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*A Visualization of Eitoku's
Lost Paintings at Azuchi Castle*

KANO EITOKU (1543–1590) transformed Japanese painting style, redirecting the spatial perceptions of his generation toward a new world of abstraction in pictorial elements. His innovative vision responded to the artistic and social requirements of the second half of the sixteenth century, when the most important commissions were large-scale *shōhekiga* (wall paintings) for palatial residences. Society's insistence on ceremony and the patron's demand for self-glorification obliged the artist to work with a painting format having functional and symbolic dimensions above and beyond the spatial prescriptions of the architecture itself.

Conditions for a creative surge coalesced when the hegemon Oda Nobunaga commissioned Eitoku to decorate Azuchi Castle in 1576. An audacious patron and an energetic artist joined in a project to recast existing conventions into a new environment which would serve the purposes of political manipulation and social control. Departing from the prevalent model of a castle as a fort built for military defense, Nobunaga conceived his residence as an impressive symbol of his authority and a visible sign of his self-confidence in ruling the Japanese realm, his *Tenka*. Nobunaga's castle was the first major citadel to give priority to a grand display of personal power and glory. It announced a new era in which the lord's physical surroundings would become an integral part of his rulership, and interior decoration would reinforce statecraft.

Although nothing remains of the paintings at Azuchi Castle, they were a landmark in Eitoku's career and probably a significant stage in the development of his painting style. Had they remained in existence, they would provide a better understanding of the spatial revolution that occurred in pictorial expression around this time. Perhaps

a mental image of the *shōhekiga* at Azuchi Castle can be formed by considering large-scale paintings associated with Eitoku, and discussing their relevance to the architectural program of Nobunaga's castle. Wall paintings and folding-screen paintings produced within a forty-year period beginning in 1566 are available for illustration. They provide a visual survey of the evolution of Eitoku's style during the latter sixteenth century and aid in the effort to supply the missing link at Azuchi Castle.

First it is necessary to be aware of the specifications Eitoku was asked to meet in creating his paintings, for *shōhekiga* are always done in the context of a larger architectural plan. Just three months after the first foundation stone was laid and a year and a half before the roof was put in place, Eitoku was summoned with other artisans and workmen to reside at the Azuchi building site.¹ While the walls were being erected, Eitoku learned the structure of the building. He was told the function of the rooms, the size and arrangement of the walls, the decorative context to be provided by carpenters, artisans in lacquerwork, metal craftsmen. He was directed by Kimura Jirozaemon, the construction commissioner,² who communicated Nobunaga's desires and added ideas of his own, probably prescribing subjects and styles to be used in certain areas. Not until he had absorbed this background did Eitoku create designs to be submitted for approval.

The structure Eitoku was asked to embellish with paintings has recently been exhaustively studied and reconstructed in drawings and floor plans by the architectural historian Naitō Akira.³ The decorative program of the Azuchi Castle donjon has been known through Ōta Gyūichi's account in the *Shinchō kōki*,⁴ cited in George Elison's preceding essay, "The Cross and the Sword." But Naitō's discovery of a reliable copy of the builder's plans (the *Tenshu sashizu* or "Specifications of the Donjon") makes a more complete visualization possible.

Naitō emphasizes that Azuchi Castle should not be considered as a military fortification but rather as the influential predecessor of early seventeenth-century warrior residences built for political purposes. It was a significant stage in the development of *shoin-zukuri*, the style of residential architecture that provided a structured environment for social contacts between lords and vassals in the Early Modern period. The first four of the donjon's seven stories contained a vertical distribution of the three major divisions of *shoin-zukuri*: the *omote* suites for public audiences and entertainments, the *nakaoku* areas for daily activities, and the *oku* apartments for wife and concubines. These rooms surrounded a central open vault, which functioned vertically

much as the main garden does on a plane surface in fully developed *shoin-zukuri*, associating the individual sections into a unified complex.⁵ In very general terms, the first four stories could be divided diagonally, from northeast corner to southwest corner, into rooms with a formal and public function on the south and east, and rooms with an informal and private character on the north and west.⁶

The public *omote* area began at the main gate on the southeast corner of the ground floor. From here, the main staircase led to the initial reception room (*tōzamurai*) on the second story directly above the entrance. The south side of the second floor was occupied by the *taimensho* suites used for holding audiences with chief vassals. In a row on the extreme south were two large *zashiki* (formal *tatami*-matted sitting rooms) and a small *shoin*, which by the 1570s had developed into a nonfunctional desk alcove used as a decorative focus. Along the north side of these three rooms another series bordered the central vault: a small room fitted with shelves for the artistic display of prized objects (*tana*), a large *zashiki*, and a small elevated room for persons of highest status (*jōdan*) provided with decorative wooden doors leading to an adjoining room where guards were stationed. On the southeast corner of the central vault were two service rooms (*nando*)⁷—probably *tatami*-matted waiting rooms for retainers, for they were directly across the corridor from the initial reception room.

The third-floor rooms with a public function bordered the south and east sides of the central vault, while on the north side a stage projected into the open space. The unit of a *Nō* stage facing formal reception rooms across a garden space corresponds precisely to the plan of warrior residences in developed *shoin-zukuri*. Directly opposite the stage was the *hiroma* suite of highest status rooms for formal entertaining, consisting of a four-mat⁸ elevated room (*jōdan*), a twelve-mat *zashiki*, and a two-mat room with shelves (*tana*). Along the east were the *zashiki* where the guests' more important retainers viewed the entertainment from a slight angle. The final room of the public *omote* unit was the tearoom (*cha-zashiki*), located in the northeast corner of the fourth floor.

The food-service function of the *nakaoku* began on the east side of the second floor with the kitchen area, continuing via staircases and corridors to the food supply center intermediary between kitchens and other rooms (*irori no ma*) in the southeast corner of the third floor. The *nakaoku* areas serving as entrances and guest areas began across the corridor from the second-floor kitchen, with several splendid service rooms (*nando*) bordering the east and north sides of the

central vault,⁹ and continued on the north side of the third floor with two very large *zashiki* and a twelve-mat elevated room on the extreme north.

A relatively isolated series of *zashiki* on the west side of the second floor appears to have functioned as the *kuroshoin*, in other words, as an inner sequence of rooms where the master conducted his daily business.¹⁰ Staircases connected this complex with the master's room (*goza no ma*) on the west side of the third floor, which was adjacent to the formal reception rooms on the south and, via a long service room, the large *zashiki* on the north.

Judging from the painting subjects on the fourth floor, all *zashiki* on the east, south, and west were *nakaoku* living rooms, with the two on the south that are identified as having *toko* (here, probably a decorative alcove) and *tana* (decorative shelves) being the most formal. These rooms, and the two on the east, quite likely served honored guests rather than permanent residents. The northeast corner room was the *omote* tearoom, while the *zashiki* on the north side probably functioned as the private apartments of the *oku*. All rooms faced a corridor that encircled the central vault with a bridge running from north to south across the open space. Thus, occupants could amuse themselves by observing the activities taking place in the rooms below.

The central vault ended here, and a ceiling enclosed the four levels of space for public ceremony and private living. The fifth floor provided service areas for the rooms below, as well as two *tatami*-matted rooms that may have been observation posts. A sumptuous Buddhist chapel occupied the sixth level, and a square *zashiki* decorated with Chinese Confucian themes capped the seven-story castle.

The *Shinchō kōki* identifies painting subjects in the *taimensho* audience suites on the second floor, in the *biroma* and other public reception rooms bordering the central vault on the third floor, and in all *zashiki* except the tearoom (which is specified as having no painting) on the fourth floor. Some of the other rooms surely contained *shōhekiga*, and the sources give occasional hints that certain rooms were painted in gold or with ink painting (*sumie*), or imply that painted walls were the norm by commenting that specific areas had no paintings at all. The sixth-story chapel had its walls, its ceilings, its surrounding gallery, and even its columns covered with Buddhist paintings, and the seventh-story black lacquer-and-gold room featured didactic Confucian subjects on its walls and floral motifs on its ceiling. This pictorial abundance with its variety of subject matter

confronted the man commissioned to bring it into being with an immense challenge. Nobunaga was an exacting patron, Azuchi Castle an enormous project.

Eitoku's success in handling his task at Azuchi may be gauged by the great demand for similar luxuriance in the decoration of subsequent residential castles. Made aware of the overriding importance of environment in influencing the behavior of groups, the lords required that their mansions project an aura of their prestige. The subject matter, design concept, and pictorial technique employed in the wall paintings had to relate to the desired ambience of each room. In castles of the Momoyama period, *shōhekiga* were intended to control the psychological receptivity of guests as well as their physical assembly. Each unit of interior space was conceived to have a distinct character consistent with its social function.

Azuchi Castle's *taimensho* audience suite, in accord with typical warrior residences at the end of the sixteenth century, was designed with formal simplicity in mind.¹¹ Its paintings were executed in monochrome. The four-mat raised *jōdan* on the northwest of the six-room sequence displayed a picture of pheasants nourishing their young. In the adjoining twelve-mat *zashiki* on the east, wild geese were painted. The two-mat room beside it featured a *tana* with doves. These could have been small paintings on the sliding panels across the top of the built-in shelves, or larger works on the wall behind the shelves. South of these three rooms were two more large *zashiki* and a decorative desk alcove (*shoin*). The western twelve-mat room was separated from the northwest *jōdan* by a stationary wall, but communicated with the Wild Goose Room through two sets of sliding-door panels (*fusuma*), and contained ink paintings of plum trees. The northern half of its west wall opened to the desk alcove, where a painting of *Evening Bell from a Distant Temple* could be viewed. This is one of the famous Chinese scenic spots, the *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang*, favored by Japanese landscape painters from the fifteenth century onward, and it provided an appropriate complement to the miniature landscape (*bonsan*) set in front of it. Somewhat dissociated from the other two large *zashiki* by its theme was the eight-mat southeast room furnished with ink paintings of Chinese Confucian scholars. This room was also mentioned last in Ōta Gyūichi's account, even though it joins the room with the plum painting, which Gyūichi described first.

The distribution of subjects in this suite of rooms differs markedly from the arrangements established in the earlier Muromachi period.

Although the residences of Ashikaga shoguns are known only from scattered and insufficient references in historical records, the arrangements of *shōhekiga* in the Abbot's Quarters (*Hōjō*) of several important Zen institutions are fairly well understood. In the three major rooms of these buildings—the Central Room (*Shitchū*) of highest status, the Upper Room (*Jōdan*) of second importance, and the Lower Room (*Gedan*) of third rank—there was a conscious attempt to combine flower and bird, figure, and landscape subjects in contrasting styles associated with major Chinese artists, especially the thirteenth-century painters Mu-ch'i, Hsia Kuei, and Liang K'ai. In general, flowers and birds were depicted in the Central Room, figure subjects in the Upper Room, and landscapes in the Lower Room.¹² At Azuchi Castle, a profusion of flower and bird themes replaced this balanced distribution. With their immediately grasped appeal to the senses, flowers and birds were better suited to large-scale architectural surfaces, and were favored by artists and patrons during the second half of the sixteenth century. Second in popularity were figure subjects. When landscapes appeared, they were usually located in private rooms or at focal points to allow for longer reflection.

Evening Bell from a Distant Temple is the only landscape Gyūichi mentions in his account of the Azuchi Castle donjon. The isolation of a single scene from the *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang* is a new occurrence in *shōhekiga*. It is difficult to find for illustration comparable paintings that are reliable enough as indicators of Eitoku's style.¹³ It is possible, however, to speculate about the Chinese model that Nobunaga asked Eitoku to follow in painting *Evening Bell*. Of the four Chinese sets of the *Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang* known in Japan by the late fifteenth century,¹⁴ the most likely prototype for Eitoku's Azuchi Castle painting was the one associated with the fourteenth-century Chinese monk-painter Yü-chien. Sometime after being recorded in the Ashikaga Shogunal Collection in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, the eight segments of Yü-chien's original handscroll were dispersed into private collections. These small paintings harmonized with the aesthetics of the tea ceremony (*cha-no-yu*), and were revered by sixteenth-century connoisseurs of tea. Nobunaga, a notorious collector of tea treasures (*meibutsu*), owned at least three of Yü-chien's *Eight Views*. One of these was *Evening Bell from a Distant Temple*, acquired about 1570 and used in a number of important tea ceremonies sponsored by Nobunaga throughout the succeeding decade.¹⁵

Evening Bell was the most prized of Yü-chien's *Eight Views*.¹⁶

Therefore, a wall painting based on this celebrated tea treasure would create a contemplative focus in Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle audience suite. It would remind visitors of Nobunaga's prestige as a collector of valuable objects, and of his liaison with the powerful merchants involved in Sakai tea society. Unfortunately, *Evening Bell from a Distant Temple* is not one of the three fragments from Yü-chien's Hsiao-Hsiang scroll that has survived,¹⁷ so conjecture must be limited to a general visualization of a landscape with a multistoried temple, rendered in strongly contrasting ink tonalities applied spontaneously with effortless brushwork.

For the paintings of Confucian scholars and the flower and bird themes in Nobunaga's audience suite, better comparative material exists. Eitoku's paintings in the Abbot's Quarters of the Jukōin in the Daitokuji provide excellent illustrations of how he might have approached these subjects. Executed in 1566, when Eitoku was just twenty-three years old, they indicate the direction he was taking ten years before he began the Azuchi Castle project. Like the *taimensho* audience suite works, they are basically ink paintings, with the figure subject (the *Four Accomplishments*) in an important secondary room and the flower and bird theme (*Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons*) in the principal room.

The *Four Accomplishments* of the cultivated Chinese gentleman are playing the lute (*ch'in*), the game of *go*, calligraphy, and painting. As was the usual practice, in the Jukōin Eitoku rendered the theme in the formal academic style of the Chinese Southern Sung painters Ma Yüan and Hsia Kuei. Both subject and style acknowledge Eitoku's training in the shop of his grandfather, Kano Motonobu (1476–1559).¹⁸ On eight sliding-door panels composed sequentially across the east and north walls of the Upper Room (*Jōdan*), these paintings show Confucian scholars in a landscape setting (pl. 1). This is probably Eitoku's most conservative work. Not only does it incorporate subject, type-style, and motifs from Motonobu's shop, but it also retains the Muromachi-period compositional method of framing open areas with concentrations of forms at the outer edges. Where the east wall joins the north wall, opposing forces pull away from the corner axis to provide a caesura while still allowing continuous movement from one wall to the next. Triangular rocks thrust up from the bottom edge to furnish a foreground bridge between actual room space and the middle-ground picture stage where the flow of activity occurs. Distant views emerge across lake expanses, giving the horizontal flow a rhythm of alternating mass and void.

Yet hints of Eitoku's new direction already are evident in the Jukōin *Four Accomplishments*. His foreground rocks are less three-dimensional than are comparable works from Motonobu's shop,¹⁹ so there is less distance between room space and the picture's main scenes. His middle-ground stage plateau tilts up a little more, giving a closer view of larger figures acting out their roles. The southeast thrust of the foreground rock in the corner seems to pass in front of the vertical axis of the pine tree sending its sharp branches both south and west. And the movement from middle ground tends more often to be up the picture plane rather than back into distant landscape. In general, Eitoku seems to be more aware of the two-dimensional wall surface and the possibility of bringing the picture up to the edge of the room space rather than pulling the viewer into the picture.

In the *Four Accomplishments*, Eitoku's individual interpretation of motifs is already perceptible: he is enlarging and simplifying, stressing outlines, reducing tonal gradations. Allowing his powerful brush to dominate, he is reinterpreting natural forms with the abstract language of art. And yet, it is the *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* in the adjoining Central Room (*Shitchū*) of the Jukōin (pls. 2 and 3) that declares the new vision of the Momoyama period and indicates the direction Eitoku must have pursued in his paintings of plums and wild geese at Azuchi Castle.

The differences in Eitoku's two series of paintings at the Jukōin are striking. Most obvious, of course, is the dissimilarity in subject matter and type-style. The *Four Accomplishments* depicts figures in a landscape with the angular forms and sharp lines of the Ma Yüan-Hsia Kuei tradition. *Flowers and Birds* presents birds among trees and flowering plants using the stringy texture strokes and rounder forms associated with the style of Mu-ch'i. The *Four Accomplishments* is done in ink with light color, *Flowers and Birds* in ink only, but with gold mists suspended in the atmosphere. This kind of contrast was sought in *shōhekiga* in the interest of variety and distinction between rooms. Already by the late fifteenth century, Eitoku's great-grandfather and founder of the Kano line of artists, Kano Masanobu (1434–1530), was being supplied with Chinese model paintings of different styles to be followed in his decoration of Ashikaga Yoshi-masa's Higashiyama Villa.²⁰

More remarkable is the difference in composition. The *Four Accomplishments* is a panoramic landscape scene of forms completed within the picture frame. Groups of logically small figures drawn in careful detail occupy cells of space somewhat removed from the

viewer. *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* is a close-up view of middle-ground motifs, too large to be completely contained within the vertical dimensions of the wall surface. This too is a conscious choice of pictorial mode. Perhaps this contrast illustrates what Kano Einō was referring to in the *Honchō gashi* (1678) when he said of Eitoku:

He did landscapes, figures, flowers and birds, all in *saiga* [small or elaborate paintings]. Frequently he did *taiga* [large or expansive paintings]. When he chose to do *taiga*, his brushwork had the vigor of leaping cranes and fleeing snakes.²¹

As Eitoku's large commissions increased, Einō says:

Eitoku had no time to do *saiga*, but did *taiga* completely. Some of his pine and plum trees extended one hundred or two hundred feet and some of his figures were three or four feet tall. His brushwork became rugged and tempestuous. No one compares his quality with Motonobu's, though. In ink painting, he used a straw brush and, for the most part, had his grandfather's style, yet he produced a strikingly new conception. It was extraordinary, having a unique fascination not present in the art of his predecessors.²²

It is precisely by comparing Eitoku's painting with the art of his great predecessor, Motonobu, that this new conception, present in the Jukōin and surely developed at Azuchi Castle, can be understood.

The prototype for Eitoku's *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* is Motonobu's *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* in the Central Room (*Shitchū*) of Myōshinji's Reiun'in (pl. 4) done twenty-three years earlier, in 1543. Both paintings present a seasonal sequence of birds and flowers in a continuous horizontal surface of three walls. The composition begins at the south end of the east wall, announcing spring with misty bamboo and flowering plum branches, moving northward past summer waterfalls, turning the corner into autumn, while representing winter with snowy mountains in the background. But as Einō suggested, Eitoku adopted Motonobu's ink painting vocabulary to express a new relationship between the abstract world of art and the real world of interior space. Eitoku used Motonobu's S-shaped pine trees, his oversized cranes, his coveys of wild ducks and clusters of hibiscus, but he exaggerated the size of these motifs. The trunks of Eitoku's trees, for example, have twice the girth of Motonobu's, and their powerful roots grip the earth at the very base of the

wall surface, almost seeming to grow from the floor of the room itself rather than being set back on an earthen bank.

Eitoku's enlargement of motifs is but one factor indicating a basic structural change that establishes a new interaction between the wall surface and room space. To appreciate the innovation, it is necessary to understand the prototype.

Motonobu's painting is a continuous wall surface in three subsections. On the east wall, a watery area in the center of the spring scene is bracketed by the curve of a bamboo grove and lake shore on the right, and the reverse curve of a gnarled plum tree dipping into the water below an overhanging pine branch on the left. This large, slowly sweeping curve encloses a spatial volume further defined by the sloping hillocks in the foreground and their echo in the stepped recession of earthen banks in the middle ground. The focus of the composition is the northeast corner, where the greatest concentration of motifs is found. Counterbalancing the southward pull of the pine on the east wall, the rocks on the north wall incline to the west, marking the start of a second sequence. In front of a torrential waterfall, a crane perches on a gnarled horizontal pine branch that carries the movement to the left. A brief foray into depth via wintery mountains and a distant grove of trees is possible below three flying geese that swoop diagonally toward the flock huddled in the northwest corner inlet. A spit of land and blowing reeds enclose the second scene for another pause before the southward-bending growth of hibiscus pulls the viewer to consider the autumn setting of the west wall. From the rather small mass of luxuriant blossoms in the northwest corner, the angle of vision expands to enclose another sphere of middle-ground space and end with a large crane shrieking in a willow grove that overhangs marshy banks.

The rhythmic movement across the three walls undulates from top to bottom of the picture surface, and concurrently circulates from back to front of middle-ground space. It requires time to move in and out as well as up and down, so the tempo is slow and stately. There are pauses at corners and occasional suggestions of a space that contains more than is shown. At these places, the viewer can reflect for a moment before being caught again by an overhanging branch or a flying bird and returned to the motifs that are explicitly delineated.

In Eitoku's painting, there is no pause for reflection, nothing that would require the viewer to contemplate what he cannot see. Eitoku conceived of the three walls as a single unit. His enormous forms sweep across the surface, jumping over room space in the corners to

continue on the next wall without being slowed by codas of framing elements. The sequence begins with a few bamboo stalks, but this motif does not act as a bracket for a void area, as does the bamboo with its earthen bank in Motonobu's *Reiun* in *Flowers and Birds*. Instead, muscular tree roots immediately capture the eye, compelling movement through the exaggerated S-curve of the oversized plum tree. A shooting branch whips over the springtime violets and swimming mandarin ducks to the gushing rapids in the northeast corner. Its momentum jumps the corner to the cascades on the north wall, sweeps back with the torrent splashing to the east wall, then rushes westward again on the waves to the night heron. This movement passes a background wall of distant snowy mountains, arches over the top branches of two huge pine trees that shelter large cranes, is caught by a swooping goose, and ends with the responding geese on the ground.

In the northwest corner, Eitoku appears to retain Motonobu's centrifugal separation technique, for the giant pine trees swing away from each other in the direction of their respective walls. But these trees are not frames for subunits of the total composition. Their movement tends to be outward into room space, once again spanning the corner. A large root of the tree on the north wall hooks over to fasten on the ground of the west wall; the inner branches of the two trees pull in countermovements to intertwine across the top of the angle. The repetition of the giant crane motif under the arching pine branch on each wall requires that the entire corner be seen as one unified grove of trees providing refuge for a pair of large birds.

Eitoku accomplishes this compelling lateral movement by confining foreground motifs to the minimum of a few triangular rocks, bringing a very narrow middle ground forward, and eliminating background altogether. He reduces the number of motifs in this middle ground and greatly enlarges what he retains, using the entire height of the wall for his forms and suggesting further size by radically truncating the tops of trees. He blocks possible recession by suspending streaks of gold-dust clouds across the surface. These clouds are not vaporous suggestions of atmosphere, but are positive objects with physical substance. Thus, another key to Eitoku's commanding movement is his denial of void space and his assertion of positive form. Whereas Motonobu's motifs surround pockets of space, in Eitoku's painting the motif dominates. Eitoku's subject is the awesome energy of nature as it flows through natural bodies. The plum tree relays its force into the rushing water, which carries it to the lusty

cranes and vigorous pine trees, and they transmit it to the stalwart geese.

There is no room for the viewer to enter the painting and find his place in this world of form. Instead, the painted objects are brought to the surface of the wall, to the very edge of living space. At the corners, they even audaciously span that space. Eitoku's powerful brush lines and strong tonal contrasts contribute to immediate understanding of explicit forms. It is an artistic conception ideally suited to environments of social interaction.

Surviving works show that Eitoku's style developed rapidly and displayed a remarkable sensitivity to architectural context. The ink paintings done for Azuchi Castle's *taimensho* ten years later than the works at the Jukōin must have been far more aggressive. It is unusual at this time, although not without precedent, to find "plums" mentioned as the painting subject for an entire room.²³ The dominating plum tree that Eitoku painted in the Central Room of the Jukōin Abbot's Quarters was not considered the subject of the sequence, which was referred to as *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons*. Therefore, Ōta Gyūichi's description of the Azuchi room as containing "pictures of plums" suggests even greater magnification of the tree motif, perhaps approaching the commanding form of a late composition such as the Tokyo National Museum's *Cypress* (pl. 9).

In addition to this predictable increase in visual dynamism, Eitoku may have made a significant innovation in his paintings for Nobunaga's audience rooms: he may have incorporated gold leaf into monochrome painting. While the *Tenshu sashizu* specifies that these were all ink paintings (*sumie*),²⁴ the *Shinchō kōki* notes that "from top to bottom, everything in these chambers, wherever there are pictures, all is gold."²⁵ This is not necessarily a contradiction. However, although gold dust and gold paint had been used with ink paintings throughout the sixteenth century, judging from existing large works, gold leaf was not combined with ink monochrome before the 1590s. Yet, such a union would have been a logical next step for Eitoku in the 1570s. The gold-dust clouds of his Jukōin *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* present solid forms that defy allusion to depth. It is reasonable to suppose that he did make a conceptual leap by substituting abstract gold-leaf clouds in Azuchi Castle, in order to create dramatic contrasts of black and gold; for he had already used them in works of a different genre.²⁶

The aesthetic effect of such a combination can be seen in a set of wall paintings attributed to Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539–1610) and

probably executed near the end of the sixteenth century, the *Rocks and Waves* owned by Zenrinji in Kyoto.²⁷ Unlike gold paint, which has the character of a pigment, gold leaf is a flat, denaturalized surface. Wherever it is applied, it creates an impenetrable, reflective plane, affirming the two-dimensional nature of the wall and establishing a disengaged context for depicted motifs. Its unreality reinforces the assertive substance of painted objects. It immediately informs the viewer that he is looking at a newly created reality, and not at an image of his own world.

The resplendence of Momoyama gold-ground and strong-color (*kinpeki*) painting burst forth in the third-floor *omote* rooms for public entertainment. This is the style that made Eitoku famous. His *kinpeki shōhekiga* at Azuchi were an instant success, and Eitoku was much in demand for the remainder of his short life. Kano Einō says in the *Honchō gashi*: "Lord Toyotomi Hideyoshi built two great castles, Juraku and Osaka. He had Eitoku paint them in *kinpeki*. Whenever the lords of the day built grand residences to be furnished with gold walls, they always wanted [Eitoku] to paint them."²⁸

Many of these great lords were received by Nobunaga at Azuchi Castle in the brief period of its existence from 1579 to 1582. There they saw the flowers and birds painted by Eitoku in brilliant colors and gold in the twelve-mat *zashiki* and its adjoining four-mat *jōdan* that formed Nobunaga's *hiroma*. They surely relished the exotic flavor of the eight-mat Civet Room (*jakō no ma*) on the east side, or the popular themes of Chinese hermits and sages in the two *zashiki* flanking the Civet Room. Here was a painting style that could exploit a wealth of sensual elements: the luxury of shining gold, the brilliance of saturated colors, the rhythmic affirmation of strong line. Unfortunately, no technique could ensure permanence for this magnificent art. Most *kinpeki shōhekiga* from the era of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi perished with the castles they decorated. Very little survives, and those paintings that are extant have suffered with time, retaining only a shadowy hint of their original splendor.

The best remaining examples of *kinpeki shōhekiga* associated with Eitoku from the Tenshō years (1573–1593) now adorn the rooms of the Dai Hōjō (Large Abbot's Quarters) at the great Zen monastery Nanzenji in Kyoto. These paintings were originally created by Eitoku's shop for a building of the Imperial Palace, which was given to the Nanzenji in 1611.²⁹ Scholarly opinion is divided concerning whether they were done for Emperor Ōgimachi's In no Gosho (Retirement Palace) in 1586, or for Emperor Go-Yōzei's Seiryōden

(Ceremonial Residence) in 1591, and whether or not Eitoku's own painting can be found in the series. There are problems in terms of style, since few of these paintings possess the striking grandeur of conception of the Jukōin cycle of *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* (pls. 2 and 3) or the boldness of later large *kinpeki* works attributed to Eitoku (pls. 7 and 8). Although none of the Nanzenji paintings can be accepted as works by Eitoku himself, they do reflect contemporary currents within his Kano school. They also illustrate a development of wall-painting style in response to the unique character of gold leaf.

The flower and bird paintings in Nobunaga's *hiroma* may have given an effect similar to that of the Nanzenji *Willow and Camellias* (pl. 5). On a grassy bank among colorful flowers, the branches of a willow tree are caught by spring breezes, and swing over a brook toward a large shrub of blossoming camellias. Clouds of gold leaf serve both as background to silhouette vividly colored shapes and as positive forms to structure the composition. Of the Nanzenji *kinpeki* paintings,³⁰ these are among the most conservative group.

In his perceptive analysis of *kinpeki shōhekiga*, Takeda Tsuneo identifies three developmental stages based on a distinction between gold clouds and gold ground.³¹ Gold clouds generally occupy the front of a picture plane, taking a positive role in composition by isolating important motifs and by suggesting passage of time or space. Gold ground is a background of gold leaf, establishing the back plane against which painted objects are suspended. The first stage in Takeda's schema of evolution is the use of gold clouds only, developed from the cloud forms (*kumogata*) in the *Yamato-e* tradition of narrative illustration of Japanese classics. Since no background plane is fixed, recession into depth is possible. The second stage is concurrent use of gold clouds and gold ground, and is the mode prevalent in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Generally the gold clouds and gold ground define a narrow space where objects exist between the foreground plane and the background plane. The tendency is toward loss of this distinction. In some earlier instances, segments of plain ground remain to allow glimpses into depth, and in some later instances, the gold leaf acts as foreground cloud in one section but unaccountably becomes background in another. Finally, the third stage is gold ground only. It is not seen in its pure form before the second quarter of the seventeenth century.³²

In the Nanzenji *Willow and Camellias*, the gold clouds are always distinct cloud forms, although they slide in front of some motifs to

isolate the forms of others. Occasionally the clouds break to uncover a suggestion of depth, as in the upper part of the left panel, where a few misty trees appear. Thus the wall presents a successive layering of planes, with a reminder that depth is still possible.

Both gold clouds and gold ground are present in the painting of *Civets in Pine* (pl. 6). The nine panels of this sequence, as reconstructed by Kobayashi Chū, form the most substantial overall composition that remains at Nanzenji.³³ Both in its subject matter and in its organization of motifs under the spreading branches of a large S-shaped pine tree, this painting serves as a useful means to visualize the effect of Azuchi Castle's Civet Room. If the original ultramarine were still on the water and the brilliant greens and reds remained on the flowers and grasses, it would be an even better illustration. As is the case with the *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* in the Jukōin, a few rocks at the bottom of the wall suggest a foreground between room space and a close-up middle ground of enlarged motifs. But at Nanzenji, the civets and rocks and peonies interact across a lateral passage that has nothing behind it except two layers of gold: gold clouds floating across a gold ground. To distinguish the two, greenish-white gesso was used to build up the scalloped edges of the clouds before the gold leaf was applied; then the contours were outlined with gold paint. Since gold paint has a different nature and less luster than gold leaf, it provided a subtle contrast. Today, however, this gold has flaked off, exposing the gesso and the ink outline of the clouds.

On both sides of the Civet Room at Azuchi Castle were rooms painted with famous Chinese sages and Taoist immortals.³⁴ Figure subjects in *kinpeki* are rare among surviving works attributed to Eitoku, and the only large-scale paintings with serious claims to his authorship are the *Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety* (*Nijūshikō*) and *Chinese Hermits* (*Sennin*) (pl. 7) from Nanzenji. Of these two, the sequence of seventeen panels illustrating stories of Chinese hermits is thought to be closer to Eitoku's accepted works, although Japanese scholars have many doubts that Eitoku actually painted it. The style, with its strong *Yamato-e* character, is closer to the manner of Eitoku's son, Mitsunobu (1561–1608), who is known to have completed his father's unfinished work after Eitoku's sudden death in 1590.³⁵ In terms of motif, the group of gentlemen playing *go* in plate 7 closely resembles the arrangement in the *go* scene (the third panel from the right in pl. 1) of Eitoku's Jukōin *Four Accomplishments*, and the tree in the second panel of the illustrated *Chinese Hermits*

has the same configuration as the tree in the hanging scroll of *Ch'ao Fu* by Eitoku in the Tokyo National Museum.³⁶ This certainly does not mean the same artist painted all three works, but it suggests that the painting of Chinese hermits came from Eitoku's shop.

The techniques of figure depiction in Nanzenji's *Chinese Hermits* are derived from Chinese painting as interpreted by sixteenth-century Kano artists, but the coloring and compositional techniques come from the *Yamato-e* tradition. Instead of the predominance of the strong mineral pigments generally favored by Kano artists, we find gentle pinks and lavenders and milky greys.³⁷ The scenes are arranged on a ground of gold, with a strong reliance on gold clouds to structure the composition and to provide spatial transitions from one scene to the next. Although this is a technique that originated with *Yamato-e* artists, by the second half of the sixteenth century it could be employed at will by artists of all schools, and in this case it gives a distinctive *Yamato-e* flavor. A century later, in 1678, Eitoku's descendant, Kano Einō, gave Kano artists specific instructions on how to paint *Yamato-e* compositions.

The *Yamato-e* manner is an expression of human sensibilities, so it is gentle. . . . Clouds are placed above and below the scenes to differentiate space and to emphasize what is important by covering the trivial. There are many pine trees in the design. These are done by arranging a series of similar branches one above the other and painting them in dark green.³⁸

The pine in *Chinese Hermits*, while having the trunk configuration of the tree in Eitoku's *Ch'ao Fu*, has the stylized layering of scalloped green clusters in the *Yamato-e* manner, rather than the individually separated wheels of needles seen in the Chinese-derived style of *Civets in Pine*.

Aside from matters of stylistic derivation of motifs, the structure of the painting moves a step further away from the realistic stage space of the magnified middle ground in *Civets in Pine*. In *Chinese Hermits*, the layering of planes by gold clouds begins on the very bottom edge of the wall. Behind the gold clouds, multifaceted rocks crop up, emphasized by a background of gold. Against this metallic gold ground, groups of Chinese hermits act out their stories. These forms are not bound to a specific locale defined by green grass and earthen banks. Their environment is neutralized by a denaturalized, inorganic expanse of gold. Figures, rocks, trees, even a running brook, are disengaged from the tangible world and rearranged on an abstract

plane. Actors cannot penetrate their metallic background, but they can be imagined to move left or right along the lateral avenues organized by the stratification of clouds. Thus the use of gold ground and gold clouds in *Chinese Hermits* affirms the planar character of the wall and emphasizes the horizontal movement of the composition around the room.

The two north *zashiki* on Azuchi Castle's third floor also contained *kinpeki shōhekiga*. The larger, twenty-mat room was painted with *Horses in Pasture*, a popular theme in the warrior society of the late sixteenth century. No comparable paintings by Eitoku's school have survived, but some idea of possible treatments of the subject can be gained from two sets of folding screens that were shown in the 1975 Momoyama exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. *Horses in a Landscape* by Unkoku Tōgan (1547–1618) depicts the same subject, but is an ink painting produced by an artist of a different stylistic lineage about twenty-five years after Azuchi Castle was decorated.³⁹ *Rounding Up Horses* by Hasegawa Tōhaku was executed closer to the time the Azuchi *shōhekiga* were done and is in color, although there is no gold.⁴⁰ Tōhaku is said to have begun his artistic career in the Kano style, only later establishing his own school,⁴¹ but these screens are very early works and may have been painted before Tōhaku arrived in Kyoto in the 1570s. Therefore, *Rounding Up Horses* may not be at all comparable to Kano shop productions of the late 1570s.

Hsi Wang-mu was depicted in the twelve-mat *zashiki*, as in all likelihood was her consort Tung Wang-kung.⁴² Again, contemporary Kano examples are lacking, but the subject was treated throughout the sixteenth century. An early example formed part of the commission executed by Motonobu and his shop for the Daisen'in during the first quarter of the century.⁴³ A late example exists in splendid *kinpeki* in Nishi Honganji's *taimensho* suite, painted in the early seventeenth century.⁴⁴

The painting topics of all the *zashiki* on the fourth floor of the Azuchi donjon are given in the *Shinchō kōki*: craggy rocks, dragons and tigers, bamboo, pine, phoenix, hydrangeas, falcon breeding, and Chinese examples of model conduct.⁴⁵ The range of subject matter and the fact that Gyūichi specifically names them illustrates another function of *shōhekiga*: to clarify room divisions. The sliding-door panels on which these themes were painted served as partitions between one area of living space and another, and the paintings supplemented the architectural scheme. They not only decorated the

walls, but also created an aesthetic environment sufficiently different from surrounding space to identify each room. As the *Kaoku zakkō*, an Edo-period encyclopaedic manual on residential architecture, points out: "It is a great inconvenience when it is difficult to distinguish between rooms in many-chambered buildings. Accordingly, the walls and sliding doors are painted so that names can be given the various rooms, and not necessarily just to create splendid interiors."⁴⁶ The Jesuit Luis Frois compared the interior of Nobunaga's Gifu Castle to the Labyrinth of Crete,⁴⁷ and his fellow missionary João Rodrigues Tçuzzu commented on Japanese palaces of the 1590s by saying that "it is necessary to have competent guides in such houses."⁴⁸ A great deal of ingenuity was required of the artist who worked on this kind of residence. He had to design a series of different environments, each conveying the distinctive character that was appropriate to the function of the room being decorated.

The *zashiki* on the west side of the donjon's fourth floor are mentioned first in the *Shinchō kōki*. Since Gyūichi consistently begins with the most important rooms on each level, these probably formed Nobunaga's apartments. Aggressive subjects—trees on rugged cliffs, and dragons and tigers—conveyed a forceful image of natural power. An analogous work is the oversized folding screen of *Chinese Lions* (*Karajishi*) in the Imperial Household Collection (pl. 8).⁴⁹ This screen of two imperious beasts stalking through a rocky passage was supposedly presented by Hideyoshi to Mōri Terumoto as a peace offering at the time of the siege of Takamatsu Castle in 1582. It bears the authentication of Kano Tan'yū (1602–1674) in the lower right corner and is universally accepted as an Eitoku painting, although some scholars consider it closer to 1587 in date.⁵⁰ It fairly throbs with the audacity which those two lions, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, applied to establish their control over a warlike society.

In *Chinese Lions*, the direction Eitoku was taking in the Jukōin *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* toward simplification and exaggeration of forms has proceeded to a stage of terrific dynamism. Motifs have been reduced to three: a pair of enormous animals, an adamantine rock, and a twig bearing a few desiccated leaves. Or perhaps the motifs should number four, since the gold ground itself is a material substance, transforming at will to gold cloud with no change of inherent nature. The distinction between gold ground and gold cloud has nearly vanished, and with its dissolution the stratification of foreground plane and background plane disappears. Only in the upper-left section, where the gold surface unaccountably forms scal-

loped edges of gold clouds, does a layering of planes occur. The change in effect is dramatic: like apparitions, the lions emerge from the visionary gold surface on the right to approach a fixed narrow passageway between a foreground rock in lower left and a rock cliff locked in position by gold clouds. The gold ground on the right ejects these phantasms from its surface, and the beasts magnify its force by virtue of their own bold contours and clear-cut patterns of line and color. Only the vestige of layered space on the left ties them to the picture surface.

Dynamic pictorial elements make a positive statement. Foremost is the gold surface, catching and reflecting light, animating the space it confronts. Against this vibrant, impenetrable base, Eitoku's decisive lines reiterate the density of the gold and affirm the substantial bulk of the Chinese lions. Gold spirals are captured in the whorls of the lions' manes and tails, linking them with the unreal world of their mineral environment. The vivid green of the crystalline rocks is consistent with this inorganic context. Exaggerations of size, of precision, of color intensity: these are the aesthetic carriers of an incisive message.

Such paintings create environments expedient to the purposes of social control. They are meant to overwhelm. By their very presence, they establish the dominating tone which a feudal ruler adopts toward his vassals: they aggressively confront the lord's subordinates. They defy reflection on selfhood and force individuals to respond submissively to the power they represent. Surrounded by this kind of imperative atmosphere, Nobunaga's vassals were all the more aware that they must heed his paramount decree. This environment constrained them by the artistic force of its message.

Continuing the theme of assurance but neutralizing motifs of confrontation, the two south-side *zashiki* contain paintings of bamboo and of pine. These probably were the most public of the fourth-floor rooms. The Pine Room (*matsu no ma*) may have looked something like the large entrance hall of Kyoto's Myōhōin, where enormous pine trees extend their branches across a gold ground above rocks and a few clumps of bamboo.⁵¹ This painting, however, although based on Eitoku's style, probably was executed several decades after his death and displays a delicate grace characteristic of the early seventeenth century. Another giant tree painting with a better claim to Eitoku's authorship might provide a more reliable image of the Azuchi Castle Pine Room. This is the eight-fold screen of *Cypress* in the Tokyo National Museum (pl. 9).

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE 1. *Four Accomplishments (Kinki Shoga)*. Kano Eitoku. Sliding-door panels, ink and color on paper; four east panels, each 175 × 143 cm; two of four north panels, each 175 × 95 cm. Upper Room (*Jōdan*), Jukōin, Daitokuji, Kyoto.

PLATE 2. *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons (Shiki Kachō)*. Kano Eitoku. *In situ*. Central Room (*Shitchū*), Jukōin, Daitokuji, Kyoto.

PLATE 3. *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons (Shiki Kachō)*. Kano Eitoku. Sliding-door panels, ink and gold dust on paper; four east panels, each 177 × 143 cm; four outer north panels, each 177 × 92 cm; four inner north panels, each 177 × 74 cm; four west panels, each 177 × 143 cm. Central Room (*Shitchū*), Jukōin, Daitokuji, Kyoto.

PLATE 4. *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons (Shiki Kachō)*. Kano Motonobu. Sliding-door panels, ink and light color on paper; four east panels, each 178 × 143 cm; four north panels, each 178 × 118 cm; four west panels, each 178 × 143 cm. Central Room (*Shitchū*), Reiun'in, Myōshinji, Kyoto.

PLATE 5. *Willow and Camellias (Yanagi ni Tsubaki)*. Kano school. Four sliding-door panels, color and gold leaf on paper, each 184 × 98 cm. Yanagi no ma, Dai Hōjō, Nanzenji, Kyoto.

PLATE 6. *Civets in Pine (Matsu ni Jakō)*. Kano school. Nine sliding-door panels, color and gold leaf on paper; four right-hand panels, each 185 × 72 cm; middle panel 178 × 86 cm; four left-hand panels, each 184 × 98 cm. Jakō no ma and Nishi no ma, Dai Hōjō, Nanzenji, Kyoto.

PLATE 7. *Chinese Hermits (Sennin)*. Attributed to Kano Eitoku. Four of twelve sliding-door panels, color and gold leaf on paper, each 184 × 98 cm. Ohiru no ma, Dai Hōjō, Nanzenji, Kyoto.

PLATE 8. *Chinese Lions (Karajishi)*. Kano Eitoku. Six-fold screen, color and gold leaf on paper, 225 × 460 cm. Imperial Household Collection, Tokyo.

PLATE 9. *Cypress (Hinoki)*. Attributed to Kano Eitoku. Eight-fold screen, color and gold leaf on paper, 170 × 460 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

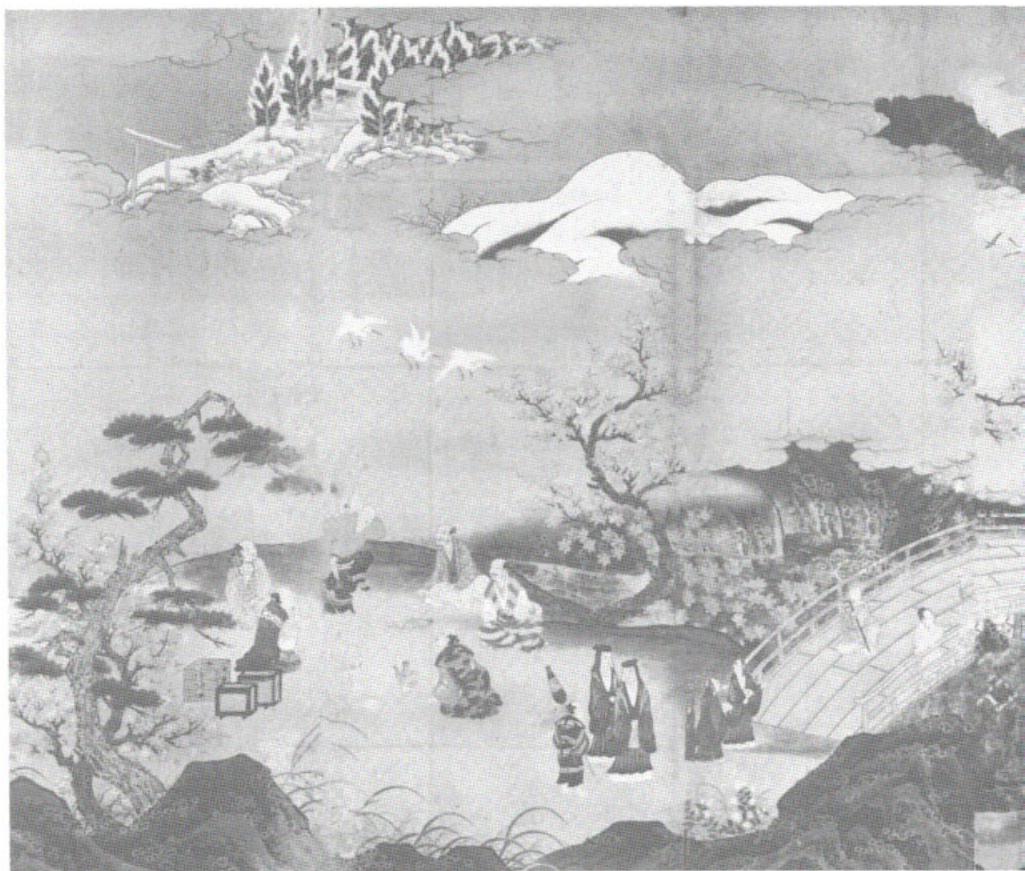
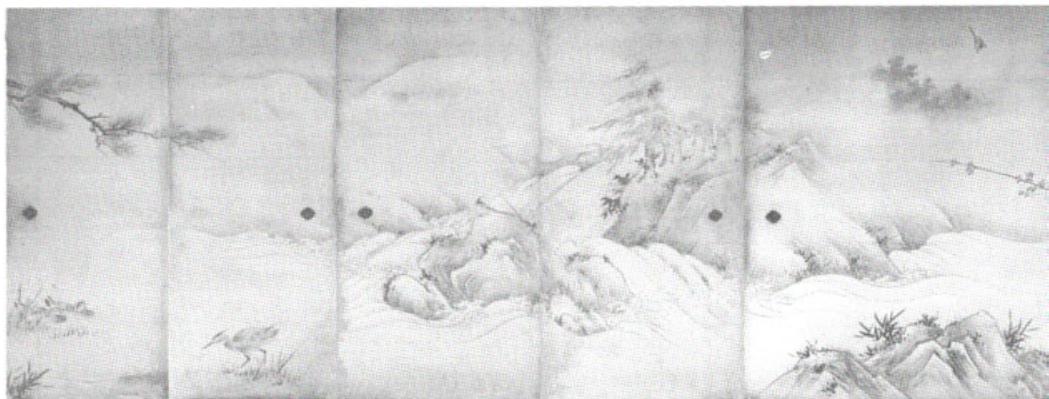
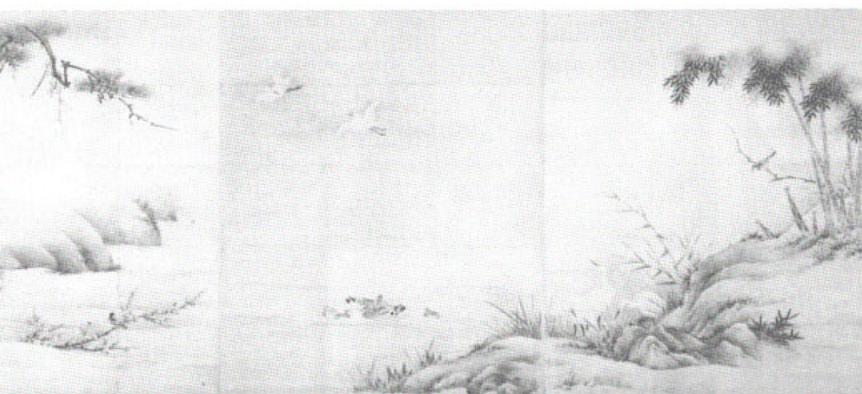
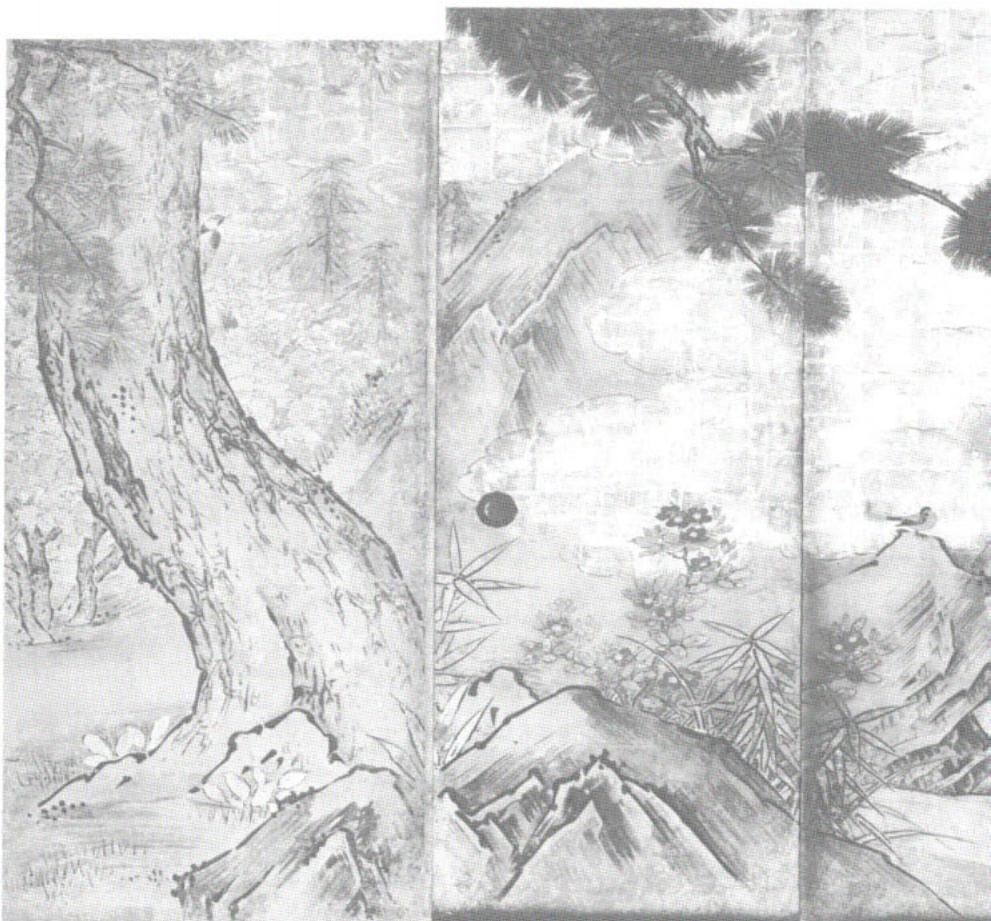


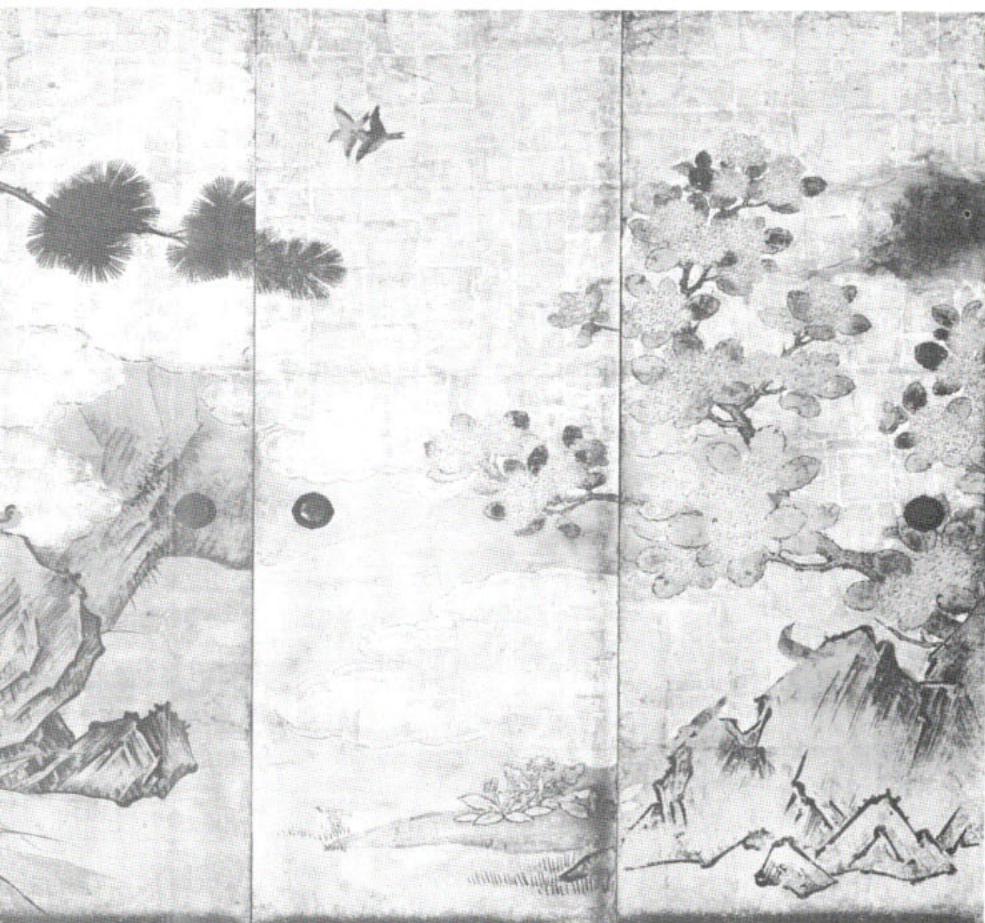
Figure 1. *Maple Viewing at Takao* (*Takao Kanpū*). Kano Hideyori. Six-fold screen, color on paper, 149 × 364 cm. Tokyo National Museum.











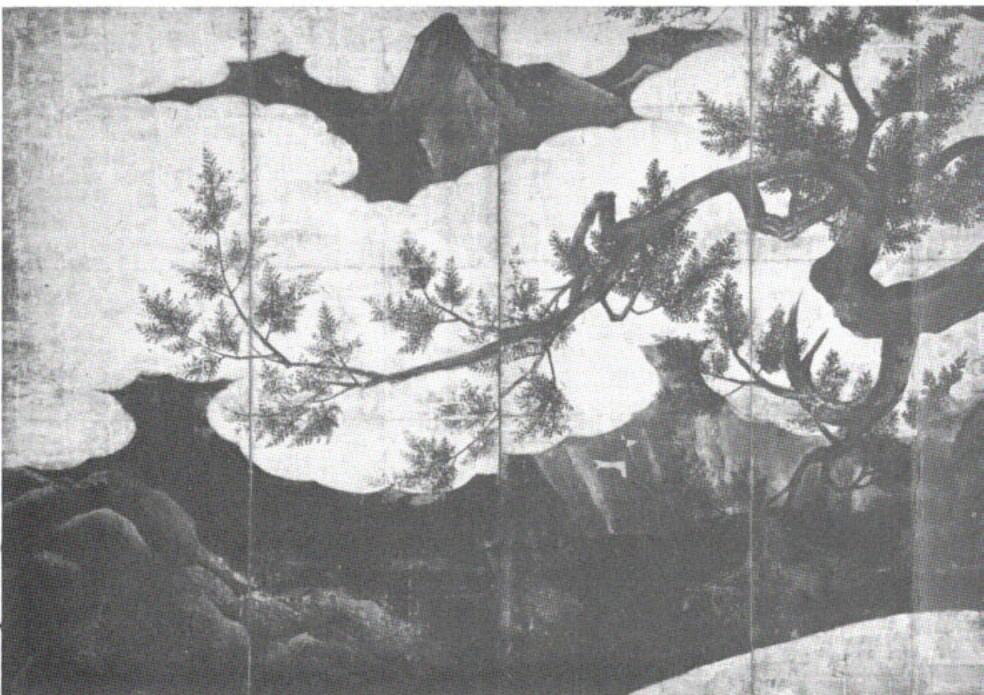


PLATE 9.



PLATE 8.



Although it is now mounted as a folding screen, traces of sliding-door handles reveal that *Cypress* was originally a *fusuma* painting. Many Japanese scholars consider that it formed part of the large commission that Eitoku, assisted by his younger brother Sōshū (1551–1601) and his son Mitsunobu, was painting for the palace of Prince Tomohito at the time of his death in 1590.⁵² If so, then whether actually executed by Eitoku or by an important assistant, the *Cypress* screen provides an example of Eitoku's late style.

Since *Cypress* does not retain its original format, conclusions about total composition can only be tentative. However, judging from the size of the paper sections in terms of its total height, only a few inches were lost from the top and bottom edges when *Cypress* was remounted as a folding screen.⁵³ Therefore, the radical truncation of the top and bottom of the commanding tree was present from the beginning. Foreground rocks have vanished; the burly cypress occupies the very front plane of the wall. Its rich reddish-brown trunk is shaded with black and highlighted with gold, then adorned with whitish-green lichen clusters. Gold ground silhouettes its muscular limbs, with a gold cloud particularly accenting the branch extending to the left, paralleling the deep ultramarine water below. A great hulking rock rises behind the cloud. Once again, there is a layering of horizontal planes, directing attention laterally across the wall surface.

The compact gold sheet and the equally uniform ultramarine water surface behind the husky tree and stalwart rock create tensions that frustrate naturalistic illusion. The inorganic surface denies space, but it affirms the material nature of objects. Motifs are reduced to their most legible components and rendered so large that they give a heightened perception of reality, appealing directly to the senses. Thus the tree and the rock have substantial bulk, but they do not displace space, for in this painting there is no space to displace. The only direction in which the forms can expand is horizontally, around the border of the room. They are locked within the homogeneous planar surface of the wall.

The themes of the two east-side *zashiki* are proselytizing, suggesting that these rooms were intended for guests. In one, a phoenix in paulownia was painted; in the other, Hsü Yu and Ch'ao Fu were depicted. The phoenix has a long history in China as a symbol for the reign of a virtuous king, while the Chinese hermits Hsü Yu and Ch'ao Fu had become a favored illustration of military comradeship in sixteenth-century Japan.⁵⁴ No contemporary examples of these

themes provide comparable illustrations for what Eitoku might have designed at Azuchi Castle.⁵⁵

The three *zashiki* north of the central vault probably made up the *oku* apartments for the women of the household, since the subjects named by Gyūichi are quieter than the themes in the other suites. The northeast corner room had a *toko* (decorative alcove) and *tana* (shelves) and was painted in *kinpeki* with scenes of nurturing falcons. This became a popular subject for genre painting in the seventeenth century, but comparable contemporary examples are rare.

The adjoining twelve-mat *zashiki* had hydrangea depicted on its west wall. A hydrangea bush is painted in the right two panels of *Civets in Pine* from Nanzenji (pl. 6), but the effect of the Azuchi wall might have been more similar to the elegance of the *Cherry and Willow* panels at Nanzenji.⁵⁶ Sinuous slender trees with a decidedly *Yamato-e* flavor bear delicate white blossoms against a background with gold clouds. The gold predominates, presenting an ethereal world quite distinct from the images of dynamism and aggression in other rooms.

No paintings were found on the fifth level, but the sixth-story Buddhist chapel and the seventh-story Confucian room were sumptuously decorated.

The octagonal sixth floor was totally Buddhist in theme. A gallery about seven feet wide surrounded an eight-sided room that was about twenty-one feet in diameter. Arched windows in the outer wall of the gallery were decorated with ornate railings, and images of fantastic dolphins (*shachihoko*) and flying dragons on the window shutters produced an encircling rhythm like ocean waves. On the ceiling of the gallery, between each intercolumnation, were a pair of dragons. Hungry ghosts (*gaki*) and demons (*oni*) were painted on the walls opposite the windows. The columns and rafters were vermilion, and ascending and descending dragons emblazoned the inner columns. Inside the octagonal hall, all columns were gold and all paintings were *kinpeki*. On the walls were depictions of the *Ten Great Disciples of Buddha* and *Buddha Establishing the Way and Preaching the Law*, and on the coffered ceiling were Buddhist angels.⁵⁷ The chapel presented a radiant microcosm of the Buddhist universe, from dragons in the depths of the earth to divine spirits in the heavens.

This kind of Buddhist decoration certainly formed part of the professional activity of sixteenth-century Kano artists, but it tended to be conservative in nature, and would not have been the vehicle for stylistic innovation. The Buddhist paintings probably were relegated

to an assistant in a commission as large as Azuchi Castle—especially since Nobunaga had little use for Buddhist traditions.

In fact, surmounting this spiritual realm, another world occupied a position even higher and more exalted than that of the celestial Buddhist angels. The square room on the top story symbolized Nobunaga's aspirations to rule all of Japan, and must have been the most important decorative project at Azuchi Castle. It was painted with Chinese culture-heroes, political models, and sages, its theme being good government as sanctioned by the Chinese concept of the Mandate of Heaven.⁵⁸ About twenty-one feet square, the room had an entrance in the middle of each of its four sides communicating with an outer gallery. Such dignified symmetry would reinforce the aura of moral rectitude. The pillars, the beams of the coffered ceiling, the windows lining the encircling gallery, even the floor gleamed with lustrous black lacquer, setting off the brilliant *kinpeki* paintings on the wall panels and ceiling coffers, and creating a stunning contrast to the gold of the castle's exterior at this level. The room must have given an effect very similar to the Tsukuba Suma Jinja Honden, painted in 1602 by Eitoku's son Mitsunobu, who had assisted his father at Azuchi Castle.

But Mitsunobu's paintings at Tsukuba Suma Jinja are graceful flowers and grasses. The subject matter of Eitoku's work at Azuchi, combined with the greater forcefulness of his style, would have given the seventh-story room a much stronger impact. The *Tenshu sashizu* identifies the subject of each wall. On the southeast walls were Fu Hsi and Shen Nung, the Chinese culture-heroes who are credited with developing such arts of civilization as writing, fishing and trapping, agriculture and commerce. In the southwest corner was Huang Ti on the south wall and Lao Tzu on the west. Huang Ti (the Yellow Emperor) is the mythical sage-king associated with the inception of Taoism, who is cited in the *Tao-te ching* and frequently linked with its legendary author, Lao Tzu. The association of the two here would have evoked the Taoist conception of the ideal ruler as a sage who governs on the basis of his comprehension of the mystic principle of Tao.

In the northwest corner was King Wen in his carriage, about to meet the wise hermit T'ai Kung-wang on the adjoining wall. King Wen received Heaven's Mandate to overthrow the decadent Shang rule and found the Chou dynasty, and was one of Confucius' models of benevolence and virtue. T'ai Kung-wang ended his voluntary exile to serve King Wen as chief counsellor. On the east end of the north

wall was the Duke of Chou, another model of virtue extolled by Confucius. As regent to King Wen's grandson, King Ch'eng, he devoted himself so conscientiously to the tasks of government that he would interrupt his bath, holding his wet hair to one side, in order to deal with affairs of state. On the east wall were the Ten Disciples of Confucius on the north, and Confucius himself on the south.

The wall paintings follow a chronological progression from the sage-kings of the mythical past through historical paragons of virtue to Confucius, the codifier of a political system based on the integrity of a wise ruler. The subjects of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove* and the *Four Wise Men of Shang Shan*, paintings that are mentioned in the *Shinchō kōki*, are not indicated on the *Tenshu sashizu*. Naitō speculates that these were located on the wooden panels above the doors in the center of each side wall,⁵⁹ where Mitsunobu painted wisteria in the Tsukubu Suma Jinja. Since both of these themes deal with gentlemen who shunned government service in times of political degeneracy, they would underline the need for the good rulers depicted on the major walls.

There is no precedent in Japanese architectural decoration for such a room: the seventh story of Azuchi Castle heralds the new age. Documentary materials referring to fifteenth-century shogunal residences do not mention comparable Chinese political subjects, but after the collaboration of Eitoku and Nobunaga at Azuchi in the 1570s, and in accord with the increasing emphasis on Confucianism as a model for social conduct, Chinese historical subjects became prominent themes for *shōhekiga*. Among the earliest examples still in existence are the Nanzenji wall paintings of *Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety* and *Chinese Hermits* (pl. 7), painted by Eitoku's shop for rooms in the Imperial Palace at least a decade after Nobunaga's castle was designed.

Such a room presented demands which must have intensely stimulated Eitoku's accomplishment of a spatial transformation. The theme of a Utopia decreed by a prince sublimely confident of his mission to reunite and revivify the Japanese realm—that is to say, establish his own new order, the *Tenka*—required an environment displaying symbols of authority beyond those found in the common surroundings of daily life. The architect provided a square with axial openings to reinforce that environment's stability, recalling similar arrangements in Buddhist architecture, such as the early eighth-century Kondō of the Hōryūji. Lacquer craftsmen furnished a shimmer of reflective black on all structural members, an effect not

achieved to the same degree in the Tsukubu Suma Jinja Honden, since this later interior lacks the rarefied luminosity of the Azuchi donjon's lacquered floor. An equivalent image is created by the dazzling floor of the third-story room in the Kinkaku, or Golden Pavilion, of the Rokuonji,⁶⁰ an important architectural prototype for Nobunaga's residence, which was built nearly two centuries earlier by that other great political visionary, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, as a symbol of his earthly paradise.

In this room of denaturalized veneers, Eitoku would have fused amplified motifs into the front plane of an impenetrable gold surface. By asserting the physical existence of his materials, he would have refuted any expectation of illusionist space within the picture. Rather than being a mirror image of reality, Eitoku's new spatial world was a restructured abstraction of physical forces. His sensory elements of rhythmic line, commanding shape, saturated color, and brilliant gold leaf communicate on an essentially intuitive level. They appeal not so much to the mind as to the body.

Eitoku's message on the seventh story of Azuchi Castle was explicit. It confronted visitors with an aesthetic vision of Nobunaga's ideal realm and compelled them to respect it, for Eitoku's sense of pictorial space was perfectly attuned to the commanding spirit of the age of Nobunaga.

