



The Asiatic Society of Japan

Honorary Patron: H.I.H. Princess Takamado

Cooperative Science and Research Body of the Science Council of Japan

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Bulletin No. 1

January 2017

This Bulletin includes announcements of the Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February. Please kindly note that there will be no Meeting in January.

February Meeting: Monday, February 6th at 6:30 p.m.
Speaker and Subject: The Special Guest Lecturer and Subject will be announced on the evening of the AGM. We remain most grateful for your kind understanding and patience.
Venue: The Embassy of Mexico

Please note that attendance of the AGM is possible by prior application only. Please direct applications to attend via email to info@asjapan.org, or via fax to the Society's fax number as stated above.

Please kindly note that the application period will commence upon the date of receipt of this Bulletin, and will close on **Tuesday, January 17th, 2017**. We would respectfully ask Members to submit their applications early to avoid disappointment.

Payment of Membership Dues

May we remind Members who have not yet renewed their Asiatic Society of Japan membership for 2017 to do so by remitting the subscription amount to our account, the particulars of which are as follows:

- Postal transfer to Japan Postal Account No. 00120-0-167991.
- Bank transfer to Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Aoyama-dori Branch, Ordinary Account No. 1048353.
- Payment is also possible by U.S. dollar cheque.

May we also remind Members of the annual Membership Rates:

Regular	11,000 yen
Sustaining	16,000 yen and upwards
Institutional	20,000 yen
Spouse	4,000 yen
Student	3,000 yen

Exhibitions

Complimentary tickets to, and leaflets for, the following exhibitions were made available at the December meeting, and we would like to express our appreciation to the donors.

Complimentary tickets & leaflets:

- 1) "Ceramics Japan: Tracing Japanese Modern through Ceramics" at the Shoto Museum of Art, December 13th - January 29th 2017

Discounted tickets and leaflets:

- 2) "The Special Exhibition of Netsuke Art by Motomasa Kurita" at the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum, December 1st - 29th
- 3) "Endless: The Paintings of Yamada Masaaki" at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, December 6th - February 12th 2017
- 4) "Definitive Nihonga Masterpieces: The Kyoto Art World - 19th Century to Contemporary Paintings" at the Yamatane Museum of Art, December 10th - February 5th 2017

Leaflets:

- 5) "Joint Thematic Exhibition with the Shanghai Museum" at the Tokyo National Museum, April 12th - February 26th 2017
- 6) "The Universe and Art" at the Mori Art Museum, July 30th - January 9th 2017
- 7) "Jakuchu & Buson" at the Okada Museum of Art, September 5th - December 18th
- 8) "Art Deco and the Former Prince Asaka Residence" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, September 22nd - December 25th
- 9) "Toguri Collection 1984/1985 – Revival" at the Toguri Museum of Art, October 4th - December 23rd
- 10) "Detroit Institute of Arts Exhibition" at the Ueno Royal Museum, October 7th - January 21st 2017
- 11) "Van Gogh and Gauguin" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, October 8th - December 18th
- 12) "Lucas Cranach the Elder" at the National Museum of Western Art, October 15th - January 15th 2017
- 13) "Sengai World" at the Eisei Bunko Museum, October 15th - January 29th 2017
- 14) "Bonjour Monsieur Renoir - Renoir Umehara - Joie de Peindre" at the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, October 19th - January 9th 2017
- 15) "Marie-Antoinette" at the Mori Arts Center Gallery, October 25th - February 26th 2017
- 16) "Lascaux" at the National Science Museum, November 1st - February 19th 2017
- 17) "Maruyama Okyo" at the Nezu Museum, November 3rd - December 18th
- 18) "Life of Bunjin: The Art World of Urakami Gyokudo and his Sons, Shunken and Shukin", Chiba City Museum of Art, November 10th - December 18th
- 19) "The Form of Kana" at the Idemitsu Museum of Arts, November 19th - December 18th
- 20) "1935-1937: Seeking the Real in the Dark" at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, November 22nd - February 12th
- 21) "A Century of Dreams of War Time" at the Edo-Tokyo Museum, November 23rd - January 29th 2017
- 22) "Special Exhibition: Northern Song Ru Ware Narcissus Basins - Treasured Masterpieces from the National Palace Museum, Taipei" at the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka, December 10th - March 26th 2017
- 23) "Kogei (Modern Crafts) and the Tea Ceremony II from the Museum Collection", at the Crafts Gallery, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, December 17th – February 19th 2017
- 24) "The People by Kishin" at the Yokohama Museum of Art, January 4th - February 28th 2017
- 25) "Sometsuke: Celebrating Four Centuries of Japanese Porcelain" at the Nezu Museum, January 7th - February 19th 2017
- 26) "The Romanov Dynasty" at the Toyo Bunko Museum, January 7th - April 9th 2017
- 27) "Matisse et Rouault" at the Shiodome Museum, January 14th - March 26th 2017
- 28) "Eternal Treasures from the Kasugataisha Shrine" at the Tokyo National Museum, January 17th - March 12th 2017

- 29) "Netsuke" at the Mitaka City Gallery of Art, January 14th - March 20th 2017
- 30) "Namikawa Yasuyuki and Japanese Cloisonne" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, January 14th - April 9th 2017
- 31) "Perfect Guide to Japanese Sword" at the Seikado Bunko Art Museum, January 21st - March 20th 2017
- 33) "Titian and the Renaissance in Venice" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, January 21st - April 2nd 2017
- 34) "Ceramics from Europe and Glass from Around the World" at the Suntory Museum of Art, January 25th - March 12th 2017
- 35) "Orsay Nabis" at the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo, February 4th - May 21st 2017
- 36) "Yayoi Kusama: My Eternal Soul" at the National Art Center, Tokyo, February 22nd - May 22nd 2017
- 37) "The Israel Goldman Collection: This is Kyosai!" at the Bunkamura Museum, February 23rd - April 16th 2017
- 38) "Théodore Chassériau" at the National Museum of Western Art, February 28th - May 28th 2017
- 39) "Alfons Mucha" at the National Art Center, Tokyo, March 8th - June 5th 2017
- 40) "Old Masters from the State Hermitage Museum" at the Mori Arts Center Gallery, March 18th - June 18th 2017
- 41) "Session" at the University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, March 28th - May 21st 2017
- 42) "Chanogu - The Arts of Tea Ceremony, The Essence of Japan" at the Tokyo National Museum, April 11th - June 4th 2017
- 43) "Babel" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, April 18th - July 2nd
- 44) "Sakamoto Ryoma: Japan's Favorite Hero" at the Edo Tokyo Museum, April 29th - June 18th
- 45) "Unkei - The Great Master of Buddhist Sculpture" at the Tokyo National Museum, September 26th - November 26th 2017

December Meeting

Title: "The Art of Friendship at the Chester Beatty Library: Celebrating 60 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Ireland and Japan"

Speaker: Dr. Mary Redfern (Curator of the East Asian Collections, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin)

Dr. Mary Redfern's Lecture, within the beautiful surroundings of the Residence of the Ambassador of Ireland, fell upon the eve of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Japan which will take place in 2017. This anniversary was also the perfect opportunity for the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin to organize a special exhibition drawing upon its permanent collection of Japanese art. Relations between the two nations began with an exchange of letters, when in 1957 the Ambassador of Japan to the United Kingdom wrote to the Ambassador of Ireland to the United Kingdom, proposing to set up diplomatic missions at a ministerial level. It thus seems perfectly fitting that the Chester Beatty Library's exhibition will focus upon *surimono*. Privately commissioned and elegantly designed prints that often include poetry, these products of collaboration and embodiments of goodwill were exchanged between friends on auspicious occasions such as the New Year.

Dr. Redfern began with a brief outline of the history of the Chester Beatty Library, which first opened to the public in 1954 and in the year 2000 moved to its present location within the grounds of Dublin Castle. The Library's collection focuses upon rare books, manuscripts and painted scrolls from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, the great majority of which were collected by the Library's founder Sir Alfred Chester Beatty.

Alfred Chester Beatty was born in New York in 1875, and studied mining at Columbia University. He then joined a working mine before rising up through the ranks to develop an international reputation as a mining engineer and consultant. Shortly after the death of his first wife in 1911, Beatty moved with his children to

London, where he established the mining firm Selection Trust. Beatty became known as a collector of Western manuscripts, but from 1914 he was impelled to begin collecting Qur'ans, after travelling with his new wife to Egypt, where the climate was beneficial for his health. Three years later, in 1917, Beatty travelled for the first time to China and Japan: a voyage that had a major impact on the scale and pace of Beatty's collecting of East Asian art.

Beatty moved to Dublin in 1950 following his retirement. He took his collection with him and in 1953 built a library on Dublin's outskirts, which opened to the public in 1954. Upon Beatty's death in 1968 the Library was bequeathed in trust to the people of Ireland.

Some thirty years later, the decision was taken to relocate the Library to its current location within the grounds of Dublin Castle in the heart of the city. This has had a dramatic effect upon its nature as an institution. A functioning museum with permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, a lecture theatre, a café, a reading room and a conservation studio, today the Library runs a busy public programme of events and exhibitions. Since the Library relocated in 2000, visitor numbers have risen sharply: from just over 6,000 in 1998 before the move, to approximately 350,000 in 2015.

Within its two permanent exhibition galleries, the Library is able to display only a tiny percentage of its Japanese collection (which includes approximately 1800 works) on a rotating basis. Its incredible depth of variety includes paintings and manuscripts, Buddhist texts, portable shrines, ukiyo-e prints and printed books, *surimono* prints, netsuke, inrō and tsuba. Dr. Redfern stressed that the numbers alone cannot convey the beauty and wonder of working with the collections. The objects all embody both the quality for which Beatty carefully selected his collection and his own tastes as an individual collector.

Literally meaning 'printed things', *surimono* may be considered the acme of Japanese print-making. They are breathtakingly accomplished technically and often include metallic powders, rich colouring and *gauffrage*, or embossing. The Library's special exhibition of these works in 2017 will run from 3rd March to 27th August, and will feature numerous examples of *versei* commissioned by poetry circles in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Combining short verses composed at poetry gatherings with designs prepared by leading artists of the day, these prints embody the eloquence and spirit of reciprocal influence and learning of these salons, and often take their subject matter from the literary canons of Japan and China.

In the next part of her lecture, Dr. Redfern offered the ASJ's audience a fascinating insight into several examples of the *surimono* to feature in the 2017 exhibition. Space constrictions prevent this Bulletin from fully doing justice to the many beautiful works shown, but we hope that focussing on one may offer some insights into the incredible range of *surimono*'s qualities. In *Seals, Ink Box and Plum Blossom* by artist Ryūryūkyō Shinsai and poet Harunoya Naritake (1820), we see the symbolic and yet highly personal motifs and patterns through which *surimono* could express both the occasion being commemorated and the identity of their creators. On the left hand side of this print's image we see an embossed seal in the form of a dragon suggesting a Dragon Year; within an adjacent upturned seal are the characters for crane, turtle, pine and bamboo: all of which were felicitous symbols that might be deployed at the New Year, a key occasion for the exchange of *surimono* as gifts. The square upturned seals appear to read 'Haru no mado' while the motif on the edge of the box in the foreground is from Naritake, suggesting the poet Harunoya Naritake. A plum sprig features in the centre of the print's composition, above which Harunoya's poem is included on the left-hand side, which was the position of honour. It reads: 'I fill my brush with the fragrance of fresh ink and write the character for "plum tree" this morning as my first calligraphy.' This interplay between text and image adds to *surimono*'s sense of delight in layers of meaning through allusion, which conceptually expanded the experience of receiving and reading them.

The emphasis within *surimono* upon allusion, and their tendency to include puns which open up the layers of potential meaning within the print, offers a form of playful engagement that finds its parallel in one of

surimono's precursors: *egoyomi* or calendar prints. These count among some of the earliest examples of full colour printing in Japan, and only occasionally feature poems. *Egoyomi* flourished during the Meiwa era (1764–71), during which the shogunate government controlled official calendar production. However, private individuals commissioned calendar prints which cleverly depicted lunar calendar information hidden within the subject matter of the picture. In a similar fashion, 'keys' within the imagery and verse of *surimono* often enabled their receiver to discover the covert symbolism at work within the print. References to both classical literature and recent literary trends were common in *surimono*, which suggests that they also functioned as a way for their literati patrons to take pleasure in their shared knowledge.

The Chester Beatty Library holds archival documentation relating to the formation of the collection. These archives include documents such as invoices and shipping lists relating to Beatty's trip to China and Japan in 1917. It was during this trip that Beatty's eye was first caught by lavishly illustrated Nara e-hon or 'Nara illustrated picture books', which he continued collecting after his return, but he did not turn to prints until decades later.

Beatty's approach to collecting Japanese prints reflects his interest in collaborating with specialists from various fields. This collaborative approach – much like that found within the prints themselves – is of crucial importance in relation to the development of the Library's *surimono* collection.

In 1954 Beatty had the opportunity to purchase the print collection of Dr M. Cooper, through the London dealer Kegan Paul. Seeing the chance to secure a good collection at a good price, Beatty followed the same instincts that had guided him to success in business. The collection comprised over 600 Japanese prints, including 84 *surimono*, and its sale to Beatty was finalized on the 12th of May of that year, for a total value of £4,250. This was a notably good price for this quantity of prints, given the already competitive nature of their market. Beatty's correspondence about the sale at the time suggests that he considered Japanese prints to be a gap within his collection as it then was, so the purchase offered the chance to make his overall holdings more 'representative' of East Asian art.

At the time of this purchase, Beatty engaged the scholar and Sotheby's consultant Jack Hillier (1912-1995) to act as an advisor on future acquisitions. A scholar now celebrated for his many publications on Japanese printed arts, at the time Hillier had recently authored *Japanese Masters of the Colour Print* (Phaidon, 1954).

The Cooper prints arrived at the Library in June 1954, whereupon Beatty, like Hillier and Beatty's librarian Wilkinson, began to sense the pleasure of collecting them. Hillier encouraged Beatty to further collect prints and printed books, which he did, but the two remained dedicated to pursuing artistic merit and quality, declining to seek after rarities at the expense of standards.

In a 1955 letter from Beatty to Hillier, we see Beatty evaluating *surimono* in comparison to other forms of Japanese prints as relatively underexplored, and under-valued. In a Sotheby's sale in December of the same year, Beatty acquired nine *surimono* prints from the Ridsdale collection for a total of £8: far less than the cost of the *ukiyo-e* prints Beatty was then acquiring. Beatty's letters after this sale show how much he was taken by the quality, visual appeal and economic advantage offered by *surimono* prints. He wrote to Wilkinson in December 1955: 'I think we might go all out for *surimono* and make the collection famous for *surimono* as we cannot compete with the other things.'

Over the subsequent years, further examples of *surimono* were added to the collection under Hillier's direction. A major acquisition was made in 1960 at a sale organized by Glendining & Co., Ltd. Here, the shift of focus toward *surimono* is evident in Beatty's purchases: a total of 15 lots of woodblock prints as opposed to 57 lots of *surimono*. Since these were grouped lots, the total *surimono* purchase added up to 172 prints. As purchases continued to be made, Beatty praised Hillier on the strength of the *surimono* collection they had formed. By October 1960 this amounted to '490 *surimono* of the finest quality', as he wrote to Hillier.

When Sir Chester Beatty passed away in 1968, his Library was bequeathed to Ireland. A key moment in the continuing legacy of the *surimono* collection came in the 1980s, when scholar Roger Keyes undertook the production of a comprehensive catalogue, including translations of the poems included within the prints. The result, *The Art of Surimono* (Sotheby, 1985), was ahead of its time in terms of its sensitivity towards the specific qualities of *surimono* images and poetry, and remains a key reference work.

As an institution, the Chester Beatty Library continues today to work collaboratively in bringing the collection to as large an audience as possible. The Japanese print collections have been digitized as part of a major ongoing project undertaken by Ritsumeikan University's Art Research Center, and the advancement of digital access to the collections is an institutional priority.

The collections of the Chester Beatty Library are recognized as being of world-class quality, and serve as an important cultural bridge between Japan and Ireland to this day. The Library's 2017 exhibition "The Art of Friendship: Japanese Surimono Prints" will surely open the eyes of an ever greater number of viewers from around the world to the work of Chester Beatty the collector, and to the exquisite wonders of his collections.

Following Dr. Redfern's lecture, questions were taken from members of the audience.

Q1: In the late 1940s I was bitten by the 'Greek bug'. As soon as I could read Greek properly, I was buying second-hand textbooks, and in the margins there were references to alternative readings, within which 'Chester Beatty' was a very important name. When he was in Egypt, he was buying papyri - but not necessarily just Arabic; he was buying Greek papyri as well. Can you fill in this missing space?

A1: The only the word I can use to describe the Chester Beatty collections in total is 'magical'. The Library's Western Collection encompasses objects from cuneiform tablets to ancient Egyptian period papyri; also some very early biblical papyri; later illuminated manuscripts; all the way up to French 20th century fashion plates. I think part of the reason for this incredible breadth is that Beatty was astute enough to know when he should get someone else to help. With the *surimono*, one of the things I had first wondered was how much Beatty had been guiding what Hillier was purchasing. However, that doesn't come up in their correspondence. Beatty will occasionally suggest certain lots, but in this case there is little sense of demanding a particular genre of works; it is much more a sense of trusting Hillier as the expert. Beatty was obviously reading about *surimono*, and every so often in the letters he makes a reference to something he has read. But for example, there was once a French dealer who offered to visit Beatty at his villa in France, and Beatty responded that she was free to bring books to him, but for Japanese prints she should show the prints to Hillier, whom Beatty trusted. I think that is one of the reasons he was able to develop such a wide-ranging collection.

Q2: Thank you, that was a wonderful talk, and I have known Roger Keyes and enjoyed his book. I was able to visit the Chester Beatty very early in about 1981, and I loved the old building and its surrounding area. What has happened to the old building?

A2: The old building was sold as part of the Library's move, and I believe it has been redeveloped, so the building is no longer there as I understand. That being said, we retain a number of features that were in the old building – there was a Chinese inspired coffered ceiling that was moved from Beatty's house in London originally to the first Library, and that is now in the Reading Room of our new site in Dublin Castle. There is also furniture within the Asian collections - including Chinese furniture and vases – some of which decorated Beatty's house and some of which decorated the old Library at Shrewsbury Road.

Q3: Regarding the *surimono* showing a seal and and plum blossom. When I look at the flowers I think that the ones on the left are quince. Is it written in the poem that they are plum?

A3: The poet does mention a plum tree in his poem, and the other thing that would make me think that these are plum is because within the seal we have crane, turtle, pine and bamboo – so the plum is missing from the seal, as it would be natural to have plum, bamboo and pine. I would think it probably is plum but I will have a look into it; one of the joys of these *surimono* is that we can never know what we will find within them.

Q4: Thank you very much for a wonderful presentation. I have the impression that one of the defining qualities of Japanese aesthetics is *ekphrasis*: the combination of word and image. I think this is one of the major differences between Western art and Japanese art – in Western art we have poems about paintings, such as Auden's 'Musée des Beaux-Arts', whereas Japanese tends to combine poem and painting together. In the Heian Period, for example, when they composed a poem it was often composed about an image already depicted on the screen, and this tradition I think comes all the way down to the Edo period, when these *surimono* were created. At a certain point, 'play' becomes added to this – especially visual play with the Chinese characters and the actual images that are depicted. I believe we find the same sense of play in the *ukiyo-e* prints of the Edo period, and I just wondered if you would agree with that definition, and would you like to comment on the relationship between *ukiyo-e* and *surimono* in terms of 'play'?

A4: In *ukiyo-e* prints as well there is a lot of allusion, *mitate*, plays upon puns, puns that require you to have prior knowledge, but in the *surimono* I think that is taken to the next level – you have people using poems from the past that they expect their reader to be familiar with, and creating puzzles that someone can engage with and unlock. As you say, these are incredibly visual poems, already, before the image is there, and the hardest thing sometimes is to find the connection between the very visual poem and the visual image. In some there is a direct relationship but sometimes the allusion is so gently hidden that you have to unlock it, and that's where you can see minds at work, cogs turning on the New Year's Day as they receive this print. That's where I think the *surimono* really excel at this allusion, and they can do that because of the visual nature of the poetry, and how the print can work to either support that or take it off in a new direction. Many of the prints have more than one poem on them – one or two is fairly typical, three or more are also found – so you can see the directions taken by the different poets, and then how the artist responded. It is generally understood that the poems were written first and given to the artist who then prepared the illustration, but then for the person receiving it, he or she is perhaps visually receiving the illustration before the poem. All of this feeds into the very interesting interplay between text and image, particularly given the poems' frequent visual qualities: the colours, the seasons, the sensations depicted within them.

Q5: When people received the *surimono*, how were they kept? Were they stored in a drawer or boxes, or hung on a wall?

A5: Some prints show small lacquer boxes that appear to have been used for *surimono*. The *surimono* prints themselves are often about 20 centimetres square: this is the *shikishiban*, the square format which was increasingly employed from the 1810s. So they are small things, and could be taken along to meetings in such boxes. Some were then put into albums. They were not pasted onto walls in order to have survived as impeccably as they do. One of the things Beatty saw in *surimono* was the quality of the prints, and one of the reasons for this is perhaps that they were treated differently, because they were received as gifts, and so may have received an extra degree of care. There was also interest in collecting them with albums, of which there are examples created in Japan, as well as by Western collectors.

Following the Q&A, a Vote of Thanks was given by Her Excellency Anne Barrington, Ambassador of Ireland to Japan. After this, our speaker and guests enjoyed continuing the discussion over an enjoyable and delicious buffet reception at the Residence.

New Members

Dr. Mary Redfern	UK	Curator, East Asian Collections, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin
Dr. Corin Golding (DPhil Oxon, Oriental Institute)	UK	PhD Candidate, International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, Tokyo
Mr. Kazuo Mitsuhashi	Japan	Mitsuhashi Teien
Mr. Yuta Hanzawa	Japan	Student, Seikei University

Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee has been set up to prepare a slate of candidates for election to the Council at the Society's Annual General Meeting. The chairman is Prof. Patrick Carey, and members from the Council are Ms. Keiko Makino, Mr. Soichiro Mochidome, Dr. Ciaran Murray, Mrs. Doreen Simmons and Mrs. Shigeko Tanaka, with Prof. Fumiko Daido Murray representing the membership at large. Any of the Committee members will be happy to receive nominations or recommendations for Council membership, and we would also welcome offers from members who would like to volunteer their services to the Society in other capacities.

From the *Transactions* Editors

Volume 8, Series V, of our *Transactions* has now gone to the printers; the Editors express their gratitude to all who have made it possible, and invite contributions for Volume 9. Especially welcome are proposals for book reviews and Scholarship in Brief, in particular from members of the Society wishing to publish in its journal for the first time. Proposals for Scholarship in Brief should go by e-mail attachment to the editor responsible (kmcphalen@gmail.com), and all others, including reviews, to the Editor-in-Chief (robertmorton1@yahoo.co.uk). Please note that our present printers require illustrations in electronic form, and copyright permission for these is the responsibility of the author. The deadline for completed copy (with illustrations) is March 31st; however, it is recommended that it be sent in as early as possible to ensure maximum attention and consultation.

News Notes

¶ Exhibition Announcement: "Rediscovering Three-Dimensional Art in Japan"

The touring exhibition "Rediscovering Three-Dimensional Art in Japan" explores the aesthetic sense of the Japanese people with a wide range of three-dimensional works beyond the frameworks of sculpture and craftwork. The exhibits include 15 works of netsuke, including a female figure carved by Ryushi Komada. The exhibition will be held at Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art from November 15th, 2016 to January 9th, 2017; and Mie Prefectural Art Museum from January 24th to April 9th, 2017.