and purchased well-preserved ukiyo-e prints but they also properly stored them in secure conditions in their “chest for the prints.”¹⁰⁵ One of Ricketts’s motivations for careful handling was that their collection was the proof of Ricketts and Shannon’s sharp eyes for Japanese art, and he wanted them to be remembered as true connoisseurs in the future.

The third entry in Minutes of Meetings related to the Ricketts and Shannon collection concerns the exhibition plan of their collection at the British Museum:

Exhibition of Shannon Collection of Japanese Prints.—On a report by Mr. Hobson, 2nd November, the Trustees approved the closing of the present exhibition of Oriental Paintings, and the opening on 28th November (with a Private View on 27th November) of an exhibition of Japanese Prints and Drawings from the collection deposited on loan by the Trustees of Mr. Charles Shannon, together with some recent acquisitions (c. 4958).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 17 September 1911, Add MS 61715, fol. 116r. Jap is a discriminatory word; however, Ricketts sometimes used it in his letters and diary.
In the same year as their collection was deposited in the museum, the museum decided to hold an exhibition including their Japanese art collection, showing that the museum acknowledged the high artistic value of its Japanese prints and drawings collections.

The *Times* reported on this exhibition on 29th November 1933, noting that it comprised about half of the Hokusai drawings, all the prints, and three painted screens from their collection. The *Times* paid attention to Harunobu’s delicacy in the use of colour, the grace in Utamaro’s portraits of women, and Hokusai’s joyous freedom, and gave the exhibition a favourable review.107

In 1937, another entry in *Minutes of Meetings* describing the bequest of Ricketts and Shannon’s collection appeared:

Charles Shannon Bequest.—Read reports by Mr. Popham, 14th June, and Mr. Hobson, 1st July, that the will of the late Charles Shannon, R.A., had been proved, and that under it the Museum became entitled to the series of Vale Press wood-blocks and to the collections of Japanese colour-prints and Oriental drawings and half the collection of Japanese drawings formed by him and the late Charles Ricketts, R.A., which had been on deposit in the Museum since 1933.108

Shannon passed away in March of the same year, and their collection was officially bequeathed to the British Museum in July. The entry mentions that the collection bequeathed by Shannon was created by both him and Ricketts. It is notable that the

museum understood that it was a joint collection, this chapter and thesis re-emphasising Ricketts’s role after his disappearance from the historiography of these bequests, as we have seen.

**Analysis of the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection in the British Museum**

The Ricketts and Shannon collection bequeathed to the British Museum in 1937 has been maintained to the present day. To clarify the detailed contents, the characteristics of their collection, and its artistic value, I searched Japanese artefacts related to Ricketts and Shannon in the British Museum’s collection online, and I created tables and charts based on the data for these artworks in the collection for the analysis.

The online search of the British Museum’s collection resulted in 333 Japanese artworks related to Ricketts and Shannon. *Amida Raigo Triad* (museum number 1938,0108,0.1), one of the 333 artworks, was donated by Mr and Mrs Henry Winslow in memory of Charles Ricketts, and its previous owner was “Kawasaki.” As a result, it is not considered part of Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, although it is telling that they were memorialised through a Japanese image. Additionally, *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* by Hokusai and Yanagawa Shigenobu (museum number 1937,0710,0.267) did not have the “Acquisition name” recorded in the museum’s collection online.\(^{109}\)

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\(^{109}\) As artists of *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, Hiroshige is the most famous artist. However, Hokusai also made a series called *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. Shigenobu was Hokusai’s
However, two artworks with museum numbers 1937,0710,0.266 and 1937,0710,0.268 were recorded as “Bequeathed by: Charles Hazelwood Shannon.” Therefore, I surmise museum number 1937,0710,0.267 was also bequeathed by Shannon. Except for *Amida Raigo Triad*, the following is an analysis of these 332 Japanese artworks from Ricketts and Shannon’s collection.

Focusing on the artists in the online collection (Table 2), the most represented in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection was Hokusai with 115 artworks. After Hokusai, Utamaro was second with fifty-nine artworks, and Harunobu was third with fifty artworks. Furthermore, there were thirty-three artworks by artists in the Hokusai style. The reason Ricketts and Shannon collected these is, again, their difficulty of judging whether artworks were by Hokusai, and, at the time, they believed that Hokusai painted these thirty-three artworks. Still, the total number of Hokusai’s artworks and Hokusai-style artists’ artworks is 148, by far the most in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection.

Moreover, Gakutei, Hokkei, and Ryuryukyo Shinsai, who were included in their collection, were Hokusai’s pupils. Like many of their peers and successors, Ricketts and Shannon placed a high priority on collecting Hokusai’s art.

Noguchi Yonejiro increased his interest in ukiyo-e prints through interactions with British Japonists, recognising the popularity of ukiyo-e in the West at his stay in

son-in-law, and he contributed several illustrations to Hokusai’s *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. 

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London in the early 20th century. In 1919, he published Rokudai-Ukiyoeshi [The Six Great Ukiyo-e Artists]. He listed Harunobu, Kiyonaga, Utamaro, Tōshūsai Sharaku, Hokusai, and Hiroshige as the six great ukiyo-e artists, and he also wrote about interactions with British Japonists including Ricketts. Noguchi considered Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Utamaro as masters of beautiful women ukiyo-e, Sharaku as a master of actor ukiyo-e, and Hokusai and Hiroshige as masters of landscape ukiyo-e. Today, people still regard these six as great artists, and exhibitions of them are often held.

Regarding these six ukiyo-e artists, however, there is no artwork by Kiyonaga or Sharaku in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection. Sharaku is famous as a mysterious artist because he was active for only about ten months from 1794 to 1795, and his ancestry and career have not been revealed. Sharaku created about 140 works in his lifetime, and the British Museum possesses thirty-three. Because of this small number, it would have been difficult for Ricketts and Shannon to purchase Sharaku’s artworks during their lifetime. Additionally, the increased interest in Sharaku was later than Hokusai and Utamaro. In fact, it was 1910 in Munich when the first monograph on Sharaku, Sharaku written by Julius Kurth was published, and this monograph was written in German.

Therefore, for Ricketts and Shannon, it was difficult to obtain information on Sharaku from the end of 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, and this might have

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been one of reasons why Ricketts and Shannon did not have Sharaku’s works. Moreover, Sharaku’s main subject was *yakusha-e*, which means artworks depicting kabuki actors and stages. Specifically, Sharaku often depicted busts of kabuki actors with deformations. Hence, women painted by Sharaku have big noses, thick eyebrows, vivid eyes, and dynamic poses, and they stir powerful impressions. Female kabuki roles have been played by male actors; however, Sharaku’s women are more masculine than real kabuki male actors who play beautiful women. This Sharaku characteristic contrasts with the work of Utamaro and Harunobu, which Ricketts and Shannon preferred, and in spite of Ricketts’s interest in stage design. In addition, Utamaro and Harunobu’s women are elegant and gentle. Therefore, it was easy for Ricketts and Shannon to understand the beauty of Japanese women. Furthermore, Utamaro and Harunobu more frequently depicted women’s entire bodies than Sharaku. For Ricketts, this was helpful in designing stage costumes inspired by Japanese culture, such as for *The Mikado* in 1926.

The reason there are no Kiyonaga artworks in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection remains a mystery. In fact, they purchased four Kiyonaga prints from Leighton’s collection on 16 July 1896 and displayed one Kiyonaga print at the Fair Women Exhibition in 1909, as mentioned above. However, the British Museum does not have these prints, nor does the Fitzwilliam Museum. At present, they are missing. In addition, Ricketts’s friend, Binyon, who worked at the British Museum, regarded
Hokusai and Utamaro higher than Kiyonaga. Therefore, there is slight possibility that Binyon’s opinion made impression on the lack of Kiyonaga works in the Ricketts and Shannon’s collection.

Ricketts and Shannon had a great interest in bijin-ga (artworks depicting beautiful women), and they possessed bijin-ga by Utamaro, Harunobu, and Eishi. Specifically, Utamaro and Eishi were influenced by Kiyonaga’s bijin-ga style, which depicts women with beautifully balanced proportions. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that Ricketts and Shannon did not value Kiyonaga’s artworks and sold them while they were alive. Some external factors must have affected the bequest of Ricketts and Shannon’s collection.

Looking at the production dates (Table 3), A Fashionable Representation of the Immortals of Poetry: Picture Book of Waka-no-ura by Takagi Sadatake was printed in 1734 and the mentioned folding screen by the Rimpa school was painted in the 17th or 18th century. Because Ricketts and Shannon possessed many Hokusai prints, there are 110 artworks from the 1830s. Furthermore, there are forty-eight artworks by Harunobu from the 1760s and twenty from the 1790s by Hokusai, Utamaro, and Eishi. However, it is difficult to identify the exact production dates of ukiyo-e prints because there are


various editions of the same prints, and the actual careers of many ukiyo-e artists are still obscure. Therefore, production dates for 132 artworks remain unknown.

Almost all the material in Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection is on paper. Only one drawing by the Hokusai school (1937,0710,0.305) is painted on silk. Regarding techniques in their collection, forty artworks are painted and 292 are woodblock. Furthermore, in terms of object types, the number of prints is 288 including twenty-seven surimono (privately commissioned prints). In addition to prints, there are thirty-one drawings, six paintings, four illustrated print books, one painting album, one hanging scroll, and one folding screen. A large proportion of the collection are woodblock prints. This is because Hokusai, Utamaro, and Harunobu, who mainly produced woodblock prints, were Ricketts and Shannon’s favourite artists. Additionally, the number of Japanese woodblock prints in the British market was greater than the number of Japanese paintings. Japanese authorities did not regard woodblock prints by ukiyo-e artists, who were outside of an authoritative school, as “art,” and Japanese merchants exported many prints to foreign countries to earn foreign currency.

Specifically, Hokusai passed away in 1849, and he was still popular after his death. Therefore, a significant number of his ukiyo-e prints were dealt and circulated within Japanese and Western art markets throughout the 19th century.

Compared with the 1860s and 1870s, when Whistler, the Rossetti brothers, and
Leighton collected not only Japanese woodblock prints but Japanese porcelain and folding screens, the price of Japanese artefacts rose because of their popularity during Ricketts and Shannon’s period. Therefore, Darracott and Delaney considered that Ricketts and Shannon were unable to afford Japanese high art like folding screens and hanging screens. Instead, they focused on woodblock prints from the 19th century, which were relatively affordable. Of course, Ricketts could not possess paintings by Korin, whom he admired, because they were important cultural properties, and some of them were considered official Japanese national treasures. Even ordinary Japanese people could not purchase them. Their purchases were influenced by the depictions of unique figures by artists with excellent techniques, or at least those within their price range. These depictions led to Ricketts’s inspiration by Japanese artists, which I explore in Chapter 3.

Japanese publishers often produced ukiyo-e prints as series, and there are several series in the Ricketts and Shannon collection (Table 4). The largest series is forty-eight prints, *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* by Hokusai in the early 1830s. This is the most famous ukiyo-e print series by Hokusai, depicting Mount Fuji from various locations in Japan. It is also a symbolic series, inspiring many Western artists in the context of Japonisme. Although the title indicates thirty-six views, the series contains

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forty-six different prints. Ricketts and Shannon’s collection has forty-five different examples, only missing Gaifu Kaisei (Clear Day with a Southern Breeze), and demonstrates a strong intention to complete this series. Their collection includes Hokusai’s representative works, Kanagawa-oki Nami-ura (Under the Wave off Kanagawa), known as The Great Wave, and Sanka hakuu (Sudden Shower beneath the Summit). The British Museum possesses 106 prints of this series, and the series from Ricketts and Shannon’s collection accounts for about 45% of the museum collection. Anderson sold about 3000 Japanese artefacts to the British Museum in 1881, however, there was no print from Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji in Anderson’s collection. Furthermore, Morrison sold about 2000 ukiyo-e prints to the museum in 1906, and Morrison’s collection contains thirty-two prints of Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. Regarding this Hokusai series, compared with Anderson and Morrison, who were great Japanese collectors and laid the foundation of the Japanese art collection of the British Museum, Ricketts and Shannon collected almost all the prints in the series. Their collection plays an important role in the Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji collection of the museum.

Ricketts and Shannon collected other Hokusai ukiyo-e series. For example, Tour of Waterfalls in Various Provinces was produced following Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji.

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Mount Fuji. This series consists of eight prints, and Ricketts and Shannon had them all.

Like Tour of Waterfalls, Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces is regarded as a Hokusai masterpiece series of landscape ukiyo-e prints. Based on eleven Japanese bridges, Hokusai exercised his imagination and painted fantasy scenery. In Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, there are fourteen prints including all eleven series prints. In addition, the Snow, Flower and Moon series, which is the subject of an old Chinese poem, depicts various Japanese seasons; Ricketts and Shannon had all three prints. In this way, they followed a major Hokusai series when Hokusai was in his seventies. They tried to collect all the prints of each series to build a high-quality Japanese art collection, Ricketts and Shannon were evidently collector Japonists.

Like Hokusai, Hiroshige was a master of landscape ukiyo-e. In Britain, Hiroshige’s ukiyo-e inspired Whistler’s paintings depicting bridges and rivers, such as Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge (c.1872–5).\(^{115}\) Ricketts and Shannon had eleven prints of The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (c. 1833-4), which was Hiroshige’s most prominent ukiyo-e series. Hiroshige created about thirty versions of The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. The works from Ricketts and Shannon’s collection are from the Hōeidō edition, which was the most popular. Hiroshige was Hokusai’s rival, and they competed in landscape ukiyo-e. Hiroshige’s art is more

\(^{115}\) Ono, Bi no Koryu, 114.
naturalistic and informative than Hokusai’s. However, Ricketts and Shannon did not collect many prints by Hiroshige in contrast to Hokusai, perhaps because they felt that Hiroshige’s works lacked Hokusai’s boldness. In addition, compared with Hokusai, Hiroshige, who was more than 30 years younger, began to be appreciated later than Hokusai in general. Therefore, for Ricketts and Shannon, it was easier to get their interest in Hokusai than Hiroshige.

Except for the six great ukiyo-e artists, Ricketts and Shannon possessed thirteen prints of Twenty-four Generals for the Katsushika Circle by Gakutei. This series comprises privately commissioned prints, surimono. Therefore, Ricketts and Shannon had luxurious versions of ukiyo-e prints of elaborate painting on good-quality Japanese paper.

Overall, the size of Hokusai’s ukiyo-e series, which is over eighty prints, overwhelms that of other series in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection. Specifically, the influential Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji by Hokusai from their collection is indispensable in terms of the history of British art collectors and Japanese art collections in Britain.

Regarding subjects, because Ricketts and Shannon’s collection includes Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the number of artworks with the subject of Mount Fuji is the largest at fifty-three works by not only the landscape ukiyo-e artists Hokusai and
Hiroshige, but also the bijin-ga artists Harunobu and Utamaro. In the Edo era, the worship of this mountain became popular, and many people climbed it. Hence, Japanese people at that time felt close to the mountain, and ukiyo-e artists often chose this subject. Mount Fuji of ukiyo-e symbolises Hokusai and Japonisme. From the 19th century to the present day, Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji has remained canonical and popular, Ricketts and Shannon’s collection contributing to its canonical status.

After Mount Fuji, the subject of beautiful women is the second most common in their collection, and there are forty-nine artworks. For this subject, Utamaro often depicted courtesans. Goncourt added the subtitle “Le Peintre des Maisons Vertes (A Painter of the Pleasure Quarters)” – which refers to a painter of Yoshiwara, the brothel district in Edo city – to his book Utamaro in 1891. Utamaro elaborately painted the beauty of courtesans and their lives in Yoshiwara. Furthermore, while Goncourt featured the subject of mother and child by Utamaro in the book, Ricketts and Shannon had nineteen prints on this subject. Because Ricketts was conscious of Goncourt and wrote an essay about Utamaro in 1897, we can easily imagine that there was a certain influence from Goncourt when Ricketts collected Utamaro’s works, with Ricketts and

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117 The literal translation of “Maisons Vertes” is “Green Houses” in English. However, Goncourt translated a Japanese word “Seirō 青楼” to “Maisons Vertes” in French, and the meaning of “Seirō 青楼” is “brothels” in English. For the English translation, I quoted “the Pleasure Quarters” from Tadashi Kobayashi, Utamaro: Portraits from the Floating World (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982), 67.
Shannon matching Goncourt’s interest in beautiful women, and outdoing his interest in maternal figures.

In Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, there are two erotic artworks or shunga by Harunobu: Returning Sail at the Towel Rack (Fig. 27) from the series of Eight Fashionable Views of Interiors and Young Man being Seduced by an Older Woman (Fig. 28). The German art critic, Julius Meier-Graefe wrote about shunga in 1890’s Europe:

There are but few collectors of these things, as they cannot be exhibited, so they were comparatively cheap ten years ago, and among them the best-preserved prints are to be found.118

Although collecting shunga was not a respectable hobby at that time, other artists also collected shunga, such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec119 and Aubrey Beardsley.120

Specifically, Goncourt had an enthusiasm for shunga, and he wrote about it in 1896:

As I noted in my study on Outamaro every Japanese painter has a body of erotic works, his shungwa, his paintings of spring. And I spoke of the erotic painting of the Far East, of the furious, almost angry copulations; the somersaults of rutting pairs, knocking over the folding screen of a bed room; the mingling of bodies which dissolve into one another; sensual excitability of the arms […] finally, the force, the power of the outline which makes the drawing of a phallus equal to that of the hand in the Louvre Museum

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118 Meier-Graefe, Modern Art, vol. 1, 252.
119 Oshima, Japonismu: Inshōha to Ukiyoe no Shūhen, 299-301.
120 William Rothenstein, Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein 1872-1900 (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), 134.


attributed to Michelangelo.¹²¹

Goncourt’s eagerness would spark Ricketts and Shannon’s curiosity. Their hidden interest was revealed in an essay on his memory in London by Noguchi who formed a friendship with them, and who recorded that Shannon “secretly” showed Noguchi shunga including work by Utamaro and Hokusai, again purchased from Goncourt’s collection.¹²² At present, these shunga by Utamaro and Hokusai were apparently not bequeathed by Ricketts and Shannon to the British Museum although the museum has a large collection of shunga from 1865.¹²³ There is a possibility that these artworks were sold in secret by their executors because of their explicit content in the 1930s when Ricketts and Shannon died, and on the other hand, Harunobu’s two prints remained in their bequest to the museum because their erotic expressions were moderate and lyrical, and they did not depict outrightly sexual scenes.

Furthermore, there are sixteen artworks depicting Japanese historical samurai, such as Watanabe no Tsuna (953–1025) and Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189).

Ricketts could not read Japanese, and it is not certain to what extent he understood

Japanese history, although, as we shall see, he had an increasingly sophisticated and detailed knowledge of Japanese art history. However, he wrote a review on the Japanese art of Tsuna’s and Yoshitsune’s periods at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910; therefore, it was clear that Ricketts had a basic knowledge of overall Japanese history, which was helpful for collecting Japanese artefacts.

Most artworks were bequeathed to the British Museum in 1937 after Shannon died. The museum’s collection online describes 308 artworks as “Bequeathed by: Charles Hazelwood Shannon.” The collection online lists about nine artworks as “Bequeathed by: Charles Hazelwood Shannon / Previous owner/ex-collection: Charles Ricketts.” Ricketts died in 1931; therefore, the ownership of Ricketts and Shannon’s joint art collection went to Shannon. However, the museum’s collection online does not differentiate between “Bequeathed by: Charles Hazelwood Shannon” or “Bequeathed by: Charles Hazelwood Shannon / Previous owner/ex-collection: Charles Ricketts.”

Furthermore, some artworks have a unique acquisition history. *Omu Komachi* (*Parrot Komachi*) by Utamaro was bequeathed by Shannon, and its previous owner was Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831–1889). Kyōsai was a Japanese painter who interacted with the British architect Josiah Conder. There was a connection between Ricketts, Shannon, and Kyōsai through the art collection. Moreover, while Ricketts was alive, he donated one

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hanging scroll and one Harunobu ukiyo-e print in 1910 and 1922 respectively. In the
collection online, it is noted that Ricketts donated one painting by the Hokusai school
(1903,1126,0.1) in 1881. However, there is a high probability that this is an error
because Ricketts was 15 years old in 1881. I suggest that it was actually donated in
1903, based on the museum number.

Japanese Drawings in the Fitzwilliam Museum

Whereas the British Museum acquired most Japanese artworks of the Ricketts and
Shannon collection, the Fitzwilliam Museum inherited their Japanese books and the
other half of the Japanese drawings by Hokusai. Although almost no data on Japanese
drawings from Ricketts and Shannon’s collection appears on the Fitzwilliam Museum
Online Collection Explorer, Japanese drawings of their bequest still exist in the museum
storehouse. This section inquires about the unknown details and illuminates the
significance of these forgotten drawings by ukiyo-e artists based on the examination in
the museum study room.

Regarding artworks related to Ricketts, the museum possesses three of his
stage designs, two of Edmund Dulac’s caricatures, and fifteen Japanese drawings. There
is old data about the title and the object number of Japanese drawings in the museum’s
database from when the museum obtained the collection. Some titles of drawings are
incorrect: for example, “Mount Fuji and a Pine Tree” (No. 3954) means Mount Fuji
and a Pine Tree, and “Wild Cat” (No. 3955, 3956, 3971) means Tiger, because most Japanese people in the 19th century had not seen real tigers, and Japanese painters painted tigers like cats using their imagination based on hearsay.

Moreover, in 1979, as we have seen, the Fitzwilliam Museum exhibited Ricketts and Shannon’s collection in the All for Art: the Ricketts and Shannon Collection exhibition. It displayed sixteen ukiyo-e prints and one Japanese drawing from the British Museum and three Japanese drawings from the Fitzwilliam Museum, totalling twenty Japanese objects in the Oriental art section. The catalogue lists three Japanese drawings (Nos. 3698, 3956, and 3968) owned by the museum. However, at present, The Goddess Kwannon by the Utagawa school (No. 3968) (Fig. 29) is not in the museum. Additionally, although the catalogue wrote that this work was produced by the Utagawa school, I believe that it was painted by one of the Hokusai school artists referring to Hokusai’s print, Mystical Bird (Karyōbinga) (Fig. 30), which is currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Furthermore, Old Man by the Hokusai school, which appears in an article by Sutton, was not included in the collection that I saw at this time.

Looking at fifteen Japanese artworks in the Ricketts and Shannon collection, there are three Hokusai, nine Hokusai-style, and three Utagawa-style drawings. As with

125 Darracott, All for Art: the Ricketts and Shannon Collection, 85.
their Japanese art collection in the British Museum, works of the Hokusai school occupy most of the Fitzwilliam Museum, as Ricketts and Shannon were especially attached to Hokusai. The most noteworthy fact is the existence of three of Hokusai’s drawings. There are also four Hokusai drawings in the Ricketts and Shannon collection in the British Museum; therefore, Ricketts and Shannon held at least seven Hokusai drawings.

Focusing on Hokusai’s three drawings in the Fitzwilliam Museum individually, first, there is a preparatory drawing of Sakyô no dayû Michimasa from the series of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets, Explained by the Nurse (Fig. 31a). Usually, preparatory drawings for woodblock prints were lost when they were printed. However, the series of One Hundred Poems was never completed to produce one hundred works to illustrate all poems, and only twenty-seven works were printed. Therefore, preparatory drawings of this series remain. According to Nagata, the provenance of the preparatory drawings of One Hundred Poems starts from Hokusai. Hokusai gave a part of them to his pupils and other acquaintances.127 Peter Morse explored the details of the provenance and stated that Japanese painter Kawanabe Kyōsai, who was also a Hokusai collector, collected sixty drawings, and a square red seal was put on fifty-two existing drawings to indicate the Kyōsai collection. Before Kyōsai’s death in 1889, he sold the

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drawings to Hart through a Japanese art dealer, Hayashi Tadamasa in 1885.\textsuperscript{128}

On the way to Britain, Hayashi showed the drawings to Goncourt in Paris. Goncourt wrote in his journal that he saw fifty-seven drawings for the series of \textit{One Hundred Poems}, and these drawings were bought by an Englishman for 25,000 francs.\textsuperscript{129} Around 1895, thirty-three drawings of the Hart collection went to Michael Tomkinson, who was a collector in London, whilst some other drawings went to other collectors.

After Hart died in 1898, drawings of the series of \textit{One Hundred Poems} from his collection often came up at auctions, in 1898, 1910, and 1920.\textsuperscript{130} From this provenance, Ricketts and Shannon seem to have acquired \textit{Sakyô no dayû Michimasa} at one of these auctions. Looking at the bottom left part of the drawing, there is a square red seal (Fig. 31b). This is the same seal as that which Morse mentioned, and it suggests that \textit{Sakyô no dayû Michimasa} from the Ricketts and Shannon collection used to be the Kyôsai collection and the Hart collection. In addition, Utamaro’s \textit{Omu Komachi} mentioned above, which was in the Ricketts and Shannon collection, was also derived from the

\textsuperscript{128} Hayashi Tadamasa (1853–1906) was a Japanese art dealer who mainly worked in Paris. He assisted Louis Gonse to publish \textit{L’Art Japonais} in 1883, and he contributed an article to the May 1886 issue of \textit{Paris Illustré} which featured Japan. In 1900, he was a general commissioner of the Japanese pavilion at the Exposition Universelle of 1900. Hayashi was Goncourt’s friend, and he provided many important materials related to ukiyo-e artists to Goncourt when Goncourt wrote his books, \textit{Hokusai} and \textit{Outamaro}.


Kyōsai collection and has a rectangular red seal. Although the shape of the seal is different between *Omu Komachi* and *Sakyō no dayū Michimasa*, it is notable that the artworks from the Kyōsai collection came to Britain, went through the Ricketts and Shannon collection, and reached the British and the Fitzwilliam Museums, respectively. Ricketts and Shannon never met Kyōsai; however, their enthusiasm for ukiyo-e artworks might connect them to Kyōsai.

After the preparatory drawing of *Sakyō no dayū Michimasa* was bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum by Ricketts and Shannon in 1937, it was forgotten for a long time. In the early 1990s, the existence of *Sakyō no dayū Michimasa* was rediscovered: when the Japanese edition of *Hokusai: One-Hundred Poets* was published in 1996, its image was added to the book. About sixty years have passed since the Ricketts and Shannon bequest to the museum, and their collection has extended the canon.

The series of *One Hundred Poems* was not famous like the series of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. However, as previously mentioned, this series is the last of Hokusai’s ukiyo-e prints series, and it embodies the aged Hokusai’s accomplished skill and expression. Specifically, *Sakyō no dayū Michimasa*, which Ricketts and Shannon owned, was not a print but a preparatory drawing. The drawing shows Hokusai’s black drawing lines infused his craftsmanship. Goncourt described the preparatory drawings

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131 Morse, *Hokusai: Hyakunin-isshu Uba ga Etoki*, 16.
of the series of *One Hundred Poems* as “very interesting” and of “unabashed originality” in 1885. For Ricketts and Shannon, who were engaged in printing and engraving, it was a valuable work in terms of not only the beauty of Japanese art but also the artisanship of print design.

Another drawing by Hokusai that Ricketts and Shannon bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum, *Mount Fuji and a Pine Tree* (Fig. 24), is an ink painting with colour. They had at least four such works by Hokusai, and there are two in their British Museum bequest, both of which illustrate animals: a cockerel, hen and lion–dog (1937,0710,0.292 and 1937,0710,0.294). These give a different impression to the one previously mentioned drawing in the Fitzwilliam that depict plants and a landscape. *Mount Fuji and a Pine Tree* depicts a tree dynamically crossing Mount Fuji in the background. Through this work, Ricketts and Shannon would appreciate Hokusai’s unique perspective.

In the Ricketts and Shannon bequest, there is also a work whose origins are debatable. *Man in the Act of Committing Hari-kiri with a Sword* (Fig. 32) is a drawing recorded as Hokusai’s by the Fitzwilliam. Its depiction of a man’s rugged muscles and toes is similar to *Lü Zhìshēn Defeating Zhōu Tōng from Preparatory Drawings for the “Suikoden”* (Fig. 3). However, *Man in the Act* is a single item, and differs from *Lü

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132 Goncourt, *Journal; Mémoires de la Vie Littéraire*, vol. 3, 523.
Zhishēn, which is contained in an album with 52 other drawings. In addition, in contrast to Sakyô no dayû Michimasa and Mount Fuji and a Pine Tree, Man in the Act does not have Hokusai’s sign and seal. Therefore, Man in the Act may not be Hokusai’s work but work by one of his pupils. Again, Ricketts and Shannon believed the drawing was Hokusai’s; scholarly Japonisme has continued to develop.

Painters of the Hokusai or Utagawa schools fashioned the 12 other drawings. Hokusai’s pupils often copied paintings by their teacher, and, as mentioned previously, Tiger and Waterfall (Fig. 17) and Tiger (Fig. 18) are copies of Tiger (Fig. 15) and Running Tiger (Fig. 19) in volume 13 of Hokusai Manga. As further imitations of Running Tiger by pupils, there are the three Wild Cat drawings (Fig. 33, 34, 35), the outlines of which are based on Running Tiger. Fig. 33 was coloured with vermillion ink, Fig. 34 used red stripes and Fig. 35 was squared with red ink. These versions show the traces of the pupils’ painting training, and for Ricketts and Shannon, their similarity made it understandably difficult to distinguish Hokusai’s work from that of his school.

In addition, Woman Meditatively Drawing a Sword (Fig. 36) is a copy of an illustration of an ancient Japanese hero, Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto, disguised as a woman in Hokusai’s illustration book Ehon Musahi Abumi (Fig. 37). Man Beating or Slaying a Semi-Human Monster with Claws (Fig. 38) is also copied by a pupil of Hokusai based
on Hokusai’s hanging scroll, *Shōki, the Demon Queller* (Fig. 39).\(^{133}\)

No drawings in the Hokusai and Utagawa styles in the Ricketts and Shannon bequest of the Fitzwilliam Museum have Hokusai’s sign and seal, and it was not easy for them to ascertain whether these drawings were Hokusai’s or not. Nevertheless, the presence of so many drawings suggests that Ricketts and Shannon did not know about the presence of pupils of ukiyo-e artists. Comparing their ukiyo-e drawings collection with their ukiyo-e prints collection, Ricketts and Shannon collected many important ukiyo-e prints by masters, such as Hokusai’s series of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* and Utamaro’s series of *Customs of Beauties Around the Clock*; on the other hand, regarding ukiyo-e drawings, they could not find many genuine drawings by ukiyo-e masters.

However, three or four of Hokusai’s original drawings are in the Ricketts and Shannon bequest in the Fitzwilliam. This has not been examined sufficiently in contrast to the British Museum, and these drawings had been forgotten until now; my rediscovery provides proof of their enthusiasm in hunting for Hokusai’s rarer works.

**Japanese Art Collectors in the Late 19th Century and the Early 20th Century**

In this chapter, I have been exploring the contents of Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection. To help develop a sense of the individuality of their collection, in this

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\(^{133}\) *Shōki* is a god in Chinese folklore. In Japan, people believed that an illustration of *Shōki* would protect them from evil spirits.
section I compare it with other British and French collections associated with them.

In France, there were already several Japanese collectors by the 1860s, as we have seen. Each developed their own collection, and in 1878, French art critic Ernest Chesneau enumerated noticeable Japanese art collectors in France:

The former curator of paintings at the Louvre, Mr. Villot; painters, Manet, Tissot, Fantin-la-Tour, Alphonse Hirsch, Degas, Carolus Duran, Monet; engravers, Bracquemond and Jules Jacquemart; M. Solon from the Sèvres factory; writers, Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, Champfleury, Philippe Burty, Zola; publisher, Charpentier; business persons, Barbédienne, Christofle, Bouilhet, Falize; travellers, Cernuschi, Duret, Émile Guimet, F. Regamey.\(^{134}\)

Among these collectors, the most influential for Ricketts and Shannon was de Goncourt, as we have seen, whose *Outamaro* and *Hokusai* praised the charm of ukiyo-e prints. The Goncourt brothers were Japanese art collectors at the very early stage of Japonisme in the West. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt had an interest Japanese art from the 1850s, and they started to collect Japanese artefacts together from 1861 at the latest.\(^ {135}\) After Jules’ death in 1870, Edmond continued to collect them. In the 1870s and the 1880s, the craze for Japanese art spread across Europe, and, in his novel *Chérie*, published in 1884, Edmond boasted that he was the first person to appreciate the beauty of Japanese art.\(^ {136}\)

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\(^{135}\) Goncourt, *Journal; Mémoires de la Vie Littéraire*, vol. 1, 931. They acquired a Japanese drawing at the Porte Chinoise in Paris on 8th June, 1861.

His pride is similar to Ricketts’s, which appeared in his diary entries. For example, in 1901 he criticised the quality of the new Japanese art collection at the British Museum, and both he and Goncourt had self-confidence in believing they were the leading experts of Japanese art in Europe. However, the end of the Goncourt collection was different from that of the Ricketts and Shannon collection, most of the latter bequeathed to museums. Goncourt passed away in 1896, and his entire collection was put up for auction at the Hotel Drouot, Paris the following year. The auction catalogue states that his wish was that:

my drawings, my prints, my trinkets, my books, finally the things of art which made the happiness of my life, do not have the cold grave of a museum, and the stupid glance of the indifferent passers-by, and I ask that they all be scattered under the hammer blow of an auctioneer and that the enjoyment that the acquisition of each of them gave me, be restored, for each of them, to an heir of the same tastes as mine.

In contrast to Ricketts, who was friends with museum workers Binyon and Cockerell, Goncourt detested the role of museums as places of exhibitions for ordinary citizens and rejected bequeathing his collection there, no matter how scattered it would be.

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137 Ricketts’s Diary, 5 August 1901, Add MS 58099, fol. 41v. I quoted this entry in the previous section.
138 Duchesne and Bing, *Collection des Goncourt*, two pages back of page I.

Compared to Ricketts, Goncourt was less concerned with the public, museological legacy of his collection, and more interested in bringing pleasure to fellow, similar private collectors.

Among the objects from the Goncourt Collection of Far Eastern Art, 1,637 came up for auction from 8th to 13th March 1897. Although the auction title was “Collection of Goncourt: Arts of the Far East,” most entries were Japanese objects and the others were Chinese. They consisted mainly of ceramics, lacquer ware, metal ware, netsuke,139 paintings, ukiyo-e prints, and books. The catalogue housed in the National Art Library has notes concerning the contract prices of each entry, with the ceramics and lacquerware receiving the highest bids. For example, the price of Korin’s lacquered box was 3,850 francs.140 Meanwhile, the price range of ukiyo-e prints was approximately between 20 to 300 francs. The whole sum of bid prices of this six-day-long auction reached 236,589 francs.141 The Goncourt collection hugely exceeded the Ricketts and Shannon collection in both the quantity and the value of artwork. Unlike de Goncourt, Ricketts and Shannon also did not collect handcrafts. While ceramics and lacquer ware were expensive, netsuke and kozuka142 in the Goncourt sale were relatively affordable, like ukiyo-e prints. This fact reveals that, in spite of their Arts and Crafts

139 Netsuke is a small carved ornament made of wood, ivory or metal. It was worn by men in the Edo era, and they attached it to the cord of a pouch to prevent it from dropping.
140 Duchesne and Bing, Collection des Goncourt, 99.
141 Koyama-Richard, Yume Mita Nihon, 208.
142 Kozuka is a small knife attached to a Japanese sword.
Movement context, Ricketts and Shannon focused on ukiyo-e art rather than three-dimensional art, and artefacts by artists they respected, such as Hokusai and Utamaro, rather than artefacts by unidentified artists.

However, the two collections contained parallels when it came to ukiyo-e. Ukiyo-e prints by Hokusai and Utamaro were the first and second most numerous in both collections. There were Japanese illustrated books by ukiyo-e artists, including Utamaro’s *Pictures of Selected Insects* and Hokusai’s *The Hundred Views of Fuji* in the Goncourt collection, which Ricketts and Shannon purchased at the Frank Swettenham Sale in 1912, as mentioned previously; a cross-generational pattern.

In addition, as Darracott pointed out, the collecting life of the Goncourt brothers and Ricketts and Shannon overlapped.143 Both of them did creative activities, collected artworks jointly, and had a deep knowledge of Japanese art. In addition, Edmond de Goncourt and Ricketts both wrote about Utamaro; a conscious paralleling on Ricketts’s part.

In Britain, Ricketts and Shannon’s closest parallels were, probably, Whistler and Leighton.144 Whistler was one of the early Japonists in Britain and a leading collector of Japanese art. He started to collect Japanese artefacts in earnest around 1863

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144 Leighton commissioned from Ricketts a drawing when Ricketts was a young artist in his mid-20s in 1891. Leighton was pleased with Ricketts’s execution of the pen drawing *Oedipus and the Sphinx*. For more details, see Letters to Ricketts from Frederic Leighton, 1891-1892, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. VI, 1887-1915, Add MS 58090, fol. 6r-10r, British Library; Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 19; Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 46; Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts*, 71-72.
after moving to London from Paris. He purchased them in Britain, France and the Netherlands, at locations such as Dessoye’s shop in Paris and at Farmer and Rogers in London, and these artefacts appeared in Whistler’s paintings, such as The Princess from the Land of Porcelain (La Princesse du pays de la porcelaine) (1863–1865), Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen (1864), and Variations in Flesh Colour and Green – The Balcony (1864–1870; additions 1870–1879). Specifically, in Caprice in Purple and Gold, there are lavish Japanese artworks and a golden folding screen surrounds a woman in a kimono holding an ukiyo-e print. Ono Ayako stated that the prints in this painting might be from Hiroshige’s ukiyo-e print series Views of the Sixty-odd Provinces. Whistler was inspired by Hiroshige’s prints, and adopted Hiroshige’s compositions for his Nocturnes. Additionally, there are similarities between beautiful women depicted by Kiyonaga and Eishi and women in several of Whistler’s paintings. Although the connection between Whistler and ukiyo-e prints is strong, most of his Japanese art collection was scattered when Whistler went bankrupt in 1879, his belongings auctioned or handed over to his acquaintances. Ono found that only 16 Japanese objects appeared in the auction catalogues, and among these objects were an earthenware jar, a musical instrument, screens, a panel, bronze candlesticks, a painting scroll, paintings, picture

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146 Ono, Bi no Koryu, 65-66.
books, a cabinet, chairs, a bird cage, a bronzed towel airer and hand screens.\(^{148}\)

Furthermore, as Watanabe Toshio mentioned, it is said that Godwin’s collection went to Whistler when he married Godwin’s ex-wife Beatrice in 1888, following the architect’s death in 1886.\(^{149}\) This collection has 28 Japanese objects including five ceramics and 18 ukiyo-e prints, and is currently housed in the Hunterian and the British Museum in the Rosalind Birnie Philip bequest.\(^{150}\) In this bequest, there are eight Kiyonaga, three Hokusai, two Utamaro, and two Hiroshige prints, and one Katsukawa Shunchō and one Utagawa Toyokuni ukiyo-e print. Although it is difficult to grasp the whole picture of Whistler’s Japanese art collection because of the small number of objects remaining, we can catch a glimpse of it, containing various kinds of Japanese artefacts from furniture to ukiyo-e prints. These artefacts show that his collection was eclectic, that he did not focus on specific artists, materials or subjects, and contained items of greater value than anything in the more modest Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, which mainly contained affordable ukiyo-e prints. They did not purchase anything from Whistler’s collection although they lived in the painter’s former house in the late 1880s, some of whose interior design choices they maintained, as we have seen.


\(^{149}\) Watanabe, "Eishi Prints in Whistler's Studio?" 877-878.

\(^{150}\) Rosalind Birnie Philip was Whistler’s sister-in-law. She bequeathed most of Whistler’s collection to the Hunterian and also presented a small part of it to the British Museum.
Like Whistler, Leighton’s Japanese art collection was posthumously auctioned and scattered. In the 1896 Leighton auctions, Ricketts and Shannon acquired ukiyo-e prints by Harunobu, Kiyonaga and Hokusai and a study by Seitei. The auction collection also listed other Japanese artefacts: 28 ceramic entries, two panels, two screens and one study for sale on 10th July.\(^\text{151}\) and 12 entries of ukiyo-e prints and two entries of drawings for sale on 16th July.\(^\text{152}\)

Compared to Ricketts, Leighton again collected different kinds of Japanese artefacts, such as the gold Japanese folding screen that appeared in his *Mother and Child* (1865). Leighton also owned a relatively large quantity of ceramics including Satsuma ware, Kutani ware, and old Imari ware. Satsuma, Kutani and Imari are traditional ceramics production areas in Japan. The popularity of ceramics in these areas rose through international exhibitions in Europe in the 19th century, and Leighton reflected its popularity in his collection. The prices of ceramics in the Goncourt sale were expensive; on the other hand, those in the Leighton sale were affordable, and their price range was between 1 shilling and 6 pence to 12 pounds. In the Leighton sale, ukiyo-e prints were sold from 1 pound and 1 shilling to 5 pounds and 5 shillings, and there was no big difference between the price of ceramics and the ukiyo-e prints. As I mentioned earlier, previous studies insisted that Ricketts and Shannon were unable to


purchase many ceramics and screens because of their high prices; therefore, they collected ukiyo-e prints, which were reasonable in price. However, looking at the prices of ceramics and ukiyo-e prints in the Leighton sale, it is clear that the main reason why Ricketts and Shannon did not purchase ceramics was not price but taste.

Ricketts respected the artwork of another key mid-century collector, Rossetti, as we have begun to see. Rossetti began acquiring Japanese artefacts around 1860, focusing mainly on ceramics and ukiyo-e prints. These often appeared in his artworks. For example, *The Blue Bower* (1865) depicted a woman playing the *koto*, a Japanese stringed instrument, and *The Beloved ("The Bride")* (1865-1866) illustrated a woman in a green *kimono*. In the 1860s, Rossetti vied with other Japonist artists to acquire Japanese objects, and he wrote about it when he visited Dessoye's Japanese shop in Paris in 1864 in a letter to his mother:

I have bought very little—only four Japanese books, and some photographs from the early Italian masters which William will be much interested in. I went to his Japanese shop, but found that all the costumes were being snapped up by a French artist, Tissot, who it seems is doing three Japanese pictures, which the mistress of the shop described to me as the three wonders of the world, evidently in her opinion quite throwing Whistler into the shade. She told me, with a great deal of laughing, about Whistler's consternation at my

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154 Ricketts was inspired by Rossetti's art, and Ricketts and Shannon collected his artworks, such as *Beatrice denying her Greeting to Dante on the Public Stairs*. For more details, see Ricketts, Shannon and "Michael Field" Transcripts Vol. I, Add MS 61713, fol. 36r, 75r, British Library; Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 35, 119.
155 Yamaguchi, "Bikutoria-cho no Medievalism to Japanisme no Setten," 116-117.
156 Tanita, *Yuibi-Shugi to Japanizumu*, 73-74.
Rossetti’s ceramics collection was subsequently scattered while Rossetti was alive as his brother William Michael wrote that “the great majority of it was sold off in 1872.” On the other hand, with regard to ukiyo-e prints, Yamaguchi Eriko found a painting list of William Michael’s house in 1908 including a few ukiyo-e prints purchased by his brother. In the Rossetti ukiyo-e collection, in the list, there was a print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi. However, at present, the ukiyo-e prints in the Rossetti collection remain scattered, their whereabouts still a mystery.

As non-artist Japanese art collectors in Britain, Anderson and Morrison left their great name behind them. As I mentioned, Ricketts and Shannon possessed Japanese artefacts from the Anderson collection. Approximately 3,000 objects from the Anderson collection and 2,000 objects from the Morrison collection are extant in the British Museum Japanese art collection, which has about 29,000 Japanese objects in total. The British Museum collected most Japanese art from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Specifically, regarding ukiyo-e prints, in the early 20th century several Japanese art collectors donated or sold their ukiyo-e prints collections to the British Museum. In addition to Rickets, Shannon, and Hart, Lawrence Smith

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enumerated these: Ernest Satow, Morrison, Hickman Bacon, Samuel Tuke, R. N. Shaw, and Oscar Raphael. Except for Ricketts and Shannon, most of these collectors, who had financial power, provided a larger number of ukiyo-e prints to the British Museum. However, none of them worked actively in the fine arts field.

Like Ricketts and Shannon, of course, there were those who were both creators and Japanese art collectors in the early 20th century, such as Ricketts’s close friends, Rothenstein and English poet, Gordon Bottomley, who mainly collected ukiyo-e artworks. Rothenstein published Two Drawings by Hok’ sai from the Collection of W. Rothenstein in 1910, and he presented his collections, The Guardian of Heaven and A Goblin in the book. Rothenstein believed that these two drawings were painted by

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162 William Rothenstein, Two Drawings by Hok’sai from the Collection of W. Rothenstein (Gloucestershire: Essex House Press, 1910).
Hokusai. Again, however, there is a high possibility that they are Hokusai pupils’ works like many drawings in the Ricketts and Shannon collection. *The Guardian of Heaven* also depicted the same subject, a foo dog\(^\text{163}\) as *A Chinese Lion-dog crouching by a Rock* (1937.0710.0.300) in the Ricketts and Shannon bequest in the British Museum illustrated a foo dog. Given these similarities, it seems likely that Rothenstein’s Japanese art collection activity was influenced by Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, or Ricketts advised Rothenstein about Hokusai as a Japanese art connoisseur.

Bottomley collected artworks by contemporary artists including the Pre-Raphaelites and Ricketts, and again formed his Japanese art collection around ukiyo-e art. In Bottomley’s Japanese art collection, there were ukiyo-e prints by Katsukawa Shunshō, Utamaro, and Hiroshige.\(^\text{164}\) In 1949, after his death, Bottomley’s art collection was bequeathed to the Carlisle Museum Art Gallery, his Japanese art collection kept together. Comparing Rothenstein and Bottomley’s Japanese art collections with Ricketts and Shannon’s, the scale of the latter was bigger than the former.

Through the comparisons of Japanese art collectors, it is clear that Ricketts and Shannon were rare individuals who collected more than 300 Japanese objects consisting mainly of ukiyo-e artworks by Hokusai, Utamaro and Harunobu besides working as

\(^{163}\) A foo dog is a mythical lion with curly hair. Its concept was introduced from China to Japan, and Japanese artists often depict it in paintings and sculptures from the 16th century.

artists and left these objects to the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum. Whilst divided into two, perhaps like the two of them, Ricketts’s method of bequest shows that he wanted to leave their Japanese art collection without scattering it, because for Ricketts, the Ricketts and Shannon collection was the fruit of their collection history over several decades, in a sense, it was their joint art production as art connoisseurs and collector Japonists.
Chapter 2

“A Good Friend of Japan”? Ricketts and Japanese Cultural Studies

Ricketts’s Position in the British Art World

Ricketts deepened his knowledge about Japanese art through collecting activities. At the same time, he developed his knowledge of Western art through collecting. From the 1890s, Ricketts and Shannon collected a wide range of artefacts: ancient Greek and Egyptian antiquities, artworks by Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau, Delacroix, Puvis de Chavennes, Millais, Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, and so on. Ricketts reflected his taste in these collections, and he attached importance to classical art, old masters, symbolists, and the Pre-Raphaelites. Specifically, Ricketts had a strong attachment to Puvis de Chavannes, and Ricketts and Shannon visited him in Paris to ask for suggestions as artists in 1887. Regarding Ricketts’s opinion about paintings, he wrote that “my personal belief is that great painting belongs to great artists, and that our best modern technicians are actually our imaginative painters, such as [George Frederic] Watts, Puvis, Burne-Jones, [Paul] Baudry, and Gustave Moreau.” In contrast to Ricketts’s classical taste, he had a hostile attitude toward post-impressionism including Roger Fry as mentioned in the previous chapter, which he considered as a disease that

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attacked all that was finest in the European tradition of art since the Renaissance.³

Ricketts opposed the new tide in the 20th century, and in fact, Ricketts felt that he was a person of the 19th century.⁴

Ricketts developed his knowledge about Western art through writing his books: The Prado and its Masterpieces (1903) and Titian (1910). Although Ricketts wrote these books with a beautiful touch, he did not achieve commercial success because these books were not sufficiently useful as academic reference books. Ricketts also joined the consultative committee of the Burlington Magazine, and contributed articles to the magazine regularly in the 1900s.⁵

As an art connoisseur, Ricketts was regarded highly, and he was nominated to be the director of the National Gallery in London in 1915 although he declined the post. In addition, from 1924, he served as an art adviser of the National Gallery of Canada. As an artist, he became an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1922, and a Royal Academician in 1928. Ricketts, who had an eye for art, also developed his knowledge about art through his trips to foreign countries, such as Spain, Italy, Greece, and Egypt. However, unfortunately, Ricketts had never been to Japan.

**Ricketts’s Mutual Interaction with Japanese People in Early 20th-Century London**

Alas! Japan is very distant, the cost of the ticket there before the war was, I think, 50 pounds. A few months ago, it was, via San Francisco, about 200 pounds. This may be change, that is, become cheaper, but one never knows.⁶

I am in hopes that things may quiet down, but it will be years before travel will be a pleasure and the cost of the everything here and abroad is unbelievable. No, for a long while to come we have dropped any idea of the Far East. Japan or Ceylon may be a delightful experience for the end of our lives. We must be content in smoothing down our expenses and acquiring habits of economy.⁷

Although Ricketts had wanted to visit Japan for a long time as he wrote his thoughts in the above letters in 1919 and 1920, he never travelled there due to the cost. However, early 20th-century London was increasingly cosmopolitan, and it provided Ricketts with opportunities to interact with various Japanese people.⁸ Through these opportunities, Ricketts learned more about Japanese culture, and gave inspiration to Japanese intellectuals.

Ricketts’s diary mentions several Japanese people with whom he interacted and learned more about Japanese culture. Acquaintances from his Japanese circle also wrote about their impressions of him. This section explores those interactions.

In March 1902, Ricketts wrote in his diary about a Japanese connoisseur of painting and calligraphy, Kohitsu, mentioned in Chapter 1 as the person who

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⁸ The number of Japanese residents in London in 1907 was 353, and in 1919, it became 812. Much more Japanese residents lived in London than Paris and Berlin from 1907 to the beginning of the 1920s. For the details, see Wada Hirofumi et al., *Gengo Toshi, Rondon: 1861-1945* [Linguistic City, London: 1861-1945] (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2009), 12-14.
recommended that Ricketts and Shannon purchase Japanese screens.\(^9\) Ricketts met Kohitsu at the British Museum and became interested in his knowledge of Japanese art.

Their interaction continued during Kohitsu’s stay in London, and they dined together several times from 1902 to 1903. The published version of Ricketts’s diary, *Self-Portrait*, describes an occasion when Kohitsu took Ricketts and Shannon to a Japanese club to have dinner in July 1902:

> During the meal a Japanese, I imagined a friend of Kohitsu, came in and out of the room. He spoke fluent French, he then showed us some indifferent lacquer, old mask, etc.; he was a dealer. [...] I asked if one of the masks was dear. Twelve pounds, was the answer. We left. Outside, Kohitsu said: “The mask is not ninth century, it is a forgery: he does not know, I do: I have been to Nara. They are extremely rare, very valuable, enormous, any price! It is a copy made at Nara, where they are now made to take in collectors. They are so well made sometimes that out of ten Japanese collectors nine will think modern mask right, one, not right.” I was very much touched by his frankness.\(^10\)

This episode indicates Kohitsu’s knowledge, and also how kind of Kohitsu to reassure Ricketts that his is a common mistake even amongst most Japanese people. Kohitsu was a professional with experience working at the Art Department of the Tokyo Imperial Museum and came from a prestigious connoisseurly family. When Ricketts met Kohitsu in 1902, Ricketts’s knowledge of Japanese art was still developing, although he had a rich knowledge of ukiyo-e, even if he sometimes made mistakes when it came to the

\(^9\) Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 26 March 1902, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XVI. 1902, Add MS 58100, fol. 19v, British Library.

correct attributions of drawings. Regarding old Japanese art, Ricketts was in a position
to be taught by Kohitsu.

Ricketts’s diary describes the details of their interaction in July 1902. However,
the majority of their dining scenes are cut from *Self-Portrait*. Its editors considered
these scenes unimportant, although the content reveals much of Ricketts’s experience of
Japanese cuisine at the club:

We then adjourned to the dining room; a small tray containing bowls, saucers
and chopsticks was placed before us, and saké poured out. This is drunk
throughout the meal, some small salt fishes, minnows, being used as hors
d’oeuvres. These were rather too salty. The saké tastes like pale sherry and
water. Then followed a delicate soup, which I thought chicken broth thickened
with flour and a little milk: this turned out to be made of a dried fish Hokusai
often represents being dropped by Hotei. This was followed by a slice of
bream with sweetened mushrooms, flavoured with a wine made from the bean,
poured over. This also was excellent. Rice is kept in a bowl throughout, and is
treated like bread. Shannon managed his chopsticks perfectly almost at once. I
managed them only when talking or when not paying attention. Kohitsu then
placed some butter in a pan over a spirit-lamp, added saké and bean wine,
then placed small pieces of beef and onion to frizzle in it; this is a new dish,
half European, and very good indeed. This was followed by fritters of shrimp,
then as dessert, small slices of cucumber rind, aubergine, a species of turnip
and radishes in wine vinegar. This is eaten with rice, on which pale tea is
poured, which tastes rather like straw. This last preparation seems
inconsequent, and somewhat like the improvised dolls’ dinner of a child. In
this, the rather starchy rice, and the pale tea, I found the raw and watery
element I had imagined to be the basis of Japanese cooking. The other dishes
were merely very delicate light and palatable cooking.\(^\text{11}\)

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\(^\text{11}\) Ricketts’s Diary, 30 July 1902, Add MS 58100, fol. 44rv.
Ricketts recorded what and how they ate and drank, with the implication being that he had limited experience of Japanese food. According to his diary, “The saké tastes like pale sherry and water” and “Rice is kept in a bowl throughout, and is treated like bread.” He made a cross-cultural comparison to aid understanding. Additionally, he described an ingredient as a fish which reminded him of Hokusai often depicted with Hotei, a characteristic move for Ricketts, who knew Hokusai’s works well, as we have seen.

Through these interactions with Kohitsu, Ricketts was pleased with him, and noted Kohitsu’s contact address in London.\(^\text{12}\)

Ricketts and Kohitsu maintained a good relationship. In August 1902, Ricketts took Kohitsu to the National Gallery to introduce Western paintings, perhaps in exchange for the pair’s earlier Japanese dinner:

Took Kohitsu to the National Gallery to see the water-colour copies of the famous frescoes. He seems insensible to Mantegna or Signorelli, in whom one might have fancied an affinity to some Japanese masters, though he liked, or seemed interested in, the latter’s original paintings. He liked quite genuinely the Fra Angelico, and Piero della Francesca seemed to impress him each time, also Pisanello, who I should have thought might have seemed hard and niggled. He was charmed by the copy of the classical painting in the Farnese gardens, he also noticed of his own accord the doubtfulness of most of the Assisi frescoes, given to Giotto. I tried to explain by the copies of frescoes and the pictures in the National, the logical sequence in the Tuscan school. Fra Filippo Lippi pleased him sometimes, Filippino, Botticelli seemed incomprehensible, he liked Benozzo Gozzoli in the Riccardi paintings, and to my surprise, the better Ghirlandaios. We avoided Venice, though I tried the experiment of

\(^{12}\) Ricketts’s Diary, 30 July 1902, Add MS 58100, fol. 45r. Ricketts noted that “Ryonin Kohitsu Esq, 43 Southampton Road, W.C.”
Crivelli, whom he found incomprehensible. Simplicity of motive, form, and delicacy of colouring seem to appeal to him readily. Rich colour he thinks unpleasant, I believe, ditto exaggeration of form or action.\textsuperscript{13}

In his recollections, Ricketts noted Kohitsu’s likes and dislikes amongst more than 10 Renaissance artists, a period of Italian art history that proved paradigmatic for Ricketts, as we have begun to see. Interestingly, Ricketts considered that there was an affinity between Mantegna, Signorelli and great Japanese artists. On the other hand, Kohitsu was fascinated by artworks with “simplicity”, finding, by Ricketts’s account, similarities with characteristics of Japanese art.

In March 1903, Ricketts and Shannon invited Kohitsu to their house for lunch, and Kohitsu photographed their Greek collection and Tanagras. Ricketts wrote that Kohitsu spent a delightful time in arranging the Greek necklace in a group of pots.\textsuperscript{14} In terms of the connections between ancient Greek and Japanese art, painter and Japonist, Menpes, who had been to Japan twice, noted a similarity between the two countries; a parallel also not lost on Albert Moore who fused ancient Greek and Japanese elements in his paintings.\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, other British Japonists admired ancient Greece and contemporary Japan because of their remoteness in terms of time and space respectively, and Godwin, Rossetti, and Whistler also created the Greco-Anglo-Japanese style.

\textsuperscript{13} Ricketts’s Diary, 30 July 1902, Add MS 58100, fol. 46v-47r.
\textsuperscript{14} Ricketts's Diary, 11 March 1903, Add MS 58101, fol. 23v.
\textsuperscript{15} Mortimer Menpes, Japan: A Record in Colour (London: A. & C. Black, 1901), 31. Ono, Bi no Koryu, 49.
artworks. Additionally, Cyprian Bridge, a Royal Navy officer, compared Japanese clothes to “the short tunic of the women the chiton of the Greeks.” Like Menpes, Moore, and Bridge, Kohitsu would find similarities between the two countries, such as the connections shared by *kimono*, tunics, and long garments.

In March 1903, Ricketts’s diary reveals that Kohitsu again took Ricketts and Shannon to eat Japanese food:

Dined with Kohitsu who gave us an exquisite dinner, dry “fish soup”, O Sirü, raw fish and bean sauce, veal croquettes and cucumber and lobster salad, a most exquisite pale soup made of turbot and small mushrooms called O Simons (or bowl soup, O Echavan), grilled eel, and raw turnip soaked in some preparation. All of these are singularly delicate in taste, served in tiny portions with rice for bread and pale tea for drink. The bean wine sauce they put into almost anything is called O Vanissa Shos.

The diary indicates Ricketts’s interest and surprise. In this entry, Ricketts mentioned several Japanese food names, such as O Sirü. Although it initially proved difficult to identify them, O Simons would refer to *Osuimono*, a clear Japanese soup. Although he seems not to have noticed, Ricketts was eating the same things again, having developed a taste for them this time. In his diary, Ricketts did not describe food in detail except for these Japanese meals in July 1902 and March 1903. Although Ricketts never visited Japan, due to the high cost and his busy schedule, he wanted to absorb Japanese food

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16 Tanita, *Yuibi-Shugi to Japanizumu*, 96-108.
18 Ricketts’s Diary, 11 March 1903, Add MS 58101, fol. 24v.
culture through interactions with Kohitsu. These dining scenes represent Ricketts’s soft
cultural exchange at the beginning of the 20th century, as he developed his taste for
things Japanese in more than one sense.

In 1914, Ricketts met a Japanese watercolour painter, Makino Yoshio. In the early 20th century, various Japanese people visited Britain, and Makino effectively lived in London for a long time, from 1897 to 1942.19 Makino represented a new type of Japanese person for Ricketts:

Markino [Makino] the Japanese came with Dulac. His appearance is curiously Italian; he has lived for years in America and Europe, and represents the new type of Japanese who has arrived since the Russo-Japanese war which has cost Japan too much, who is hostile to a great many things in his own country.20

1914 marked the passing of more than 40 years since the Edo period ended, and also saw the Taisho era in Japan in the middle of Westernisation. Makino was a rare person who made a living by painting in London. He also published a book of his paintings, *The Colour of London*, in 1907. In contrast to *samurai* in *kimono* in the Edo era who swore loyalty to their lord, Makino wore a Western costume and had a severe opinion on the Japanese government. The diary entry shows Ricketts's observation of the modernisation of Japanese people with whom he interacted in London. In doing so, he

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20 Ricketts’s Diary, 13 March 1914, Add MS 58105, fol. 15r.
The Russo-Japanese war was from 1904 to 1905.
could get to know them and not idealise them too much. The environment surrounding
Ricketts in 1914 differed from that of the first generation of Japonists when Cyprian
Bridge wrote “The Mediterranean of Japan” in 1875.

While Ricketts wrote about his impressions of Japanese art, culture and people, Japanese people in London also wrote about Ricketts. Noguchi Yonejiro often wrote about interacting with Ricketts. Noguchi stayed in Britain twice, from 1902 to 1903 and from 1913 to 1914.  

21 He met Ricketts during both stays. In 1903, Binyon introduced Ricketts to Noguchi.  

22 Binyon first invited Noguchi to his room. Binyon then showed Noguchi his collected poems decorated by Ricketts. This proved to be the first time that Noguchi heard Ricketts’s name. After a few days, Binyon took Noguchi to a restaurant near the British Museum to have lunch with Ricketts. Noguchi wrote that Ricketts gave Noguchi the impression that he was a Russian Jew because of his black hair, beard and fast-talking.  

Initially, Noguchi did not have an especially favourable impression of Ricketts.

However, when Noguchi met Ricketts again in 1914, he began to respect him and emphasised his role as a critic of Japanese art. In Ōshū Bundan Insho-ki [The


23 Noguchi, Kiri no Rondon, 189-190.
Impression of European Artists], which depicted people Noguchi met in Europe, he
focused a chapter on Ricketts, “Painter, Mr Ricketts.”²⁴ He wrote that Ricketts spoke
eloquently about ukiyo-e artists:

Ricketts is a Japanese art researcher, and his enthusiasm for Japanese art makes him talkative: “Harunobu’s elegance is the elegance of a dream of fairy tales. His art is exactly like fairy tales, and it does not have intellect. Utamaro (Ricketts has the perfect delicate hands for a painter, and he imitates how beautiful women depicted by Utamaro stand and take a seat with his hands) is a great painter, however, when admiration at the first time for Utamaro faded away, I cannot tolerate Utamaro’s monotony.” […]
Ricketts talked: “On the whole, Hokusai is the greatest painter, and probably, he is one of world-class painters. All-Europe was amazed by Hokusai.”²⁵

The fact that Noguchi recorded Ricketts’s conversation indicates respect for his
knowledge of Japanese art. At the time Noguchi was writing, however, there existed
limited criticism of ukiyo-e art, even in Japan, making Ricketts’s comparative expertise
welcome. Noguchi also mentioned Ricketts in Rokudai-Ukiyoeshi [The Six Great
Ukiyo-e Artists] (1919) and Nihon no Bijutsu [Japanese Art] (1920). Interestingly,
Rokudai-Ukiyoeshi describes Noguchi acquiring information on ukiyo-e in London
from Ricketts:

In London, Mr Ricketts (I often talk about respected Mr Ricketts’s features as an artist and a remarkable critic) told me the beauty of Kitagawa

Utamaro’s triptych, *Women Overnight Guests* owned by the British Museum.\(^{26}\)

Noguchi then visited the museum to see *Women Overnight Guests*, and he understood Ricketts’s praise for Utamaro’s palette. This episode inspired the introduction of the chapter, *Utamaro, the Great Master* in *Rokudai-Ukiyoeshi*. Furthermore, Ricketts provided information on the ukiyo-e trends in the West to Noguchi:

> Mr Ricketts told me that the popularity of Hokusai has declined, and it is an age of Kiyonaga. In fact, it is difficult for Hokusai’s beautiful women, who are tall and stiff, to be popular in the West. Today, it is an age when physical beauty of Kiyonaga’s style is valued, and it is necessary to depict women with rich cheeks and sexy attitudes.\(^{27}\)

Noguchi trusted Ricketts as a source of knowledge. Ricketts often gave Noguchi helpful suggestions, and he aroused Noguchi’s curiosity to write about ukiyo-e. In addition, Noguchi drew inspiration from Ricketts’s opinions not only on ukiyo-e artists but also on the Rimpa school. Noguchi’s books stated that Ricketts saw Ogata Korin’s *Waves at Matsushima* at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, to which we shall return, and praised its nobleness.\(^{28}\) Ricketts’s admiration for Korin left a strong impression on Noguchi and again helped him to examine Korin’s works. In acknowledgement of Ricketts’s opinions, Noguchi wrote “TO CHARLES RICKETTS” in a preface of *Korin*.

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\(^{26}\) Noguchi, *Rokudai-Ukiyoeshi*, 1. I translated from Japanese into English.


For Noguchi, who published many books on Japanese art, Ricketts proved an indispensable inspiration for further study. Ricketts was in a respectful, quiet position when talking with Kohitsu about Japanese art in 1902, and he did not bring up the topic of Japanese pictorial art in his first encounter with Noguchi in 1903. However, Ricketts acquired more knowledge of Japanese art, which he could confidently discuss with Japanese people by 1914. The fact that Ricketts gave important suggestions to Noguchi indicated the importation of knowledge of Japanese art from a European source, Ricketts, to a Japanese critic, Noguchi.

Ricketts was not only respected as a critic but also as an artist. A prime example of a Japanese person who purchased Ricketts’s works and brought them to Japan was a shipowner, Matsukata Kojiro. Ricketts met Matsukata in August 1917, when the latter asked Ricketts and Shannon to exhibit their paintings in Japan.²⁹ Matsukata, an art collector, collected more than ten thousand artworks in Europe and was president of a Japanese transportation company, Kawasaki Kisen. He stayed in London to collect British paintings from 25ᵗʰ March 1916 to 25ᵗʰ November 1917 as part of his European tour.³⁰ In March 1918, Ricketts recorded that Matsukata bought his

picture “Holy Women and Angel of the Resurrection.”\(^{31}\) In April 1918, Ricketts wrote in a letter that his painting “The Holy Women,” depicting women in yellow and a green landscape, was going to Japan.\(^{32}\) In 1910, *The Studio* reproduced a coloured illustration of *The Holy Women and the Angel of the Resurrection* (Fig. 40), which bears a similarity to the depiction in the letter.\(^{33}\)

Becoming acquainted with Matsukata led to a Japanese exhibition of Ricketts’s artwork. *The Great European Painting Exhibition* was organised by a Japanese painter, Ishibashi Kazunori, with Frank Brangwyn’s help and aimed to raise funds for Belgian people made refugees because of World War I. The exhibition displayed 53 works by 15 artists including Ricketts, Shannon, and Belgian painters, alongside 104 works by Brangwyn.\(^{34}\) There exists a high possibility that Ricketts’s painting was featured in this exhibition because of Brangwyn’s relationship with Matsukata. The exhibition took place at the Japanese department store, Mitsukoshi in Tokyo from 1\(^{st}\) to 10\(^{th}\) June 1918 (Fig. 41).\(^{35}\) It featured one of Ricketts’s paintings, *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*, which

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\(^{31}\) Charles Rickett’s’s Diary, 29 March 1918, Rickett and Shannon Papers Vol. XXV. 1918, Add MS 58109, fol. 71r, British Library.

\(^{32}\) Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 292.


\(^{35}\) Mitsukoshi Gofukuten. ”’The Great European Painting Exhibition,” *Mitsukoshi* 8, no.6 (1918): 8-9.

Japanese department stores have had a custom to hold exhibitions since the end of the Meiji period. Mitsukoshi was the first department store in Japan to hold an art exhibition at the own store in 1908.
appeared in *Mitsukoshi*, which was its public relations brochure, at the upper left of Fig. 41. In 1918, Ricketts wrote about the exhibition on a postcard: “I have sold a picture of ‘The Wise and Foolish Virgins’ in Japan where I had sent it on exhibition.” 36 Although Ricketts did not visit Japan in his lifetime, his painting went on display there in front of Japanese viewers.

Other pieces of Ricketts’s work also went to Japan. For instance, part of the Matsukata collection which he collected in Europe, *Italia Redenta* (Fig. 2), is in the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. *Italia Redenta* formed part of a series of lithographs made by the British War Publicity Bureau. Matsukata purchased this series at an exhibition at the Fine Art Society in July 1917. The 2019 exhibition of the Matsukata collection pointed out that the shipbuilding magnate was conscious of artworks depicting World War I. 37 However, a painting by Ricketts in the Matsukata collection was possibly destroyed by fire at the Pantechnicon warehouse in London in 1939 before its planned transportation to Japan. The painting, *Daughter of Herodias*, was part of the list found in 2016 by the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. 38

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36 Charles Ricketts’s Postcard to Thomas Lowinsky, 7 September 1918, Ricketts, Shannon and “Michael Field” Transcripts Vol. VI, Add MS 61718, fol. 126r, British Library.
When Matsukata stayed in London, he often collected contemporary works in Britain, including Ricketts’s. This situation indicates that Matsukata wanted to introduce the latest British art to Japan. The fact that he went to meet Ricketts and purchased several of his works proved that Ricketts was developing a Japanese reputation at the time.

After his death, Ricketts still had a following among Japanese people. Art historian and critic Yashiro Yukio described Ricketts as “a best friend of Japanese art” in his obituary of Ricketts (Appendix 2). Yashiro accompanied Matsukata on his journey to Europe to collect paintings in Paris and London from 1921. In London, he met Ricketts and Shannon through Binyon, and they became friends. In 1925, Yashiro published *Sandro Botticelli* in London. The book generally received favourable reviews although Roger Fry criticized it because Fry was dissatisfied with its criticism of his friend, Herbert Horne. Ricketts also wrote a review in 1927. While previous studies have not paid much attention to Ricketts’s review, probably because two years had already passed since the book was published, in contrast to Fry, Ricketts appreciated

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Yashiro’s unique viewpoint: “with an intimate knowledge of European Art, he has striven to detect the points of contact in the work of this great Florentine wherein the East and West may meet, or seem at one. At times this is stimulating and convincing, at times the strain of this effort is perceptible.” Ricketts found an affinity between Mantegna, Signorelli and Japanese masters when Kohitsu took the National Gallery in 1902, and he evidently thereafter felt a sense of closeness toward the comparison of Western and Japanese masters. In Sandro Botticelli, Yashiro compared Botticelli with Japanese artists, such as Korin, Utamaro, and Kiyonaga. It was easy for Ricketts to sympathize, as he recognised possible points of contact, historical or spiritual, even if found some of those parallels strained.

At the beginning of his obituary of Ricketts, Yashiro expressed grief over the artist’s death:

Charles Ricketts, R.A. passed away in London on 7 October. We sorrow for his death not only because of the loss of a leading painter, critic, theatre designer, and book designer in Britain, but also of a good friend of Japan who appreciated, loved, and collected Japanese art.

Yashiro attached importance to Ricketts as a supporter of Japanese art and called him “a good friend of Japan.” Yashiro also emphasised that Ricketts believed in the excellence

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44 Ricketts passed away in 1931. Volume 1 of Bijutsu Kenkyu was published in January 1932.
of Japanese art, frequently supporting it. Furthermore, Yashiro expressed his gratitude to Ricketts: “It was greatly fortunate for Japanese art that Mr Ricketts always had a good understanding of Japan.”  

Yashiro may have shown gratitude because Ricketts continued to regard Japanese art highly even though diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan weakened from the middle of the 1920s, while the popularity of Chinese art rose in Britain in the early 20th century.

In his obituary, Yashiro explained Ricketts’s works and achievements, recalling that Ricketts and Shannon played leading roles as collectors of ukiyo-e prints. Yashiro ended the obituary by expressing his sorrow for the loss of Ricketts:

In this way, we mourn the death of Mr Ricketts in various aspects. Those who know Mr Ricketts’s witty, cultured conversation will feel sad about a London art world without Mr Ricketts, specifically, in terms of the loss of the best friend of Japanese art.

For Yashiro, the phrase “the best friend of Japanese art” expressed the highest respect for Ricketts. Through learning about and collecting Japanese art, Ricketts became a leading figure of Japanese art in London, whose achievement was admired by the Japanese people he met.

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Japanese Art Studies around Ricketts

Despite the sustained prosperity of Japanese arts, Japan did not itself have the idea of “Fine Art” until the Edo period. The first appearance of *bijutsu*, a translation for fine art in Japanese, was in 1872, at the beginning of the Meiji period. At the same time, in Japan, there was no systematic study of art history until the Edo period. Therefore, Western people, who wrote works on Japanese art from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, made a perhaps surprisingly significant contribution to the advancement of Japanese art studies, especially studies of ukiyo-e prints and paintings, which Japanese authorities did not regard as high art.

Specifically, Goncourt’s *Outamaro* in 1891 is a prime example of a work which was the first monograph of Utamaro. Also, several Japanese art studies books were published in the same period. Similarly, Ricketts’s great interest in Japanese pictorial art, especially ukiyo-e prints drove him to write articles on Utamaro and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 in London. The period in which Ricketts lived represented the dawn of Japanese art studies.

Ricketts published his article “Outamaro” in 1897. By 1897, various written works on Japanese pictorial art by the first generation of Japonists had already been published. After the 1850s, British diplomats, such as, Rutherford Alcock and Laurence

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48 Japanese philosopher, Nishi Amane used *bijutsu* in a lecture in January 1872. In addition, Japanese diplomat, Ōtori Keisuke used it at the arrangements for the Japanese pavilion of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair in February of the same year. For more details, see Mitamura Shunsuke, *Bijutsu kara Ato he* [From Bijutsu to Art] (Tokyo: Hozansha, 1982), 8-10. The Meiji period was from 1868 to 1912.
Oliphant, who had visited Japan, wrote about Japanese culture and art based on their first-hand experiences in Japan in their books.⁴⁹ Although these books look like travelogues, rather than works of art history, they brought interests in Japanese art and culture to Britain. The travelogues did not, however, discuss in detail individual artists.⁵⁰

William Anderson was, subsequently, a pioneering figure in Britain making progress in Japanese pictorial art studies, who systematised information of long Japanese art history. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Anderson sold about 3,000 Japanese artefacts to the British Museum. Based on these objects, he published a *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* in 1886. In the same year, he also brought out *The Pictorial Arts of Japan: With a Brief Historical Sketch of the Associated Arts, and Some Remarks upon the Pictorial Art of the Chinese and Koreans*. This illustrated book represented the first comprehensive survey of Japanese art in English from ancient times to the Edo era. *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* dealt with an enormous number of Japanese artists, and among ukiyo-e artists, it explained and illustrated Hokusai’s life and work in detail. However, it did not explore Utamaro in any depth.

After the two books, Anderson focused on engraving, and he published a catalogue of an exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club; *Catalogue of Prints and Books, Illustrating the History of Engraving in Japan Exhibited in 1888*. In the catalogue, while Anderson praised Hokusai, he gave low praise for prints after 1860.\(^5\) Anderson again wrote about engraving in 1895 in *Japanese Wood Engravings: Their History, Technique, and Characteristics*. In this book, he criticised Utamaro. For example, he described how Utamaro’s works possessed a remarkable charm of line, pose, and composition, but suggested that their overall effect was marred by the ungraceful mannerisms perverting the drawing of the faces and limbs.\(^6\)

Anderson again had a high opinion of Hokusai, who he thought represented the dominant influence in the world of artisanal art in the early 19th century.\(^7\) Anderson’s books and catalogues were read by many people interested in Japanese art. Simultaneously, his admiration for Hokusai was spread by these written works. Itabashi Miya argued that Anderson’s idea of Hokusai as an artisan, who had not only novel ideas and painting skills but also great originality, was inherited by Binyon and V&A curator, Edward F. Strange, and ‘Arts and Crafts’ Hokusai perhaps especially welcome.

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Itabashi, ”19 Seikimatsu kara 20 Seikishoto Igirisu ni Okeru Ukiyo-e Hanga Kenkyu,” 32.
at the then South Kensington Museum. In this way, Anderson laid a foundation for Japanese pictorial art studies in the late 19th century.

Like Anderson, Morrison built up a huge Japanese art collection, and wrote a book on Japanese art. Morrison sold about 2,000 ukiyo-e prints collection to the British Museum in 1906. A further 589 Japanese paintings and 33 Chinese paintings from the Morrison collection were donated to the museum in 1913. In addition, Morrison contributed an introduction to a catalogue of an ukiyo-e prints exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1909, and he introduced an outline of ukiyo-e prints and their terminology for beginners based on his rich knowledge.

In 1911, Morrison’s most noteworthy work, The Painters of Japan, was published. This two-volume textbook, written for students, describes the history of Japanese painting in detail with beautiful monochrome and coloured illustrations, devoting more than fifty pages to ukiyo-e art. In this, Morrison considered each artist thoroughly in chronological order from the 16th to the early 20th century. Regarding Utamaro, Morrison regarded him highly as not only a painter of the human figure but also a harmonious colourist. As for Hokusai, Morrison considered that he was a great painter, a specialist in every department, and a breaker of tradition but he was not the

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54 Itabashi, "19 Seikimatsu kara 20 Seikishoto Igirisu ni Okeru Ukiyo-e Hanga Kenkyu," 33.
55 Koyama, Tatsujintachi no Daieihakubutsukan, 163.
best colourist. The book was regarded as essential reading on Japanese pictorial art history for about fifty years after its first publication.

In the same period, American art historian, Ernest Fenollosa published books and articles on Japanese art. Fenollosa published a “Review of the Chapter on Painting, in L’Art Japonais, by L. Gonse” in Japan Weekly Mail in 1884 and “Ukiyo-e shi ko” in Kokka in 1890. Whereas Anderson and Morrison regarded Hokusai highly, Fenollosa attached more importance on Japanese paintings in the Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi era, and the early Edo era than ukiyo-e prints in the late Edo era. Fenollosa also criticised Japonists in Britain, such as Anderson, and French Japonist, Louis Gonse, for overestimating Hokusai in these articles. In fact, at the early stage of writing on Japanese art in the West from the 1860s to the 1880s, Japonists paid attention to Hokusai. For example, Philippe Burty’s Chefs-d'œuvre des arts industriels (1866), James Jackson Jarves’s A Glimpse at the Art of Japan (1876), and Gonse’s L’Art Japonais (1883) praised Hokusai hugely. Thereafter, Fenollosa gradually changed his views on Hokusai. In Special Exhibitions of the Pictorial Art of Japan and China. No. 1. Hokusai and his School (1893) and The Masters of Ukioye: A Complete Historical

Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School (1896), he regarded Hokusai as an important ukiyo-e artist. In addition, Fenollosa enumerated the first-ranked ukiyo-e artists: Matabei, Okumura Masanobu, Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Hokusai, and especially, he hugely praised Kiyonaga as the central and culminating figure. He also regarded Utamaro as a second-ranked artist, and Hiroshige as a third-ranked artist.  

Perhaps surprisingly, Ricketts did not mention these books by Anderson, Morrison, and Fenollosa, the pioneers of Japanese art studies in his books and diary although he read books on Japan and Japanese art for many years. It was 1914 before Ricketts first mentioned Morrison’s name, when he wrote about the exhibition of Japanese and Chinese paintings from the Morrison collection at the British Museum. Ricketts was asked to review that exhibition by Binyon on 27th April, visiting the show

63 Ricketts wrote in his diary that “Read books on Japan all day” in 1901, and “Purchase of books on Japanese art” in 1916. For the details see, Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 4 August 1901, Add MS 88957/3/18, fol. 116r-117r; Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 15 June 1916, Add MS 58107, fol. 40r.
thereafter. Ricketts wrote the review, but revealed his true feelings about the exhibition in his diary:

To the Stein and Morrison Collections for Times article, this I fear is not good. I was given 1200 words to describe the effort of twelve centuries, this is at a rate of 100 words per century and one word a year, besides palaver concerning Stein, Binyon and the opening. I am disappointed with the Chinese statue; this is not for a moment comparable to many Japanese portrait figures. I do not think its ascription to the Tang epoch tenable, it seems to me early Ming. The Morrison collection is most foolishly over-ascribed. The Kanawoka [Kose no Kanaoka] is a copy of a Chinese work, it is contemporary with its inner mount. The Korin screen is a copy. Several of the Kano works are very good, but the ultimate value of the collection will be very problematical, at least as far as authenticity is concerned. I have felt tied and uncomfortable in my article.

Ricketts was disappointed at the quality of exhibits, and he had a negative attitude toward writing an article for the exhibition, perhaps acutely aware of Morrison’s failure at attributions, given his own earlier errors. The exhibition guide at that time wrote that

*Portrait of Michizane in Chinese Dress* was “Attributed to Kanaoka”; however, the guide regarded that *Coloured Stones, Pine Shoot and Berries* and *The Wave-beaten Rock* were by Korin himself. As mentioned in the previous section, Ricketts saw

Korin’s *Waves at Matsushima* at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, and he had a

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65 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 5 May 1914, Add MS 58105, fol. 25v. “Stein” is Mare Aurel Stein, a collector of Chinese and Central Asian art. The British Museum exhibited the Stein collection and the Morrison collection at the same time.


At present, the British Museum considers that *Coloured Stones, Pine Shoot and Berries* (Museum number: 1913,0501,0.268) is claimed to be by Korin, and *The Wave-beaten Rock* (Museum number: 1913,0501,0.263) is by school or style of Korin.
special attachment to it, therefore, he was able to recognise that *The Wave-beaten Rock*,
which was inspired by *Waves at Matsushima*, was not painted by Korin. Although
Ricketts praised paintings by the Kano school, he was dissatisfied with the exhibition as
a whole. In fact, Timothy Clark pointed out that artworks of the Morrison collection in
the Edo period were generally great, however, many artefacts of the collection in the
early period were not authentic.\(^{67}\)

Ricketts tactfully covered up his true feelings in the review article:

> We owe to the generosity of Sir Gwynne-Evans the purchase of the Morrison Collection; this is a notable addition to our rich national collection of Chinese and Japanese kakemonos. Several important works add to periods already well represented; others fill gaps in the historical sequence of names and schools. The acquisition of the Morrison Collection would seem to make even more urgent than hitherto the founding of an Oriental Museum in London, or, failing this, a separate Asiatic department in the British Museum, our Asian collection seems hardly in place among the prints and drawings of Europe. The catalogue ascribes No. 2, “Amida descending,” to Yeshin Sozu [Eshin Sozu], who worked in the 10\(^{th}\) century; it is an exquisite thing of a type which, for many reasons, has not so far left the country of its production. To Nobutzane [Fujiwara no Nobuzane] is ascribed the delicate painting No. 5; this name is, in a sense, symbolic of an epoch to which this half-mythical artist of the 13\(^{th}\) century is known to have belonged; the work could be described as a harmony in white, green, and silver.

> The British Museum was already wealthy in important examples of the “Kano” monochrome school of painters, which the Japanese still consider the classic epoch of their painting. A magnificent “Daruma,” by Soami, No. 12, and the “Immortal breathing out his Spirit,” by Motonobu, No. 16, add materially to

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the quality of our national collection. The later phase of the “Kano” School when, with Yeitoku, a new gorgeous style of colour decoration was evolved is still unrepresented, unless it is to be found in the rich screen No. 30, tentatively attributed to Sotatsu. This later master is present with a notable screen, No. 99. To Korin, his pupil, who is one of the most singular personalities in Japanese art can be ascribed the design of the fantastic “Red Rock in a golden Sea,” No. 32, and the curious and fascinating kakemono, No. 31, in which the workmanship is more delicate and yet more mordant than in the former example of his style. Among the protagonists of the later realistic school and the renewal of “Genre,” known as the “Ukiyoyé,” there are several examples. On the whole, however, these masters have triumphed in the making of colour prints more than as painters; as print makers they brought new subject-matter and a new sense of design to the art of their country; it must suffice to say that Yeishi, the great Hokusai, and Hiroshige, are each well represented among many others. But this meagre list of names and numbers cannot convey the power, variety, and range of this notable series of pictures, nor express the importance of the great art of Japan, which can claim the longest unbroken sequence of effort and proved achievement in the modern era, dating, as it does, from the ninth century to to-day.68

In the article, Ricketts admitted the importance of the Morrison collection for expanding and improving Japanese art collections in Britain, and at the same time, he mentioned the significance of Japanese art as the long continuous tradition of art. “Sir Gwynne-Evans” is businessman William Gwynne-Evans who donated 589 Japanese paintings and 33 Chinese paintings acquired from Morrison to the British Museum in 1913.69 In the same year, the British Museum’s Department of Prints and Drawings founded the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings, which was still “sub” department and

68 First proof of Ricketts’s exhibition review article, May 1914, Add MS 58105, fol. 27r. This proof was stuck on the page of the week of 7th May in Ricketts’s diary.
was not “a separate Asiatic department” as Ricketts wrote the above.\textsuperscript{70} This acquisition by the museum led to this exhibition in 1914, and Binyon regarded the Morrison collection at the exhibition highly.\textsuperscript{71} Although Ricketts wrote severe comments on the Morrison collection in his diary, and had a rare opportunity to criticise the exhibition for a newspaper article, his review was evasive, and it started and finished enumerating names of artists from Eshin Sozu in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century to ukiyo-e artists in the Edo era. Specifically, he did not point out that paintings regarded as Korin’s work were not authentic. Ricketts understandably took his friend and exhibition curator, Binyon into consideration, and hesitated writing his true impressions of the exhibition. The word count was also constraining. Ricketts understandably felt “tied and uncomfortable.”

In the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, various Japanese art books were published in Britain by British people including Ricketts’s circle who were the second generation of Japonists. As representative Japanese art scholars at that time, British Museum curator, Binyon, and V&A curator, Strange published several books. Both were curators who dealt first hand with a wide array of Japanese artefacts. In 1908, Binyon wrote a comprehensive survey of Painting in the Far East: An Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art in Asia Especially China and Japan, and selected paintings for a book of Japanese paintings, Pictures by Japanese Artists. In Japanese Art: One Cut in Four

\textsuperscript{70} Koyama, Tatsujintachi no Daieihakubutsukan, 175.
\textsuperscript{71} Koyama, "Arthur Morrison to Nihon [Arthur Morrison and Japan]," 77.
Colours, 37 Drawings on Superfine Unglazed Art Paper, 20 Tinted Illustrations and 1 Engraving (1909), he emphasised the importance to Japanese art of the Kano school, a traditional painting school, inspired by Chinese precedents. Binyon, who dealt with Oriental art at the British Museum, often wrote about multinational Asian works, and, in 1911, published The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan, Based on Original Sources. This book was a part of the Wisdom of the East series, and Binyon examined Chinese and Japanese painting techniques and theories, such as colour, composition, and perspective. The Art of Asia, published in 1916, was a paper for a joint meeting of the China Society and the Japan Society, where Binyon again discussed the cross-cultural relationship of Asian art including Japanese, Chinese, Persian, and Indian arts. Japanese Colour Prints, co-authored with J. J. O'Brien Sexton in 1923, viewed the history of ukiyo-e in chronological order. The book included two colour illustrations of Harunobu’s prints, one colour reproduction of Utamaro’s, and one monochrome illustration of Utamaro’s, which was in Ricketts and Shannon collection at that time, again suggesting the importance of their collection to the subsequent canonisation of Japanese art in Britain.  

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72 Binyon and Sexton, Japanese Colour Prints, Plate II, III, XIV, XXXV. At present, these four prints, Two Girls Drying Cotton Thread by Harunobu (Museum number: 1937,0710,0.2), Two Girls on a Veranda by Harunobu (1937,0710,0.1), A Young Man Reclining on a Futon within a Mosquito Net and Smoking whilst his Sweetheart Raises the Net and Looks out by Utamaro (1937,0710,0.87), and A Woman Standing Outside a Mosquito Net, inside of which a Man is Seated Pipe in Hand by Utamaro (1937,0710,0.88) are in the British Museum.
Ricketts had been friends with Binyon for about 30 years. However, Ricketts was not inspired by Binyon’s views on Japanese art although Binyon was the contemporary leading figure in Japanese art studies in Britain at that time. In fact, Ricketts did not mention the influence of Binyon on his views on Japanese art in his diary entries despite many interactions between the two. For example, Ricketts did not appreciate Toba Sōjō’s humorous caricature scroll while Binyon had a high opinion of Toba and regarded Toba as one of the representative Japanese artists in the 12th century. Moreover, Ricketts regarded a painter in the Meiji era, Kano Hogai highly; however, Binyon did not attach importance to artists in the Meiji era. On the other hand, between Ricketts’s and Binyon’s views on Japanese art, there are several similarities. Ricketts was deeply impressed by Korin’s screen depicting waves at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, as we shall see. Binyon regarded Korin as “the most Japanese of all the artists of Japan,” and he also paid attention to Korin’s waves screen. In addition, both Ricketts and Binyon regarded Hokusai and Utamaro highly as mentioned above. Regarding Hokusai, interestingly, both of them compared

73 Ricketts, Pages on Art, 176.
74 Ricketts, Pages on Art, 177-178.
75 Ricketts, Pages on Art, 180-181.
76 Binyon, Painting in the Far East, 73.
77 Binyon and Sexton, Japanese Colour Prints, 190.
Hokusai with Rembrandt and Turner. However, Ricketts actively collected Hokusai’s ukiyo-e prints series of *Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces* as mentioned in the previous chapter, whereas Binyon did not regard this series highly. In this way, there are similarities and differences between Ricketts’s and Binyon’s views. The two had their own firm views on Japanese art respectively although there is a slight possibility that Binyon affected Ricketts’s views.

Like Binyon, Strange published *Japanese Illustrations: A History of the Arts of Wood-cutting and Colour Printing in Japan*, which was his first book on ukiyo-e prints in 1897. Strange drew on Anderson’s earlier *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (1886), *Japanese Wood Engravings* (1895), and Goncourt’s *Outamaro* (1891) and *Hokusai* (1896) as works of reference. Specifically, Strange emphasised the importance of Anderson’s achievement in the field of Japanese art history. In 1904, Strange published two books on ukiyo-e prints: *Japanese Colour Prints* and *The Colour-Prints of Japan: An Appreciation and History*, which developed on his *Japanese Illustrations* (1897). The latter included a chapter exploring “Influences in European Art,” examining Japonisme,

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such as Rossetti’s Japanese art collection, as well as Whistler’s and Beardsley’s artworks, the work of an earlier generation of Japonists. Strange also wrote two more specialized books on ukiyo-e artists: *Hokusai, The Old Man Mad with Painting* (1906), and *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige with 52 Plates Including 16 in Colour* (1925). In addition, as a curator, he played a part in the National Art Library and the V&A’s catalogues on Japanese art from 1893.

Ricketts mentioned Binyon and Strange in a dismissive 1917 letter but did not write about their books in detail:

Binyon’s catalogue is well-illustrated, it is sold by Longmans & Co. Paternoster Row. I do not know its price and hardly know if it is sufficiently full of pictures to count as a picture book. [...] It is of course on a quite different level to Strange’s book, which I consider worthless.

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83 Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Gordon Bottomley, 6 July 1917, Add MS 88957/3/17, fol. 34r.
Like Strange, Binyon was involved with several British Museum catalogues on Japanese art. There is a high probability that “Binyon’s catalogue” means *A Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Woodcuts Preserved in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, then recently published in 1916. The exhaustive catalogue is a voluminous work of 605 pages with monochrome illustrations, and introduces Japanese and Chinese printings of the museum collection. By contrast, Strange did not publish a comprehensive catalogue of ukiyo-e prints in the V&A with illustrations, perhaps spawning Ricketts’s ire.

In the select bibliography of *A Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Woodcuts*, Binyon chose *Hokusai* (1899) by Charles Holmes, who was a painter, art critic, and Ricketts’s friend, as a key work on particular masters. Holmes started his career as a critic of Japanese art at Binyon’s suggestion, and he wrote his first article “Hiroshige”

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On the front page, “Longmans & Co., 39, Paternoster Row” is listed as one of sellers of the catalogue.
for *The Dome* in 1897. Holmes was not a big collector, specialist, or curator of Japanese art in that year. However, he was close to several Japonists in London, including Binyon, Ricketts, and Shannon. It was, therefore, relatively easy for Holmes to enter into the Japonisme field. “Hiroshige” was a rare article that specialised in the painter at that time although the article compared him with Hokusai. The article was, however, comparatively superficial, since there were few previous studies on Hiroshige in the 1890s. Holmes continued to write short articles on Japanese art for *The Dome*, including “Utamaro” (1898) and “Hokusai” (1898). Holmes then published a small book, *Hokusai* (1899) in Binyon’s series of *The Artist’s Library*, a sign of his respect. By contrast, Ricketts did not mention Holmes’s book or articles on Japanese art in either his written works or diary although Ricketts and Holmes had the following conversation in 1901:

Again discussed Constable with Holmes. I insisted that Constable stood at the parting of the ways between old and modern painting. The Barbizon people show greater reliance upon tradition and greater consciousness. The Impressionists owe an overwhelming debt to Hiroshige, with collateral or side influence of the late works of Turner and even Hokusai, though both these latter influences are more in the nature of suggestions. In the character of their works, they belong to a totally different range of feeling and aim.

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87 Charles John Holmes, *Self and Partners, Mostly Self: Being the Reminiscences of C. J. Holmes* (London: Constable, 1936), 186-187. Binyon said to Holmes: “you know something about Hiroshige. Write an article about him for *The Dome* and make two guineas.” Holmes signed the article “Charles Holmes,” and the name was mistaken by Charles Holme, who was a prominent member of the Japan Society.  
88 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 1 March 1901, Add MS 88957/3/18, fol. 95r.
Ricketts and Holmes perhaps talked frequently about Constable – “Again discussed” - because Holmes had also published *Constable* in *The Artist’s Library* series in the same year. Ricketts argued for the Japonisme of the Impressionists, especially Hiroshige. In addition, Holmes helped Ricketts and Shannon to purchase Japanese artefacts at auctions as mentioned in Chapter 1. Ricketts, then, seemed to have treated Holmes as a friend or colleague rather than an art critic. On the other hand, neither Binyon nor Holmes mentioned Ricketts’s article or books on Japanese art in their written works although they used reproductions of the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese art collection, perhaps suggesting they had more respect for him as a collector and connoisseur than a critic, even though Holmes had worked for the Vale Press which Ricketts established in the period he wrote “Outamaro.” Binyon, meanwhile, asked Ricketts to review the British Museum exhibition mentioned above, and Holmes praised Ricketts’s eye for art. 89

**Ricketts and Japanese Art Criticism: Crossing Viewpoints from Britain and Japan**

Although there were important scholarly British Japonists surrounding Ricketts, as we have seen, the Japanese art expert who gave the greatest inspiration to him was Goncourt, as we have begun to understand. Goncourt wrote two important monographs

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Holmes listed Ricketts’s abilities: “his [Ricketts’s] acute connoisseurship, his ready wit, even his little affectations of manner.”
on ukiyo-e artists containing comprehensive catalogues and biographies: *Outamaro: Le Peintre des Maisons Vertes* [Utamaro: A Painter of the Pleasure Quarters] (1891) and *Hokousai: L'art Japonais au XVIIIe Siècle* [Hokusai: Japanese Art in the 18th Century] (1896). Ricketts also admired Goncourt’s Journal, and at the beginning of “Outamaro,” Ricketts wrote about Goncourt’s achievement:90

Efforts have been made abroad that must not be overlooked to understand and class the achievements of Japanese art. If, at the present, there are serious gaps in our knowledge, if much that passes to-day will be set aside to-morrow, modern research has at least brought us thus far. It is now more than thirty years since some coloured prints, rich and strange in tone, excited the attention of a few — among them Edmond de Goncourt. We owe to him the picture of Outamaro in a monograph that places all subsequent admirers in the writer’s debt, and from which only generalities and minor inaccuracies may be removed by subsequent research, leaving to him, nevertheless, the first shadowing forth of an artistic personality that is at once definite and elusive, limited yet suggestive, troublesome to the dunce and pedant as the art of Watteau is troublesome.91

The reason why Ricketts picked up on the name of Watteau is that Goncourt had likened Utamaro to Watteau in his 1888 journal.92 Specifically, Ricketts praised Goncourt for establishing the foundation for research into Utamaro; a newly scholarly ambition in this second generation. In fact, Goncourt’s *Outamaro* was the first monograph on the

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90 Robin Holloway’s Letter to Charles Ricketts, 7 July 1917, Add MS 88957/3/17, fol. 37r.
91 Ricketts, "Outamaro," 22.
artist in the world. *Outamaro* drew attention from not only Europe but also Japan, and it was reprinted and translated into Japanese several times.\(^93\)

The book is divided into two parts: the first on Utamaro’s biography and works; and the second a catalogue of Utamaro with Goncourt’s commentary without illustrations. *Outamaro* derived much of its information from a Japanese art dealer, Hayashi Tadamasa, who, as we saw in Chapter 1, both collected and translated Japanese materials, effectively working as Goncourt’s co-author. At this stage in his career, Ricketts did not have Japanese people to help him to write on Japanese art, so he relied heavily on Goncourt’s *Outamaro*. Later, Ricketts would develop a significant Japanese circle, as we have begun to see.

From around 1888, Utamaro’s ukiyo-e prints became popular in Paris.\(^94\) After Goncourt published *Outamaro* in 1891, German-French art dealer, Siegfried Bing, who lived in Paris, contributed an article, “The Art of Utamaro” to *The Studio* in 1894.

Compared with Goncourt’s *Outamaro*, “The Art of Utamaro” is a short article, and describes an overview of the beauty of Utamaro’s figures. It does not explore Utamaro’s works individually. Although *The Studio* was a British magazine for art, Ricketts did not show any interests in Bing’s article on Utamaro. The reason of this might be that Ricketts was hostile to *The Studio*, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

\(^{93}\) Oki Yukiko, "Yakusha Atogaki [Afterword by the Translator]," in *Outamaro* written by Edmond de Goncourt and translated by Oki Yukiko (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005), 309.

\(^{94}\) Oshima, *Japonisumu: Inshōha to Ukiyoe no Shūhen*, 338-339.
Ricketts’s essay, “Outamaro” originally appeared in volume 5 of The Dial (1897), a magazine edited by Ricketts himself and Shannon. Ricketts, therefore, wrote the article under a pseudonym, “Charles Sturt.” This 5-page essay is the first work featuring only Utamato written by the British author. In 1913, the essay was reprinted in Ricketts’s book, Pages on Art. In the essay, Ricketts again compared Utamaro with several European artists, such as Sandro Botticelli, Martin Schongauer, Matthäus Zasinger, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Memling:

The qualities of Outamaro have stood the test of various manners of approach, and the exercise of that peculiar gift of fascination that is his, has forced itself upon the attention even of those who had entered upon the study of Japan under the spell of its later magnificent realism. The art of Outamaro will win one also from a reactionary mood, due to an over familiarity with the excellent, in a country like Italy, that has had its specious primitives and decadents. We would place Outamaro in a phase of art at once attractive and dangerous, in a phase where, as with Botticelli, an art has refined strangely upon itself, accepting, however, certain signs of fatigue, not, as with the Italian, in technique as from callousness or haste even, but in a tendency towards monotonous trains of thought. In Europe the art of Schongauer with its over-sweetness, of Zasinger with its delicacy, would hardly prepare one for the might and passion of a Durer, whose art was influenced by them. So the art of Outamaro does not prepare one for the advent of a Hokusai. It is there that he will seem at once primitive and decadent, but, like Botticelli or Memling, Outamaro escapes at times into charmed spaces, and divines, intermittently perhaps, much that those who came before or after him did not divine, or were unable to achieve. A feeling that with this Japanese a monotonous and even feminine bent of mind mars an infinite refinement in form and colour may lead men of intelligence to suspect him, and with him the eighteenth-century art of Japan.95

95 Ricketts, "Outamaro," 22.
In a now familiar, comparative European move, Ricketts used the art history of Schongauer, Zasinger, and Durer to explain the relationship between Utamaro and Hokusai. He also argued that Utamaro would fascinate many people in the tide of realism, decadence, and primitivism, recalling the earlier language of Walter Pater’s 1873 *The Renaissance*, as he likened Utamaro to Botticelli and Memling. Hence, comparing Japanese art with early medieval and early modern European art was Ricketts’s method to define Japanese art. Ricketts, who published European art history books, such as *The Prado and its Masterpieces* (1903) and *Titian* (1910), also had great knowledge of European art, and this method was characteristic of his Japanese art criticism to clarify and highlight Japanese art.  

There are further links between Ricketts and Goncourt, with Ricketts employing Gouncourt’s French spelling of “Outamaro”:

In composition he will affect the half-drowned appearance of things bathed in water, as in the two magnificent triptych prints, *Les Plongeuses* and *Les Porteuses de Sel*, veiling the limbs of his women in the twilight of a wave. It serves his purpose to reduce what might be too definite for him, by means of spangled and translucent materials become playthings in the hands of women, as in one of those magnificent prints where a courtesan passes a veil across her mouth and eyes, or in that design charming with its yellows and greens (now in the Louvre), in which a mother peeps at a child from behind a scarf. With him the green haze of mosquito-nets is used for the shadowing forth, beyond, of the

96 Ricketts became a candidate of a director of the National Gallery in 1915 although he refused taking up the post. For the details, see Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 250-251. Other British Japonists also compared Japan with Medieval Europe, and Yamaguchi argued that William Burges, Dresser, and Rossetti paid attention to connections between Japan and Medieval Europe. For the details, see Yamaguchi, “Bikutoria-cho no Medievalism to Japaisme no Setten.”
half-hidden whiteness of a face, or to make emerge from the shadow a hand or arm with the effect of some flower rising from the water.\textsuperscript{97}

Again, sounding like Walter Pater, Ricketts here employs French titles for Utamaro’s “Les Plongeuses” and “Les Porteuses de Sel,” by which he is referring to images better known in English respectively as Female Divers (Fig. 42, 43) and Brine Carriers (Fig. 44). These works appeared next to each other in the catalogue part of Goncourt’s Outamaro, where he praised the exquisite composition of Female Divers.\textsuperscript{98}

Ricketts also referred to several works without titles to analyse Utamaro’s beautiful transparent depiction through a veil, a scarf, and mosquito nets. “A courtesan passes a veil across her mouth and eyes” and “a mother peeps at a child from behind a scarf” are, most likely, Woman Holding up a Piece of Fabric (c. 1795-1796) and the left part of Utamaro’s triptych print, Needlework (c. 1794-1795), respectively. Utamaro also often depicted mosquito nets in his ukiyo-e prints, such as Mosquito-net, from the series “Model Young Women Woven in Mist” (c. 1794-1795), and Women Overnight Guests (c. 1794-1795), Mosquito-net for a Baby (c. 1794-1795).

Regarding Utamaro’s women, Ricketts paid attention to mothers and children:

[Utamaro] was a great lover of women, whence curious intuitions, feminine intuitions—often present in men of his stamp—expressed here almost for the

\textsuperscript{97} Ricketts, "Outamaro," 25.
first time. Natures like his are not averse to the sight of maternity, and in his rendering of women ministering to the little wants of their children he retains a charm denied to the more grave Italian painters of the Madonna. 99

Ricketts believed that Utamaro’s depiction of mothers and children had a charm. His and Shannon’s collection included *A Mother and a Child* by Utamaro; we can now understand better why they purchased it. Furthermore, Ricketts wrote about Utamaro’s colour, expressing it beautifully:

Whatever maybe the influences upon the work of Outamaro, his colour-harmonies fulfil his own needs and the exigences of the colour print; to the subject-matter of his immediate forerunners he has brought a gift of analysis, an element of the strange, the exquisite, that mere nothing making for grace. His name conjures up the vision of cloud-like colours, and shapes that have the curve of fountains, upon a world remote yet actual, as it would seem to us, for its newness and for its trivialities even, he has shed that grace as of faded things, the troubled hues of a fresco about to disappear, of a flower dying in the twilight. 100

This shows that Ricketts again considered that Whistlerian colour harmony was one of the important elements of Utamaro’s work. In this essay, whereas Ricketts provided an outline of Utamaro, he hardly picked up individual works by the artist. Ricketts did not yet have enough images to hand of Utamaro’s works in 1897. Goncourt’s *Outamaro* does not contain illustrations, and Ricketts was still developing his Japanese art collection with Shannon in this period. If Ricketts had written an essay about Utamaro

in the 1920s, it would have differed widely; Japonist scholarship depended on the arts of reproduction as well as first hand access.

Indeed, when Ricketts gave Noguchi *Pages on Art* in the 1910s, Ricketts told him, “Please do not read my article about Utamaro because I am ashamed of my poor argument.”¹⁰¹ Ricketts felt uneasy because Noguchi, who had published books about ukiyo-e prints, might read his book which included chapters about Utamaro.

“Outamaro,” his old essay of 1897, had evidently dated badly in the midst of a newly stringent modernism increasingly allergic to the decadent 1890s, even though Ricketts had added a few sentences when it was reprinted in *Pages on Art*.

Nevertheless, the tactful Noguchi praised *Pages on Art* for Ricketts’s deep insights. Noguchi also specifically cited the part comparing Utamaro with Botticelli, Schongauer, Zasinger, Dürer, and Memling, which I quoted above.¹⁰² For *Pages on Art*, Ricketts added this sentence: “[Utamaro] comes at the end of an epoch, exhausts its subject matter and accumulated experience,” and he tried to emphasise Utamaro’s greatness as a ukiyo-e artist.¹⁰³ However, in spite of Ricketts’s scholarly ambitions, Noguchi regarded *Pages on Art* as art criticism, rather than art history, although he praised Ricketts’s deep insight and defended his criticism from the accusation that it

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¹⁰¹ Noguchi, *Kiri no Rondon*, 188.
was just an artist’s hobby. Recognising the influence of Pater’s “impressions,” and perhaps damning Ricketts with faint praise as a limited European critic, Noguchi thought:

Ricketts’s Eastern art research is a thorough examination among Westerner’s research. Of course, needless to say, Ricketts’s research is not historical research but criticism of impressions.¹⁰⁴

In fact, in other parts of “Outamaro,” Ricketts again compared Utamaro with ancient Greek art to state Utamaro’s great taste in its conclusion:

Among slight things of grace few will be found to equal the grace, the charm that is his; his deftness of hand is no mere slightness of execution; and if in this matter it is a little languid beside the more direct brushwork of some Greek vase painters (at times strangely akin to Japanese workers with the brush), his sense of grace will be found to contain also a latent spark of strength almost wholly denied to the sweet popular figurettes of Tanagra; his conventions retain a franker, swifter sense of truth, for which reason he is sometimes classed as a realist; he also meant no more than to please, but to please a people whose possibilities for the future had not ceased, and, with all his self-consciousness of means, however complex, he represents the subtlety, the complexity of a tradition that is young, and for this reason his results will remain unforeseen and fresh to us.¹⁰⁵

Again, the comparison with European art was designed to make Utamaro more familiar to Western readers, whilst also making the important claim that Japan had an art history, and was not merely stuck at a single moment of early development.

Whereas Ricketts’s “Outamaro” was not regarded as an important academic essay in London, “Outamaro” made a more positive impression in Japan. Noguchi wrote that “I remember that someone translated ‘Outamaro’ from *Pages on Art* in a magazine of ukiyo-e.”¹⁰⁶ That “Someone” was Uemura Eiichi, who translated “Outamaro” from English into Japanese in the magazine, *Ukiyo-e* in 1916,¹⁰⁷ where it is entitled “Utamaro Shōron (1) [The Short Essay of Utamaro (1)],” an incomplete translation. In Japan in the first half of the 1910s, there were not many books and articles on Utamaro in Japanese, therefore, Uemura thought Ricketts was worth translating. However, after 1917, materials on Utamaro increased, and the need for a Japanese translation of Ricketts’s “Outamaro” faded.

*Pages on Art* contains other articles on Japanese art. This book is a collection of art criticism comprising 18 chapters, in which Ricketts also mentioned Japanese prints in chapters about European painters. For example, in the first chapter, about Charles Conder, Ricketts wrote that “Whistler and the print-makers of Japan had discovered the use of certain delicate transitions of tint.”¹⁰⁸ In the fifth chapter, about Puvis de Chavannes, Ricketts stated: “there is a more original outlook, something

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Noguchi, *Kiri no Rondon*, 188.  
hinting at the simplicity of motive which characterises the colour prints of Japan."¹⁰⁹ In this way, Ricketts paid attention to the colour scheme and simple beauty of Japanese prints.

The 15th chapter is a short book review of *Three Essays on Oriental Painting* by Taki Seiichi.¹¹⁰ Taki was a Japanese art historian and chief editor of the Oriental art magazine *Kokka*. He originally contributed articles from *Three Essays on Oriental Painting* to *Kokka* in Japanese from 1905 to 1907, where he explained the characteristics of Japanese painting, Chinese landscape painting, and Indian ink painting. Ricketts read an English version of the book published in 1910, and learned about Eastern art history from the viewpoint of a Japanese art scholar. Specifically, Taki discussed the artistic connection between Japan, China, and India, three areas which interested Ricketts, as we have seen, from the evidence of his broader, cosmopolitan collection. In the review, Ricketts introduced the vital role of *Kokka*, which spread the knowledge of the masterpieces of Japanese paintings across Europe. Regarding Taki’s praise for Korin and Kano Eitoku, Ricketts emphasised Japanese decorative art in the art world: “to me at least, Japan has endowed the world with triumphs of decorative painting for which we have no parallel elsewhere,” and it shows that Ricketts regarded Japanese art as important.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 64.
¹¹¹ Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 208.
The most notable chapter, however, is the 13th, “Japanese Painting and Sculpture at the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition.” This article describes Ricketts’s responses to the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, based on his two newspaper articles in The Morning Post in 1910: “Japanese Painting and Sculpture I: The Exhibition at Shepherd’s Bush” and “Japanese Painting at Shepherd’s Bush II.” However, Ricketts did not write the magazine or newspaper title and the date of the articles which he reprinted in Pages on Art, and he just mentioned The Morning Post and The Burlington Magazine to thank them for reprinting in the preface.

The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 was held in White City, London between 14th May and 29th October to strengthen the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Over eight million people attended, as we have seen. For the Japanese government, the aims of the exhibition were to claim the right to rank with the world powers and to promote government-manufactured Japanese art history.

In the exhibition, the Japanese art department contained a Retrospective Section and a Modern Section. The Japanese government exhibited about 1,400 works, and it was the first time that 33 Japanese national treasures were exhibited.

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113 Ricketts, Pages on Art, Preface.
Noguchi mentioned in Ōshū Bundan Insho-ki (1916) that Ricketts introduced Japanese old paintings in the exhibition in The Post. He wrote not The Morning Post but The Post. For the details, see Noguchi, Ōshū Bundan Insho-ki, 196.
simultaneously.\textsuperscript{114} This exhibition displayed a wide range of Japanese art, such as paintings, sculptures, craftworks, and architecture, offering Ricketts the chance to discuss various types of Japanese art.

As we have seen, in “Outamaro,” Ricketts tended to compare Japanese art with European art when he explained the details of Japanese art from “the point of view of a Western art lover.” In the \textit{Pages on Art} version of his review of the 1910 exhibition, he explained his admiration for the Japan-British Exhibition and his own viewpoint at the beginning:

> It would be almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the exhibition of Japanese masterpieces of sculpture and painting now on view at the White City, or even do justice to the patriotism and generosity which has made possible the formation of a collection which ranges in date from a time when St. Sophia was still a new building, to the decade in which Mr. Whistler was influenced by Hiroshige. On two former occasions Europe has had the opportunity of studying specimen pieces of the art which the Japanese prize most, Paris being in each case the congenial centre. I am not aware that any country in Europe has ever contemplated a return of the compliment, and that a loan of Western art, including works from the time of Giotto to that of Corot, will ever be held in Tokio [Tokyo]. The outlook which this exhibition presents will therefore not be entirely strange to some art lovers: I must even add that, thanks to the initiative of Sir Sidney Colvin, the British Museum is rich in rare

\textsuperscript{114} Hotta-Lister Ayako, \textit{The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East} (Richmond: Japan Library, 1999).


Japanese paintings; but the White City contains some marvellous pieces of sculpture from unimpeachable sources, of which no European collection can give an idea, the Imperial Household Museum, the treasuries of temples, and some princely houses being among the contributors. I would not claim the expert knowledge which could view these rare things in relation to the ideals they express. How many Europeans are possessed of this? How many care to acquire the slightest knowledge of the fascinating thought and heroic history of Japan? I would merely value these works from the point of view of a Western art lover, and beg the reader to peep over my shoulder whilst I read out the labels and try to evoke desultory impressions from past experiences, and from a still more desultory reading of a few Eastern and Western authorities.\footnote{Ricketts, \textit{Pages on Art}, 167-168.}

Ricketts surveyed the importance of this exhibition containing rich Japanese art collections with a comparison with the British Museum, the situation of Japonisme in Europe. Ricketts’s language, such as “desultory impressions” and “desultory reading” shows that he still looked with a nineteenth-century eye, the language of Impressionism and Walter Pater. As the introduction of following passages, he emphasised his “Western” viewpoint to consider exhibits and tried to share readers with his “impressions.” These words, “Western art lover” and “impressions” modestly emphasise that the article is a subjective judgement rather than an objective analysis. In addition, Ricketts employs his characteristic European comparisons, suggesting that artworks by Cho Densu, who was a painter and a Buddhist priest in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, resembled those of Fra Angelico, and

\footnote{\textquoteleft\textquoteleft Two former occasions\textquoteright\textquoteright would be the International Exposition of 1867 and the 1900 Paris Exposition.}
*The Tale of Genji* (1008), a classic of medieval Japanese literature was somehow akin to Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* (1796).116

In this article, Ricketts also gave an outline of exhibits in chronological order from a bronze Buddha in the 7th century. Ricketts was fascinated with paintings by Maruyama Ōkyo and Mori Sosen in the Edo era, but was less enamoured with Toba Sōjō’s humorous caricature scroll from the 12th century and Kano Motonobu’s painting from the 16th century. Specifically, Ricketts described how “before the large triptych by Motonobu I am like the man who disliked *Hamlet*—‘because it was too full of quotations.’”117 Ricketts did not find such works sufficiently mystical, failing to stir his imagination because of their humorousness and many quotations. Ricketts also mentioned Hokusai’s painting in the exhibition, even though the Japan-British Exhibition did not display ukiyo-e prints.118

Long before the exhibition, as we have seen, Japanese officials regarded Japanese prints formed in the 17th century as low-ranking art below old traditional arts. Ricketts noticed this dealing with Hokusai’s ukiyo-e prints in Japan, and he pointed out the difference of its evaluation between Europe and Japan.119 In addition, Ricketts paid attention to a painter in the Meiji era, Kano Hogai, making the more scholarly

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116 Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 172, 175.
117 Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 176.
118 Itabashi, “1910nen Nichieihakurankai no Nihonbijutsu o Meguru Omote to Ura,” 44.
connection between the history of Buddhist art in Japan and Hogai’s colour painting,

*Avalokitesvara as a Merciful Mother* (Fig. 45):

I have considered the development of Japanese sculpture and painting under Indian or Indo-Mongol ideals; the stream of thought had poured like a current from some tropical clime, where things are driven into rapid maturity and decay, to a land where the seed carried among the flotsam and jetsam will take root and grow strong under a more bracing sky. The tendency of Indian and Chinese civilisation was constantly to crumble into dust; in Japan it was maintained and transformed by a race forced to temperance and energy by the limits of a land walled in and guarded by its coasts and sea. Of Buddhist art there has been no trace for centuries in India and China. In Japan the tradition is even yet unbroken. I remember a picture of Kwannon by the late Kano Hogai which might be placed next to a masterpiece of the past.¹²⁰

Ricketts here praised the continuity of the Japanese tradition, in contrast to both China and India, both in some ways enervated British colonies, arguing that *Avalokitesvara as a Merciful Mother* inherited this great tradition. The painting depicts Kannon dropping holy water on a baby. Hogai trained in painting of the Kano school, and after the training, combined a traditional Western and Japanese painting method, here employing Western-style colour gradations. Like Ricketts, from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, there were many European people to praise ukiyo-e prints in the Edo era. However, there were few European people to regard artworks in the Meiji era highly. Ricketts was one of few people in Britain to recognise Hogai as a successor of traditional Japanese art in the new era.

¹²⁰ Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 177-178.
In addition, Ricketts wrote about his interaction with a Japanese friend. The friend was surprised at Ricketts’s knowledge about Korin. Ricketts especially praised Korin highly, and regarded him as one of the most notable, incomparable artists in the history of the world.\textsuperscript{121} For example, Ricketts discussed Korin’s screens in the exhibition, a rare moment in which he discussed an individual artwork in the essay:

Some of [Korin’s] works would give a better impression of the general trend of his painting than the two exhibited here. His figure pieces are, I admit, strange to European eyes; with them I am not concerned. The two great screens at the White City show him in a phase where he out-Korins Korin. A grey sea bent into fantastic waves moves silently beneath great golden drifts of cloud with an uncanny force, as if controlled by the spell of some Eastern Prospero; such a sea would leave the dress of Ferdinand unwetted, and become calm at the bidding of Ariel. Huge boulders stand out; they are volcanic in colour, but of a fantastic shape no geologist would care to scan; about them some vivid trees have clambered, that flourish and exult in the brilliant light of this changeless place where a fairy storm rolls on in silence for ever. What I have described suggests possibly an element of tragic splendour; this is not the aspect of the work itself, which is brilliant and almost gay. Am I right in divining something at once impassive yet exultant in the art of Korin? In life he was arrogant, and at times a little fantastic. Some writer has spoken of the tenderness and gaiety of his art; to me it expresses something else — his gaiety is that of buds upon huge trees; I would as soon accuse a torrent of tenderness because delicate flowers nestle by its brink and both these comparisons might be the subject of one of his paintings.\textsuperscript{122}

Korin’s screen, which Ricketts characteristically compares to Shakespeare, here to Prospero, Ferdinand, and Ariel from \textit{The Tempest} (1611), would be \textit{Waves at Matsushima}. Ricketts celebrated Korin’s magnificent depiction of nature using

\textsuperscript{121} Ricketts, \textit{Pages on Art}, 179-180.  
\textsuperscript{122} Ricketts, \textit{Pages on Art}, 181-182.
Shakespeare’s masterpiece. In the exhibition, *Waves at Matsushima* was exhibited under the title, “Scene of Matsushima” (Fig. 46). In 1910, this screen was owned by Iwasaki Koyata who was the head of the Mitsubishi conglomerate. The screen was destroyed by fire during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, therefore, the Japan-British Exhibition was a rare opportunity for people in Britain to see Korin’s work before it was lost. Figure 46, the reproduction of *Waves at Matsushima* from the illustrated catalogue of the exhibition is monochrome. However, Ricketts’s writing revitalised Korin’s depiction of colours and brushwork vividly and decoratively. The section of Korin shows that Ricketts had the strongest attachment to Korin, specifically, *Waves at Matsushima*.

In addition, regarding Korin, Ricketts’s contemporaries also had their interest in Korin. Firstly, French Japonist, Louis Gonse regarded Korin highly, and argued that Korin was “the most Japanese of Japanese.” Gonse also thought Korin was in the first rank of those who had carried the genius of decoration to the highest pitch in *L’Art Japonais* (1883) and *Le Japon Artistique* (1890) respectively. Gonse’s view on Korin inspired other Japonists. While Anderson did not regard Korin’s depiction of figures

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highly, he cited Gonse’s description in *L'Art Japonais* as a warm and comprehensive tribute.\(^{125}\) In contrast to Anderson, Fenollosa had a high opinion of Korin, and he criticised Anderson’s low praise for Korin.\(^{126}\) Morrison also praised Korin and cited Gonse’s view on Korin.\(^{127}\) Binyon appreciated Korin highly, and described Korin as “perhaps the most Japanese of all the artists of Japan,” akin to Gonse’s view mentioned above.\(^{128}\) Compared to these Japonists who wrote about Korin, Ricketts was not so much affected by Gonse’s view as other Japonists, even though he was deeply impressed with Korin’s screen.

*Pages on Art* is a collection of essays and articles, and Ricketts’s article format was not sufficient to describe in detail each image and object included in the Japan-British Exhibition. To supplement our understanding of his view of the show, we can also consider an article Ricketts wrote about the Japan-British Exhibition for *The Morning Post*. There, the Eurocentric Ricketts described the exhibition as “a Japanese Uffizi,” and he discussed painters in various periods from the 9\(^{th}\) to the 19\(^{th}\) century including Kose no Kanaoka, Sesshū, Korin, Ōkyo, Sosen, Hokusai, and Kikuchi

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Yōsai. Specifically, Ricketts put emphasis on Kanaoka, a 9th-century painter, and again, Korin, the show allowing a new emphasis on paintings rather than the first generation Japonists’ prints.

For example, Ricketts discussed Korin’s *Red and White Plum Blossoms* (c. 18th century) displayed under the name, *Plum-Trees*:

Korin is here again with a pair of screens, which count among the five or six most admirable and famous of his works; against a golden ground sweeps a conventionalised stream painted in silver now tarnished with age; on each side stand sentinel two gnarled trees which break into blossom. Nothing could surpass the vivid impression conveyed by this work, which evokes the rush of blacked water after rain and the sudden breaking out of spring after a winter storm.130

*Red and White Plum Blossoms* was designated as a Japanese national treasure in 1956.

Nearly fifty years earlier, Ricketts was riveted by Korin’s expressiveness with a daring composition which a silver river flowed in the centre of the screen between twisting white and red plum trees with a gold background. Ricketts sympathised with Korin’s position not only as a painter but also as an arts and crafts designer, respecting especially Korin’s decorative and highly controlled design with gold leaf.

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129 Charles Ricketts, "Japanese Painting at Shepherd’s Bush," *Morning Post*, June 9, 1910, 2. This is Ricketts’s third article regarding Japanese artworks at the exhibition for *The Morning Post*. Ricketts wrote this article to the editor of *The Morning Post*, and at the beginning, he reminded that the exhibits introduced in his second article on June 7 were no longer on view due to delay in the publication of his article.

Having seen Kanaoka’s *Juichimen Kwannon*, meanwhile, Ricketts wrote that Kanaoka equalled Giotto as a great artist.\(^{131}\) According to Itabashi, Fry and Binyon also regarded old Japanese Buddhist paintings as similar to the early Italian artworks.\(^{132}\) As mentioned in Chapter 1, Fry held the Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1910, in the same year as the Japan-British Exhibition. In the following year, Ricketts curated the exhibition, *A Century of Art, 1810-1910*, to oppose and answer Fry’s exhibition.

Although Ricketts was an opponent of modernism and post-impressionism, the Japan-British Exhibition revealed a unique opportunity to study various historical Japanese artworks which had previously been difficult to see in Britain as Yashiro pointed out that Ricketts, who had mainly seen ukiyo-e prints until the exhibition. Impressed by these artworks, artists and critics were stimulated at the exhibition in a way different to, and less well known than, Fry’s in some ways rival modernism.\(^{133}\)

Ricketts had been immediately impressed by the Japan-British Exhibition, as he revealed in a letter to Sydney Cockerell soon after the opening of the exhibition:

> You must come up to see the Japanese art treasures. I should like to conduct you personally, but this would be impossible before the 23rd at the earliest. We could go there some morning, lunch there, and do the five rooms very comfortably. They have on view specimens of sculpture from the 7th to the 15th century. A portrait statue of the 13th is as fine as sculpture can be. Though the

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average is high, the department has to be without the Reims or Bargello sculptures which can’t be moved. The portrait statue is a specimen of an art which is rivalled only by the Egyptian portrait status in Paris and Cairo. The paintings start with the Japanese Cimabue, every period is represented and, with some three or five exceptions, every great master is there. In some three of four instances, such as the Korin Screen, the Okio waterfall, the specimens are famous masterpieces. The sequence stops with Hiroshige. The Lenders rank from the Mikado, members of the Shogun family, Japanese dukes of Norfolk, Spencer, Pembroke, and the Japanese Sir Hugh Lane. I suspect the Japanese Charles Ricketts, i.e. Kakasu Okakura, of lending under the name of an institution which he governs; Okakura belongs to a nation still highly civilised, despite its machine-guns and paper collars.

[...]

P.S. Though the armour is disappointing, there are some scraps by the great armourers. I wish that I could trot down to Cambridge and deliver lecture on Japanese art, but this is the time that I am tied down to my work for the year.134

Here again, Ricketts compared various Japanese figures to more familiar European artists and patrons, such as “the Japanese Cimabue” and “Japanese dukes of Norfolk.” He used these comparisons to make Japanese art history easier for his correspondent, the director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cockerell. Ricketts praised Korin’s screen again, and wrote frankly about his disappointment at armours because this was a private letter.

For the same reason, Ricketts boldly compared himself to Okakura Kakuzō, who helped Ernest Fenollosa’s Japanese art collecting work in the 1880s. Okakura was a founder of the Oriental art magazine Kokka, and the first head of the Tokyo Fine Arts School in 1890. He also worked for the Asia department of the Museum of Fine Arts.

134 Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 16 May 1910, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/3/16, fol. 77r-78r, British Library.
Boston in the 1900s. This description, “the Japanese Charles Ricketts, i.e. Kakasu Okakura” shows Ricketts’s sense of identity as an institutionally powerful Japanese art connoisseur and critic, also suggesting that he was interested in curating a large-scale Japanese art exhibition. In addition, Ricketts’s frustrated wish to deliver a lecture on Japanese art means that he had confidence in teaching Japanese art studies as of 1910, emphasising further his status as a scholar Japonist.

Ricketts also compared himself, in this private form, to Noguchi. Noguchi documented Ricketts and Okakura’s respect for Hogai’s *Avalokitesvara as a Merciful Mother* in “The Art of Hogai”, a chapter of *Nihon no Bijutsu*. Noguchi cited Ricketts’s text about Hogai in *Pages on Art* mentioned above, and regarded Ricketts and Okakura as great critics in the West and the East respectively, agreeing with their positive estimation.\(^{135}\) By contrast, Binyon was not fascinated with Hogai.\(^{136}\) Ricketts was one of a select few individuals who admired Hogai whilst Noguchi was in London, encouraging Noguchi to allude to Ricketts along with Okakura in his book.

Ricketts also talked to Noguchi about his impression on the Japan-British Exhibition:

> For me, the exhibition in White City was the first big Japanese art exhibition. I went to the exhibition every day, and I stood in front of works by Tawaraya

Sōtatsu and Ogata Korin. Korin’s famous folding screen depicting waves is unforgettable.\textsuperscript{137}

Going to the exhibition daily for about 5 months is the work of a serious scholar, an obsessive. Sōtatsu and Korin’s artworks had high value because some of them were designated as Japanese national treasures. Individual art collectors could not purchase these works, and it was a rare opportunity to see them outside Japan. Ricketts was fascinated by their gorgeous folding screens, and Noguchi cited Ricketts’s words about Korin:

My imaginary eyes can see many a European painter and critic standing before Korin’s screens of sea-waves and rocks at the White City some years ago, of which I spoke before, one of them exclaiming, “This is grand,” and the other, “I feel that I am a prince seeing such a picture painted with a prince-like feeling.” Among them is Charles Ricketts who is delighted to tell you his impression in the following words: “A grey sea bent into fantastic waves moves silently beneath great golden drifts of clouds with an uncanny force, as if controlled by the spell of some Eastern Prospero; such a sea would leave the dress of Ferdinand unwetted, and become calm at the bidding of Ariel. Huge boulders stand out; they are volcanic in colour, but of a fantastic shape no geologist would care to scan; about them some vivid trees have clambered, that flourish and exult in the brilliant light of this changeless place where a fairy storm rolls on in silence for ever. What I have described suggests possibly an element of tragic splendour; this is not the aspect of the work itself, which is brilliant and almost gay. Am I right in divining something at once impressive yet exultant in the art of Korin?” This is the language rightly spoken.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{137} Noguchi, Ōshū Bundan Ōinshō-ki, 195-196.  
Noguchi, Nihon no Bijutsu, 366-367.  
Noguchi, Kiri no Rondo, 193.  
\textsuperscript{138} Noguchi, Nihon no Bijutsu, 30-33.  
Noguchi, Korin, 19.  
Noguchi was aware that Ricketts became fascinated by Korin at the exhibition. He dedicated his book, *Korin* in 1922 “TO CHARLES RICKETTS” in the preface, as mentioned in the previous section, and evidently cited the passage we have already analysed from *Pages on Art*. It also shows that Ricketts’s interest in Korin stimulated Noguchi to write about Korin, the Westerner’s interest in Korin affecting the Japanese.

Whereas Noguchi’s *Korin* was written in English, *Nihon no Bijutsu* and *Korin to Kenzan* was written in Japanese. There, however, Noguchi included the same citation. Compared with *Korin*, the two books include more regarding Ricketts’s opinion on Korin:

Korin’s art is absolutely the king of art, the magnificent king of art. Korin is one of most refined artists in the world art history. The value of aesthetic and symbolic arts was completely put in order by Korin’s hand. The idea of realistic decorative arts reached its peak. [...] Korin appeared as an heir of Sōtatsu and Kōetsu. He refined and distilled realities into a dot of symbols. That is to say that he reduced facts to symbols. Korin did not have an external limit because he was able to turn facts into symbols. This might be a reason that he sometimes regulated realistic art experiences dogmatically. Of course, we must not misunderstand that Korin’s art is irresponsible and impulsive art. Except for Korin, there is no artist who can control their own art with conscious perception and arrange their own art with musical sense. In short, Korin’s work is marvellous art. We are delighted to be seduced by Korin. Korin was bold, and he was filled with overflowing vitality. Korin’s famous screen of waves, which there is in front of me [Ricketts] now, is owned by Baron Iwasaki in Japan. It is the best happiness to possess such a great artwork.¹³⁹

Here, Ricketts develops a more in-depth discussion on Korin than in *Page on Art*. He respected Korin as the king of art, and he considered that Korin was a central figure of aesthetic and symbolic arts. The sentences, “he [Korin] refined and distilled realities into a dot of symbols,” “he reduced facts to symbols” and “he was able to turn facts into symbols” suggest that Ricketts regarded Korin like a Symbolism artist, and he connected Korin’s art with Symbolism. In fact, Ricketts admired Puvis de Chavannes and Gustave Moreau who were French Symbolists, and specifically, Ricketts was inspired by Moreau’s works, as we shall see, and suggested that Japonisme was as central to Symbolism as it was to Impressionism and Pre-Raphaelitism, claims substantiated in a number of recent exhibitions. Although again comparing European art with Japanese art, Ricketts’s identification of Korin with Symbolism gave a new viewpoint of Korin to Japanese art history.

In the above citation, Ricketts again mentioned “Korin’s famous screen of waves.” In the Ricketts archive at the British Library, there is a black-and-white photograph of *Waves at Matsushima* (Fig. 47). However, this photograph shows only the left half of the folding screen. The image of this screen was a different version of *Waves at Matsushima* exhibited at the Japan-British Exhibition, from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (Fig. 48), which also appears in Binyon’s *Painting in Print of the left part of Waves at Matsushima*, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 29r, British Library.
the far East in 1908.\textsuperscript{141} It is the only photograph showing a Japanese painting in the archive on Ricketts in the library, suggesting that he wanted to keep Korin’s art at hand.

Ricketts remained fascinated with ukiyo-e prints from the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, as we see from the article “Outamaro.” However, the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 significantly broadened his horizons. Specifically, he immediately developed a strong attachment to Korin. At that time, Westerners, including the Ricketts circle, wrote books on Japanese art. The early 20\textsuperscript{th} century was the time of scholarly Japonists. Ricketts also wrote several articles on Japanese art, their views and significance acknowledged by both Binyon and Noguchi, even if he frequently compared Japanese and European art, and even if he did not publish a specialist monograph on Korin. Ricketts’s articles are short, even fragmentary, due to the word limit, and Ricketts, who was a multi-talented artist, did not have enough time to become a data-driven, monograph-writing art historian. In some ways, he remained close to the subjective impressionism of the previous generation, of Goncourt and Pater, explaining why, around the high Modernism of 1910, he remained a marginalised figure. If Ricketts had published a book on Korin, things might have been different in Europe, but his reputation in Japan, as we see from the case of Noguchi, was, perhaps surprisingly, key.

\textsuperscript{141} Binyon, \textit{Painting in the Far East}, 206.
Chapter 3

Japonisme in Ricketts’s Artworks


Ricketts’s theatrical arts in the early 20th century, especially his costume design, such as *The Mikado* in 1926, were often inspired by Japanese art. Regarding studies on Japonisme in theatre arts, preceding studies already have discussed many theatrical Japonisme in various countries, for example, Britain, France, and Russia, in recent years.¹ Most of these studies focused on plots of Japonisme plays, and explore how Japonisme plays described Japan in the stories. Specifically, they paid attention to how Japonisme plays, such as *The Geisha* (1896), stereotyped Japanese women as *geisha* girls. In fact, these plays idealised the image of Japanese women in the context of Orientalism, and the Japanese female roles often were obedient and self-sacrificial.

women. At the same time, previous studies considered that the male roles in the Japonisme plays were little more than an addition to the plays. On the other hand, Ricketts had respect for Japanese art in contrast to previous plays’ Orientalist views on Japan, and he attached importance on the authenticity of his theatrical design. Ricketts also had an interest in Japanese male actors and masculine designs through his experience to see Japanese male actors and ukiyo-e prints, and his interest reflected his designs for various productions. Therefore, in contrast to previous studies, this chapter features not only Japonisme female fashion but also male fashion and masculine design, a noteworthy point. In addition, there are not sufficient studies on Japonisme in theatrical costumes in the early 20th century. For instance, previous studies on costumes for The Mikado only explored the costumes of its first performance in 1885. Hence, examining Ricketts’s Japonisme costumes for the repeat performance of The Mikado in 1926 is vital, as we shall see.

Ricketts’s several artworks in other art fields, such as book design and painting also contained Japanese elements. Before Ricketts was involved in theatre design, his

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main work was book design from the 1880s to the 1890s. His first big opportunity as a book designer was an encounter with Wilde. Ricketts and Shannon designed and published the first issue of their own magazine, *The Dial* in 1889, which they sent to Wilde. The magazine stimulated Wilde’s interest, and a friendship between Ricketts and Wilde started.\(^4\)

Wilde asked Ricketts to design many of his books, for example, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *Intentions* (1891), *The House of Pomegranates* (1891), and *The Sphinx* (1894). When it comes to discussions of Wilde’s illustrators, Beardsley dominates the scholarship. However, Ricketts dealt with more of Wilde’s books than Beardsley even if Beardsley’s illustrations for the English translated version *Salome* in 1894 were inspired by the erotic and grotesque aspects of ukiyo-e prints, making them relevant here.\(^5\)

Later, Ricketts asked Noguchi how to produce books in Japan, making it clear that he had an interest in Japanese publishing.\(^6\) Ricketts’s greatest inspiration source,

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Ricketts’s friend, painter, and art critic, Charles Holmes considered that Ricketts would be the better choice for *Salome’s* book design than Beardsley. Holmes wrote that “He [Ricketts] certainly understood Wilde’s intentions far better than Beardsley, whose Salome is no idolized, wilful princess in a remote Oriental place, but a jaded Cyprian *apache* from a music-hall promenade” in Holmes, *Self and Partners*, 167.

\(^6\) Noguchi, *Kiri no Rondon*, 190.
however, was Rossetti, and Delaney pointed out that the design of *A House of Pomegranates* used the Pre-Raphaelite style.⁷ Whereas both Ricketts and Wilde were interested in Japanese art, their interests were not directly and strongly connected to their joint book projects, where both were keen to maintain a harmony between book design and story.⁸

Ricketts’s book design seems to be far from Japanese art. Nevertheless, there are a few Japanese elements to be found. Previous studies touched upon inspirations from Japan on the cover of *The Sphinx*: Barber noted “highly Japanese vertical lines and sliding doors;” Calloway characterised the binding as “Japanese in inspiration;” whilst Delaney also suggested possible Japanese inspirations.⁹ In fact, from the viewpoint of Japonisme, the noticeable point of this book is its cover (Fig. 1).

The atmosphere of the cover is simple and quiet because Ricketts did not use any letters, such as information on the title or the author. He drew straight gold lines, dividing the cover space. Specifically, the long vertical lines and small round knobs recall *fusuma*, a Japanese framed and papered sliding door for a room partition. On the cover, there are several figures. A dove and a bell peek through the upper part of sliding doors, while the Sphinx sits and a female figure holding ivy looks back. On the back

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Calloway, *Charles Ricketts Subtle and Fantastic Decorator*, 16.
cover, the figure wearing a cowl shines light at the Sphinx, and the Sphinx again looks back. The poses of the two human figures recall the ancient Greek pottery possessed by Ricketts, as well as Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. As an example, the left human figure in a cowl recalls Kannon wearing a hood in *Kannon Riding on a Carp* (Fig. 49), from *Hokusai Manga* volume 13, from the Ricketts and Shannon collection. We have noted before the parallels drawn in the period between Japanese and ancient Greek art.

The overall composition of the cover is also asymmetrical. Asymmetry is often used in the composition of Japanese art. Indeed, in 1869 Ernest Chesneau stated that the absence of symmetry was one of the fundamental characteristics of Japanese decorative art. Ricketts's asymmetry is a not disorderly arrangement. The straight lines and small knobs maintain tranquillity. Ricketts himself considered *The Sphinx* his “best work as an illustrator.” In addition, the cover of *Recollections* (1932; Fig. 50), the book in which Ricketts recalls Wilde, mirrors *The Sphinx*. Again, the cover is divided by gold lines upon a milky-white background, with standing figures in the foreground, and a figure peeking through a round window in the upper part of the wall. Ricketts evidently had a special fondness for *The Sphinx*.

Ricketts’s second turning point as a book designer was the establishment of his

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11 Ricketts, *Oscar Wilde: Recollections*, 38

To date, critics have suggested that the great inspiration of these designs was *The Strife of Love, revealed in a Dream by Poliphilus* published in 1499. Nevertheless, in 1904, Ricketts recalled the margins for the Vale books, and mentioned Japanese books:

The mere element of proportion between the body of the type and margins is a necessary and easy element of order and beauty in a book. “The inner margin should be the narrowest, the top somewhat wider, the outside (fore-edge) wider still, and the bottom widest of all.” This rule is one sanctioned by practice; where it exists inverted, as it does in Japanese and Persian books, the lower portion of the page, and with it the written or drawn matter, is liable to being soiled and damaged. This rule is of general application and should make sightly, or at any rate decent, a book not intended in the first place to be beautiful.

Ricketts wrote about the difference of margins between the Vale books and Japanese and Persian books. The above quotation again reveals that he was interested in broader Asian culture from Persia across to Japan, and he knew Japanese book designs, even if he did not always apply it to his books.

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Regarding Ricketts’s illustrations for the Vale books, Kawamura pointed out that *Psyche in the House* (Fig. 51), an illustration for *De Cupidinis et Psyches Amoribus* published in 1901, revealed a rare case of Ricketts’s Japanese taste in his book design.\(^\text{14}\) The illustration depicts Psyche opening the window and looking at a sleeping man. She has long hair and wears a *kimono*-like gown. Her appearance looks like Katisha (Fig. 88) who Ricketts subsequently drew for *The Mikado* in 1926.

Looking at other Ricketts’s illustrations for books, they were inspired by Rossetti and Moreau. Ricketts’s friend, Sturge Moore, who compiled *Self-Portrait*, documented that Rossetti and Moreau were the two of the artists Ricketts most admired.\(^\text{15}\) These inspirations, however, sometimes enabled further Japonisme effects, at one remove. For example, *Had Zimri Peace Who Show Slew his Master?* (Fig. 52), an illustration for *Jezebel* in the *Universal Review* in 1889, shows a woman in a dress with many big roundels. Delaney considered that these roundels were inspired by Rossetti.\(^\text{16}\) Roundels again appeared in the cover of the first edition of Wilde’s *De Profundis* (Fig. 53) designed by Ricketts in 1905. On the front cover, there are three roundels. The two upper examples show a bird escaping through prison bars and a free bird in the sky. The two birds are an obvious metaphor of Wilde’s imprisonment and ultimate release. In the lower part, there is a roundel depicting strong high waves and one big star, alluding to a

\(^{15}\) Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 15.  
\(^{16}\) Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 41.
passage in the text, as Barber and Capelleveen have noted. They also point out that the use of roundels recalled Rossetti. Ricketts himself wrote that Rossetti was one of the most singular and original men in art. He was fond of Rossetti’s wood engravings of the 1860s, and around 1890 and 1891, he was specifically absorbed in Rossetti’s art.

However, regarding Rossetti’s book design, previous studies mentioned the relationship between Rossetti’s roundels and Japanese art. Rossetti was, as we have seen, one of the first generation of Japonists in Britain, who collected Japanese ceramics and prints from the 1860s onwards. On the cover of *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865; Fig. 54) by Algernon Charles Swinburne, Rossetti placed four roundels. Watanabe pointed out the Japanese character of these roundels, and Tanita indicated that Rossetti used the Japanese family crest depicting *shuro*, a palm tree, for the overlapped two roundels in

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Watry, *The Vale Press: Charles Ricketts, a Publisher in Earnest*, 16.


Tanita, *Yubi-Shugi to Japanizumu*, 90-95.
In the lower right part, there is also an anthemion roundel, often depicted in ancient Greek decorations. Robert Schmutzler similarly noted that this design was derived from Japanese lacquer ware and ancient Greek pottery, a now familiar mixture of Japan and Greece. Because of the use of roundels and the white background, Tanita and Capelleveen also note the influence of *Atalanta in Calydon* on Ricketts’s *De Profundis*.

There is a similar indirect Japonisme in Ricketts’s illustration through Moreau, who not only had an impact on Ricketts’s theatrical works, as we shall see, but also his two-dimensional art. Ricketts’s *The Great Worm* (1889; Fig. 55a) was an illustration for *The Great Worm* by John Gray, published in the first issue of *The Dial*, edited by Ricketts and Shannon, in 1889. The illustration depicts mountains in the background, a big worm in the middle, and a nude standing woman in the foreground. Ricketts reproduced this illustration as a drawing (Fig. 55b). Calloway pointed out that Gray possessed Moreau’s watercolour, *Sappho* (Fig. 56) at that time, with its obvious inspiration for *The Great Worm*. At the same time, *Sappho* had a Japonisme effect.

Moreau collected ukiyo-e prints, and Oki mentioned that Sappho’s twisting body looked

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24 Calloway, *Charles Ricketts Subtle and Fantastic Decorator*, 12-13. *Sappho* is now the collection of the V&A.
like female figures twisting and turning their bodies there. Right after the International Exposition of 1867 in Paris, Moreau acquired an album of creped prints. Previous studies noted that Sappho’s dress in *Sappho* paralleled a pattern of a female figure’s *obi* and the colour scheme of *kimono* in one of the prints in this album, *Portrait of Genji Enjoying the Evening Cool* (1865) by Utagawa Kunisada. Additionally, Oki pointed out that Moreau’s depiction of steep cliffs in *Sappho* was inspired by *Hokusai Manga*, a key source text for Ricketts as well, as we have seen.

In fact, Moreau specifically had an interest in Hokusai. In the 1880s, he collected 14 volumes of *Hokusai Manga*. The exhibition of *Hokusai and Japonisme* considered that a cliff in *Hokusai Manga* (Fig. 57) inspired a rocky stretch in Moreau’s *Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna* (c. 1876).

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28 Oki, "Gyusutābu Morō to Ukiyoe Geijutsu," 29.
29 National Museum of Western Art and Yomiuri Shimbun, ed., *Hokusai to Japonisumu*, 308.
*Hokusai Manga* is woodblock printed books in 15 volumes published from 1814 to 1878.
30 National Museum of Western Art and Yomiuri Shimbun, ed., *Hokusai to Japonisumu*, 220.
Moreau knew Hokusai at the International Exposition. He copied Hokusai’s sketches in his sketchbook called *Etudes Orientales*. Kitazaki Chikashi considered that one of sketches of ukiyo-e prints in *Etudes Orientales* was an image source of Moreau’s *The Apparition*. For the relationship between *The Apparition* and ukiyo-e prints, see Kitazaki Chikashi, "Shinshutsusuru Bijon —Bān-Jōnzu to Morō no Sakuhin ni Miru Ikon no Hensei [Permeating Vision —The Changing Character of Iconic Elements Seen in the Works of Burne-Jones and Moreau],” in *Winsuroppu Korekushon: Fogg Bijutsukan Shozou 19 Seiki Igirisu Furansu Kaiga: Musou to Genjitsu no Awai ni* [Nineteenth Century British and French Art from the Winthrop Collection of the Fogg Art Museum: Between
Worm, steep cliffs and a twisting female body are common features between Moreau and Ricketts, and thus between Japonisme and Ricketts. In addition, Moreau used vivid colours inspired by ukiyo-e prints in Sappho’s red and blue dress, which Ricketts also employed for the mountains in The Great Worm. The bright green and blue mountains and blue sky resemble Hiroshige and Hokusai’s palette in their landscape prints, and especially, the Prussian blue in Hokusai’s Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. Like the connection between Japonisme, Rossetti, and Ricketts, Japonisme at a second remove also occurred in the relationship between Japonisme, Moreau, and Ricketts’s artworks.

Moreau’s art also inspired Ricketts’s oil paintings, and it made a connection with Japonisme. Ricketts admired the French Symbolist work of Moreau, Puvis de Chavannes, and the Pre-Raphaelites Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones. Ricketts went to art school to learn wood engraving; he did not receive painting training. Therefore, Ricketts made himself the elective apprentice of these respected artists. He considered that great artists were imaginative people who expressed their dramatic vision and deep inner emotion through literary subjects. Therefore, his many paintings depicting tragic

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31 Shannon and "Michael Field" Transcripts Vol. I, Add MS 61713, fol. 75r.
Although Ricketts continued to paint, he realised the limits of his painting ability because he did not have formal training, and he often felt insecure about the gap between the ideal and reality of his painting. Lucian Pissaro, son of Camille Pissaro, described Ricketts not as a painter but as a storyteller. This criticism indicates that theatre design was more congenial to Ricketts than painting in terms of narrative skill. For the details, see Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 30; Darracott, The World of Charles Ricketts, 54.
32 Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 192-193.
scenes with rich colours were inspired by them, and especially Moreau. Moreau’s Japonist steep cliffs recur in Ricketts’s oil paintings. For example, cliffs appeared in *Tobias and the Angel* (1902-1905; Fig. 58), *Deposition from the Cross* (c. 1915; Fig. 59), and *Siegfried and the Magic Bird* (c. 1930; Fig. 60). *Montezuma* (c. 1914; Fig. 61), meanwhile, depicts the 16th-century Emperor of Mexico wearing a blue and red headdress surrounded by cliffs, recalling again *Sappho*, which depicts her in blue and red dress close to the cliffs. *Montezuma* again reveals Ricketts’s second-order Japonisme.

Ricketts’s sculpture, however, is more of a marginal case, perhaps because the majority of the artist’s encounters with Japan, at least at the start of his career were two-dimensional. Ricketts produced most of his sculptures between 1900 and 1910, their number far fewer than his theatre design, book design, and painting.33 His sculptures are small, from about 20 to 30 cm. Among them, there are *Mother and Child* (Fig. 62). Ricketts respected Rodin and was inspired by his works.34 Ricketts also wrote a chapter on Rodin in *Pages on Art* in 1913, and, in 1921, Ricketts’s sculpture was characterised as possessing a “certain pittoresque [picturesque] rather than sculpturesque quality” that

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33 Ricketts made over 20 sculptures before World War I. For the details, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: A Biography*, 190.
34 Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 49.
Calloway, *Charles Ricketts Subtle and Fantastic Decorator*, 70.
“allie[d Ricketts] to Rodin.”

Tate points out Rodin’s impact on *Mother and Child.* Rodin made sculptures on this theme from around 1869 to 1885, and specifically, his works with this theme around 1885 depicted affection and intimacy. Ricketts’s statuette recalls Rodin’s *The Young Mother* (Fig. 63). Although there were Japonisme connections between Ricketts and Moreau, and Ricketts and Rossetti as mentioned the above, it is difficult to find its connection between Ricketts and Rodin. Nevertheless, Rodin collected many Japanese artefacts and ukiyo-e prints, and produced works modelled on a Japanese actress and dancer, Hanako. Around 1890 Rodin was particularly interested in Japanese art, as his sketches reveal, and again around 1895 when he started to collect ukiyo-e prints. This means that in the year of 1869 and 1885 when Rodin made sculptures of a mother and a child, he was not within the orbit of Japonisme. Ricketts’s interest in Rodin therefore is not primarily an interest of one second generation Japonist for another. As a result, Ricketts did not mention the

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36 About Charles Ricketts by “TIS,” June, 1921, pp.94-96, Papers relating to Charles Ricketts, Add MS 88957/5/5, British Library.
39 According to the National Galleries of Scotland, the reason of Rodin’s interest on the subject of a mother and a child around 1885 would be the romantic relationship with Camille Claudel and her childbirth. For the details, see National Galleries of Scotland, "Auguste Rodin, *The Young Mother,“* National Galleries of Scotland, accessed January 22, 2022, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/5371/young-mother.
Musée Rodin has 213 Japanese prints collection collected by Rodin, however, there was no ukiyo-e prints depicting a mother and a child among the collection.
relationship between Rodin and Japan in *Pages on Art* in 1913, and he did not note that Hanako was a model for Rodin in his diary when Ricketts saw her onstage in London in 1914, as we have seen.\(^{40}\) In 1903, when Ricketts met Rodin face to face, Japanese art was not a topic of their conversation.\(^{41}\)

Nevertheless, Ricketts and Shannon added *A Mother and a Child* by Utamaro to their Japanese Art Collection in 1900, considering it the most beautiful print.\(^{42}\) As we have begun to see, Japanese print artists, especially Utamaro, often depicted maternal themes in their works.\(^{43}\) However, there is no sure proof of the link between Ricketts’s mother and child and Utamaro’s print among Ricketts’s diary and letters. Additionally, while mothers and children in Rodin and Ricketts’s sculptures are in the nude, mothers and children are in *kimono*s in the nineteen *ukiyo-e* prints on this subject in the Ricketts and Shannon collection. In Rodin and Ricketts, maternity is a quasi-sacred bond, *ukiyo-e* prints depicted scenes from daily maternal life with a light touch. Ricketts himself was aware that Utamaro’s rendering of mothers ministering to the little wants of their

\(^{40}\) Ricketts’s Diary, 2 November 1914, Add MS 58105, fol. 55v.

\(^{41}\) Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 97.

\(^{42}\) Ricketts’s Diary, 30 October 1900, Add MS 58098, fol.45v. Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 42.

children was different from the grave depiction of the Madonna in the West.\textsuperscript{44} Ricketts’s mother owes more to Rodin than Japan. Nevertheless, given how influential first-generation Japonisme had been in both Britain and France, Japonisme elements were perhaps an already inescapable part of the cosmopolitan visual culture in which Ricketts developed his own art practice.

**Motives of Ricketts’s Theatre Design: Experiences of Eclectic Theatre Arts in London**

Ricketts was an avid theatre goer before he made his stage designer debut in 1906. His parents were fond of music, and he lived near the Crystal Palace when he was a child. At the Crystal Palace, daily concerts and local operas were held, and Ricketts was in close contact with various kinds of theatrical culture. In his childhood, he liked to visit concerts and operas, and he saw *Don Giovanni* and *Faust*.\textsuperscript{45} In Ricketts’s youth, he also often went to Wagner, Beethoven, Chopin, and Schumann concerts. Specifically, Ricketts liked Wagner and Chopin, who were Romantic artists.\textsuperscript{46} He was fascinated with their opera and music, which appealed to his emotion and sense directly.

In 1900, Ricketts had a new encounter with the theatrical art from Japan, which also appealed to his sense. Japanese actress Sada Yacco left a strong impression on Ricketts, in his first live experience of Japanese theatre, devoting several pages of his

\textsuperscript{44} Ricketts, "Outamaro," 25.
\textsuperscript{45} Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 1-3.
diary to his responses. Regarding Yacco (1871-1946), Yacco was a *geisha* when she was young, and after she married Japanese actor Kawakami Otojirō, she became an actress.

When she visited Western countries in the beginning of the 20th century, Ricketts got an opportunity to see her performance. On 22nd June 1900, Ricketts also saw Yacco and Kawakami’s first performance in London.47 Kawakami and Yacco travelled widely in Europe and America, from 1899 to 1902, where they were especially popular in Paris, and London. Their popularity derived in part from their realistic movements, and Yacco’s fierce emotional expression, which enabled Western audiences to understand the stories.48

In contrast, Japanese art expert Kohitsu Ryōnin, who met Ricketts in London, was scornful of Yacco for acting like a European.49 This noticeable gap in Yacco’s reception between Western and Japanese people suggests, from the outset, the hybridity and perhaps comparative superficiality of Ricketts’s Japonisme. Ricketts wrote of his excitement about Yacco’s acting. He also compared her wild dance to artworks by Hokusai:

> Sada Yacco, the actress, is entrancing; curiously natural in her acting, she also

47 The opening day of Kawakami and Yacco’s performance in 1900 was 22nd May at the Coronet Theatre. The programs were *Kojima Takanori* [The Loyalist], *Geisha and Bushi* [The Geisha and the Knight], and *Hidari Jingorō* [Zingoro]. For the details, see Uetsuki Keiichiro, and Izuha Takashi, “Sadayakko no Rondon: Kaigaka sareta Sadayakko [Sada Yacco in London: Sada Yacco in Paintings],” *Departmental Bulletin Paper of College of Art, Nihon University* 47 (2008): 84.


at times lapses into vague entranced movements of the eyes—a downward squint—odd, tremulous movements of the mouth, and marionette actions of the arms. Marvellously graceful and elastic in movement, she does, or allows to be done to her, astonishingly violent things. As a dancer she has a wild “eclectic” grace, something of a wave or tiger by Hokusai. In a scene of despair where she runs amuck, she appears dishevelled like a Hokusai ghost, and moves—almost slides—across the stage with an ecstatic face, with eyes revulsed. Her face, lit by flashes of expression, will become pallid and vacant. She dies really gasping for breath and hunted down from within.

Both Shannon and I were actively interested throughout and will see the autumn season when they return.50

The above diary shows that every move Yacco made attracted Ricketts’s attention.

We’ve already encountered Hokusai’s tiger. According to Kawamura, this tiger would be from one of the Brinkley collections that Ricketts bought in 1898 which I discussed in Chapter 1 (Fig. 16, 17), drawings of a wild tiger under the waterfall, which referred to a tiger from Hokusai Manga, volume 13.51

Additionally, Ricketts regarded Yacco as Hokusai’s ghost. In fact, Hokusai depicted ghosts many times. Ghosts appeared in Hokusai Manga, volume 10, where the ghosts had disordered long hair. Ricketts recalled these ghosts when he saw Yacco’s wild dance. Ricketts also compared Yacco with Hokusai’s iconic print, The Great Wave from the series of Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, a version in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, as we have seen. Ricketts’s diary characterised Yacco’s performance as full of energy, and it is obvious that he found elements in common between Yacco and

50 Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 39-40.
Hokusai in terms of dynamic power. Like Hokusai’s art, we can easily understand that Ricketts became deeply absorbed in Yacco after this performance. He went to see her onstage again in 1901. He wrote about the details of the programmes for Zingoro and The Shogun:

With Shannon to see Zingaro [Zingoro] and The Shogun, the latter play interesting us hugely. (Hero: Makumoto. Heroine: Sada Yacco. Shogun: Kawakami.) The first act suffers from compression. It is obviously an idyllic scene round the marriage of the hero and the heroine, broken in upon by the tragedy of some thwarted conspiracy. It presented only one or two broken incidents. The next scene, the battle, where the hero escapes only by changing clothes with his servant, presented a series of entrances and exits, speeches and tussles, somewhat on the plan of the last act in Macbeth; in this scene Sada Yacco is taken prisoner with all the circumstances of a Hokusai design.\(^52\)

Although he did not understand the Japanese lines, Ricketts enjoyed the experience, and tried to grasp the story in detail based on characters’ movements and props. In his writing, like the entry of the year of 1900, he used a word “Hokusai” again to describe the scene, as he strove to record all what he saw in the theatre, his responses veering from claiming some things were “obvious” to an expert like him and vague: “some thwarted conspiracy”.

In addition, Ricketts had an opportunity to see other two performances, The Geisha and the Knight and Sairoku, which was a Japanese version of the trial scene of Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice (1596-1597) by the troupe of Kawakami, with

\(^{52}\) Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 60-61.
Kawakami playing Sairoku, Shylock, and Yacco playing Osode, Portia respectively.\textsuperscript{53}

Ricketts wrote his impression on these two performances:

In the evening we saw Sada Yacco and Kawakami in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. His Shylock was amazingly barbaric and primaeval in its unmitigated wickedness, and like all ruffians on the Japanese stage, his get-up was splendid. He measures out on the shirt, with black ink, the spot over the heart he means out to cut out. Sada as Portia was Charming. In the “Geisha and the Knight” she acted with the power and subtlety she showed last year at the Coronet, and dance as she was unable to dance at the Criterion, owing to the lack of space. Both Shannon and I watched her with an enthusiastic immobility, with the sense that all this was new to us, as if we had seen it for the first, instead of the third, time.\textsuperscript{54}

This time, Ricketts praised Kawakami for his intense acting as Sairoku. Like other entries of his diary, he was caught up in Yacco with “an enthusiastic immobility.”

Before seeing performances by the Kawakami company, Ricketts, who had not been to Japan, as we have seen, and had not experienced Japanese theatre therefore designed primarily for Japanese audiences, could do nothing but imagine traditional Japanese dramas from ukiyo-e prints and comparisons with Shakespeare, suggesting that he either flattered Japanese theatre through comparison with the most paradigmatic form of British theatre or lazily used the most canonical frame of reference. Through experiences of live performances in 1900 and 1901, especially involving Yacco, Ricketts got to be familiar with Japanese theatre and dance. The popularity of such

\textsuperscript{53} Inoue, *Kawakami Otojirō to Sadayakko II*, 214, 227.

\textsuperscript{54} Ricketts' Diary, 12 July 1901, Shannon and "Michael Field" Transcripts Vol. I, Add MS 61713, fol. 261r-262r.
performances in London at the beginning of the 20th century may also have inspired him when it came to thinking about his own theatre design.

Although Yacco left London in 1901, Ricketts saw performances by Japanese actors again in 1914. He went to see Japanese actress Hanako twice. He regarded her highly as an actress, and compared her with Yacco:

Madame Hanako is the height of a child of thirteen, and it is difficult to know where she finds room in her tiny face for expression and feeling. She is accomplished and intelligent and an artist. She lacks the strangeness and magnetism of Sada Yacco. Her acting in the tragic moments was however very good indeed, in the scene when she counts ten gold plates, one of which she discovers is missing, was admirable. When told under the accusation of theft to count again, her acting was even more admirable. Her death scene, when she speaks with her lips but makes no sound, was also admirable, but there was not the spiritual insight of Sada Yacco, the scene of horror in her smiles and caresses, the resistance of all her woman’s tenderness to the varied horror of death. Yet the battle of each scene and faculty was perfectly exquisite as a slattern little servant dressed in her mistress’s clothes.\(^{55}\)

Ricketts’s impression on Hanako was generally good, however, compared to Yacco, he was not overwhelmed by her performance. The above diary reveals that Ricketts’s criteria for evaluating Japanese actors was Yacco’s level, and her impact on him was significant. Yacco would also prove to be one of motives for Ricketts to create his own eclectic theatrical works.

\(^{55}\) Ricketts’s Diary, 2 November 1914, Add MS 58105, fol. 55v.
Hanako had also worked as a model for Rodin since 1906.
Motives of Ricketts’s Theatre Design: Interaction with Itō Michio and Oswald Sickert around Noh Plays

Ricketts was just an audience member when he saw Yacco at a theatre between 1900 and 1901. However, he finally acquired opportunities to interact with a Japanese dancer from 1915 to 1916. His name was Itō Michio. Although Itō had originally hoped to become a singer, he changed his course, and he learned contemporary dance in Germany from 1912, from where he was evacuated to England at to the outbreak of the First World War. Ricketts became acquainted with Itō in 1915, mentioning him first in his diary on the 19th of October 1915. The pair became friends, and Itō joined Ricketts and Shannon’s gathering every Friday, alongside W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and Edmund Dulac. On the 19th of October 1915, Ricketts wrote:

> Itto [Itō] in Germany. (Itto is a Japanese mime and dancer). Itto was at the Dalcroze School when war was declared, most of the foreigners left after warning, he waited till he thought it better to go to Berlin. He walked part of the way, being short of cash, was arrested once. In Berlin his brother-in-law, who has service in the Embassy, wondered why he had been so long, and would not believe that his warnings to leave Dresden had not reached him. In Berlin, the news that England had entered the war cast a sort of spell upon the town; men hurriedly bought the newspapers, read them beneath streetlamps, and hurried away. He saw a Russian spy being ill-treated and struck at in the streets near Reinhardt’s Theatre, and left Berlin three days before Japan entered the contest. Like other Japanese, he travelled in short trips to Holland,

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57 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 19 October 1915, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XXII. 1915, Add MS 58106, fol. 53v, British Library.

Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-teki Buyō," 42.

professing to be on short journeys. In the last train, like other civilians he had
to stand up whilst the military occupied the seats. Holland was unfriendly, men
would ask him in the streets questions which he did not understand, which
meant: “When will you Japanese take Java from us?” He speaks of his arrival
in England at night as of entering into a sense of peace and security, though he
was almost penniless, having outrun his allowance or what remained of it.

The Dalcroze School was a modern dance school in Hellerau, Germany. Ricketts
recorded how Itō took refuge from Germany to England at the World War I in 1914, and
his diary record shows his great interest in Itō as a cosmopolitan Japanese person. On
2nd November 1915, Ricketts mentioned Itō again in his diary:

Itto [Itō] Dance. He called to thank me for my dresses, and spoke intelligently
about Japan, her music, poetry and dancing: The terrible weight of tradition,
precedence and rule, and the limited movement allowed to dancing in Japan,
due to small rooms: The obligato survival of marionette movements in acting
because drama began with marionettes: The thousand and one symbolical
conventions for emotional expression: That Japanese music was like a single
thread, a small melodic movement only; that harmony and concerted mass, as
understood in Europe, was unintelligible, that it took him a year to get
accustomed to it. He said amusing thing about our acting and opera tradition,
our love, as it seemed to him, for vulgarity. He wished to retain Japanese
feeling on a broader technical basis, since Japanese dancing and acting were
invisible on a European stage. He spoke of his longing in Japan to escape from
Japanese traditions, as petty and wooden; that now he saw them in a new light
and feared their loss in the senseless and unthinking imitation of Europe. It
seems Japan has Futurist artists already. 59

Ricketts wrote that Itō belatedly realised the importance of tradition of Japanese
theatrical arts once he was in Europe. In fact, Itō had studied Western modern dance in

59 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 2 November 1915, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. XXII. 1915, Add
MS 58106, fol. 59v, British Library.
Germany, and he was not a professional noh player or kabuki actor, but he showcased four dances that adopted elements of traditional Japanese dance in London in May 1915.\textsuperscript{60} Itō, who was conscious of his Japaneseness, and Ricketts, who had a great interest in Japanese theatre, got along well, and Ricketts contributed to Itō’s performance as a designer in the same year. At the beginning of the above entry, Itō thanked Ricketts for costumes. “My dresses” referred to a costume designed by Ricketts and Dulac:

Michio Itow is going to give some performance of Noh dancing, in proper costume, next week. That is all that’s on in the “awtwoild.” Proper Japanese daimyo dress reconstructed by Du Lac and Ricketts. Etc. very precious. Itow is one of the few interesting japs [Japanese] I have ever met. They usually seem lacking in intensity.\textsuperscript{61}

The above letter is from Pound to James Joyce on 23\textsuperscript{rd} October 1915. On October 28, November 2 and 9 1915, there were three performances of dance and poems in Kensington which featured Itō, and Itō co-starred with poet/chanter Utchiyama Masirmi and flautist “Mr. Minami” at the performances.\textsuperscript{62} According to Takeishi, photographs of the costumes designed by Ricketts and Dulac included the “daimyo dress,” documented

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{60} Tōjō Ai, "Rondon no Itō Michio [Itō Michio in London]," \textit{Bulletin Paper of Meiji University Taisho Drama Study Society} 7 (1998): 84-86.
\textit{Daimyo} means a Japanese feudal lord.
Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-teki Buyō," 44.
\textsuperscript{62} Preston, \textit{Learning to Kneel}, 116.
\end{footnotesize}
in the *Daily Mirror* on 10th January (Fig. 64). The paper reported that Itō performed the fox dance, the priest’s dance, and female demon dance at the Margaret Morris Theatre on 8th January. In the middle of the photograph is the “daimyo dress” mentioned by Pound. In *daimyo dress*, Itō wore *eboshi*, *kataginu*, *kosode*, and *nagabakama*. *Eboshi* is a long-pointed black hat, *kataginu* is a sleeveless robe over *kosode*, *kosode* is a short-sleeved garment, and *nagabakama* is long-pleated trousers. These clothes were formal dresses for Japanese feudal lords, *daimyo*.

The photograph on the right, “Female demon dance”, shows Itō, who wore a long-haired wig and demon’s horns, striking a frightening pose. This demon’s costume also appeared on the lower part of Ricketts’s 1916 postcard to Oswald Sickert, the younger brother of painter Walter Sickert (Fig. 65). Ricketts made notes of this costume design around this illustration which the demon is going to attack: “Vampire,” “Dress gray crepe Over gray silk. design in sleeves two confronted skulls in dull gold. girdle, deep fringe of cut out felt, in conventional blood pattern.”

The illustration of the postcard is a rough sketch. However, we can see the

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63 Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-tekki Buyō," 44.

V&A wrote that this postcard was from Ricketts to Walter Sickert. However, it would be Oswald Sickert who Ricketts actively interacted with in 1916. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider that the postcard was sent to Oswald. Takeishi inferred that Ricketts sent this postcard to Oswald Sickert in March 1916 because Sickert thanked Ricketts for sending sketches in a letter on 3rd April. For the details, see Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-tekki Buyō," 56, and Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 3 April 1916, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. VII, Add MS 58091, fol. 17r, British Library.
details in a watercolour drawing (Fig. 66) in the Ashmolean Museum. On the upper right, there is an inscription: “Witch Dancer” and “Itto.” The dancer, holding a long stick, wears a grey *uchikake*, which is a female robe, worn over a white *kosode*, which is a short-sleeved *kimono*. There are gold skulls on the sleeves of *uchikake*, and black skulls on the chest and the knee of *kosode*. On the waistline, there are vivid red fringes like gushing blood. These patterns bring a gothic effect.

A second illustration at the top of the postcard (Fig. 65) would be *Shōjō*. *Shōjō* is an imaginary animal and an elf which likes liquor. *Shōjō* appears in the noh play “*Shōjō*”. Itō created a dance of *Shōjō* based on this noh play. In fact, the red long-haired wig on the postcard is same as the noh play’s wig. Itō himself wrote about his dances in his memoirs, and it proves that he danced *Shōjō*: “I am a figure as a Japanese dancer. Therefore, I needed to make the Japanese atmosphere. I wholly did original dances. I performed *Shōjō* and *Kitsune*. I also sometimes danced in *eboshi* and *nagabakama*.”

As the reason why Itō thanked Ricketts for designing his costumes in November 1915, Ricketts paradoxically contributed to Itō’s desire for creating authentically Japanese dances. Itō did not choose Japanese costume makers, but

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67 Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-teki Buyō," 46.
Ricketts. At the same time, Ricketts felt strongly about his work with Itō, and he sketched in monochrome Itō’s dancing scene in which he probably wore a daimyo costume (Fig. 67). The sketch can be found in an album of Gordon Bottomley Papers in the British Library.69 In the margins, Bottomley wrote: “As this is labelled ‘Itto,’ it may be a ‘personal’ scene designed for the Japanese dancer Itō, who worked for Yeats in 1916.” In the sketch, Ricketts captured a back shot of Itō dancing dynamically in the centre of the stage with curtains, with characteristic chrysanthemum patterns. Ricketts wanted to leave a record of the rare live Japanese traditional dance, as he never had an opportunity to see kabuki or noh plays in Japan. This sketch was compiled with Ricketts’s other principal theatre design works, such as King Lear and Salome which I discuss in the next section, suggesting how significant Ricketts’s interactions with Itō were to his later work. Ricketts respected and put emphasis on the tradition of kimono and noh plays, and his costumes sought to look authentic, helping lay the groundwork for the successful reception of noh plays in London.

Furthermore, in the above postcard (Fig. 65), Ricketts wrote that:

My dear Sickert, I can’t tell you what real pleasure and excitement your fascinating cards of Japanese actors have given me. I am delighted to realize that a traditional breadth and beauty survives in the dresses, and am most interested in the intelligence and good looks of the people. Uzaemon’s looks are exquisite creations in his photos. I enclose two anonymous sketches of two

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69 Ricketts’s Sketch of Itō in a personal scene, compiled in 1941, Album of Charles Ricketts's Theatre Set Designs, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/5/11, fol. 30r, British Library.
dresses I designed and stencilled for a young Japanese who was stranded in London after escaping from Germany.  

Oswald Sickert, who stayed at the Central Hotel in Tsukiji, Tokyo at that time, sent many postcards of Japanese actors to Ricketts between 1916 and 1917. Although Ricketts was glad to acquire them, and although many are lost, I found four postcards regarding Japanese theatres in Ricketts’s and Shannon’s Papers, in Gordon Bottomley’s Papers, and in George Bernard Shaw’s Papers at the British Library.

Amongst these, there is a postcard, from Ricketts to Bottomley, of kabuki actor Ichimura Uzaemon (Fig. 68), mentioned in the above quotation, posing as Mitsuuji in *Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji* which was based on a long novel published from 1829 to 1842. Uzaemon sports a simple *kimono* and looks quite sophisticated because the character of Mitsuuji is a handsome man who has both beauty and intelligence. On the backside of this photograph, Ricketts wrote to Bottomley about Uzaemon: “Let this card of the charming Uzaemon stand for the nice things I would like to say.” Kabuki has been played by all male actors, hence, Ricketts’s kabuki photographs captured male actors. Uzaemon’s photograph showed beautiful masculinity, in contrast to the taste in

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70 Victoria and Albert Museum, "Postcard from Rickets to Walter Richard Sickert." Uzaemon is kabuki actor, Ichimura Uzaemon.

71 Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 16 February 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 8r. Oswald Valentine Sickert (1871-1923) was one of brothers of painter, Walter Sickert. He was a reviewing staff of the *Saturday Review*, and after leaving the *Saturday Review*, he became a salesman for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. As a part of his work for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, he visited Japan in 1916. For the details of the Sickert family, see Denys Sutton, *Walter Sickert: a Biography* (London: Michael Joseph, 1976).

72 Ricketts’s postcard of Ichimura Uzaemon to Bottomley, c. 1917, Letters from Charles Ricketts, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/1/76, fol. 2v, British Library.

73 Ricketts’s postcard of Ichimura Uzaemon to Bottomley, c. 1917, Add MS 88957/1/76, fol. 2r.
the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century when Japonists in Europe often preferred feminine figures from Japan, such as stereotypical representations of \textit{geisha}. Of course, \textit{samurai} is also another stereotype of Japanese representation, however, paying attention to the beauty of masculinity is significant of the new masculine preference in the gendering of Japonisme.

Ricketts’s description of Uzaemon’s “exquisite appearance” is indicative of early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century Orientalism. Indeed, according to Grace Lavery, “Exquisite” is the term that people in Britain at that time often used to praise Japanese art aesthetically.\textsuperscript{74} Therefore, Ricketts was one of these people sensing the uniqueness and the beauty, which they had never seen, in Japanese traditional art.

Sickert’s postcards further stimulated Ricketts, who described the details of each Japanese actor in his letters to Bottomley in the period between 1916 and 1917. These sought to spread the culture of traditional Japanese theatre arts around his circle of friends:

Sickert’s letter, which I enclose, describes Koshiro and his qualities, personal and hereditary. He is admittedly the great actor of the Japanese revival. Sojuro and Baiko seem to share a considerable degree of celebrity, but, I fancy, interest Sickert less than Uzaemon whose photos convey a rare aroma of personality – a delicate personality, plus considerable personal charm and beauty. Sadanji is, I think, present in one card only, he is also popular, not of the actor-class but, according to legend, a Samurai by birth, who has adopted the stage as a

profession. You will find particulars on most cards, at the back. Kotaro is a dancer more than an actor, he is still very young. If this information is not all on the backs of cards, it is a “resume” of an article on the revival of the native stage tradition in Japan which appeared in a Times supplement devoted to Japan some time ago. From this I gathered that the fashion for European modern drama, Ibsen, Sudermann, Shaw and less valid authors is on the wane. Sadanji, however, won great praise as Shylock.75

Koshiro, Sojuro, Baiko, and Sadanji are kabuki actors Matsumoto Koshiro, Sawamura Soujuro, Onoe Baiko, and Ichikawa Sadanji. Sadanji performed not only kabuki but also Western plays, and he played Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* translated to Japanese in Tokyo in 1908. In this letter, Ricketts paid attention to the traditionality of Japanese theatrical arts. The words “revival,” “resume,” and “tradition” reflected the introverted and retrospective trend during World War I.

In three other postcards in the British Library, there is another kabuki actor postcard, this time from Ricketts to Shaw in 1917, a photograph of Nakamura Kichiemon as Toneri Matsuomaru in *Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami* (1746) (Fig. 69).76 On the back of this postcard, Ricketts wrote that “it represents ‘Kichiyemon’ one of the youngest and most popular of the Japanese actors, in a revival there of traditional plays and traditional method of acting which amounts to a national event.”77 *Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami* was based on the real story of Sugawara Michizane’s downfall

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75 Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 30 August 1916, Add MS 61716, fol. 87r-88r.
76 Ricketts’s postcard of Nakamura Kichiemon to Shaw, 1917, George Bernard Shaw Papers: Series I. Vol. XLI, Add MS 50548, fol. 69v, British Library.
77 Ricketts’s postcard of Nakamura Kichiemon to Shaw, 1917, Add MS 50548, fol. 69r.
and tragedy due to the political conflict in the early 10th century. In this play, the triplets appeared as important roles, and the role of Matsuomaru was one of the triplets, and a servant of a political enemy of Michizane, Fujiwara Shihei although he was in both Michizane and Shihei’s debt. Kichiemon’s as Matsuomaru posture, which opened his arms and legs, looks masculine. Kichiemon had more heavy make-up than Uzaemon as Mitsuuiji, and it looks strong. He also wore a wild wig and a gorgeous *kimono* with swords, and they had a dignified air. This appearance of Kichiemon condensed Japanese traditional masculinity.

In 1912, Ricketts also sent a postcard with a photograph of a Western play in Japan to Shaw. It depicts a scene of the Japanese translation of *A Doll’s House* (1879) by Ibsen, as performed in Tokyo in 1911 (Fig. 70). Shaw was inspired by Ibsen’s plays, and so it seems likely that Ricketts knew this postcard would interest him. This photograph shows Europeanised characters and stage settings. It indicates the latest hybrid Japanese theatre world which played both European and Japanese plays.

At the same time, Ricketts possessed postcards picturing noh players. In Ricketts’s and Shannon’s Papers, there is an unsent postcard with a photograph of Ōe Matasaburo playing an old man, Tooru in the noh play *Tooru* (c. 15c) (Fig. 71).

Matasaburo carries a water basket and wears a *kimono* and an old man mask with a

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78 Ricketts’s postcard of *A Doll’s House* in Japan to Shaw, 7 February 1912, Add MS 50548, fol. 64v.
79 Unused Postcard, c. 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 60r.
small smile, a warai-jou noh mask. Compared with above kabuki photographs of
Uzaemon and Kichiemon, the mask makes this photograph more tranquil and
mysterious. The postcard was a present from Sickert to Ricketts around 1916. noh plays
also fascinated Ricketts, and he described his interest in them in his letters to
Bottomley:

I am glad you were entranced with the Noh pictures. I often look at them, with
constant pleasure.\textsuperscript{80}

I shall in the course of a few days send you a typed copy of a most interesting
letter, of several pages, from O. Sickert on the “No” or masked hieratic plays of
Japan. Yeats has asked for a copy and I shall have two made, it shows a
genuine and highly intelligent visualising of the subject by a man who has
knowledge of other arts, and other points of view. I feel it may even suggest
some sort of insight in the native rendering of the Greek drama other than the
operatic one which I hold at present.\textsuperscript{81}

The above letters show that Ricketts was deeply and pleasurably preoccupied with noh
plays, from the evidence of Sickert’s postcards and letters, sharing his fascination with
Bottomley and Yeats. Whilst his transliteration of Japanese words is ongoingly
idiosyncratic, Ricketts again thought there was a relationship between Greek drama and
14\textsuperscript{th}-century noh, a parallel with ancient Greece not uncommon in the period, as we
have seen; Sickert replying to Ricketts acknowledging that he said “the idea of the No

\textsuperscript{80} Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 6 July 1917, Add MS 61716, fol. 182r.
\textsuperscript{81} Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 11 November 1916, Add MS 61716, fol. 121r.
performance may affect your idea of the performance of a Greek tragedy,” suggesting further the centrality of noh for Ricketts’s theatrical creative activities.

Furthermore, “A typed copy of a most interesting letter, of several pages, from O. Sickert” still remains in the British Library. Sickert not only sent many postcards with photographs of Japanese actors to Ricketts, but also reported the details of Japanese theatrical arts, especially noh plays. In addition, Sickert wrote synopsises of noh plays in his long letters, such as Matsukaze, Kantan, Miidera, Tooru, Matsu-mushi, Yashima, Hashi Benkei (Benkei on the Bridge), and Naniwa, documenting everything that happened on the noh stage. For example, Sickert explained the story line of Matsukaze in a clarifying way:

Matsukaze    Mr. Tetsunjo Kwanze
Murasame     Mr. Shigeru Kwanze
The Priest   Mr. Hiroji Tsuchiya

A Priest enters. He arrives at Suma and taking a pine tree which stands separated from other trees to be telling something, calls up a villager to ask about it. A villager enters. He tells that this is the place where the sister fisher-

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82 Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 15 December 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 57r.
83 Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 2 October 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 32r-39r.
Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 15 December 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 55r-66r.

Regarding Sickert’s notes of noh plays, Sickert himself wrote in Add MS 58091, fol. 57r that “I had begun to make some note on No plays I had seen. Your letter has encouraged me to go on and send them to you. You must not think, however, that I enjoy No performance to anything like the extent to which I catch on to how wonderful they are. The performance is all a means of delivering very poetical poetry with heightened intensity, and if you don’t know the words, you miss the object of the performance. From Kantan especially and from Tooru, in part, as also from Miidera, I got much direct pleasure, because the action happens to tell. But with many others, my pleasure is considerably indirect, except, of course, in the mere existence and motion of the masked and robed figures, which are the most beautiful things created.” Sickert made his notes because he was hugely fascinated with noh plays, and also, he got its motivations from Ricketts’s letters.
This is the beginning of the synopsis of *Matsukaze*. Sickert’s explanation took into consideration that Ricketts could not read or understand aurally Japanese, and so explained the underlying plot to him. In the same period, Yeats gave Ricketts *Certain Noble Plays of Japan: From the Manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa, Chosen and Finished by Ezra Pound with an Introduction by William Butler Yeats* (1916). The book was a collection of English translations of noh plays, *Nishikigi, Hagoromo, Kumasaka,* and *Kagekiyo,* based on Fenollosa’s posthumous drafts. As we have seen, Yeats also wanted to read Sickert’s letter which contained different scenarios of noh plays from *Certain Noble Plays.*

Moreover, Ricketts shared postcards with his other friend, Sydney Cockerell, then a director of the Fitzwilliam Museum:

> The No cards arrived many months ago and in the course of a few days will reach you from Cambridge – I have lent them to Cockerell there who has promised to forward them to you. I often see Waley, he did not tell me he had translated *Haku Rakuten,* he often translates the titles upon my Sickert cards, which continue to arrive – the one I send you was a duplicate.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, a part of the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese art collection

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84 Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 2 October 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 38r.
86 Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 29 May 1917, Add MS 88957/1/76, fol. 3r.  *Haku Rakuten* (c. 1419) is one of noh plays.
was bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum because of their friendship with Cockerell.

The above episode about lending noh postcards to Cockerell reveals how keen Ricketts was to share his Japanese artefacts with his friends. In addition, Ricketts had an interaction with “Waley,” who was providing translations for him. This was likely Arthur Waley, a member of staff dealing with Japanese and Chinese artefacts at the department of Oriental prints and drawings, the British Museum, and a scholar of Eastern studies. In Ricketts’s diary, he wrote that Waley told him the story of a noh play, *Kantan* in November 1916:

Waley told the charming story of one of the No plays. A sage travels to China in search of Wisdom. At an inn he falls asleep whilst they are preparing his soup. In a dream he becomes Emperor and lives a magnificent life, becoming satiated with power till the nothingness of life and honour are forced upon his intellect. He awakens to his soup and decide[s] to return to Japan to become a Buddhist monk, since he has lived his life and found it wanting.

Waley was good at reading classical Japanese, and was also interested in noh plays like Ricketts and Yeats. This diary entry shows Ricketts collected the knowledge of noh plays from his friend around 1916. He shared his materials of noh plays with his friends in Britain, and at the same time, the relationship with his friends provided him with

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87 According to Ricketts’s diary (Add MS 58107, fol. 15r), he met Waley, Yeats, and Itō in the evening of 11 February 1916, and this is the oldest record about Waley in the diary.
88 Charles Ricketts’s Diary, 3 November 1916, Add MS 58107, fol. 68r.
89 Waley was good at reading Japanese, on the other hand, Sickert felt a difficulty in learning Japanese. In Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, he wrote the importance of learning Japanese for foreigners who stay in Japan and how to start learning Japanese. He also suggested that Waley was an expert of Japanese language. For the details, see Oswald Sickert’s letter to Ricketts, 8 August 1916, Add MS 58091, fol. 29r.
crucial knowledge, suggesting Japonisme in this period as a significantly collaborative
deavour, the group collectively having enough different skills to make sense of noh.

Waley himself, meanwhile, published *The Nō Plays of Japan*, a collection of
English translated noh plays in 1921. The book contains 19 noh scripts including
*Kantan* and *Haku Rakuten* mentioned in Ricketts’s diary and letter. The book’s
Appendix I, “Modern Nō Letters from Japan” includes a part of Sickert’s letter to
Ricketts. Waley wanted to print a fresh voice by Sickert who stayed in Japan, and wrote
in the preface that “I include the following extracts from letters written in 1916 by Mr.
Oswald Sickert to Mr. Charles Ricketts. The sender and recipient of the letters both
authorized me to use them, and for this permission I am deeply grateful.”\(^90\) Although the
letters in the appendix were written by Sickert, the friendship between Ricketts and
Waley, and Ricketts and Sickert further reveal Ricketts as a key node in a Modernist
Japanese network. Additionally, Waley was 20 years younger than Ricketts. Waley is a
generation younger, so Ricketts, as the heir to the Rossetti generation, helped to inform
and transform the Japanese theatrical art below him.

In the 1910s, meeting Itō in London and writing to Sickert provided important
experiences developing Ricketts’s ideas of Japan, inspiring his costume design and
understanding of kabuki and noh plays.

Appendix I is from page 306 to 315.
King Lear, The Forty-Seven Ronins and Salome: Unperformed Productions concerning Japan

Ricketts designed a theatre costume for the first time in July 1904, for the Black Jester, for Yeats. Ricketts started to deal with stage designs in earnest in 1906. The trigger was again Yeats. Ricketts founded the Literary Theatre Society in London with Shannon, and his friends, Sturge Moore, Binyon, William Pye, R. C. Trevelyan, Gwendolyn Bishop, and Florence Farr. The society was modelled on Yeats’s Irish Literary Theatre.

In 1906, Ricketts’s career as a theatre designer began with Aphrodite Against Artemis by Sturge Moore, and Salome and A Florentine Tragedy by Wilde, all productions were for the Literary Theatre Society. After 1906, plays designed by Ricketts were presented almost every year. Ricketts was a prolific designer, and Cecil Lewis, the editor of Self-Portrait, documented that Ricketts designed forty drawings for a production in one day. His attitude toward theatrical works was different from his other works, such as paintings and book designs, and he enjoyed stage designs because he regarded work for the stage as a holiday task.

In 1909, Ricketts designed King Lear for Herbert Trench at the Haymarket

Theatre. Although Ricketts was dissatisfied with its execution, he won high praise for his design from critics, and the production made his name as a stage designer. His design of *King Lear* also drew attention from Japanese people who were interested in theatre arts, and, as a result, in 1911 came an opportunity of working with a Japanese theatre company: for a production of *King Lear* for the New Theatre in Tokyo. In three letters from December 1911 to February 1912, Ricketts documented the production’s beginning and his great joy for designing for a Japanese theatre:

The son of the translator of *Hamlet* in Japan wants to consult me about the production of *Lear* in Tokio [Tokyo]. If I had the time, I should like to translate my dresses and scenes into archaic Japanese, contend with their Dolmen age and the temple of Isé.\(^\text{95}\)

I have promised to design the dresses and setting for the first performance of *Lear* in Japanese – Shakespeare is delighted!\(^\text{96}\)

But during the last fortnight I have turned to a work which has given me a perfectly fantastic sense of pleasure, namely designing the dresses and setting for the first performance of *King Lear* for the New Theatre at Tokio [Tokyo]. I was approached by the son of the translator of *Hamlet* into Japanese to know if photographs existed of my Haymarket production. Enquiries at the photographer elicited the information that the plates had been destroyed (owing to the play being a failure) so I started re-designing it on simpler lines, and if you can promise me to return the drawings rapidly, I will forward them to you registered to look at, before they go to Japan. The scenery is on too large a scale to send, but I enclose thumbnail sketches of them, and a postcard of the first act of the first performance of “Hamlet” in Japanese (please return this to me). Of course, Shakespeare is delighted, *Hamlet* was a great success, it ran three nights. “Lear” is not expected to draw as well. […] I half hope I

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\(^{95}\) Ricketts’s postcard to Sydney Cockerell, 16 December 1911, Add MS 61715, fol. 145r. “Tokio” is an old romanization of Tokyo, and it is used by several non-English countries.

\(^{96}\) Ricketts’s letter to Sydney Cockerell, 20 December 1911, Add MS 61715, fol. 142r.
shall be asked to design “Macbeth” and the “Agamemnon” for Japan. If they ask me, I will.\textsuperscript{97}

The postcard to Cockerell documented that Ricketts did not intend to use the same costume and stage design as in *King Lear* in 1909. For the Japanese version, he planned to create ambitious designs introducing Japanese culture of the New Stone Age and the Ise Grand Shrine. It would be the height of Ricketts’s hybridising art of Shakespeare and ancient Japan. The sentence “Shakespeare is delighted” appeared in not only in the above letters to Cockerell and Bottomley but also in the letter to Dutch painter, Richard Roland Holst.\textsuperscript{98} It proved Ricketts’s excitement and strong eagerness for the first performance of *King Lear* in Japan.\textsuperscript{99}

In the letter to Bottomley, Ricketts wrote that he enclosed thumbnail sketches of the scenery. In fact, these sketches were depicted on the back of the letter, and there are four small drawings of the scenery: Lear’s Palace, Gloucester’s House, the Heath scene, and the Cliff scene (Fig. 72). Compared with his theatre design for *King Lear* in 1909 which still exist in the V&A (Fig. 73), both have similar ancient and mysterious tastes. The design of drawings for the 1911 version is simpler than the 1909, and the roof of Gloucester’s House recalls the thatched roof of the Ise Grand Shrine’s

\textsuperscript{97}Ricketts’s letter to Gordon Bottomley, 4 February 1912, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/1/75, fol. 34r, British Library.

\textsuperscript{98}Ricketts, *Self-Portrait*, 170-171.

\textsuperscript{99}In reality, the Japanese version of *King Lear*, “Yami to Hikari [The Dark and the Light]” adopted by Takayasu Gekko was performed for the first time in Japan in 1902.
architecture, thatching popular in both Britain and Japan. Ricketts also showed an
eagerness to design two further productions, *Macbeth* and *Agamemnon* for Japan in the
future, and dreamed of achieving a success as a theatre designer in Japan.

Regarding the details of *King Lear* in 1911, most drawings for its design no
longer exist. However, there are fragmentary clues in Bottomley’s writings:

He executed a marvellous fantasy on them, heightening them with touches
and poses and patterns that brought the drawings into relation with the prints
of Utamaro and Kiyonaga—expressing them in terms that gave them a
Japanese appeal, without destroying the reference to Shakespeare.\(^{100}\)

Ricketts had an idea to add elements of ukiyo-e prints by Utamaro and Kiyonaga, *bijin-
ga* artists, who depicted beautiful women and the alluring world. His design was
experimental, transregional, and transhistorical because it included ancient-styled
scenery alongside Edo-era elegance. Bottomley, however, thought that Ricketts was the
right person to design *King Lear* in Japan as he was a multi-talented artist:

It was a fascinating commission for a man of Ricketts’s temperament and
many-sidedness: the connoisseur and the trained engraver mobilised eagerly
with the painter to help the theatre-designer. Few people can speak of these
designs, for few saw them: and in Japan they disappeared years ago. It is an
immeasurable loss, for together they constituted a masterpiece: beside the
gaunt scenic designs of Stonehenge world there must have been some fifty
designs for single costumes. These latter showed an evidently profound
knowledge of Japanese theatre-prints, the way in which they were put on the
wood, the brilliant tender tones in which they were printed: but beyond that
they made abundantly clear everything that needed to be known about the

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\(^{100}\) Bottomley, "Charles Ricketts R.A.,” 391.
constitution of the costume: and, dominating everything else, every costume was worn by its character. The set was an array of comment and understanding applied to every person in the play in turn, and all done in terms of draughtsmanship that remembered Japan’s own theatre-portraits, yet expressed the subtitles and idiosyncrasies of Shakespeare’s people in a graphic language that their Japanese personators could understand and would vividly apprehend.  

The above article was written in 1940 for Theatre Arts Monthly, and Bottomley revealed that Ricketts’s design for King Lear in 1911 was lost in Japan. Bottomley was one of few people who saw it. The designs, which Bottomley praised, included prehistoric scenery with huge stones and fifty costumes. There was also a connection with Utamaro and Kiyonaga, Ricketts creating the costumes with beautiful ukiyo-e colours. Ricketts matched his design with the Japanese theatre and actors, and the design was high quality. However, the production had an unaccountable ending, and never opened in Tokyo.

We can find the reason in a Bottomley letter to Ricketts in 1915 when more than three years had passed since he accepted the request to design King Lear in Tokyo:

I often wonder if you heard of what happened to the “Lear” designs you did for Japan. Many of them are still crisp in my memory. I interrogated Noguchi about the theatre for which you did them, and demanded picture post cards like those you shewed me; he never mentioned it, however, so I interrogated him anew when I saw him last winter, and he told me he had enquired and could not hear of or find any such theatre; and when I mentioned Mr. Tsubuchi’s name he expressed a deep disbelief in Mr. Tsubuchi and all his works. But there was something in his subtle Oriental glance and innocent expression which made me disbelieve him. I often go over those designs in my mind and long to hear they are not lost; if they are I shall go to Japan to

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discover them if I am ever well enough.102

“Noguchi” is a Japanese writer, Noguchi Yonejiro, who inquired, on Ricketts’s behalf, into the background of *King Lear* in Tokyo. As a result of his investigation, he discovered that the play was never performed, and all things related to this production, such as “the New Theatre” and “The son of the translator of Hamlet in Japan” were suspicious. “Mr. Tsubuchi” was also a doubtful person, however, this name is similar to Japanese novelist, critic, and playwright, Tsubouchi Shoyo (1859-1935). Tsubouchi developed modern literature and plays in Japan. He researched Shakespeare, and translated all Shakespeare’s play from English into Japanese. In 1911, *Hamlet* played at Imperial Theatre in Tokyo under Tsubouchi’s direction and translation. There is a slight possibility that Tsubouchi asked Ricketts to design *King Lear* for improvement on Japanese Shakespeare plays. However, in 1913, Tsubouchi stopped performing plays, and he concentrated on translation of Shakespeare.103 If “Mr. Tsubuchi” was Tsubouchi, after all, unfortunately, Ricketts had been deceived, and his designs lost in Japan.

In spite of this undoubtedly painful, shaming revelation, Ricketts was still eager to deal with Japanese theatrical arts in 1914:

I may possibly return to the stage this year to mount and dress *The Forty-

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102 Gordon Bottomley’s letter to Ricketts, Early 1915, Ricketts, Add MS 61716, fol. 219r-220r.
Seven Ronins, but this is only in the air. There shall be no pink plum blossom, geishas and paper wisteria, but feudal men and women and, I hope, tragic backgrounds of snow and rock.\textsuperscript{104}

Barker is contemplating The Forty-Seven Ronins, by Masefield, - a subject I suggested to Binyon about five years ago. I have written to him that, if not too late, I should like to stage it. I should of course forsake all Japo-European Notions of Japan and try to evoke the aspect and character of a remote and feudal Japan with the heraldic dresses of the late Tosa School, Matabe and his following.\textsuperscript{105}

In 1915, John Masefield completed The Faithful, a three-act tragedy, based on The Forty-Seven Ronins (Chushingura), a play incorporating various theatrical formats, such as kabuki and joruri, that had been popular since the Edo period in Japan. The play deals with a historical incident involving the forty-seven rōnins, or masterless samurai, and their mission to avenge the death of their master at the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{106} As the precedent for the play based on Chushingura, there was Yamato produced by Maeda Masana, who was a Japanese government officer of the Universal Exposition, in Paris in 1867. Maeda adapted Chushingura into Yamato to explain the reality of Japanese chivalry to Western people. Yamato was performed only once. Although it used authentic Japanese costumes and stage sets, the audience could not understand its story sufficiently.\textsuperscript{107} Hence, Yamato did not achieve success in Paris.

In the Ricketts and Shannon collection bequeathed to the British Museum,

\textsuperscript{104} Ricketts’s letter, 14 February 1914, Add MS 61716, fol. 76r.
\textsuperscript{105} Ricketts’s letter, February 1914, Add MS 61716, fol. 77r.
\textsuperscript{107} Mabuchi, Butai no ueno Japonisumu, 90-99.
there are four ukiyo-e prints depicting kabuki version of *Chushingura* which is called *Kanadehon Chushingura* (1748). One is Utamaro’s print portraying Act 7 (1937,0710,0.66), the remaining three are Hokusai’s prints representing Act 1, Act 9, and Act 11 (1937,0710,0.200, 1937,0710,0.201, and 1937,0710,0.202). Specifically, in Hokusai’s Act 11 (Fig. 74), the last act of this kabuki, rōnins in black and white haori, Japanese half-length coats, are attacking Kono Moronou’s residence to kill Kono as an act of vengeance.

As Ricketts wrote about his imagined stage design in the above, there is no feminine, Japonist cliches of pink plum blossom, *geishas* or paper wisteria, but serious, cold, hard, feudal men with mountains and snow. Ricketts, then, seems to have gotten interested in *The Forty-Seven Ronins* through ukiyo-e prints depicting it, and then suggested its subject to Binyon in 1909, drawing on his knowledge in 1914 as a collector and artistic Japonist.

As further evidence that Ricketts had a special attachment to the story of the forty-seven rōnins, Noguchi recorded Ricketts’s opinion of the English adaptation:

When I told Mr. Ricketts that Mr. Masefield was writing a play of *Chushingura* [*The Forty-Seven Ronins*], Mr. Ricketts said that there was no writer who was able to write this play properly in the West. He also said: “We can maintain the interest until the scene of the attack by ronins, however, the last act of their hara-kiri makes Westerners feel unpleasant. Yet, it becomes difficult for audiences to understand the ending if this hara-kiri act will be removed. This is
the part which writers struggle to write.\textsuperscript{108}

*Hara-kiri*, ritual suicide by cutting one’s stomach open with a sword, was performed by the *samurai* until the Edo era. Likely agreeing with Ricketts, Masefield cut the scene, although he evidently did not agree with the idea that no one in the West could successfully translate Japanese drama, nor with Ricketts’s self-assessment as an exception to this rule, in spite of his own ongoing translation and transliteration problems.\textsuperscript{109}

Ricketts imagined a serious setting which included the strict *samurai* families and monochrome scenery in winter like Hokusai’s *Chushingura* in contrast to elegant women in ukiyo-e prints, the former more characteristic, as we have seen, of a more masculine image of Japan in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 to 1905. Ricketts had a concrete plan for costumes, and intended to adopt the Tosa school style, a painting school from four centuries earlier, to express a more “authentic” sense of Japan, although one that was 400 years out of date.

However, Ricketts’s concrete design plan never embodied, since he himself declined the commission in the end. According to Noguchi, before 1916, Ricketts said that *The Mikado* and *The Geisha* had misled London audiences with an erroneous knowledge of Japan, therefore, it was difficult to perform a genuine Japanese-style play.


\textsuperscript{109} Noguchi, *Butai no Hitobito*, 75.
causing him to decline the offers of *The Forty-Seven Ronins* by a producer, Harley Granville-Barker several times.\(^{110}\) “A kind of convention” would mean unhelpful, stereotypical images of Japan.

*The Mikado,* which premiered in 1885, and *The Geisha,* which premiered in 1896, left a strong impression of Japanese girls in gorgeous kimonos on people in London. In contrast to these two plays, *The Forty-Seven Ronins* shows hara-kiri, and it does not have “pink plum blossom, geishas and paper wisteria.” There is a big difference between the two and *The Forty-Seven Ronins.* Ricketts wanted to make *The Forty-Seven Ronins* authentic and serious, as he wrote in his letter. It also shows that Ricketts respected Japanese men and women, and did not have his interest in the stereotypical images of Japan like geishas. Therefore, there is a high possibility that Ricketts himself stopped being involved in the production of *The Forty-Seven Ronins* because of two problems, the audience and the authenticity. Ricketts considered that the London audience could not accept *The Forty-Seven Ronins* if it showed too serious scenes, especially hara-kiri, and he could not tolerate *The Faithful,* the English adaptation of *The Forty-Seven Ronins* by Masefield, without a hara-kiri scene.

Unfortunately, there was no environment for Ricketts to design his ideal authentic *The Forty-Seven Ronins* in London in 1914. However, Ricketts’s attempt to create masculine

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stage design of *The Forty-Seven Ronins* in contrast to previous stereotypical Japonisme plays with *geishas* indicates the new phase of theatrical Japonisme in the early 20th century, and it is a notable experiment.

A further opportunity to create designs related to Japan returned to Ricketts in 1919. The commission came from Shochiku, a Japanese stage production company, to design *Salome.* Ricketts wrote about this in a letter in August 1919:

> Of course, I will return to the stage, I am in it now reconstructing *Salome* for a proposed production by the Shōchiku Theatrical Company, Tokyo. This company often employs Uzaemon, but only in Japanese plays, I fear. Curiously enough, years ago I dreamt that Sada Yacco had performed Salome in a Japanese version of the play; that, with strange muttered soliloquies she had descended a staircase haunted by her guilty passion for Herod; that John, a bound prisoner behind a wattle, had made ardent love to her till, in Japanese fashion, she had pushed the wattle back upon him with sudden birdlike cries interrupted by the terrific entrance of Kawakami as Herod with a convulsed mask, feet turned in, in a slow deliberate descent of the stairs, supported by a hesitating Herodias. I saw the dance, rapid, vivid, trance-like, the head thrust over the wattle, and Salome's suicide after a slow muttered speech spoken to space or to the audience she did not see. I fear this is unlike, and the Japanese Salome, whose photo I have seen, wears Maud Allan pearls in her hair. I do not think Uzaemon would consent to do Salome. He is adored by ladies.

Like *King Lear* in 1909 and 1911, as Ricketts described “reconstructing,” he had designed *Salome* in 1906. He already wrote that he wished that Yacco would play the

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111 Takeishi guesses that Ricketts contracted with kabuki actor, Ichikawa Ennosuke and playwright, Matsui Shouyou as representatives of Shochiku who visited London in 1919. For the details, see Takeishi, "Itō Michio no Nihon-teki Buyō," 56.
title role in his *Salome* in the same year. Working with Yacco was his long-held dream, and he had a specific image of Salome by Yacco with Kawakami. Ricketts did not want to cast kabuki actor, Ichimura Uzaemon who worked in Japanese plays. He believed that Yacco was the very person to play Salome, and she would handle the non-Japanese role by expressing emotions with her whole body.

Regarding Ricketts’s design for *Salome* in Japan, Bottomley recorded in his memoirs that Ricketts:

> He designed *Salome* again in 1919 for a production in Japan by Japanese artists who were organising a scheme for the presentation of great European drama to their countrymen. This set of designs showed his stage-work at its most fortunate heights: the costumes were in a vein of passionate fantasy mingled with a use of decoration deliciously contrived to appeal to the country of Ukiyo-ye, Herodias wearing a robe of black and yellow that suggested not only a tigress but a tigress “burning bright” with searing flame, Herod’s rich apparel and black beard and hair being given a sinister touch of unfathomed depravity by a coronal of innocent pink robes in his hair, the Jew’s large patterned dresses, beards and pointed high caps marking them off sharply from the Romans: the scene a fragment of a high colonnade against a dark luminous night. But his work on this play was particularly doomed to oblivion. These designs never reached Japan: they went to New York on the way there, and are said to have been lost in the New York Customs.

Bottomley’s writing shows Ricketts’s colourful costumes, and it is different from *Salome* in 1906 which used all-blue costumes. Ricketts’ costumes, whilst designed to

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113 Charles Ricketts’s postcard, 2 October 1906, Ricketts and Shannon Papers Vol. V. 1906-1913, Add MS 58089, fol. 36r, British Library.
114 Bottomley, “Charles Ricketts R.A.” 381.
115 Ricketts, *Pages on Art*, 244.
appeal to the Japanese, were not just imitated from Japanese designs, but rather from the Biblical Middle East. As Bottomley wrote, the unlucky Ricketts’s designs were lost in New York, however, a painting of the stage design for *Salome* (Fig. 75) still remains in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

This bluish stage design has a blue background and blue curtains hung from the ceiling with red pillars. There is an exotic atmosphere; however, the design does not focus on a specific country’s style. One of few possible Japanese elements is a big circle on the blue curtains and semicircles on the pillars which recall Japanese family crests. On the lower right of the design, we can find the inscription: *Salome* The Schochiku [Shochiku] Co. Tokio [Tokyo], the inscription proving that this painting was for *Salome* of the Japanese production.

Furthermore, several costume designs for *Salome* remains in the V&A. Costume designs for Young Syrian (Fig. 76) and Two Priests (Fig. 77) are again exotic cosmopolitan design with big unique patterns. Like Bottomley’s description, a costume design for Herodias (Fig. 78) has noticeable black and yellow colours on the gown. This gorgeous gown has a long train, and is similar to *uchikake*, the Japanese women’s gown worn over a *kimono*.\(^\text{116}\) Although Herodias’s clothes are *kimono* like, in the way they wrap an actress’s body, her gold head gear is not Japanese.

Regarding Herod’s costume design, Bottomley possessed its design by Ricketts (Fig. 79) in a photograph album.\textsuperscript{117} As Bottomley wrote, the photograph of the costume design shows that Herod wore a robe with big elliptic patterns, and had a long-pointed beard. Although the photograph is monochrome, Bottomley left colourful descriptions of Ricketts’s costume design, whose lapis lazuli and turquoise palette evoke central and east Asia:

Herod. Lazuli robe, tomato lining, gold and bl. [black] patt. [patterns]; red and bl. shoes, bl. gown white spots, gold patt. [pattern] green squares, blue and gold panel, purple sash, silv. [silver] armlet, gold cup, silver and turq. [turquoise] clasps to robe, turq. ring, coral necklace, silver turq. ear-rings coral drops. Pink rose wreath.\textsuperscript{118}

In the album, there is also a photograph of Ricketts’s design for Salome in the scene of Dance of the Seven Veils (Fig. 80). Evoking the seductive dance scene, this costume is revealing, however it keeps its elegance. There are small and big patterns on the costume. Salome wears a head gear, necklaces, bracelets, and anklets. Similar to Herod’s robe, Salome’s veil depicts big roundel patterns. Bottomley again described Salome’s costume:


\textsuperscript{117} The Photograph of Ricketts’s Design for Herod, c. 1920s, Charles Ricketts's Work for \textit{Salome} and \textit{The Merchant of Venice}, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 19r. British Library.
\textsuperscript{118} Gordon Bottomley, The Memo of \textit{Salome}, Small Drawings, c. 1920s, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 26r.
bodice, gold bosses on breast band, red and silv. necklace, red shoes.

The palette of Salome’s dress was far from Japanese. In addition, the exoticness and sensuality of this costume did not appear in traditional Japanese costumes. Compared with Herodias’s costume (Fig. 78), Salome’s costume is more exotic, and it does not have a design related to *kimono*.

In addition, there is a pencil drawing of a costume design for a dancer which was also possibly for *Salome* (Fig. 81). The decorative costume seductively emphasises the actress’s body line, recalling Salome in *The Apparition* (1876) by Gustave Moreau, a documented source of inspiration for Ricketts, as he himself acknowledged.

Regarding the vivid colour scheme and exotic mood in Ricketts’s stage design, Ricketts denied the inspiration of the *Ballets Russes* design in 1915 although he was absorbed in the *Ballets Russes* in the 1910s: “the Russian designers owe me nothing. […] Any chance likeness you may detect lies in common indebtedness to Moreau, or should I say to things initiated and discovered by Moreau.”  

The stage and costume design of the *Ballets Russes* was exotic and bold, and used bright colours. The *Ballets Russes* started in Paris in 1909, and fascinated European people including Ricketts. Ricketts often saw its performances enthusiastically, and he had met founder of the *Ballets Russes*, Sergei Diaghilev and Russian ballet dancer, Vaslav Nijinski at his house.  

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enthusiasm for the Ballets Russes, he sharply commented on the Ballets Russes designer, Leon Bakst:

Bakst puts too much detail into all he does, uses too many colours, and hardly husbands his resource. The general effect is often confused and even unpleasant, but he has so much invention and fancy that one has to accept him on his own terms, he is a brilliant improvisator and has the qualities of his defects.\(^{121}\)

Compared Bakst’s design with Ricketts’s, Bakst used more kinds of colours in a single production design than Ricketts. In fact, Bakst’s costumes, such as Cléopâtre in 1909 and Schéhérazade in 1910, used many bright colours and patterns. Similarly, Ricketts used vivid colours; however, he also created theatre designs with colour unity, for example, designs of the all-blue Salome in 1906 and the all-green Miracle in 1907.\(^{122}\)

Moreover, in Bakst’s design, there was frequent use of Middle Eastern exotic elements and ancient Greek elements.\(^{123}\) On the other hand, Ricketts attached importance on Japanese art, and he applied not only Western and Middle Eastern elements but also Japanese elements to his theatre design. Hence, Ricketts’s wide art knowledge was one of his advantages in stage design.

For Salome, Ricketts evidently had in mind his favourite actress, Yacco, who

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\(^{121}\) Charles Ricketts’s Letter to William Pye, December 1912, Gordon Bottomley Papers, Add MS 88957/3/11, fol. 190r, British Library.

\(^{122}\) Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 227.

was not only an actress but also a dancer. One of the reasons why this and the above
Salome’s designs were not Japanese was that Yacco had danced many Japanese roles,
therefore, Ricketts, who already had seen several Yacco’s Japanese roles in 1900 and
1901, wanted to create new beautiful costumes, which people had never seen, for her.
The fact that Ricketts did not design a stereotyped Japanese-tasted costume like *geishas*
for Yacco is a notable point. It shows his serious attitude toward the use of Japonisme
elements, and he did not have the Orientalism view on Japanese women. In this way,
Ricketts designed stage settings and costumes enthusiastically; however, after the loss
of designs at the New York custom, the project of *Salome* in Japan was dropped.

Ricketts’s dream, with Yacco playing Salome, again disappeared.

Although Ricketts experienced misfortune, in contrast to previous Japonisme
plays in the late 19th century, such as *The Geisha* and *The Mikado*, his design plans, like
his interest in the masculinity of *The Forty-Seven Ronins* and his costume design for
Yacco in *Salome* which did not have obvious Japanese elements, were significant signs
of the new phase of theatrical Japonisme as Ricketts aimed to design serious and
genuine stages when he dealt with Japanese elements. At least when it came to his
theatre designs, Ricketts did not have discriminatory Orientalist view on Japan, and he
did not reproduce stereotyped Japonisme stage designs.
The Mikado: Seeking Beauty and Authenticity

All three productions, King Lear in 1911, The Forty-Seven Rōnin in 1914, and Salome in 1919 were not to be finally staged. In spite of Ricketts’s misfortune, his theatrical ambitions continued, working on nearly 40 productions from 1906 to 1919, according to the chronological list by Fletcher. Among these productions was a further play design with hidden Japanese elements although it was not a coproduction with a Japanese company, nor a story given a Japanese setting like King Lear or The Forty-Seven Rōnin. The play was another Shakespeare staple, The Merchant of Venice, in a production first performed in 1918.

Ricketts’s friend, Penelope Wheeler commissioned him to design three Shakespeare’s plays, and The Merchant of Venice was to be performed to British armies in France; a mid-war production with a tight budget, perhaps not an undue constraint for a Ricketts who acknowledged that he was “the cheapest dressmaker in London”. For the production, he designed a useful, portable curtain set, saving expenses on scenery. The costumes, however, were a labour of love, taking four months to stencil.

Ricketts’s letters and diary do not mention his Japanese inspirations:

I am working hand over hand at dresses for Y.M.C.A. performances at the Front for Twelfth Night, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merchant of Venice.

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125 Fletcher, "Charles Ricketts and the Theatre," 18.
Bottomley, "Charles Ricketts R.A." 392. These three Shakespeare plays, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, and Much Ado About Nothing were played by the company which Lena Ashwell organised.
126 Furst, "Charles Ricketts, ARA, and his Stage Work," 332.
[...] Shylock is stupendous, and other figures have dresses that recall Giorgione, Carpaccio and Rossetti. [...] I think designs the best I have done. 127

Whilst Ricketts here explicitly acknowledges a group of European artists, his costume drawings included Japanese elements. Of course, Rossetti depicted women wearing kimonos in his painting. Although there is a possibility that Rossetti’s depiction of kimonos might share some underlying ideas, Ricketts’s design of The Merchant of Venice employed male kimonos, Rossetti not anticipating Ricketts’s interest in Japanese male fashion. Ricketts learned of Japanese male garments through male figures in ukiyo-e prints and male actors of kabuki and noh in photographs, and he put his knowledge to his design works. Ricketts showed his interest in Japanese male fashion, and it indicates a notable new phase of theatrical Japonisme in terms of Ricketts’s wide knowledge about traditional Japanese fashion including male kimonos, not merely female kimonos which had been widely known in Europe for centuries. For example, looking at Ricketts’s colour drawing of Shylock (Fig. 82) which he singled out in the letter, although the palette is again far from traditionally Japanese, the green lined neck and long-trained trousers are both similar to kamishimo, Edo-period formal costume for the samurai, which combined a broad-shouldered waistcoat, kataginu, and long pleated


Ricketts also sent a letter about designs of these three Shakespeare plays to Binyon. He wrote that he introduced Giorgione and early Titian elements into costumes, and “Shylock is terrific.” For the details, see Charles Ricketts’s Letter to Laurence Binyon, September 1918, Ricketts, Shannon and “Michael Field” Transcripts Vol. VI, Add MS 61718, fol. 159r, British Library.
trousers, *nagabakama*. In addition, Shylock’s long black hat has the same form as an *eboshi*, the privileged class formal hat. Ricketts’s costume for Tubal (Fig. 83) also clearly recalls Japanese male *kimonos*. Bottomley explained Tubal’s costume as follows:

> Green tunic, blue skirt; top and bottom patches yellow, middle one rosy purple. Sleeves, green leaves, black roots, crimson and blue rings, pale yellow spots, dark oyster lining. D. [dark] brown hair, black cap, primrose veil.

Ricketts’s drawing of Tubal is more detailed than Shylock’s, one of few coloured drawings of *The Merchant of Venice* by Ricketts in existence. “Green tunic” is broader shouldered than Shylock’s green lined neck, and the use of colour in Tubal’s costume is simpler than Shylock’s. Therefore, Tubal’s “Green tunic” and “blue skirt” are more similar in style to *kamishimo* than Shylock’s. In addition, both Shylock and Tubal wear a black hat, fastened with long ribbons around their foreheads. This resembles a *hikitate eboshi*, a kind of *eboshi*. Tubal and Shylock, friends in the play, both wear *kimonos*, highlighting and orientalising them among other European costumes, perhaps also recalling the 1901 production of *The Merchant of Venice* performed by Kawakami and Yacco, similarly adapted with Japanese elements, as we have seen, with Ricketts paying particular attention to Sairoku, played by Kawakami, Shylock in the English version.

And again, the fact that Ricketts attached importance to male Japanese fashion in his

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128 Charles Ricketts, Ricketts’s Design for Shylock, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 59r.
   Bottomley wrote about this costume “Pale oyster gown, red shoe and veil; green lining neck and sleeves, blue buttons and girdle, brown wallet, auburn hair” in his memo, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 25r.

129 Gordon Bottomley, *The Memo of The Merchant of Venice*, c. 1920s, Add MS 88957/5/9, fol. 25r.
stage design indicates the significant new phase of Japonisme compared to previous Japonisme depiction of frequent use of female fashion.

In the 1920s, Ricketts continued to provide designs for plays including *The Betrothal* in 1921, *Saint Joan* in 1924, and *Henry VIII* in 1925. It was not until 1926, however, when Ricketts again got an opportunity to design a production strongly related to Japan. That January, Rupert D'Oyly Carte, owner of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, asked Ricketts to design *Utopia Ltd*. Ricketts declined it, but offered instead to design a new production of *The Mikado*, the project being swiftly contracted. Ricketts wrote about his contract in the letter to D'Oyly Carte:

> I have read *The Mikado*, my fee for the entire production would be £500, with one condition, namely that every drawing made for it is returned to me after use, I should add that they are usually in a dreadful hole and not worth keeping.  

£500 in 1926 was approximately £31,254 in 2020. Ricketts asked D'Oyly Carte to return all his design drawings to him, the product of his bitter experience of losing his earlier designs. Ricketts already a design plan, which he suggested to D'Oyly Carte:

> Should you ever contemplate the renovation of *The Gondoliers* in, shall we say *Louis XIV* costume or, better still, *The Mikado* in exquisite 18 cent[ury] Japanese dresses – including the fantastic court dresses – I should be pleased to collaborate. Concerning this last *The Geisha, Madame Butterfly* and *The

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132 Bank of England, "Inflation calculator.”
"Mikado" have created a dreary pink dressing gown style quite unlike anything Japanese and I believe the public would be startled by the novelty of an entirely different presentment.\(^{133}\)

*The Geisha* (1896), *Madame Butterfly* (1904) and *The Mikado* are Japonisme theatrical plays, and all of them won popularity among Westerners. Ricketts was dissatisfied with costume designs in these plays setting in Japan. As mentioned in the previous section, he considered that these plays gave inauthentic images of Japan to the audience.\(^{134}\) He respected Japanese culture, and he wanted to improve Japonisme plays through the introduction of greater authenticity of Japanese costumes, for the first redesign of *The Mikado* since its premiere in 1885. In the same month, January 1926, Ricketts discussed further details including makeup and wigs:

I agree with you that an entirely new aspect should be given to the *Mikado*, the original setting being without character or distinction. To be frank I should not care to undertake it unless it were viewed as a new work requiring beauty, humour and an element of surprise in its appearance.

In our interview you very wisely warned me of the personal limitations of your singers, this however is a case where prejudice and habit would have to be overruled. The ladies must make up very white and alter their eyebrows, the men in the chorus must wear wide breeches and authentic wigs and head dressed, what is more important is that Katisha should wear the long train, huge fan and flowing wig of a court Lady, at least in act 1, in act 2 this might affect the silly little tuns and trickes traditional in the part.\(^{135}\)

Ricketts evidently desired to reshape *The Mikado* in more authentic and serious

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\(^{133}\) Ricketts’s letter to D’Oyly Carte, 16 January 1926, Add MS 89231/6/235.

\(^{134}\) Noguchi, *Oshū Bundan Inshō-ki*, 197.

\(^{135}\) Ricketts’s letter to D’Oyly Carte, 27 January 1926, Add MS 89231/6/235.
Japanese ways, more akin to noh drama, perhaps a strange desire for a play designed to be comic. He also made a detailed note for makeup:

“Mikado” ladies. Make-up foundation; combination of No.5. and 1 1/2 or 2, to make light, ivory tone, *not too yellow*. High placed carmine on cheekbones heightened by No.18 dry rouge after powdering off. Black upward swirling lines at outer corners of eyes.

No eyeshadow to be used, eyelids lightly touched with Carmine 1. Slanting Jap[anese] eyebrows.

Very small mouth (using centre only) made up with Carmine 1.

“Mikado” men. Foundation No.5. Colour (Carmine 1 or 11) placed high on cheekbone.

Same tone for mouth.\textsuperscript{136}

Ricketts’s knowledge of theatrical makeup here, and Japanese historic make-up styles, is noticeable, he knew even foundation numbers. He underlined “not too yellow,” perhaps to avoid discriminatory expressions of the supposed colour of Japanese flesh.

Surviving photographs confirm that Ricketts got his way. Katisha (Fig. 84) and the court ladies (Fig. 85) applied white foundation on their whole faces, which concealed their real eyebrows following makeup styles in the Edo era in which adult ladies shaved or plucked their eyebrows. “Authentic wigs” were also traditionally Japanese. Again, surviving evidence suggests that Ricketts got his way, since the V&A possesses wigs from the time of *The Mikado*. Ko-Ko’s wig (Fig. 86) came complete with a topknot whilst the front part of their hair was shaved in the shape of a half-moon, or *sakayaki*.

\textsuperscript{136} Charles Ricketts’s note, 1926, D'Oyly Carte: Correspondence and Papers Concerning *The Mikado* (1), Add MS 89231/11/32, British Library.
Foundation still remains on this wig’s skin, revealing that the male foundation colour was similar to a Japanese skin tone. Katisha’s wig (Fig. 87) is a hairstyle for female court nobles and court ladies in the Edo era called ōsuberakashi. This wig is heavy because its hairstyle has a long ponytail with hirabitai which is a hair ornament for formal dress.137

Additionally, as we can see in the photograph (Fig. 84) and the design drawing (Fig. 88), Katisha was dressed in layered kimonos called jūnihitoe. She wore white, green and purple kimonos with circle patterns and a red nagabakama (long-pleated trousers), and these costumes made refined colour harmony. Binyon admired Katisha’s costume.138 However, it would have weighed from 10 to 20 kilograms, making it difficult to move. In fact, the Katisha actress hated her costume, and Ricketts needed to remove her mo, complete with a picture of a tiger, a train skirt that covered the backside of the lower half of the body. Ricketts painted the tiger inspired by Korin on this mo, the year 1926 the Year of the Tiger.139 In fact, Korin painted a screen, The Tiger (Fig. 89) waking toward the lower left side, and the tiger’s face looks not only strong but also

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137 For the details of dress designs for Japanese female court nobles in the Edo period, see Izutsu Gafū, Nihon Fukushokushi: Josei-hen [History of Costume in Japan: Female Garments] (Kyoto: Mitsumura Suiko Shoin, 2015), 156-159, 172-175.
138 Laurence Binyon’s letter to Ricketts, 26 September 1926, Add MS 58091, fol. 212r. Binyon wrote that “Katisha was a splendid sort of Komachi figure.” Komachi means beautiful women.
cute. Ricketts’s tiger in Katisha’s costume has a very similar pose and face to Korin’s tiger. Looking at Katisha’s costume design of Fig. 88, there is a waking tiger in a bamboo forest on the white mo, which has disappeared in the photograph (Fig. 84) when The Mikado ran; Ricketts’s desire for authenticity undercut by the actors’ need to move freely.

Other actors also struggled with Ricketts’s Japanese costumes. He wrote that Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah looked paralysed. Compared with female kimonos, there are fewer things to wear for male kimonos. However, the male actors also felt constrained by their tight obis, sashes worn with kimonos. Regarding the tightness of kimonos in Ricketts’s costume design, interestingly, the haute couture fashion in the early 20th century used elements of kimonos as the symbol stimulating the fashion trend to wear loose-fitting clothes in contrast to the former tight corset fashion. Paul Poiret created the “Kimono” coat in 1903, and he introduced a corset-free dress in 1906. Other haute couture designers including Mariano Fortuny also designed coats like uchikake, which was a Japanese female gown worn over a kimono, in the 1910s. In the 1920s, the fashion trend was a straight-lined dress with gentle drapes inspired by kimonos, and this

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140 Korin also painted a tiger in bamboo forests in The Tiger in Bamboo Forests (c. 18th century), which is the collection of the Kyoto National Museum.
141 Ricketts, Self-Portrait, 369.
dress did not tighten waistlines. On the other hand, Ricketts also designed costumes like uchikake for Herodias in Salome (Fig. 78); however, female costumes for Herodias and Katisha look heavy and tight because of obis, many accessories, and layered kimonos. As Ricketts mentioned, his male costumes for Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah were also tight. One of reason why there was a difference of tightness between Ricketts’s costume and the haute couture fashion although both of them were inspired by kimonos is that Ricketts pursued the authentic way to wear kimonos while haute couture designers selected elements of kimonos which matched the loose-fitting fashion trend.

Compared with Katisha’s costume, Pooh-Bah’s costume is more graceful (Fig. 90). Pooh-Bah, who was the Lord High Everything Else, wore a sword at his side, an eboshi (a black hat), golden kariginu with folding fans patterns, and a long train, and green and gold trousers, or sashinuki.

Ricketts’s costume again drew on Japanese court clothing, its use of colour creating a luxurious atmosphere. In addition, the Lord High Executioner, Ko-Ko’s costume (Fig. 91, 92), which is simpler than Pooh-Bah’s, has eboshi, kariginu-like

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142 Kyoto Costume Institute ed., Modo no Japonisumu: Kimono kara Umareta Yutori no Bi [Japonisme in Fashion: Relaxing Beauty from Kimono], exh. cat. (Kyoto: Kyoto Costume Institute, 1994), 56, 108.
kimono, and sashinuki. It still remains in the V&A, and looking at the details, there are patterns of axes on the back of the black kimono, alluding to Ko-Ko’s job as an executioner. The set of Ko-Ko’s costumes also look Japanese. However, there are Western buttons and clasps, which audiences cannot see, around the green waistline of sashinuki, the costumes designed for authenticity, elegance, but also practicality.

Indeed, among the costumes, only the sandals are completely Western, since it was considered difficult for British makers to weave zouri, Japanese sandals, from straw or bamboo bark, and since it was tough for actors, who were unfamiliar with Japanese footwear, to perform in them. Zouri were, however, less conspicuous an element of Japanese costume, in London, than kimonos, so Ricketts may have conceded more easily.

In the V&A, the set of costumes for the Mikado (Fig. 93) also remains. These include pale yellow formal kimono accented by red with yellow and green flower patterns, similar to chrysanthemums, related to the Japanese Imperial family. The Mikado’s black formal hat is called kanmuri, and oikake, which are fan shape accessories, are attached around the ears. In reality, oikake were hat accessories for military officers of court nobles, so, for the Mikado, they were merely decorative, rather than historically authentic. Looking at the photography of the Mikado (Fig. 85), his kanmuri is more formal than eboshi, and it gives dignity to this role. The above male
costumes for *The Mikado* clarify that Ricketts closely examined fashion of various ranks of persons from the executioner to the Mikado.

Ricketts designed costumes for not only principals but also ensembles.

Bottomley highly praised *The Mikado*, discussing female chorus members:

*The Mikado* is, as a stage-picture, one of his greatest achievements; he brought to it, and put into it, an unrivalled knowledge of Japanese art and of the sources of its beauty, and produced something akin to the eighteenth-century masterpieces of Kiyonaga and Utamaro—a setting that is, in fact, too serious and intensive for the light burlesque masterpiece with which it has to run in harness; and that would more fittingly accompany the grave, haughty beauty of some *Samurai* legend. Nevertheless, to see it is an experience to treasure and desire anew; the opening of the first act, all jade and grey, to be suddenly enlivened by the radiant inclusion of butterfly school-girls, and the chorus of white and green and rose bridesmaids in a cherry garden at the opening of the second act seem, in remembrance, the loveliest sights ever seen on a stage—sufficient reason, in fact, for a deaf man to attend a performance of the operetta.144

All 12 costume designs for female chorus members remain in the V&A, with their different, elegant colours and patterns. According to a breakdown of the female costume cost, Ricketts designed 23 different costumes of female choruses, costing about £350.145

Bottomley also found elements of Kiyonaga and Utamaro in Ricketts’s design, as he had done in the design for *King Lear* in 1911, the chorus girls in *The Mikado* again recalling the beautiful women in ukiyo-e prints so loved by Ricketts. Looking at his

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144 Bottomley, "Charles Ricketts R.A." 394.
£350 in 1926 was about £21,878 in 2020. For the details, see Bank of England, "Inflation calculator."
costume designs for chorus girls (Fig. 94, 95), from the viewpoint of ukiyo-e prints, girls depicted in the designs strike a familiar pose, twisting their waist and neck and making streamlined body lines, similar to poses of women in ukiyo-e prints, especially bijin-ga. In addition, a girl in a red kimono (Fig. 95) ties an obi vertically. This Heijūrō musubi was popular in the middle of the Edo period among young ladies, as we can see from a Harunobu print (Fig. 96) in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection. In this print, a small maid on the right side puts on her obi tightened with Heijūrō musubi. However, Ricketts himself did not mention that The Mikado design was inspired by Kiyonaga and Utamaro:

I can show you two albums of picture post cards of famous Japanese actors, often in fine historical dresses. My collection of Japanese prints is without bearing on the period, circa 1700, to which I incline, owing to its unhackneyed appearance and gaiety of colour, I do not propose pedantic accuracy – this is impossible – but I would wish to convey the fresh, bright, heraldic colour & the modish forms of the screen painters of old Japan. I believe this would enchant the public.146

If Ricketts referred to his ukiyo-e prints collection, whose artists started their carrier after the middle of the 18th century, he also referred to postcards of Japanese actors in kimonos, a few of which remain in the British Library. Although there are no postcards of female roles, Ricketts would undoubtedly have possessed related images of various Japanese actors including female roles at that time because he wrote that he had two

146 Ricketts’s letter to D’Oyly Carte, 27 January 1926, Add MS 89231/6/235.
albums of postcards. Additionally, *Heijūrō musubi* was originated by Murayama Heijūrō who was a male kabuki actor who took female roles, therefore, there would be a postcard of a kabuki actor with *Heijūrō musubi*. Moreover, Ricketts referred to Japanese costumes in the specific period:

> The new dresses I have chosen belong to a period—about 1720—when the national costume was especially beautiful. The girls’ dresses, in particular, were very bright and gay. Therefore, there is nothing to lose by making the costumes conform to that period. Indeed, the increased artistic effect alone justifies the heavy expense.\(^\text{147}\)

Ricketts’s design target was around 1720 when the quality of *Yuzen*-style dyeing was improving in Japan, allowing Japanese people to depict exquisite colours and patterns on *kimonos*. When it came to *The Mikado*, Ricketts also seems to have referred to Japanese artworks in the British Museum. He saw Hart’s Japanese art collection in 1901 when the British Museum asked Ricketts to consult on it for their possible purchase, as mentioned in Chapter 1. In Hart’s collection, there are artworks depicting women and *kimonos* around 1720. *Sanjo Kantaro as a Girl Dancing* (Fig. 97) by Okumura Masanobu shows an actor playing a female role dancing in a *kimono*. The actor puts on a hat with flower decorations, called *hanagasa* used for festivals and dances, a similar hat found in Ricketts’s costume design for female chorus members (Fig. 94, 95).

Miyagawa Choshun’s *Courtesan* (Fig. 98) wears a complex, harmonious, vivid

yellow, red, black, and white *kimono* with colourful chrysanthemums, reeds and fishnet patterns. This is echoed in Ricketts’s *kimono* for chorus girls which have similarly elaborate patterns and colours. The British Museum possesses another Choshun’s artworks (Fig. 99) depicting people in *kimono* with various bright colours, a pair of handscrolls showing scenes of pleasure in Edo from the New Year to the early summer. In the second scroll, people dance in a circle under cherry blossoms. Among the dancers, women put on hats, twist their waists, and raise their arms. The British Museum purchased this artwork in 1881 from Anderson. Ricketts evidently admired this dancing scene, and adopted its expressions for his costume design.

Furthermore, around 1720 in Japan, Ricketts’s chosen period, was the moment when *Korin* patterns came into fashion. These are unique designs inspired by Korin’s artworks. In the Edo era, illustrated books of *kimono* designs were often published, books featuring *Korin* patterns, such as *Korin*-style water, chrysanthemums, pine trees, and cranes. For example, *Korin*-style Japanese simplified apricot blossoms appear in an illustrated book, *Hiinagata Someiro no Yama* (Fig. 100). In Ricketts’s costume designs (Fig. 94, 101), similar Japanese apricot blossoms appear on *kimono*, specifically, round apricot blossoms on a pale blue *kimono* (Fig. 101). Ricketts, who respected Korin, and painted a tiger inspired by Korin on Katisha’s costume, as we have seen, would create designs infused with Korin’s taste for chorus members’ *kimono*. In this way, Ricketts’s
costumes for chorus girls reveal how he used elements of Edo fashion for costumes around 1720. By contrast, Ricketts concentrated on traditional costumes for court nobles, when it came to the designs for the costumes of Katisha, Ko-Ko, and the Mikado. In both costume designs, chorus girls and court nobles, Ricketts maintained the beauty and authenticity supported by his knowledge of Japanese costumes.

There are comparatively few surviving materials relating to the set design of *The Mikado*. The set design for Ko-Ko’s Garden (Fig. 102) depicts a red humpback bridge, which has a big curve, willow trees, and a pond. On the stage, there are folding screens and female chorus members posed in the foreground (Fig. 103). This set design with a peaceful and bright atmosphere has a similar composition of Hokusai’s *Drum Bridge of Kameido Tenjin Shrine*, from the Ricketts and Shannon Collection (Fig. 104). Both of them feature a humpback bridge as the main topic.

In addition, Hiroshige’s *Wisteria at Kameido Tenjin Shrine* depicts a humpback bridge (Fig. 105). Its composition, with wisteria painted in the foreground of the bridge, is even more similar to Ricketts’s set design, with willow trees painted in the foreground of the bridge. Whilst this image was not in Ricketts and Shannon’s collection, it was part of the British Museum collection from 1906, meaning there is a high likelihood that Ricketts saw it, and he was inspired by Hokusai and Hiroshige’s

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148 Claude Monet built a humpback bridge inspired by *Wisteria at Kameido Tenjin Shrine* in his garden in Giverny. Monet painted the bridge and garden in his paintings, such as *The Water-Lily Pond* (1899).
prints.

Furthermore, there is another set design depicting a gate with a green roof and red pillars in the forest covered with snow (Fig. 106). This backdrop was placed behind walls and another gate on the stage (Fig. 107). Compared with the design of Ko-Ko’s Garden, this set design is more serious. Its serious atmosphere shares Hokusai’s Kanadehon Chushingura, Act II (Fig. 74), again from the Ricketts and Shannon collection, as mentioned in the previous section. Kanadehon Chushingura, Act II depicts a gate, walls and trees covered with snow, and Ricketts’s set design and this Hokusai’s print have much in common. Ricketts seems to have introduced elements of The Forty-Seven Ronins, which he could not design in the 1910s, into The Mikado.

Ricketts poured all his energy into designing The Mikado, and he had many promotional interviews before the opening on 20th September 1926. Ricketts showed his design drawings to the press, who praised them.149 However, there were some advanced reviews regarding costume designs which disappointed Ricketts:

Mr. Charles Ricketts, A.R.A., who has designed new scenery and dresses for the Gilbert and Sullivan autumn season to start at the Prince’s Theatre on Sept. 20, has provided a species of Oriental “Oxford bags” to be worn by male members of the chorus.150

The welcome reopening of the D’Oyly Carte season of Gilbert and Sullivan opera on the 20th suggests itself as an opportunity for starting what will be a

149 Ricketts, Self-Portrait, Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 27 October 1926, 369.
novel, and might be a most intellectual contest: the casting of these operas with present-day celebrities or notorieties. *The Mikado* is full of possibilities for those with literary leanings to enter a competish for the best description of who Pooh-Bah, for instance, most resembles in the characters who tread the stage of modern life, perhaps very deftly, perhaps with a ponderosity which is simply soul-searing! […] Hamlet has been done in plus-fours, and Oxford bags used by ineffable young men and Bright Young Persons—so why should not some of Gilbert’s heroes and heroines be fitted to modern and actual personalities?  

The above articles devote the great attention to *The Mikado*; however, the press wrote as if Western elements would appear in costumes, such as plus-fours and Oxford bags.  

Ricketts challenged these misunderstandings in an article for *Daily Mail* on 18th September, revealing his own opinion about *The Mikado*:

The original setting of “The Mikado” contains nothing which it is essential to preserve. The piece was staged in a great hurry at its first appearance, and the dressing of it was given into the hands of a costumier who was told to do the best he could. Little was known at the time about Japanese dress, and the result was a production in which the costumes looked like kimonos. “The Mikado,” of course, is not meant to be a true picture of Japanese life. It is a fairy-tale, in which, half the time, Gilbert is laughing at his own country.  

Many Japanese resent a parody in which their national dress is made to look like a collection of dressing-gowns. Their Mikado, too, is semi-sacred to them. In the new version the actor playing that part will appear in the costume of a prince of high rank, but without Imperial heraldry. During a visit of the Japanese Heir-Apparent, the Home Secretary objected to the opera because he considered it might give offence. By correcting the costumes, we are making a long overdue gesture of courtesy to a friendly nation.  

The Gentlemen of Japan appear now in Court costume, but with fictitious banners and heraldry. Katisha’s dress, conforming to the historic mode, is elaborate in the extreme, with sleeves wider than present-day dresses. In my opinion this type of Court dress is one of the most beautiful ever invented.

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151 *Tatler*, “Picture in the Fire,” editorial, September 15, 1926, iv.
Current reports about “Oxford Bags” and “Plus Fours” are entirely erroneous. No European element is being introduced. The breeches referred to are more like divided skirts than trousers, and were in common use thirty years ago. Many of the dresses copied have remained in fashion for centuries —some were used before the Norman Conquest.152

Ricketts here criticises the first performance design in 1885 for its lack of knowledge of Japanese culture. Looking at the costumes of the original production for the Mikado and for a Japanese Gentleman (Fig. 108, 109), we can see that the original production employed Japanese fabric provided by Liberty.153 However, against the luxurious fabric and the characters of high rank, these two costumes do not have hakama, pleated trousers, and their way of wearing kimonos are too casual, with Ricketts comparing them to “a collection of dressing-gowns.” Specifically, a Japanese Gentleman (Fig. 109) tightened an obi on his front, and wore a light blue cloth around his neck to decorate a neckband. Although the fabrics are beautiful, these costumes are far from true Japanese kimonos. By contrast, Ricketts’s costumes were more authentic and respectful than the original production’s costumes. Therefore, he could not tolerate a groundless rumour which Western items would appear in the repeat performance because it did not respect Japanese tradition and Ricketts’s elaborate work which he proudly believed The Mikado

152 Ricketts, "Why I Redressed The Mikado."
in 1926 was the best Japanese-style production in England.

In addition, as Ricketts wrote that “Gilbert is laughing at his own country” in the above article, he understood that The Mikado itself was a comedy about Britain.

Regarding the costume for the first performance of The Mikado in 1885, Tawata Shintaryo argues that the original production costume design might have been intentionally made to look similar to Tudor British aristocrat’s garments so that the audience could understand that the play was a comedy about Britain set in “never-never-Japan.”

Compared with costumes for the first production, there may be a possibility that Ricketts’s enthusiasm for the authentic representation of Japan in his costume design ironically might have given the audience the impression that the story itself was based on Japan. However, D'Oyly Carte wrote that Ricketts’s costume distinguished Japanese actual persons from characters in The Mikado, and he also emphasised that it was obvious that the storyline of The Mikado described Britain:

Mr. Ricketts, who has a great knowledge of Japan, designed the Mikado’s dress on the lines of a great noble and particularly avoided any close resemblance to the actual costume worn by the Emperor of Japan.

No doubt you realise that all the characters in The Mikado are clearly English and the opera has no relation at all to Japan except in the setting.

Ricketts, who had respect for Japan, avoided close resemblance to an actual costume by an actual person, and D'Oyly Carte did not consider that Ricketts’s costume led the
audience to misunderstand real Japan. In fact, he did not use the actual Japanese imperial family crest in his costume design for the Mikado (Fig. 93) although he applied the authentic court nobles garment design to its costume. This fact shows that Ricketts tried to make his costume compatible between the authenticity of his costume design and the characteristics of the story, which was fiction. Ricketts himself did not have any concern or dilemma about the possibility of misunderstandings of actual Japan caused by his design, and looking at reviews of The Mikado, theatre critics and reporters also did not mention that Ricketts’s costumes led to the misunderstandings.

Contrary to disquieting advance reviews, the opening reviews viewed The Mikado in a favourable light. Ricketts expressed his delight in his letter to Bottomley:

In the Mikado everything turned out perfectly in execution, the dresses being the most successful I have had so far done. [...] The house on the first night, and the public since, have been enthusiastic.\textsuperscript{156}

Ricketts was understandably pleased and relieved, after so much misfortune, finally achieving a great success not only in the field of stage design but also in his long career as an artist. Not everyone was persuaded, however. Bottomley wrote about some audience’s opinions on Ricketts’s design:

re-dressing of “the Mikado” in eighteenth-century Japanese costume caused considerable controversy among those who hated to see the sacred canon of Gilbert and Sullivan disturbed by so much as the change on a headdress.

\textsuperscript{156} Ricketts, Self-Portrait, Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 27 October 1926, 368-369.
There was perhaps some reason in this objection, for the very accuracy of Ricketts’ costumes, and the delicate beauty of their colour, made them perhaps less suitable to the characters in what is, after all, a burlesque, than the costumes they replaced. The comic quality of “The Mikado” (if any change in the traditional presentation is to be made) is what should be emphasized.\(^{157}\)

Bottomley explained that authenticity of Ricketts’s design had the exact opposite effect among fans of Gilbert and Sullivan’s works. Even if Ricketts’s design was a bit ill-judged and humourless, Ricketts had loyalty to Japanese culture rather than to mid-Victorian Japonisme promoted by Gilbert and Sullivan. However, supporters of Ricketts’s design were predominant over objectors at that time:

New ground was broken last night. Instead of the usual rather commonplace costumes and scenery entirely new designs of old Japan were provided by Mr. Charles Ricketts A.R.A., enhancing the value of the production.\(^{158}\)

Nevertheless, despite these outspoken criticisms on the part of a minority, I think the production may be counted a triumph for Mr. Ricketts. The artist had “let himself go” on the costumes of Poo-bah and Katisha, and the rest of the company, very properly, made a semi-subdued background for these resplendent characters.\(^{159}\)

When the curtain rose on “The Mikado” as re-dressed by Charles Ricketts A.R.A., the audience gasped. There was some tittering. Then a burst of applause made it plain that the Ayes had it. As a matter of fact, “The Mikado” slipped as easily into his new clothes as “Hamlet” did.\(^{160}\)

\(^{159}\) "A Real Triumph," editorial, Lancashire Evening Post, September 22, 1926, 4.
In this way, Ricketts’s designs, especially of costumes, acquired favourable responses, and the costumes were repeatedly re-used until the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company dissolved in the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{161} The design of \textit{The Mikado}, into which Ricketts introduced his knowledge of Japanese art, became his most famous work, as well as a notable Japonisme theatrical work in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

In 1926, Ricketts designed another production, \textit{Macbeth} (1606) which opened in London three months after \textit{The Mikado}. He regretted that he had declined the commission of \textit{Macbeth} in 1911, and he wanted a second chance.\textsuperscript{162} As cited above, he had an ambition to be asked to design \textit{Macbeth} for Japan.\textsuperscript{163} Whilst he was never approached for such a production, there are several hidden Japanese elements in \textit{Macbeth} like his design of \textit{The Merchant of Venice}.

The designs fuse ancient and exotic worlds, with specific costumes again possessing Japanese elements. For example, the green and white costume for Duncan (Fig. 110) resembles a formal \textit{kimono} style for \textit{samurai}, \textit{kamishimo}, which is an ensemble of a broad-shouldered waistcoat and long pleated trousers, like Shylock’s costume (Fig. 82). Whist Duncan’s crown is Western, his trailing long white cloak is more Japanese, with the pooled train of a \textit{kimono}. The costume for Lady Macbeth (Fig. 111), meanwhile, includes a wide gold belt, similar to a female \textit{obi}, a sash worn with

\textsuperscript{161} Delaney, \textit{Charles Ricketts: A Biography}, 352.
\textsuperscript{162} Ricketts, Self-\textit{Portrait}, 171.
\textsuperscript{163} Ricketts’s letter to Bottomley, 4 February 1912, Add MS 88957/1/75, fol. 34r.
In both costumes, Ricketts employed Japanese elements to accentuate the high-class atmosphere of his regal characters. In addition, Ricketts might again have nodded back to the performance of *The Shogun* he saw in 1901 performed by Yacco and Kawakami, which reminded him of *Macbeth*. Ricketts’s costume design for *Macbeth* was reproduced in *The Observer* in December 1926 (Fig. 112). Ricketts’s design is characteristically cosmopolitan, making it difficult for audiences to identify from which period and place these costumes come, the artist’s Japonisme, however, again central to the mix.

Ricketts worked as a theatre designer until 1931, the year he passed away, deploying his knowledge of both ukiyo-e prints and Japanese traditional theatre arts, and playing a vital role in early-20th-century Japonisme. The prodigious Ricketts produced various kinds of art, specifically, as an artistic Japonist, employing Japanese art most carefully for his theatrical design. He also tried to spread the knowledge of Japanese traditional theatrical arts, kabuki and noh around his art circle in Britain. It is also notable that Ricketts designed authentic Japanese male costumes for various productions and came up with masculine stage sets for *The Forty-Seven Ronins* and *The Mikado* in contrast to stereotypical Japonisme plays in the 19th century-Britain along with...
with *geishas*, and he brought the new aspect of Japonisme in theatrical arts. His knowledge of Japanese art and pride as a Japonist bloomed in the design of *The Mikado*.

In contrast, his sculptures, paintings, and book designs are less invested. After much bad luck, Ricketts’s design of *The Mikado* brought him success and improved the quality and authenticity of the early-20th century British Japonisme.

Interactions between Ricketts’s art and Japanese art brought mutual benefit to Ricketts and British Japonisme, and to Japanese performers in London, who had inspired Ricketts and been inspired by him. The Japonisme of Ricketts’s paintings and book designs, by contrast, is second hand, as well as second generational, indebted rather than progressive.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored in unprecedented detail the relationship between Ricketts and Japan, emphasising how the artist was a transitional figure, between nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japonists, and a vital Japonist of the second generation in London. I have regarded Ricketts as a versatile Japonist: a Collector, Scholar, and Artist, who contributed in very significant and long-lasting ways to the British understanding of Japan in multiple media the period from the 1880s to the 1930s, and up to the present day.

Exploring Ricketts and his partner Shannon’s art collecting and exhibiting activities, and their bequest of the collection to museums, I have indicated the significance of their Japanese art collection and their uniqueness as Japanese art collectors and connoisseurs in London, and I have clarified the role of Ricketts as a collector Japonist to the extant canon of Japanese art.

Ricketts and Shannon started jointly to collect Japanese artefacts, specifically ukiyo-e prints by Hokusai, Utamaro, and Harunobu in the 1880s, emerging as leading collectors around 1900. At the same time, Ricketts established his reputation as a Japanese art connoisseur. Ricketts and Shannon also exhibited their Japanese art collection in London and Paris, revealing their collection to large, diverse public. In the
end, they collected over 300 Japanese artworks, which they bequeathed to the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, establishing a British Japanese canon including Hokusai’s famous *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* series and *Tour of Waterfalls in Various Provinces* series.

The bequest to the Fitzwilliam Museum also includes less well-known Japanese drawings: drawings by the Hokusai school artists and Hokusai’s precious preparatory drawing of *Sakyô no dayû Michimasa* from the series of *One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets, Explained by the Nurse*. Japanese and British scholarly understanding of Japanese art and sense of what constitutes a Japanese canon owes much, as we have seen, to Ricketts’s pioneering legacy.

In addition, I have revealed Ricketts’s cultural interaction with Japanese people in London. Although he never travelled to Japan, early 20th-century London was a cosmopolitan city, and Ricketts had various opportunities to interact with Japanese intellectuals. For example, Ricketts developed his taste for things Japanese in part from Kohitsu, with whom he dined as well as talked art. In addition, Ricketts sold his painting to Matsukata, who exhibited it in Japan.

Some of Ricketts’s Japanese acquaintances and friends subsequently wrote about him, and I have explored, for the first time, books and articles related to Ricketts in Japanese, suggesting a two-way exchange between Britain and Japan, rather than just
the more stereotyped story of the European reception of Japanese art, the standard theme of much European Japonisme studies. Noguchi wrote that he admired Ricketts’s strong attachment to Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e prints and Korin. Yashiro penned a poignant obituary to Ricketts, expressing his gratitude to Ricketts for respecting Japanese art.

In these cosmopolitan surroundings, Ricketts’s interest in Japanese art developed, and he wrote Japanese art criticism. Japanese art studies in Britain had begun flourishing from the late 19th century, with works by notable Japanese art scholars, Goncourt, Anderson, Morrison, Binyon, and Strange stimulating Ricketts. Through an analysis of Ricketts’s articles on Utamaro and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, I have revealed the particular character of his Japonisme, his aesthetic subjectivity, and frequent use of comparisons between Japanese and European art, especially ancient and early modern. Again, some Japanese people knew and valued Ricketts’s work, and I have paid attention to the existence of the unfinished Japanese translation of Ricketts’s *Outamaro* by Uemura.

Unfortunately, Ricketts’s Japanese art criticism did not have enough academic credibility, and as a scholarly Japonist, Ricketts did not achieve a great success. However, his enthusiasm for Korin inspired Noguchi, Ricketts wrote articles on Utamaro at the very early stage of Japanese studies in Britain, and he documented his
real as well as published views regarding the Japan-British Exhibition, enabling us to
detect key differences between his public and private personae.

In addition, the thesis clarifies the active role Ricketts played as an artistic
Japonist. He dealt with a wide variety of art forms: theatre design, book design,
paintings, and sculpture. Ricketts designed many of Wilde’s books, and his design for
*The Sphinx* is not only his best book design but his most Japonist. In addition, when it
came to his book design and paintings, Ricketts was inspired by Rossetti and Moreau,
key first generation Japonists, bequeathing an indirect Japonisme in Ricketts’s artworks.

When it came to theatre design, Ricketts was famous but not always successful. In
London, he interacted with Japanese dancer Itō, and exchanged letters with Sickert. Itō
and Sickert aroused Ricketts’s interest in kabuki and noh plays. Ricketts also saw
performances by Japanese actress Sada Yacco, which he found tremendously evocative.
Through these experiences, Ricketts developed his desire to adopt Japanese art in his
theatre design. At first, he attempted to design productions for Japan: *King Lear, The
Forty-Seven Ronins* and *Salome*. However, these productions were unperformed.
Ricketts’s theatre designs with Japanese inspirations did, however, finally see the light
of day in *The Merchant of Venice, The Mikado*, and *Macbeth*. I have examined Japanese
elements in each production, specifically, *The Mikado*, which was Ricketts’s great
success, and showed the strongest inspiration from Japanese art among his artworks.
Through my examination, I have shown that Ricketts introduced his knowledge and experience of Japanese art into his artworks as an artist, scholar, and collector Japonist, using Japanese art to suggest parallels between ancient Greek and early modern British and Japanese cultures, and seeking, perhaps paradoxically, to employ more serious and genuine Japanese sources for *The Mikado*, rejecting the *kimono geisha* cliches of the first generation of Japonists in favour of something more masculine, philosophical, tragic, and modernist.

Ricketts was like a kaleidoscope because of his versatility. However, in my thesis, I have looked at Ricketts primarily through a lens of Japonisme, and I have demonstrated Ricketts’s clear place as a leading Japonist from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Ricketts was the embodiment of the second generation of British Japonisme, one with as much significance, perhaps, as the better-known Pound or Yeats.

My thesis has consistently focused on Ricketts as a Japonist. In my thesis, Shannon was a key partner for collecting Japanese artefacts with Ricketts jointly. In fact, when I visited the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2019, the two portraits of Ricketts and Shannon painted by Shannon were exhibited next to each other. As mentioned in the introduction, in 2022 the Suntory Museum of Art held an exhibition, *Hokusai from the British Museum* which picked up on Shannon as one of notable
Japanese art collectors in Britain. However, at present, Shannon’s part in this story remains under-researched. Shannon is also a forgotten artist and Japonist.

There are also other forgotten people of Ricketts’s generation whom it would be productive to examine from the viewpoint of British Japonisme. Ricketts’s friends, Bottomley and Rothenstein, who I mentioned in Chapter 1, were also important figures who collected Japanese artefacts. In addition, Charles Holmes, who appeared in Chapter 2, published *Hokusai*, and Oswald Sickert, who appeared in Chapter 3, wrote a key joint correspondence with Ricketts. Returning Shannon and other Ricketts’s friends to the centre stage would broaden the horizon of British art and Japonisme in the early 20th century, and emphasise the importance of visual artists to complement the more developed scholarship on literary Japonists of this period.

Finally, whilst I have investigated Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese art collection, other parts of their collection require similar analysis, such as their close-related India, Chinese, and Middle-Eastern artefacts. Although the number of these artefacts is fewer, integrating all Ricketts and Shannon’s Japanese, ancient Greek, Indian, Chinese, and Middle-Eastern interests into a whole cosmopolitan collection would help both specify the singularity of the Japanese material, and reveal and broader Orientalism of which it was a part.
Appendices

(Appendix 1)

DRAWINGS & WATERCOLORS
by HOK'SAÏ
1. Study page.
2. Tiger caught in a waterfall.
   (Great study published in the Mangwa).
3. Repetition in a small format of the same subject.
   (Sketch for the Mangwa).
5. Study in colour for the same subject.
6. Big sketch for the same subject.
7. Study for the same subject.
8. Fabulous lion.
   (Watercolour).
9. Landscape in the style of Seshiu.
   (Watercolour).
10. Fuji seen behind the trunk of a tree.
   (Watercolour).
11. Cascade.
12. Apparition holding a sword.
13. Shinsi-Shoki killing a demon.
   (Watercolour).
   (Watercolour).
15. Great study for a legendary figure.
16. Legendary figure.
   (Watercolour).
17. Meditation warrior leaning on his spear.
18. Juggler.
19. Ito-Soda wins the Monster Cat.
20. Two monsters appearing to a woman.
21. Yoshitsune and Benkei. 
22. Yoshitsune giving his share of food to Benkei. 
29. Demon. 
30. Hotéi. 
   (Watercolour). 
31. Temple guardian. 
   (Study for a figure of the Mangwa). 
32. Bronze. 
   (Study for a figure of the Mangwa). 
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33. Warrior on the lookout. 
34. Study of rat, weasel and peasant. 
35. Chinese poetry. 
36. Study for Chinese poets. 
37. Creeping man. 
38. Guard. 
40. Chinese half-god. 
41. Fan. 
42. Screen. 
43. Study of a legendary lion. 

DRAWINGS & WATERCOLORS 
by HOKKEÏ 
25. Mother and child. 
27. Bird study. 
   (Watercolour).
Yashiro Yukio (1890-1975) was an art historian and art critic, perhaps most relevant in this context as the author of *Sandro Botticelli* (London, 1925), which was criticized by Roger Fry. Yukio accompanied Matsukata Kojirō’s on his journey to Europe to collect paintings in Paris and London from 1921. In London, he met Ricketts and Shannon through Laurence Binyon, and they became friends.\(^1\) *Bijutsu Kenkyu* was launched in 1932 by the Art Institute where Yashiro worked as a chief of staff.


**The Death of the Great Painter, Mr. Ricketts**

Charles Ricketts, R.A. passed away in London on \(^2\)7th October. We sorrow for his death not only because of a loss of a leading painter, critic, theatre designer, and book designer in Britain, but also of a good friend of Japan who appreciated, loved, and collected Japanese art. When the Japan-British Exhibition took place in London in the 43\(^{rd}\) year of Meiji, \(^3\) Japan sent, amongst others, to the exhibition Masaki, \(^4\) who is now

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\(^2\) Ricketts passed away in 1931. Volume 1 of *Bijutsu Kenkyu* was published in January 1932.

\(^3\) The 43rd year of Meiji is 1910.
the head of Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Mizoguchi, and the chief of the art section of the Tokyo Imperial Museum. Looking back on it now, Japan took surprisingly many important old artefacts to Britain. Mr. Ricketts was one of the visitors who was deeply impressed by Japanese art at that time. After that, he consistently believed in the excellence of Japanese art, and he frequently wrote and talked in support of it. In recent years, Chinese art is in fashion in the West, and this trend drove Japanese art into a tight corner. However, Mr. Ricketts maintained Japanese art’s superiority even while he was fully aware of Chinese art’s excellence. As a painter, Mr. Ricketts was a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, and, as an art critic, had such a reputation that he was a strong candidate to become director of the National Gallery in his later years. It was, greatly fortunate for Japanese art that Mr. Ricketts always had a good understanding of Japan humbly. I think that we, Japanese people, should be grateful to Mr. Ricketts.

Mr. Ricketts produced great paintings using subjects of tragic literature. However, he was more famous as a theatrical designer than as a painter. A prime example of his theatre design works is his costume and scenery design for Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923), and regarding this, there is a splendid publication of an edition deluxe. Furthermore, it is certain that Mr. Ricketts was a master of book and

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4 Masaki Naohiko was the 5th head of Tokyo School of Fine Arts from 1901 to 1932.
5 Mizoguchi Teijiro was the chief of the art section of the Tokyo Imperial Museum from 1915 to his death in 1945.
type design as his works at the Ballantyne Press were equally matched with William Morris’s Kelmscott Press briefly. Also, I recommend *Pages on Art* and *Titian* by Mr. Ricketts to people who wish to understand his art criticism.

Mr. Ricketts had a close relationship with Mr. Charles Shannon, who, from a young age, was a great painter in Britain as a Royal Academician. They always lived together in a house, and it is well known in British painting circles that there was a period which they lived in Whistler’s former house. French painter, Jacques-Émile Blanche depicted and put side by side Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Shannon in one portrait.  

Both Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Shannon were eccentric persons. They remained bachelors throughout their life, and they enjoyed jointly collecting old artefacts. Their last house was Townsend House, which was architecturally impressive, their big studio and museum. In Europe, they were also leading collectors of Egyptian and Greek masterpieces and first-class sketches by Raphael and other Renaissance artists. They were also leading collectors of ukiyo-e prints in Japan, especially, ukiyo-e prints by Harunobu, Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige, and many picture books. Additionally, they had a folding screen from the Momoyama era, and so on.  

I am worried about where these rich art collections are going from now on.

In this way, we mourn the death of Mr. Ricketts in various aspects. Those who

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7 Jacques-Émile Blanche, *Charles Shannon and Charles Ricketts*, 1904, Oil on canvas, 92.1 x 73 cm, Tate, London, Bequeathed by Charles Shannon in 1937.

8 The Momoyama era is from the end of 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century in Japan.
know Mr. Ricketts’s witty, cultured conversation will feel sad about a London art world without Mr. Ricketts, specifically, in terms of the loss of the best friend of Japanese art.
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Komeima, Yukiko, and Sasai Kei. "19seiki Kohan no Igirisu Engeki ni Miru Nihon no Fukushoku [Japanese Costumes in British Musical Comedies in the Late 19th


Lacambre, Genevieve. “Les milieu japonisants à Paris, 1860-1880.” In Japonisme in


(Table 1) Details of eighty-two works from the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection at the Fair Women Exhibition in 1909

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitagawa Utamaro</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki Harunobu</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsukawa Shunshō</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chōbunsai Eishi</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoda Koryūsai</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitagawa Utamaro the Second</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsushika Hokusai</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torii Kiyonaga</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yashima Gakutei</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ukiyo-e Print</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Katsushika Hokusai          | 4      |
| Teisai Hokuba               | 1      |
| Totoya Hokkei               | 1      |
| **Drawing**                 | **6**  |

| Katsushika Hokusai          | 2      |
| **Watercolour [Ink Painting]** | **2**  |

| Harunobu School             | 1      |
| **Painting**                | **1**  |

| **Total**                   | **82** |
(Table 2) The number of artists in the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection at the British Museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎) (1760-1849)</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitagawa Utamaro (喜多川歌麿) (1753-1806)</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信) (1725-1770)</td>
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<td>School of/style of: Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utagawa Hiroshige (歌川広重) (1797-1858)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yashima Gakutei (八島岳亭) (1786?–1868)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chobunsai Eishi (鳥文斎栄之) (1756-1829)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After: Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totoya Hokkei (魚屋北渓) (1780-1850)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoda Koryusai (磯田湖龍齋) (1735-1790?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attributed to: Katsushika Hokusai</td>
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<td>Kitagawa Utamaro II (Unknown)</td>
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<td>Kondo Katsunobu (近藤勝信) (Unknown)</td>
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<td>Ochiai Yoshiiku (落合芳幾) (1833-1904)</td>
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<td>Ryuryukyo Shinsai (柳々居辰斎) (Unknown)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of/style of: Oguri Sotan (小栗宗湛) (1413-1481)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of/style of: Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shiba Kokan (司馬江漢) (1747-1818)</td>
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<td>Shibata Zeshin (柴田是眞) (1807-1891)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takagi Sadate (高木貞武) (Unknown)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takashima Chiharu (高島千春) (1777-1859)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torii Kiyoshige (鳥居清重) (Unknown)</td>
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(Table 3) Production dates of artists in the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection at the British Museum

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<td>1760s</td>
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<td>1790s</td>
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<td>1800s</td>
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<tr>
<td>1810s</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820s</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830s</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>332</strong></td>
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Table 4: Series of ukiyo-e prints in the Ricketts and Shannon Japanese Art Collection at the British Museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Series)</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fugaku sanjurokkei (Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shokoku meikyo kiran (Wondrous Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsushika Nijushi-Sho (Twenty-four Generals for the Katsushika Circle)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokaido Gojusan-tsugi no uchi (The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shokoku taki-meguri (Tour of Waterfalls in Various Provinces)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuzoku bijin tokei ( Customs of Beauties Around the Clock)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyakunin  isshu uba ga etoki</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokaido gojusan-tsugi (Fifty-three Stations on the Tokaido)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toto Meisho</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanadehon Chushingura (The Forty-seven Loyal Retainers)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Sekkagetsu (Snow, Flower and Moon)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furyu Ko-Dakara Awase</td>
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<td>Mu-Tamagawa</td>
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<tr>
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