DEVALUED CURRENCY

Elegiac Symposium on Paradigm Shifts
Part 2

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INTRODUCTION: REGARDING CHANGE AT ISE JINGŪ

There is something—two or three things, actually—provincial about the idea of paradigm shifts. In its heyday, the notion of incommensurable paradigms was useful in defense of local cultures against encroachments from the outside. Anthropologists and historians in particular took to the notion as support for the happy thought that outlandish systems of belief could not be judged with reference to any universal standard. The leading candidate for universal standard (Science) was understood as itself a province—a remote island continent, with its uniquely intimidating language, hermetic concepts, and incomparably fastidious manners. In the sense most relevant to this symposium, the idea of paradigm shifts is provincial in that it relates to a quintessentially modern and Western experience of continuity as monotony. Kuhn argued that changes so basic can ensue during a shift in paradigm that "what were ducks . . . before the revolution are rabbits afterwards."[1] He is not talking about a change in mere nomenclature

1. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (1962; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 111.

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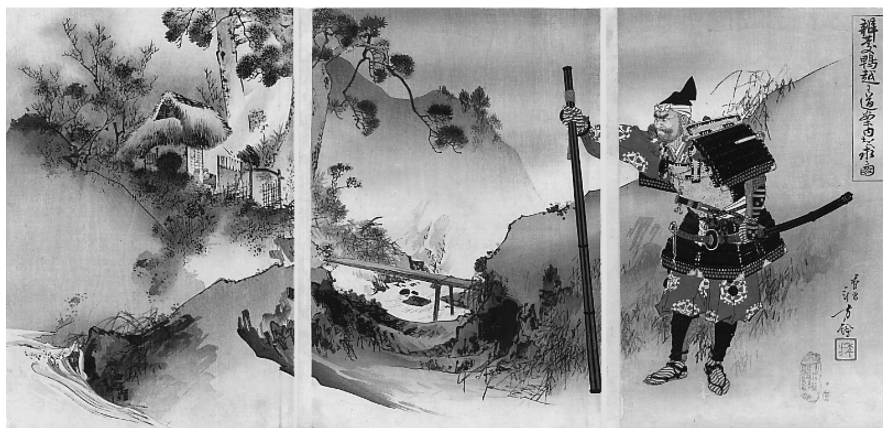

Figure 1. *The Lost Samurai* (1895), woodblock-print triptych by Toshikata Mizuno (1866–1908). Courtesy of Japan Print Gallery, London.

(the shift is from *duck* to *rabbit*). Notice also the tense and mood: "*were* ducks," not "*seem to have been* ducks." Expelled from scientific memory, ducks migrate from the textbooks of science to those of metadisciplines—history of science, philosophy of science—on the opposite side of campus. In its way of seeing the world and its way of doing business, one science or another has been transformed. It is hard to imagine a theory better suited to a culture so impatient with continuity.

Other cultures, I hope and believe, regard and manage change differently. As a student of modernist drama and art, which are deeply indebted to those of Japan, I have learned something about Japanese attitudes toward and ways of dealing with major change and have found them difficult to parse in Western terms. Take the shift, apparently revolutionary, from the way things were organized under the Tokugawa shogunate to the way things got reorganized after the accession of Emperor Meiji in 1867. My subject here is art rather than politics, so let Exhibit A be a triptych of the Meiji era (fig. 1). "The Lost Samurai," a set of three woodblock prints designed by Toshikata Mizuno and published in 1895, is said in an online gallery description to picture a warrior who, "hoping to obtain directions, spots a person in a small hut deep in the mountains." But the lost samurai does not look especially hopeful; nor does he appear the kind of samurai who, even if lost, would ask for directions at a pastoral hut. With his hands in mail mittens—one gripping a sword; the other, a stick fully his height—the samurai glowers with what looks to be impotent menace. Certainly, the contrast that Toshikata has drawn between samurai and hermit could not be more stark. The former is wearing regalia and colorful armor (in blue, brown, red, orange, and yellow layers, plus a headdress in black, fixed to his brow with a fussy white bow)—all detailed in the style of kabuki prints, including gesture and facial expression. The hut with its thatched little roof, the little bridge over the little stream, and the iconographically correct misty landscape are done cursorily

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in black ink and wash, as required by classic *sumi-e* style. The latter originated in seventh-century China (Tang dynasty) and migrated, under Zen auspices, to Japan in the mid-fourteenth century. *Sumi-e* is thus referred to by some as "Zen style," but its context is not necessarily Buddhist.

Two characteristically Japanese styles of pictorial art—one understated, one hyperbolic—are posed here as in conflict, and the conflict is represented as if self-evidently clear. The warrior is portrayed as if indignant at the countryfolk. Had their backward, colorless, tradition-bound modesty given comfort to the emperor in his determination to lose the shogunate and samurai? Somehow I doubt it. But a lively, passionate, and chivalric era had come to an end—or so it was said—in the name of a prior and more naturally Japanese order. Hence the term for this apparent shift in paradigm: the Meiji Restoration. But it is unclear, to me anyway, what it was that needed restoring. The proper order of Japan, it was an axiom of Shinto belief, had been continuous from the seventh century BCE, when Kamuyamato Iwarebiko, a descendant of Amaterasu, sun goddess of Nippon (Land of the Rising Sun), became its first emperor under the name of Jimmu. Emperor Meiji (born Mutsuhito) was one-hundred-twenty-second in descent from Jimmu. The first fourteen emperors in the official lineage are thought by historians to be legendary, and so the relevant clause in the emperor's title ("seated on the throne occupied by the same dynasty changeless through ages eternal") is regarded as slightly fanciful. But it is accepted that Ojin, who ascended the throne in 270 CE, is a historical personage and that the line of descent from him to Emperor Meiji is as straight as a line ever gets.

On the other hand, the shogunate too was ancient, by no means a late imposition on imperial governance. The title *sei-i taishōgun* (roughly "supreme commander, conqueror of barbarians") was held by military commanders-in-chief from the eighth to twelfth centuries; and the institution, the shogunate per se, was established in 1192. The Tokugawa (or Edo) shogunate was, at its founding around 1600, only the latest in a series, each led by another clan of the military aristocracy; though the shogunate at Edo was the most tenacious, lasting more than one-third of a millennium. Further, the historically verifiable samurai date back perhaps as far as historically verifiable emperors do. Both shogun and samurai had been, throughout their known history, subordinate, at least nominally, to the emperor; emperors of the one dynasty had reigned virtually without interruption (there were regencies) but rarely governed, their powers assumed by ministers of state; and, in any case, there had never been—not really—an emperor of Japan. The seventh-century titles translated, since Meiji's time, as *emperor* are *tennô* (heavenly sovereign) and *tenshi* (son of heaven). Japan was not an empire but a collection of contiguous islands, and its sovereign was a demigod and chief priest (or perhaps shaman) of the national religion Shinto, but not the holder of a political office. It does seem that the Meiji emperor held more direct authority of political and military kinds than most of his predecessors. Still, his

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government and military were run by bureaucrats (though of a class different and lower than those who had exercised power before). Moreover, the samurai themselves had long since been transformed, under the Tokugawa, from soldiers into bureaucrats; and not a few of the Buddhists among them put down their swords and became monks.

Then why is the Meiji Restoration so called? Perry's "opening" of Japan to the West occurred when the prince who would be Meiji was about a year old, and Japanese elites absorbed the basics of Western history. France had had its Bourbon Restoration under Louis XVIII and Charles X, the British under Charles II had had their Stuart Restoration—and at the same time as Japanese nationalists decided that Nippon had always been an empire and its *tennô* an emperor, they determined that Japan, like these Western powers, had undergone the restoration of an interrupted order. But what happened constitutionally in Japan after 1867 seems, from a perspective not so far above sea level, rather limited. The court of the *tennô* relocated from Kyoto to the seat of de facto power at Edo. Samurai armies were disbanded and their social class in principle abolished, but the samurai of the time had not much in common with the warriors celebrated or lampooned in Meiji era prints like Toshikata's. And while the ruling shogun was dismissed and the institution of the shogunate abolished, even the emperor who had signed the decrees reigned more than he ruled over Japan. The same three institutions—reigning sovereign, ruling vizier, and military aristocracy—that had been in place, in one arrangement or another, "changeless through ages eternal," remained, at least structurally, in place. Did anyone in Japan believe otherwise?

Or better: what did Toshikata believe? It should be possible to approach an answer in stylistic terms. The kabuki milieu of the warrior in "The Lost Samurai" was thriving when Meiji took the throne but was fading out by 1895 when Toshikata made parodic use of it. Paradoxically, kabuki style in visual art is associated both with the Meiji Restoration and with the samurai of history and legend, though it is hard to imagine either the Meiji or samurai elites in attendance at performances.[2] Kabuki, unlike Noh drama, was a popular genre, as were kabuki woodblock prints; and conceivably, the contorted features of Toshikata's samurai reflect resentment that the ancient, noble class into which he was born had been co-opted for such pedestrian use. We may imagine that his grimace is, moreover, defiant. No matter what the historical time in which the triptych may be set, it was printed one generation after Meiji had decreed that samurai (a) could no longer wear swords in public or (b) execute commoners who evinced disrespect. The warrior whom Toshikata pictures in full armor (including the customary two blades and a glare threatening violence against a commoner's shack) is a figure of the indeterminate past, or else he is in violation of imperial edicts. Not impos-

2. However, a kabuki performance was given for the emperor himself on April 21, 1887.

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sibly, since he is lost (like a sailor marooned without news of Japan's surrender to MacArthur), this samurai is in violation unawares. Either way, it is reasonable to suppose that his glare is directed, in some part, at the *sumi-e* style of the landscape in which he appears so out of place. *Sumi-e* is immemorial, timeless—as immemorial and timeless, let us say, as the natural ancient order of Japan that Meiji partisans suppressed the samurai and shogunate in order to "restore." At another level, presumably—I mean the level at which it is the samurai of legend, merely, who appear as characters in kabuki plays—the actual samurai, those who served as bureaucrats under the Tokugawa, would have had contempt for most genres of woodblock print and have preferred to acquire for their homes traditional scrolls brushed in modest *sumi-e* style.[3]

The samurai in Toshikata's triptych may be clueless, but the artist was evidently mindful of what was happening beyond his woodblock; and mindful, too, of the mindfulness of his audience. At best, I am an amateur of this art form, but it seems clear that Toshikata's piece is remarking on the shift—the supposed shift—in paradigm that had left the samurai wandering without place or role in Meiji Japan. Did that shift, the image prompts us to ask, restore an order even more ancient than that of the samurai? Was the shift, in other words, as it had been made out to be by the shifters? Given the increasingly noticeable presence of foreigners, and also the Westernization of the Japanese military and even monarchy, had there not been, rather than a restoration, a leap forward into the future? Or a fall sideways into the present day of an alien culture? Did not the Meiji Restoration have more to do with Commodore Perry than with Amaterasu Omikami? If such was Toshikata's conclusion, then the basic black-and-white landscape of his triptych, signaling continuity with immemorial tradition, would have to have been a kind of joke. More likely, I think, the artist saw that two ways of understanding the recent developments in Japan were being offered simultaneously and that there was little to choose between them. Both paradigms may have seemed to him fishy, shallow, or wrong. In which case, "The Lost Samurai" should be read as ironic.[4]

3. Unfortunately, I have not found, in any language that I can read, a persuasive account of the sociology of nineteenth-century Japanese prints and drama. It is clear, though, that the condescension among the upper classes and cognoscenti in Japan to woodblock prints is, even today, palpable. As for the artistic preferences of the late Edo and Meiji eras, there was one genre of woodblock print that at least some aristocrats admired: *surimono*. These are small-edition, small-sized, de luxe prints to order, often bearing extensive calligraphy (mostly of poems); and these embody a low-key but powerful aesthetic all their own. European Impressionists and van Gogh were collectors of Hiroshige and Hokusai; Picasso's interest was mainly in the erotic genre called *shunga*. Frank Lloyd Wright, however, was an important collector and promoter of *surimono*: see Joan B. Mirviss and John T. Carpenter, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of Surimono* (Trumble, CT: Weatherhill, 1995).

4. I am hesitant to find irony in this picture, or any other picture, of this tradition. My hesitation comes from an experience of interpretive failure with a Kuniyoshi print confronting the viewer with three unreadable faces. One is the face of an *oiran* (a highest-class courtesan), the most haughty and sophisticated that I have seen portrayed in art. Cowering behind her is a sumptuously dressed child, presumably illegitimate, looking with what seems to be fear at a point off the right side of the image. The courtesan is looking at that point as well, though what feelings

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I do not mean that the moral of Toshikata's piece is *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*—nothing so jaded (or French). Look again at the lost samurai's face. He has a strong feeling to express, apparently, and is doing so. Still, an expression not dissimilar can be found on the face or makeup "mask" of nearly any major figure at the climax of almost any kabuki play. That histrionic look is an iconographic sign. I have seen famously serene monks, in kabuki prints, wearing expressions like the lost samurai's face. Is the emotion a skit? These are theatrical prints, stylistically, but their subject matter would seem to carry historical and political significance. Was the Meiji Restoration, for Toshikata and his audience, a skit or in-joke? Did history (revolutions, restorations, changes of capital cities) seem to them histrionic—a performance? And what of change itself—another skit?

I will hazard this much in answer to my rhetorical questions: it is not inconsistent with the evidence of nineteenth-century political history in Japan, or the evidence of Japanese woodblock prints of the same period, that reconstitutions and restorations and overthrows are validly understood in theatrical terms. It would not be the first time that a modern Asian polity was so interpreted.[5] More consistent, however, might be to construe the performance of Japanese politics in terms of another ritual—a ritual of the state religion whose function may be to obviate fundamental change. The *tennô*'s court at Kyoto transferred to Edo, displacing the shogun from his own capital and abolishing the shogunate—a momentous historical event surely, a shift in political paradigm—but how different was it from the once-per-generation destruction and reconstruction of the shrines of Ise Jingū? As home of the imperial *kami* Amaterasu, Ise is the chief sanctuary of

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or thoughts her look indicates are (to me) obscure. In any case, the *oiran*'s look is not welcoming. She is more sumptuously dressed even than the child, but at just the spot on her kimono where she would be seated (she is standing, in the image) is a third face, embroidered or painted on the fabric—the face, unmistakably, of Daruma, the founder of Zen Buddhism. When she sits, it will be on the Zen master's face. Daruma too is looking at the point, off the print's right side, that has riveted the attentions of the *oiran* and child, but his features seem to me paralyzed with shock—as in: Where am I? What am I doing *here*? The only readings of this image that make sense to me are ironical. I can interpret the piece as saying, "Here is what we have come to as a society, where the *oiran* of some aristocrat wears the greatest of Zen masters on the seat of her gown." Or else, I could interpret it to say, "Here is where Buddhist disdain for *ukiyo-e* belongs—between a prostitute and a floor cushion." *Ukiyo-e* means "art of the floating world," the floating world being what a Buddhist knows as *samsara*—the burdensomely trivial realm of pleasures, events, relationships, and mere things—from which, with strenuous effort of spirit, one can be freed. Thus, either reading might be valid; but I suspect that both are wrong and that it is my Western attunement to irony that prevents my understanding properly. There is a print by Toshikata (made several decades later) on a related theme: in "Beauty and Daruma Reverse Roles," which was the frontispiece for a novel, the Zen master wears the kind of ladies' kimono worn by the *oiran* in Kuniyoshi's print. He is sitting opposite a "beauty" (the *bijn* is a basic thematic category of prints) who is dressed in a plain Buddhist robe and holding a *hossu*—the Zen fly-swatter that is an iconographic attribute of Daruma himself. I know of at least one *ukiyo-e* print depicting a "Courtesan as Daruma Crossing the Sea on a Reed" (by Suzuki Harunobu, 1766–67). I have also seen a scroll painting (artist unknown) from about 1930, in which Daruma towers over a doll-like *bijn* whose kimono is decorated with what appear to be images of hell (a demon, a skeleton, etc.). In any of these cases, what the viewer is to make of the relationship between Zen master and *bijn* is unobvious, though I sense that "ironic" would not do the relationship justice.

5. See, for instance, Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), and Jonathan D. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain* (New York: Viking, 2007).

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Figure 2. *Kodenchi,* empty site for the reconstruction of Ise shrines immediately adjacent. © 2001 Jingū-shicho

Shinto and Japan. In the ritual of *shikinen sengu*, the sixty-some shrine buildings of Ise (as well as the Uji Bridge leading to them over the Isuzu River) are demolished, then rebuilt, exactly, to the last detail, on the *kodenchi*, the vacated site of the last disassembled shrine (fig. 2). As Arata Isozaki, known for masterpieces of architecture in the West as well as in Japan, explains the procedure:

> Each building in the shrine complex has an identical double, one of which is in use while the other is disassembled, then rebuilt. The period of rebuilding is officially set at 20 years. This ritualistic and performative rebuilding has persisted, it is said, since 685 C.E. (i.e., the fourteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tenmu). It is believed that the period of 20 years is predicated on the life span of buildings whose pillars are sunk directly into the ground, without foundation; or it may be the time needed for passing down the necessary carpentry techniques; or there may be another, more mysterious reason. Completion of the next rebuilding is scheduled for the year 2013.[6]

6. Arata Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, trans. Sabu Kohso, ed. David B. Stewart (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 323 n. 1. Pages 117–69 of this book comprise a brilliant commentary on the architecture of Ise Jingū.

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Figure 3. First fence, with main gate, surrounding the *shōden*, inner precinct of the enshrined *kami* Amaterasu at Ise. © 2001 Jingū-shicho

There have been sixty-one such unbuildings and rebuildings, historically verifiable, over the past 1,300 years, and the official line of Shinto is that this ritual has been going on for about two millennia, ever since the *kami* left the emperor's palace at Yamato and found a home that she preferred in Ise. Since that time, her residence has been the small *shōden* in Ise's most sacred inner precinct, which is enclosed by four rows of fences, beyond even the first of which only descendants of Amaterasu are admitted, bearing gifts (fig. 3).

Imagine a ritual of this kind conducted every twenty years in the Vatican—tearing down and rebuilding St. Peter's Basilica—or conducted at the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Imagine Jews celebrating, as a scheduled ritual occurrence (rather than mourning, in daily prayer, at three annual fasts, and even at the climax of wedding ceremonies), the destruction of the Jerusalem Temples. To picture any of these possibilities, you need first to imagine that monotheists in the West had come to reject their architectural, as well as ontological, foundationalism; had got beyond their addiction to real estate (NB *real*); had abandoned their ideals of solidity, permanence, or grandeur; and had embraced notions of artistic beauty demanding radical simplification (and efficient deconstruction). The Ise shrines are architecturally granaries of linear shape, built, without nails, of cypress, and with thatched gabled roofs comprised of miscanthus reeds; the only other materials used are gold and copper for the

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Figure 4. Detail of roof construction and balustrade, main sanctuary, Ise.
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hardware (fig. 4).[7] These characteristics have had incalculable effect on the way the Japanese have built their buildings for many centuries—though it is forbidden to reproduce the Ise style of architecture elsewhere and, besides, only the imperial elite and their carpenters know how the insides of the buildings look.

Even more influential on Japanese culture, we may surmise, has been the effect of each generation's understanding that their most ancient and revered structures are always in process of intentional destruction and reconstruction. The buildings are thirteen (perhaps twenty) centuries old but never develop, are not permitted to develop, the patina of age. They are primeval but not old. As one of the early Western commentators on Ise Jingū put it:

> The Parthenon . . . is aesthetically the greatest and most sublime building in stone, as are the Ise shrines in wood. But still there is a great difference. Even if the Parthenon had not been blown to ruins it would today still be only a monument of ancient times, as life is missing from it. How very different are the shrines at Ise! Not only are the religious rites and the everlasting stream of worshippers a living presence, the

7. The rebuilding process takes eight years of the twenty-year cycle, requires 14,000 pieces of timber, 25,000 sheaves of miscanthus reeds, and 122,000 specialist carpenters. Over sixty structures are rebuilt, and moreover all vestments and sacred treasures (supplied by the imperial family) are replaced (in all: 1,576 articles in 125 categories). Preparing each of these articles requires specialist skills and knowledge dating back numerous centuries. See the entry "Shikinensengū" in *The Encyclopedia of Shinto*, available online at eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords (accessed November 26, 2007).

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Figure 5. Aerial view of the "divine forest" surrounding Ise Jingū, Mie prefecture.
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shrines have yet another vital quality, which is entirely original in its effect, intention, and perception. This is the fact that the shrines are always new.[8]

The purity of the shrines is thought to depend on a renewal consisting of replacement and shifting. I use that gerund not only to recall us to our subject, shifts in paradigm, but also because there is no other word for what happens at Ise Jingū. Each structure in the complex has immediately at its side an empty space that is constantly in preparation for shifting the *kami*'s treasures from one set of structures to fresh duplicates. Until the eighth century, "whenever a new emperor ascended the throne, the capital had been moved" as well—and I suppose the shifting of Emperor Meiji's court from Kyoto to Edo was, in this sense at least, the restoration of a lapsed tradition.[9] At the *shōden* in Ise, it is the tutelary *kami* of the emperor and nation who shifts, though only back and forth between contiguous sites. If the *kami* is regarded as herself a paradigm, then yes, there is a paradigm shift at Ise. It takes place in the darkness of night, unwatched, deep inside the "divine forest," on schedule, every twenty years (fig. 5). This paradigm *shifts* but never ages, and *it does not change*. At Ise Jingū, as in Western science, the only paradigm shift—the only truly revolutionary change—would be no longer to shift at all.

8. Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan* (Tokyo: Sandeidō, 1937), 139.

9. Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, 131.

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Postscript

It was learning about the *shikinen sengu* ritual that enabled me to understand, insofar as I do, the curious experience of the Western amateur in the market for *ukiyo-e* prints. Advice to new collectors is not hard to come by, much of it alarming and all of it confusing. One useful piece of advice is: look twice at the name, the full name, of any print's designer. Japanese dealers may offer a Hiroshige print without specifying that the Hiroshige in question is not Hiroshige I, also called Hiroshige Utagawa, also called Hiroshige Ando, also called Hiroshige Ichiyusai. His closest disciple (and eventual son-in-law) received the name Hiroshige II from Hiroshige I (and there are also a Hiroshige III and IV). Kunisada (a contemporary and collaborator of Hiroshige I and II) often signed Toyokuni III as his name (Toyokuni I being Kunisada's teacher)—but there are also successive Kunisadas with art-dynasty numbers following the name. Myself, I have not found that Japanese dealers or galleries conceal anything that they consider important from potential buyers. Hiroshige II often worked on woodblock designs with Hiroshige I and developed (as was expected of disciples) a derivative style. If that style is what the collector seeks to collect, well—Hiroshige is the style's name.

A second piece of advice, more alarming, is not to buy *ukiyo-e* prints at all except from a handful of galleries worldwide—galleries where each item sold is museum quality and its provenance clearly established. It is museum people who mostly give this advice (and then hint that a gift to the collections they oversee would, in the fullness of time, be welcome). What you are warned against in particular is that irresponsible dealers will sell you a posthumous "restrike" print, made with original but worn-down and repaired woodblocks. Or worse, they may sell you an image printed, using expertly recarved blocks, on authentically handmade (but cunningly aged) *washi* paper. It is true that I have noticed suspect items of the kind on auction occasionally but always offered at opening bids very far below what a posh gallery would ask for a first-edition print. The larcenous dealer is by no means getting rich quick. Japanese and Western dealers, posh or otherwise, are all happy, in my experience, to discuss the ontological status of their prints for sale. It is just that Japanese ontology (as Roland Barthes explained in *L'Empire des signes*) differs radically from the one involved with the Western art market. Ontologically speaking, an *ukiyo-e* print is called an original when it comes from the first edition approved by the artist. But what do "original" and "the artist" mean in a context (a) where a minimum of three artists (designer, woodblock carver, and printer) are involved from the beginning; (b) where the designer's signature and seal (if any) are carved in a woodblock, not added by hand; (c) where the designer hands the carver a colorfree cartoon (later destroyed, presumably without regret) as a guide for making the print; and (d) where it is never certain who chose and then mixed the colors? Moreover, *ukiyo-e* prints were unnumbered and were published, often, in editions of a thousand or more.

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How different, then, is a good print of a restrike edition—if the woodblocks are expertly repaired—from a print of the first-edition strike or, for that matter, from an outstandingly well-done print of a posthumous edition? There is no original (no "artist's proof" or color cartoon) with which to compare any of them.

The original and the unique are not especially valued in this ontology—Plato was not Japanese—and the recarving of important woodblock designs can be national events in Japan. The prints that result are not thought of as facsimiles, in the Western derogatory sense; they are originals of a fresh edition of an old, well-loved design. Virtually every skilled woodblock carver and printer in Tokyo during the years from 1998 to 2004 took part in preparing a complete, new edition of the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series, designed in the 1850s by Hiroshige (that's Hiroshige I—though among the designs is one entirely the work of Hiroshige II). The paper in this new edition differs from that of the first edition in that *washi* is now somewhat differently made (though still made by hand and still, I am told, by artisans of the same family), and the pigments differ in that they are more durable now and less susceptible to fading. It is assumed that this latest edition will be the last recarved printing, ever, of this series, because the skills demanded are likely to die out with the present generation.[10] Each print in this "200th anniversary edition" costs around two hundred dollars and looks about as close as anything could, not to an 1850s original as it looks today, but to an early printing from the first edition *in the year of its initial release*.[11] For the thousands of additional dollars that you would pay for an 1850s (rather than twenty-first century) print from this series, you would be acquiring a prestige wholly un-Japanese, plus what is called patina—consisting, in the case at hand,

10. On the other hand, a Canadian, David Bull, got himself trained as a traditional woodblock carver in Tokyo and has busied himself there, for decades, producing not only expertly recarved editions of *ukiyo-e* prints but elaborating on all the old values of Japanese artists. These he defends, online and in the media, with polemical force and charm. He will, for instance, not sell you an individual print—you must "subscribe" to a full year's worth of ten, though he charges barely $60 each for them. He refuses to number prints or to limit editions—printing can continue as long as the woodblocks for a given print last and there is demand for more. He objects to any "attempt to maintain an artificially high price for a commodity by restricting the supply available. When people in other fields try tricks like this, they are castigated by society, and perhaps even find themselves in trouble with the law. How on earth is it that the world of prints has allowed itself to be caught up in this ridiculous practice? A practice that ultimately, over a century of incremental subversion, completely destroyed the world of printmaking. . . . What kind of value would a printmaker want his prints to have? Should he really care what financial value they have? Should he want people to collect his prints as investments? If so, then he should sell stock certificates, not prints. I make prints because I like using my skills to make beautiful objects out of beautiful materials—cherry wood, fluffy paper, and soft pigments. Both the process and the result give me great pleasure." Bull moreover asks buyers not to frame his prints, since traditionally Japanese lovers of *ukiyo-e* do not do so. Woodblock prints, he maintains, are for holding in the hand—just so—in a natural light that permits viewing them as three-dimensional works (which indeed they are). For Bull's views on Japanese woodblock prints and printmaking, see especially woodblock.com/surimono/atgallery01.html (and /atgallery02.html) (accessed November 26, 2007), as well as www.asahi-net.or.jp/~xs3d-bull/feedback/brickbats.html (accessed November 26, 2007).

11. The standard price for a complete set of the "anniversary edition" is around $24,000—a price that one could well pay for a single, faultless print from the first edition.

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of repaired wormholes and other insect damage, repaired tears, cleaned-off stains and surface dirt, undoable smears and centerfolds, trimmed margins, wrinkles, toning, foxing, and fading. My impression is that Japanese lovers of *ukiyo-e* prefer to acquire prints from painstakingly made editions of their own time and not simply in order to save money. They prefer to have their Hiroshige, Hokusai, or Utamaro clean, fresh, pure, and lacking in patina, but with the design and colors replicated to the exacting standards of the woodblock artists' guilds. If this idea makes a Western conservator or curator's skin crawl, it should be recalled that the Japanese also prefer to tear down their version of St. Peter's Basilica and rebuild it, clean, every twenty years.

It was, I have come to think, while studying the noble arts of Japan (or while studying Ernest Fenollosa's studies of them) that Ezra Pound came up with his motto for modernism: "make it new." But even Pound did not have what it would take to import the mentality of Ise into Western fine arts. His *Cantos* may be a riff on Homer and Dante, but not a facsimile of either's work. Whereas we in the West go in fear of replication, pay dearly for originals (however defined), number our print editions to make sure almost nobody but ourselves enjoys the same designs—the Japanese, by tradition, regard originality and uniqueness as untoward ideas, and think of patina as dirt.[12] "New" can mean "the same, but clean." In this context, I have lost track of what *paradigm shift* means or could mean, because I am uncertain of the meanings of four basic terms we require to define it. What are paradigm shifts in theory, and do they occur in practice? To answer that question, we need more thoughtfully to define *old* and *new*, *continuity* and *change*.

—*Jeffrey M. Perl*

12. On the "fabricated origin" of Ise Jingū—which is the origin of "Japan-ness" itself—see Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, 159–69.

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