

Crafting Identities

Tableware for the Meiji Emperor

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Abstract

As Japan struggled to free itself of the 'unequal treaties' imposed upon it by foreign powers in the mid-nineteenth century, the Meiji Emperor (1868–1912) was also seeking to establish his position as ruler in the eyes of both the citizens of Japan and audiences overseas. While the country embarked on a period of widespread modernisation along Western lines, building railroads and factories, educating the masses and developing strong armed forces, the emperor himself emerged from the seclusion previously expected of Japan's imperial figurehead, greeting foreign visitors according to European models of etiquette and hosting lavish Western-style banquets.

Bridging both Western and Japanese dining styles, and featuring pieces produced in Japan and Europe during the first half of the Meiji era, this study examines the ceramic tableware of the imperial court and the documentary sources that record its commissioning and use. Historically neglected, the study of Meiji-era ceramics as it has developed over recent years is dominated by export-focused narratives. By way of redressing this balance, this thesis focuses on the emperor as consumer before turning to consider the career of Arita potter Tsuji Katsuzō (1848–1929), a maker of imperial tableware, to explore an alternate aspect of the role played by ceramics within Meiji-era Japan. Reconstructing the strategies that lay behind the selection of imperial tableware and examining how it was then used, I argue that these objects were employed to craft the identity of Japan's new ruler. Connecting the emperor to rulers of centuries past and to those of distant lands through their design and in the material practices of their use, ceramics set on the imperial table positioned the Meiji Emperor as sovereign and invited others to do the same.

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Note on text:

Japanese words are transliterated using the modified Hepburn system, with macrons omitted for terms in common use. Japanese names are given family name first. Dates from the Gregorian calendar are given as MONTH DD, YYYY. Where a Japanese date precedes Japan's adoption of the Gregorian calendar on January 1, 1873, these are written: day DD month MM, ERA YY [YYYY] in the text and ERA YY/MM/DD in the footnotes.

Introduction

As Japan struggled to free itself of the ‘unequal treaties’ imposed upon it by foreign powers in the mid-nineteenth century, the Meiji Emperor was also seeking to establish his position as ruler in the eyes of both the citizens of Japan and audiences overseas. While the country embarked on a period of widespread modernisation along Western lines, building railroads and factories, educating the masses and developing strong armed forces, the emperor himself emerged from the seclusion previously expected of Japan’s imperial figurehead, greeting foreign visitors according to European models of etiquette and hosting lavish Western-style banquets.

These banquets, and more specifically the tableware they employed, are the focus of my research. However, to examine Western tableware and dining alone would emphasise the exotic to the point of overlooking acts that created links with the past. Bridging both Western and Japanese dining styles, and featuring pieces produced in Japan and Europe, the full spectrum of ceramic tableware of the Meiji imperial court has been selected as the focus for this study. Using archival sources preserved by the Imperial Household Agency to shed further light upon imperial tableware held by institutions that range from ceramics companies and museums in Arita, to a former imperial convent in Kyoto and the Imperial Cuisine Division of the Imperial Household Agency, my research reconstructs the strategies that lay behind the selection of imperial tableware during the Meiji era (1868–1912).

This introductory chapter sets out the research context for this study through a review of existing scholarship on Meiji-era ceramics that demonstrates the dominance of export-led narratives. It also addresses the theoretical approach that underpins this thesis: an approach that highlights the importance of objects in the construction of social identity. A statement of my hypothesis and research questions is accompanied by an overview of sources used, before my wider aims for this thesis are framed through a discussion of two particularly problematic terms:

emperor and Western. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of those to follow.

Beyond Export

The academic study of Meiji-era ceramics has progressed greatly in recent years through both exhibition and publication, but in many ways it has retained a Meiji-era outlook on the role of ceramics. While discussions of ceramics from Japan's Momoyama (1568–1615) and Edo (1615–1868) periods embed their subject within wider cultural practices of those times, encompassing themes of performance, patronage, and aesthetic and artistic practice, discussion of Meiji-era ceramics has remained closely focused upon export, (international) exhibition and technological development.¹ In these ways, the scholarship as it stands reflects the goals of the Meiji Emperor's government, mobilising ceramics and other crafts as commodities and exhibits to secure profit and prestige overseas. As such, while great progress has been made in the study of Japanese ceramics produced during the Meiji era, the use of ceramics *within* Meiji-era Japan has been neglected.

Until quite recently, Japanese ceramics produced in the Meiji era held little interest to scholars, the developing fervour for export and technological change of those times perceived as wholly negative in their influence. A history of Japanese ceramics from prehistory to present published in 1960 elucidated developments of the century past in two short paragraphs. A history as bleak as it was concise, it observed: 'The development of a modern industrial society in Japan following the restoration of Imperial government in 1868 meant the eventual decline of all the elements of social and economic life which had given birth to the best in Japanese art, including ceramics.'² With no pieces from the Meiji era illustrated, it was shown as a lacuna devoid of life and art between the productions of Edo-period kilns and

¹ Dating for these periods is given following G. B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978). For recent publications exploring the diverse roles played by ceramics before the Meiji era, see: Louise Allison Cort and Andrew M. Watsky, eds., *Chigusa and the Art of Tea* (Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2014); Andrew L. Maske, *Potters and Patrons in Edo Period Japan: Takatori Ware and the Kuroda Domain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, *Vessels of Influence: China and the Birth of Porcelain in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012).

² Roy Andrew Miller, *Japanese Ceramics* (Tokyo: Toto Shuppan, 1960) 99.

the twentieth century's Mingei movement.³ Ceramics had indeed held specific value as export commodities during the period, mobilised under the slogans *shokusan kogyō* or 'promotion of manufacturing,' and *yushutsu kogyō*: 'promotion of exports.' Since dubbed 'the golden age of ceramic exports,' official agencies and private companies alike made concerted efforts to engage markets overseas and secure a good display at international exhibitions.⁴ As the vacuum of scholarship on Meiji-era ceramics has come to be filled in recent decades, these nineteenth-century concerns continue to echo through the literature.

While the historic neglect of Meiji-era ceramics has left space for pioneering research on potters and companies of the highest rank and achievements, export stands as the dominant theme in the body of research now taking shape. In *Master Potter of Meiji Japan*, Pollard focused on Miyagawa (Makuzu) Kōzan (1842–1916). One of two ceramicists appointed Artist to the Imperial Household during the Meiji era, Kōzan was among the elite of his time and yet Pollard had to break much new ground. Exploring how Kōzan adapted through the period, Pollard observes that 'As a successful manufacturer of export wares and a frequent participant in international and domestic exhibitions, Kōzan in many ways embodied Meiji government policies.'⁵ Other researchers have focused on individual companies. Kamochi presents the history of the company Seiji Kaisha (est. 1879) as a window onto Imari porcelain during the Meiji era.⁶ While Seiji Kaisha did not survive into the twentieth century, other Arita companies founded in the Meiji era continue to thrive and scholars have recorded the achievements of Kōransha (est. 1875) and Fukagawa Seiji (est. 1894) for in-house publication.⁷ Although domestic production

³ Established in the 1920s, the Mingei movement encouraged appreciation of traditional folk crafts, using them to inspire contemporary artist-craftsmen.

⁴ Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai, ed., *Meiji taishō jidai no Nihon tōji: Sangyō to kōgei bijutsu* ([Japan]: Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai, 2012), 17.

⁵ Clare Pollard, *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kōzan (1842–1916) and his Workshop* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

⁶ Kamochi Takanori, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari: Higeki no Seiji Kaisha* (Arita: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2006).

⁷ Nakayama Seiki, *Arita yōgyō no nagare to sono ashioto: Kōransha hyakunen no ayumi* (Arita: Kōransha, 1980); Ōkuma Toshiyuki, 'Meijiki no Fukagawa Chūji to Fukagawa Seiji' in *Fukagawa Seiji of Meiji: Meiji no tōki ishō*, ed. Fukagawa Itta (Saga: [Fukagawa], 2000); Yamada Takehisa, *Kōransha 130 nenshi* (Arita: Kōransha Shashi Hensan linkai, 2008).

is mentioned within these studies, export drives the narrative, while the steady rhythm of international exhibitions punctuates discussion to provide a space for evaluation.

New arenas for Japan's engagement with the wider world, international exhibitions were deemed of great importance by Meiji-era officials and have since captivated researchers. In 1983, Maeyama discussed Arita ceramics submitted to domestic and international exhibitions in the early Meiji era.⁸ More recently, the exhibition *Arts of East and West from World Expositions* highlighted pieces displayed at these international spectacles, but also described the exchange of Japanese ceramics for Sèvres' porcelains at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1878: a rare insight into the counter-movement of objects.⁹ Jackson meanwhile examined the collection of Japanese ceramics assembled at the behest of the South Kensington Museum and displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876; though London sought a collection that might offer a historical overview of Japan's ceramic production, its Japanese commissioners ensured that contemporary manufactures were very much in evidence.¹⁰ Now belonging to the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, this episode highlights some of the impetus for this focus on exhibitions: the spectacular pieces displayed at international exhibitions were actively collected by institutions at the time, securing their availability (and institutional relevance) to today's researchers and curators.¹¹

Despite embracing a diversity of approaches and source materials, recent scholarship focusing on the production of ceramics has also come to be dominated

⁸ Maeyama Hiroshi, 'Meiji zenki, naigai hakurankai shuppin no tōjiki nitsuite: Saga, Nagasaki-ken kōsei shiryō nado kara' in *Saga kensei hyakunen kinen: Kindai no Kyūshū tōji ten*, ed. Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōji Bunkakan.

⁹ The exhibition's Japanese title was *Seiki no saiten bankoku hakurankai no bijutsu*; Ito Yoshiaki, '1878 nen Pari bankokuhakurankai ni okeru Nichi-Futsu tōji no kōkan' in *Arts of East and West from World Expositions 1855–1900: Paris, Vienna and Chicago*, ed. Tokyo National Museum et al., ([Japan]: NHK et al., 2004).

¹⁰ Anna Jackson, 'Imagining Japan: The Victorian Perception and Acquisition of Japanese Culture,' *Journal of Design History* 5.4 (1992).

¹¹ For example, see: Rupert Faulkner and Anna Jackson, 'The Meiji Period in South Kensington: The Representation of Japan in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1852–1912' in *Selected Essays*, vol. 1 of *The Nassar D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art, Meiji no Takara: Treasures of Imperial Japan*, ed. Oliver Impey and Malcolm Fairley (London: Kibo Foundation, 1995), 162–76.

by export concerns. Economic historian Miyachi offers both macro- and micro-scale analyses of different production areas.¹² While figures Miyachi includes for domestic consumption often exceed those for exports, they serve as little more than a backdrop for expanding export production in his discussion of the market for Japanese ceramics.¹³ The introduction of Western materials, machinery and expertise, and the development of experimental and educational institutes have also been taken up, with Yamada and Checkland's overviews featuring government imperatives to enhance exports and individual entrepreneurial ambition side by side.¹⁴ On design, official efforts towards improvement are documented in Tokyo National Museum's valuable study of the *Onchizuroku*: design compendiums intended to raise the standard of crafts produced for exhibition and export.¹⁵ The domestic market for ceramics and their use within Japan, meanwhile, remains marginal to discussions.

With detailed and yet wide-ranging coverage of production, exhibition and artistry, Jahn's *Meiji Ceramics* covers great distance in redressing the limited attention paid to ceramics of the era.¹⁶ Subtitled *The Art of Japanese Export Porcelain and Satsuma Ware*, Jahn's focus is almost exclusively upon ceramics produced for sale overseas. Although the domestic market is addressed in part, this is largely confined to the appendices where it is presented as an unchanging space. In her discussion of rural workshops, Jahn notes 'innovations reached remote areas only gradually, and here the demand for objects for use in the home and the Court

¹² Miyachi Hidetoshi, *Kindai Nihon no tōjikyō: sangyō hatten to sangyō soshiki no fukusōsei* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2008).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 46–57.

¹⁴ Yamada Takehisa, 'The Export-oriented Industrialization of Japanese Pottery: The Adaptation of Overseas Technology and Market Information' in *The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization: Another Path to Industrialization*, ed. Tanimoto Masayuki (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Olive Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural bridges* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁵ Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Meiji dezain no tanjō: chōsa kenkyū hōkokusho onchizuroku* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai 1997). Several material correspondents of these designs have been identified, for example see catalogue nos. 10, 20, 22, 29, 34 in Meiji Taishō Jidai, ed., *Meiji taishō jidai*.

¹⁶ Gisela Jahn, *Meiji Ceramics: The Art of Japanese Export Porcelain and Satsuma Ware 1868–1912*, trans. Michael Foster (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2004).

remained unaffected.¹⁷ Domestic and traditional also become interchangeable terms as certain regions ‘turned to producing for export, making only small amounts of traditional pottery,’ while for ‘potters hit in the 1880s by the slump in exports’ domestic commissions ‘offered craftsmen a chance of reacquainting themselves with traditional pottery.’¹⁸ Focusing on art-ceramics rather than those for daily use, Jahn dismisses Western-style tableware of the period as ‘marginal phenomena’ to be omitted from her account.¹⁹ However, among the most intriguing pieces she introduces is a Western-style comport made by Seiji Kaisha for the imperial household.²⁰ The challenge this presents to a static understanding of the domestic market is sadly unexplored.

The bias towards export in publications on Meiji ceramics has not gone unnoticed, but the balance is yet to be righted. Having already drawn attention to the export of ceramics to non-Western countries such as China, Maezaki recently stated that ‘previous scholarship has often treated the subject [of Meiji ceramics] as if the entire ceramic production was for the export market.’²¹ By focusing intently on objects made in Japan for use elsewhere, the rich and myriad meanings of ceramics—previously so important to the cultures of these islands—risk fading into the shadows. In her study of art collector Masuda Takashi, Guth touched upon the appreciation, use and circulation of ceramics, particularly antiques, in the sphere of *chanoyu* tea ceremony during the Meiji era.²² Maezaki meanwhile considers the Japanese market for Chinese-style porcelain for *sencha* tea drinking, highlighting that leading artists of the day served an active domestic market.²³ In the doctoral thesis from which this paper was drawn, Maezaki used Seifū Yohei III’s work as a lens to explore Sino-Japanese interaction in the technical development and

¹⁷ Ibid., 301, 307.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., Preface, 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 217.

²¹ Quote from: Maezaki Shinya, ‘Meiji Ceramics for the Japanese Domestic Market: *Sencha* and Japanese Literati Taste,’ *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 74 (2009–2010), 47. See also: Maezaki Shinya, ‘Late 19th Century Japanese Export Porcelain for the Chinese Market,’ *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 73 (2008–2009).

²² Christine M. E. Guth, *Art, Tea and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), Chapter 3.

²³ Maezaki, ‘Meiji Ceramics.’

consumption of ceramics, developing observations made by Okamoto and Pollard on similarities between Meiji-era ceramics and those of China's Qing dynasty.²⁴ While such insights into the use of ceramics during the Meiji era remain rare, they suggest the potential richness of more domestic concerns within this golden age of export.

From a neglected subject to one dominated by considerations of export, the history of Meiji-era ceramics remains hazardously incomplete. Only by further exploring the domestic role of ceramics in the Meiji era can this gulf be bridged. However, international markets were evidently a pressing concern of the time and as assessments of specific companies or artists cited above reveal, to ignore export in a producer-focused study would likely invoke a denial of their situation. In order to better approach the domestic role played by ceramics, this thesis focuses instead upon a consumer: the Meiji Emperor. Considering a class of object closely associated with export production—Western-style tableware—and encompassing services imported *into* Japan, this thesis sets out to explore what happens when once familiar trajectories are diverted.²⁵

As a research focus, the emperor and his household offer an alternative to export-dominated narratives. During the Meiji era, imperial tableware was commissioned from the Arita workshops of Seiji Kaisha, Tsuji, Kōransha and Fukagawa Seiji, and reference to imperial commissions can be found in the company histories referred to above.²⁶ In addition, despite the vicissitudes of the intervening years, many examples of imperial tableware from the Meiji era have been preserved in the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division within the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. Fifteen years ago, these handed-down items became the focus of an exhibition of imperial tableware at the museum of the Imperial Household Agency: the Sannomaru Shōzōkan.

²⁴ Maezaki Shinya, 'Qing-style Porcelain in Meiji Japan: The Ceramic Art of Seifū Yohei III' (PhD Diss., School of Oriental and African studies, 2009), 25.

²⁵ With debt to Appadurai: Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: commodities and the politics of value' in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁶ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 104, 130, 136–37; Ōkuma, 'Meijiki no Fukagawa Chūji,' 45; Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 7, 10, 40–41.

Titled *Kyōen: kindai no teburu āto* ('Imperial Feasts: Modern Table Art'), the exhibition held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan in 2000 featured a range of dinner services, glassware and cutlery produced for the imperial palace during the Meiji era.²⁷ The seventy-four exhibits included eleven items of silverware, forty-seven pieces of glassware and sixteen exhibits of ceramic tableware, some of which comprised multiple pieces. The ceramics exhibited included tableware from workshops in Kyoto and Arita, but also products of the British manufactory, Minton, all shaped for banquets in Western style. In the catalogue, Oka Yasumasa discussed research undertaken on the glass collections, while practices of imperial dining more broadly and ceramics in particular were discussed in a four-page introductory paper by Ōkuma Toshiyuki, then Head Curator.²⁸

In his text, Ōkuma sought to establish the presiding influence over the ceramics exhibited. While acknowledging that some of the imperial tableware made in Japan was similar to that produced by the French factory Sèvres, for Ōkuma the abiding affinity was towards British wares from the Victorian period, a matter revealed in the survival of pieces made by Minton, the use of naturalistic painting style on one Japanese service, and exotic and eclectic taste in others.²⁹ In conclusion, Ōkuma considered why it might be that British Victorian tableware was favoured over French, stating: 'One answer to this can probably be sought in the fact that Britain, as was Japan, was a kingdom ruled by an 'Emperor.' The norm for the Japanese court should not be the dining table of the French bourgeois citizen, but the British royal household's court banquet.'³⁰ Ōkuma's allusion to a link between the selection of tableware and the nature of a nation's constitution is more tantalising than satisfying. With only three pieces of the turquoise dessert service remaining, Ōkuma could not be certain whether these once existed in greater numbers and were actually used, or indeed whether they might have been

²⁷ Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan, ed., *Kyōen: Kindai no teburu āto* ([Japan]: Kikyō Bunka Kyōkai, 2000).

²⁸ Ōkuma Toshiyuki, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō' and Oka Yasumasa, 'Kyūchū no gurasu shokki ni tsuite' in *Kyōen: Kindai no teburu āto*, ed. Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan. ([Japan]: Kikyō Bunka Kyōkai, 2000).

²⁹ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 6–7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7. Author's translation.

a gift.³¹ Researchers familiar with the ceramics of Sèvres, a factory established under the close patronage of the French monarchy, might also question their dismissal as ‘bourgeois.’ Limited to a few pages, and with uncertainties over how and when services were commissioned, there is more work to be done on the topic of imperial tableware.³²

Building on Ōkuma’s work, but differing in scope and approach, this thesis offers a new analysis of Meiji-era imperial ceramic tableware. The exhibition in 2000 was limited to tableware for Western-style dining; three years later, some of these exhibits were shown again at the museum under the heading ‘Within Westernisation.’³³ While understandable in the restricted space of an exhibition, the exclusion of indigenous forms of tableware encourages a one-sided view of the Meiji-era court. Including services both Western and Japanese in style, and expanding upon the limited information currently available, this thesis uses archival records to offer new insights into the purchases of the Imperial Household Ministry. Most importantly, in my overarching aim to discover a role for Meiji-era ceramics beyond export, I have a different view to the potential of these objects. Within Ōkuma’s conclusion, certain objects were selected because of the emperor’s position, hence British manufactures produced under a monarchy were considered more suitable than those of Republican France. In this respect, my approach fundamentally differs. Examining the full spectrum of tableware crafted for the Meiji Emperor’s use, I do not see these objects as static reflections of his status, but as meaningful tools employed in its production.

In engaging with imperial tableware, this thesis not only seeks to broaden appreciation of Meiji-era ceramics, but also to develop a new understanding of the material identity of the Meiji Emperor. Devised within the sphere of art history, in selecting such a focus this thesis also engages with wider topics in Japanese studies

³¹ Based on the nature of the objects, Ōkuma feels that it is unlikely that they were a gift, but were more likely ordered from a catalogue: *ibid.*, 6–7.

³² In this regard it is worth noting that the Minton ceramics in *Kyōen* are all dated c.1870s–80s, while the Seiji Kaisha pieces are dated to the 1880s: a range developed from the company history.

³³ This exhibition sought to highlight the significance of Chinese influences alongside those of the West and Japan within the court’s decorative arts: Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū dezain: Wa-Chū-Yō no yūwa no bi o motomete* ([Japan]: Kikuyō Bunka Kyōkai, 2003), 40–41.

and histories of dining. Interactions with this additional body of literature shall be elucidated in Chapter 1, but here I would like to explain my approach regarding the relationships between material objects and the construction of identity.

Negotiating Identities

Although this study is situated first and foremost within the field of art history, the objects of this thesis were once in some respects quotidian things. While existing studies of Meiji ceramics tend to focus on vases, exhibition pieces or so-called art-ceramics, I examine vessels for eating and drinking employed in the life of the imperial court. Reflecting this active use, the theoretical approaches underpinning this thesis are drawn from a discourse that has developed between anthropology, archaeology and art history. Preoccupied with the relationships between material things and people, this discourse has been termed material culture studies.³⁴ Drawing on these studies, there are three themes I would like to focus on: appropriation, identity and agency. The utilisation of art and architecture in the shaping of Japan's national identity during the Meiji era has already been documented.³⁵ Here, I seek to understand the role played by both conventional and foreign artistic and cultural forms with regard a more individual sovereign identity as I contend that material things were employed to mediate and even alter the identity of the Meiji Emperor.

With its goal of achieving *bunmei kaika* or 'civilisation and enlightenment,' the Meiji era is often characterised as a period of excessive Westernisation. In the eyes of contemporary foreign observers, this was certainly the case for the imperial court. Foreign guests mourned the loss of the court's 'picturesque' customs, even as they acknowledged the introduction of cultural forms they recognised as their own as little more than inevitable.³⁶ In later years, nationalist agendas re-positioned the adoption and reworking of foreign cultural materials as one of the tenets of

³⁴ For an introduction to this interdisciplinary field with diverse papers and useful bibliographies, see Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁵ See, for example: Christine M. E. Guth, 'Japan 1868 – 1945: Art, Architecture, and National Identity,' *Art Journal* 55.3 (1996).

³⁶ Discussed below in Chapter 5, section 1.

nihonjinron or discourses on the nature of Japaneseness. Critiqued thoroughly by Dale in 1986, according to the *nihonjinron* discourse, 'both the capacity and manner of Japanese assimilations of foreign civilisation [was interpreted] as itself "unique".'³⁷ A key aspect of this philosophy is that the indigenous cultural core remains unaltered, a concept that has proven seductive all too often.³⁸ For myself, the introduction of foreign cultural practices should be read somewhat differently.

The transmission of cultural elements between societies is often defined according to prevailing power relations. Thus, while the politically powerful may appropriate cultural materials from a weaker group, cultural minorities, as Ziff and Rao suggest, 'are encouraged if not obliged, to adapt or assimilate the cultural forms and practices of the dominant group.'³⁹ Westernisation tends to fall into this latter, obligatory, set: the near passive acceptance of its forms a condition of their purported superiority. Thomas noted that the use of European articles by indigenous peoples has been framed in negative terms. While Paolino's account of India in 1800 presented the non-use of European articles by the local population as 'a negative condition which had to be explained,' in other cases where European material was introduced this was taken as 'emblematic of the disintegration of indigenous cultures in the face of imperial expansion.'⁴⁰ Demonstrating the two-way nature of appropriation within the history of the Pacific region, Thomas proposed instead that 'in certain phases of contact and colonial history, indigenous people are no less powerful and no less able to appropriate than the whites who imagine themselves as intruders.'⁴¹ Thomas shows how parties on all sides of

³⁷ Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (Beckenham, Kent: Croon Helm, 1986), 50.

³⁸ For example, Meech closes her otherwise excellent volume on Meiji period prints with the statement: 'The essential strength of Japanese culture has always been its willingness to accept exotic new customs in the absolute certainty that the core, an untouchable "Japaneseness", will still be there, not seriously threatened by a superficial overlay of eclectic imports, whether Chinese or Western.' Julia Meech-Pekarik, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986), 232.

³⁹ Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, 'Introduction to Cultural Appropriation: A Framework for Analysis' in *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, eds. Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 5, 7.

⁴⁰ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 1–2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

intercultural exchanges appropriated objects, re-configuring identities, cultures and the objects themselves in the process. Responsive to the nuance of power relations, Thomas' approach offers a means for considering the adoption of Western cultural forms within the imperial court as wilful and strategic.

Subject to 'unequal treaties' forced upon the shogun's government after the arrival of Commodore Perry's black ships in 1853, Japan was neither colony nor equal.⁴² In such a complex political space, the rebalancing of power relations between Japan and overseas nations became a focus for action. Turning away from polarised rationalisations of immutable Japaneseness or passive Westernisation alike, I am neither making a case for a uniquely Japanese appropriation, nor one merely superficial. Rather, by considering the adoption of foreign dining materials in the imperial court as a form of deliberate appropriation, this study unpicks what use of the foreign meant within this specific context, why such efforts were undertaken and, critically, what impact this had on objects and their users. Furthermore, by subjecting apparently conventional material forms to equal scrutiny, those elements deemed unchanging are also critically examined.

If the adoption of foreign material forms and apparent continuity with the past are both reframed as active, even strategic, processes, the question that comes to the fore is why? Why were certain objects and cultural forms employed in place of others? Bourdieu suggested that 'art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences'.⁴³ As such, the selection of particular material objects and espousal of certain cultural forms defines one's place within society through distinction from those who make alternative choices, and yet individuals are tied into reproducing the same social structure through their actions. Shifting from conceptions of class to discourses around identity opens up more dynamic possibilities for considering the

⁴² These treaties include the 1858 Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed with the United States, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce also signed in 1858, and similar agreements made with France, Holland, Russia and other countries. Opening Japanese ports to foreign trade, these treaties also granted concessions in terms of trading tariffs and extraterritoriality.

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1984), 7.

interaction people and objects. This is partly because the identities in question, unlike Bourdieu's class structures, are available for negotiation.

According to Woodward's definition, 'Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live,' it 'marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not.'⁴⁴ Determining where an individual fits in the larger social corpus, identity can, therefore, be as much about similarity as difference. Unlike Bourdieu's self-reproducing class structures, identity is mutable: it can be asserted and it can be transformed. As Gilroy suggests, 'the thresholds between sameness and difference are not fixed: they can be moved.'⁴⁵

Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, Peleggi argued that the consumption of Western material goods was one means by which the Siamese elite, and in particular its monarchy, chose to redefine themselves in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁶ Although this is a valuable study (particularly given the contemporaneity of the Siamese court of King Chulalongkorn to that of the Meiji Emperor), despite the importance of courtly consumption to Peleggi's account, objects themselves receive little attention. 'From cameras to gramophones to motor cars,' 'European wines, cutlery and dinnerware,' these are simply 'things Western.'⁴⁷ For my own study, the nature of the objects in play is of paramount importance. Restored as ruler in 1868, Japan's emperor needed to establish his place within the country and internationally: re-mapping the thresholds that defined his identity. However, as Gilroy has noted, while 'identity-making has a history ... its historical character is often concealed.'⁴⁸ If identity is not only expressed, but negotiated through objects, however, those objects may supply the evidence to expose such a history.

It has already been suggested here that the adoption of foreign cultural forms and continuation of apparently conventional ones within the Meiji-era court

⁴⁴ Kathryn Woodward, 'Introduction' in *Identity and Difference*, ed. Kathryn Woodward (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1997), 1–2.

⁴⁵ Paul Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity' in *Identity and Difference*, ed. Kathryn Woodward (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1997), 303.

⁴⁶ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 20, 19.

⁴⁸ Gilroy, 'Diaspora,' 303.

served a strategic purpose. No longer considered static, one of the ways in which identity is constructed and re-constructed is performance. In 1990, Butler convincingly argued that gender, an aspect of identity often considered innate and fixed, was not biologically determined but rather constructed through cultural performance.⁴⁹ Conceiving the emperor's sovereign identity as created through performance as much as by virtue of birth makes it available for negotiation. Agency is conferred to both actor and audience: as the performer enacts their identity (wilfully or subconsciously), the onlooker may perceive something different from whatever is intended. Within this, objects can be vital. As Carson has observed, performance often depends upon material things.⁵⁰ Considering the space of performance in which identity might be negotiated as an assemblage of human actors and material things, in order to consider the role of objects within the performance it is necessary to consider how objects might themselves act.

In 1998, Gell argued for the agency of things; as Thomas has noted, an art that is not about meaning or communication, but doing.⁵¹ Gell placed the agency of artworks (themselves very broadly defined) firmly within the context of social relations. In the case of an art object, 'the *index* [artwork] is itself seen as the outcome and/or the instrument of social agency.'⁵² Possessing an agency acquired through social relationships in which they are entwined, artworks are not passive, but able to act on human agents. A fresh evaluation of the potential of material things, Gell's study made a definite mark within the scholarship.⁵³ Within his model of agency, however, Gell disregarded aesthetic and symbolic qualities of art.⁵⁴ As influential as his theories have become, not all are willing to accept such heavy

⁴⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ Barbara G. Carson, *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behaviour and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* (Washington DC: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990), 59.

⁵¹ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Nicholas Thomas, 'Introduction' in *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*, eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 4.

⁵² Gell, *Art and Agency*, 15.

⁵³ See, for example: Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas, eds. *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Liana Chua and Mark Elliott, eds. *Distributed Objects: Meaning and Mattering after Alfred Gell* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).

⁵⁴ Gell, *Art and Agency*, 5-6.

casualties. Layton and others have taken issue with Gell's emphasis on intrinsic agency over culturally based symbolic and communicative aspects.⁵⁵ Morphy, meanwhile, has argued for an alternative model of art as action in which semantics and aesthetics are integral. For Morphy, the power of art lies in its multi-dimensional qualities: art can encode, suggest, convey and affect, and it is used precisely because 'it connects the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience and facilitates complex ways of acting in the world.'⁵⁶

With this understanding, it may be acknowledged that art can work in subtle, even surreptitious ways, or as Tilley notes, 'in a manner that words cannot.'⁵⁷ In his study of Wala canoes Tilley wrote, 'In the field of cultural production and reproduction it is the case that an order of artefacts performs its symbolic work of socialization and the creation of social identities silently, continuously and, therefore, relatively unremarkably.'⁵⁸ The objects that were set upon the emperor's table were rich in meaning, but also served a more quotidian purpose as dining utensils. In this way, might they not have offered a similar potential for the quiet and almost insidiously compelling formation of new social identities?

Approaching Imperial Tableware

The thesis proposed is that ceramic tableware was used to construct the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor.

In examining this thesis, my research questions explore the meanings and use of these objects. Firstly, I examine design as a crystallisation of intentions. Addressing fundamental questions of what kinds of ceramic tableware were used in the imperial palaces of the Meiji era, when were they commissioned and who from,

⁵⁵ Robert Layton, 'Art and Agency: A Reassessment', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9.3 (2003). See also Shirley Campbell, 'The Captivating Agency of Art: Many Ways of Seeing' in *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*, eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 134.

⁵⁶ Howard Morphy, 'Art as Action, Art as Evidence' in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, eds. Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 288–89.

⁵⁷ Christopher Tilley, 'Metaphor, Materiality and Interpretation: Introduction' in *The Material Culture Reader*, ed. Victor Buchli (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 25.

⁵⁸ Christopher Tilley, 'The Metaphorical Transformations of Wala Canoes' in *The Material Culture Reader*, ed. Victor Buchli (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 28.

I consider why particular styles were chosen and what meanings they possessed. Rarely directly stated, the reasons for the selection of certain styles are interpreted from written evidence and comparative analysis. Having established the material intentions behind the creation of these objects, my second cluster of questions focuses on their use and impact. Determining the material practices in which ceramic tableware was deployed both upon and beyond the imperial table, I then ask how these objects affected the identities of those around them, particularly their users but also the craftsmen that made them.⁵⁹

This study draws upon a wide range of primary sources, including objects and archival records, and what I offer is my own interpretation of those materials. Here I introduce some of the principal sources employed, with reference to my research questions and the scope of this project.

The exhibition of Western-style imperial tableware held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan in 2000 featured surviving examples of Meiji-era tableware from the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division, as well as a group of design books.⁶⁰ In his introductory paper for the exhibition catalogue, Ōkuma also referred to a *Goshokki kubun-bo* or ‘Register of classes of tableware’ (presumably an inventory) produced from approximately 1874. However, the information he was able to take from such documentary sources was limited. Describing the records available, he wrote:

The problem is, even if you have an opportunity to see the valuable documents recording the tableware stored at some point, you cannot determine whether ‘English, blue ground tall cup’ or ‘water glass with sheer crest,’ correspond to the surviving tableware, and even if you find they correspond, one cannot identify the production year of the vessel in question.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Drawing on its usage in archaeology, the term ‘material practice’ is used here to indicate human practices with a critical material dimension. Such practices are often dependent not only upon the employment of material things, but also their own potential for action.

⁶⁰ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōden: Kindai no teburu āto*

⁶¹ Ōkuma, ‘Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,’ 4. Author’s translation.

The Register is also apparently ambiguous as to whether items are Western- or Japanese-style. In the face of such obstacles, Ōkuma does not attempt to connect these records to the surviving objects.⁶²

The limitations noted by Ōkuma with regard the study of imperial tableware highlight the complexity of these objects. Being actively used, Ōkuma noted that tableware may be lost to damage, and a single service may comprise pieces of different ages as replenishments are made. He also commented upon the difficulties of dating such pieces, determining whether or not they were used, and establishing how they were acquired (for example by gift or commission). Summing up, he states, 'As a result, to consider in detail the entire history of the Western tableware in the Meiji court can be considered practically impossible.'⁶³ Through the kindness of the Imperial Cuisine Division, I was able to inspect many of the items displayed in the 2000 exhibition, developing my understanding of these works. I was not, however, able to examine either the design books or the 'Register of classes of tableware' studied by Ōkuma, which I recognise as a limitation to my research. Nonetheless, employing a widened range of sources, the present study builds on Ōkuma's valuable work to address some of these difficulties.

Complementing the published collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division examined by the author, a number of surveys were undertaken to examine other imperial tableware of the Edo period and Meiji era.⁶⁴ Fragments of excavated Edo-period ceramic tableware featuring imperial crests were examined at the Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute, while collections of handed-down imperial tableware in Japanese style were surveyed at Reikanji, a former imperial convent in Kyoto, and at the headquarters of Toraya, a confectionary company with a longstanding relationship to the imperial household. Analysed in Chapter 2, these surveys enabled comparison of imperial tableware of the Edo period with that produced in Japanese style in the Meiji-era. In Arita, Kyushu, I surveyed the collections of three companies commissioned to supply tableware to the Imperial

⁶² Ibid., 5.

⁶³ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁴ See **Surveys** in the appendices for details of objects surveyed in private collections; surveys undertaken in institutional collections or of published materials are not detailed.

Household Ministry during the Meiji era: Tsuji, Kōransha and Fukagawa Seiji. The collections at Tsuji also included a number of designs for imperial tableware, as well as archival documents discussed below. For comparison and analysis of designs, I also examined objects at institutions including Kyushu Ceramic Museum, Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives, the British Museum, Maidstone Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Collections at Sandringham.

While these surveys afforded me a better understanding of the full range of tableware produced for imperial use, without associated records, dating of these pieces beyond the broad dates achievable through company histories remained problematic, particularly as certain designs were evidently reused over the generations and many items of Japanese-style tableware were unmarked. Addressing issues of dating and agency within the commissioning of imperial tableware, extensive use was made of a series of records called the *Goyōdōroku* or 'Record of Imperial Supplies.'⁶⁵ Preserved in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo, the *Goyōdōroku* documents procurement of an array of items for the imperial household through estimates, requests for payment and so on. Comprising individual sheets of company or Ministry correspondence only later bound together, the completeness of these records is difficult to assess. Even so, a single year from the Meiji era might span more than twenty thick volumes. Being handwritten, the legibility of individual documents varies widely and can require specialist skill to decipher. In short, these records are extensive, dense and difficult to use. However, they have proved invaluable. Although design aspects are only cursorily indicated, study of the *Goyōdōroku* has enabled me to trace orders for services of specific designs, their costing and dates, as well as shedding further light on processes of commission and the selection of particular companies.

On the producers' side, company records related to this topic within Japan were fragmentary, but nonetheless offered unique insights. The Tsuji family allowed me access to a large collection of unsorted historical materials (originals and copies) relating to Tsuji Katsuzō, who was head of the family for most of the Meiji era. On

⁶⁵ The *Goyōdōroku* examined dated from 1871 to 1889; for logistical reasons, it was not possible to examine records for 1883 and part of 1884. Details of specific volumes are given in the relevant footnotes.

examining these documents, I determined to expand my final research question on the shaping of identity to the makers of imperial tableware as well as its users: the focus of my final chapter. In addition to these records, members of the Momota family deposited a number of documents pertaining to the company Seiji Kaisha at the History and Folklore Museum of Arita.⁶⁶ Including drafts of correspondence, some details of orders, and records relating to the formation of the company, the Momota archives were employed by Kamochi in his history of Seiji Kaisha and referred to by Ōkuma.⁶⁷ I have made my own study of several of these documents, which are particularly helpful for setting the imperial production into its wider context. I also made efforts to locate relevant documents regarding imperial commissions made by European factories. The Garrard Papers at the Archive of Art and Design in London and the Minton Archive recently gifted to the city of Stoke-on-Trent include valuable records; the archives at Sèvres, meanwhile, hold much promise but are yet to yield relevant documentation.⁶⁸

It has not been possible to locate an official source reporting which dinner service was used on what occasion, and it is rare for commissioning documents to specify such matters. However, by consulting diverse sources it has been possible to gradually glean insights into the use of particular services and the impact these objects had upon those around them. These sources include accounts of visiting dignitaries and other memoirs (official, personal, published and private), reports of exhibitions, and the *Reikiroku* or 'Record of Rules' for the Imperial Cuisine Division. As with the *Goyōdoroku*, the *Reikiroku* were compiled from extant documents at a later date. Dealing with miscellaneous matters varying from footmen's uniforms to the destruction caused by fires, these documents shed light on the functioning of the Imperial Cuisine Division, providing contextual information on imperial banquets. Further records in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency employed to build up a picture of imperial dining included photographic albums, architectural drawings and depictions of ceremonial events. Together with the

⁶⁶ For full listings of the Momota archives, see: Arita-chō Rekishi Minzoku Shiryokan, *Arita-chō rekishi minzoku shiryokan shūzō monjo mokuroku*, (Arita: Arita-chō Rekishi Minzoku Shiryokan, 1981), 1:32–49 and 2:25–39.

⁶⁷ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 130, 136–37; Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 5.

⁶⁸ Details of these records are given in the appropriate footnotes below.

secondary literature available, these sources helped to situate imperial tableware within the social contexts, networks and assemblages of its use.

The chronological scope of this project has been shaped by certain understandings, but these boundaries have been further delineated by the nature of the source materials. The principal focus taken is on the first half of the Meiji era: 1868 to around 1890. In 1889, following his move to the newly built Meiji Palace, the Meiji Emperor granted Japan a Constitution, establishing the role of emperor and populace alike. The two decades that preceded this moment were a time of foundation, legitimation and negotiation. Given my concern with the development of a new role for the Meiji Emperor, it is this earlier period of flux that is the most interesting.

The records available and difficulties in dating imperial tableware also encourage a temporal focus on the first half of the Meiji era. The earliest *Goyōdoroku* records in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency date to 1871 and include records related to imperial tableware.⁶⁹ Soon after the move to the Meiji Palace in 1889, responsibility for tableware orders was passed from the Supplies Division to the Imperial Cuisine Division. Although valuable documents relating to this transition are preserved in the archive, the subsequent Imperial Cuisine Division records for purchases do not appear to have been deposited.⁷⁰

With respect to objects, the most securely dateable examples of Japanese imperial tableware—the products of Kanzan Denshichi's Kyoto workshop and the Arita firm Seiji Kaisha—also belong to the first half of the Meiji era. Having established his workshop at the start of the Meiji era, Kanzan Denshichi passed away in 1890; Seiji Kaisha, founded in 1879, also went into decline in the 1890s. As a final reason for focusing on this earlier period, following Seiji Kaisha's decline it is evident that other companies were called upon to make objects to the same designs, suggesting that patterns for imperial tableware had stabilised to some degree by the 1890s. Although earlier and later examples shall be called upon to

⁶⁹ These include, for example, a brief request for glass decanters, lidded vessels and bowls: Request for objects, Imperial Table Office, Meiji 4/6/2 from 'Goyōdoroku seikyū no bu,' 1871, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68878. **Source 1.**

⁷⁰ For documents relating to the handover, see: 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

develop the argument where appropriate, both conceptually and in terms of sources the first half of the Meiji era has been deemed the most profitable for developing a nuanced understanding and analysis of imperial tableware.

Terms of Engagement

There are two terms I have struggled with in preparing this thesis: emperor and Western. Scholars have already highlighted the shortcomings of both, sometimes suggesting alternatives, but they remain pervasive within the literature. Presenting them here, I do not propose to offer definitions. Instead, I offer an explication of these words as terms of engagement.

The word 'emperor' is now conventionally used to translate the Japanese term *tennō* across Japan's historical eras. However, as Butler observed, though this English-language equivalent was adopted during the Meiji era, historically 'Japanese "emperors" rarely ruled as such. They lacked individual power, a standing army, and, most significantly, an empire.'⁷¹ *Tennō* itself is also only one of many terms used to indicate the ancestral ruler of Japan, and (being borrowed from Chinese) was introduced during the seventh and eighth centuries.⁷² Even in the Meiji era, this terminology remains difficult. In the documents examined in this thesis, the Meiji Emperor is often called *seijō* and sometimes *shujō*, indirect expressions little used today. The emperor may also be politely alluded to as one of the *mittsu gosho* or 'three palaces': a term used to indicate the emperor, empress and empress dowager. In translating these various words as emperor, the indirectness of the originals is lost. Meanwhile, for foreigners visiting Japan, in the sixteenth century the emperor was termed 'pope' for his apparently sacerdotal role, in the nineteenth century the preferred term became the Japanese *mikado* (now replete with associations of the 1885 Gilbert and Sullivan opera). The selection of the word 'emperor' in the Meiji era was one way in which the Meiji Emperor was defined on a global stage as a sovereign ruler. Employing the term 'emperor' uncritically, such contingencies would be masked.

⁷¹ Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan: 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 13.

⁷² *Ibid.*

More problematic still is the term ‘Western,’ which falsely suggests a homogenous ‘West’ that may be contrasted with an Orientalised ‘East.’ Unsatisfying though it is, much of the tableware and dining practices are here described as ‘Western-style.’ Indicating, in my usage, dinner services made for dining with knife and fork, as likely made in Japan as in Europe or North America, it brings the same homogenising weight to bear: dining practices and the accoutrements thereof were not the same in each country of Europe and North America, nor were they unchanging.⁷³ Sensing that European influences were more plausible, for a time I myself dispensed with this term in favour of ‘European.’ However, despite arguing against the exclusively ‘Western’ nature of these things, the term itself crept back in as the conventional equivalent for the Japanese term *seiyō*. This term, or more commonly its contracted prefix *yō*, has been almost uniformly applied to such objects and meals in the nineteenth-century Japanese sources consulted. For this reason I shall use ‘Western’ and ‘Western-style’ here, but ask that the reader approach these words with caution, as their stability is illusory.

Employed for the purposes of elucidating this thesis, these terms do not cease to be problematic. In my conclusions I will return to the terms ‘emperor’ and ‘Western’ to reassess them in the light of the work expounded.

Thesis Outline

Occupying a new role as sovereign-ruler of Japan, this thesis argues that the Meiji Emperor (or more precisely those around him) exploited an agency possessed by dinner services of ceramic tableware to negotiate a new sovereign identity in the performative space of the imperial banquet. The agency these objects possessed was built through their reference to and relationships with different ceramic and sovereign heritages, but also realised through their use in various situations. However, the emperor was not the only one whose identity was shaped by these objects. The potters of Arita commissioned to make imperial tableware simultaneously constructed their own identities as *kunaishō goyōtashi* or ‘Suppliers to the Imperial Household.’ This argument is constructed across six chapters,

⁷³ For similar reasons, the possible alternative ‘Euramerica’ is deemed unhelpful here. This term is a neologism from the Japanese *ōbei*: John Clark, *Modernities of Japanese Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 96.

summarised below. These chapters are preceded by the present introduction and a brief historical prologue, and followed by my conclusions.

Chapter 1: And then there was a Banquet

The first chapter of this thesis explores the events that marked the Promulgation of the Constitution on February 11, 1889. On this occasion, the roles of emperor and nation were writ large. While scholars accord the event due significance, banquets that marked the occasion have been overlooked. Chronologically, the Promulgation of the Constitution falls close to the end terminus for this thesis, however it is brought to the fore as a means of demonstrating the significance of banquets within court pageantry and the importance of ceramic tableware as a focus for analysis.

Chapter 2: Tableware for the Imperial Palace

Chapter 2 considers the distinctive ceramic tableware developed for imperial use in the Edo period. Known as *kinri goyōtoki* or ‘ceramics for use in the imperial palace,’ these objects have recently emerged (in quite literal terms) as a topic for academic research. The production of such objects in the Meiji era, however, has yet to be explored. In 1875, a new suite of designs for Japanese-style tableware for the emperor, empress and empress dowager was developed using the Edo-period conventions. Vessels that had previously served the courtly networks of Kyoto were employed anew to connect the Meiji Emperor to his ancestry.

Chapter 3: Imported Identities

The third chapter of this thesis returns to some of the objects introduced by Ōkuma to offer a new analysis. Focusing on imperial tableware imported from Europe or made in Japan according to imported models, I argue that these objects were not selected as ‘Western’ or ‘British,’ but rather for the specific associations they extended to the royal households of Europe. Both objects and archival records suggest that these objects were intended to position the Meiji Emperor within an international ruling elite. Furthermore, the complex histories written into their

decoration reveal that this was one of a sequence of appropriations in their trajectories.

Chapter 4: Redefining *Yōshokki*

The focus of this chapter is imperial ceramic tableware shaped for European dining practices, but made in Japan and decorated according to designs developed within Japan. These objects were known, nonetheless, as *yōshokki* or Western-style tableware. Exposing the diversity of strategies employed around the imperial table, this chapter examines legitimation through material appropriation of the past and negotiation with expectations of otherness, as well as charting how pattern could overcome the foreignness of imported forms.

Chapter 5: Constructing an Emperor

Chapter 5 tracks the use of this new imperial material culture of dining. Primary accounts of imperial banquets show how these objects and the emperor that used them were received, but I also follow imperial tableware beyond the palace walls, where it continued to shape the identity of the Meiji Emperor through presentation and display. Lastly, the tableware forms developed in the early Meiji era were used on the tables of his successors, shaping the identity of future emperors.

Chapter 6: Making *Kunaishō Goyōtashi*

Having developed arguments regarding the use of tableware in the construction and mediation of imperial identity, my last chapter turns attention to the makers of these objects focusing on Tsuji Katsuzō, an Arita potter with a unique family legacy. With each object made in his workshop for imperial use serving to express and construct the relationship between this potter and his unique patron, I examine how Tsuji actively shaped his own identity as ‘Supplier to the Imperial Court’ or *Kunaishō goyōtashi*.

In 1986, Appadurai considered how one might elucidate the place of things in the social world. He observed, ‘For that we have to follow the things themselves,

for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories.⁷⁴

Uncovering such meanings for Japanese imperial tableware is the objective of this thesis, which presents an examination of their forms, their use, and the trajectories that shaped them. First of all, however, these objects must be found, located within the space of the imperial banquet.

⁷⁴ Appadurai, 'Introduction,' 5.

Prologue

In 1868, the Meiji Emperor was ostensibly restored to power. In practice, the new government that formed around this 'Meiji Restoration' largely ruled in his name, but the emperor nonetheless had an important role to play as sovereign figurehead of the Japanese nation. For his predecessors, life had been quite different. During the Edo period (c.1615–1868), Japan was effectively ruled by a military elite led by the shoguns of the Tokugawa dynasty. Their power extending through a regional network of feudal vassals, the shogunate established its base in Edo (modern day Tokyo) while emperor and court remained in Kyoto.

For the Tokugawa shogunate, foreign influence represented a threat to their hard-won power and they placed careful restrictions on international trade and exchange. From the 1630s, only a few foreign traders were permitted access to Japan: the Dutch in Dejima, Nagasaki, the Chinese and the Ryūkyū islanders. Two centuries on, foreign powers with advanced military capabilities found the status quo unfavourable to their trading interests. Led by Commodore Perry of the United States of America, during the 1850s the US, Britain, Holland, France and Russia impelled the shogunate to sign treaties that would open Japanese ports to foreign trade. Granting extraterritoriality and preferential rates, these agreements were later termed the 'unequal treaties.' The arrival of foreign nations further unsettled Japan's delicate political balance, playing a part in the downfall of the shogunate and the emperor's 'restoration.'

With the commencement of the Meiji era (1868–1912), a modern nation state began to take shape, the emperor visible at the helm. Social, political and geographical territories were reorganized. In 1871, regional *han* were dissolved and replaced with prefectures managed by bureaucrats. Craftsmen who had worked for hereditary *daimyō* lords repositioned themselves within new networks of patronage and responded to government calls to mobilise their wares for export. Both emperor and craftsman had new roles to play. In this thesis, I examine how ceramics were deployed in that pursuit.

Chapter 1: And then there was a Banquet

At 7pm various people including the imperial princes, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Privy Council, the Cabinet Ministers, ministers of foreign countries and officials appointed by the Emperor will be summoned and a banquet given in the Hōmeiden.

Kanpō, February 3, 1889.¹

The special edition of *Kanpō* ('Official Gazette') published February 3, 1889, set out events for the promulgation of Japan's Constitution eight days later. Describing the rites, ceremonies and military review that would take place over four pages, a single line notes that at 7pm a banquet would be held in the Hōmeiden of the Meiji Palace. While the events of February 11, 1889, have been accorded due importance in histories of the Japanese nation and its emperor, the banquet in the Meiji Palace has remained a marginal note to proceedings. In this chapter, using the example of the Promulgation of the Constitution, I stake a claim for the significance of the court banquet in Meiji-era Japan. Read as a site of assemblage, a contrived convergence of people and things, the Constitution Banquet of 1889 was a space in which power might be constructed as much as displayed.

The Promulgation of the Constitution stands as a showpiece of Meiji-era pageantry. Indigenous and imported rituals were combined, public and private in varying degrees, with sacred rites at palace shrines followed by choreographed ceremonies in the throne room and a military review beyond the palace gates. Drawing on Hobsbawm and Ranger's conceptualisation of the invention of tradition, Fujitani situated the Promulgation of the Constitution among new traditions created during the Meiji era, arguing it was 'Japan's first modern national ceremony.'² However, as Fujitani acknowledges, many elements were not new.³

¹ *Kanpō*, February 3, 1889, <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2944918>, 4. Author's translation.

² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Fujitani Takashi, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 107.

³ *Ibid.*, 174–84.

The Meiji Emperor's military uniform and Empress Shōken's participation were already familiar from their introduction in the early Meiji era.

Exploring processes that shaped nation and citizen, Fujitani examined the mobilisation of the body of the emperor in this endeavour. He focused on the first three events of the Promulgation: sacred rites that forged a connection to the past, the Promulgation's definition of emperor as constitutional monarch, and the military review that placed the emperor at the head of his new army before his citizens.⁴ As for the banquet, Fujitani observes, 'The imperial procession then returned to the palace, again through cheering crowds, to await a state banquet that would be held in the evening for the Japanese and foreign dignitaries.'⁵ Mentioned only in passing, the banquet falls outside his investigation. Banquets hosted by the Meiji Emperor were, however, considered significant by Steele, who examined the diplomatic role of dining around the Meiji Restoration.⁶ Drawing on the official record of the Meiji Emperor's life and rule: *Meiji tennō ki*, Steele's argument that 'eating and drinking functioned to validate and empower the new Meiji government in the minds (and stomachs) of foreign dignitaries' is enticing, but as he himself notes, he was 'frustrated by the scarcity of detailed information on early court banquets.'⁷ This undermines his analysis, which is unable to recreate the drama of these occasions and does little to distinguish between government and emperor. Furthermore, with the exception of Fujitani's description of the emperor's English-made carriage, neither author considers the material aspect of proceedings.⁸ Meiji-era pageantry was a spectacle encompassing people, actions and things and there is more to be said on their engagement.

Approaching the day's events from a materially aware perspective demands a different kind of evidence. In order to penetrate the palace walls, this chapter employs a series of eight paintings. Commissioned as a record of events by the Imperial Household Ministry and attributed to Tokonami Masayoshi, these

⁴ *Ibid.*, 107–11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁶ M. William Steele, *Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History* (London: Routledge, 2003), Chapter 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 111, 110.

⁸ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 110.

paintings disclose the significance of the Constitution banquets among the day's events. Therein, people and things brought are brought together amid simultaneous plays of hierarchy and association. These are also spaces within which the identity of the Meiji Emperor might be mediated and negotiated.

The first part of this chapter uses the paintings commissioned by the Board of Ceremonies to argue for the significance of the banquet as a singular performance in which all present participated. In the second part, detail provided in the paintings is used to prompt examination of the elements of the banqueting assemblage and the trajectories that brought them together. Considering the people present, the construction of hierarchies, furnishings and cuisine, the studies here cited form a wider body of literature that intersects with the space of the imperial banquet. Finally, I present my case for a deeper analysis of one element that overcomes tensions between association and distinction, equality and hierarchy present within the banquet. As a medium, this thesis argues, it served to articulate the sovereignty of the Meiji Emperor within a community of sovereigns and as heir to a legacy of imperial rule. Binding emperor and guests together in a moment of performance and onwards through time in its repetition and reiteration, quotidian though it may be, this element is ceramic tableware.

1.1 Picturing the Promulgation

On the morning of February 11, 1889—the twenty-second year of the era 'enlightened rule' or *meiji*—Japan's emperor stood before his governors and ministers to bestow a new Constitution. The throne room of the recently constructed Meiji Palace glittered, its freshly gilt surfaces echoed in the braiding of the emperor's military uniform cut in Western style. Building on the past, it was the 2549th anniversary of the accession of Japan's first emperor, Jimmu.⁹ Looking to the future, the Constitution granted defined Japan as a modern nation state. While the official gazette and newspapers invited the populace to attend in mind if not in body, designers of commercial woodblock prints created visual images for public consumption. Fashioned with a different purpose, the day's events also became the

⁹ Known in English as Empire Day or National Foundation Day.

subject of eight paintings preserved in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency (**Figures 1.1–1.8**).¹⁰ Marginalised in *Kanpō* and commercial prints, the significance of the Constitution Banquet is demonstrated by these works.

Lines of Enquiry

A key source in any discussion of events of February 11, 1889, the day's programme was detailed in a special issue of *Kanpō*: the 'Official Gazette' of the Meiji government. *Kanpō* was first published in 1883; despatched to all prefectural offices, from 1886 it was employed for the promulgation of laws.¹¹ The Constitution of the Empire of Japan was published in *Kanpō* on February 11, 1889.¹² Eight days earlier, on February 3, a special issue detailed events for the Constitution's Promulgation. The programme included an overview of the guests and a schematic of their arrangement in the throne room (**Figure 1.9**).¹³ Circulated the length and breadth of the nation, *Kanpō*'s contents were also reproduced in local newspapers.¹⁴ Woodblock prints offered the public another means of experiencing the Constitution's Promulgation. Artists including Yōsai Nobukazu, Adachi Ginkō and Inoue Tankei designed prints of the emperor presenting the Constitution or riding in his carriage (**Figures 1.10–1.13**). Commercial products crafted to appeal to buyers, these prints suggest popular interest. While not everyone could be physically present, such media allowed for a wider engagement with the day's momentous events, later finding application as historical sources.

¹⁰ The original ledger record describes these works as '*utsushi*' perhaps suggesting they may be facsimiles: Kunaichō, 'Shoryōbu shozō mokuroku kōkai shisutemu: shiryō shosai,' accessed June 1, 2015, <http://toshoryo.kunaicho.go.jp/Kobunsho/Detail/77308>. However, the nature of this record is unclear, so I follow recent publications that attribute these works to Tokonami Masayoshi, see: Kunaichō Shoryōbu, *Gishiki kankei shiryō* ([Japan]: Kunaichō, 2004), 21; Kunaichō Shoryōbu and Kunaichō Sannomaru Shozōkan, eds., *Teishitsu no fumikura: Shoryōbu no meihin* ([Japan]: Kunaichō, 2010), 44.

¹¹ *Kanpō* is still produced by the National Printing Bureau. For a brief history, see: 'History of Official Gazette,' National Printing Bureau, accessed June 1, 2015, http://www.npb.go.jp/en/books/kanpo_history.html.

¹² *Kanpō*, February 11, 1889, <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2944926>.

¹³ *Kanpō*, February 3, 1889.

¹⁴ For example: 'Kenpō happu shiki no shidai,' *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, February 3, 1889; see also Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 108.

In contrast to *Kanpō*, which was circulated in advance of the Promulgation, the paintings by Tokonami Masayoshi (1842–1897) examined here were created up to a year or more after the fact. The Imperial Household Ministry’s Board of Ceremonies appears to have planned that a series of paintings be executed at the time of events, however, a note from the time states ‘it was difficult to give the order to a common painter.’¹⁵ Five months after the Constitution’s Promulgation, the Board commissioned Tokonami and records show that he completed the work the following May, requesting payment of three hundred yen.¹⁶ Born in Kagoshima, Tokonami had a dual career as a government official and self-taught painter in Western style. Resigning from the Ministry of Justice in 1880, he was employed by the Imperial Household Ministry two years later to paint scenes of *Nikkō*.¹⁷ Tokonami could clearly be trusted to produce works that would satisfy the demands of this unique client, but the delay in his appointment suggests he may not have witnessed events for himself. Nonetheless, his works strove for accuracy and may be considered part of the official narrative.

The paintings commissioned by the Board of Ceremonies were intended as faithful records, a matter demonstrated by archival documents. As well as requesting permission to tour the palace, Tokonami sought access to photographs of visitors and attendants. Ministers of the Board of Ceremonies, meanwhile, wrote to the imperial princes’ households to confirm the colours of dresses worn by high-ranking women.¹⁸ Accuracy was the shared goal of artist and commissioner. While these paintings offer a visual account of the schedule set out in *Kanpō*, they give a

¹⁵ Circulated draft letter, Head of Board of Ceremonies to Vice-Minister of Justice, June 7, 1889, from ‘*Kenpō happu shiki roku*,’ 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 12848. Author’s translation.

¹⁶ Circulated draft letter, Head of Board of Ceremonies to Minister of the Imperial Household, May 30, 1890, from ‘*Kenpō happu shiki roku*,’ 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 12848.

¹⁷ Kunaichō, *Gishiki*, 21.

¹⁸ For original documents, see: ‘*Kenpō happu shiki roku*,’ 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 12848.

different emphasis on proceedings, highlighting aspects unsaid and unseen in other sources.¹⁹

Narrative and Purpose

The first painting in the Promulgation series (**Figure 1.1**) shows the Meiji Emperor conducting rites to mark *kigen setsu*: the commemoration of the enthronement of Emperor Jimmu.²⁰ The selection of the day of *kigen setsu* for the Promulgation and rites carried out at sanctuaries connected this new political development to Japan's imperial legacy and cast the Constitution as sacrosanct. As Fujitani stated, 'The rites began by emphasizing the divine aspect of the emperor and rendering sacred the political act of establishing the Constitution.'²¹ A cornerstone for the ceremonies to follow, these rites set the actions of the Meiji Emperor in defining Japan's modernity alongside those of his ancestor Emperor Jimmu, Japan's founder, but the painting also highlights divisions between observers and participants in this ritual.

Entering the Kashikodokoro (palace sanctuary), the tall crest of the emperor's hat and the rich colour of his silk robes distinguish him from the Shintō priests and shrine attendants dressed in white. Wearing the court garb of his ancestors, the image calls to mind the 1872 photographic portrait by Uchida Kuichi (**Figure 1.14**), taken just prior to the emperor's adoption of Western-style dress (**Figure 1.15**). In the painting's foreground, officials stand as spectators to this ritual. All apparently male and Japanese, even this select few must stand back and observe, not permitted entry to the shrine buildings. The separation of spectator and actor is rendered both in position and through the material distinction of their clothing: while the emperor and his priests wear robes, the officials stand back to observe in heavy black Western-style uniforms. While the publication of these rites in *Kanpō*,

¹⁹ The sequence of the paintings according to their archival numbers is different to that of the day's events with the handing over of the Constitution preceding the rites at the palace sanctuary. The works themselves do not appear to be numbered, so here they are dealt with in the order of events.

²⁰ The first (and generally considered legendary) emperor of Japan, Jimmu is seen as the founder of Japan's imperial line, see: Donald Philippi, trans. *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), Chapters 47–54.

²¹ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 107.

albeit concise, brought these private performances into a much wider domain, they did not reveal the clothing of the emperor, nor did this moment become a subject of popular prints. Separating the emperor, in the clothes of his ancestors and his youth, from his uniformed audience, the painting records the choreography of the occasion as the emperor's body alone was employed to create connections to the past, standing in silk robes at the cusp of Japan's national modernity.

The second painting in the series (**Figure 1.2**) depicts the emperor dressed in Western-style military uniform handing the Constitution to his Prime Minister, Kuroda Kiyotaka. As *Kanpō* notes, at 10am the Prime Minister, Chairman of Privy Council, cabinet ministers, officials appointed by the emperor, dukes, Order of the First Class, prefectural governors, attendants, marquis and barons were requested to assemble in the Seiden (throne room) of the Meiji Palace. The emperor arrived accompanied by the Director of the Board of Ceremonies, Grand Chamberlain and other officials, while attendants carried the sacred jewel and sword of the imperial treasures. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal handed the Constitution to the Emperor who granted it to his Prime Minister and, by extension, the nation. As witnesses, *Kanpō* notes the presence of the empress, foreign representatives and employees.²² These groups can all be seen in Tokonami's painting, which resonates with woodblock prints of the occasion (for example, **Figure 1.10** and **Figure 1.11**) despite exceeding them in accuracy.²³ Repeated in historical sourcebooks and echoed in the official pictorial history commissioned for the Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery (**Figure 1.16**), these depictions of Westernised dress and intense colours have shaped the visual memory of the Meiji-era court.²⁴

²² *Kanpō*, February 3, 1889, 2–3; see also Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1968–1977), 7:206–10.

²³ The Meiji Palace was destroyed by fire during World War II, but designs and photographs reveal the accuracy of Tokonami's depiction. Among the prints, Yōsai Nobukazu and Inoue Tankei presented their own decorative schemes and only the triptych by Adachi Ginkō features any decorative details in accord with the palace, though even this does not approach the accuracy of the paintings. For the original designs and photographs, see: Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan, ed., *Maboroshi no shitsunai sōshiku: Meiji Kyūden no saigen o kokoromiru* ([Japan]: Kunaichō, 2011).

²⁴ For a recent example of the use of the Tokonami painting, see: Miyachi Masato, ed., *Meiji jidaikan* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 2005), 191. Details of the painting in the Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery are given in Uchikoshi Takaaki, *Meiji Tennō no goshōgai: kaiga to seiseki de tadoru* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 2012), 126–27; for the role of these works as a pictorial history, see Imaizumi Yoshiko, 'The

After the ceremony in the throne room, at 1:30pm the emperor rode out of the palace to inspect the military review at the Aoyama Military Parade Ground. Mentioned only briefly in *Kanpō*, Inoue Tankei created a triptych of the scene (**Figure 1.13**) that can be compared with Tokonami's painting (**Figure 1.3**). Inoue's depiction of the carriage compares well with the original preserved at the Meiji Jingu Treasure Museum (**Figure 1.17**). Filling the right-hand sheet of the triptych, Inoue brings the emperor's carriage close to the viewer. Seated within, the Meiji Emperor almost returns the viewer's gaze, capturing the public nature of this element of proceedings and giving a sense of proximity. In Tokonami's painting, the perspective is quite different. Snow covers the vast expanse of the parade ground, its edges framed by the dark shadows of distant soldiers, as the Meiji Emperor rides in his carriage at the centre. In place of the audience perspective offered by Inoue's depiction, Tokonami captures a performance of power with the emperor at its core, a dragon-shaped cloud in the sky making further reference to his sovereign strength.

The fourth painting in Tokonami's series (**Figure 1.4**) shows the banquet in the Meiji Palace and the fifth a performance of *bugaku* court dance (**Figure 1.5**), briefly noted in *Kanpō* as taking place at 7pm and 9pm respectively. The painting of the *bugaku* performance shows four dancers watched by an audience of Japanese and foreign elites in the throne room. Emperor and empress sit side-by-side on the central dais with the princes to the right. The audience, meanwhile, is divided by gender and by nationality. To the right stands the foreign contingent: ladies with reddish hair in front of men with the same, and a small group of gentleman in Chinese and Korean dress. To the left, the Japanese court ladies are similarly separated from the men. All observe the performers in the centre, but that is the extent of their participation. The social division and spectatorship apparent in the painting of the *bugaku* performance offer stark contrast to the painting of the banquet that precedes it. It is in this aspect that the significance of the Constitution Banquet is revealed.

Depicting the Constitution Banquet

While *Kanpō*'s allusion to the Constitution Banquet is contained in a single line, the painting of the Hōmeiden banqueting hall offers the first glimpse of the significance of this occasion (**Figure 1.4**). This painting is one that has been reproduced alongside that of the Promulgation, but unlike the attention given that moment, the banquet has remained on the margins as little more than a glimpse into the Westernised world of the court at the end of the 'Rokumeikan era.'²⁵ *Kanpō* offers no forewarning of the final three paintings that complete the series: depictions of a further three rooms in which banquets were held (**Figures 1.6–1.8**). Of the eight paintings created to record the events of February 11, 1889, four show banqueting scenes. Diverging from the account offered by *Kanpō*, these paintings suggest the importance of the banquet to proceedings.

While Steele asserted the value of dining in Western style for Western eyes (and stomachs), here it is adopted even when only Japanese diners are present.²⁶ The guests depicted in the Hōmeiden include a number of foreigners, in the three remaining rooms, however, only one diner has recognisably reddish hair suggesting he is not Japanese.²⁷ Nonetheless, in each of these rooms—the Minami Tamari no Ma (southern entrance hall: **Figure 1.6**), the Kita Tamari no Ma (northern entrance hall: **Figure 1.7**), and the Imperial Household Ministry (**Figure 1.8**)—glassware crowds every place setting as liveried staff busy themselves between tables. Whether foreign or Japanese, the emperor's guests are served food in Western style. This is in accordance with Finn's reassessment of the infamous Rokumeikan, which 'rather than impressing foreigners' may equally have served as a site for

²⁵ The term 'Rokumeikan era' is used to describe the period between 1883 and c.1889 when the Rokumeikan, a Western-style building designed by Josiah Conder at the instigation of foreign minister Inoue Kaoru, was used for various events and entertainments in foreign style. These years are seen as the peak of a superficial fervour for 'things Western' in Meiji-era Tokyo.

²⁶ Steele, *Alternative Narratives*, 111.

²⁷ Recognising the evident methodological issues that judging nationality based on hair colour may present, this has been determined pertinent for this series of paintings only on the basis of the visual evidence. From the schematic given in *Kanpō* it is apparent that the audience was divided by nationality; in Tokonami's painting of the Promulgation of the Constitution (Figure 1.2) reddish hair is shown only among the foreign group.

Japanese men now fully versed in Western customs to meet among themselves.²⁸ The appropriation of foreign dining styles at the court was no less superficial, but held its own specific purpose.

The depiction of the Constitution banquet reveals it to be the only moment in the day that assembled both foreign and Japanese participants to share in a single performance. In the *Hōmeiden*, men and women of different nations sit alternately at the same table (**Figure 1.4**). There are no spectators to be found here or in any of the three other rooms depicted: all are participating in the same performance. However, hierarchy also marks this space of transnational association. Seated at the head of the table in the principal room, the emperor is positioned at the top of the assembled hierarchy. In the paintings preceding, the emperor was singled out, his position merely observed by the onlookers there gathered. Here, the assembled elite, Japanese and foreign alike, share in a performance that underscores the Meiji Emperor's place as sovereign. Not merely a display of power, through the complicity of its participants, the banquet served in that power's creation.

Prepared at the behest of the Board of Ceremonies and intended to be accurate, this unique record suggests that the celebratory banquets held a greater importance than has previously been accorded them. With four out of the eight paintings commissioned showing banquets, the significance of these scenes extends beyond sheer weight of numbers. Performances of hospitality and the sovereign power of the Meiji Emperor, only the banquets are revealed to be without spectator: the emperor, attendants and guests all share in the performance. The banquets are distinguished as moments of assemblage: disparate people and things briefly united together into a whole. A space of hierarchy and association, within the assemblage boundaries of nation and culture may be overcome as readily as they are defined.²⁹

²⁸ The Rokumeikan achieved infamy as a site of Western entertainments in Tokyo (see note 25 above); Finn has offered a new assessment: Dallas Finn, 'Reassessing the Rokumeikan,' in *Challenging past and present: the metamorphosis of nineteenth-century Japanese art*, ed. Ellen P. Conant (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 233.

²⁹ Assemblage is considered here to denote the deliberate bringing together of different things (including objects, people and behaviours) into a single moment. In terms of artistic practice,

1.2 Constructing the Banquet

Part of a ceremonial event that Fujitani considered a 'first', the elements contained in these paintings took shape over the first two decades of the Meiji era: the product of successive selections and decisions. By the time Tokonami painted these scenes, the elements of the assemblage had already separated once more. While some elements may have been adopted to meet foreign standards of civilised behaviour, in the performative space of the banquet these components served to establish the supreme and sovereign position of the Meiji Emperor.

Separating an assemblage for analysis incurs methodological difficulties because the assemblage is more than its individual components. However, given the divergent trajectories of its parts, trying to address the whole is also problematic. As such, discussion shall focus on the following themes: the presence of the emperor and women, hierarchies, architecture, cuisine and agency. In so doing, I will set this art-historical study of imperial tableware among the wider body of literature with which it intersects. While the choices and contingencies behind each element offer potential for analysis, I argue that it is the element that remains almost unseen that offers the greatest reward. This element more than any other had the potential to overcome the divisions there present, and so realise the unifying power of the assemblage.

A Duty to Dine

In the first of the banquet paintings (**Figure 1.4**), the Meiji Emperor takes his place among guests Japanese and foreign at the centre of the horseshoe-shaped table. His very presence may be considered remarkable. As the elevated living descendent of the sun goddess, the notion of the emperor engaging directly with

assemblage has been conceived in terms of 'the need of certain artists to defy and obliterate accepted categories.' William C. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 92. Considering social practices of assemblage, Ross felt that assemblage supported social cohesion and control, observing 'With this perceived convergence of sentiment the hostility, distrust, or indifference that accompanies strangeness fades away; the sense of separateness is blunted, and the consciousness of kind becomes more vivid.' Edward Alsworth Ross, 'Social Control VII: Assemblage,' *American Journal of Sociology* 2.6 (1897): 825. As such, it may be said assemblage has the potential to create union from disparate elements.

foreigners was unthinkable to theorists of the late Edo period. Indeed, when the prospect of foreign audiences was raised in 1868, the Meiji Emperor's mother, Nakayama Yoshiko, and a number of his courtiers were driven to despair.³⁰ The stakes, however, were high: the 'unequal treaties' signed by the shogunate undermined Japanese sovereignty.³¹ Foreign policy would be critical to renegotiating Japan's position, and that extended to diplomatic receptions. In March 1868, the Meiji Emperor received British minister Sir Harry Parkes at the Shishinden. As Breen observes, rising to his feet at Parkes' third bow in accord with diplomatic protocols set at the Congress of Vienna, the emperor was 'drawn into a community of western sovereigns.'³²

The Meiji Emperor's engagement with foreigners was a dramatic development, and not lightly undertaken. As the new government found their feet on the international stage protocols were gradually fomented.³³ In 1869, the Meiji Emperor received his first overseas royal prince: the Duke of Edinburgh. Every effort was made to accommodate the duke, with furniture brought from Hong Kong to refit the Enryōkan, a former naval academy, as a guesthouse.³⁴ However, records suggest that the emperor did not dine with his guest. Following his official audience with the Meiji Emperor, the Duke of Edinburgh was invited to join him in the garden; as Mitford recalls, 'After a short delay ... the Duke was shown into the delicious little Maple Tea-house in the Castle gardens, where tea and all manner of delicacies were served. Then came a summons to the Waterfall Pavilion, where the Emperor was waiting.'³⁵ While providing refreshments as a generous host, the emperor does not appear to have taken them with the duke. Four years later, as Steele has charted, Western food was made the official cuisine for banquets for the

³⁰ John Breen, 'The Rituals of Anglo-Japanese Diplomacy: Imperial Audiences in Early Meiji' in *Social and Cultural Perspectives*, Vol. 5 of *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000*, eds. Gordon Daniels and Chushichi Tsuzuki (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 62, 71–72.

³¹ The 'unequal treaties' granted citizens of foreign nations extraterritoriality within Japan; remaining subject to the laws of their own nations, they had immunity from Japanese jurisdiction.

³² Breen, 'Rituals,' 62.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World, 1852–1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 392.

³⁵ Algernon Mitford (Lord Redesdale), *Memories* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1915), 2:499.

diplomatic corps and visiting foreign dignitaries were invited to dine with the emperor in Western style.³⁶

The significance of this transformation was codified within the *Kimurokujō* or 'Six Conventions' of 1886. Developed as the emperor and government moved towards constitutional monarchy, these conventions defined the relationship between the emperor and his cabinet. The fourth article states:

The emperor shall give his permission when the Prime Minister or Minister of Foreign Affairs request that he dine with appropriately qualified foreigners and Japanese people.³⁷

Expected to be hospitable (even perhaps if he was not so inclined), the remaining articles required the emperor to go on tours to the regions, meet with his ministers, attend cabinet meetings and address queries to the ministers concerned.³⁸

Repeatedly absent from ceremonies during this year, Keene has suggested that the Meiji Emperor displayed a level of ennui with his official duties. The official chronicles cite illness, but Keene notes that the emperor rode twice as frequently as the year before.³⁹ Whether boredom with court functions motivated the drafting of the *Kimurokujō* is difficult to say, but the inclusion of dining among the more governance-oriented conventions is significant. Hosting banquets for guests foreign and Japanese was not a matter of personal preference for the emperor, but an important aspect of the role he was now expected to play.

The attendance of the empress and other women at imperial banquets demonstrates another shift of the early Meiji era. Under the shogunate, women of high rank were allotted largely sequestered lives, while entertainment was the domain of trained entertainers (*geisha*), courtesans and prostitutes.⁴⁰ Even within the household, wives and children would dine apart from the patriarch, perhaps

³⁶ Steele, *Alternative Narratives*, 122–27.

³⁷ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 6:631. Author's translation.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 403.

⁴⁰ Miyoshi Masao, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994), 70.

joining the servants.⁴¹ Dispatched to the United States in 1860, members of the Tokugawa Mission were taken aback by the presence of women at receptions, galas and balls, their apparently elevated position and bold demeanour.⁴² Other early travel diaries reveal similar discomfort. Riding a passenger ship to Hong Kong in 1866, *bakufu* official Kawaji Tarō recorded that women sat down before their husbands and took the best seats.⁴³ The translation of such practices to Japan was surely inconceivable.

For Japan's new foreign guests, however, the presence of women at receptions was not only expected, but also allied to their notion of civilisation. The memoirs of Julia Dent Grant, who accompanied her husband former President Ulysses S. Grant on his journey around the world at the end of the 1870s, record her disdain at the absence of the Khedive of Cairo's wife from an engagement:

I told the Princess how disappointed I was not to see her at the banquet, she repeated through her interpreter just what the Khedive said: 'Oh, it is not the custom of our country.' I at once declared it to be a very harsh and unjust custom, and added, 'In America we would not consent to such an unjust custom. We always were at the entertainments given by our husbands if any ladies were.'⁴⁴

For Julia Dent Grant it was unthinkable that a wife would not be invited where both sexes were present, the place of women becoming a standard by which a culture might be judged. By the time the Grants arrived in Japan in 1879, the attendance of women at certain court events—both the wives of foreign ministers and those of the Japanese nobles and officials—had been established, but the process was gradual and predicated by rank. From 1872, Empress Shōken received diplomatic envoys and their wives.⁴⁵ In 1875, the wives of foreign ambassadors, of the imperial

⁴¹ Sally Hastings, 'A Dinner Party is not a Revolution: Space, Gender, and Hierarchy in Meiji Japan,' in *Manners and Mischief: Gender, Power, and Etiquette in Japan*, eds. Jan Bardsley and Laura Miller (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 103.

⁴² Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them*, 68–77.

⁴³ Andrew Cobbing, *The Japanese Discovery of Victorian Britain: Early Travel Encounters in the Far West* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998), 71.

⁴⁴ Julia Dent Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant* (New York: Putnam, 1975), 231–32.

⁴⁵ Sally Hastings, 'The Empress' New Clothes and Japanese Women, 1868–1912,' *Historian* 55.4 (1993): 680.

family, *kazoku* (peers) and officials of the *chokunin* rank (appointed by the emperor) were invited to the New Years' audience with the emperor, while wives of ministers in the diplomatic service and officials of the *sōnin* rank (appointed with imperial approval) were allowed to attend imperial audiences in 1878.⁴⁶

The presence of women at the Constitution Banquet should not be taken as a change in prevailing gender hierarchies. Examining Meiji-era banquets as gendered spaces, Hastings argued that the presence of women within official engagements did not prove revolutionary, going into reversal to some degree from the 1890s and having little impact on preferences for arranged marriage.⁴⁷ In Tokonami's paintings, women are present only in the first two banqueting scenes among the highest sections of the assembled elite. Guest lists in the archival records list 'wife' (or occasionally 'daughter') against the names of invitees implying that women were not present in the same capacity as the men beside them.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, for some even shifts on this scale were too much to envisage. Print artist Chikanobu depicted an imagined banquet at the Meiji Palace. Allowing the women their Western dresses, he denied them a seat at the table, which they instead served (**Figure 1.18**). In fact, elite women had become a requisite element of official engagements from the mid-1870s, but their presence may be considered a matter of requirement rather than preference. As it was the emperor's duty to dine, so too it became theirs. When they took their seats in 1889, they were continuing a practice already underway.

Positioning the Emperor

Unique among the depictions of events surrounding the Promulgation of the Constitution, all those present in the banqueting scenes participated in the performance. The paintings also reveal how distinctions in status were marked and created through clothing and seating arrangements. Following systems adopted within Japan well before 1889, these distinctions speak to practices older still. Even

⁴⁶ Osakabe Yoshinori, *Yōfuku, sanpatsu, dattō: fukusei no Meiji Ishin* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010), 164.

⁴⁷ Hastings, 'Dinner Party.'

⁴⁸ Guest list for imperial banquet, February 2, 1889, from 'Kenpō happu shiki roku', 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 568-1.

the term used for the banquet in the paintings' titles establishes the position of the emperor with regard his guests. Ranged across four rooms, the hierarchies assembled are focused upon the Meiji Emperor, rendering all present complicit in his elevation.

The Meiji Restoration's success was contingent upon a coalition of support the nobility and samurai. In the second year of the Meiji era, the two groups were merged into a single peerage (*kazoku*), but the challenge of uniting them culturally remained. During the Edo period, the two wore different forms of dress: for ceremonial occasions these were *ikan* and *kamishimo* (**Figure 1.19** and **Figure 1.20**). As Osakabe discussed, during the earliest years of the Meiji era, alternate models for clothing were considered. These ranged from archaic styles that predated the ascendancy of the shoguns (the dress of 'restoration'), or a continuation of the use of Edo-period *ikan* (but now intended to encompass the former samurai class), to an amalgam of Western materials and Japanese cut.⁴⁹ With French-style uniforms adopted by the freshly conscripted Japanese army and British-style uniforms adopted by the equally novel navy in 1870, a new 'Civil Servant Court Attire' (*bunkan daireifuku*) was developed in 1872 (**Figure 1.21**). Ostensibly modelled on uniforms of Napoleonic France, the reason given was that the clothes of France were already the standard for many countries.⁵⁰ Rather than French per se, therefore, the selection was based upon an international currency.

The question of appearance to those beyond Japan was a factor in these developments. Japanese officials wearing robes and *hakama* risked becoming an exotic spectacle in the foreign countries they visited.⁵¹ The first clothing regulations (1870) employed a semi-Western style that was restricted to use when travelling overseas or in other such extraordinary circumstances.⁵² Not deemed particularly successful as a compromise, the court attire enacted in 1872 was developed at the time of the Iwakura Mission.⁵³ Ten years later, unease over appearance extended to

⁴⁹ For details of these deliberations, see Osakabe, *Yōfuku*, Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵¹ For example, see Muragaki Norimasa's comments on the spectacle of their visit to the White House in 1860: Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them*, 132.

⁵² Osakabe, *Yōfuku*, 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

Japanese women within Japan. Encouraging the adoption of Western dress by women in 1885, Itō Hirobumi is reported to have said that this was a matter of politics, observing that in traditional dress Japan's women were seen as little more than dolls.⁵⁴ Empress Shōken first wore Western-style dress a year later.⁵⁵ Such considerations notwithstanding, in the drafting of the 1872 clothing regulations, concern with outward reception was more than matched by consideration of internal hierarchies. While unity among the *kazoku* was one goal, clarity of rank within this new group was also a pressing consideration.

The clothing regulations of 1872 served to encode a new court hierarchy that united the former samurai and noble classes while supporting detection of an individual's rank. Rank was marked through decorative trimming: the presence or absence of paulownia motifs, and the colours of braiding, trousers and fur trims. In 1873, court attire was established for the imperial family itself, following similar principles but replacing paulownia with the chrysanthemum.⁵⁶ The emperor's military uniform was also settled in this year, as recorded in the photographic portrait by Uchida Kuichi (**Figure 1.15**). Different to those of his army and navy officers, Osakabe suggests that the emperor's uniform placed him above commoners, *kazoku*, armed forces and imperial family alike.⁵⁷ Refinements to these materialisations of position continued to be made through the Meiji era; however, examining the painting of the banquet of the Hōmeiden, tensions are evident.

The clothing distinctions briefly introduced above are apparent in the banquet paintings, but no unified order can be discerned. Details of braiding and trim indicate the hierarchies of the military as running parallel to those of the court officials beside them. Foreign men wear uniforms of similar style but marked by different distinctions of rank, with only a few sporting sashes and medals integrating them into the local hierarchy. Chinese and Korean officials, meanwhile, wear the court robes of their own countries. Only the women are unvaryingly revealed in the robe décolletée regardless of their nationality. Such divisions among

⁵⁴ Ibid., 166; Erwin Baelz, *Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor* (New York: Viking Press, 1932), 239.

⁵⁵ Hastings, 'Empress,' 682.

⁵⁶ Osakabe, *Yōfuku*, 63–64.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 67.

the emperor's guests create tensions in the overarching order. Asserting the emperor's supreme position, however, was a more encompassing hierarchy critical to the space of the banquet: the seating arrangement.

In the painting of the Hōmeiden, the Meiji Emperor and Empress Shōken sit at the head of the horseshoe-shaped table, their guests arranged around them. While guest lists for these banquets are preserved in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, they do not include a seating plan.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the significance of such arrangements was recognised by host and guest alike. Records relating to the 1881 visit of the Hawaiian King Kalakaua include a schematic diagram of the seating arrangement (**Figure 1.22**).⁵⁹ The Meiji Emperor sits at the centre of the table, Kalakaua on his immediate right; directly opposite are three imperial princes: Fushimi no Miya, Arisugawa no Miya and Higashi Fushimi no Miya, while Kitashirakawa no Miya sits to the right of King Kalakaua. A list of names appended to the seating arrangement is given in descending rank. With the exception of the Senior Assistant of the Foreign Ministry on the emperor's left, the rank of an individual is realised through their proximity to the table's centre and so the emperor and king. The two Hawaiian officials are appended to the list of guests and inserted into the table's hierarchy. Such an arrangement was in accord with European precedent, but equally meaningful to the emperor's Hawaiian guest. In his diary, Kalakaua began to draw his own schematic of the table plan, before describing it in words (**Figure 1.23**).⁶⁰ The seating arrangement was a construction of power as much as hospitality, increasingly transnational in its intelligibility. Seated at the centre of the table in the Hōmeiden, the Meiji Emperor became the apex of that hierarchy.

The Constitution Banquet was much larger than that given to King Kalakaua and occupied multiple rooms. Taking his place in the Hōmeiden, the Meiji Emperor could not simultaneously be part of the seating arrangements of the other three

⁵⁸ Guest list for imperial banquet, February 2, 1889, from 'Kenpō happu shiki roku,' 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 568-1.

⁵⁹ Seating plan, from 'Hawaikoku kōtei raikōki,' [1881], Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 71533.

⁶⁰ Entry for March 14, 1881, from 'Travel Journal of King David Kalakaua,' Bishop Museum Archives: MS MC Kalakaua 2.3.

rooms. His august presence, however, was not physically confined. A prince of the blood (*shinnō*) presided over each of the three other banquets as imperial proxy (*godairi*): Yamashina no Miya in the Minami Tamari no Ma, Kitashirakawa no Miya in the Kita Tamari no Ma, and Arisugawa no Miya in the Ministry (**Figure 1.24**).⁶¹ Seated at the head of each table, the princes drew the four rooms together into a single hierarchy, the Meiji Emperor at its peak.

While the princes of the blood projected the presence of the emperor beyond the Hōmeiden, another group, dressed in their master's livery, broadcast his position as host and sovereign. In each banqueting scene, footmen serve the tables. The liveries they wear were introduced in 1889 at the time of the move to the Meiji Palace at the behest of Imperial Household Minister, Viscount Hijikata Hisamoto. The directive then issued shows the uniforms in perfect detail (**Figure 1.25**).⁶² Captioned *shuhaijin daireifuku*: 'court dress of the waiting staff,' a faceless figure wears a black coat edged with golden chrysanthemums over crimson breeches and waistcoat, with white stockings, white gloves, and black shoes with golden buckles. As Styles noted for eighteenth-century England, 'a livery, while defining its wearer as a servant, also represented the employing family to the world.'⁶³ The footmen's liveries of 1889 identified them as servants of the Japanese emperor and carried his crest, but the differences between these liveries and those that preceded them are particularly revealing.

Four years previously, Itō Hirobumi announced a livery to be worn from January 1, 1885.⁶⁴ The 1885 livery comprised a black coat and trousers with red flashes on the cuffs and tails, a red waistcoat, a black cap, and chrysanthemum buttons (**Figure 1.26**). While the 1885 and 1889 liveries may both be considered Western in style, the latter is conspicuously archaic. With gilt-buckled shoes, tights and breeches, this livery would not be out of place in eighteenth-century Europe, or

⁶¹ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 7:210–11.

⁶² Directive regarding uniforms, Hijikata Hisamoto, November 16, 1888, from 'Reikiroku,' 1886–1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3060.

⁶³ John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 295.

⁶⁴ Directive regarding uniforms, Itō Hirobumi, December 17, 1884, from 'Reikiroku,' 1879–1885, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3059.

indeed the courts of its monarchs. In England, liveries that were previously in step with wider fashions fossilised towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ Such archaic liveries for footmen could be found in the royal courts of nineteenth-century Europe, details of which were consulted in the development of palace liveries as described by court advisor Ottmar von Mohl.⁶⁶ Archaic and ostentatious, the 1889 livery was suited to a royal court, so defining its master.

The last word on the emperor's relationship to his guests is stated in the titles of these paintings. While the official gazette, *Kanpō*, uses the neutral term *enkai* ('banquet'), the paintings' titles and contemporary archival documents refer to the Constitution Banquets as *gobaishoku*.⁶⁷ Less commonly used, this carries the meaning of dining with one's superiors, in particular the emperor. Records relating to the Meiji Emperor's meal with King Kalakaua of Hawaii, conversely, refer to that meal as *gotaishoku*: a meal among elevated equals.⁶⁸ As his guests and inferiors, those dining with the emperor in 1889 were participants in a performance that established his elevated position both locally and internationally.

Setting the Stage

Destroyed by fire in an air raid in May 1945, the full splendour of the Meiji Palace is revealed in Tokonami's paintings.⁶⁹ Completed in 1888, the Palace offered a dramatic new stage for court ceremonies. Thirty-three by sixteen metres, with ceilings seven metres high, the Hōmeiden was the largest room and intended from the outset for banqueting (**Figures 1.27–1.29**). While the building's exterior reflected the style of the Kyoto Goshō, its interior combined Japanese and European elements: the clematis pattern on the Hōmeiden's ceiling was adapted from a stirrup at Temukeyama Hachiman Shrine, while its sideboard was imported from Germany (**Figure 1.30–1.32**).⁷⁰ Considering this 'eclectic Japanese-Western

⁶⁵ Styles, *Dress*, 300–01.

⁶⁶ Mohl is discussed further below. Ottmar von Mohl, *Am Japanischen Hofe* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1904), 197–200.

⁶⁷ 'Kenpō happu shiki roku,' 1889, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 568-1.

⁶⁸ 'Hawaikoku kōtei raikōki,' 1881, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 71533.

⁶⁹ In 2011, details of the palace's design were reconstructed with archival records for an exhibition at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan, see: Kunaichō, ed., *Maboroshi*.

⁷⁰ For the Hōmeiden's decoration, see: *ibid.*, 23–29.

style building' and the later 'unashamedly neo-Baroque' Akasaka Detached Palace, both Fujitani and Coaldrake have linked court architecture to strategies of power.⁷¹ As Coaldrake stated, '[The Meiji era] witnessed the construction of a new state, a new society and a new built environment to express its identity and ambitions.'⁷² If architecture was used to define identity, and not merely express it, the early years of the Meiji era were arguably even more important than those that followed.

In 1868 the Meiji Emperor moved from Kyoto to Tokyo. Taking symbolic charge of the shogunate's capital, he also adopted their residence: the Nishinomaru Palace of Edo Castle. Five years later, on May 5, 1873, a fire started in a storehouse consuming the wooden palace. Emperor and empress were forced to take residence in the Akasaka Imperial Villa, once residence of the Kishu Tokugawa clan.⁷³ Renamed Akasaka Temporary Palace, this was not expected to be a long-term arrangement, but it would be fifteen years before the Meiji Palace was completed. Meanwhile, the paucity of accommodations at Akasaka presented an obstacle to the developing role of the emperor. In response, new buildings were planned: the Akasaka Audience Chamber and Dining Hall (*Akasaka ekkenjo kaishokudō*; under design/construction 1876–1879) and the Akasaka Temporary Palace Dining Hall (*Akasaka karikōkyo gokaishokudō*; completed 1881). Designed to address the most pressing needs of this critical period, these were buildings for the reception of guests and the staging of imperial banquets.

Between 1876 and 1879, the European architect Charles Alfred Chastel de Boinville was engaged to develop designs for a new Akasaka Audience Chamber and Dining Hall.⁷⁴ Although never completed, surviving designs undermine Fujitani's assertion that until the early 1880s, the governing elite 'conceived of the palace as

⁷¹ Quotations from William Howard Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), 218, 213. Fujitani discussed the genesis of the Meiji Palace in terms of its use as a site for public ceremonials: Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 66–82. The Akasaka Detached Palace, examined by Coaldrake, expressed imperial authority to such a degree that the emperor deemed it too grand for its intended use by the crown prince: Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority*, Chapter 9.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 208.

⁷³ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 236.

⁷⁴ For discussion of the designs, see: Onogi Shigekatsu, *Meiji Yōfū kyūtei kenchiku* (Tokyo: Sagami Shobō, 1983), 35–42. Born in France to a British father of French descent, Boinville's history and biography are discussed by Izumi: Izumida Hideo, 'Arufureddo Chāruzu Shassutōru de Boanviru no kakei ni tsuite,' *Kenchiku Shigaku* 52 (2009).

little more than the emperor's residence.⁷⁵ Preserved drawings reveal a grand throne room and dining hall, with ancillary chambers over two storeys and a cellar below (**Figures 1.33–1.36**). While small in size, the project was an ambitious neo-Baroque reception palace, unabashedly European in style.

The designs show a building guided by European conventions, with Japanese motifs adorning rather than driving the decorative scheme. On the exterior, a long-tailed bird has settled upon the pediment, while laurel swags and putti frame imperial crests of paulownia and chrysanthemum (**Figure 1.37** and **Figure 1.38**). In the dining room, Japanese elements are restricted to small inset plaques, perhaps porcelain decorated in underglaze blue (**Figure 1.36** and **Figure 1.39**). In the throne room, mythical creatures of the Orient are caught mid-exploration: dragons prowl over the back of the throne (**Figure 1.40**) and *kirin* peer up at long-tailed birds perched over the mirrors (**Figure 1.41**).⁷⁶ In a later version of the design, a more integrated scheme emerges: the creatures are downplayed and European framing elements are replaced by bamboo and paulownia (**Figure 1.42** and **Figure 1.43**). With bird-arabesque borders similar to those used in the Meiji Palace's Hōmeiden (**Figure 1.44** and **Figure 1.45**), even at this early date, moves towards the more hybrid style of the later palace can be seen.

Efforts at merging styles were, however, limited. The driving intent of this building is clear: to reveal the Meiji Emperor as a sovereign equal to the rulers of Europe. In his biography of the emperor, Keene observed occasional semblances between France's Louis XIV and the Meiji Emperor, but noted:

Japan had no equivalent of the many equestrian statues of Louis XIV; the elaborate paintings showing the king defending the Catholic faith or winning in battles with foreign countries; or the poetry, plays and musical compositions commissioned in order to enhance Louis's image both with his contemporaries and with posterity.⁷⁷

It is intriguing to note, therefore, the equestrian statue poised on the roof of Boinville's palace (**Figure 1.33**). At the end of the first decade of his rule, the Meiji

⁷⁵ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 68.

⁷⁶ The *kirin* is a mythical animal with the body of a deer and a single horn.

⁷⁷ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 211–12.

Emperor was to be rendered as a king in the European tradition through the appropriation of a foreign architectural language.

While construction was underway in 1879, an earthquake struck Tokyo: cracks appeared in the building's masonry walls and the project was terminated.⁷⁸ A dining hall was still required, but (perhaps unsurprisingly) the building completed two years later was of Japanese wooden construction. An early project of the Imperial Household Ministry's Bureau of Skilled Artisans, the Akasaka Temporary Palace Dining Hall was designed by Kiko Kiyoyoshi and completed in 1881 at a cost of around 53300 yen. It was then used for imperial banquets until 1888.⁷⁹ Scholars interested in Japan's international cultural engagement may have been captivated by the Rokumeikan: 'the scarlet woman of Meiji architecture' designed by Josiah Conder and completed in 1883, but it was in the Akasaka Temporary Palace Dining Hall that the Meiji Emperor hosted the grandsons of Queen Victoria (1881), John A. Bingham, American Minister Plenipotentiary to Japan (1885), and Prince Bhanubandhuwongse Voradej, younger brother of Rama V of Siam (1887), as well as Japanese ministers, military and prefectural officers.⁸⁰ The Rokumeikan, like the Meiji Palace, did not escape the ravages of time; the Akasaka Temporary Palace Dining Hall, however, survives today as the Meiji Kinenkan at Meiji Jingu Gaien (**Figure 1.46**).⁸¹

Constructed in the Shōin style, but with fireplaces, furnishings and floorings of Western finish, Yamazaki suggested that the Akasaka Temporary Palace Dining Hall was an important precursor of the Meiji Palace.⁸² Today decorated with a yellow paper featuring long-tailed birds (**Figure 1.47**), the same paper is shown in a painting of the Meiji Emperor and his advisors deliberating over the Constitution in

⁷⁸ Onogi, *Meiji Yōfū*, 24.

⁷⁹ For details, see: Meiji Jingū Zōeikyoku, ed., 'Kenpō Kinenkan ryakushi' in *Shiryōhen 3*, vol. 19 of *Meiji Jingū sōsho*, ed. Meiji Jingū (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2006), 1203–94; for the Bureau's involvement, see: Suzuki Hiroyuki, *Kōshitsu kenchiku* (Tokyo: Kenchiku Gahōsha, 2005), 314–16.

⁸⁰ Finn, 'Reassessing the Rokumeikan,' 227–28; Meiji Jingū Zōeikyoku, ed., 'Kenpō Kinenkan.'

⁸¹ For the building's history, see: *ibid.*, 1203–07.

⁸² Yamazaki Taisuke, "'Kenpō Kinenkan ryakushi'" ni miru Meiji 10 nendai no kyūden no fūkei,' in *Shiryōhen 3*, vol. 19 of *Meiji Jingū sōsho*, ed. Meiji Jingū (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2006), 1319.

1888 later commissioned for the Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery (**Figure 1.48**).⁸³ At the time of the hall's construction, however, the scheme appears to have been different. Dining with the emperor on 26 October 1881, the grandsons of Queen Victoria: Prince Albert Victor Duke of Clarence and Avondale and Prince George (George V), described the hall as follows:

The dinner (to which all the ministers were invited) was served in a large hall that had never been used before; its sides were constructed with the same plain white wood crossbeams as we remarked yesterday in the other parts of the building, and the wall spaces between them were decorated with Japanese paintings in the old style—the stork, the symbol of long life, and the evergreen fir tree, the symbol of happiness, being introduced frequently.⁸⁴

To the emperor's British guests, décor and building were thoroughly Japanese. However, the princes also recognized the adaptations that had been made to the palace, describing it as 'in Japanese style with European fittings,' and noting the carpets laid over the tatami mats to protect them from the heavy boots of foreign guests.⁸⁵ Such combinations and adaptations at the Akasaka Temporary Palace presage the design of the Meiji Palace, fusing inter-culturally conversant spaces with ostensibly Japanese architecture.

The architectural efforts of the early Meiji-era imperial court show that close attention was being paid to the architecture of engagement, and that the banqueting hall was vital within this. Accommodating if eclectic, the hybrid direction employed for the Meiji Palace could already be seen in the 1881 dining hall. That is not to say, however, that overtly European options were abandoned. In 1882, Boinville's plans were revived under Conder's direction, albeit fruitlessly, and the 1909 Akasaka Tōgūgoshō shares aspects in common with these early inclinations.⁸⁶ Contingency may play a part: if Boinville's plans had succeeded,

⁸³ For details of the painting, see: Uchikoshi, *Meiji Tennō*, 124–25; for the history surrounding its creation, see: Imaizumi, 'Making of a Mnemonic Space.'

⁸⁴ Prince Albert Victor and King George V, *The Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship "Bacchante": 1879–1882*, comp. John Neale Dalton (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), 2:39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:30.

⁸⁶ For the revival of plans under Conder, see: Onogi, *Meiji Yōfū*, 44–52.

would the Meiji Palace have been constructed? Although the building planned comprised little more than a throne room and dining hall, among the last drawings are floor plans that show wings and suites stretching off these spaces (**Figure 1.49**). These plans suggest that later extensions may have been considered, which could have engendered a very different architectural articulation of identity. As it happened the transfer of a foreign architectural style did not run smoothly on this occasion, paving the way for more hybrid constructions.

Gastronomy and Nation

In contrast to the mixed architectural style of the Meiji Palace, the menu served on February 11, 1889, was uncompromisingly European. An essential component of a banquet, the paintings show only a few formless items of food on the tables and trays of the waiting staff. The evening's menu, however, permits a closer analysis. Through the use of European cuisine (and exotic ingredients such as pineapple) the emperor's table was set amongst that of his peers: an international ruling elite. Such cosmopolitan menus were established long before the Constitution's Promulgation, however, and the inclusion of dishes of beef and lamb speaks to wider efforts to change the dietary habits of a nation in 1872.

Decorated with a gilded border, the menu printed for the Constitution Banquet on February 11, 1889, advised guests that they would be eating oysters, mud turtle broth, steamed fish, beef with truffles, quail, lamb with peas, goose soup, punch, turkey salad and asparagus with sauce, followed by Macaron Charlotte and pineapple sorbet.⁸⁷ The menu follows an established format: a cold appetiser followed by courses of soup, fish, meat, punch (typically a palate cleansing sorbet rather than a drink), salad, vegetables and hot and cold desserts.⁸⁸ Written in Japanese, other menus produced for the imperial court were written in French, including that prepared for the 1887 visit of Prince Bhanubandhuwongse Voradej,

⁸⁷ Akiyama Shirō, ed., *Akiyama Tokuzō menyū korekushon* (Tokyo: Akiyama Tokuzō Shinobukai Shuppanbu, 1976), 33.

⁸⁸ For courses, see: W. K. H. Bode, *European Gastronomy: The Story of Man's Food and Eating Customs* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 111–12; on punch, see: Valerie Mars, 'À la Russe: The New Way of Dining,' in *Eating with the Victorians*, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), 123.

younger brother of Rama V of Siam (**Figure 1.50**).⁸⁹ Such use of French for menus was widespread due to the great influence of French cuisine, particularly in diplomatic dining.⁹⁰ Without more details of the preparation of these dishes, the precise mode of the cooking style is unclear, but the presence of lamb, beef and turkey (not to mention pineapple sorbet) reflects significant changes in Japanese imperial cuisine that occurred around 1872.

The Meiji Emperor's consumption of Western food contrasts with the conspicuous non-consumption of foodstuffs by his predecessors. A guide to court rituals of 1330 induced the emperor to tap the tray to signal that he had eaten rather than actually consuming the food at certain rituals.⁹¹ From the mid-sixteenth century, each morning successive generations of the Kawabata family gave Japan's emperor a breakfast of rice cakes wrapped in unsweetened bean paste. What began as a welcome gift of food during impoverished times for the court in the Sengoku period (c.1467–c.1600) became a ritualised act in which the food itself ceased to be eaten. Offered as though to a deity, as Rath has observed, this ritual 'confirmed perceptions of the emperor's sacred place on earth.'⁹² While the divine ancestry of the Meiji Emperor retained currency, his relationship to food and its consumption took on a new significance in the Meiji era.

The emperor ceased to receive this ritual breakfast upon his removal to Tokyo in 1868, but other dining patterns transformed more gradually. The emperor's earliest encounter with Western food may have been in 1871. The diary of Kido Takayoshi records that on 2 October 1871 the emperor summoned his ministers to the Enryōkan in the grounds of the Hama Detached Palace where Western food was offered.⁹³ Furnished in Western style, the Enryōkan had been

⁸⁹ Akiyama, ed., *Akiyama Tokuzō*; Akiyama Tokuzō Shinobukai, ed., *Tennōke no kyōen* ([Japan]: Akiyama Tokuzō Kinen Kankōkai, 1983).

⁹⁰ Mars, 'À la Russe,' 114; for the wider dominance of French cuisine, see: Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁹¹ Eric C. Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 36.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹³ Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, trans. Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota ([Tokyo]: University of Tokyo Press, 1983–1986), 2:81–82.

used for visiting foreign dignitaries such as the Duke of Edinburgh, but no mention is made of overseas guests on this occasion. Keeping this domestic focus, the emperor's consumption was soon to enjoy a much wider significance.

The significance of the meat served at the Meiji Emperor's table can only be understood with reference to the broader history of meat consumption within Japan.⁹⁴ Some of the earliest restrictions on meat consumption in Japan came from the imperial house itself. In 675 AD, Emperor Tenmu prohibited the slaughter and consumption of domesticated animals (cattle, horses, chickens and dogs) and monkeys in the months between April and September. Later edicts by the Tokugawa shogunate similarly prohibited the slaying of certain animals in particular seasons, while taboos stemming from Buddhism and Shintō helped stigmatise the slaughter and consumption of animals. While meat, in particular game, was eaten during the Edo period, it was often justified as medicinal or disguised through the use of euphemisms such as *yamakujira* or 'mountain whale.' Within this context, the consumption of meat by Europeans in Japan became a point of cultural contrast. An eighteenth-century print of the Dutch in Dejima designed by Hayashi Shihei features a conspicuous bull's head on a platter (**Figure 1.51**), while Utagawa Sadahide offers a lurid vision of the meat preparation in a Yokohama kitchen after the signing of the 'unequal treaties' (**Figure 1.52**). Even as meat became more widely available in the late Edo period, its position was ambiguous. Fukuzawa Yukichi claimed to have eaten meat as a poor student alongside Osaka's rougher denizens in the 1850s, revealing the stigma and bravura he attached to this act.⁹⁵ In the Meiji era, the status of meat came under fresh consideration.

In the early 1870s, the Meiji government and intellectuals encouraged Japan's citizens to include meat in their diet. Presented as critical to the

⁹⁴ Harada Nobuo's research has been particularly influential in the re-evaluation of historic meat consumption, for example: Harada Nobuo 'Nihon chūsei ni okeru nikushoku ni tsuite: kome shakai to no kanren kara,' in *Ronshū Higashi Ajia no shokujū bunka*, ed. Ishige Naomichi (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985). For summaries drawing on this and later research, see: Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 24–34 and Ishige Naomichi, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), 52–58 and 146–50.

⁹⁵ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, rev. trans. Kiyooka Eiichi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 59.

establishment of a strong physique to match that of Western nations, it was a literal means of building a stronger nation. In the spirit of *bunmei kaika* or ‘civilisation and enlightenment,’ meat was presented as possessing a ‘civilising’ power, and in *Aguranabe*, a satire on beef consumption and social change, popular author Kanagaki Robun quipped, ‘clever or stupid, poor or elite, you won’t get civilized if you don’t eat meat!’⁹⁶ The popularity of Robun’s satire (indicated by the number of volumes issued) suggests that the public was not necessarily as receptive of meat-eating as the government wished. More than a thousand years after his ancestor Emperor Tenmu had placed prohibitions on the slaughter of domesticated animals, in 1872 the Imperial Household Ministry publicly declared that the Meiji Emperor ate meat.⁹⁷ Breaking with centuries of tradition, the emperor’s body was employed as dietary model for the nation.

That same year (seventeen years before pineapple sorbet would be served to the emperor’s guests at Constitution Banquet) purchase records indicate that the Imperial Table Office requested a device to make ice cream and iced sweets.⁹⁸ In 1873, Western food was established as the cuisine for certain court functions, and on September 8 that year the Duke of Genoa was feted with a Western-style breakfast.⁹⁹ The American ambassador de Long, who accompanied the Duke recalled: ‘the emperor, who a few years ago was too great to be seen, sat down with us in foreign style, with foreign knife, fork and spoon.’¹⁰⁰ In contrast with the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh four years earlier, the emperor dined together with his guest. The menu served is not known, but examples of court menus from 1874 onwards have been published.¹⁰¹ At a lunch in 1875, the ambassadors of Britain, Italy, America, Holland, Belgium, Russia, Peru, Spain, France and Germany were given an extensive menu that included lamb, beef, pineapple dessert and coffee

⁹⁶ Kanagaki Robun as quoted in John Pierre Mertz, *Novel Japan: Spaces of Nationhood in Early Meiji Narrative, 1870–1888* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003), 1.

⁹⁷ For discussion, see: Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, 24–34.

⁹⁸ Request for equipment, Imperial Table Office, Meiji 5/7, from ‘Goyōdoroku,’ vol. 3, 1872, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68881.

⁹⁹ Steele, *Alternative Narratives*, 126.

¹⁰⁰ De Long as quoted in Steele, *Alternative Narratives*, 128.

¹⁰¹ Akiyama, ed., *Akiyama Tokuzō*; Akiyama, ed., *Tennōke no kyōen*.

sorbet.¹⁰² Novel though beef and sorbet may have been to the emperor and his court at the beginning of the Meiji era, by 1889 such introductions were well established upon the tables of the court, which had themselves become sites of transnational engagement.¹⁰³

In the paintings of the Constitution Banquets, food is barely shown. Contrasting with earlier woodblock prints of foreigners that delighted in the exotic grotesquerie of a bull's head on a platter, perhaps the consumption of meat at court was no longer remarkable. An alternative explanation is suggested by the large floral decorations in the centre of the tables, which imply dining *à la russe*. Gaining popularity in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *à la russe* style of dining relied on waiting staff to deliver food in courses rather than weighing the table down with dishes. It seems that the moment depicted is the start of the meal, all have taken their seats, but the food has yet to be served. Testing the limits of the painting still further and exploring the adoption of the *à la russe* mode of dining, I would now like to consider some of the elements of the banquet that are almost invisible in these paintings.

Invisible Things

The consumption of novel foods does not in itself demand different dining methods. Even so, the banquet served at the palace on February 11, 1889, not only employed foreign foods, but served them in foreign style. This adoption of a foreign mode of dining required host, diners and footmen alike to have knowledge of its methods and etiquette. It also required material objects: tableware, glasses, knives, forks, napkins and more. The banquet was a performance, and as Carson has stated: 'To a large extent, performance depends upon objects. The possibility of behaving in some ways but not in others may be intimately bound up with the straightforward presence or absence of an item.'¹⁰⁴ These two elements, knowledge

¹⁰² Ibid., 13.

¹⁰³ While it isn't known what the Meiji Emperor first made of these foods, Cobbing's exploration of contemporary Japanese travel diaries demonstrates that although beef was not palatable to all, ice cream and champagne made for more agreeable culinary encounters: Cobbing, *Japanese Discovery*, 78–81.

¹⁰⁴ Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, 59.

and objects, while key to the practice of dining are only lightly suggested within in the paintings. However, these elements also required significant consideration and investment on the part of the Imperial Household Ministry.

Decorated only with flowers, candelabra and a few dishes (**Figures 1.4, 1.6–1.8**), the paintings suggest that the Constitution Banquets were served as *à la Russe*. Literally meaning ‘in Russian style’ (written as a matter of course in French), the *à la Russe* style may have originated in the Russia, but adapted to local requirements as its popularity spread.¹⁰⁵ It was employed in England from the mid-nineteenth century, when Mrs Beeton gave her readers the following guidance:

In a dinners *à la Russe*, the dishes are cut up on a sideboard, and handed round to the guests, and each dish may be considered a course. The table for a dinner *à la Russe* should be laid with flowers and plants in fancy flowerpots down the middle, together with some of the dessert dishes. A menu or bill of fare should be laid by the side of each guest.¹⁰⁶

Contrasted with the older *à la Française* style, in which the table was laden with dishes and guests served themselves, *à la Russe* relied on waiting footmen to deliver each course, the menu advising guests what was yet to come.¹⁰⁷ Requiring more staff, cutlery and glassware, it was also bound by stricter etiquette. As Mears comments, ‘*À la Russe* as interpreted in Victorian dining circles was a paradigm for both formal and informal rules which defined the diners in relation to one another and to the outside world.’¹⁰⁸ In adopting this foreign dining style the imperial court (and its staff) had to master the etiquette entailed if they were to redefine themselves in that same world.

Deceptively natural though table manners may become over time within a society, they are culturally constructed. As Elias observed in *The Civilizing Process*:

Nothing in table manners is self-evident or the product, as it were, of a ‘natural’ feeling of delicacy. The spoon, fork, and napkin are not

¹⁰⁵ Mars, ‘*À la Russe*,’ 113.

¹⁰⁶ Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management* (London: S. O. Beeton, 1863), 954.

¹⁰⁷ For details of both, see: Peter Brears, ‘*À la Française: The Waning of a Long Dining Tradition*,’ in *Eating with the Victorians*, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Stroud: Sutton, 2004); Mars, ‘*À la Russe*.’

¹⁰⁸ Mars, ‘*À la Russe*,’ 112.

invented by individuals as technical implements with obvious purposes and clear directions for use.¹⁰⁹

Functioning as a form of cultural competence and a marker of class, Bourdieu suggested two ways in which manners might be learnt within a given society. On the one hand, 'Total, early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life and extended by a scholastic learning [. . .],' and on the other 'belated, methodological learning.'¹¹⁰ Of these, Bourdieu observed, only the former guarantees its subject 'cultural legitimacy.'¹¹¹ The many guides published in England to enable such belated learning (and so support social ambition) attest to the challenges and opportunities *à la Russe* presented.¹¹² Although Japan had its own strict etiquette for dining, as diners took their seats at tables set in Western fashion, they too faced this challenge.

For the earliest Japanese envoys of the Tokugawa Mission in 1860, mimicry offered one option for dealing with the complications of the American banqueting table. As Vice-Ambassador Muragaki Norimasa recounts in this description of a dinner with President James Buchanan:

The President sat at the center, while his niece Lane sat opposite to him, with Shimmi sitting on her right and I on her left . . . Soon soup was served, followed by various kinds of meat, and of course champagne, and other drinks. Aware of the President's presence, we were very careful about our manners. It was rather amusing to watch and imitate the table manners of a woman sitting next to me.¹¹³

However, for the imperial court of the Meiji era, neither early, imperceptible learning, nor learning through trial-and-error presented a viable option. Instead, the

¹⁰⁹ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 88.

¹¹⁰ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 66.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² On dining handbooks, see: Natalie Kapetanos Meir, ' "A Fashionable Dinner is Arranged as Follows": Victorian Dining Taxonomies' *Victorian Literature and Culture* 33.1 (2005). For publications and social mobility, see: Christopher Clausen, 'How to Join the Middle Classes: With the Help of Dr Smiles and Mrs Beeton,' *American Scholar* 62.3 (1993).

¹¹³ Muragaki Norimasa as quoted in Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them*, 73.

Imperial Household Ministry went to great efforts to secure the knowledge needed to meet the demands of dining.

The contribution made by foreign expert-employees known as *oyatoi gaikokujin* in the modernisation of Meiji-era Japan is widely recognised.¹¹⁴ Standing alongside specialists in architecture, engineering and medicine, was the advisor on court etiquette hired in 1887: Ottmar von Mohl. Having previously served in the Prussian court, German-born Mohl worked for the Imperial Household Ministry between April 1887 and April 1889. Fifteen years later, Mohl published an account of these years under the title *Am Japanischen Hofe*.¹¹⁵ Hired just prior to the move to the Meiji Palace, Mohl notes that he translated European books on court etiquette, explained these matters to court officials and offered his opinion on the organisation of the court: duties that were in accord with the account of the son of another *oyatoi* who described their role as ‘living books of reference.’¹¹⁶ Mohl’s memoirs recall the failings of Japanese waiting staff and his efforts to improve their performance. On the occasion of a luncheon served for the visit of the Landgrave of Hesse, ‘Plates and cutlery were thrown clattering to the floor, and a loud noise filled the hall.’¹¹⁷ Mohl subsequently promoted the appointment of Louis Dewette, a Belgian steward already in Tokyo and previously employed by the Russian ambassador, to train the serving staff.¹¹⁸ Instructive as Mohl’s account is, it gives little credit to the work undertaken before his arrival. The acquisition of the correct forms of service and etiquette had been a concern of the imperial household for many years.

The acquisition of Western culinary knowledge—for the preparation of food, its serving and consumption—was an objective of the Imperial Household Ministry long before Mohl’s arrival in 1887. On 2 July 1873, the *Meiji tennō ki* recorded that in preparation for dining in Western style from mid-September of that year, the

¹¹⁴ For an overview, see: Hazel J. Jones, *Live Machines: Hired Foreigners and Meiji Japan* (Tenterden: Paul Norbury, 1980).

¹¹⁵ Mohl, *Am Japanischen Hofe*. For a biography and summary of Mohl’s experiences, see: Richard Szimpl, ‘Gaikoku jin no mita Meiji Nihon no kindaika to Ōka: Oyatoi shikibukan Ottomāru fon mōru (Ottmar von Mohl) no baai,’ *Nanzan Daigaku Yōroppa Kenkyū Sentā Hō* 8 (2002).

¹¹⁶ Francis Piggot as quoted in Jones, *Live Machines*, 126.

¹¹⁷ Mohl, *Am Japanischen Hofe*, 62. Author’s translation.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48–49.

emperor, empress and ladies-in-waiting of the court should receive instruction to learn the correct forms for eating Western cuisine.¹¹⁹ The previous month, the Ministry purchased a copy of Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Seiyō ishokujū*.¹²⁰ A guide to the everyday material culture of the Western world, *Seiyō ishokujū* included a breakdown of the key items of the Western table (**Figure 1.53**), as well as some notes on etiquette.¹²¹ Western publications also appear to have been consulted, as records of the Imperial Cuisine Division discuss the preparation of a translation of *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, which (despite the title) deals mostly with recipes and dining.¹²²

While Mrs Beeton's guidance was aimed primarily at Britain's middle class, court staff were also sent overseas to examine elite dining before Mohl's arrival. In 1883 and 1886, Yoshimura Haruo of the Imperial Cuisine Division travelled to Europe to study the food preparation and serving in embassies and royal households; on his return he was described as an expert in setting the table and Western tableware.¹²³ The historic court practices of Japan were also a focus of research during the Meiji era. At the instigation of Iwakura Tomomi, a record was made of Edo-period court ceremonies and table settings as recalled by Nakayama Tadayasu (maternal grandfather father of the Meiji Emperor): labors that are now credited with supporting the transmission of court traditions into the present era.¹²⁴ Taken on its own, Mohl's account implies a somewhat haphazard attempt to adopt foreign dining practices on the part of the Japanese court—and one urgently requiring his intervention—but these manifold efforts on the part of the imperial

¹¹⁹ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 3:97.

¹²⁰ Request for payment, Chūgaidō, June 18, 1873, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 13, 1873, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68894. A copy of this book can today be found in the collections of the Agency's Bureau of Books and Drawings: 274.301.

¹²¹ Katayama Junnosuke (attributed to Fukuzawa Yukichi), *Seiyō ishokujū* (Edo: Katayama-shi Zōhan, 1867). For further discussion of such publications, see Mary Redfern, 'Getting to Grips with Knives, Forks and Spoons: Guides to Western-Style Dining for Japanese Audiences, c.1800–1875,' *Food and Foodways* 22.3 (2014).

¹²² Copy of letter, Kyōkaisha to Imperial Table Office, February, 1873, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

¹²³ Documents concerning Yoshimura Haruo, 1886, from 'Shintairoku,' 1886–1897, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 21505.

¹²⁴ For description of these records see Kunaichō Sannomaru Shozōkan, ed., *Kyōen: Dentō no bi* ([Japan]: Kunaichō, 1999), 14–17.

household reveal not only the investment made to establish a table befitting a royal household, but also the Japanese agency with which requisite knowledge was pursued.

Dining as considered here employs objects according to culturally determined forms and conventions. In addition to their investment in securing the knowledge to be at table, the imperial household also secured the material objects these practices required. The banquet paintings show clusters of glassware, cutlery, flower baskets, salvers and dishes. Some of these items may have been imported, others made locally, but in they are only indistinctly shown (**Figure 1.54**) with none of the detail allotted the palace's decoration or depictions of uniform. These quotidian objects have become invisible things, and with little scholarly attention paid to them, to some extent they have remained so.¹²⁵

Within these visual records where do these objects fall? What might they have been able to achieve in this grand and multi-faceted project of defining and positioning the emperor? A hypothesis may be drawn from Miller, 'the importance of the object world is often precisely that artefacts were often most effective in social reproduction when they were assumed to be trivial and not to matter.'¹²⁶ Concerned not with social reproduction but its negotiation, not all deemed these objects trivial even if they have since been dismissed as such. Instead their 'everyday' nature may have lent them potency that other items lacked. The chapters that follow will expose the processes and decisions that shaped these vessels. As Mars invites, 'The table has always been there to be read.'¹²⁷

1.3 Tableware in the Banquet of Nations

Utagawa Yoshikazu's 1863 triptych, 'Picture of the banquet of the foreign peoples of the Five Nations', shows men and women sharing a meal (**Figure 1.55**). Following the legends from right to left, these diners are American, Russian, Dutch

¹²⁵ Outside the exhibition catalogues previously discussed (Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōen: Kindai*; Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū*) Meiji-era imperial ceramic tableware has only been mentioned in passing.

¹²⁶ Daniel Miller, 'Why Some Things Matter,' in *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, ed. Daniel Miller (London: UCL Press, 1998), 12.

¹²⁷ Mars, 'À la Russe,' 138.

and British; on the far left stand a French couple and their daughter. Dower suggested that prints using the theme of Five Nations, 'introduced to a secluded feudal society not merely the unfamiliar concept of the modern nation-state, but also the spectacle of peoples of different races and cultures interacting as equals.'¹²⁸ This particular print defines dining as a trans-national act in which each of the Five Nations can participate: a space of shared culture and association. However, and a sixth nation is also present in the print. Standing between the French and the British, two Chinese men serve the meal: hierarchy created within this space of association. The Japanese meanwhile are absent from proceedings, observing from outside the frame as the print's consumers and perhaps considering their own place in an increasingly global world.

In the years that followed the signing of the 'unequal treaties,' Japan sought to negotiate its position within the hierarchy of nations. Soon these efforts brought Japan's elite to the banqueting table, and within a few years of the Restoration even the emperor was expected to dine with foreign guests. Intended to faithfully record the proceedings of February 11, 1889, Tokonami's paintings reveal a lavish banquet that united domestic and foreign elites. Given only one line in the official gazette *Kanpō*, this banquet took place across four rooms, elevating the emperor above the assembled hierarchy. While the Promulgation of the Constitution may be considered a 'first' in terms of Japanese court pageantry, the assemblage encountered at these banquets had been forming for some time. For Japan's emperor, dining was already a duty, and this foreign mode of dining demanded both material objects and the mastery of foreign etiquette as Japan took its place at the banquet of nations.

Why did the Japanese imperial court go to the effort of adopting an alternative dining practice? As Chapter 5 of this thesis demonstrates, these efforts were not necessarily well received by foreign guests who mourned the perceived loss of Japanese customs. However, such consequences should not be conflated with the intentions held. As the discussion of clothing suggested, observers from

¹²⁸ John W. Dower, 'Yokohama Boomtown: Foreigners in Treaty Port Japan (1859–1872),' MIT Visualising Cultures, accessed June 1, 2015, http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/yokohama/yb_essay05.html.

Europe and North America viewed Japan's native customs as picturesque, even childlike. As long as the 'unequal treaties' set Japan below its European and North American counterparts in the hierarchy of nations, might not the adoption of Western dining styles within the court be an act of resistance, an assertion of equality? These banquets also played a role in securing the position of the emperor at the head of both military and court. As the paintings show, association and hierarchy coexisted at the banquets held on February 11, 1889, with guests foreign and Japanese complicit in a performance that elevated the Meiji Emperor.

It is my belief that the meaning of this performance, its intent, was written into the elements that composed the assemblage. However, by the time Tokonami toured the palace, the conversations had finished, the wine had been drunk and the tables cleared: the spectacle that brought these elements together had finished. In the brightly decorated palace, the blank white discs on the tables solicit attention. What decoration did they feature? What difference might that make? These are questions that this thesis addresses, but it may seem curious to focus on something almost absent. However, even in the paintings the potential of these blank white discs is apparent. Empty of food, their surfaces gaze up at the diners assembled. Prime real estate for an art more active than decorative, it is no coincidence that dinner services often carried heraldic devices asserting status and descent. In addition, the nature of the service merits consideration. With matching patterns running across soup plate and bread plate, from setting to setting, the dinner service finds completion above its individual parts. A setting for each diner, no matter their rank, nationality or gender, these objects served to bind the divergent elements of this assemblage together.

Though it might be possible to build similar arguments for glassware, chairs or cutlery, when considering Meiji-era Japan, ceramic tableware possesses a deeper significance. As a material, porcelain has operated between cultures as often as it was utilised by domestic elites. Having imported porcelain from China and Korea, Japan produced its own porcelain from the seventeenth century. Employed in the courts of shogun and emperor, Japanese porcelain was also shipped overseas where it graced Europe's palaces and, alongside wares from China, stimulated the production of European porcelains. To examine glassware or cutlery in the Meiji-era

imperial court would be to examine an introduction, but porcelain found its place on the tables of the emperors of the Edo period just as it penetrated European palaces. Offering a lens by which more nuanced processes of adaptation and negotiation may be considered, it is to these Edo-period imperial porcelains that this thesis now turns.

Chapter 2: Tableware for the Imperial Palace

Following the query it is confirmed that the ceramic vessels for use by the empress dowager [will be] as per the design to the left, instruction is made to the Head of the Imperial Cuisine Division by the Minister of the Imperial Household on March 23, 1875.

Annotation on design, 1875¹

Among the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division of Japan's Imperial Household Agency is a design for a shallow dish (**Figure 2.1**). With steep curving sides, this dish would not be suitable for dining with knife and fork. The level motion of a dinner knife would be impeded, forcing it to be used at an angle unsuited to cutting. A diner using chopsticks, however, would find solace in these low walls that offer support to the capture of any evasive morsels. The surface of the dish is sectioned by a central blue ring. Outside this ring, three long-tailed birds are captured in flight. Between them are three imperial chrysanthemum crests with two layers of sixteen petals, and tortoiseshell motifs containing flowers. The drawn profile indicates a swirling arabesque on the outer surface. The annotation specifies that plates of this design are to be used by Empress Dowager Eishō, a matter confirmed on March 23, 1875: the eighth year of the Meiji era.

The design described above was featured in the catalogue of the exhibition *Kyōen: Kindai no tēburu āto* (English title: *Imperial Feasts: Modern Table Art*) held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan in 2000.² As its title suggests, the subject of this exhibition was the tableware of the modern imperial court, in other words the imperial court of the Meiji era (1868–1912). However, focusing on imperial tableware in Western style, Japanese-style tableware was absent from this reconstruction of Japan's modern imperial table. The only exception, this design was included as a figure within the catalogue's introductory essay on the fringe of discussion.³ In contrast, a

¹ Text taken from Figure 1 of Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 8. Author's translation.

² Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōen: Kindai*.

³ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 5, 8.

sister exhibition at the same venue the previous year stressed the traditional aspect of grand banquets given during imperial enthronement celebrations.⁴ Focusing on the banquet held for Emperor Akihito's enthronement in 1990, this exhibition sought the origins of these practices in the past, an approach that can obscure moments of change and overlook the agency behind tradition. Highlighting the comparative novelty of porcelain imperial tableware within the Japanese imperial court, this chapter reveals that during the Meiji era continuity with the past in this respect was actively (and selectively) constructed.

The proposition examined here is that indigenous and imported forms of tableware were two aspects of a single strategy: the construction of the Meiji Emperor's sovereign identity. As such, the purpose of this chapter is to draw such 'traditional' items into the discussion of the imperial court's material identity. Archival sources reveal that this design was one of a group of such designs implemented in 1875. Echoing the court clothing regulations of 1873 discussed in Chapter 1, these documents stipulated designs for tableware to be used by the Meiji Emperor, Empress Shōken and the Empress Dowager Eishō. Following precedents established during the Edo period (1615–1868) both in their decoration and their makers, this new system for imperial tableware connected the imperial family to the material legacy of their forebears. Considered in this light, these objects play an important role in the definition of the Meiji Emperor.

In order to elucidate this role, the nature of this material 'tradition' and its Meiji-era transition must be examined. The first part of this chapter examines ceramic tableware produced for imperial use in the Edo period. Known as *kinri goyōtōki*: 'ceramics for use in the imperial palace,' scholarly interest in these objects was recently stimulated by archaeological excavations in the vicinity of the Kyoto Palace. Building on these studies, I compare the design, production and use of these wares to Nabeshima porcelains of the same period. Suggesting that imperial ceramics were objects of association, the use of *kinri goyōtōki* in the networks surrounding the court is considered with reference to the collections of a former imperial convent, Reikanji. The second part of this chapter addresses the

⁴ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōen: Dentō*.

production of similar ceramics during the Meiji era. While these objects offer a measure of continuity with the material practices of the Edo period, all is not necessarily as straightforward as it might seem.

In 1986 Hanley argued that too much focus has been placed on novel aspects of the Meiji era, leading researchers ‘to overlook or play down the continuity to be found in the material culture, way of life, and the standard of living during the nineteenth century.’⁵ In addressing the use of Edo-style porcelains in the Meiji era, I hope not to fall prey to such assumptions. However, while Hanley demonstrated that beyond Japan’s urban populations and elite, there was significant stability in people’s way of life with change occurring more gradually than many might suggest, in the case of the emperor, I argue that the apparent continuity in certain categories of imperial tableware was actively created. Archival sources do not reveal an unbroken tradition between Edo and Meiji, but rather the development of a new system for imperial tableware in the early Meiji era that knowingly referenced the past. Constructed or otherwise, should this continuity, as Hanley suggests, be seen as offering ‘a stable base that enabled the Japanese people to deal with the political, economic, and cultural change that confronted them,’ or was it too part of a wider strategy?⁶

The chapters that follow will return to the Western tableware introduced by the exhibition *Kyōen: Kindai no tēburu āto*. Bringing both Japanese and Western-style works together in this re-examination of imperial tableware is vital to my argument that ceramic tableware played a part in the shaping of the Meiji Emperor’s sovereign identity. As the Meiji Emperor’s position within the wider world was negotiated, the imperial court drew from its past as much as from the cultures that surrounded it. Here these elements are divided into separate chapters: the current chapter examines Japanese-style tableware and its relationship to *kinri goyōtōki* of the Edo period, Chapter 3 focuses on tableware of Western style and origin, and Chapter 4 considers domestically made tableware for Western-style dining. This division is necessary for analysis, but the narratives

⁵ Susan Hanley, ‘The Material Culture: Stability in Transition,’ in *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*, eds. Marius B. Jensen and Gilbert Rozman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 466.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 469.

developed overlap and intertwine as they reveal the strategy at their core. *Kinri goyōtōki* developed as a material expression of the identity of the Edo-period emperors, carrying their agency in the networks surrounding the court. In the Meiji era, this imperial legacy was a key element of the sovereign identity shaped for the Meiji Emperor, defining him in terms of his ancestry and in relation to those closest to him.

2.1 *Kinri Goyōtōki*

Although Chinese porcelains were imported into Japan from the eleventh or twelfth century, up to six centuries elapsed before Japan developed its own porcelain industries. As Rousmaniere has charted, during the Momoyama and Edo periods Chinese and subsequently Chinese-style porcelain became vital to elite strategies of display and hospitality within Japan.⁷ While the first attempts at porcelain production in Kyushu in the 1610s are traditionally attributed to the efforts of Korean potters, it was Chinese porcelain that quickly provided the model for vessel forms and decoration.⁸ In 1644, the Ming dynasty collapsed, disrupting imports and stimulating the nascent domestic porcelain industry. Porcelains produced in the province of Hizen penetrated markets China could no longer satisfy: the Dutch East India Company shipped Japanese porcelains to Southeast and Western Asia and Europe, while local merchants, prohibited from travelling overseas by the isolationist policies of the shogunate, distributed wares within Japan. Japanese porcelain graced the castles of Europe's kings, and, through the efforts of the Nabeshima lords, the court of Japan's shoguns.

Hizen porcelains also found their way into the palace of the Japanese emperor. Despite enjoying limited political power during the Edo period, the emperor was the centre of Kyoto's courtly sphere. The Tokugawa shogunate valued imperial legitimation, reinstating the practice by which successive shoguns received the emperor's blessing, and offering homage (and financial support) to the imperial palace. Butler has suggested 'The seventeenth century court ... held little in the way

⁷ Rousmaniere, *Vessels*.

⁸ For discussion, see: *ibid.*, Chapter 3.

of power and wealth ... yet its status and preeminent position in cultural terms were equal or superior to those it had enjoyed in 1400.⁹ For Butler, the court *persisted*, adapting to maintain a position of relevance as the powerful warlords who sought to unify Japan during the Sengoku period (c.1467–c.1600). Oda Nobunaga, Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Tokugawa Ieyasu all made conscious efforts to provide for the court.¹⁰ The imperial palace was gradually afforded the means to rebuild its grandeur, if not its authority. Produced from around 1700 for a court reaping the financial reward of complicity with the dominant military, the ceramics discussed here represent a new imperial material culture.

While porcelain vessels presented to the shogun by Nabeshima lords have long drawn attention, the history of these imperial vessels has only recently been explored. With current research focused upon excavated materials, a few handed down pieces and historical records, there are other collections to be brought into these discussions. Building on the existing scholarship, this first part of the chapter defines *kinri goyōtōki* and draws comparisons with Nabeshima ceramics. A new element of the material culture of the imperial court, these were nonetheless conservative objects that formed links with the past, while in their use they helped to forge relationships in the present.

Uncovering an imperial past

Research into Edo-period imperial ceramics has been stimulated by recent archaeological excavations. Between 1997 and 2002, the Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute excavated an area of 14,687m² within the Kyoto Gyoen: the garden surrounding the Imperial Palace in Kyoto (hereafter Goshō).¹¹ During the Edo period, court nobles occupied the area, but it fell into disrepair following the removal of emperor and court to Tokyo at the beginning of the Meiji era. When the Meiji Emperor visited Kyoto in 1877, he was shocked by conditions.¹² Thereafter, the Goshō was repaired, the ruined noble residences demolished and a park

⁹ Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144–53.

¹¹ Kyōto-shi Maizōbunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed., *Heiankyō sakyō hokuhen shibō* (Kyoto: Kyōto-shi Maizōbunkazai Kenkyūjo, 2004).

¹² Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 780.

established. Largely protected from development, only minor excavations were subsequently undertaken in the area surrounding the palace. The recent excavations took place in advance of the construction of the Kyoto State Guesthouse.

Uncovering a unique site in Japan's historic capital, the Guesthouse excavations held the potential to shed new light on the lives of Kyoto's courtly elite and the palace itself. The excavated area lay east of the extant Gosho, and north of the site of the Sentō Gosho, built in 1630 for the retirement of Emperor Gomizunō but destroyed by fire in 1854. During the Edo period, the area between these palaces was filled with noble residences (**Figure 2.2**).¹³ The site yielded more than 7000 boxes of excavated materials dating from the Early Modern period onwards, of which porcelain formed a significant component.¹⁴ Historically documented conflagrations in 1671, 1708 and 1788, and comparative studies were used to date finds. A number of porcelain dishes and tea bowls decorated in underglaze blue with the chrysanthemum crest of the imperial family (**Figure 2.3**) were recovered from contexts dated to the second half of the eighteenth century, with similar dishes and bowls, fewer in number, found in contexts dated to the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.¹⁵

Prior to the Kyoto excavations, porcelain and stoneware vessels decorated with imperial chrysanthemum crests were known from public and private collections. Handed down through the generations, many of these objects have been preserved as single pieces. In contrast, the quantity of ceramics recovered by the Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute and accompanying contextual data served as a catalyst for new research. However, another potentially vital resource in understanding the history of imperial ceramics has been largely overlooked. The Gosho and Sentō Gosho were not the only palaces in the Edo period. Although not the residences of emperors, clustered around Kyoto are Buddhist temples termed *monzeki* and *amamonzeki*: monasteries and nunneries where members of the

¹³ For the history of the noble residential area, see: Kyōto-shi, ed., *Heiankyō*, 2: Chapter 7.

¹⁴ Nōshiba Tsutomu, 'Kyōto kuge yashiki no Hizenkei tōjiki ni tsuite,' in *Juyōsō no chigai ni yoru Kyūshū tōji no yōsō* ed. Kyūshū Kinsei Tōji Gakkai ([Japan]: Kyūshū Kinsei Tōji Gakkai, 2004), 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17, 25–26.

imperial family and high nobility once served as abbot or abbess.¹⁶ Only occasionally open to the public, a recent exhibition of artworks from *amamonzeki* at the University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, described theirs as ‘A hidden heritage.’¹⁷ In contrast to the isolated objects typically preserved as heirlooms, a survey of collections at the *amamonzeki* Reikanji revealed more than seventy examples of imperial ceramics, including many sets.¹⁸

The *amamonzeki* were ‘centers of learning, spiritual discipline and worship,’ but also ‘small aristocratic courts where the customs and language of imperial circles were maintained.’¹⁹ Benefitting from imperial patronage and gifts, these temples participated in the day-to-day material culture of the court as practiced by their tonsured imperial initiates. Known as ‘the palace of the valley’, Reikanji (**Figure 2.4**) is one of thirteen surviving *amamonzeki*. The temple’s first abbess was Tari no Miya, daughter of Emperor Gomizunō (r.1611–1629); the second abbess was a daughter of Emperor Gosai (r.1654–1663).²⁰ With close imperial connections, the collections at Reikanji offer a rare insight into the material culture of the extended court. A survey of ceramics revealed 72 pieces that may be termed *kinri goyōtōki* and a further 46 of similar ware and style, but without a chrysanthemum crest. Preserved in sets and multiples, these objects further enliven the discussion of imperial ceramics helping to build a picture of both the nature of *kinri* ceramics and the networks in which they operated.

¹⁶ I am indebted to Professor Oka Yoshiko for guiding my research in this direction.

¹⁷ Barbara Ruch, ‘A Hidden Heritage: The Story of an Exhibition’ in *Amamonzeki jiin no sekai: Miko-tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009), 14.

¹⁸ Details of objects surveyed are appended: Surveys 2. For a summary, see: Oka Yoshiko, ‘Reikanji monzeki shozō no tōjiki,’ in *Nihon no shūkyō to jendā no kenkyū: Kinsei shakai ni okeru nisō to amadera no yakuwari*, ed. Oka Yoshiko (Nishinomiya: Oka Yoshiko / Ottemae Daigaku: 2013).

¹⁹ Ruch, ‘Hidden Heritage,’ 14.

²⁰ For a summary of Reikanji’s history, see: Patricia Fister and Hanafusa Miki, ‘Convent Histories’ in *Amamonzeki jiin no sekai: Miko-tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009), 370.

Defining *kinri goyōtōki*

The literature on *kinri goyōtōki* is almost exclusively in Japanese, and the expression requires some explanation.²¹ Terms for Japanese ceramic wares are variously derived from production sites (Kyoto, Seto), technique and materials (*tenmoku*), makers (Ninsei, Kakiemon), or even key figures involved in their development (Oribe, Nabeshima), but *kinri goyōtōki* sits uneasily among this group as it does not denote a single type of ware. *Tōki* are ceramics, *goyō* indicates elite use or order (here imperial), while *kinri* denotes the palace. In this way, the ceramics known as *kinri goyōtōki* (hereafter *kinri*) are defined first and foremost by their consumer: the imperial palace.

Just as this thesis encompasses ceramics made in Europe and Japan, of porcelain and bone china, the ceramics classed as *kinri goyōtōki* (here described as *kinri*) were not made in one location, nor are they of uniform materials. Two principal groups can be identified: porcelain vessels decorated in underglaze blue principally made in Hizen (**Figure 2.3**), and stoneware vessels decorated in underglaze blue and red iron oxide made in Kyoto (**Figure 2.5**). Both groups comprise vessels used in daily life: tableware, smoking accessories, tea wares, braziers and accessories for taking medicines. However, there is limited overlap between porcelain and stoneware forms. The *kinri* porcelains predominantly comprise dishes and lidded boxes for food and smoking accessories, while the Kyoto *kinri* wares include tea vessels, medicine cups and kettles. In the Kyoto excavations, both were recovered from the same archaeological contexts. The two are also found alongside each other in the collections of former imperial nunnery, Reikanji. Complementary in their use rather than mutually exclusive, their characteristics, however, are quite different.

Decorated exclusively in underglaze blue, the majority of the Edo-period *kinri* porcelain vessels are now believed to have been made in the town of Arita in the former Hizen province. Typically bereft of makers' marks, during the twentieth century some scholars attributed these objects to the Kiyomizu kilns in Kyoto, or

²¹ Within the Japanese literature use of this term is not yet consistent. Variations include the more general *kinri goyōhin*: 'goods for imperial use' and *kinri chūmonhin*: 'articles ordered by the palace,' which may apply to objects in all media. Denoting ceramics specifically, here I use *kinri goyōtōki*.

Kyushu's Hirado kilns, but historical sources have helped cement the Arita attribution in recent years.²² Ōhashi studied early *kinri* porcelains excavated from contexts related to the 1708 and 1788 fires, his observations revealing the relationship between these objects and contemporary Hizen production. He noted that the porcelain and cobalt were the highest quality used in Arita, but while typical Arita wares would have a ring or mark within the footring no such markings were made on the *kinri* dishes: a characteristic also found on Nabeshima wares presented to the shogunate (**Figure 2.6**). The reverse of dishes, Ōhashi observed, was decorated with a flowering *karakusa* or arabesque, but unlike typical Arita arabesque motifs, it was drawn in outline and filled rather than being executed as a single line. Lastly, the central well of each dish was left blank, enclosed by a blue circle; designs of this style peaked in Arita around the 1690s (**Figure 2.7**), suggesting that it may have been around this time that Arita *kinri* ceramics were created.²³ From Ōhashi's expert observations, it is clear that *kinri* ceramics were among the highest quality Arita wares, sharing certain design features with the Nabeshima wares crafted for presentation to the shogun.

The designs painted onto the surface of the porcelain *kinri* ceramics employ diverse motifs within a structured format. On the walls of bowls and in the borders of dishes three types of motif are typically used: crests, repeating patterns and scattered motifs. The crests are, by definition for *kinri*, variations of the imperial chrysanthemum crest (typically two layers of sixteen petals), though other crests can be found as discussed below. Repeating patterns include tortoiseshell, chequerboard, pine bark, arrow-flights, lozenges and wisteria (**Figure 2.8**), while scattered motifs range from birds (particularly cranes and phoenix) to flowering branches of cherry, plum and chrysanthemum.²⁴ Finally, as noted above, the outer surfaces of dishes feature scrolling vegetal arabesques known as *karakusa* (Chinese grass) with plum blossom flowers (**Figure 2.9**). On the pieces considered to have

²² For discussion of misattributions, see Ike Osamu, *Gosho no utsuwa* (Kyoto: Mitsumura Suiko Shoin, 2012), 9. For historical sources relating to Arita production, see: Ōhashi Koji, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai no tokubetsuna imi o motsu Hizen jiki nidai: Kinri goyōtōki to umeboshiyō tsubo,' *Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōjibunkakan kenkyū kiyō*, 3 (2004), 3–7.

²³ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 7.

²⁴ For the diversity of motifs, see: Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*.

been made for imperial use, these flowers are characteristically outlined and filled rather than drawn with a single line, suggesting the extra care taken by the craftsmen in their production.²⁵

The design arrangement and techniques employed for these *kinri* porcelains remained consistent, even conservative, during the Edo period. While other Arita porcelains ceased to feature the central blank space in the well of dishes, this was retained within *kinri* porcelains. Likewise, the absence of makers' marks or other decoration within the footring remained consistent.²⁶ Such conservatism has impeded production of a tighter chronology, an effort further hampered by the recovery of apparently older and newer pieces from the same archaeological contexts. Among the few dateable changes that have been suggested are a change in the execution of the petals of the two-layered chrysanthemum around 1708 (**Figure 2.10**), and the introduction of phoenix motifs in the nineteenth century (**Figure 2.11**).²⁷

The objects produced in porcelain with these characteristic designs include smoking accessories, hand-warmers, and rinsing-bowls called *ugaiwan* (**Figure 2.12**), but tableware—bowls, dishes and lidded vessels—dominates and was likely produced in sets. The collections at Reikanji support this interpretation. Here, the same decoration is found on dishes of the same size and shape (**Figure 2.13**), as well as crossing between different vessel forms (**Figure 2.14**). Within the decorative scheme of dishes and bowls, the space demarcated by the blue ring in the centre of each *kinri* dish corresponds to the underside of the bowl bounded by the footring (**Figure 2.15**). In this way, the particular organisation of patterns around a central void on the *kinri* dishes allows them to employ exactly the same designs as the bowls: the distinctive decoration of *kinri* porcelains facilitating unity among these vessels.

The *kinri* ceramics made in Kyoto are quite different to the Hizen examples. Fired as stoneware, with grey bodies and a thin clear glaze, these vessels belong among Kyoto's Awata ware with a number of pieces carrying the stamp of the

²⁵ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 7.

²⁶ Exceptions to this are found in the Meiji era as discussed below.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7, 15.

Taizan kiln. The Kyoto *kinri* ceramics reveal a greater diversity of form than the porcelain *kinri* ceramics, but largely comprise vessels for tea, alcohol and medicines, rather than for dining. Pieces preserved at Reikanji include handled bowls, kettles, water containers for tea ceremony and braziers. Their decoration is generally limited to scattered imperial chrysanthemum crests in underglaze blue and red iron oxide, but excavated ceramics include examples incorporating other motifs such as leaves and pine needles (**Figure 2.16**).²⁸ In addition, the collections at Reikanji include pieces with crane and tortoiseshell decoration, but no crests (**Figure 2.17**); similar examples are known from other *amamonzeki* (**Figure 2.18**).²⁹ Chrysanthemums may be drawn petal by petal or within a circle (**Figure 2.19**), but the dateable shift in the porcelain *kinri* is not echoed by the Awata wares.³⁰

It is difficult to say whether the Kyoto *kinri* ceramics were also crafted as sets. At Reikanji, a kettle (*dobin*), medicine bowl and ewer are stored together (**Figure 2.20**). Among these only the kettle carries a maker's mark, and while the kettle and medicine bowl both tend towards brown in their colour, the ewer is a cool greenish-grey. It is unlikely that they were produced as a set. However, despite these differences, viewed as a group they are remarkably coherent even in this small number. Ornamented exclusively with chrysanthemum crests in underglaze blue and red iron-oxide, their sparse and simple decoration affords these disparate elements an impression of unity.

From the limited number of objects known, it seems that the Awata ware *kinri* ceramics may not have been as numerous as the Hizen ware *kinri* ceramics. Among the objects published from the excavations, 86 porcelain fragments feature chrysanthemum crests, compared to 16 Kyoto stoneware fragments. A similarly

²⁸ Ike suggested the Awata wares featured only scattered chrysanthemum crests: Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 360. However, the excavated materials include two tea bowls featuring reverse chrysanthemum crests together with motifs of leaves and pine needles: Kyōto-shi, ed., *Heiankyō*, 2 (Images):437.

²⁹ Oka Yoshiko, *Kinsei kyōyaki no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Shibubunkaku Shuppan, 2011), 287.

³⁰ Among the excavated materials, the assemblage from context B674 (dated 1700–1750) includes three Awata-ware pieces with two-layer chrysanthemums and five Hizen-ware pieces featuring chrysanthemums drawn in a circle suggesting that the execution of the crest did not change synchronously across the two wares. In addition, Awata-ware pieces featuring both styles of depiction were found within single assemblages from contexts G471 and F950, suggesting their coexistence. For assemblages, see: Kyōto-shi, ed., *Heiankyō*, 2 (Images):372–75, 437, 508.

disproportionate ratio can be found at Reikanji: of the 72 ceramics featuring chrysanthemum crests, 62 are porcelain, and only 10 are Kyoto stonewares. While each group shows an internal unity in terms of their designs, placed alongside each other their materials are quite different. Even so, the two are nonetheless brought together by the chrysanthemum crests they bear and the palace (and imperial denizens) those crests represent. As this thesis examines imperial tableware, porcelain *kinri* will be more intensively discussed, but it is important to appreciate the broader dimensions of *kinri* ceramics as a category determined by consumption.

Porcelain for Japanese palaces

Hizen porcelains of the Edo period have achieved renown within Europe for their courtly connections. In 1990, the exhibition *Porcelain for Palaces* showcased Japanese export porcelains that graced the residences of Europe's rulers from the second half of the seventeenth century.³¹ Demand for Chinese and Japanese porcelain helped stimulate the later development of Europe's own soft and hard-paste porcelain manufactories, such as Sèvres and Meissen, themselves intimately associated with the royal patronage. Equally well known among the Edo-period porcelains are the Nabeshima wares presented by the feudal lords of Nabeshima to the Tokugawa shoguns at their castle in Edo.³² Both the *kinri* porcelains and Nabeshima wares were made in Hizen province, Kyushu, for use in the palaces of Japan's rulers: *de jure* and *de facto*. Building on the definitions for *kinri* given previously, comparison of these imperial ceramics with the Nabeshima porcelains sheds further light on the forces that shaped them.

Porcelain was not produced in Japan until the early seventeenth century. However, that is not to say it was not used in Japan before that time. Imported from China from the eleventh or twelfth centuries, porcelain had already established itself among some sections of the Japanese elite before it was made

³¹ John Ayers et al., *Porcelain for Palaces: The Fashion for Japan in Europe, 1650–1750* ([London]: Oriental Ceramics Society, 1990).

³² For examples of Nabeshima ware, see: Kanagawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Nabeshima: Hanyō kara gendai made* (Yokohama: Kanagawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan, 1987). For discussion, see: Ōhashi Kōji, *Shōgun to Nabeshima Kakiemon* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 2007).

within the archipelago.³³ Although not responsible for the initial development of porcelain technologies within Japan, the disruption to Chinese exports caused by the Ming dynasty's downfall in 1644 played a role in their expansion. Divested of supplies that had become integral to the production of their identities, Japan's elite was primed to support domestically made porcelain. This was the context within which Nabeshima ware developed.

A somewhat opportunist response to the reduced availability of Chinese ceramics, the supply of porcelain as *kenjō-hin* or presentation goods to the shogunal court by the Nabeshima lords was a way of currying the shogun's favour. Having pledged their allegiance to the defeated forces of western Japan at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, the Nabeshima domain needed to reconcile with the victorious shogunate. With access to Chinese imports arriving in Nagasaki, Nabeshima Katsushige (1580–1657) began to present Chinese ceramics to the shogunate from the beginning of the Edo period. Following the downfall of the Ming dynasty, the Nabeshima shifted attention to the production of domestic porcelains of the highest quality. The presentation of domestically made ceramics commenced in 1651, continuing on an annual basis.³⁴ Dispatched around the eleventh month, ships carried up to 2000 pieces of porcelain from Kyushu to Edo each year. While other ceramics were presented to the shogunate as occasion demanded, Nabeshima presentations were expected each year.³⁵ Offered as tribute, these objects were instrumental in the maintenance of feudal relations between the regional lords of Nabeshima and the *de facto* ruler of the Japanese archipelago.

Despite starting in a similar way, with presentations to the emperor by a high-ranking lord, the *kinri* porcelains were not *kenjō-hin* but *chūmon-hin*: ordered goods. Sources suggest that the Date clan of Sendai domain commissioned ceramics from the Tsuji workshop in Arita through an Edo trader with Hizen connections during the Kanbun era (1661–1673). Delighted with the works, the Date lords later presented ceramics made by Tsuji to the imperial palace.³⁶ Credited with producing

³³ Rousmaniere, *Vessels*, Chapter 2.

³⁴ For the history of Nabeshima production, see: Ōhashi, *Shōgun to Nabeshima*.

³⁵ Ōhashi Kōji, 'Edo bakuhan taisei o tokushoku zukeru tōjiki,' *Kikan kōkogaku*, 110 (2010): 15–16.

³⁶ For discussion of these sources, see: Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 4.

many of the Hizen porcelains for the imperial palace, records suggest that the Tsuji household received imperial orders from the time of Tsuji Kiemon III, who died in 1716.³⁷ Excavated materials support this, with porcelains decorated with chrysanthemum crests in underglaze blue first appearing around the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.³⁸ As with the Nabeshima wares, sources suggest that ships were dispatched annually.³⁹ Both crafted in Hizen and dispatched by ship each year, the Nabeshima and *kinri* wares were products of quite different social relationships. While Nabeshima porcelains were produced within lord-vassal relations, *kinri* porcelains were commissioned by, and for, the Gosho.

The decoration of Nabeshima and *kinri* porcelains is quite distinct, but they share an important characteristic: the absence of makers' marks. Produced at domain kilns, located first in Iwayagawachi and then moved to Okawachiyama, Nabeshima porcelains are (as their name suggests) closely associated with the Nabeshima lords that oversaw their production. However, while Nabeshima porcelains benefitted their domain lords in their negotiations with the shogunate, the craftsmen who made the *kinri* porcelains reaped the unique benefits of patronage for themselves. Even without a makers' mark, the name of Tsuji was closely associated with the *kinri* ceramics ordered by the Gosho. Filled with the characteristic designs of *kinri* porcelains, an order book dated to 1772 mentions Tsuji by name.⁴⁰ In 1775, Tsuji Kiheiji VI received the court name *Hitachi Daijō Minamoto no Ason Aitsune*.⁴¹ Carrying court rank, such a bestowal was a rare accolade for a craftsman. For a time, the Tsuji lineage was also granted a monopoly over the production of imperial porcelains, further demonstrating the strength of their relationship with the palace.⁴² It was not only in the porcelain *kinri* ceramics that such direct patronage manifested itself. From the early Edo period, the Awata kilns in Kyoto enjoyed the patronage of the local temple, Shorenin. Also

³⁷ 'Tsuji-ke jidaisho,' Meiji-era (1868–1912), Tsuji Collection. **Source 37.**

³⁸ Nōshiba, 'Kyōto kuge yashiki,' 25.

³⁹ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 13.

⁴⁰ 'Chōbutsu no hinagata,' 1772, Imari City Museum of History and Folklore: Maekawa-ke collection.

⁴¹ 'Tsuji-ke jidaisho,' Meiji-era (1868–1912), Tsuji Collection. **Source 37.**

⁴² Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 13. Oka has questioned the robustness of this monopoly, see: Oka Yoshiko, 'Kyōto ni okeru Hizen jiki no juyō nit suite,' in *Juyōsō no chigai ni yoru Kyūshū tōji no yōsō* ed. Kyūshū Kinsei Tōji Gakkai ([Japan]: Kyūshū Kinsei Tōji Gakkai, 2004).

known as *Awataguchi no Gosho* ('the Palace of Awataguchi'), Shorenin was a *monzeki* monastery with imperial connections.⁴³ By ordering goods directly or through affiliated traders, vessels met the needs and wishes of the court as their makers enjoyed unique patronage.

The Nabeshima presentation goods and the ordered *kinri* porcelains were conceived in contrasting socio-political contexts, which are reflected in the decorative strategies of the two wares. Designs selected for Nabeshima presentation wares were often auspicious, reflecting the proper sentiment of the lords towards their shogun (**Figure 2.21**). The characteristic high foot found on Nabeshima dishes (**Figure 2.22**), meanwhile, echoes the shape of lacquer sake cups employed for offerings and the sealing of social contracts.⁴⁴ Executed with the greatest care and presented annually, the domain's porcelains enacted the fealty of the Nabeshima lords toward the shogunate. Crafted with an eye to the past, the porcelains produced for imperial use possess a quieter beauty. Decorated only in underglaze blue, the patterns on *kinri* porcelains were drawn from the imperial court. These repeating patterns (including tortoiseshell, pine bark and rising clouds: **Figure 2.8**) belong to a group of patterns known as *yūsoku moyō*. *Yūsoku* refers to knowledge of court practices, ceremonies and etiquette. These were also material practices, and *yūsoku moyō* ('*yūsoku* patterns') is used to describe the patterns woven into silk fabrics employed for courtly attire (**Figure 2.23**). Clothed in the patterns of the court, these new Japanese porcelains embedded themselves into an existing imperial material culture.

Comparing motifs on imperial porcelains with those of textiles, Ike has shown the parallels between the two. He notes: 'the patterns drawn on the vessels for imperial use are identical to the designs used for the various articles in the imperial court. As a result, in terms of the fixtures of the palace, there is a sense of unity.'⁴⁵ Clothing was central to the performances that secured the role and identity of the court, with appropriate attire a prerequisite of ceremonies and rituals. Even

⁴³ Kyōto-shi Rekishi Shiryōkan, 'Kyōto no yakimono: Awatayaki to kiyomizuyaki,' 2005, accessed June 1, 2015, <https://www.city.kyoto.jp/somu/rekishi/fm/nenpyou/htmlsheet/bunka20.html>.

⁴⁴ For sake cups, see: U. A. Casal, 'Some notes on the Sakazuki and the Role of Drinking Sake in Japan,' *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 19 (1940).

⁴⁵ Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 13. Author's translation.

in the most straitened times of the Sengoku period when warring factions battled for control and the consumption of luxurious textiles stretched the resources of courtiers and emperor alike, court clothing regulations were not relaxed. Instead, courtiers borrowed the clothing they needed for ceremonies and the emperor's costumes were refurbished.⁴⁶ Adopting the motifs of court costume, *kinri* porcelains were able to become part of court material culture. A new addition to the imperial table, their design had a conservative edge.

Trade with China resumed in the 1680s.⁴⁷ The artistry of Nabeshima wares, however, is considered to have peaked after this date—between the 1690s and 1720s.⁴⁸ Nabeshima wares predominantly comprised dishes and cups for dining, and these domestically made porcelains had quickly become integral to displays of hospitality within and around the shogun's court. The largest dishes, approximately 30 cm in diameter (**Figure 2.21**), were used for formal banquets, and Ōhashi has noted the correlation between their production and the institution of the system of *onari*, whereby the shogun visited, and was entertained at, the houses of his chief vassals.⁴⁹ The Nabeshima kilns did not only make ceramics for the shogun, however. Within Tokyo, significant quantities of Nabeshima ceramics have been excavated from the sites including the residences of the Dewa-Matsuyama clan and the Hikosaka family, vassals of the shogunate. According to Mizumoto, these materials support documentary evidence showing that Nabeshima lords presented ceramics to various individuals, but further demonstrate that they were given according to the roles people held rather than the stipends they received under the shogunate. As such, Mizumoto argues, these gifts were strategically employed to secure the position of the Nabeshima domain.⁵⁰ By controlling the production and distribution

⁴⁶ Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 89–97.

⁴⁷ Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, 'White Gold: The Porcelain for Export Manufactured in Japan and the Diffusion of New Beverages in Europe,' in *Jiki: Porcellana giapponese tra Oriente e Occidente 1610–1760*, eds. Ōhashi Kōji and Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (Milan: Electa, 2004), 50.

⁴⁸ Ōhashi Kōji, 'Japanese Porcelain: Imari for Japanese Shōguns and European kings,' in *Jiki: Porcellana giapponese tra Oriente e Occidente 1610 – 1760*, eds. Ōhashi Kōji and Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (Milan: Electa, 2004).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁰ Mizumoto Kazumi, 'Edo ni okeru nabeshima shutsudo jōkyō,' *Kikan kōkogaku* 110 (2010).

of goods required by material practices of dining and display, the Nabeshima lords could reposition themselves within Edo's networks of power.

While the characteristics of the *kinri* porcelains and the documents regarding their production by the Tsuji house have enabled fruitful discussion, the role these ceramics played in material practices and networks of authority is still to be fully disclosed. Even where practical use can be assumed, the significance of these objects extended beyond simple utility. The recovery of pieces of different date from excavated contexts suggests that items were retained for some time before deposition.⁵¹ Similarly, *amamonzeki* collections include pieces that have been preserved despite sustaining damage that would render them unsuitable for use.⁵² Alongside the networks that shaped them, these *yūsoku*-clad porcelains had a part to play in wider social relationships.

Objects of association

The majority of *kinri* porcelains were produced as tableware, comprising dishes, bowls and lidded boxes. While use of the term *kinri* to describe these ceramics privileges their association with the palace, an alternative term employed by Ike highlights another aspect of their role. Ike refers to these porcelains as *osagari* or 'things handed down.'⁵³ The preservation of *kinri* ceramics among the collections of the imperial convents also suggests the wider role of these objects in the material culture and practice of the imperial family. Intended to furnish the imperial table, these objects were not confined to it. Through the movement of imperial things, and the creation of objects in similar style, *kinri* porcelains served in wider networks of association and affiliation to the imperial court.

Individual examples of *kinri* porcelain have been preserved with a provenance that connects them to imperial use. The box for a dish decorated with pine arabesques and chrysanthemum crests in the Shibata Collection at Kyushu Ceramics Museum (**Figure 2.24**) carries the following inscription:

⁵¹ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 7.

⁵² For example, the collections at Reikanji include a bowl broken into two and repaired: **Survey 1**, RK43-17.

⁵³ Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 362.

Tea-bowl: one piece; dish: two pieces; items used by Emperor Kōkaku bestowed upon the court doctor of that time, Ōmachi⁵⁴

Given to a court doctor by Emperor Kōkaku, this dish has been handed down through the generations preserving its imperial association. Similar acts of imperial munificence are recorded from the end of the Edo period, relating how those who served the emperor his meals were given food and occasionally tableware:

The *osue* [attendants] received the left-overs. This was a side benefit of the *osue*. Approximately twice or three times in a month one might receive and bring back as much as a tea bowl. I also was favoured and received such things as the emperor's tea bowl.⁵⁵

The palace attendants included women drawn from the noble families of the court; through their service to the emperor and the gifts bestowed in return, relationships between the imperial family and nobility were strengthened.⁵⁶ Presented individually rather than in sets intended for practical use, these items secured value through their association with the emperor that used them. Other pieces however, followed different trajectories.

The appearance of alternate forms of the imperial chrysanthemum crest on *kinri* porcelains offer insights into other narratives. Chrysanthemums were a favoured motif of the retired Emperor Gotoba (1180–1239), and it is his influence that is credited with the gradual institution of these flowers as an imperial crest alongside the paulownia.⁵⁷ Over time, different variations of the chrysanthemum crest were also used. Of the 62 porcelains with imperial crests surveyed at Reikanji, nearly half (29) have variant chrysanthemum crests that may help elucidate the social relationships behind these objects. A three-layered chrysanthemum crest noted by Ike to be used by some *monzeki* is found on two individual dishes: one decorated with rising clouds, the other with cranes (**Figure 2.25** and **Figure 2.26**)

⁵⁴ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 28 (Figure 4.3: Box lid). Author's translation.

⁵⁵ *Bakumatsu no kyūtei* as quoted in Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 10. Author's translation.

⁵⁶ For the role of women at court during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 50–56 and 240–43.

⁵⁷ Yokomizu Hiroko, 'Motifs and the Treasures of Imperial Convents,' in *Amamonzeki jiin no sekai: Miko-tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009), 351.

and on a set of two dishes and three bowls with a chrysanthemum design (**Figure 2.14**).⁵⁸ However, it is the chrysanthemum framed with *karakusa* that is most numerous. This crest, associated with Emperor Kōkaku, can be found on a set of ten identical small dishes (**Figure 2.13**), as well as a further eight dishes in two designs (**Figure 2.27** and **Figure 2.28**), and a single *ugaiwan* or rinsing bowl (**Figure 2.29**). Totalling 19 items, these pieces account for approximately one third of the porcelains with chrysanthemum crests preserved at the temple. Reikanji received substantial support during the reign of Emperor Kōkaku (1771–1840, r.1780–1817) including suites of rooms bequeathed after his retirement in 1817. Emperor Kōkaku's older sister, Kanzan Sōkyo (1769–1821), was fourth abbess of the temple and this close connection is credited with drawing the emperor's favour towards the temple.⁵⁹ Featuring the crest associated with Kōkaku, it is likely that these dishes also date from this time. Unlike other *densei-hin* or *osagari* preserved in small numbers, these dishes survive in quantities suggesting practical use. Enabling the continuation of imperial material practices in the residence of the emperor's kin, each use of these items reaffirmed the connection between convent and Gosho.

A number of Edo-period porcelains exhibit all characteristic features of the *kinri* porcelain except one: they do not feature the imperial chrysanthemum crest. Some feature alternate crests, while others have no crest at all.⁶⁰ Among the 105 porcelain vessels with *kinri*-style designs at Reikanji, 30 have no crest, and 13 feature alternative crests.⁶¹ Other crests featured on the Reikanji porcelains include cherry-blossom (**Figure 2.30**), wisteria (**Figure 2.31**), and *yatsufuji* wisteria (**Figure 2.32**). Given the flexibility with which crests were employed by different families and institutions during the Edo period precise attribution is difficult. However, the importance of the crest or *mon* as an indicator of lineage, affiliation and identity should not be underestimated even if that identity is now unclear. The records of

⁵⁸ Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 60.

⁵⁹ Fister and Hanafusa, 'Convent Histories,' 370.

⁶⁰ As the presence of a chrysanthemum crest has been recognised as one of the characteristic features of the *kinri goyōtōki*, pieces with an alternative crest shall here be described as *kinri*-style.

⁶¹ 'Kinri-style' is used here to denote pieces that do not satisfy all the characteristics for *kinri goyōtōki* but are nonetheless, visually very similar. This figure includes sixteen pieces of miniature size.

the Maekawa family include two pattern books that shed further light on such objects.⁶² The first of these books records orders from the nobility, featuring many of the characteristic designs found on *kinri* ceramics (**Figure 2.33**). The second book is dated securely to 1772 and considered the later of the two works. Featuring the same range of motifs (**Figure 2.34**) but highlighting the involvement of a retailer thought to sell more widely, it has been suggested that this book was oriented towards a broader Kyoto market.⁶³ Taken together with the objects featuring alternate crests, or no crests, these order books suggest that the nobility and subsequently other sections of Kyoto's population sought to participate in this courtly material culture.

As both order books and extant pieces reveal, *kinri* porcelains employed a wide spectrum of motifs, and yet through their conservative design they are visually coherent as a group, even if crests vary. Examples of *kinri*-style ceramics without an imperial crest are found alongside pieces that do have such crests (whether in excavations or the collections at Reikanji), suggesting that the group or groups using them participated in the same social networks. Awata ware pieces without crests have also been preserved in the collections of former imperial convents Reikanji and Hōkyōji.⁶⁴ With further research, the spread of these objects and the identities of the individuals commissioning and using them might be better understood.

While the *osagari-hin* offer evidence of the role played by porcelain tableware in the maintenance of social relationships by the imperial family, the wider use of *kinri*-style porcelains suggests use of similar objects by the extended court as a way of affiliating themselves to the imperial household through a shared material culture. The existence of ceramics with all the characteristics of *kinri goyōtōki* except the chrysanthemum crest that relates them to palace use highlights the difficulty of defining this ware. While other studies have acknowledged the existence of such items, as yet they have resisted integration into the emerging

⁶² The Maekawa family records document the Kyushu-Kansai ceramics trade during the Edo period. The pattern books are preserved at Imari City Museum of History and Folklore. For details, see: Imari-shi, 'Maekawa-ke shiryō 'Goyō gochōbutsu hinagata' to 'Chōbutsu no hinagata' nitsuite,' in Imari-shi Shihensan linkai, ed., *Imari-shi shi: Shiryōhen* (Imari: Imari-shi, 2007).

⁶³ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 10.

⁶⁴ For example: **Survey 1**, RK45; Oka, *Kinsei kyōyaki*, 287.

scholarship. Hopefully as the field develops, further light will be shed on the use, relative dating and distribution of such wares. Here, I offer only a first approach towards the material culture of the imperial palace and its court in the Edo period. Developing on from individual pieces with strong provenance, the collections at Reikanji suggest the potential for consideration of the *kinri* and *kinri*-style ceramics as part of a material culture that permeated Kyoto's courtly networks.

Uniting Japan?

The palaces of Edo and Kyoto each had their own material cultures fomented within their individual political networks. However, developments of the Bakumatsu period affected both. In the 1850s, Tokugawa Iemochi was compelled to sign treaties with the nations of Europe and America that opened certain Japanese ports to foreign traders. Emperor Kōmei, meanwhile, remained staunchly opposed to these developments, demanding that the barbarians be expelled. In these troubling times, palpable tension between court and shogunate only added to the wider uncertainty. To soothe the rift, plans were made to connect the noble and warrior classes with a marriage alliance at the highest level. Somewhat surprisingly, the Marsham collection of ceramics at Maidstone Museum, Kent, may offer an insight into the role material culture played in this effort to unite Japan.

The gift of Henry Marsham (1845–1908), son of the third Earl of Romney, the Marsham collection at Maidstone Museum comprises numerous examples of Japanese domestic ceramic wares, three of which are of particular interest here. Presented to the Museum in 1908, two porcelain dishes and a bowl decorated in underglaze blue have neither maker's mark nor circle within their foot-ring (**Figure 2.35**). An auspicious design of cranes over pine branches is executed elegantly; on the reverse scrolling *karakusa* is augmented by a plum flower outlined and filled in deep cobalt. With a chrysanthemum crest, these pieces have all the characteristic features expected of *kinri* porcelains, the density of designs in accord with pieces dated to the nineteenth century. However, with a central calyx indicating that it is depicted in reverse, the chrysanthemum crest is only shown once. The other crests on the bowl and dishes are the triple hollyhock leaf of the Tokugawa clan. Little is

known about these pieces, but their decoration suggests the material expression of an alliance between imperial family and shogunate.⁶⁵

Under pressure from overseas powers, in the 1850s the shogunate entered into trading treaties that ended more than two centuries of national seclusion without the emperor's consent. The ensuing rift between court and shogunate only added to the potential weakness of Japan against an external threat, and both sides recognized the need to restore relations. In November 1858, only a month after the signing of the last of these treaties, the possibility of a marriage between Shogun Tokugawa Iemochi and Kazu no Miya, half sister of Emperor Kōmei, was discussed. Already promised to Arisugawa no Miya, Kazu no Miya (1846–1877) was reluctant to leave Kyoto and Emperor Kōmei was also wary of dispatching his beloved sister to lands roamed by foreigners. However, high-ranking courtiers such as Iwakura Tomomi saw the value of the alliance. Not only would it present a united front to foreign powers, but it might also act as a means to transfer the waning authority of the shogunate to the court and then overturn the treaties signed. Perhaps influenced by Iwakura's counsel, Kōmei convinced his sister to proceed with the marriage under the assurance that certain conditions would be met.⁶⁶

The conditions the emperor demanded reveal the political importance of this act. Diplomatic relations with foreign countries were to be severed, and it was to be made clear that the marriage was not forced upon Kazu no Miya, but a joint action of court and shogunate for the country's greater union.⁶⁷ Kazu no Miya had conditions of her own. She asked to be able to return to Kyoto each year to pay respects at her father's tomb and to her brother, and voiced her wishes with regards the selection of her attendants. She also requested to live in the same surroundings in Edo as she had in the Goshō in Kyoto, a condition that was accepted.⁶⁸ By this means, the material culture of the Goshō would be transferred to Edo. In such circumstance, it would only be fitting for her tableware to feature the crest of her imperial ancestry as well as that of her husband.

⁶⁵ I am indebted to Professor Ōhashi Kōji for first bringing this possibility to my attention.

⁶⁶ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 52–55, 59–62.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Before Kōmei allowed his sister to leave for Edo, he raised her to the rank of *naishinnō*: royal princess.⁶⁹ The reverse chrysanthemum depicted alongside the Tokugawa triple hollyhock crest is similar to the fourteen-petalled version denoted for use by imperial princes in 1869.⁷⁰ While such a claim cannot yet be verified, it is possible that the dishes preserved in Maidstone were produced in fulfillment of Kazu no Miya's wish to continue her imperial lifestyle in Edo. Her desire to live as she had in the Goshō calls to mind her relatives who established new lives in the *amamonzeki* surrounded by the material culture of the court. These objects and the familiar material practices they enabled remained part of these women's lives as did their imperial identities. Reflecting the wider political context of the times, the hollyhock and chrysanthemum crests on these vessels suggest the alliance that was hoped to strengthen the nation in a time of external threat. This alliance, however, proved unstable. Following Kōmei's death, samurai factions opposed to the shogunate gathered behind his successor, guiding the young Meiji Emperor to victory over the Tokugawa forces.

2.2 Reshaping Material Legacies

In the early 1870s, as the previous chapter discussed, Western forms of dining were introduced within the Japanese imperial court: one of a suite of changes affecting the day-to-day life of the Meiji Emperor. Dated to 1875, in the midst of these transformations, the design introduced at the start of this chapter (**Figure 2.1**) shows a dish with many of the characteristics of Edo-period *kinri* porcelains. This design was actually one of a series of designs for Japanese-style tableware developed for the emperor, empress and empress dowager, and implemented in 1875. Examining these designs, associated records and the objects that may have resulted, this new system of imperial tableware shall be examined. Other ceramics in *kinri* style were also produced during the Meiji era. Tracing the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 734.

⁷⁰ Ike, *Goshō no utsuwa*, 54. Previously the use of chrysanthemum crests had not been so strictly controlled, and it is worth noting that the 1869 proclamation stated that imperial princes should no longer use sixteen-petalled chrysanthemums, but rather fifteen, fourteen or fewer petals: Yokomizu, 'Motifs,' 351.

pathways taken by these objects, it is possible to see the continuing role of *kinri* ceramics in the construction of networks around the court. However, while both forms and use of these ceramics show elements of continuity, such an interpretation should be approached with caution.

Breaking with the past

After his 'Restoration' to power, the Meiji Emperor followed in the footsteps of Kazu no Miya, moving from the Gosho in Kyoto to the stronghold of the shogunate: Edo. Renamed Tokyo, literally meaning 'Eastern Capital,' this city became home to the court. This move and the imperial progresses that followed were calculated to strengthen the new regime, improving its grip on power after the fighting that accompanied the Restoration.⁷¹ The emperor and empress occupied the former palace of the shoguns: Edo Castle Nishinomaru Palace, renamed Kōjō or 'Imperial Palace.' In the years following other changes were implemented, but on the night of 5 May 1873 a fire broke out in a palace storehouse. Fanned by the wind, it destroyed the palace. While the imperial regalia and other treasures were saved, many possessions were lost to the flames.⁷² This incident has doubtless impacted upon the survival of items from this critical period of transition, but records that survive demonstrate that the daily life of the emperor was already changing before these dramatic events.

Having moved to Tokyo and accepted foreign audiences, by 1871 further aspects of the Meiji Emperor's lifestyle were coming under scrutiny. Ōkubo Toshimichi, formerly a low ranking samurai of the Satsuma domain but now one of the three great statesmen of the Meiji Restoration, felt changes were needed. In 1871, his Satsuma countryman, Yoshii Tomozane, was appointed Senior Secretary of the Imperial Household. That year, Yoshii travelled to Yokohama where he purchased a desk, chair and lamp for the emperor.⁷³ In 1872, Yoshii received permission to dismiss thirty-six ladies-in-waiting, leaving scope for wider transformation. A German tailor was brought to the palace and the new court dress

⁷¹ For imperial progresses, see: Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 42–55.

⁷² Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 236.

⁷³ Osakabe, *Yōfuku*, 64.

of the emperor was styled.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the emperor's consumption of meat was announced to his citizens.⁷⁵ Soon after the fire at the palace, Western-style banquets became a feature of life at court. Did the blaze provide further opportunity to break with the old, or were changes to the imperial table already underway?

Records of the banqueting department from 1873 that detail the destruction wrought by the fire indicate that the transformation of court dining was underway before the blaze. In the days following the fire, investigation was made into the tableware that had been destroyed, which included coffee accessories, glass sugar bowls, knives and forks.⁷⁶ At the end of the month, the weight of lumpen remains of gold, silver and copper vessels ruined in the blaze was investigated.⁷⁷ In July, attention shifted to the serving of tea and sweets to foreign guests visiting the court, with mention made of salaries for foreign chefs.⁷⁸ As noted in Chapter 1, from 2 July 1873 instruction in Western dining styles was given to the imperial family, in September the Duke of Genoa was treated to a breakfast in Western style, and in October an enquiry was made regarding proposals to serve Western cuisine to ambassadors in place of sake and snacks on the day of the emperor's birthday: Tenchōsetsu.⁷⁹ Amidst such change, what place did the practices of the past have?

Crafting continuity

Even with such significant changes taking place in the imperial court, material expressions of continuity with the Edo period may also be discerned. Two years after the destruction of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, an archival record details new designs to be employed for the ceramic tableware of the emperor,

⁷⁴ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁵ For discussion of the significance of this act, see: Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, 24–34.

⁷⁶ Internal document, Imperial Table Office, May 11, 1873, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

⁷⁷ Internal document, Imperial Table Office, May 31, 1873, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

⁷⁸ Internal document for circulation, July 30, 1873, and Internal document for circulation, July 31, 1873, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

⁷⁹ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 3:97; Mitford, *Memories*, 2:499; Copy of enquiry addressed to Iwakura Tomomi, October 25, 1873, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

empress and empress dowager. Dated March 23, 1875, two years after the formal adoption of Western-style banquets, I have been able to connect this notice to designs for tableware in Japanese style, as well as identifying purchase records for these objects. Modelled closely on the *kinri* porcelains of the Edo period, with different patterns for each of the emperor, empress and empress dowager, these designs defined the members of the imperial family in relation to each other and to those that preceded them. However, with records showing that existing objects were rendered obsolete in this process, the system is revealed as new despite its traditional veneer: continuity with the past was selectively managed.

In 1875, the staff of the Imperial Cuisine Division received the following instruction:

The patterns of the ceramic tableware and *bentō* [food containers] for use by the three palaces are determined as per the designs recently enclosed; in this regard, from now, on the occasion of new production all [items] will be made using the patterns described above.⁸⁰

The notice was issued to the head of the Imperial Cuisine Division, ladies-in-waiting and attendants. The notice adds that nine sheets of designs are provided; these are not enclosed with the preserved document, but the date on which the notice was issued is a familiar one: March 23, 1875. It corresponds exactly to that given on the design for ceramic vessels for use by the empress dowager (**Figure 2.1**) described in the introduction to this chapter. The term ‘three palaces’ (*mitsu goshō*) given in the notice does not refer to a physical space, but is a polite allusion to the emperor, empress and empress dowager. It was not only the tableware of the Empress Dowager Eishō that was to be regulated, therefore, but also that of the Meiji Emperor and Empress Shōken. Fortunately, these other designs have been also preserved, albeit some distance away.

Among the collections of the Tsuji kiln in Arita are a number of designs for tableware. As discussed above, the Tsuji family produced tableware for the imperial family in the Edo period, receiving court appointment and other honours. During

⁸⁰ Internal document for circulation, Imperial Cuisine Division, March 23, 1875, from ‘Reikiroku,’ 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058. Author’s translation.

the Meiji era, the head of the family Tsuji Katsuzō (the focus of Chapter 6) was actively involved in the changes taking place in Arita, forming new companies and participating in international exhibitions. The designs, which appear to date in the most part from the Meiji era, reveal this involvement with some stamped *fukoku hakurankai saga-ken tōjiki shuppin kyōkai*: ‘French Exhibition Saga Prefecture Ceramic Exhibit Association’ signaling pieces considered worthy for the Paris Exhibition of 1900.⁸¹ The Tsuji collection also includes designs for tableware decorated with imperial crests, six of which are for dishes and tea bowls in Japanese style. Each of these has been annotated to indicate the person for whom it is intended: a dish and tea bowl each for the emperor (**Figure 2.36** and **Figure 2.37**), empress (**Figure 2.38** and **Figure 2.39**) and empress dowager (**Figure 2.40** and **Figure 2.41**). The design for a dish marked for the empress dowager is identical to that featured by Ōkuma in the exhibition catalogue (**Figure 2.1**), allowing the designs to be connected to the 1875 directive.⁸² The likeness to Edo-period *kinri* porcelains may be apparent, but some of these designs have further annotations. Discussions between maker and commissioner, these reveal more of the process by which continuity was crafted in the early Meiji era.

With a blank central well demarcated by a blue circle, the design arrangement of these pieces is in accord with *kinri* porcelains of the late Edo period. Each piece features chrysanthemum crests and long-tailed birds. Sometimes described as Chinese phoenixes, such birds began to appear on Edo-period *kinri* porcelains in the nineteenth century.⁸³ The birds on each dish are near identical, but the repeated patterns vary. The pieces for the Meiji Emperor carry a motif of mallow flowers (*koaoi*) those for Empress Shōken feature clouds in waves (*kumotatewaki*) and the items for Empress Dowager Eishō are decorated with flowers in tortoiseshell (*kikkōhanabishi*): all *yūsoku* or courtly patterns that can be found on Edo-period imperial porcelains. The only element at all incongruous with the Edo-period porcelains is the *karakusa* arabesque drawn for the outer surface of

⁸¹ For another example, see: Ozaki Yōko, ‘Keibuke no yakimono ga ima ni tsutaeru shijitsu: Meiji 33 nen (1900) Pari banpaku ni shuppin sareta aritayaki,’ *Sarayama* 87 (2010).

⁸² The existence of further designs in a private collection was noted by Ōkuma, but without further discussion or illustration: Ōkuma, ‘Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,’ 5.

⁸³ Ōhashi, ‘Shōgunke kenjō igai,’ 15.

each dish. This centered sprig is quite different to the more linear Edo-period motif that winds its way around the dish (**Figure 2.9**). Furthermore, it has no plum flower: one of the diagnostic features of the Edo-period *kinri* porcelains. As similar as they first appear, the designs cannot be taken to represent a straightforward continuation of Edo practices.

A further aspect for consideration is highlighted by the annotation on the drawing of a bowl for the emperor. An additional chrysanthemum crest has been drawn to the right of the bowl; the script beneath reads:

Hitherto, the crests have been drawn as on the right. We would like to inquire whether on this occasion you wish for it to be the layered chrysanthemum? If it is to be as drawn here, it is very difficult compared to the usual way of drawing the crest ... while it is possible to draw one or two without drawing a circle, when the quantity [of the order] is large, we would like to ask that [the crest] is as per before.⁸⁴

The imperial chrysanthemum crest has numerous variations, but the most usual is a single chrysanthemum flower with sixteen petals behind which the tips of a further sixteen petals (the second layer) may be glimpsed. Examining the crest on the bowl and the crest added to the drawing, the difference alluded to in the annotation can be appreciated.

The crest on the bowl (identical to those featured in the other designs) shows each single petal of the upper and lower layers of the chrysanthemum crest individually delineated. The crest added to the side of the drawing, however, shows a circle within which a sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum has been inscribed, the circle itself serving to suggest the sixteen petals of the lower layer (**Figure 2.42**). During the Edo period, as noted above, both variations were known, but the individually drawn examples on porcelain are considered to be earlier dating to before circa 1708.⁸⁵ Where the crest was drawn within a circle, surviving examples show how this could be executed. Observing the different tones of the cobalt, it is possible to see how an outer and inner circle are painted onto the vessel, with

⁸⁴ Design for bowl, 1875, Tsuji Collection. Author's translation. **Survey 3**, TD021.

⁸⁵ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 7.

straight lines extended from the centre before the tips of the petals are added in to complete the motif (**Figure 2.43**). As the annotation on the design indicates, the petal-by-petal model revealed in the design was a challenging prospect on a three-dimensional object, for a large order the circle method was preferred. A maker's response to a drawing presumably issued by the Imperial Household Ministry, the design itself becomes a site of negotiation between proposal and practice.

The limitations of the two-dimensional designs are drawn out in some of the other comments inscribed around the objects. Annotations on the design for the emperor's bowl and that of the empress dowager seek clarification regarding the total number of imperial crests to be drawn. Observing that on the dish three crests will be visible, the total number of crests on the bowls is queried. This highlights the limitations of the two-dimensional designs, which are only able to show one side of the work. The annotations also signal that aspects that might be considered 'conventional' from an examination of the Edo-period porcelains, in which three crests would be anticipated and the circle method for drawing chrysanthemum crests was well established, needed clarification or at least confirmation at this moment in time. Considered in this light, 'stability' would be a misnomer, instead the apparent continuity is the result of action and negotiation.

Order documents preserved in the archives of the Imperial Household Agency indicate that the design system implemented in 1875 was observed. In 1879, the Supplies Division requested quotes for three sets of *bentō* (food containers). The internal document refers to these as *bentō* for the *mittsu gosho*, but the estimates returned in response specify patterns of mallow, tortoiseshell, and clouds in waves.⁸⁶ In October 1880 and July 1881 Tsuji Katsuzō requested payment for separate orders of tableware. With items including tea bowls, bowls for steamed food and dishes for preserved vegetables, the vessels were for Japanese dining. While the patterns are not specified, the list is clearly divided into items for the

⁸⁶ Internal document for circulation with estimates, June 18, 1879, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 2, 1879, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69006.

emperor, empress and empress dowager.⁸⁷ Later records of orders from February 5, 1887, explicitly connect motif and individual: the dishes for the emperor are described as ‘with imperial crest and mallow flower motif,’ those for the empress dowager are described as ‘with imperial crest and tortoiseshell motif,’ and those for the empress are described as ‘with imperial crest and clouds in waves motif.’⁸⁸ These orders placed with Seiji Kaisha reveal the persistence of the 1875 system. However, they also indicate that even this continuity was contingent upon the steady replenishment of vessels and concomitant expenditure on the part of the Imperial Household Ministry.

In considering the relationship between these objects and their *kinri* predecessors of the Edo period, the location of the designs themselves, and the potters chosen to produce these objects during the Meiji era cannot be overlooked. As seen above, the Tsuji family not only preserves these designs today, but also received orders for these wares during the Meiji era, at which time orders were taken independently by Tsuji Katsuzō, or by the companies of which he was a founding member: Kōransha (established 1875) and Seiji Kaisha (established 1879). Discussed further in Chapter 6, the close relationship developed between the Tsuji house and the imperial court during the Edo period continued into the Meiji era, when they were again selected to supply items to the imperial household. It was not only through pattern and material that connections were created to the material culture of the Edo period, but also by means of the very makers chosen to create these pieces.

Hindering attempts to identify the material correspondents of these designs and orders, dishes and bowls featuring long-tailed birds, rising clouds, tortoiseshell and mallow flowers that may date from the Meiji era carry no makers’ marks. In this, they are in accord with the *kinri* porcelains of the Edo period. Departing from the designs in certain aspects, the ceramics identified are in fact in closer accord with the Edo-period *kinri* porcelains than the designs discussed above. Examining two

⁸⁷ Request for payment, Tsuji Katsuzō and Matsuo Eitarō to Supplies Division, October 30, 1880, and Request for payment, Tsuji Katsuzō and Matsuo Eitarō to Supplies Division, July 7, 1881, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 13, 1881, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69084.

⁸⁸ Requests for tableware, February 5, 1887, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 2, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69291. **Sources 30 to 32.**

groups of likely candidates for the material correlates of these designs—found within the collections of Toraya Bunkō, Tokyo, and Reikanji, Kyoto—these tensions can be explored.

The collections of Toraya Bunkō include three bowls, two dishes and two shallow bowls decorated with chrysanthemum crests, long-tailed birds and lozenge-shaped mallow motifs (**Figure 2.44**). Annotations on paper wrappings of pieces from this group (**Figure 2.45**) give a date of 2 April 1894: whether this relates to production, presentation, or some other event is difficult to say. A further two dishes are decorated with chrysanthemum crests, long-tailed birds and rising clouds. While the motifs are in accord with those of the designs for the tableware of the emperor and empress, they are not the same: the heads and tail feathers of the birds are executed differently, the repeated motifs do not have precisely the same arrangement and the *karakusa* motif on the outside is as depicted on Edo porcelains in contrast to the centered sprig shown in the designs.⁸⁹ The crisp whiteness of the bodies, however, suggests a Meiji-era production date is likely. Unfortunately it is not known exactly when or how these dishes were acquired, but Toraya were (and are) suppliers of confectionaries to the imperial palace.

Among the collections at Reikanji, two dishes and three bowls carry motifs similar to those recorded on the designs relating to the empress dowager (**Figure 2.46** and **Figure 2.47**). The decoration of long-tailed birds, chrysanthemum crests and flowers in tortoiseshell differs from the 1875 designs in exactly the same manner as the vessels at Toraya: the *karakusa* is as shown on Edo porcelains, and the chrysanthemum is drawn within a circle, but the cobalt on the Reikanji examples is also conspicuously bright in hue. This suggests that these pieces may date from the early Meiji era, soon after the introduction of new chemical cobalt pigments.⁹⁰ These objects suggest that the craftsmen's advice regarding the depiction of the crests was followed, and that the *karakusa* was also modified to be closer to that of the Edo period. Through their own knowledge and practice, the

⁸⁹ In the surveys I have undertaken, I have not encountered the particular arrangement of *karakusa* seen in the designs on any actual object.

⁹⁰ Chemical cobalt oxide was brought to Japan by the merchant Shimizu Usaburo after the Paris Exhibition of 1867 and began to be used in the early Meiji era; in time it was mixed with other pigments to soften the hue: Pollard, *Master Potter*, 37, 72.

craftsmen may also be attributed agency in shaping the continuity produced in these vessels.

An additional notice in the *Reikiroku* further underscores the constructed and selective nature of this continuity. Prior to the issuing of the designs, on February 3, 1875, it was noted that tableware used by the imperial family should feature chrysanthemum and *karakusa* decoration.⁹¹ As noted, the designs were confirmed on March 23, but on February 27 the Imperial Cuisine Division made the following statement to the Ministry:

Regarding the dishes that can be used for meals bestowed [by the emperor], we inform you that the things now obsolete are handed over to the Supplies Division.⁹²

Appended is a list of the obsolete tableware: 1162 dishes of different sizes and designs, as well as tea bowls, boxes and so on (**Table 2.1**). Some of the patterns specified are familiar from the materials discussed above such as cranes and tortoiseshell, while others indicate more Chinese-style motifs, including landscapes of mountains and water, and Chinese children. Of the eighteen styles of plate described, only two feature chrysanthemums. In selecting for this overt deployment of the imperial crest, the system of tableware instituted in 1875 highlighted the imperial ancestry of the emperor and those closest to him. With many objects rendered obsolete, the apparent continuity to imperial tableware of the Edo period was the product of careful management.

While the authors of the designs and annotations are not specified, from the direction of the annotations it may be assumed that the designs preserved by the Tsuji family were received from the Imperial Household Agency. These drawings became a site of conversation between patron and maker, design and practice. Both these texts and the extant objects, closer in style to the Edo ceramics than the original designs, suggest the role of craftsmen in giving continuity its material form. Intended for use by central members of the imperial family, the dishes depicted in

⁹¹ Internal document for circulation, Imperial Cuisine Division, February 3, 1875, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058.

⁹² Internal document for circulation, Imperial Cuisine Division, February 27, 1875, from 'Reikiroku,' 1873–1878, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3058. **Source 3.**

these drawings and recorded in these orders are individual to their users. However, just as each dish and bowl was expected to form a set, so the coherence between the designs draws them together. Supplanting the assorted dishes extant in 1875, the dishes designed and ordered for the Meiji Emperor, Empress Shōken and Empress Dowager Eishō connected these individuals to each other and to their imperial ancestry.

***Kinri* by Kanzan Denshichi**

While the attribution of the dishes discussed above must be inferred, the collections at Reikanji contain two further pieces of *kinri*-style porcelain that can be firmly attributed to the Meiji era. Decorated in underglaze blue with chrysanthemum crests, long-tailed birds and rising clouds, this tobacco container and ash jar differ from all *kinri* porcelains considered thus far. These vessels carry the mark of Kanzan Denshichi (**Figure 2.47**). As such, they can be dated to the early Meiji era, but must also be attributed to Kyoto for their production. Breaking in some respects from the Edo tradition, these pieces also served to continue it. This tobacco set and two others like it expose the continued importance of *kinri* ceramics in maintaining networks surrounding the imperial family.

Born in the ceramics producing area of Seto, Kanzan Denshichi (1821-1890) joined the Kotō ware kiln in the Hikone Domain, moving to Kyoto when the kiln closed in 1862. He established his workshop at the base of Kiyomizu-zaka and is thought to have been one of the first ceramicists in Kyoto to specialise in porcelain production. Known in his youth as Katō Shigejirō, he adopted Kanzan as his artist name in 1862 (around the time he moved to Kyoto), and from 1872 he was known as Kanzan Denshichi.⁹³ At its peak, Kanzan's workshop had up to 100 craftsmen, but mismanagement led to the dissolution of the workshop in 1889, and Kanzan died a year later.⁹⁴ Kanzan's biography enables comparatively close dating of signed

⁹³ Kitamura Jushirō, *Kotōyaki no kenkyū*, (Osaka: Kotōyaki No Kenkyūkai Shuppan Kōenkai, 1925), 319.

⁹⁴ For further details of Kanzan and his works, see: *ibid.*, 319–29; Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan, ed., *Karei naru kindai kyōyaki: Arisugawa Miyake denrai Kanzan Denshichi no ippin* (Tokyo: Kunaichō, 2014); Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan Bunka Shiryōka, *Meiji no kyōyaki* (Kyoto: Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan Tomo no Kai, 1979).

works: those signed Kanzan may be dated between 1862 and 1890, while those signed Kanzan Denshichi should fall within the range 1872 to 1890.

Much literature on Kanzan is derived from Kitamura's 1925 publication *Kotōyaki no kenkyū* which records that Kanzan undertook commissions for the Imperial Household Ministry as early as 1871, producing Western-style tableware for the Enryōkan in 1873.⁹⁵ Many of the orders Kanzan supplied to the imperial household went through the trader Kofude Zendayū.⁹⁶ Kofude supplied various goods to the imperial household in the Meiji era and in the majority of his order records the makers are not specified at all. Kanzan, however, is occasionally cited by name, perhaps a reflection of his standing at this time.⁹⁷ While further research is required to support the claims for Kanzan's earliest work for the imperial household, his later involvement is proven by these documents. Unexpected though it may be on porcelain *kinri* wares, the signature that appears on the base of his imperial ceramics is not problematic in terms of their imperial authenticity.

The presence of Kanzan's signature represents a break with the characteristics of Edo period *kinri* ceramics. As discussed above, *kinri*-style tableware made for imperial use in Arita by Tsuji and his affiliates during the Meiji era upheld many of the characteristics established during the Edo period: the absence of makers' marks, and the particular execution of chrysanthemum crest and *karakusa* motifs. The value of Kanzan's signature today lies not only in demonstrating that Kyoto porcelains were used alongside those of the former Hizen province, but more importantly in the close attributions it enables. Given the

⁹⁵ Corroboration of the 1873 order has yet to be found in the imperial purchase records. Unfortunately, Kitamura's sources are not detailed: Kitamura, *Kotōyaki*, 321.

⁹⁶ Kitamura lists the name of the merchant Kanzan worked with as 古筆善太夫 (Kofude Zendayū), but archival sources give 小筆善太夫 (same pronunciation).

⁹⁷ In 1881 when Kanzan supplied a service of dinner, soup, dessert and bread plates to the Imperial Household Ministry, Kofude was listed as *dairi* or 'representative': Request for payment, Kanzan Denshichi, July 18, 1881, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 13, 1881, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, 69084. In earlier orders, Kanzan's name may be listed against one or two items among a larger order from Kofude, eg. Request for payment, Kofude Zendayū, April, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 12, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, 69043. The Kyoto government also acted as a go-between, eg. Letter from Governor of Kyoto to Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry, August 8, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 28, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, 69059. Kanzan's Western-style tableware is discussed in Chapter 4.

conservative tendencies of these *kinri* wares, it can be difficult to distinguish between wares of Edo and Meiji except on material grounds. Kanzan's signature provides a narrow date range for certain pieces, enabling a closer examination of how ceramics were employed in the early Meiji era.

The tobacco set preserved at Reikanji comprises a tobacco container and ash jar (**Figure 2.47**). The rounded walls of the porcelain jars are decorated in underglaze blue with sixteen-petalled imperial chrysanthemum crests (drawn within a circle), long-tailed birds in flight and motifs of clouds in waves: the same motifs as those featured in the designs for the empress' tableware issued in 1875. With Kanzan's mark ('*kanzan-sei*') inscribed on both the tobacco container and the ash jar in underglaze-blue, they can be dated to between 1862 and 1890, the intense blue suggesting a narrower range of 1869 to 1890 as new cobalt pigments were introduced at the beginning of the Meiji era.⁹⁸

Given the political and social contexts of the time, the continuing patronage of Reikanji implied by these objects merits consideration. At the start of the Meiji era, attention fell upon Japan's entangled religious adherence to Buddhism and Shintō. Determining that the two had to be separated, the government set about this task. With the emperor identified as the head of the Shintō faith, the close links between the imperial family and Buddhist temples came under pressure. In the early 1870s, members of the imperial family who had taken religious vows and entered Buddhist monasteries and nunneries were forced to return to lay society disrupting the ties of patronage and prayer that had bound the two.⁹⁹ In 1873, Abbess Hōzan Sōjun of Reikanji was the last royal abbess to leave her temple: although later reinstated as a nun she was not allowed to return to Reikanji.¹⁰⁰ The tobacco accessories by Kanzan, however, tell a different aspect of the story. Becoming aware of the plight of the former imperial convents, the Meiji Emperor

⁹⁸ Kanzan experimented with imported pigments under the direction of Gottfried Wagener from 1869: Kitamura, *Kotōyaki*, 320. This was also the time at which Shimizu was experimenting successfully with chemical cobalt oxide within Japan: Pollard, *Master Potter*, 72.

⁹⁹ For this and broader history of *amamonzeki*, see: Patricia Fister, 'Japan's Imperial Buddhist Convents: A Brief History,' in *Amamonzeki jūin no sekai: Miko-tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Fister and Hanafusa, 'Convent Histories,' 370.

and Empress Shōken maintained close ties, offering their patronage and support. Empress Shōken is known to have given personal items including clothing and lacquer ware to former imperial nunneries.¹⁰¹ It is not known when or how the Kanzan pieces reached Reikanji, but featuring motifs designated elsewhere for the empress' use, it seems probable that they too played a part in continuing connections between Reikanji and the imperial family.

A tobacco set almost identical to that at Reikanji is preserved in the collections of Meiji Jingū. The ash jar and tobacco container are the same shape and also feature long-tailed birds and imperial chrysanthemum crests (**Figure 2.48**). The dimensions are also comparable: the Reikanji ash jar is 7.3cm high and 12.1cm in diameter, compared to 7.6cm and 11.5cm at Meiji Jingū, while the tobacco containers are 7.5cm high and 6.2cm diameter (Reikanji) and 7.8cm high and 6.3cm in diameter (Meiji Jingū). Kanzan's mark is inscribed on their bases, but while the Reikanji pieces feature clouds in waves and chrysanthemums drawn within a circle, the Meiji Jingū set features mallow flower motifs and individually drawn chrysanthemum petals (**Figure 2.49**). The set was presented to Meiji Jingū by Awataguchi Ayako (1880-1955), lady-in-waiting to the Meiji Emperor and Empress Shōken between 1905 and 1915. Awataguchi received a number of personal items from the imperial couple, echoing the presentation of tableware to court ladies during the Edo period.¹⁰² These particular items, however, were given to Awataguchi by Kan'in no Miya (1865–1945), who is understood to have received the set from the Meiji Emperor. Intriguingly, the decoration of long-tailed birds and lozenge-shaped mallow flower motifs on the tobacco set are the same as those featured on the emperor's tableware designs of 1875.

A third tobacco set by Kanzan Denshichi is in the collections of the Museum Chokokan, Nabeshima. This set features the same decoration as that preserved at

¹⁰¹ Hanafusa Miki, 'Empress Tōfukumon'in and Empress Shōken,' in *Amamonzeki jiin no sekai: Mikotachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009).

¹⁰² An exhibition featuring imperial gifts given to Awataguchi called *Meiji Tennō ga tsutaeta kyūtei waka no miyabi: Jōkan Awataguchi Ayako korekushon kara* was held in 2014, see: 'Meiji Tennō yukari no hin narabu: Kyōto Kōzu Kobunkakaikan de tokubutsuten,' *Kyōto Shinbun*, November 3, 2014, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.kyoto-np.co.jp/top/article/20141103000016>.

Meiji Jingū: the long-tailed birds and mallow flower motifs associated with the Meiji Emperor's tableware, but here the chrysanthemums are drawn within a circle (**Figure 2.50**). Inscriptions on the associated box state that the set was given to Kitajima Itoko, a lady-in-waiting, by the Meiji Emperor. Kitajima Itoko later presented the set to Nabeshima Nagako.¹⁰³ Considering this set alongside those at Meiji Jingū and Reikanji, a pattern emerges: while the tobacco set at Reikanji features long-tailed birds and clouds in waves, motifs used for the tableware of Empress Shōken, the two sets known to have been received from the Meiji Emperor, at Meiji Jingū and the Chokokan Museum, feature the mallow flowers stipulated for his use. While further evidence would be required, it seems that the designation of certain motifs for imperial tableware in 1875 may have extended to other items of daily use. There are limitations to this argument: other motifs can also be found on *kinri*-style porcelains with the imperial crest that carry Kanzan's signature (**Figure 2.51**). The provenance of these pieces requires further investigation as do the records of orders placed with Kofude. Of greater significance at this juncture, is what these objects reveal about the networks within which they operated.

Kanzan's inclusion by name in the order documents implies that his work held a particular value against that of some of his peers. Firmly attributable to the first half of the Meiji era, Kanzan's *kinri* ceramics reveal some of the changes that were taking place within the sphere of imperial porcelain, but also establish the continuing significance of *kinri*-style porcelains as imperial gifts. Each of the tobacco sets made by Kanzan Denshichi and decorated with the imperial motifs earlier encountered in tableware designs, has been gifted and preserved, presented and honoured. Embedded within social relationships, these Edo-style ceramics not only forged links with imperial legacies of the past, but were also instrumental to the social relationships that shaped imperial identities in the Meiji present.

¹⁰³ Chōkokan, 'Shūzōhin shōkai: Kikugomon-tsuki kuwa tabakobon,' Nabeshima Hōkōkai, accessed June 1, 2015, http://www.nabeshima.or.jp/collection/index.php?mode=display_itemdetail&id=256#.

2.3 Imperial Tableware

In 1833, Emperor Kōkaku presented a set of dolls to his daughter, Sanmaji-in no Miya. A miniature rendering of the imperial court, such dolls were displayed during the Doll Festival in the third month. While those outside Kyoto dressed their imperial dolls in lavishly embellished textiles befitting the court of their imagination, the dolls presented by Emperor Kōkaku to his daughter wear silk robes woven with *yūsoku* motifs, accurate reflections of the dress and manner of the imperial court (**Figure 2.52**).¹⁰⁴ The furnishings that accompany this little emperor and empress include twin containers of tiny painted shells for the shell matching game, smoking accessories, a *go* board and lacquer chests: 'faithful miniatures of the actual furnishings used in the palace.'¹⁰⁵ However, it is the small raised table in front of the little empress that captures attention. Of plain unvarnished wood, standing on its square top are three tiny porcelain dishes and two bowls decorated with minute blue chrysanthemum crests and pine branches, the wells of the dishes left blank within a blue circle (**Figure 2.53**). Included in this representation of the court, these diminutive vessels and the real life *kinri goyōtōki* they duplicated had become an integral component of Japan's imperial material culture.

As shown in this chapter, what in the Meiji era might be considered 'traditional' in terms of imperial tableware, was itself an invention of the Edo period. The distinctive decoration of these ceramics highlighted their association with their imperial commissioners and consumers through the use of crests and courtly motifs. Through these objects, connections were made and maintained between family members and supporters, transmitting the agency of Kyoto's emperors beyond the palace walls. The existence of objects with alternative crests, meanwhile, suggests a wider role these objects played in Kyoto's courtly networks. With much research still to be done, these ceramics offer an enticing glimpse into the material practices of the Kyoto court: supported financially by the shogunate, but with its own distinctive material culture.

¹⁰⁴ Tanaka Masaru, 'The Dolls of Imperial Convents,' in *Amamonzeki jūin no sekai: Miko-tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, eds. Medieval Japanese Studies Institute et al. ([Japan]: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2009), 211.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

While existing research into *kinri* ceramics has focused on works from the Edo period, discussions of Meiji-era court tableware have privileged new introductions from the West. The notices issued in 1875 regarding the tableware to be used by the Meiji Emperor, Empress Shōken and Dowager Empress Eishō reveal the conscious construction of material links between Edo and Meiji: a process negotiated between craftsmen and commissioners, each with a view to the past. The system constructed was a product of the Meiji era that referenced the material expression of imperial tableware developed during the Edo period. The appearance of Kanzan's signature on the base of *kinri* porcelains demonstrates the scope for change, but also reveals how objects moved as gifts as they had done in centuries past. Defining the Meiji Emperor as inheritor of an imperial legacy, but also positioning him in relation to the empress and empress dowager, these objects shaped his identity through associations constructed within their decoration.

The past remained a potent resource in the construction of court culture. A century and a half earlier, newly developed Japanese porcelains had dressed themselves in the clothes of the imperial court. The designs for tableware issued in 1875 represent a new phase in the history of the *kinri* ceramics, albeit one that looked to the past for its inspiration. The use of such objects in the Meiji era reveals one aspect of the Meiji Emperor's sovereign identity: an identity built upon the past. The objects to be considered in the next chapter show a similar concern with heritage, only this time the heritage was not one found within the Japanese archipelago, but in the royal courts of Europe. Moving neither forwards nor backwards in time, the year is the same: 1875. The objects and material practices of dining that will now be discussed, however, are quite different.

Chapter 3: Imported Identities

Police Superintendent Sawa will depart on the coming 12th day, as such matters [for investigation] as outlined in the main text should be proposed by the morning of the 8th day. If there is nothing to be investigated, please let us know.

[General Affairs Division]

List:

[Regarding] each country's sovereign:

Menus and cards for celebrations such as the emperor's birthday.

Menus and cards for the usual lunches and suppers.

Menus and cards for meals with the ambassadors, and so on.

Furthermore, in the seating arrangement, is the end of the table the highest [position] or is the centre of the table the highest [position]?

On the aforementioned occasions, do those serving wear formal dress?

... Imperial Cuisine Division [February, 1879]¹

The request addressed to Sawa Tadashi by the Imperial Cuisine Division in 1879 is an unexpected one. A police superintendent, Sawa had been selected to accompany Kawaji Toshiyoshi, Superintendent General of Tokyo's Metropolitan Police, on an investigative mission to Europe to examine police systems.² It is a familiar narrative of the Meiji era. In addition to bringing in foreign experts, numerous officials and students travelled overseas to seek out models for modernization across what have been described as, 'a wide range of functional areas: schools, courts, police, the banking system, postal services, the army and navy, universities, newspapers, administrative organizations, factories, hospitals,

¹ Copy of internal document, Imperial Household Ministry, February 1879, from 'Reikiroku,' 1879–1885, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3059.

² For details of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police's use of French models, see: D. Eleanor Westney, 'The Emulation of Western Organizations in Meiji Japan: The Case of the Paris Prefecture of Police and the Keishi-Chō,' *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8.2 (1982).

political parties, elected assemblies.³ With the Imperial Cuisine Division seeking knowledge on the table arrangements and menus employed by Europe's sovereigns, it is apparent that such areas of interest extended more widely still. Their list was prepared in response to the Imperial Household Ministry's request to its departments for matters related to the operation and consumption of Europe's ruling households that Sawa should investigate during his journeys. Exploring this less travelled narrative of concerns simultaneously sovereign and quotidian, this chapter examines the European models that were employed in the furnishing of the emperor's table during the early Meiji era. To do so, I employ some of the same questions applied to more 'functional' institutions: 'How and why was the specific model for the new organization selected,' and 'What features of the model were adopted?'⁴ In this regard, I argue that the model in question is the material expression of sovereignty.

Royal patronage, diplomatic exchanges and competition are key to the story of porcelain in Europe. The earliest porcelains imported from China were exquisite rarities, treasured in *Wunderkammer* together with wonders of the natural world.⁵ As quantities of imported porcelain swelled, these vessels placed upon the tea or banqueting table became integral to social display and negotiation among certain sections of society, just as porcelain did in the court of Japan's shogun and the palace of its emperor. The value accorded to porcelain within Europe secured its use in the brokering of diplomatic alliances from an early date. In 1590, the Saxon elector of Dresden received sixteen pieces of Ming porcelain from the grand duke of Tuscany and in 1686 the Siam embassy presented 1500 pieces of Chinese porcelain to Louis XIV.⁶ Japanese porcelain also played a part in this story of select trade. When political instability within China disturbed trade with Chinese kilns in the mid-seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company exported Japanese porcelain to

³ *Ibid.*, 308. For foreign experts, see: Jones, *Live Machines*.

⁴ Westney, 'Emulation', 309.

⁵ *Wunderkammer* or cabinets of curiosities were collections of intriguing and exotic things (natural and man-made), formed by Europe's elite from around the mid-sixteenth century.

⁶ Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, 'Porcelain and Prestige: Princely Gifts and "White Gold" from Meissen,' in *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710–63*, ed. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger (New York: Yale University Press/Bard Graduate Center, 2007), 3.

Europe. The porcelain wares crafted in Arita and shipped from Imari became 'porcelain for palaces': colonising the tables and mantels of Europe's elite.⁷

Inspired by these imports, and urged by their powerful patrons, European craftsmen experimented with different materials to capture the qualities of this exotic material.⁸ The first true porcelain ('hard-paste') was fired in Europe in 1708 under the patronage of Augustus II. An unintended consequence of an alchemist's work, it was from this discovery that the workshops of Meissen were established.⁹ In France, soft-paste porcelains were produced under royal patronage at Sèvres from the second half of the eighteenth century, soon becoming 'the ambassadorial gift of preference.'¹⁰ Although early British porcelains did not profit from royal patronage to the same extent as their continental cousins, this changed dramatically in the reign of Queen Victoria, who openly demonstrated her support of national manufactures on the grand stage of the Great Exhibition.¹¹ The age of the international exhibition was one in which industry became a keystone of national pride. For Kume Kunitake, a member of the Iwakura Mission travelling in Europe in the early 1870s, the stakes were clear:

All countries compete in their respective industries, and rather than endure the shame of stooping to use their rivals' goods, they always turn to products manufactured domestically to supply their nations' needs.¹²

However, as this chapter demonstrates, Japan did not turn exclusively to its own manufactures to furnish the table of its emperor. Was this a matter of national shame, or did Japan stoop to conquer?

⁷ Ayers et al., *Porcelain for Palaces*.

⁸ For early attempts in Florence and France, see: Cassidy-Geiger, 'Porcelain and Prestige,' 3. For a summary of models for the transfer of porcelain technology, see: Rose Kerr, 'Transfer: The Worldwide Trade in Ceramics from Fujian Province,' in *Transfer: The Influence of China on World Ceramics*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2009), 9–10. As a result of the processes by which East Asian porcelains—vitrified ceramics made with kaolinitic clay—were effectively reverse-engineered in Europe, a spectrum of materials (for example, bone china, soft- and hard-paste porcelain) of varying composition was created.

⁹ Cassidy-Geiger, 'Porcelain and Prestige,' 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ Joan Jones, 'Minton and Queen Victoria,' *The Antique Collector*, December 1987.

¹² Kume Kunitake, *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–73: a true account of the Ambassador extraordinary & plenipotentiary's journey of observation through the United States of America and Europe*, eds. Graham Healey and Tsuzuki Chushichi (Matsudo: Japan Documents, 2002), 3:141.

While existing studies of porcelain tend to privilege an East-West flow of objects and technologies, this chapter focuses on objects moving the other way: ceramic dinner services commissioned by the Imperial Household Ministry in Tokyo that were either crafted in Europe or based directly upon imported models. Dating (at least in their initial commissioning) to the early Meiji era, before the construction of the Meiji Palace and the Constitution's Promulgation, these were porcelains for a temporary palace, ceramics used by a court and emperor in construction. The first and second parts of this chapter examine a suite of tableware commissioned in 1875. Including both dessert and coffee services commissioned from Minton and silver-gilt tableware, this dining assemblage was purchased from Britain, but reveals a more complicated ancestry. The third part of the chapter considers a dinner service modelled on Sèvres originals that can be associated with records dating from 1880. Archival records that detail the commissioning of these services reveal the scale of resources invested in furnishing the imperial table and enable correction of certain assumptions previously put forward. Analysing both the designs of these objects and the makers who produced them, this chapter considers what these objects were intended to convey in terms of imperial identities.

In his own study of these same services, Ōkuma argued that while commissions of British glass and ceramics suggested that Britain—a nation with a monarch—provided the model for Meiji-era court dining, technological limitations encouraged the use of Sèvres ceramics—the products of bourgeois France—as models for imperial tableware to be made in Japan.¹³ Considering objects in terms of a narrow national identity based on their country of production, this interpretation fails to grasp the fluidity of craft histories and interactions that continually traverse such geographical and temporal borders. As important as national manufactures were in the late nineteenth century, the boundaries between them were slippery, neither craftsmen nor styles being fixed within national boundaries. Such permeability and exchange may encourage an interpretation of these objects as 'Western,' and indeed the records do refer to

¹³ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 6–7.

them as *yōshokki*: Western tableware. Both encompassing and ambiguous, this label does not reflect the multi-faceted nature of these works.

As the quote above reveals, the banqueting tables of Europe's royal households became objects of study alongside police forces, postal services, armies and schools. The tableware imported for the emperor's use, meanwhile, possessed layered and complex meanings that suggest the fruits of similar investigations. The objects selected for the imperial table supported the formation of a material culture that rather than English, British or French, Japanese or even Western, is best termed 'sovereign'.

3.1 Porcelain Abandoned?

As noted in Chapter 1, by 1871, it appears that Western food was being served to the Meiji Emperor, with meals in Western style becoming a feature of certain imperial receptions from 1873. In these years, some tableware was purchased through Yokohama, and Japanese craftsmen may also have produced tableware for the imperial household. Details of these objects, however, remain elusive.¹⁴ From the mid-1870s, more detailed records emerge.

Highlighted in the epilogue to Rousmaniere's *Vessels of Influence*, on May 31, 1876, the Times declared that the Meiji Emperor ('Mikado') had turned his back on porcelain and lacquer and would now dine from dishes of silver-gilt, to quote:

If any further proof were needed of the readiness with which the Japanese adapt themselves to the necessities of European civilization, it may be found in the fact that the Mikado, no longer content with his old vessels of lac [lacquer] and porcelain, has resolved on dining off silver-gilt plates, like any King or Emperor of the West ... In order to meet his wishes the execution of

¹⁴ For example, although an 1873 receipt records the purchase of Western-style tableware, bought from an import agent and with no description beyond the basic items, there is nothing to say where these items were from or what they were like: Payment receipt, S. Marcus & Co., May 17, 1873, from 'Goyōdoroku Kōnyū,' vol. 12, 1873, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68893. **Source 2.**

the Mikado's order has been entrusted to Messrs. Garrard, the Queen's goldsmiths, of the Haymarket ...¹⁵

Rousmaniere notes that 'Inherent in this quotation is the desire of the Meiji government to be considered part of the civilized Western world.'¹⁶ While suggesting a move away from the porcelain that was the focus of her study, this episode supports her argument that dining and its accoutrements were employed as a measure of civilisation and culture in Japan as well as elsewhere, but was the imperial household truly ready to abandon porcelain in favour of silver?

As Chapter 2 discussed, porcelain did still have a role to play. In 1875, the Imperial Household Ministry instigated a new system for Japanese-style tableware that drew on Edo period precedents, connecting the Meiji Emperor to his Edo-period forebears through the use of their material culture. That same year, the Imperial Household Ministry placed a series of orders with British suppliers for chairs, tables, dishes, glassware, and cutlery: a full dining assemblage. It was not just European objects that were imported, but the material practices of its rulers. In accord with those practices, while the Meiji Emperor would dine from silver for the main course, porcelain (or to be precise, bone china) would be used for the dessert. The dessert service ordered in 1875 is discussed in the second part of this chapter; first, embracing the material fluidity of the past, I examine the silver-gilt service commissioned from Garrard using archival records, drawings and photographs to reconstruct the service and the statement it made.

Reconstructing the Garrard service

Neither the exhibition of imperial tableware held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan in 2000, nor the subsequent exhibition of Meiji-era design in 2003 featured silverware made by Garrard.¹⁷ Nor do any works by Garrard feature in the Mainichi Newspaper's publication *Kyūchū no shokki*.¹⁸ It is not known whether the objects described by the Times in 1876 actually survive. However, the Sannomaru

¹⁵ 'Plate for the Mikado,' *The Times*, May 31, 1876, 6.

¹⁶ Rousmaniere, *Vessels*, 155.

¹⁷ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōden: Kindai*; Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū*.

¹⁸ This publication focused on contemporary imperial tableware: Mainichi Shinbunsha 'Shihō' linkai Jimukyoku, ed. *Kyūchū no shokki* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1999).

Shōzōkan's exhibition catalogues do feature a series of drawings and historic photographs of silverware that merit consideration (**Figures 3.1–3.17**). In 2000, the curator of these exhibitions, Ōkuma Toshiyuki, commented that the origin of these drawings was unclear.¹⁹ In 2003, noting their combination of Chinese, Japanese and Western design elements, the drawings were included among works felt to display hybridity in their design.²⁰ Such hybridity, Ōkuma commented, saw its peak in the Meiji 30s (1897–1906), and he attributed the drawings to the mid to late Meiji era.²¹ Drawing on contemporary newspaper reports and archival documents in Tokyo and London, I assert that these drawings and historic photographs include depictions of pieces from the Garrard service commissioned only a few years after the earliest Western-style banquets at court.

The Times was not the only newspaper to run an article on the Garrard dinner service. Five days previously, the Morning Post described the Garrard service as 'one of the most magnificent works of its class ever produced in this country.'²² It records that the service accommodated twenty-five diners, comprising some two hundred and fifty plates, as well as 'knives, forks, spoons, ladles, butter-boats, mustard-pots, salt-cellars, and all the articles usually found upon an English dinner-table.'²³ The ornamentation is commented on as follows:

The tortoise, the dragon, the stork, and the phoenix—creatures which have an emblematic significance in the eyes of the Japanese—figure conspicuously in the decoration of the various objects; and the embossing is rich in fanciful devices of wild flowers.²⁴

The Garrard service was evidently richly decorated and teeming with creatures drawn from East Asian design.

The Morning Post's description is echoed by the Times. Described as a complete service, specific items mentioned include a fountain centrepiece,

¹⁹ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7.

²⁰ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū*, 67–68, 98.

²¹ Ōkuma Toshiyuki, 'Tanbō: Meiji no kyūchū dezain,' in *Meiji no kyūchū dezain: Wa-Chū-Yō no yūwa no bi o motomete*, ed. Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan ([Japan]: Kikuyō Bunka Kyōkai, 2003), 7.

²² 'The Mikado's Dinner Service,' *The Morning Post*, May 26, 1876, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

candelabra, fruit stands, entrée dishes, and sauceboats. Regarding the motifs, the article notes that the centrepiece stood on tortoise feet and features ‘the traditional dragon and Phoenix,’ the other items are described as follows:

On all of these one or other of the traditional emblems of Japan, the tortoise, dragon, and phoenix have been introduced, while the minor ornamentation is generally floral and remarkable for the recurrence of the chrysanthemum, so common both on Chinese and Japanese porcelain.²⁵

From tortoise feet, to dragons and chrysanthemums, the motifs of the Garrard service as described by the newspapers can be found among the photographs and drawings of silver tableware preserved in Tokyo. However, as the newspapers suggest, such motifs were frequently encountered in Japanese art, so further evidence is required to identify these images as representations of the Garrard service.

Purchase records in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency include documents relating to orders for dining furniture and tableware lodged with British companies in 1875 and completed by 1877.²⁶ A significant commission from Garrard is among these orders, the tableware detailed summarised in **Table 3.1**. The Japanese listings largely match the description given by the British press: a centrepiece, candelabra and entrée dishes are mentioned, as are sauceboats and cutlery. Fruit stands and saltcellars mentioned in the newspapers are not present, though this could be due to changes to the order or translation issues.²⁷ Nonetheless, these records confirm the scale of the service and the expense incurred. With more than 1500 pieces listed, the total cost was just over £8500 sterling: an approximate equivalent value in 2005 would be £400,000.²⁸

²⁵ ‘Plate for the Mikado,’ 6.

²⁶ ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 11, 1877, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68979. See also: **Sources 5 to 11**.

²⁷ For example, one item is listed in the Japanese documents as a soy sauce jar and gruel dish respectively, but appears to indicate a sauceboat as quantity matches that for sauce spoons. Such issues highlight the challenges of foreign tableware in translation.

²⁸ This figure employs the National Archives’ Currency Converter which suggests that £8500 in 1880 would be worth £410,635 in 2005, the same amount from 1870 gives a 2005 equivalent of £388,450: The National Archives, ‘Currency Converter,’ accessed March 12, 2015, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>.

Falling under the jurisdiction of the Supplies Division, the purchase records cannot be directly associated with the drawings preserved in the Imperial Cuisine Division, and no further description is given in the listings. However, there are two drawings preserved alongside the suite of orders placed in 1875. Ink drawings of imperial crests, they show a chrysanthemum flanked by a dragon and long-tailed bird, and a chrysanthemum over paulownia flanked by the same (**Figures 3.18** and **Figure 3.19**) The first of these crests, or as the Times states: ‘a chrysanthemum as a crest and a dragon and a Phoenix as supporters’²⁹ can be seen in the Imperial Cuisine Division’s drawings of the salver (**Figure 3.1**) and jug (**Figure 3.8**). Operating as an identifier of heraldry, the execution of a crest may be consistent across different objects for various reasons, but the Garrard archive housed at the Archive of Art and Design, London, offers further evidence in support of this connection.

A nineteenth-century pattern book in the Garrard archive includes three images that can be attributed to the Garrard service ordered for Japan’s emperor: two candelabra (with seven and four lights respectively) and a heated entrée dish (**Figure 3.20–3.22**). Such items are also listed in the purchase records relating to the Garrard service, which detail two seven-light candelabra and four four-light candelabra, as well as eight entrée dishes with warmers (**Table 3.1**). Annotations in the pattern book confirm that these were made for Japan. Under each candelabrum is written, ‘As made for Japanese Ministers Feb. 1876.’³⁰ The entrée dish is annotated simply ‘Japanese’, but the execution of the tortoise feet and base edge is the same as that of the larger candelabrum.³¹ Replete with sinuous dragons, a crouching long-tailed bird and chrysanthemum motifs, these designs bring to life the descriptions given by the newspapers, and while these same pieces cannot be identified amongst the drawings and photographs published in the exhibition catalogues, comparable motifs may be discerned.

Drawing together these different sources, the Garrard service commissioned in 1875 may be at least partially reconstructed. Briefly outlined here, the connections between motifs are summarised visually in **Figure 3.23**. The cranes on

²⁹ ‘Plate for the Mikado,’ 6.

³⁰ Pattern book, Garrard, nineteenth century, Archive of Art and Design: AAD/1999/6/1.

³¹ Ibid.

the seven-light candelabrum in the Garrard archive suggest that the photographs and drawings of the larger candelabrum with flower stand depict the pair of flower stands included among the larger pieces **(A)**, while the tortoise feet (also seen on the entrée dish in the Pattern Book) are repeated on the open dish, centerpiece and fruit stand **(B)**. Described as a flower stand by Ōkuma, it is possible that the dish at the top of the centerpiece **(Figure 3.17)** may have functioned as a cistern, suggesting that this is the perfume fountain listed in the archives.³² The salver that carries the crest depicted in the records shares the same hatched border as the cruet with dragon rack **(C)**, and this crest can also be found on the decanter and the fruit stand with tortoise feet **(D)**. Not specified in the listing, fruit stands were mentioned by the Times. Dragons clutching gems appear on the fruit stand, decanter, sauceboat and sugar bowl **(E)**. The decanter and sauceboat feature the same heart-shaped leaf border **(F)**, and the sugar dish and tureen have the same bamboo motif and crest **(G)**. Although absolute certainty might only be yielded by hallmarks on the objects themselves (should they survive) or additional records, with the sources available it has been possible to shed some light on the nature of this unique service. The coffee pot **(Figure 3.10)** and handled tray **(Figure 3.11)** are accounted for below, meanwhile the cake basket **(Figure 3.5)** and vegetable dish **(Figure 3.12)** reproduced alongside these images do not appear to belong to the service.

‘Like any King or Emperor of the West’

The textual and visual records of the 1876 Garrard service document a substantial silver-gilt dinner service, comprehensive enough for practical use by at least twenty-five diners in a Western-style banquet.³³ Decorated with dragons and

³² In 1851, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert commissioned Garrard to make a perfumed fountain centerpiece featuring horses watering beneath a Moorish dome. The cistern is contained within the dome, with water pressure driving the fountain beneath, see: Royal Collection Trust, ‘The Alhambra Table Fountain,’ accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/1569/the-alhambra-table-fountain>.

³³ This is the number given by the Morning Post: ‘The Mikado’s Dinner Service,’ 8. Associated records placed at the time for other dining equipment cater for 48 settings, but in the case of the Garrard service, some pieces required for an individual setting (such as fish forks) do not exceed 42 in

phoenixes, and standing on tortoise feet, the description of the Garrard service given in the Times led Rousmaniere to note that ‘much of the symbolism remained Chinese in content’.³⁴ For Ōkuma, the drawings preserved within the Imperial Cuisine Division revealed a fusion of Japanese, Chinese and Western design.³⁵ With this in mind, the Times’ statement that this service embodied the emperor’s will to dine ‘like any King or Emperor of the West’ merits closer consideration.³⁶ Having reconstructed the forms of this service, the nature of the statement being made and its authorship will now be examined.

As remarkable as the Garrard service was, its intended consumer made it the focus of even greater attention: ensuing newspaper reports demonstrating that both the objects and the intentions of the emperor anticipated to dine from them came under scrutiny. Garrard not only displayed the service before its dispatch to Japan, but also presented it for inspection by the Prince and Princess of Wales at Marlborough House.³⁷ For the Times, the service stood as testimony of Japan’s adaption to ‘the necessities of European civilization.’³⁸ The Times also notes Garrard’s role as purveyors to Queen Victoria, and that a new coat of arms was devised for the service such that the Meiji Emperor ‘may be placed on a footing of heraldic equality with his brother sovereigns in Europe.’³⁹ Purchased from a Royal Warrant holder, the Imperial Household Ministry chose to commission tableware that was not merely ‘Western’, but specifically associated with a sovereign court: a significance that was not lost upon contemporary observers.

As a purchase, rather than a gift, the agency in this material choice rests with the ‘Japanese Ministers’ noted in the Pattern Book, but the authorship of its designs appears to rest elsewhere. Ōkuma refers to the volumes of drawings in the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division as ‘*zuanjō*’ or ‘design books’, but the

number: Order list, Supplies Division after Garrard, c.1875, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 11, 1877, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68979. **Source 5.**

³⁴ Rousmaniere, *Vessels*, 156.

³⁵ Ōkuma, ‘Tanbō,’ 7.

³⁶ ‘Plate for the Mikado,’ 6.

³⁷ ‘The Prince and Princess of Wales,’ *The Standard*, June 27, 1876, 5.

³⁸ ‘Plate for the Mikado,’ 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

designs within did not necessarily originate in Japan.⁴⁰ At the same time that the Garrard service was ordered, coffee and tea wares were commissioned from Hunt and Roskell (also Royal Warrant holders). This order comprised a kettle, teapot, coffee pot, cream jug, sugar basin and tongs, teaspoons and tray, at a cost of just over £450 (**Table 3.2**). Two of the 'design book' drawings can be confidently attributed to this service: the coffee pot and tray (**Figure 3.10** and **Figure 3.11**). The confidence in this attribution lies in their shape and ornament: both coffee pot and tray match other pieces produced by this company. Termed the Ashburnham pattern (**Figure 3.24**), this design was first developed for a dinner service for the 4th Earl of Ashburnham, and combines interlocking hexagonal flowers with script-like border motifs (**Figure 3.25**). A dragon knob has been added to the coffee pot and the arms of the Japanese emperor are featured on the tray, but while customised, it would be difficult to claim that these drawings represent original designs developed within Japan.

According to the *Morning Post*, designs for the Garrard service were provided by Mr William Tayler.⁴¹ And yet, both *Morning Post* and *Times* commented upon their 'Japanese' nature: for the *Times*, the service employed 'traditional emblems of Japan,' while the *Morning Post* observed 'creatures which have an emblematic significance in the eyes of the Japanese.'⁴² Historically influenced by Chinese traditions as noted by Rousmaniere, motifs of dragons, cranes and tortoises were part of a broader Japanese design vocabulary.⁴³ Such motifs that could be found among the monumental bronze pieces presented by Japan at international exhibitions of the 1870s, and perhaps it was such works that inspired Tayler in his creation of these designs. These were not objects designed for 'any King or Emperor of the West,' but for the emperor of Japan. However, these complex and crowded arrangements offer stark contrast to the controlled Edo-period imperial porcelains discussed in Chapter 2, from which dragons were notably

⁴⁰ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7. As noted in the introduction, it has not been possible to examine these books first-hand.

⁴¹ 'The Mikado's Dinner Service,' 8.

⁴² 'The Mikado's Dinner Service,' 8; 'Plate for the Mikado,' 6.

⁴³ Rousmaniere, *Vessels*, 156.

absent.⁴⁴ This was tableware for a *mikado*, the emperor of Japan as constructed within a European imagination.

Considering the coffee service by Hunt and Roskell coffee wares alongside the Garrard service, it is apparent that the silver-gilt tableware commissioned in 1875 went beyond the hybridity of China, Japan and Western influences noted by Ōkuma. With its hexagonal flowers and script-like borders, the Ashburnham pattern suggests Islamic design while the dragons and phoenix locate it to more eastern reaches of Asia. The hexagonal flower motifs from the Ashburnham service reappear on the blade of the fish knife: an item included in the Garrard lists. Suggesting some collaboration between their respective craftsmen, here the flower petals are separated in the manner of Japanese cherry blossom (**Figure 3.26**): an 'Islamic' motif rendered 'Japanese.' Blending motifs from East Asia with those of the Islamic Middle East, the surfaces of these services belie an Orientalist preconception.⁴⁵ While the Imperial Household Ministry commissioned Royal Warrant holders to craft a service shaped for European dining practices and quite literally fit for a king, the objects crafted were not made for any King or Emperor of the West, but rather an exotic and 'Oriental' other.

3.2 Minton for the Meiji Emperor

Once the dishes of the main course or courses had been cleared, the dessert service was set upon the table. While extravagant silver-gilt was often retained for the main course on the tables of Europe's ruling elite, from the mid-eighteenth century porcelain established itself as the material of choice for the dessert.⁴⁶ Services of the mid-nineteenth century included *assiette montée* (tiered stands), *comports* and baskets to hold flowers, fruit and confections. Complementing the silver-gilt wares ordered from Garrard and Hunt and Roskell, the Imperial Household Ministry ordered a number of glass and ceramic items from London retailer, William Mortlock and Sons.

⁴⁴ For the absence of dragons, see: Ike, *Gosho no utsuwa*, 14.

⁴⁵ The key text on such cultural conflation is: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003).

⁴⁶ Hilary Young, 'Porcelain for the Dessert' in *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, eds. Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young (London: V&A Publications, 2002).

An 1872 advertisement from a London directory (**Figure 3.27**) notes that William Mortlock and Sons sold ‘EVERY DESCRIPTION OF CHINA, EARTHENWARE, AND GLASS’, but draws particular attention to ‘The Manufactures of Messrs. MINTON & Co., and other celebrated houses’, as well as their appointment to ‘HER MAJESTY AND H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.’⁴⁷ The purchases made from Mortlock included a dessert and coffee and tea service, as well as numerous drinking glasses. While these records do not specify the makers of these objects, pieces that will here be attributed to the dessert and coffee services have been handed down, preserved among the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division responsible for banquets held at the palace.⁴⁸ These ceramics were made by Minton: a Royal Warrant holder and supplier of tableware to Queen Victoria and her family.

While the silver-gilt discussed above employed Asian motifs, these Minton services make no such concession to their consumer beyond the inclusion of a Japanese imperial crest. However, it would be a gross oversimplification to say that these objects are ‘British’ (or English for that matter). Their use, and indeed reproduction, within Japan was one in a series of appropriations. They may have been made in Britain, but in style they are French: emulations of the so-called Old Sèvres, the material culture of Versailles from the reigns of Louis XV and XVI, popularised in the rococo revival of the 1820s and 1830s and appropriated by the British monarchy before they were acquired for the table of the Meiji Emperor. Examining these objects, and the appropriations that brought them to Japan, the royal nature of these wares is revealed.

Porcelain for the dessert

The exhibitions *Kyōen* and *Meiji no kyūchū dezain* held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan included three Minton dessert stands decorated in blue with roses in plaques (**Figure 3.28**), and some items from a coffee service also by Minton (**Figure**

⁴⁷ *London: A Complete Guide* (London, Henry Herbert, 1872), 126.

⁴⁸ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōen: Kindai*, 9–10. Only a few pieces appear to survive, which I attribute to the dessert and coffee services ordered in 1875. The 1875 records also list two sets of dinner plates (perhaps employed alongside the Garrard service), water basins and additional cups and saucers, the material correlates of which are yet to be identified.

3.29).⁴⁹ While replenishments crafted in Japan (**Figure 3.30**) suggested that the coffee service saw active use, with only three pieces extant (a low comport, a tall pierced basket supported by three female figures and a pierced basket with cupid support) Ōkuma questioned whether the blue dessert stands formed part of a larger set, and whether or not they were used.⁵⁰ Evidence for use of this service is discussed in Chapter 5; here I connect these objects to the purchase records. These records detail a full dessert service, actively commissioned rather than received as a gift (important in terms of agency) and received by the Imperial Cuisine Division by May 1876.⁵¹

In addition to an impressed Minton mark, the low round comport and basket with cupid support both have the retailers' mark of William Mortlock, 18 Regent Street, London indicating that the objects were made by Minton for a Mortlock's commission.⁵² While the exhibitions at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan dated these pieces broadly to the 1870s to 1880s, further marks confirm a production date in line with the purchase records. Between 1842 and 1942, Minton impressed small stamps into the bases of some pieces (**Figure 3.31**). As impressed marks, these dates pertain to the production of the blank, so may predate the finished piece. The low comport has a mark for 1874, while the basket with cupid support is marked for 1875, aligning with the purchase records. Minton pattern numbers can also be dated to a degree. The low round comport carries the pattern number G2051 in overglaze red. The 'G' series comprises 'richly decorated china tableware,' and G2051 falls within the date range of 1873-1875.⁵³ The pattern number inscribed on the tea and coffee service is G2102, likewise dateable to 1873-1875, and its plate has an impressed year mark for 1875. With a Mortlock retailers' mark and mid-1870s date, there is no reason to doubt that these are pieces from the blue-ground dessert service and gold-ground coffee and tea service referred to by the order documents.

⁴⁹ Ibid.; Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū*, 40-41.

⁵⁰ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 6-7.

⁵¹ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōen: Kindai*, 9-10.

⁵² The author was unable to examine the taller comport with three graces support.

⁵³ Joan Jones, *Minton: The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production* (Shrewsbury: Swan Hill Press, 1993), 321.

The items listed in the Mortlock order documents comprised two sets of 48 dinner plates, a blue-ground dessert service of 48 settings and a gold-ground tea and coffee service of 36 settings, as well as six pairs of tea and coffee cups, and some basins (**Table 3.3**). In total, twenty-four comports were ordered from Mortlock, noted as comprising eight each of large, medium and small. A Minton trade catalogue of the 1880s notes three heights for comports: 6.4cm, 11.4cm and 15cm.⁵⁴ It is likely that the three different sizes of comports referred to in the purchase records were of similar dimensions. At 6.7cm high and 24.6cm in diameter, the extant comport in the Imperial Cuisine Division belongs to the lower category. It has a raised foot, foliate rim and rich blue border with oblong reserves of hand-painted roses and festoons of gilded laurel leaves (**Figure 3.32**). The records also list two sets of four raised baskets with figural supports. The first of these is described as large and round and the other long and round. These can be considered to be the basket support by female figures (the Three Graces) and the basket supported by cupids respectively.

Unlike the Garrard service, teeming with exotic creatures, there is little in the form or decoration of these pieces to suggest their use in an Asian court beyond the imperial crest. The figures and laurel wreaths are Classical elements, while roses did not typically feature among Japanese decorative motifs. In short, one might say that these are not only items of 'Western' form and manufacture suited to the dining practices of those countries, but also that their design is similarly 'Western.' Even the imperial crests seem to have borrowed from European heraldic forms, teaming the chrysanthemum with crossed flags (**Figure 3.33**). Looking through the Minton Pattern Books, the patterns employed on these pieces sit comfortably among Minton's wider production.⁵⁵ The pink and gold pattern G2102 (**Figure 3.34**) is among a number of such patterns (for example, **Figure 3.35** and **Figure 3.36**). The pattern for the dessert service (**Figure 3.37**) is unusual in that the crest is shown in

⁵⁴ Paul Atterbury and Maureen Batkin, *The Dictionary of Minton* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1998), 205.

⁵⁵ The Minton Archive was purchased from Wedgwood Waterford Royal Doulton by the Art Fund on March 31, 2015, and gifted to Stoke-on-Trent City Archives. For the preceding eight years its future had been uncertain, and the archive was unavailable to researchers. The author was able to access parts of the archive in August, 2015, following its physical transfer to Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

the pattern book painting.⁵⁶ This inclusion indicates that the pattern was commissioned for this order, but this service too followed pre-existing models. The shape of the plate is described in the pattern book as 'O/S' or 'Old Sèvres,' while the base of the imperial household's cupid comport is incised with the number 1649: corresponding to Minton's shape listing for a 'Basket, pierced cupid support (M).'⁵⁷ Commissioned for the Japanese imperial household these objects employed existing models, the precise nature of which merit further consideration.

Royal things

Minton and Co. was among the leading ceramic manufacturers in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. Founded in 1793 in Stoke-on-Trent, Minton & Co. began to produce bone china tableware in around 1799.⁵⁸ Minton won medals at the international exhibitions of 1851 (London), 1853 (Paris), 1862 (London) and 1867 (Vienna) among others. Their displays in the Great Exhibition of All Nations in 1851 received the bronze Council Medal for 'beauty and originality of design': the only English manufacturer to gain such an accolade.⁵⁹ Minton famously received the patronage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Colin Minton worked closely with Prince Albert on the 1851 exhibition, and the firm supplied the royal family with several table services. These included the 116-piece dessert service displayed at the Great Exhibition and presented by Victoria to the Emperor of Austria (**Figure 3.38**), numerous ornamental wares and services decorated with Victoria's own design of wild strawberries.⁶⁰ According to Ōkuma, the selection of wares by such a noted British manufacturer reflected a preference for the products of a country under monarchical rule, as opposed to those of France, a democratic republic.⁶¹ However, closer examination reveals a more complex layering of meanings.

⁵⁶ Pattern Book G2100–G2199 and Pattern Book G1800–G2099, Minton, c.1875, Stoke-on-Trent City Archives: Minton Archive 2118 and 2429.

⁵⁷ Jones, *Minton*, 354.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁰ Jones, 'Minton and Queen Victoria,' 80.

⁶¹ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7.

Made in Stoke-on-Trent, the Minton dessert stands in the imperial collections, and indeed the 1851 dessert service purchased by Queen Victoria, are unquestionably French in style. With their rococo forms and decoration, these pieces capture the colours, shapes and spirit of ceramics produced at the Sèvres factory at the peak of its royal patronage in the late eighteenth century (**Figure 3.39**). By the 1840s, in an atmosphere of developing connoisseurship, Sèvres eighteenth-century manufactures were distinguished as from its more recent works, ranking ‘among the most sought-after of porcelain,’ and ‘conferring upon its owners respectability and taste beyond that of those who acquired the new production of the manufactory.’⁶² During the rococo revival of the 1830s and 1840s, ceramics adopting the desirable style of ‘Old Sèvres’ were made by Minton, Coalport and others.

Minton not only made French-style wares but employed French craftsmen. Around this time, Minton also began to recreate famous wares of the Renaissance, including the inlaid sixteenth-century French St Porchaire ceramics, known as Henri Deux (**Figure 3.40**). As they strove to improve technique and design, French craftsmen were hired and achieved high positions in the company. Léon Arnoux joined Minton around 1848. Soon appointed Art Director, his departure from France is attributed to competition his family business faced from Marseilles and Limoges. Other French artists who joined Minton included Pierre-Emile Jeannest, modeller of the 1851 ‘Victoria Pierced’ service, and Marc-Louis Solon who left Paris in 1870 because of the Franco-Prussian war, bringing to Minton the skills and knowledge required to execute the technique of *pâte-sur-pâte*.⁶³ In recreating not only antique wares, but also those of England’s commercial rival France, and showcasing their efforts in international exhibitions, Minton demonstrated their technical abilities while catering to contemporary tastes for historicist and revivalist design.

⁶² Laurie Dahlberg, ‘France between the Revolutions, 1789–1848,’ in *The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry, 1800–1847*, ed. Derek E. Ostergard (New York: Yale University Press/Bard Graduate Center, c.1997), 23.

⁶³ Jones, *Minton*, 80, 189.

Whether crafted in England or France, Queen Victoria's own taste for Sèvres and Sèvres-style porcelains extended beyond the dining table. Half-length portraits of Victoria and Albert on Sèvres porcelain were prominently listed in the condensed official catalogue of the Great Exhibition having been submitted to that most public of exhibitions by the royal couple themselves.⁶⁴ In a more private context, for Christmas in 1853 Prince Albert gave Victoria a Sèvres-style bone china dressing table mirror and toilet set made by Minton (**Figure 3.41**).⁶⁵ Victoria was not the first within the British Royal family to be captivated by the glittering style of Sèvres. Her uncle, George IV, first purchased ceramics from the Sèvres manufactory at the age of 21. It proved a lifelong passion, and the French Revolution soon brought many spectacular possessions of the French royalty onto the market. Between 1783 and his death in 1830, George IV amassed a collection of Sèvres porcelain that is now considered the finest in the world.⁶⁶

While interior display and fashion had their due influence, George IV was also collecting an image of kingship. As Gwilt has stated:

... another factor which undoubtedly influenced George IV's collecting was his sense of history and his detailed knowledge of France under the Bourbons and earlier dynasties. This is illustrated by the collection of portrait heads in porcelain of the kings of France which he assembled, ranging from Louis XII to Louis XVIII.⁶⁷

One piece in George IV's collection held particular significance. Divested of its sovereign patron and owner by the guillotine, Sèvres found a new patron in Napoleon Bonaparte. Recognising the potential power within these objects as tools of propaganda and display, Napoleon commissioned spectacular dinner services that articulated his own form of sovereignty with scenes of his victories, and neo-classical, Etruscan and Egyptian forms that referenced the expanding French empire

⁶⁴ George Yapp, *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations 1851* (London: Royal Commission/Spicer Brothers, 1851), 17.

⁶⁵ Royal Collection Trust, 'Dressing Table Mirror,' accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/34625/dressing-table-mirror>.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey De Bellaigue, *French Porcelain in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: The Royal Collection, 2009), 1:7–83; Joanna Gwilt, *French Porcelain for English Palaces: Sèvres from the Royal Collection* (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 2009), 7–10.

⁶⁷ Gwilt, *French Porcelain*, 10.

and those of antiquity.⁶⁸ Napoleon also commissioned Sèvres to create a porcelain table that would commemorate his prowess for posterity. Known as the Table of the Grand Commanders (**Figure 3.42**), it did indeed outlast his reign and was presented to George IV by the newly restored (and grateful) Louis XVIII soon after Napoleon's defeat. It became a treasured possession, featuring in George's subsequent state portraits (**Figure 3.43**).⁶⁹ Such a blatant appropriation of Napoleon's material expression of authority asserted George IV's own position and, indeed, the triumph of monarchy.⁷⁰ As an episode in ceramics' history, it shows exactly the potential such objects held in sovereignty's construction.

In 1811, the year he became Prince Regent, George IV acquired the unfinished and yet incomparable service made for Louis XVI's personal use at Versailles (**Figure 3.44**). Under production for ten years before the Revolution, only half of the service was ever delivered. George IV purchased the bulk of this at a cost of nearly £2000.⁷¹ However, it was not only objects that interested George IV, but also material practices. While previous British monarchs had engaged with their subjects at public dinners, his father, George III, preferred to dine in private. Under George IV's Regency, French cuisine came to dominate the menu and royal receptions once again became spectacles. In 1811, live fish swimming in a stream served as the centrepiece for his reception of the exiled King Louis XVIII of France. Ten years later, some 2000 people were invited to his coronation banquet held at Westminster Hall, a tradition since the coronation banquet of Prince Henry in 1170.⁷² While George's successor, William IV, opted not to continue this tradition, the performance of dining and the objects this demanded played a significant role in the articulation of monarchy under George IV.

The Sèvres factory survived the vicissitudes of revolution, empire, restoration and republic, tenaciously holding onto its position as one of the leading

⁶⁸ For the use of Sèvres by Napoleon, see: Steven Adams, 'Sèvres Porcelain and the Articulation of Imperial Identity in Napoleonic France,' *Journal of Design History* 20.3 (2007).

⁶⁹ Gwilt, *French Porcelain*, 178.

⁷⁰ This triumph, however, would be tested again a month after George's death as a new 'King of the French' displaced the restored Bourbon monarchy in 1830.

⁷¹ Gwilt, *French Porcelain*, 134–35.

⁷² James Yorke, 'The Royal Table in England,' in *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, eds. Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young (London: V&A Publications, 2002), 118–19.

ceramic manufacturers in Europe. As such it may seem curious that in commissioning Minton tableware in Sèvres style, Victoria and Albert opted for domestic ‘imitations.’ As the Great Exhibition of 1851 writ large, the promotion of domestic manufacture was entwined with international rivalry. Objects operating within this inter-national competitive arena were also exchanged between heads of state. Forging and maintaining connections between rulers, such gifts lent an added importance to patronage of domestic manufacture, just as they had in the early history of European porcelain. Furthermore, the pieces that Victoria, Albert and the wider royal family selected did not emulate contemporary Sèvres, but the ‘Old Sèvres’ crafted under royal patronage.

Minton’s efforts to emulate eighteenth-century Sèvres in the mid-nineteenth century can be considered successful. The bone china dessert service purchased by Victoria at the 1851 Great Exhibition incorporated unglazed Parian-ware figures modelled by Pierre-Emile Jeannest that echoed the use of biscuit porcelain figures on the dessert tables of Louis XV and XVI, while its rich turquoise ground was praised by John Tallis as ‘scarcely inferior to that of the old Sèvres’.⁷³ The Three Graces support of the pierced basket in the imperial collections may also have been developed from a Sèvres model. Two Sèvres-made Three Graces are preserved in the Royal Collections; based on models developed for Napoleon’s *service Olympique*, these biscuit-fired figures are pierced at the top to support a fruit bowl or clock (**Figure 3.45**).⁷⁴

Queen Victoria’s patronage of Minton continued into the second half of the nineteenth century. The firm was granted a Royal Warrant in 1856 and additional services in Sèvres-style were commissioned for the royal family.⁷⁵ In order to mark the wedding of the crown prince, Edward VII, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 1863, a Sèvres-style Minton bleu céleste dessert service was commissioned (**Figure**

⁷³ John Tallis, *Tallis’ History and Description of the Crystal Palace* (London: John Tallis and Co., 1852), 1:156. The unglazed Parian ware elements introduced into dessert wares by Minton echoed biscuit-fired sculptural ornaments by Sèvres and earlier sugar sculptures employed upon the dessert table. For these earlier practices, see: Hilary Young, ‘Sculpture for the Dessert, 1680–1910,’ in *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, eds. Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young (London: V&A Publications, 2002).

⁷⁴ De Bellaigue, *French Porcelain*, 3:1098–100.

⁷⁵ Jones, ‘Minton and Queen Victoria,’ 83.

3.46). With painted cupids and their initials together beneath a crown (**Figure 3.47**), this service not only speaks of love and marriage, but an alliance of two royal houses. In 1881, when Edward's sons visited Japan, they recognised the Garrard service from their inspection of it some years earlier, but they recognised the Minton dessert service for its close resemblance to that owned by their father.⁷⁶ Similarly rendered with roses in reserves on a blue ground, laurel swags on the Japanese pieces supplant the oak leaves on the English, while the comports show the same moulding (**Figure 3.48**). Even more intriguingly, an additional service dated to 1873 owned by Edward and Alexandra features two reclining cupids supporting a pierced basket: the marble-like parian clay cupids were moulded separately, but it is otherwise identical to the cupid stand preserved in Japan (**Figure 3.49**). It seems difficult to dismiss such similarity as coincidence. Just as George IV and Queen Victoria employed the style of Old Sèvres for their own purposes, might this not be seen as a deliberate acquisition of 'royal' tableware for use in Japan's imperial household?

Material connections

Examination of the Minton tea and coffee service purchased alongside the dessert set reveal the technological demands of such complex chains of appropriation. The decoration of these pieces is quite different to the bleu céleste dessert stands, however they also have much in common. Described as having a gold ground by the archival records in Japan, the surfaces of these objects are evenly divided into radial sectors of bas-relief patterned gilding with forget-me-not garlands, and delicate pink sectors with floral gilt medallions (**Figure 3.50**). This service emulates eighteenth-century Sèvres not only in its form, motifs, and extensive gilding, but also in the deep pink ground, another of Sèvres' famed colours: Rose Pompadour or Rose Dubarry (**Figure 3.51**). Examining these Minton pieces in the light of the Sèvres wares they were emulating, and considering also the Japanese reproductions of these works, the craft implications and concomitant investment demanded by these elite appropriations can be understood.

⁷⁶ Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante*, 39.

The tea and coffee service made by Minton employed the latest techniques to achieve its historicist style. While craftsmen at Sèvres in the eighteenth century carefully applied and tooled layers of gilding, the patterning on the gilded sections of these Minton pieces is executed in bas-relief. This finish was achieved by means of the acid-gold technique, patented by James Leigh Hughes in 1863. According to Hughes' process, the desired pattern was applied in a resist varnish before the glazed surface of the item was treated with fluororic acid. With the negative of the pattern eaten away, the varnish would then be removed, gilding applied and fired. In the eaten away portions, the gold would be dull, but the raised portions might then be burnished to produce a contrasting effect.⁷⁷ Minton paid Hughes to secure use of his technique and acid-gold was used to decorate the most lavish services, such as the dessert services commissioned by Lord Milton and Dr Cheadle to commemorate their journey across Canada in 1862–1863 (**Figure 3.52**) that feature the same floral medallions as the pieces made for Japan (**Figure 3.53**).⁷⁸

That this service was actively used within the period is attested by the survival of Meiji-era additions. The utility and fragility of bone china and porcelain tableware makes breakages almost inevitable. Whether replacements or reinforcements, these additional items were made within Japan (**Figure 3.30**).⁷⁹ Unlike the Minton pieces, the Japanese items do not have date stamps. However, in contrast to the Japanese-style imperial tableware discussed in Chapter 2, the Western-style tableware produced in Arita for imperial use during the Meiji era does feature company marks. Here these marks indicate that the Arita companies Seiji Kaisha and Tsuji produced pieces to Minton's design.

Noting that the gilding of the Japanese duplicates was not entirely successful in reproducing that of the Minton originals, Ōkuma highlighted the challenges inherent in copying these wares.⁸⁰ It is probable that Arita did not have access to the same acid gold technique. The survival of these items within different collections in Arita, however, suggests that such shortcomings did not prevent their

⁷⁷ James Leigh Hughes, 'Ornamenting Porcelain,' UK Patent 1594, June 24, 1863.

⁷⁸ For details of these services, see: Julie Saunders, 'The Minton Dessert Services of Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle,' *Wedgwood International Seminar* 39–40 (1994–1995).

⁷⁹ Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōden: Kindai*, 11.

⁸⁰ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7.

repeated reproduction. Beyond the imperial collections, a plate with Tsuji mark is preserved in the collections of the Kyushu Ceramic Museum (**Figure 3.54**), while the private collections of Tsuji and Fukagawa Seiji each include a coffee cup and saucer with Seiji Kaisha mark (**Figure 3.55** and **Figure 3.56**). The collections at Tsuji also include a number of teacups and saucers of the same style, glazed but undecorated (**Figure 3.57**). Tsuji Katsuzō was one of the founders of Seiji Kaisha and so the presence of Seiji Kaisha objects within the Tsuji collections may be explained through their historical relationships, the presence of the Seiji Kaisha pieces at Fukagawa Seiji requires further consideration. From archival records, it can be demonstrated that the Imperial Household Ministry often sent actual objects to the Arita workshops where they served as *mihon* or models, which might explain the presence of pieces made by Seiji Kaisha within the collections of Fukagawa Seiji. Challenging though their reproduction might be, meeting the demands of the imperial household was important to these makers, and the circulation of these objects offers an insight into the role that individual patrons could play in the movement and transfer of craft.

The efforts made by the Arita companies to reproduce these objects serve to highlight the imported nature of the originals, but also reveal that Japanese companies were capable of producing comparable wares, otherwise additional supplies would necessarily have been ordered from Britain. While Minton was the domestic manufacturer for the British royal family, the same could not be said for Japan. The factors motivating such an investment in imported tableware must be considered. Even within Britain, Minton was not the only company producing Sèvres-style tableware at this time, and as noted the Sèvres manufactory itself was still in operation, so why were Minton ceramics selected?

It has been speculated that the selection of Minton wares over other manufactures may in part be due to the efforts of Christopher Dresser.⁸¹ At the behest of the South Kensington Museum, Dresser visited Japan to present a gift of British manufactures to the Imperial Museum. The gift included wares by Minton and Doulton (with whom Dresser had a working relationship). However, Dresser did

⁸¹ Ibid., 6.

not arrive in Japan until December 26, 1876, and presented his gifts the following January.⁸² According to the purchase records, the Minton tableware ordered from Mortlock was received by the Imperial Cuisine Division by May 1876, well before Dresser's visit.⁸³ It is interesting to note that the items of Minton tableware that Dresser did bring were pieces of his own design that imitated cloisonné enamels (**Figure 3.58**). These pieces spoke of an exotic Japan, quite unlike the Sèvres-style pieces commissioned under the agency of the Imperial Household Ministry. The Ministry would have been aware of Minton well before Dresser's visit. By the 1870s, Minton had achieved great success in international exhibitions, and demonstrated their technical innovation. For this reason, The Minton factory was one of the European ceramic manufacturers visited by the Iwakura Mission of 1871–1873. Kume described the factory as producing 'the most highly-prized china in Britain, its reputation rivalling that of Paris.'⁸⁴ Minton was not only commercially successful, but also held Queen Victoria's Royal Warrant. Furthermore, the similarity between the blue dessert service and that made by Minton for the British crown prince, Albert Edward (Edward VII) appears more than coincidence. These objects were carefully chosen.

Among the remaining orders placed in 1875, the price list for chairs and tables ends with the following statement:

[The table] should be made using Brazilian mahogany, like [that] at Buckingham palace; measuring 30 *shaku* [9m] by 7 *shaku 2 sun* [2.2m] it will be divided into three sections that join together to become one table.⁸⁵

With this explicit reference to Buckingham Palace, it is clear that these objects were being purchased strategically as not only the products of a nation with a monarch, but as the very objects used by that monarch. This demanded local knowledge.

⁸² For Dresser's account, see: Christopher Dresser, *Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art-Manufactures* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882). For the gift, see: Kishida Yoko, 'Sausu kenjinton hakubutsukan to Nihon: Kurisutofā Doressā no hakonda 1876 nen no kizōshinasenteikijun nitsuite,' *Art Research* 12 (2012).

⁸³ Confirmation of receipt of tableware, Imperial Cuisine Division, May 10, 1876, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 11, 1877, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68979. **Source 12.**

⁸⁴ Kume, *Iwakura Embassy*, 2:389.

⁸⁵ Order list, Supplies Division after 'Banchingu,' c.1875, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 11, 1877, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68979. Author's translation. **Source 10.**

Indeed, the purchase records reveal that this suite of orders was placed with the involvement of the Japanese envoy then in London, Ueno Kagenori.⁸⁶ With this in mind, it is apparent that the Imperial Household Ministry was not only acquiring the manufactures of a kingdom, but forging connections to the British royal family itself through the use of the same material culture. Even so, by their motifs and perhaps even their makers or designers, these ceramics might be considered as much French as English.

3.3 Questioning an ‘English Dinner Table’

The orders placed with Garrard, Hunt and Roskell, and Mortlock and Son were three of five concurrent orders placed in the mid-1870s with British firms. The other orders included a dining table and 48 chairs, and further glassware from F. and C. Osler.⁸⁷ As cited above, the *Morning Post* commented that the Garrard service comprised ‘all the articles usually found upon an English dinner-table.’⁸⁸ Indeed, taken alongside these other orders this statement may be extended to the table itself. Ōkuma asserted that the ceramic imperial tableware of the Meiji era emulated British style. In Chapter 4 it shall be demonstrated that two of the services on which he based this argument took their inspiration from other sources, but the suite of orders placed in 1875 appears to confirm his assertion. While I would agree that a British model was employed here, this was not the only model and, as Chapter 2 discussed, in 1875 the Imperial Household Ministry also had one eye on the past.

The final dinner service to be examined in this chapter, made in Arita during the Meiji era and since, is believed to be based on Sèvres originals.⁸⁹ Following his argument that British tableware was the ideal for the Meiji court, Ōkuma felt that the selection of Sèvres—a product of a bourgeois France—as a model for

⁸⁶ On Ueno Kagenori, see: Andrew Cobbing, ‘Ueno Kagenori, 1845–1888: A Most Influential Diplomat,’ in *Japanese Envoys in Britain, 1862–1964: A Century of Diplomatic Exchange*, ed. Ian Nish (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2007).

⁸⁷ The furniture was ordered from a firm listed as ‘*Banchingu*.’ This may be ‘Bunting,’ but cannot yet be confirmed.

⁸⁸ ‘The Mikado’s Dinner Service,’ 8.

⁸⁹ Ōkuma, ‘Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,’ 5.

domestically made tableware should be explained in terms of the technical difficulty reproducing British Minton ceramics.⁹⁰ Ōkuma explains the perceived affinity towards British design while dismissing the influence of French crafts in the following terms:

One probable answer can be sought in the fact that Britain, as was Japan, was a kingdom ruled by an 'Emperor'. The norm for the Japanese court should be not be the dining table of the French Bourgeois citizen, but the British royal palace banquet.

However, the material products of Sèvres, as has already been touched upon here, had inherent value for the formulation of sovereign identities in the nineteenth century. Considering this last service, the model provided by Britain shall be highlighted as one among a series of courtly precedents being followed by the Imperial Household Ministry during the early Meiji era. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, it was not one country that would be the focus of Sawa's investigations, but the courts of several.

Model productions

The service with paulownia crest is decorated in exclusively in gilt with a classical palmette border and central crest (**Figure 3.59** and **Figure 3.60**). Surviving pieces, several of which are in private collections, include lidded tureens, comports, plates and dishes in smooth neo-classical shapes, with some rococo styling also apparent.⁹¹ Though the chrysanthemum is now better known, paulownia is also used as a crest for Japan's imperial family.⁹² Unlike the crests previously encountered in this chapter it is executed on the service as per the Japanese *mon* with no further embellishments. Later items from the service feature a chrysanthemum crest and various company marks, but the pieces with the paulownia crest feature the mark of Seiji Kaisha. These objects and associated order documents include items for both dinner and dessert, but in contrast to the Minton

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁹¹ For other published examples, see: Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōji Bunkakan, ed., *Kindai no Kyūshū tōjiten* (Arita: Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōji Bunkakan, 1983).

⁹² Nukada Iwao, *Kiri to kiku: Kōki naru monshō no sekai* (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1996).

services discussed above, neither the French originals nor orders relating to them appear to survive. As such, this attribution relies on textual references and the Japanese pieces.

Ōkuma first attributed the originals for this service to Sèvres on the basis of an 1882 draft letter preserved in Arita that references sample pieces of Sèvres tableware.⁹³ Addressed to the Imperial Household Ministry, Tezuka Kamenosuke of Seiji Kaisha requested advance payment for an order employing ‘samples of French Sèvres-made Western-style tableware for imperial use with gold patterns.’⁹⁴ Records in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency further confirm that the dinner set with paulownia crest has a history that predates its production within Japan. An estimate received from Seiji Kaisha in 1880 regarding a service decorated in gold with paulownia crest notes against each item (except the bread plate) that the article is to be made as per the sample provided; elsewhere in the same set of records, the sample pieces with gold pattern are referred to as *hakurai* or imported.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, a later order for plates by Seiji Kaisha describes their gold paulownia decoration as French.⁹⁶ With the support of these additional records, the attribution of the original models for the service with paulownia crest to Sèvres appears secure.

Identification of the original objects, whether in records or otherwise, is difficult. In 1872, during their travels in Europe, the Iwakura Mission stayed for a time in Paris where they visited the Sèvres factory. While there is no mention of ceramics being purchased at this time, Kume Kunitake (familiar with ceramics from his upbringing in Hizen province) described the factory and the processes and techniques that were employed there. He noted the high prices Sèvres wares achieved, the support the factory received from the government, and its use of museum collections for research, commenting that Sèvres, ‘which in Europe and

⁹³ Ōkuma, ‘Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,’ 5.

⁹⁴ Draft request (2 versions), Tezuka Kamenosuke to Supplies Division, July, 1882, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 139 and ㊦ 18.

⁹⁵ Estimate for order, Seiji Kaisha, May 28, 1880, and internal document, Supplies Division, March 1, 1880, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036.

Source 18 and Source 14.

⁹⁶ Request for objects, Imperial Cuisine Division, March 1, 1880, from ‘Goyōdoroku,’ vol. 1, 1888, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69299.

America is so highly prized,' was 'recognised as the world's foremost porcelain.'⁹⁷ The later chef to the imperial household, Akiyama Tokuzō, remarked that a gilt (metal?) dinner service serving eight was purchased during their stay in Paris, but as yet it is neither possible to confirm nor deny Akiyama's account. Kume's discussion of ceramics in Japan and the work undertaken at Sèvres suggests that he found it to be a suitable model for the development of Japan's ceramic industries. These objects were not dismissed as bourgeois.

In the absence of French originals, the purchase records from 1880 comprise the earliest references to the gold service with paulownia crest. At this time, it was one of two services under discussion. Both estimates were for 48-setting dinner services (**Table 3.4**), with the commissions arranged by the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture.⁹⁸ The second service, discussed in Chapter 4, featured the same range of items, but decorated in underglaze blue: while the gold service used imported models, that second service was to follow supplied designs. In September 1880 Seiji Kaisha was commissioned to make the underglaze blue dinner service only. The reasons for this are not expressed, but surviving pieces and subsequent order documents show that Seiji Kaisha was later called upon to make pieces with the gold paulownia crest during the 1880s. Founded in 1879, this order was one of the first placed with the company. And yet, just as the makers called upon in Britain and France had their own histories of royal patronage, so too did this fledgling company in Arita. Seiji Kaisha's founding members included Tsuji Katsuzō: heir to the Tsuji lineage that had supplied the emperors of the Edo period with porcelain tableware. The nature of these entangled relationships will be explored more fully in Chapter 6, however, it is important to note here that the same care was taken with selecting makers overseas and at home. It was not only tableware being developed, but a new imperial identity.

⁹⁷ Kume, *Iwakura Embassy*, 3:79–87.

⁹⁸ 'Goyōdōroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. For relevant records, see: **Sources 13 to 29**.

Sèvres and sovereignty

The first decades of Sèvres' production in the late eighteenth century were marked by the close association the factory enjoyed with both Louis XV and Louis XVI. Under their patronage, craftsmen at Sèvres combined artistry and technological innovation to create exquisite tableware for use by the royal family and as courtly gifts. It was these eighteenth-century soft-paste porcelains that Minton dessert services made for Queen Victoria and her offspring emulated so closely, but it was not only the British monarchy that called upon the glories of Sèvres in nineteenth-century Europe.

The dinner service with the paulownia crest made for the Meiji Emperor does not look to Sèvres' eighteenth century triumphs but features a simpler neo-classical scheme with monochrome gold palmette border. The classical palmette border exists in numerous iterations as demonstrated by Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament* (**Figure 3.61**), and has been widely used. However, the particular execution of the border on the Arita service (**Figure 3.62**) is the same as used on the *Table du Roi* for Chateaux Saint-Cloud and Compiègne commissioned by Louis-Phillippe I, King of the French (**Figure 3.63**). This correspondence not only reinforces that it was Sèvres' originals that provided the model for the dinner set with paulownia crest, but further alludes to the potential significance of sovereign associations in their selection.

A member of the Orléans family, a cadet branch of the Bourbon House, Louis-Phillippe I (1773–1850) displaced the restored Bourbon monarchs in the July Revolution of 1830. However, he too looked to the material practices of past monarchs, developing a close relationship with the Sèvres factory.⁹⁹ Tending towards the neoclassical rather than rococo, services were commissioned in a range of patterns for each residence and rank, with separate decorative schemes

⁹⁹ Tamara Preaud, 'Brongniart as Administrator' in *The Sevres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry, 1800–1847*, ed. Derek E. Ostergard (New York: Yale University Press/Bard Graduate Center, c.1997), 46, 48.

developed for king, princes, officers and kitchen.¹⁰⁰ A custom of France's Ancien Régime, this practice served to articulate the hierarchy of Louis-Philippe's household and his own position. While the services commissioned by Louis-Philippe I may not have espoused the forms or decoration of the eighteenth-century wares of Louis XV and Louis XVI, they enacted the same material practices.

In truth, Louis-Philippe I's position was very different to that of the monarchs he emulated. While Louis XV and Louis XVI were absolute monarchs, Louis-Philippe I was proclaimed king by the elected members of the Chamber of Deputies after gaining bourgeoisie support. A constitutional monarch, styled King of the French rather than King of France (as the Bourbon rulers had been), his power was limited though he stood as the visible head of state until his abdication in 1848. Similar shifts in sovereign power accompanied the formation of nation states elsewhere. In Britain, absolute monarchy had long been relinquished, and from the reign of Queen Victoria it was political neutrality that was expected of the sovereign figurehead. Despite the limitations of his actual political power, the customs associated with France's Ancien Régime offered Louis-Philippe I the material practices by which he might shape his own sovereign identity. The same could perhaps be said of the Meiji Emperor, while largely divorced from political authority, he had a vital role to play as a visible sovereign figurehead.

While its makers were the descendants of those called upon to produce porcelain tableware for the emperors of the Edo period the model for this particular service was the French porcelain of Sèvres, as Ōkuma suggested. However, these objects were not 'bourgeois,' and their use as models for a Japanese imperial dinner service suggests something of the intentions at play. Not only did Sèvres possess an intimate bond with France's kings and emperors from its founding in the eighteenth century, but this particular motif had also been employed to articulate sovereignty under the July Monarchy of the mid-nineteenth century. The dinner service with the paulownia crest was not generically 'Western' nor merely 'French,' but pre-loaded with royal associations. Following the arrival of these objects in Japan, they were

¹⁰⁰ Tamara Preaud, 'Catalogue of the Exhibition' in *The Sevres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry, 1800–1847*, ed. Derek E. Ostergard (New York: Yale University Press/Bard Graduate Center, c.1997), 378.

given new materiality by local craftsmen. Taking Sèvres as their model at the instigation of the Imperial Household Ministry, the pieces crafted by the Arita potters connected the Meiji Emperor to European material practices of monarchy.

3.4 Brought by Ships

The arrival of black ships in 1853 served as a catalyst for the dramatic changes of the mid-nineteenth century, but in the early Meiji era the objects brought by ships and even the ships themselves, took on a new significance supporting industrialisation, the construction of railways, and the formation of a navy. Constructed at Scottish shipyards in 1873, the Meiji Maru carried the Meiji Emperor from Aomori to Yokohama in 1876 at the end of his northern progress. Tableware once used on board this ship has been preserved (**Figure 3.64**). Made at the Bodley potteries in Burslem, England, the plate has a moulded earthenware body transfer printed with a simple border and central insignia. Such dishes could be cheaply manufactured. At the same time that crafts were mobilised in Japan's drive to export, so too were they imported. Unlike this simple, transfer-printed plate (itself no doubt instrumental in on-board displays of rank through dining) the vessels destined for the emperor's table embodied more focused strategies: articulating the Meiji Emperor's sovereign identity and positioning him within an international ruling elite.

Ōkuma suggested that Britain, a country with a monarch, provided the model for Meiji-era court dining: an assertion framed in terms of 'a deep rooted affinity' and 'admiration towards Britain.'¹⁰¹ In contrast, I have argued that from the outset the emphasis was much less upon British manufactures in general and instead quite explicitly upon its monarch. The objects ordered in 1875 were selected not because they were British, but because they were 'royal'. Despite being ordered from Britain, these services were not necessarily 'British' in style, but reflected international constructions and perceptions of sovereign identities. The motifs that decorate the silver-gilt services from Garrard and Hunt and Roskell belie an Orientalist preconception, embodying British impressions of Japan's exotic

¹⁰¹ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7.

nature and its Mikado. The Minton tableware (as used by the British royals themselves) espoused the rococo style of eighteenth-century Versailles. It is perhaps no coincidence that within a year of these commissions being lodged, Boinville drew up the first plans for the Akasaka Reception Palace discussed in Chapter 1. Its neo-Baroque extrusions crowded with phoenixes, dragons and *kirin*, it is the architectural composite of both.

The appropriation of the material culture and practices of France's eighteenth-century kings by the British royal family and the French July Monarchy offer a valuable perspective on the role that craft played in articulating sovereign identities within nineteenth-century Europe. The subsequent acquisition of Sèvres-style wares crafted by Minton and the Arita workshops for use in the Japanese imperial court should be understood as one episode in an unfolding story of the appropriation of the material practices of Versailles. Considering the fate that befell those absolute monarchs, this may seem curious. However, Versailles set a template for the material expression of monarchy, a template that other sovereigns emulated even as their own political authority diminished. The objects bought by the Imperial Household Ministry carried this legacy with them: a legacy that recognised, at least implicitly, the potential of material objects to shape sovereign identities. In selecting such tableware, the Ministry positioned the Meiji Emperor among an international ruling elite.

In 1875, as Chapter 2 discussed, the Imperial Household Ministry instituted a new system for the Japanese dishes and bowls to be used by the Meiji Emperor, Empress Shōken and Dowager Empress Eishō. While those designs created connections to an imperial material culture developed in the Japanese archipelago, the objects considered here sought alternate forms of sovereignty from the hands of European craftsmen. The British royal court was not the only model for imperial dining during the early Meiji era. Examining the wider spectrum of Meiji-era imperial tableware it becomes clear that other models were also adopted, including more direct material connections to French material expressions of sovereignty that bypassed the British middleman. The new system of Japanese tableware implemented in 1875 bears witness to the use of other models, but such application of more domestically developed expressions of sovereignty was not limited to

dishes for Japanese dining. The service with paulownia crest developed from Sèvres' models had a partner in the records from 1880. Made by the same Japanese craftsmen in the same shapes as the service with paulownia crest, this second service is similarly suited for Western-style dining. The decoration of this service, however, does not speak of European visions of sovereignty, but offers a further dimension to our understanding of the identity being crafted for the Meiji Emperor: the focus of the next chapter. Interpreted through a lens of sovereignty, these disparate objects sit comfortably within a single strategy.

Chapter 4: Redefining *Yōshokki*

The design is a curious admixture of decorative motifs not found in combination on Chinese porcelain of the Ming dynasty, and the centrifugal arrangement of the border elements is evidence of a Japanese painter's misunderstanding of Western rim decoration. Yet the makers of the set were well aware of occidental preferences for dinner, salad, and dessert plates with scalloped rims and saucers with smooth rims.

Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant and the Mikado Porcelain,' 1989¹

With these words, Feller describes a porcelain dinner service made by Seiji Kaisha and presumed to have been given to former US President, General Ulysses S. Grant, by the Meiji Emperor. Decorated in underglaze blue with a border of animals running through vines, the design of this service presents a conundrum (**Figure 4.1**). Made by Japanese craftsmen in Western style, the motifs of mythical animals and foliate arabesques may suggest Chinese design to Feller, but they are not shown in any combination he would anticipate. More curiously still, the animals depicted in the border of each plate contravene the expected orientation of border motifs in a European or North American composition: rather than standing upon the inner edge of the border, they chase each other about its rim. And yet, the rim upon which they run is lobed, while the rim of the saucer is smooth in accord with conventions of the late nineteenth-century. For Feller, this design simultaneously reveals the Japanese craftsman's knowledge of overseas preferences and fundamental misunderstandings of foreign design. However, where Feller reads admixture and mistake, I argue for selection and intent: an argument made possible by investigation of the source for this design.

The dinner service with animals in vines is the twin to the service with paulownia crest discussed in the preceding chapter. Sharing the same forms and

¹ John Quentin Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant and the Mikado Porcelain,' *Winterthur Portfolio* 24.2/3 (1989), 174.

made by the same makers, the two can also be found alongside each other in the archival record. Their commissions overlapping, it seems appropriate to consider that both services were complicit with a single strategy. However, while the dinner service with paulownia crest features among services that created connections to European material articulations of monarchy, the dinner service with animals in vines takes only its forms from the West. In the previous chapter, I argued that imported tableware was used to position the Meiji Emperor among an international ruling elite, and thereby develop his sovereign identity. In this chapter, I reveal a second approach by which imperial sovereignty was constructed within the design of seemingly Western-style tableware: the mobilisation of the past. Examining the transposition of motifs from ancient and historical imperial objects onto the forms of the Western dinner table, this chapter echoes the discussion of Japanese-style tableware given in Chapter 2 to show how the past was utilised in the construction of the Meiji Emperor's identity. Presenting the emperor as inheritor of an imperial material legacy, these objects served the same strategy as those that employed imported models: articulating a sovereign identity.

To support my overarching hypothesis that tableware was used to articulate the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor, the second and third parts of this chapter explore the appropriation of motifs from Japan's past and their rewriting onto the porcelain forms of the Western table. In the second part, I focus on the design of the dinner service with animals in vines. Identifying the source for its unusual decoration through analysis of its motifs and exploration of associated archival records, its design was not the result of misunderstanding, but rich with intent. In the third part of this chapter, rimmed plates with long-tailed birds and chrysanthemum crests are considered through their relationship to the *kinri* porcelains discussed in Chapter 2. Although they employ Western shapes, these objects destabilise boundaries of Western and Japanese through the transposition of motifs. Before this, honouring my aim to consider the full spectrum of Meiji-era imperial tableware, the first part of this chapter addresses overlaps between imperial tableware and export ceramics. While the majority of the objects discussed in this thesis diverge from contemporary export ceramics in their articulation of sovereignty, this is not the case for all objects attributed to imperial commission.

Offering up an essentialised and exotic Japan, the bird and flower service by Kanzan Denshichi and the dinner service with birds over waves by Seiji Kaisha suggest additional strategies at work in the first half of the Meiji era.

The objects discussed in this chapter may be termed *yōshokki* or Western-style tableware. In the previous chapter objects exceeded this label through their sovereign associations. Here, it is the selection of specific motifs that render these objects more than ‘Western-style,’ in one instance overcoming the potential of form to dictate an object’s cultural identity. In his discussion of Meiji interiors, Sand commented that ‘Practically anything belonging to native tradition was available for recontextualization, yet the choices and redefinitions were never arbitrary.’² Far from Feller’s ‘admixture,’ Sand offers up the language of intent. However, even if (as I would agree) the choices behind the design of objects were deliberate, this process of selection is not always made explicit in the written record. Bringing together objects and archival records, these acts of transposition—the ‘removal of aesthetic forms or motifs from the settings in which they customarily appear’—can be exposed.³ A form of trajectory, such movement from one media to another, from a customary to unexpected setting, is revealed in each example considered here: export wares find a home within domestic contexts, the patterns of an ancient bronze Chinese mirror are transferred onto tureens and comports, and the courtly *yūsoku* motifs of Edo-period imperial porcelains colonise handled coffee cups. By tracing the nature of these trajectories the strategy behind these removals and reconfigurations may be uncovered.

4.1 Export Domesticated

The craftsmen and companies that produced ceramic tableware for the imperial household—Kanzan Denshichi in Kyoto, and Seiji Kaisha, Kōransha and Tsuji in Arita—were simultaneously actively engaged in the production of ceramics for international exhibitions and export. Comparison of the ceramics they produced for the Imperial Household Ministry with those they dispatched for exhibition and sale

² Jordan Sand, ‘Was Meiji Taste in Interiors “Orientalist”?’ *Positions* 8.3 (2000), 659.

³ *Ibid.*, 657.

overseas reveals the particular sovereign taste of the Ministry's commissions in many instances. However, the lines are not so clear cut as they might at first appear. Having begun to consider the use of 'sovereign' models for imperial tableware, here I explore some exceptions. Maintaining a focus on the imperial household and emperor as consumers, the overlaps between export and domestic production are examined. Even within the palaces of the emperor, ceramics were employed in the commodification of Japan for foreign consumption.

An alternate taste?

The Imperial Household Ministry commissioned tableware suited for Western-style banquets from Japanese workshops in a variety of designs during the early Meiji era. Comparing these works to the export productions of these same makers reveals the particular concerns of these commissions with articulating the position of the Meiji Emperor. However, there are exceptions. Two dishes from a service by Kanzan Denshichi and a dinner service produced by Seiji Kaisha highlight the limitations of attempting to draw a clear line between imperial ceramics and those produced for export. While the preceding examples embody a concern with sovereignty, these remaining services appear to be oriented towards a foreign taste for an exotic Japan.

The lobed-shaped dishes made by Seiji Kaisha for imperial dinner services were also used by the company for other products, but for the most part, the designs featured on these dishes are quite different. Considering the service with paulownia crest and the service with animals in vines, despite the evident dissimilarities in materials and motifs, both are monochromatic, their designs confined (with the exception of the central paulownia crest) to neatly delineated borders and friezes (**Figure 4.2 A and B**). In contrast, the overglaze red, green and gold decoration on Seiji Kaisha's lobed plate with phoenix motifs spills over the flattened rim, flowing towards the plate's centre (**Figure 4.2 C**). While long-tailed birds might not be out of place in an imperial scheme, the overall impression is lavish and indulgent. The smooth rimmed plate with peony motifs (**Figure 4.2 D**), meanwhile, uses *kraak*-style segmentation of the border and the red, blue and gold palette of the Imari wares popular in Europe from the seventeenth century (**Figure**

4.3).⁴ Echoing historic exports dispatched to Europe by the Dutch East India Company, such designs also sit comfortably alongside Orientalist patterns produced by European factories in the nineteenth century (**Figure 4.4**). More decorative and exotic than the comparatively staid services with paulownia crest and animals in vines, they were designed to appeal to European and American markets.

Similar distinctions may be made between coffee wares produced as imperial commissions and items sent overseas. Produced with both the marks of Seiji Kaisha and those of Tsuji, the coffee cup with pink ground and flowers based on Minton originals (**Figure 3.30**) and the coffee cup with long-tailed birds (**Figure 4.5** and **Figure 4.6**) are richly decorated. While the former reveals its debt to the courtly ceramics produced under Royal patronage at Sèvres during the eighteenth century, the latter (discussed in the third part of this chapter) transposes the motifs of Edo-period imperial tableware onto a vessel unknown among the *kinri* ceramics: the handled coffee cup. The contrasts with a coffee set made by Tsuji and exhibited at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial are manifold. Ferns are irregularly placed across the body where their gold accents shimmer (**Figure 4.7**). A pierced pattern of tiny interlocking lozenges ornaments the handles and lids, showcasing the skill of the craftsman while also rendering the piece itself more elaborate. These works sit comfortably among export crafts of this period, those produced for the imperial household do not, suggesting that a distinction can be drawn between imperial and export taste. Such a statement, however, cannot be applied to all the tableware produced for the Imperial Household Ministry. The exceptions considered here include a pair of dishes with bird and flower motifs made by Kanzan Denshichi (**Figure 4.8**) and a dinner service with decoration of birds over waves (**Figure 4.9**) made by Seiji Kaisha.

From his workshop in Kyoto, Kanzan Denshichi produced Western-style tableware oriented towards export markets. Kanzan's works were displayed at

⁴ Named perhaps for the ships or 'carracks' that carried them to Europe, Kraak ceramics were Chinese export wares decorated in underglaze blue. The border patterns on Kraak ceramics are often divided into sections, a style adopted in some Japanese ceramics. The name 'Imari,' actually indicating a port, was historically applied to many porcelains originating in Japan's Hizen province; encompassing different visual styles, in Europe it is particularly associated with a palette of underglaze blue with overglaze red and gold decoration.

international exhibitions, his entries to the Exposition Universelle held in Paris in 1888 including a coffee service with painted decoration in fan-shaped reserves against a coloured ground (**Figure 4.10**).⁵ Drawings by Kanzan were also included among the *Onchizuroku*: volumes of designs compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce to improve the standard of export crafts.⁶ His designs for the *Onchizuroku* include vessels with painterly compositions of birds and flowers (**Figure 4.11**). Such arrangements of birds and flowers made their way from Chinese to Japanese paintings, and were widely used in Japanese craft. Popular for export wares, they also featured on some of Kanzan's imperial commissions.

While the tobacco sets made by Kanzan for imperial use discussed in Chapter 2 (for example, **Figure 2.47**) derived their design and decoration from the Edo-period *kinri* porcelains, other pieces made by Kanzan for the Imperial Household may be considered more decorative than imperial in their appeal. A pair of vases by Kanzan thought to have been given to Haru no Miya (the Taishō Emperor) by the Meiji Emperor in 1895, combine birds and flowers with more archaic forms derived from Chinese bronzes (**Figure 4.12**).⁷ These vases are not altogether dissimilar to a pair of Kanzan's vases submitted to the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition now in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (**Figure 4.13**). A Japanese-style dinner service produced for Prince Arisugawa features similarly abundant floral motifs unique to each piece (**Figure 4.14** and **Figure 4.15**).⁸ Of greater interest here, however, are two oblong serving dishes produced for the imperial household (**Figure 4.8**). Freely ornamented with a border of sparrows playing among peonies and other flowers, these dishes were made for European-style banquets. Their bases are marked *enryōkan sonae*: 'equipment of the Enryōkan' referring to the building in the grounds of the Hama Detached Palace

⁵ For details of some of Kanzan's entries to international exhibitions, see: Okamoto Takashi, 'Kanzan Denshichi: Kyōyaki no kakushinsha' in *Karei naru kindai kyōyaki: Arisugawa Miyake denrai Kanzan Denshichi no ippin*, ed. Kunaichō Sannomaru Shōzōkan (Tokyo: Kunaichō, 2014), 55–58.

⁶ For the *onchizuroku*, see: Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Meiji dezain no tanjō: chōsa kenkyū hōkokusho onchizuroku* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai 1997).

⁷ Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji no kyūchū*, 86.

⁸ Kunaichō, ed., *Karei naru*.

where Western food was served to the emperor in 1871, and in which visiting foreign dignitaries were invited to stay.

In a similar manner, some of the imperial tableware produced by Arita-based Seiji Kaisha reveals an overlap between their export wares and their imperial commissions. The dense, colourful designs of the dish with phoenix motifs (**Figure 4.2**, top right) are echoed by a design for a plate with chrysanthemum motifs preserved in the Tsuji collections (**Figure 4.16**). Included among a group of designs for imperial tableware, this design and its partner (**Figure 4.17**) are among the few examples for which material correspondents can be identified. A dish in a private collection features the narrower border (**Figure 4.18**), and one in the collections of Fukagawa Seiji has the more encompassing decoration (**Figure 4.19**). Rich though the decoration of these dishes may be, the only motifs used are the chrysanthemum and paulownia: the crests of the imperial household. Seiji Kaisha's dinner service with birds over waves, preserved in substantial numbers in the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division, meanwhile makes no such concession to imperial design. Instead, this service acts as a point of overlap between Seiji Kaisha's export and imperial production.

The dinner service with birds over waves preserved by the Imperial Cuisine Division is conspicuously exuberant when compared to other wares produced by Seiji Kaisha for imperial use. 'Japanese' though these designs may seem, it is now understood that the models for this service were designed by an American. Fabric swags featuring birds flying over waves are suspended over dense geometric patterns and floral reserves (**Figure 4.9**, **Figures 4.20–4.21**). With its swelling forms, dragon-shaped handles, bright enamels and extensive gilding, Ōkuma suggested that the service revealed an affinity to Orientalist British ceramics through its exotic decoration.⁹ He was not far from the mark: Kamochi has subsequently shown that the designer of this service was in fact an American ceramics dealer named Abram French. French visited Arita in 1881, establishing a working relationship with Seiji Kaisha.¹⁰ A drawing submitted by French to Seiji Kaisha reveals that a similar service

⁹ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 6.

¹⁰ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 14–16.

was originally designed for export (**Figure 4.22**): its exotic shapes and decoration poised to capitalise upon foreign expectations of Japanese design. Subsequently repurposed for use by the Imperial Household Ministry, Seiji Kaisha also produced examples of this service with decoration in underglaze blue (**Figure 4.23**) and a polychrome enamel bamboo design (**Figure 4.24**).

While much of the ceramic tableware produced for imperial use in the early Meiji era contrasts with that produced for export, there are nonetheless areas where the two entities blur. Unlike the preceding examples discussed, the bird and flower dishes made by Kanzan and Seiji Kaisha's dinner service with birds over waves do not reveal an overriding concern with sovereignty. How then might these objects be understood?

Export domesticated

The image of Japan that was desired by consumers overseas was written into crafts sold for export. Handcrafted items with diverting motifs spoke of an exotic and preindustrialised other. Unlike the tableware that articulated the Meiji Emperor's sovereign identity, the use of items similar to those created for export markets articulated an image of difference. In his article on Meiji-era interiors, Sand wrote that 'Japan remained exotic, orientalized, and therefore unequal in the eyes of the Western powers as long as Japanese imposed unfamiliar customs upon Westerners.'¹¹ While the dishes with sparrows and flowers by Kanzan and Seiji Kaisha's dinner service with birds over waves did not impose any unfamiliar material practice upon Western visitors to the palace, nor did they work to reveal the emperor as equal. The domestication of what might otherwise be considered export ceramics offers an insight into the overlapping of these two spheres: the production of an imperial sovereign and the fabrication of a consumable Japan.

With bird and flower patterns employed on vases for the imperial palace, and abundant floral motifs featured on the Japanese-style dinner service made for Prince Arisugawa, it is not outside the bounds of possibility that the Meiji Emperor may have liked such patterns. However, such an interpretation is hard to support.

¹¹ Sand, 'Meiji Taste,' 646.

The records that detail the commissioning of ceramics for the imperial table make no allusion to his involvement, and the taste and preferences of the Meiji Emperor remain difficult to discern. While purchases made by the emperor at domestic exhibitions and so forth are sometimes recorded, his own will in such matters may be questioned.¹² Keene cites the politician Makino Nobuaki whose words are particularly relevant here:

The emperor had almost no private side to him. He also had no preferences. ... He did not buy things because he wanted them but in order to encourage industry or protect art. He led almost no life apart from his work.¹³

By purchasing ceramics at Japan's domestic exhibitions, the Meiji Emperor promoted them as crafts and commodities. Exploring the relationship of between the Kanzan dishes and the site of the Enryōkan, it appears that some of the ceramics commissioned for palace use may have performed a similar role.

As noted above, the Kanzan plates with designs of birds and flowers were marked with the inscription *enryōkan sonae*: 'equipment of the Enryōkan.' Used as a guesthouse for foreign dignitaries from the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1869 and also the site at which Western food was served to the emperor in 1871 according to Kido Takayoshi's diary, the name of the Enryōkan has been found on other examples of tableware from the Meiji era suggesting that further commissions were made specifically for use in this building.¹⁴ For example, a published compendium of potters' marks from Hizen ceramics of the modern period features a mark by Nanri Kajū which reads: *enryōkan sonae imari-gama hizen kaju zō*, 'equipment of the Enryōkan, Imari kilns, made by Kaju of Hizen' (**Figure 4.25**).¹⁵ An archival source preserved in the Saga Prefectural Library sheds light on the possible origins of this mark, revealing the agency not of the Imperial

¹² For an example of such a record, see: Okamoto, 'Kanzan Denshichi,' 54.

¹³ Makino Nobuaki as quoted in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 703.

¹⁴ Kido, *Diary*, 2:81–82.

¹⁵ Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōji Bunkakan, ed., *Kingendai Hizen tōji meikanshū* (Arita: Saga Kenritsu Kyūshū Tōji Bunkakan, 2006), 76.

Household Ministry but Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the commission of an early dinner service for use in the Enryōkan.¹⁶

The document preserved in Saga was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Imari Prefecture, and is dated to the eleventh month of 1871. Established after the dissolution of the *han* domains in 1871, Imari Prefecture was renamed Saga Prefecture the following year. The order discussed is significant, carrying a total value of 2,500 *ryō* (suggested to have a contemporary value of approximately 250 million yen), and was placed with a dealer who could coordinate the work using local potters.¹⁷ The document states that designs are being sent for the production of these pieces, but is equally specific about their purpose, requiring: 'a service of ceramic vessels of all kinds made in Imari to be used on the occasion of banquets given for people of every nation in the Enryōkan.'¹⁸ Both in the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and this statement, it is clear that these vessels were produced for foreign eyes.

The designs and marks to be placed upon these objects reveal some of the strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mention is made of 'Japanese-style designs' that feature 'the ancient people of Yamato' as well as flowers, trees and grasses. These designs were to be executed in coloured enamels and gold.¹⁹ The mark for these objects was also specified. Each item was to have recorded on its base: *enryōkan sonae imari-gama*, 'equipment of the Enryōkan, Imari kilns.'²⁰ Closely associated with the porcelain wares of Hizen province as the name of the port from which these wares were shipped, the use of 'Imari' as a mark is not often encountered. Anticipated to be the products of different workshops, by consistently marking these dishes 'Imari kilns' they were branded with the name (albeit in Japanese characters) of ceramics known to grace the stately homes and castles of

¹⁶ Order request, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Imari Prefecture, Meiji 4/11, Saga Prefectural Library. Author's translation.

¹⁷ Ozaki Yōko, '2,500 ryō no chūmon wa doko e,' *Sarayama* 51 (2001), 1.

¹⁸ Order request, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Imari Prefecture, Meiji 4/11, Saga Prefectural Library. Author's translation.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Europe.²¹ Ordered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the tableware for the Enryōkan was affiliated to ceramics that had already proven themselves amenable to a European audience.

It was around this time that Japanese crafts were increasingly mobilised as export commodities. The international exhibition at Vienna in 1873 gave extra momentum to this process, and government ambitions of *shokusan kogyō* or ‘promotion of industry’ were joined by *yushutu kōgyō*: ‘promotion of exports.’²² However, crafts in Japan were in transition even before the Restoration and the dissolution of the feudal *han* system in 1871: domain kilns were closing and traditional lines of patronage were under stress. Kanzan Denshichi was among those impacted by these developments. Employed at the Hikone domain’s Kotō ware kiln, when the kilns closed in 1862 he moved to Kyoto and established a workshop focused on porcelain. Undertaking tests with imported pigments under the guidance of foreign expert Gottfried Wagener perhaps as early as 1872, Kanzan was among the vanguard of ceramicists adapting his work to the changes of the times.²³

According to the biography of Kanzan given by Kitamura in his 1925 publication *Kotōyaki no kenkyū* (‘Research into Ceramics from Eastern Biwa Lake’), in 1873 Kanzan was ordered to make seventy-five kinds of Western tableware for use in the Enryōkan.²⁴ As yet, although records detailing commissions and quotations for full Western-style dinner services to be made by Kanzan dating to circa 1878, 1880 and 1884 have been located, records for such an order from 1873 are yet to be found.²⁵ The ‘Imari’ service described by the document in Saga

²¹ Kume commented upon the prestige Imari ware held in Europe when visiting Chatsworth House in 1872: Kume, *Iwakura Embassy*, 2:342.

²² *Shokusan kōgyō* was part of the title of an essay written by statesman Ōkubo Toshimichi in 1874, which saw the promotion of trade and industry as central to Japan’s modernisation: Checkland, *Japan and Britain*, 29.

²³ For a brief summary of Wagener’s role, see: *ibid.*, 49–50. For suggestion of this date for Kanzan’s encounter with Wagener, see: Okamoto, ‘Kanzan Denshichi,’ 55.

²⁴ Kitamura, *Kotōyaki*, 321.

²⁵ The earliest record for Kanzan-made ceramics found by Okamoto dates to 1873; placed through a dealer, the order was for fourteen dessert plates: Okamoto, ‘Kanzan Denshichi,’ 59. Regarding orders for identifiably Western-style services located by the author, the 1878 order for a set of 8 dozen pieces followed the first Domestic Industrial Exhibition, but as yet it has not been possible to

Prefectural Library suggests another possibility. Commissioned for the Enryōkan in 1871, this service was not ordered by the Imperial Household Ministry, but by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Featuring the same Enryōkan inscription on their reverse, the Kanzan dishes with birds and flowers may have been produced in similar circumstances. As such, if Kanzan was commissioned to produce Western-style services for use in the Enryōkan in 1873 as Kitamura claimed, it is possible that the agency behind this, and therefore any related records, might lie with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an avenue that has yet to be explored. At this time, Kanzan's work was actively promoted for foreign consumption.

Kanzan's ceramics were presented as exemplars of the achievements of Japanese craft. In 1876, a pair of Kanzan's vases featured in the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (**Figure 4.13**). The vases were among a group of works curated by commissioners in Japan for acquisition by the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). The museum's director, Phillip Cunliffe, requested that a collection be formed that would articulate Japan's ceramic history. As Jackson has observed, the Japanese commissioners used this opportunity to promote contemporary manufactures.²⁶ The catalogue of these works written by the Japanese commissioners (edited and supplemented by the British Museum's curator Augustus Wollaston Franks) highlights Kanzan's achievements in the enamelled decoration of porcelain, setting him above his peers in Kyoto.²⁷ Made around 1875, the vases exhibited feature decoration comparable to that of the

identify any details of the pattern within the associated correspondence: 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 20, 1879, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69024. The 1880 service was commissioned for Prince Higashi Fushimi no Miya and had a cherry blossom design, see: Summary list of purchases by region, Imperial Household Ministry, c.1881, from 'Goyōdoroku,' vol. 2, 1881, Archives of the Imperial Household Ministry: 69073; and list of objects, Imperial Household Ministry, c.1881, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 28, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69059. Commissioned in 1884, Kanzan's 1883 estimate for a service decorated in polychrome enamels notes that the pattern was to follow samples: Estimate for order, Kanzan Denshichi, August, 1883, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 1, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69220. It is highly possible that other services were commissioned.

²⁶ For details of acquisition, see: Jackson, 'Imagining Japan.'

²⁷ Augustus W. Franks and M. Shioda, *Japanese Pottery: Being a Native Report* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1880), 61.

dishes with birds and flowers marked for use in the Enryōkan (**Figure 4.26**), suggesting that the two may have been intended for a similar audience.

Kanzan's workshop in Kyoto also featured on the itineraries of state guests. Visiting Japan in 1881, the grandsons of Queen Victoria visited Kanzan's shop on 5 November. Ernest Satow, who accompanied the princes, noted that after lunch at Kiyomizu-dera, the group then went 'into Kañ-zañ's shop to buy a little porcelain.'²⁸ The imperial household appears to have had a hand in the itinerary as it is noted that earlier in the day the doors of the shrine at Kiyomizu-dera were opened for their royal guests, 'by the Mikado's orders.'²⁹ The princes elaborate on their visit to Kanzan's workshop, describing how they themselves made an attempt at working clay:

We then left the grounds of the temple and came down the hill and visited several of the pottery shops. Into one, Kanzan's, the best of the lot, we went, and saw the different processes of turning and moulding. We tried our own hands at the lathe and turned out one or two little brown teapots in clay.³⁰

Purchasing a few items before continuing on their way, the episode suggests a correspondence between the Japanese crafts placed before foreign eyes and the tableware commissioned for the Enryōkan.

Further evidence of an overlap between export crafts and the specific site of the Enryōkan is given in the accounts of Julia Dent Grant and John Russell Young. Both accompanied former US President Ulysses Grant on his visit to Japan in 1879: Julia his wife, and Young his chronicler. During their stay, the emperor's guests became hosts in their own right, with Young noting that the Grants held many dinner parties in the Enryōkan.³¹ Previously fitted out with European-style furniture

²⁸ Ernest Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan Part II: The Diaries of Ernest Satow, 1870–1883*, ed. Ian Ruxton (Morrisville: Lulu Press, 2009), 476.

²⁹ Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante*, 78.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

³¹ John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: The American News Company, 1879), 2:539.

from Hong Kong, but with decorations ‘in the native fashion,’ the role played by the Enryōkan went beyond mere accommodation of its guests.³²

The records left by Young and Julia Dent Grant reveal that the Enryōkan served as both a showroom and marketplace for Japanese crafts that were then being mobilised for export. Young describes how on each day of the Grants’ sojourn, the billiard room was visited by ‘tradesmen from the bazaars of Tokio [sic], with cloths and armor and swords and all manner of curious things to sell or to show.’³³ Craft was not only sold, but performed for the emperor’s visitors. Towards the end of their stay, Young recalls that ‘Our hosts had sent us some workers in pottery, to show us the skill of the Japanese in a department of art in which they have no superiors.’³⁴ Clay was worked, painted, and even fired before their eyes, while an interpreter instructed them about the ‘progress of this special industry in Tokio [sic].’³⁵ Young’s published account includes a depiction of the occasion, in which Julia Dent Grant can be seen inspecting a vase (**Figure 4.27**). While visits to schools and military reviews organised for the party demonstrated the changes taking place in Japan, here it was the timelessness and skill of craft that was the focus of the performance. Its table furnished with vases of Satsuma ware (an export favourite), the Enryōkan was strategically seductive.³⁶ On leaving, Julia Dent Grant recalls:

I did take a last, long, loving look at my pretty bedroom ... and tarried for a few moments in the exquisitely decorated drawing room, over the walls of which were thrown lovely fans. The salon was lovely. An artist had spent much time and talent in its decoration. I will not attempt to describe it further than to say that it was Japanese and very beautiful. I took a last look out at the lovely grounds and said farewell to Enriokwan.³⁷

Situated within the grounds of the emperor’s Hama Detached Palace, the Enryōkan became a site in which a vision of Japan could be constructed for foreign consumption.

³² Mitford, *Memories*, 2:495.

³³ Young, *Around the World*, 2:584.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:588.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:589.

³⁶ Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 304.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 305.

It is a taste for exotic Japan that can be seen in the bulging forms and lavish decoration of the service by Seiji Kaisha, many examples of which preserved in the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division (**Figure 4.9**). Developed from designs originally prepared by an American dealer for export in the mid-1880s, this service can be assumed to have been commissioned by the Imperial Household Ministry thereafter. However, it is difficult to identify these commissions in the Ministry records with certainty. In 1887, the Imperial Household Ministry ordered a substantial Western-style dinner service decorated with enamels and gold from Seiji Kaisha (**Table 4.1**). Numbering 1436 pieces and priced at 2466 yen 70 sen, the pattern for the service is not specified, simply that the pieces are to be as per samples.³⁸ Later records that correspond to this order describe these items as for public use, but no further clarification is given as to their precise deployment.³⁹ The only possible clue is a statement that the cost of the service was to be not to be met from the emperor's own expenditure.⁴⁰ Were these items placed on the emperor's table or another table under the Ministry's jurisdiction? Initially designed to appeal to foreign tastes for an exotic Japan, did this service serve to Orientalise the table on which it was placed? Until the nature of that table is known, these questions are difficult to answer.

Unlike the export wares sent overseas for sale or exhibition, the porcelains discussed here remained in Japan. Standing within the grounds of the Hama Detached Palace, the Enryōkan held a unique position in its use as a guesthouse for visiting dignitaries from overseas. With some of its furnishings commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they sit slightly outside the space of the emperor's table: ready instead for the use of his foreign guests at their own dinner parties. The dishes that were branded 'Imari' or which featured export-style motifs for use in the Enryōkan suggest a strategy that played upon foreign expectations of Japanese design, and later services may have done the same. As the role of export ceramics

³⁸ Request for tableware, Imperial Cuisine Division, December, 1887, from 'Goyōdoroku,' vol. 7, 1887, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69297.

³⁹ Copy of internal document for circulation, Imperial Cuisine Division, August 8, 1888, from 'Goyōdoroku,' vol. 1, 1888, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69299.

⁴⁰ Internal document for circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, December 13, 1887, from 'Goyōdoroku,' vol. 7, 1887, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69297.

developed, further entanglements between imperial ceramics and export production ensued. Consideration of the eyes they were designed for and the tables on which they stood allows some untangling of these threads, but only so far as the records permit. I cannot claim that these objects articulated the emperor's sovereignty, but in promoting, to borrow Young's words, an 'art in which they [the Japanese] have no superiors' perhaps they served an alternate strategy for the time.⁴¹

4.2 Reflecting an Imperial Past

Seiji Kaisha's dinner service decorated with animals in vines was produced by the same makers as the dinner service with the paulownia crest discussed in Chapter 3, and shares the same forms. Archival records that can be connected to this service reveal that the commissioning of the two services overlaps in time and can be used to infer the date for the service's initial production. While the dinner service with the paulownia crest created connections to European monarchs in its forms and decoration, identification of the design source adopted for the decoration of the dinner set with animals in vines reveals a different, but analogous, approach by which imperial identity was constructed during the Meiji era. Unlike the export-style pieces described above, I argue that this service served alongside the service with paulownia crest and the Minton pieces earlier described to articulate the sovereignty of the Meiji Emperor. In this case, however, that sovereignty was realised through transposition of motifs from the ancient past onto vessels that served more contemporary needs.

Orientations

Decorated with an underglaze-blue border motif, the dinner set with animals in vines does not feature an imperial crest. However, a number of Meiji-era pieces produced by Seiji Kaisha in this design remain in the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division (**Figure 4.28**). These have been broadly dated to the 1880s,

⁴¹ Young, *Around the World*, 2:588.

the main period of activity for Seiji Kaisha.⁴² Considered alongside pieces in private collections (**Figure 4.29** and **Figure 4.30**), extant pieces with a Seiji Kaisha mark include covered tureens in three sizes, comports, plates, oval dishes, cups and saucers: a range that suggests use as a combined dinner and dessert service. The border of each piece is decorated with birds and animals, real and imagined, that chase each other through twisting grape vines, but it is the form of these tureens, comports and other pieces that helps identify them with the archival record. The shapes used for the service with animals in vines are the same as those produced by Seiji Kaisha with gold palmette borders and paulownia crests (**Figure 4.31**). As Chapter 3 discussed, records indicate that the service with paulownia crests was based upon Sèvres models: some of these same records also shed light upon the service with animals in vines.

In 1880, the Imperial Household Ministry requested estimates for two 706-piece dinner services, one decorated in gold with a paulownia crest and the other in underglaze blue. These estimates were sought from the Arita companies Seiji Kaisha and Kōransha through the agencies of the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture.⁴³ The composition of the two services listed in the estimates was identical, combining vessels for both dinner and dessert, though the estimate for the gold-decorated service was more expensive at 7264 yen compared to 4528 yen (**Table 3.3**, **Table 4.2**).⁴⁴ In Chapter 3, I argued that the service with paulownia crest mentioned in the records describes pieces of the same design as the extant service featuring gilded palmette borders and paulownia crests. Correspondence in the range and form of objects belonging to the service with paulownia crest and that with animals in vines supports the conclusion that the underglaze blue service described in the 1880 records is indeed the service with animals in vines.

While the service with paulownia crest was to be made after imported models, the archival records state that the underglaze blue service was to be made

⁴² Kunaichō, ed., *Kyōden: Kindai*, 15.

⁴³ 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. For relevant records, see: **Sources 13** to **29**.

⁴⁴ Estimate for tableware, Seiji Kaisha, July 18, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 21**.

after designs. Only one sample piece was noted: a bread plate.⁴⁵ As further support of the correspondence between the two services, the 1880 records specify that this bread plate was also to be used as the model for the shape of the bread plate for the service with the paulownia crest.⁴⁶ For the other items, draft letters from the Imperial Household Ministry to the Nagasaki Governor among the 1880 records indicate that designs were sent with details of the order.⁴⁷ This suggests designs were developed within the Imperial Household Ministry or under their direction, and did not originate independently within the pottery workshops of Arita.

The records detail negotiation between the commissioners and makers, with the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture serving as intermediary. Initially the order was to be divided between Seiji Kaisha and Kōransha and each supplied estimates for different pieces from the two services.⁴⁸ However, the Supplies Division voiced concerns over inconsistencies that may result and new estimates were solicited from both companies for production of the complete services.⁴⁹ After some deliberation, on the 9 September 1880, Seiji Kaisha was commissioned to produce the dinner service decorated in underglaze blue, with orders for the service with paulownia crest following later.⁵⁰ Made according to designs, with only one sample piece provided, it can be inferred that the 1880 order documents refer to the first commissioning of the service with animals in vines. Seiji Kaisha anticipated it would take approximately a year to produce the pieces, subsequently requesting payment

⁴⁵ Estimate for tableware, Seiji Kaisha, May 25, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 18.**

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Draft letter from Imperial Household Ministry to Governor of Nagasaki, March 2, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 15.**

⁴⁸ Letter from Governor of Nagasaki to Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry, May 29, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 19.**

⁴⁹ Draft letter from Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry to Governor of Nagasaki, June 19, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 20.**

⁵⁰ Draft order from Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry to Governor of Nagasaki, September 9, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 24.**

for the bulk of the order in January 1882.⁵¹ While this does not help to date individual pieces (which may have been added later) these records do help to pinpoint the initial production of the service.

Thinking to the wider changes taking place in the court at this time, the likely impetus for these orders can be readily grasped. As discussed in Chapter 1, in 1879 construction of a bijou, but grand, neo-Baroque reception palace at Akasaka faltered when an earthquake revealed the instability of the local terrain. Although the project was not completely abandoned, a rapid solution to the inadequacies of accommodations at the Akasaka Temporary Palace was realised through the erection of a wooden dining hall in Japanese style, but with an interior adapted to Western banquets. This measure reveals the developing importance of imperial banquets, just as the record of engagements held in this new dining hall reveals its importance as a venue for banquets for both visiting foreign dignitaries and local elites.⁵² With such a project underway, the commissioning of new tableware by the Imperial Household Ministry makes practical sense at this juncture.

Of the pieces in private collections, one group of objects merits particular mention. A porcelain dinner service decorated in underglaze blue has been handed down and divided among the descendants of the former US President, Ulysses Grant.⁵³ Made by Seiji Kaisha, the decoration of this service features animals in vines: the same as the service in the Imperial Cuisine Division (**Figure 4.28**). As of 1989, the service comprised 162 pieces including dishes, comports, tureens and

⁵¹ Acknowledgement of order, Seiji Kaisha, October 5, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 27.** A payment request submitted by Seiji Kaisha in 1882 appears to relate to this order: Request for payment, Seiji Kaisha, January 28, 1882, from 'Goyōdoroku Konyū,' vol. 1, 1882, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69102. **Source 29.**

⁵² For these banquets and their guests, see: Meiji Jingū Zōeikyoku, ed., 'Kenpō Kinenkan,' Chapter
⁵³ It has been suggested that the service was presented to the Grants during their stay in 1879: Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant,' 165. This clashes with my dating, which places earliest production to 1880. However, the service is not mentioned in accounts of imperial gifts presented at that time. Julia Dent Grant noted receiving, 'many beautiful and valuable souvenirs of our visit: rolls of superb silk, vases, cabinets, and several very fine photograph albums': Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 304. Inoue Kaoru lists a bookshelf, copper vase, lacquer chairs, brocade and other items: Inoue Kaoru, *Segai Inoue Kō den* (Tokyo: Naigai Shoseki Kabushiki Kaisha, 1933–1934), 3:126. Founded in February 1879, it would have been difficult for Seiji Kaisha to supply a full dinner service before the Grants' departure in early September.

round platters.⁵⁴ Since this date, at least two pieces have entered museum collections: a dessert plate donated to the Peabody Essex Museum (**Figure 4.1**), and a lidded sauce bowl with stand in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (**Figure 4.32**).⁵⁵ The family believe that the service was presented to the Grants by the Meiji Emperor, with one story suggesting that it was developed from a Ming dynasty plate in the emperor's collection that Julia Dent Grant admired.⁵⁶ Some concerns have been expressed regarding this imperial provenance, and the thickness of the potting, variation in the colour and absence of 'the gilt embellishments typically found on porcelain of the period' have been highlighted.⁵⁷ However, the extant pieces from this same service preserved within the Imperial Cuisine Division assuage these doubts. The decoration is indeed quite different to that found on Japanese export wares of the time, but then this service was not intended for commercial export.

As might be anticipated, the number of animals running within the grapevine border varies between items as space permits up to a maximum eleven creatures encountered on the dinner plate and some other pieces; these are: a duck, long-necked bird, tiger, deer, rooster and hen, winged horse, long-tailed bird, kirin, peacock and a four-legged dog-like creature.⁵⁸ Until now, the models for these creatures have remained elusive and opinions are divided. For Jahn, the animals are 'depicted in a simple manner recalling folk art,' echoing her argument Meiji-era potters drew most strongly on East Asian artistic traditions.⁵⁹ For Ōkuma, the execution of the animals called to mind British naturalistic painting styles supporting his own argument that Britain provided the model for court dining.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant.'

⁵⁵ The dessert plate was given to the Peabody Essex Museum by Thomas B. Hazard, accession number E82315. The sauce tureen was part of the McNeil Americana Collection presented to Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2006, accession number 2006-3-120a to c.

⁵⁶ Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant,' 173.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Kamochi suggests that the four-legged creature is a squirrel, however its legs are unusually long and its pose is uncharacteristic: Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 138. The eye markings visible on some examples may suggest a Japanese raccoon dog (*tanuki*) or a civet cat, but it is difficult to say from the extant pieces exactly what animal is represented, and it could be a dog or lion.

⁵⁹ Jahn, *Meiji Ceramics*, 216, 7.

⁶⁰ Ōkuma, 'Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,' 7.

Feller, meanwhile, noted a curious aspect within the design that distinguishes it from European and North American models.

Feller observed that, while the border motifs of tureens, cups and lids were oriented such that the animals stand upright when the vessel is placed on a table as might be expected, on examining a plate, the animals can be seen to be running around its rim (**Figure 4.33**).⁶¹ Acknowledging that the selection of lobed rims for the plates and smooth for the saucers reflected prevailing tastes overseas, so suggesting knowledge of foreign preferences, the arrangement of the animals around the rim became more perplexing still. To use an example from Sèvres, plates from the *Ordinaire de Fontainebleau* service similarly feature a border of animals within foliate arabesques, but each animal stands upon the inner boundary of the plate's rim (**Figure 4.34**). Running counter to the centripetal orientation expected of a European or North American tableware border, Feller took this arrangement as 'evidence of a Japanese painter's misunderstanding of Western rim decoration.'⁶² The arrangement found on the Seiji Kaisha service of animals in vines also contravenes the arrangement of birds and other motifs found on Edo-period imperial ceramics, which despite not having a border per se, were typically centripetally oriented (**Figure 2.14**).

In his efforts to identify the source for this design, Feller could only comment that the decoration comprises 'a curious admixture of decorative motifs not found in combination on Chinese porcelain of the Ming dynasty.'⁶³ Attempting to tally the motifs with the family story of a Ming plate admired by Grant's wife, this explanation does little to help identify the models for this service, or to explain the apparent mistake made by its painters in the orientation of its decoration. From the 1880 records, it is clear that the Imperial Household Ministry supplied designs to the potters in Arita, but the nature of those designs is not recorded. While the initial estimates given by Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha say little more than that the decoration of the service is in underglaze blue, Seiji Kaisha's subsequent estimate

⁶¹ Feller, 'Julia Dent Grant,' 168.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 173.

and confirmation of the order offer a clue in this regard, describing the underglaze-blue decoration as the *kokyō* or ‘ancient mirror’ pattern.⁶⁴

Unpacking the Mikado’s godown

While unusual for porcelain plates, one class of objects on which such centrifugal arrangements can be found are ancient bronze mirrors. Bronze mirrors cast in China were imported into Japan from the beginning of the Kofun period (250–710 AD).⁶⁵ While not the Ming plate Feller was seeking, one such imported Chinese mirror carries a striking resemblance to the design featured on the dinner service with animals in vines. The border of this mirror shows animals and birds, real and imagined, chasing through vines in a centrifugal arrangement. Although the number and sequence are slightly different, these same creatures can be found running on the dinner service with animals in vines, and I would argue that this mirror provided the inspiration for the Imperial Household Ministry’s designs. The transposition of motifs from an ancient Chinese mirror onto a plate for Western-style dining in the Japanese imperial court in 1880, however, begs further exploration.

The impact of political desires upon the transposition of motifs is one of the issues tackled by Sand in his consideration of whether Meiji-era interiors might be judged Orientalist, fabricating an essentialised cultural self-representation. Drawing on definitions of antiquarianism given by Stewart, Sand explores the rendering of Japanese aesthetic traditions in the production of a native Japanese culture.⁶⁶

Susan Stewart speaks of two motives of antiquarianism: the ‘nostalgic desire of romanticism’ and the ‘political desire of authentication.’ It is in some sense to authenticate a native culture in opposition to the West that objects and elements of native aesthetic traditions are appropriated, transformed, and redeployed in these interiors. The political desire

⁶⁴ Acknowledgement of order, Seiji Kaisha, October 5, 1880, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 27.**

⁶⁵ Gina Barnes, *State Formation in Japan: Emergence of a 4th-century Ruling Elite* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁶⁶ Sand, ‘Meiji Taste.’ See also: Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1993), Chapter 5.

manifested in this appropriation self-orientalizes by essentializing the native object toward the political end of defining a Japanese style.⁶⁷

However, the mirror that will be described here was not made in Japan: a fact that might be considered compromising of its potential to express a native aesthetic tradition. An object of Chinese manufacture, it might also be tempting to draw it into larger imperialist narratives of cultural production, but the cultural biography of this particular mirror suggests the motivations behind its adoption as a design for tableware lay elsewhere.⁶⁸ Although I would not contend that the mirror was employed to define a 'Japanese' style, Stewart's conception of political authentication is markedly apt when consideration is given to the particular provenance of this object.

While Chinese porcelain would later become integral to social competition within the realm of elite dining, Barnes has argued that during the early Kofun period (250–400 AD) it was Chinese bronze mirrors that played a vital role in the emergence of prestige goods systems and social stratification in the Japanese archipelago.⁶⁹ Elite Kofun mound burials often included a set of mirror, sword and jewel among their grave goods. This grouping, and the authority it identified, is echoed by the mirror, sword and jewel of the imperial regalia. Decorative motifs of animals in vines, meanwhile, are a feature of later mirrors produced in Tang-dynasty China (AD 618–907). Typically featuring lions among grape vines cast in relief in their centre, outlying concentric borders of such mirrors include birds, insects or animals among vines.⁷⁰ The arts of the Tang Dynasty displayed an 'international character,' and these vine motifs are believed to have been introduced from western Asia.⁷¹ One such mirror of particular interest here has an

⁶⁷ Sand, 'Meiji Taste,' 655.

⁶⁸ Here I draw upon Kopytoff's notion of the object biography, which encourages consideration of the changing values assigned to objects within different cultural contexts: Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process,' in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁶⁹ Barnes, *State Formation*.

⁷⁰ Nancy Thompson, 'The Evolution of the T'ang Lion and Grapevine Mirror,' *Artibus Asiae* 29.1 (1967).

⁷¹ *The Columbia University Exhibition of Art of the T'ang Dynasty and its Antecedents* (New York: Columbia University, 1967), 3, 9; Thompson, 'Evolution,' 35.

outer border in which animals, real and mythical, chase each other through tangled grape vines (**Figure 4.35**). There are sixteen paired animals, rather than the eleven featured on the Seiji Kaisha plate, and the sequence is different.⁷² However, allowing for differences in media and technique, and some reasonable adjustment of the design, strong similarities emerge. The stances of the creatures on the mirror are repeated on the plate; all are centrifugally oriented and travel in the same direction (**Figure 4.36**).

The transposition of motifs from a bronze Tang-dynasty mirror onto the myriad forms of the Western dinner service may be considered both in terms of design and meaning. From a design perspective, with their motifs arranged into concentric bands, the decoration on these mirrors lends itself for transformation into the border frieze of a Western-style dinner service. Many Tang-dynasty mirrors also have foliate edges that may have called to mind the foliate rims popular among European plates in the nineteenth century (**Figure 4.37**). However, the associations this object offered were also likely to have been instrumental in its selection. Archaeologically associated with emerging social hierarchies, mirrors have also held spiritual significance in Japan, enshrined in Shintō shrines. Both aspects can be found in the imperial household itself: the mirror *yata-no-kagami* at Ise Jingū being one of the three sacred treasures of the imperial regalia. In addition to such wider meanings possessed by mirrors within the Japanese context, the mirror decorated with animals in vines introduced here has its own particular significance as part of the imperial collections housed in the Shōsōin.

The Shōsōin repository was established at the Buddhist temple of Tōdaiji in the mid-eighth century. Its collections are of international significance.⁷³ In addition to rich documentary sources that have proved invaluable to historians, the Shōsōin housed a unique collection of craft and artworks that came to Japan via the Silk Road.⁷⁴ Many of these objects were once the courtly possessions of Emperor

⁷² Thompson noted that mirrors of this type would generally include 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 or 18 creatures in their outer border: *ibid.*, 37. With a maximum eleven creatures featured in the dinner plate's border an adjustment in the number from mirror to design would be anticipated.

⁷³ In addition to numerous publications, details of the Shōsōin collections are now available online, see: Kunaichō, 'Shōsōin,' accessed July 1, 2015, <http://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp>.

⁷⁴ The collections within the Shōsōin were moved to a new facility as of 1962.

Shōmu, dedicated to the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji after the emperor's death in AD 756 by his widow Empress Kōmyō. Other items entered the collection soon after having been used in ceremonies or donated by members of the imperial family, and the majority of the objects in the collection are believed to date from the seventh to eighth centuries. The collection includes a number of bronze mirrors, four of which are considered to be exceptional examples of the so-called 'lion and grapevine' type.⁷⁵ With its border of centrifugally oriented animals and birds chasing through vines, the Shōsōin mirror illustrated here stands out within its class for its similarities to the underglaze blue dinner service.⁷⁶

From the Nara period onward, the repository at Tōdaiji was sealed, its collections accessed only intermittently with imperial permission. Over the centuries, some objects were added, some removed and others stolen, but as the political climate shifted around them, those that remained served contemporary needs. As Yoshimizu has argued, following a precedent set by Fujiwara no Michinaga in 1019, access to the Shōsōin and its collections could be gained by those with power over the country or the court, conferring confirmation of their status in return.⁷⁷ After the eighth Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435–1490) had obtained a piece of the incense block called *Ranjatai*, the unifier Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) sought this above all else to mark his achievement in attaining hegemony. The Meiji Emperor himself would twice take a piece of this timber.⁷⁸

Following the Meiji Restoration, the emperor's position as head of the Shintō faith was restated, and conscientious efforts were undertaken to differentiate the entangled religions of Shintōism and Buddhism within Japan. Deities of fused identity were assigned to one faith or the other, and members of the imperial family enrolled in Buddhist monasteries and convents were compelled

⁷⁵ Thompson, 'Evolution,' 27.

⁷⁶ For details of this mirror, see: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Dai rokujūnikai Shōsōin-ten* (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2010), 86. As noted therein, an almost identical mirror is preserved at Katori Jingū, Chiba prefecture; for a comparison, see: *ibid.*, 142–44.

⁷⁷ Yoshimizu Tsuneo, 'The Shōsōin: An Open and Shut Case,' *Asian Cultural Studies* 17 (March 1989), 34.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

to return to the laity.⁷⁹ Attached to a Buddhist temple but associated with the imperial family, the Shōsōin repository was caught up in these tensions. In 1875, control of the Shōsōin was transferred from the temple of Tōdaiji to the Ministry of the Interior, with an edict from the Imperial Household Ministry required for access to the collections.⁸⁰ With the Imperial Household Ministry now effectively holding the keys to the doors, these unique collections were put to work under the new regime.

Around this time, the collections of the Shōsōin were inventoried and exhibited, taking on a new public role. Even before control of the Shōsōin was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior, in 1872 the seal on the Shōsōin was broken for the first time since the Tenpō era (1830-1844) to allow the collections to be studied by the Jinshin Survey team, who took photographs, made rubbings and even created paintings of various treasures.⁸¹ Three years later, objects from the Shōsōin were displayed alongside those from the temples of Hōryūji, Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji within the Great Buddha Hall at Tōdaiji. The 170,000 people that attended this Nara Exhibition were witnesses to treasures that had previously been secluded from the public gaze. Exhibited again in 1878 and 1890, these collections were employed to articulate Japan's cultural legacy.⁸²

The rich potential of the Shōsōin collections was also employed in the furtherance of contemporary craft production. In 1876, Ōkubo Toshimichi, then head of the Ministry for Home Affairs, arranged for pieces to be cut from textiles preserved in the collections and sent to the different prefectures as models for

⁷⁹ On the plight of Buddhism in the early Meiji era, see: Martin Collcutt, 'Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication,' in *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*, ed. Marius Jensen and Gilbert Rozman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁸⁰ William Wayne Farris, 'Pieces in a Puzzle: Changing Approaches to the Shōsōin Documents,' *Monumenta Nipponica* 62.4 (2007), 408.

⁸¹ The Jinshin survey encompassed other sites and cultural assets within Japan; original materials from the survey are now online, see: 'Jinshin Survey related materials,' National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100815>; 'Jinshin survey related photographs,' National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100817/000/000>. It has not been possible to locate the mirror discussed here among those records.

⁸² Yoshimizu, 'Shōsōin,' 38.

production.⁸³ Designer and member of the Jinshin Survey team Kishi Kōkei, meanwhile, channeled his own personal experiences of the Shōsōin collection into objects he designed for the company Seikōsha, which he helped establish in 1877 and which undertook many commissions for the imperial household.⁸⁴ In 1881, the antiquities in the Shōsōin were placed under the jurisdiction of the newly created Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.⁸⁵ Charged with the promotion of local industry (with a view towards export) one of the Ministry's initiatives was the production of the *Onchizuroku*, eighty-four volumes of designs for and depictions of craft objects.⁸⁶ Research into these catalogues has commented upon the use of Shōsōin-style 'ancient' motifs such as cranes, phoenixes and floral arabesques within designs for various crafts during the Meiji era, including pieces made for the imperial household.⁸⁷ Legally designated property of the imperial family in 1890, artefacts from the Shōsōin joined those from other temples to serve as sources for designs to decorate of the Meiji Palace.⁸⁸ As such, even as the objects themselves began to be withdrawn from public view, they continued to make a visible contribution to imperial display.

During the early Meiji era, the collections of the Shōsōin were also opened up for foreign guests, including the grandsons of Queen Victoria (accompanied by Ernest Satow), and the designer, Christopher Dresser.⁸⁹ Their diaries reveal that even before their legal designation, the rich collections of the Shōsōin were perceived (and likely presented) as the personal possessions of the Meiji Emperor. In his description of his visit with the British princes, Satow termed the Shōsōin 'the

⁸³ Ibid., 38–39.

⁸⁴ Gomi Hikaru, 'Kanzōhin ni miru zuanka Kishi Kōkei to Seikōsha no saku hin nit suite,' *Sannomaru Shōzōkan nenpō kiyō* 11 (2006).

⁸⁵ Farris, 'Pieces in a Puzzle,' 410.

⁸⁶ Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Meiji dezain*; Sato Doshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011), 115, 117.

⁸⁷ Ōkuma Toshiyuki, "'Kunaishō-gata" no imi: keijō zaishitsu gaikōteki yakuwari' in *Meiji dezain no tanjō: chōsa kenkyū hōkokusho*, ed. Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai 1997), 173.

⁸⁸ Kunaichō, ed., *Maboroshi*, 22–23; Yoshimizu, 'Shōsōin,' 39; Emi Chizuko, 'Meiji Kyūden tsunegoten fusuma-e no kōan: Shōsōin kamo ke byōbu mozō, Heike nōkyō mohon no inyō to Yamataka Nobuakira,' *Museum* 617 (2008).

⁸⁹ Dresser, *Japan*, 94–103; Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante* 2:110.

Mikado's godowns' or emperor's storehouses.⁹⁰ The specific origins of the objects therein were likewise subsumed by their imperial associations. Describing a glass ewer he considered Arabian, Dresser noted, 'the Japanese do not know whence it came; they only know that it has been in possession of their emperors for one thousand two hundred years.'⁹¹ Rather than the contexts of their production, Dresser's comment implies that the importance of the Shōsōin collections centred on an imperial provenance that stretched back to antiquity. While Dresser cannot be considered a neutral observer, it is pertinent to note in this regard that despite employing motifs from a Chinese mirror for their decoration, the purchase records for the dinner service with animals in vines make no reference to China, describing the pattern only as *kodai* or 'ancient.'⁹² Even if the mirror's geographical origins were known, at this moment, it appears that such origins mattered less than its imperial associations.

The collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division include other examples of Western-style tableware from the first half of the Meiji era that feature ancient or Shōsōin-style motifs. A Western-style dinner service made by Kanzan Denshichi (**Figure 4.38**) echoes the service with animals in vines through its decoration of centrifugally arranged mythical creatures. While not yet attributable to any one object, these animals can be considered to belong to this repertoire of 'ancient motifs' as suggested by another mirror from the Shōsōin collections reproduced in the pattern compilation *Tankakuzufu* at the end of the Edo period (**Figure 4.39**).⁹³ Falling into this same category are the birds with cordons in their beaks found on a dessert plate made by Seiji Kaisha (**Figure 4.40**). Whether the Western-style Kanzan dinner service is perhaps one of those mentioned in records from 1878 or 1884 remains unclear.⁹⁴ The Seiji Kaisha plate is also yet to be identified within the archives. Even so, it is apparent that the dinner service with animals in vines was

⁹⁰ Satow, *Diplomat in Japan*, 478.

⁹¹ Dresser, *Japan*, 99.

⁹² Request for payment, Seiji Kaisha, January 28, 1882, from 'Goyōdoroku Konyū,' vol. 1, 1882, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69102. **Source 29**.

⁹³ *Tankakuzufu* was a graphic compendium featured in the series of literary classics known as *Tankaku sōsho* compiled by Mizuno Tadanaka between 1847 and 1853. It included several illustrations of pieces from the Shōsōin collections.

⁹⁴ See note 25 above.

among a number of objects upon the imperial table that appropriated motifs and associations from the ancient past.

The use of a Shōsōin mirror as the source for designs for ceramic tableware in 1880 was one of a series of appropriations of these objects in the Meiji era. The bronze mirror with animals in vines was not only physically suited to the task of providing a model for the decoration of bordered tableware, but was also a potent symbol of authority, both as a mirror and as part of the Shōsōin collections. While the dinner service with the paulownia crest created connections to European monarchy, embedding the Meiji Emperor as a sovereign within an international ruling elite, the dinner set with animals in vines employed motifs from the 'imperial treasure-house' of the Shōsōin. Presented and later designated as the personal possessions of the Meiji Emperor inherited by the legacy of ancestry, the objects of the Shōsōin were called upon as models for a new imperial material culture that created connections to the past to underscore the legitimacy of his rule.

4.3 Edo Inflections

The services described in the second part of this chapter married motifs drawn from the ancient past with contemporary demands of dining in foreign style. At first glance, the objects considered here do something similar: transposing the patterns of Edo-period *kinri* ceramics onto the forms of European tableware and thereby creating connections to the emperors of the Edo period. First established for use on shallow dishes and steep-sided bowls, the transposition of these *kinri* patterns onto plates with flattened rims and handled cups was accompanied by other changes. Comparing the Japanese and Western-style ceramics with *kinri* motifs, it is apparent that many of the defining characteristics of *kinri* porcelains were abandoned in this transition. However, examination of the patterns used for these pieces reveals them to comprise the same suite of patterns prescribed for the tableware of the Meiji Emperor, Empress Shōken and Dowager Empress Eishō in 1875, and order records suggest that this division was reiterated among the Western forms. Articulating an imperial legacy, these motifs wrapped themselves anew around the material practices of a changing court.

Hybrid things

Writing about a Western-style rimmed plate with border motifs of chrysanthemums, long-tailed birds and interlocking tortoiseshell motifs (**Figure 4.41**), Kamochi compared this object with the 1875 design for the empress dowager's tableware featured in Chapter 2 (**Figure 2.1**). His caption for the plate is translated below:

Western plate with chrysanthemum crest and phoenix in polychrome enamel

Made by Seiji Kaisha, mid Meiji-era, diameter 19cm

Private collection

The sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum crest and phoenix are depicted. It is made following the design from the Imperial Household Ministry for the tableware of Empress Shōken [sic] issued in Meiji 8 [1875].⁹⁵

Both design and photograph show a dish with three sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum crests and the same number of long-tailed birds in flight, interposed with motifs of tortoiseshell containing flowers. However, while Kamochi acknowledges that the plate is 'Western' in the title, his reference to the design for the empress dowager's tableware conflates the two, overlooking differences in form and function. Unlike the shallow dish shown in the design, this plate is not designed for use with chopsticks, but with knife and fork. Here I examine what else changed in the process of transposition by considering whether this plate, and others like it can be considered to be examples of *kinri* ceramics.

Although the design for the empress dowager's plate departed in some respects from the Edo-period ceramics it was modelled upon, as Chapter 2 discussed, the objects that followed the 1875 designs upheld the key design characteristics of *kinri* porcelains as established during the Edo period. These characteristics included decoration of chrysanthemum crests and Kyoto-style motifs executed exclusively in underglaze blue, an absence of makers' marks or other decoration within the foot-ring, the application of *karakusa* arabesques to the

⁹⁵ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 105. Author's translation; given its date, the design actually relates to Empress Dowager Eishō.

outside of dishes with a plum flower drawn in outline and filled, and a blank central well marked by a circle in underglaze blue. Each of these features was tampered with during the process of transposition of these designs onto Western-style plates and other vessels: changes that went beyond the adaptation necessary to fit the contours of these alternate forms.

As the *kinri* motifs were transposed from the shallow Japanese dish to the flat-rimmed Western-style plate, other aspects were also altered. The central well of the plate with long-tailed birds and tortoiseshell motifs is indeed blank, but it has pushed out to reach the edge of the flattened rim. As with the *kinri* porcelains of the Edo period, a circle delineates the blank well from the motifs that encircle it. However, here, that circle and the motifs that follow are not drawn onto the body of the dish in cobalt blue, but sit on top of the glaze in gold and polychrome enamels. The reverse of this plate is not shown, but examining two similar examples preserved in the Tsuji collections (**Figure 4.42** and **Figure 4.43**), the reverse of these dishes is devoid of decoration, with no *karakusa*. Furthermore, within their foot-rings, these dishes carry the marks of their makers. Produced by Seiji Kaisha and Tsuji, these same workshops were producing *kinri*-style tableware for Japanese-style dining during the Meiji era, but those Japanese-style items were left unmarked in accordance with the Edo-period precedents. In contrast, the presence of makers' marks on these plates with flattened rims serves to draw them towards the other Western-style imperial commissions these companies undertook.

The collateral changes that accompanied the transposition of these motifs serve to distance these three plates from the *kinri* porcelains of the Edo period and the 1875 designs that followed them. However, although the two should not be conflated, the comparison to the 1875 designs remains productive, particularly when the plate introduced by Kamochi is set alongside the two plates in the Tsuji collections. With birds and crests in common, the three plates are respectively decorated with motifs of tortoiseshell, clouds in waves and mallow. As such, these dishes reveal themselves to be the individual counterparts of the suite of designs issued in 1875 (**Figure 4.44**): designs that were implemented to serve the needs of the empress dowager, the empress and indeed the Meiji Emperor himself.

Borders and boundaries

First finding their way onto porcelain during the Edo period, in 1875 the courtly *yūsoku* motifs of clouds in waves, mallow and tortoiseshell were united once more with chrysanthemum crests and long-tailed birds upon Japanese-style dishes for imperial use. Migrating onto the flattened-rim plate of the Western table, these motifs changed their colours as they colonised this alternate form. The semblance of these motifs to the patterns stipulated for Japanese-style tableware provokes consideration of whether these objects were also created for the specific use of the *mittsu gosho*: the emperor, empress and dowager empress. In examining the records that support such an interpretation a second question is incurred: are these dishes Western or Japanese?

Archival records support the interpretation that designs for the imperial tableware of the *mittsu gosho* (emperor, empress and dowager empress) implemented in 1875 were transformed into polychrome patterns for Western-style plates during the early Meiji era, and that the connection with the *mittsu gosho* was preserved during this process of transposition. On February 1, 1884, the Imperial Cuisine Division requested three sets of twenty-four plates.⁹⁶ Described as dessert plates, the order was headed for the *mittsu gosho*. The subsequent record of the Supplies Division notes an additional twenty-four plates, and that the order will be placed with Seiji Kaisha.⁹⁷ Here the plates are described as comprising large and small dessert plates, decorated in *nishiki-de*: polychrome enamels with gilding. Little is said about the nature of these patterns. Furthermore, dessert plates, or *okashi-sara*, might be found in both Japanese and Western-style dining services. However, following these orders through the records, Seiji Kaisha's requests for payment offer further clues as to their nature.

Two responses sent by Seiji Kaisha to the Supplies Division help to connect this order for dessert plates for the *mittsu gosho* to the extant dishes described above. Seiji Kaisha's listings give the dimensions of the plates as 6 *sun* 8 *bu* (20.6

⁹⁶ Request for tableware, Imperial Cuisine Division, February 1, 1884, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69224.

⁹⁷ Tableware order, Supplies Division, February 1, 1884, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 6, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69225.

cm) and 6 *sun 2 bu* (18.8 cm) respectively: very close to the dimensions of the dishes discussed above (19 cm, 19.4 cm and 21.3 cm respectively).⁹⁸ In contrast, dessert plates for a Japanese-style dining service made in the mid-Meiji era for Arisugawa no Miya measure only 12.5 cm at the mouth.⁹⁹ In addition, although the prices and qualities correspond precisely, the larger plates are referred to as *niku-sara* or ‘meat dishes’ rather than dessert plates in Seiji Kaisha’s listings. This term was employed in the Meiji era to describe Western-style plates: a result of perceived associations between Western cuisine and the consumption of meat. In an earlier request for payment for a Western dinner service made by Kōransha, all the plates (dinner, dessert and bread) are branded ‘meat dishes,’ distinguished only by size. The item corresponding to a dessert plate in that order is listed as a meat dish measuring 7 *sun* (21.2 cm).¹⁰⁰ Given the correspondence in dimensions, and the use of the term *niku-sara* by Seiji Kaisha, it can be assumed that the objects described in these records are indeed dessert plates that of Western form. Seiji Kaisha notes that they feature the imperial crest, and most tellingly, their second note states that these dishes are for the Empress Dowager.¹⁰¹ From this, it can be surmised that the dishes described by this order are not unlike that featured by Kamochi (**Figure 4.41**), dessert plates shaped for use with knife and fork.

Additional support for the transferral of not only the 1875 designs from Japanese-style dishes to ones for use with knife and fork but also for their continuing affiliation to individual members of the imperial family is given by records from 1885. Orders for dessert plates of the same size and price as those ordered for the empress dowager were again requested from Seiji Kaisha.¹⁰² This time, the intended recipient is not specified but the designs are clearly noted as

⁹⁸ Delivery confirmation, Seiji Kaisha, December 5, 1885, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 5, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69224.

⁹⁹ Kunaichō, ed., *Karei naru*, 38.

¹⁰⁰ Request for payment, Kōransha, December 27, 1878, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 13, 1882, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69114.

¹⁰¹ Delivery confirmation, Seiji Kaisha, December 31, 1885, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 6, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69225.

¹⁰² Request for tableware, Imperial Cuisine Division, February 18, 1885, and estimate from Seiji Kaisha, February 24, 1885, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 2, 1885, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69265.

comprising imperial crests, long-tailed birds and mallow flowers: the same motifs as featured in designs for the Meiji Emperor's tableware in 1875 (**Figure 2.36**), and on the dish in the Tsuji collections (**Figure 4.42**). The preservation of coffee cups with these designs demonstrates that these motifs were able to colonise other forms (**Figure 4.6**). Carrying motifs designed for individual members of the imperial family, these vessels of foreign shape appear to have been embraced beyond the demands of public entertaining.

For many foreigners in Japan, the apparent 'Westernisation' of the Meiji court was perceived as ultimately superficial. To quote the German physician Baelz writing on the occasion of the move to the new palace in 1889, 'The Emperor's private apartments are purely Japanese, without tables, chairs, or beds. This shows how little the European modes of living have penetrated beneath the surface.'¹⁰³ In contrast, it has been noted that while living in the Meiji Palace, the imperial family took breakfast in French style, and enjoyed dishes of Western cuisine with their lunch.¹⁰⁴ The use of dishes decorated for each of the *mittsu goshō* and shaped for use with knife and fork suggests that material practices in the court did not only change on the surface but at different levels, nor were these changes solely accomplished for display to the outside world.

Within this process of change, the identity of the objects offers a means to nuance understanding of the 'Westernisation' of the Meiji court. Despite being shaped to allow use of knife and fork, to call these plates Western is to do them a disservice. Fusing decoration from Japanese tableware with a vessel formed for material practices developed overseas they might be thought of as hybrids. However, in records from 1890, such objects are categorised unequivocally as Japanese. Listed for use in both the public and private domains of the palace, dessert plates and coffee cups decorated with chrysanthemum crests in polychrome enamels and gold are detailed under the heading of *washokki* or

¹⁰³ Baelz, *Awakening Japan*, 80.

¹⁰⁴ Uchikoshi Takaaki, *Shōken Kōtaigō no goshōgai: miuta to miato de tadoru* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2014), 84–85.

'Japanese tableware.'¹⁰⁵ In this way, the *yūsoku* motifs that had created porcelain as imperial during the Edo period were also able to claim these alien forms as Japanese by the mid-Meiji era.

Such identification of objects blurs the boundaries created between Japanese and Western, but appears to be unique to the pieces decorated with *yūsoku* motifs. Whether decorated with paulownia crests, animals in vines or birds over waves, the other dinner services made by Seiji Kaisha at the request of the Imperial Household Ministry are consistently referred to as *yōshokki* in the records. Much as they did in 1875, the *yūsoku* motifs served to associate the emperor with his Edo-period ancestors by creating connecting to an imperial material culture. However, these designs also possessed the agency to overcome the foreign nature of the forms that bore them. Penetrating beyond the surface of these coffee cups and plates with flattened rims the *yūsoku* motifs created them as Japanese.

4.4 Different By Design

A design for a cup in the collections of the Tsuji company shows a border composed of familiar motifs of paulownia crests and mallow that is poised to wrap itself around the rim of a handled coffee cup (**Figure 4.45**). Identical motifs are found upon a design for a plate with flattened rim in the same collection, but as yet no material correspondents to these designs have been identified. Furthermore, the designs are neither dated nor annotated in a manner that would aid in their exploration. With only a pattern and a form indicated, it is not clear by whose hand these drawings were prepared or whether these apparently imperial objects were ever produced, and a potentially valuable source is deprived of the context and materiality that might further elucidate its role. However, even in the absence of other records it is possible to see that there is no tension between these Japanese motifs and the Western form on which they stand. The complex histories and diverse trajectories that brought together this handled porcelain coffee cup and the

¹⁰⁵ Orders 1, 5 and 6 for Japanese tableware, Imperial Household Ministry, January 15, 1890, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Ministry: 3076.

motifs of the Japanese imperial house are calmly resolved upon the page: the object becomes assemblage.

The wrapping of this paulownia and mallow motif around the shape of the cup reveals a relationship between pattern and form that has been a focus of this chapter. While the forms of tureens and comports required for Western-style banquets were subject to the expectations and accommodation of foreign material practice, the motifs that spread across them were adaptable, able to change shape and move between media. More than mere ornament, these designs held the power to change the nature of the objects they enveloped: rendering *yōshokki* Japanese. Pattern also allowed the utilisation of legitimising objects of the past despite immeasurable changes to material practices in the intervening centuries. A Chinese bronze mirror may have had little place in the daily life of the Meiji court, but its patterns could be transposed onto objects that served the material needs of the day. Giving the past a new foothold in the present, such references to an ancient imperial legacy from a time before shoguns supported the legitimisation of the Meiji Emperor as Japan's sovereign.

One of the challenges in this discussion is assigning specific services to particular tables. In knowing that Kanzan's bird and flower dishes were commissioned specifically to furnish the Enryōkan, and that the plates with adapted *kinri* motifs were destined for use by the *mittsu gosho*, connections between pattern and use can be explored. For the animals in vines service the evidence is more circumstantial. Commissioned around the same time as the construction of a new dining hall and surviving in quantity within the collections of the Imperial Cuisine Division it can be assumed to have played a role in subsequent imperial banquets, but the precise nature of this role is difficult to define. For the most part, such nuances lie outside the remit of the order documents, and only very occasionally are they written onto the objects themselves. Even so, there are occasions where objects can be securely placed onto a certain table, and these will be discussed in the next chapter.

Though it can as yet only be tentatively suggested, whether a particular service was made for the sole use of the emperor, for the use of the emperor and his guests, or indeed for those guests' private use does seem to have had an impact

on the nature of the objects commissioned, suggesting that designs were tailored to the particular assemblage of people and things within which they were expected to perform. However, Feller's attribution of the orientation of motifs on the dinner service with animals in vines to a craftsman's misunderstanding indicates the potential gap between intention and perception surrounding the design of these objects. Considering the agency of material objects, Gell has made a similar distinction. An artwork may be created to have a certain impact but may be received in unintended ways.¹⁰⁶ In the discussion of dinner services ordered by the imperial household thus far, I have focused on aspects of their design and commissioning. In so doing I have highlighted the strategies by which they sought to position the Meiji Emperor as sovereign. However, intentions and outcomes do not always correlate. To develop this argument further, consideration must be given to the performances, perceptions and trajectories that followed the creation of these objects.

¹⁰⁶ Gell, *Art and Agency*, 24.

Chapter 5: Constructing an Emperor

We met the king, as he was then. This may sound rather pretentious, but actually when they came out to meet us—the king and the queen—we saw only a native couple, the only sign of royalty being that the monarch wore a European wool suit. ... They showed us their native treasure, but it turned out to be a rug made of innumerable feathers of birds.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Autobiography*, 1897¹

Stopping in Hawaii en route to America with the Iwakura Mission, in 1860 Fukuzawa Yukichi met Hawaii's monarch King Kamehameha IV (*b.*1834, *r.*1855–1863) and his wife, Queen Emma. Unimpressed by the Hawaiians, whom he described as 'pretty miserable,' Fukuzawa sought material corroboration of their rulers' royalty.² The feather cloak, a garment that conferred both status and protection to Hawaii's chiefs and now rulers, made no positive impression: the significance of this 'native treasure' unintelligible to Fukuzawa.³ The only indicator Fukuzawa found in support of the couple's royal status was the European wool coat worn by Kamehameha. Fukuzawa wrote his autobiography in 1897, nearly forty years after his visit to the island. A leading figure in Meiji-era Japan, Fukuzawa's star had risen, as had that of Japan, fresh from victory in its Chinese campaigns. Hawaiian independence, meanwhile, was under threat. The monarchy was overthrown in 1893; five years later, the islands were annexed by the United States, their sovereignty and independence lost. To what extent the superiority inherent in Fukuzawa's recollections was moulded by such developments cannot be

¹ Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 119.

² *Ibid.*, 117.

³ For discussion and examples of feather cloaks, see: Adrienne Kaeppler, *Hawaiian Featherwork: Catalogue Raisonné of pre-1900 Feathered-God Images, Cloaks, Capes, Helmets* (Berlin: Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2010).

known, but the significance of material things in both the demonstration and corroboration (or otherwise) of kingly status is certainly apparent.

A second incident involving another Hawaiian king, King David Kalakaua (b.1836, r.1874 – 1891), featured in Cannadine’s study of class in the British Empire, *Ornamentalism*, sheds further light on the inter-national currency of kingship in the late nineteenth century.⁴ At a party given by Lady Spencer in 1881, Prince Frederick of Germany took exception to the suggestion of his brother-in-law Albert Edward (Prince of Wales, later Edward VII) that the King of Hawaii should take precedence over the German crown prince. In justification, the British prince is reported to have said, ‘Either the brute is a king, or he’s a common or garden nigger; and if the latter, what’s he doing here?’⁵ While Cannadine argues that social class offered a separate hierarchy to race within the British empire through which affinities were found as much as difference, I cannot concur with his proposition that ‘this was, by the conventions of its time, a very *unracist* remark’ (original emphasis).⁶ Although the British prince enforced observation of Kalakaua’s status as king, this was despite his ethnicity not without reference to it. Race was still very much part of the equation, and for the German prince it was inconceivable that Kalakaua might be considered on par with a European monarch. At a time when a power vacuum (real or projected) could have significant consequences for a nation’s independence, the ‘restoration’ of the Meiji Emperor in 1868 may have offered a measure of legitimacy to Japan’s new government. However, being a sovereign monarch and being understood as one remained a complex matter and, as the statement of the emperor’s countryman Fukuzawa Yukichi suggests, this was a matter in which material things might play a significant role.

In the preceding three chapters, I have argued that tableware crafted for imperial use was intended to shape the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor,

⁴ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. Ridley provided a slightly different wording of this statement in her recent biography of Edward VII: ‘Either the brute is a King or he is an ordinary black nigger, and if he is not a King, why is he here at all?’ Noting that Edward accompanied the King to various engagements, Ridley suggested that the prince hoped to persuade Kalakaua to a British annexation of Hawaii: Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2012), 232.

⁶ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 8.

both as inheritor of an ancestral legacy and as a member of an international ruling elite. In this chapter I examine what happened when these objects were deployed, following their trajectories onto and beyond the imperial table. The first part of this chapter considers the success or otherwise of these objects within imperial banquets. Focusing on Western-style banquets held for visiting dignitaries of the highest rank—a former US President, British royal princes and the above-mentioned King Kalakaua—imperial tableware is returned to the wider assemblage in which it was used. Drawing on first-hand accounts, I consider whether imperial tableware was successful in articulating the sovereignty of the emperor to this elite international audience. The second part of the chapter explores the presentation of imperial tableware as gifts and its display in exhibitions, to reveal that items of tableware preserved their associations with the Meiji Emperor as they moved beyond the palace walls. The third part of this chapter considers the role played by imperial tableware in constructing the identity of Japan's emperors more broadly. Objects created for the Meiji Emperor reappeared on the tables of his successors: a material force that played a part in shaping nascent traditions.

Through an examination of these three aspects: the reception of imperial tableware in diplomatic banquets, its wider use within the Meiji era and its role across successive generations, this chapter follows the trajectories taken by objects as they became entangled in human encounters and memories. Much of the tableware discussed belongs to services already introduced. By returning these objects to the contexts they once operated within, some gaps between intentions held, roles played and impressions engendered become apparent. Perhaps not always successful in achieving those intentions revealed by their designs, individual pieces of imperial tableware continued to accumulate new meanings. Offering insights into the social lives of these objects, it is possible to discern how these everyday things were employed in the construction of the sovereign identity of the emperor of Japan, while also recognising some of the other values these objects held for contemporary audiences.

5.1 Dining with the Mikado

The Meiji Emperor (**Figure 5.1**) is accorded little by way of an active role in the archival records that describe the purchases of imperial tableware. While objects are detailed as made for the emperor's use, his own agency in willing such commissions and his interest or disinterest in their execution is not alluded to: an absence reflected in the preceding chapters. However in one respect at least, the emperor played a critical role. The banquets enacted at the imperial palace required not only objects, but accomplished performers. As both diner and host, the Meiji Emperor actively participated in the construction of his sovereign identity. This section will explore a selection of these banquets to examine how these occasions shaped foreign guests' perceptions of the sovereign they knew as the Mikado.

The role of imperial dining was not limited to constructions of sovereignty, however. The consumption of food by the emperor was also closely associated with his divine identity as descendent of the sun goddess, Amaterasu. During the *daijōsai*—the first harvest ritual conducted by an emperor—the emperor both offered and partook of food with deities, taking on, it is said, 'some kind of sacred power necessary to be king.'⁷ Usually held after the enthronement ceremonies, the Meiji Emperor's *daijōsai* was delayed until 1871. As a painting of the occasion implies (**Figure 5.2**), this communion was conducted without guests or spectators.⁸ The enactment of the emperor's position as sovereign, however, required an audience. With tables weighed down with silver and flowers, the spectacular banquets held across four rooms on February 11, 1889, for the promulgation of the Constitution not only revealed the munificence of the emperor to an audience of Japanese and foreign guests, but also engaged their complicity in the performance of the emperor's elevation among the hierarchies assembled.

⁷ Nicola Liscutin, 'Daijōsai: The Great Festival of Tasting the New Fruits, Some Aspects of its History and Meaning,' *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 5 (1990), 37. As Liscutin discusses, interpretations of this rite have varied in the pre- and post-war periods.

⁸ Nor did the Meiji Emperor attend a party held afterwards for foreign guests: Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, 'The Emperor of Japan as Deity (Kami),' *Ethnology*, 30.3 (1991), 213. See also: Uchikoshi, *Meiji Tennō*, 62.

Writing of the banquet between the Meiji Emperor and King Kalakaua in 1881, Armstrong observed ‘If the dinner had not been dreary it would have lacked the marked distinction of royal dinners throughout the world.’⁹ Some records, however, reveal a lighter side to the emperor. An early example of foreign cuisine within the imperial court, on October 2, 1871, Western food was served in the Enryōkan: committing the occasion to his diary, Kido Takayoshi wrote, ‘His Majesty appeared to be in excellent spirits and in good health—which moved me to tears.’¹⁰ In 1905, Sir Claude MacDonald noted that at a lunch given for the British fleet, ‘His Majesty chatted most amicably with all around,’ while jokes struck by Marquis Ito and Count Inoue ‘made this direct descendant of the Sun roar with laughter.’¹¹ MacDonald concluded, ‘though a Mikado, he seems very human.’¹² Such behavior may at times have been strategic. In 1891, the emperor dined with Czarevitch Nicholas on his warship, the *Pamiat Azova*. A week earlier, a Japanese policeman had attacked the Russian crown prince. Relations were more than strained. Nonetheless, the Russian minister stated he had never heard the emperor laugh so loud.¹³ Whether the emperor was truly relaxed or seeking to ease tensions cannot be known.

Just as the objects that sat upon his table carried layered and multi-faceted associations, the identity of the Meiji Emperor was equally complex. The living descendent of the sun goddess he was divine, but he could also bellow with laughter. It is not my intention to suggest that his sovereign identity was all that might be expressed as the emperor dined. However, it was this that positioned him among an international ruling elite and so could support renegotiation of Japan’s position within the hierarchy of nations. Offering three examples—the breakfast given to former US President Ulysses S. Grant in 1879, and banquets held for two British princes and the King of Hawaii in 1881—I examine the success of imperial tableware in constructing the emperor’s sovereign identity. These banquets have been selected for the significance of their guests. Although not then rulers, Grant

⁹ William N. Armstrong, *Around the World with a King* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1904), 75.

¹⁰ Kido, *Diary*, 2:82.

¹¹ Claude MacDonald as quoted in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 616.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For details of the incident, see: Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 448–58.

and the British princes belonged to the ruling elite of two powerful nations: a republic and a kingdom. King Kalakaua, meanwhile, was the first reigning sovereign to visit the Meiji Emperor; ruler of a non-Western country, his experience is particularly valuable. The banquets were presented in Western style and my analysis employs accounts written by the emperor's foreign guests. As such, I would first like to consider how such accounts reflected the changes taking place in Japan.

The vanishing picturesque

Like so many other European and American visitors to Japan during the Meiji era, Algernon Mitford (Lord Redesdale) was saddened by the changes he saw. He compared the imperial audience given to the Duke of Edinburgh in 1869 to later impressions:

But this particular Court ceremony was certainly something out of the common. It can never occur again. East and West were sharply defined. There were no cocked hats or gold-laced coats among the Japanese of those days. The Emperor and all his Court were living pictures out of the dark centuries.

The next time that I saw the Mikado was on the occasion of my second visit to Japan in 1873. He was sitting in the back of a barouche, surrounded by an escort of lancers, dressed, like himself, in European uniform. A modern of the moderns.

When I went for the third time, in 1906, with Prince Arthur of Connaught, his Majesty reminded me of that visit in 1869, when I acted as interpreter—but he was now surrounded by a Court in which the men were all the counterparts of European ministers, their breasts covered with stars and decorations from potentates great and small, and the ladies all wore tiaras and dresses from Paquin's! Alas for the vanishing of the Picturesque!¹⁴

¹⁴ Mitford, *Memories*, 2:500.

Suggesting the pace of change within the imperial court, these recollections also convey Mitford's nostalgia for something lost: a fairy-tale Japan, exotic and quaint in equal measure. It is a sentiment echoed by other foreign observers.

In 1879, John Russell Young wrote, 'we are in the presence of an old and romantic civilisation, slowly giving way to the fierce, feverish pressure of European ideas.'¹⁵ Such sentiments suggest imperialist nostalgia: the melancholy of the colonial power, which having promoted its own 'civilised' ways then mourns the changes wrought. Rosaldo has described such emotion in the following terms: 'agents of colonialism ... often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was "traditionally" (that is, when they first encountered it). The peculiarity of this yearning, of course, is that agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed ... people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed.'¹⁶ And yet, although the 'unequal treaties' codified disparity, Japan was not a colony, its imperial court was not coerced into dining in foreign style. The result of choices made within Japan in pursuit of Japanese ambitions, the changes at court were often displeasing to foreign eyes. Rather than reflecting capitulation to foreign ideals, these changes marked their appropriation.

The subversive potential of such transformation is suggested by a short passage in the memoirs of the Baroness D'Anethan, wife of Baron Albert D'Anethan, Belgian Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Japan between 1894 and 1910. Recalling an outdoor performance of the story of the forty-seven *ronin* that she attended in 1893, the Baroness wrote,

It was a picturesque sight, watching these dainty personages in their bright-coloured and graceful raiment glistening in the sunlight, appearing like butterflies from the seclusion of groves of feathery bamboos. To reach the undulating plains beyond they tripped across the stepping-stones and crossed the ancient bridges of stone, for all the world just like a willow-pattern plate, and to my prosaic English eye, this

¹⁵ Young, *Around the World*, 2:529.

¹⁶ Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia,' *Representations*, 26 (1989), 107–08.

first glimpse of the gentle, artistic beauty of Oriental life was a picture not easily forgotten.¹⁷

As decorative and superficial as the patterns on a willow pattern plate, D'Anethan's view of the people before her was tinted by a European fantasy of an exotic East (**Figure 5.3**). Porcelain and its imitators had been key to the construction of this 'picture not easily forgotten.' Portrayed as doll-like, child-like or faerie, challenging this image of difference may be considered a motivating factor in the transformation of the imperial court. When German doctor Erwin Baelz urged that the court's women retain their native dress, Ito Hirobumi dismissed him outright, replying that they would be 'regarded as mere dolls or bric-à-brac.'¹⁸ Inasmuch as it ever existed, the picturesque was not passively vanishing, but actively displaced. While the success of porcelain tableware in challenging such preconceptions would depend in part upon its audience, it is fitting that the same material that had nurtured fantasies of the picturesque was now employed such that sovereignty might prevail.

In truth, such changing realities proved less captivating to their foreign audiences than the 'living pictures out of the dark centuries.'¹⁹ While it might be assumed that dinner with an emperor would constitute a noteworthy occasion, descriptions of Western-style imperial banquets are often cursory at best. The wife of Hugh Fraser (British Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Japan between 1889 and 1894), Mary Crawford Fraser regretfully observed, 'One does not learn much of Japanese life at these feasts, which are, as far as their appointments go, for all the world like official dinner parties in Rome or Paris or Vienna.'²⁰ More interested in a picturesque Japan, it is unsurprising that Fraser and her peers wrote less fulsomely of dinners in Western style than those they felt to be 'traditional'. While a Western-style banquet at the palace might merit a few lines, the encounter with chopsticks had already emerged as one of a number of clichés of the

¹⁷ E. Mary D'Anethan, *Fourteen Years of Diplomatic Life in Japan* (London: Stanley Paul and Co., 1912), 38.

¹⁸ Baelz, *Awakening Japan*, 239.

¹⁹ Mitford, *Memories*, 2:500.

²⁰ Mary Crawford Fraser, *A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan: Letters from Home to Home* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1899), 1:33.

foreigner's experience by the end of the nineteenth century.²¹ Nonetheless, where court banquets are discussed, however briefly, an insight may be gained into their authors' perceptions of a world in flux and identities under negotiation.

A regal breakfast

Former President of the United States and hero of the American Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant (**Figure 5.4**) visited Japan in 1879 while travelling around the world with his wife, Julia Dent Grant. Preparations for Grant's reception began six months before his arrival and it was decided that he should be treated as a prince of the blood.²² Housed in the Enryōkan and lavishly entertained during their seventy-four day stay, Grant's party was treated to banquets both Western and Japanese in style. On 7 July 1879 they breakfasted with the Meiji Emperor at the Shiba Palace. Printed in Japanese and French, the menu included veal with mushroom puree, lamb cutlets with peas, and asparagus with butter sauce (**Figure 5.5**).²³

Grant's party included the chronicler John Russell Young, whose account of their two years overseas was carried by the *New York Herald* and later published.²⁴ Young was keen to describe Japan's traditional culture. Introducing a dinner in Nagasaki, he wrote:

During our visit to Nagasaki we took part in a famous dinner given in honor of General Grant, about which I propose to write at some length, because it is interesting as a picture of ancient life in Japan. In my wanderings round the world I am more interested in what reminds me of the old times, of the men and the days that are gone, than of customs reminding me of what I saw in France.²⁵

²¹ Fraser described other foreigners' accounts of Japan as follows, 'I have talked to people who had brought nothing away from Japan but the recollection of a waiting-maid and a tea-house, or one brain photograph of a short dark man dressed in unbecoming clothes. Others have seen a procession, or a dinner with chopsticks, or a missionary school, and keep all their lives one silly memory of the strangest country in the world.' *Ibid.*, 3.

²² For discussion of the Grants' visit, see Richard T. Chang, 'General Grant's 1879 Visit to Japan,' *Monumenta Nipponica*, 24.4 (1969).

²³ For the menu and some background on the banquet, see: Akiyama, ed., *Akiyama Tokuzō*, 20; Akiyama, ed., *Tennōke no kyōen*, 23.

²⁴ Young, *Around the World*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:484.

Arranged by Nagasaki's merchants, the dinner was played out in the style of a banquet with a feudal lord. Young is true to his word, offering an enthusiastic description of each course of this epic and epicurean feast. A banquet in Japanese style at the house of Yoshida Kiyonari, Japanese minister to the United States, is similarly addressed. Despite admitting he can say nothing of the food, Young's description of the dinner ranges over five pages, and reveals the pitfalls of offering 'picturesque' entertainments. As unintelligible as the Hawaiian feather cloak was to Fukuzawa, Young asserts that 'There is no plan, no form in a Japanese dinner.'²⁶ Meanwhile the women who served are declared to be 'so modest, so graceful, that you became unconscious of their presence,' becoming, 'as it were, one of the decorations of the dinner.'²⁷ Unconscious of the etiquette, Young sees no etiquette; dehumanized, the attendants compare favourably with servants at home who 'are personages with all the attributes of human nature.'²⁸ A happy experience for Young, and one he judged of interest to his readers, his account is self-assured in its underlying inequality. His report of the imperial breakfast at the Shiba Palace on 7 July 1879 is more concise, but equally revealing.

Young gave the following account of the breakfast at the Shiba Palace:

The Emperor received the General and party in a large, plainly furnished room, and led the way to another room where the table was set. The decorations of the table were sumptuous and royal. General Grant sat on one side of the Emperor, whose place was in the center. The Emperor conversed a great deal with General Grant through Mr. Yoshida, and also Governor Hennessy. His Majesty expressed a desire to have a private and friendly conference with the General, which it was arranged should take place after the General's return from Nikko. The feast lasted for a couple of hours, and the view from the table was charming.²⁹

Culturally familiar to himself and his readers, no further elaboration is deemed

²⁶ Ibid., 2:593.

²⁷ Ibid., 2:594.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 2:534.

necessary. However, even in this brief account, Young explicitly describes the table decorations as ‘royal.’ In contrast, describing a state banquet hosted by the King of Siam for Grant in Bangkok some months earlier, Young observed that ‘the service of the table was silver, the prevailing design being the three-headed elephant, which belongs to the arms of Siam,’ adding only that it ‘cost ten thousand pounds in England.’³⁰ While both accounts differ significantly from his dehumanizing and casual enjoyment of Japanese-style dinners, the tableware at the Japanese imperial banquet conveyed the royalty of his host.

A similar account of the breakfast is given in the memoirs of Julia Dent Grant. Noting that ‘The table appointments were superb,’ the former First Lady of the United States described the breakfast itself as ‘regal.’³¹ On this occasion, therefore, it might be judged that the items selected for the imperial table succeeded in articulating the sovereign position of their host. Indeed, Young later describes the hospitality that the Meiji Emperor granted their party as ‘so courteous, so thoughtful, so princely, so imperial.’³² Without further detail, it is not possible to connect these impressions to a particular service. In the case of the British princes who visited two years later, no such doubt is left as to the nature of the tableware used; their reaction, however, was somewhat different.

‘An exact facsimile’

Sons of the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, and grandsons of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert Victor (1864–1892) and Prince George (George V, *b.*1865, *r.*1910–1936) arrived in Japan 1881 (**Figure 5.6**). The princes were serving on HMS *Bacchante* as midshipmen and they cruised the world for three years visiting different countries, their diaries and letters later edited for publication.³³ As with Grant before them, the princes were invited to stay in the Enryōkan, and on October 26, 1881, they dined with the emperor in a newly constructed banqueting hall at the Akasaka Temporary Palace. While the party of Ulysses Grant were

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:245.

³¹ Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 299.

³² Young, *Around the World*, 2:565.

³³ Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante*.

impressed by the royal quality of the emperor's table, the British princes examined it closely. Already familiar with the objects they found, they read them as imitative.

Taking their places at Western balls and banquets, in Japan and overseas, the emperor's subjects were openly scrutinised by their foreign associates during the Meiji era. In November 1886, French novelist and naval officer Pierre Loti attended a ball held to mark the emperor's birthday at the Rokumeikan. His comment that 'The first European ball, held in the middle of Tokyo, was quite simply a monkey show,' is echoed by the satirical cartoon of his compatriot Georges Bigot that channels theories of biological and social evolution to depict a Japanese couple in Western attire reflected in the mirror as a pair of monkeys (**Figure 5.7**).³⁴ Such sentiment is also present in Japanese satire. Bigot's drawing was likely inspired by an earlier Japanese cartoon from the *Marumaru Chimbun* of 1879 that satirised its countrymen as apes aping the West following lectures by E. S. Morse in Tokyo on Darwinian evolution.³⁵ Other prints by Japanese artists, meanwhile, show similar cultural borrowings in a different light, whether it be a Japanese woman wearing a bustle in front of her Western tea service (**Figure 5.8**) or a restaurant in Tokyo famed for its Western cuisine (**Figure 5.9**). Enjoying a broader consumption than the objects and locations that they depicted, the aspirational qualities of these images reveal a gulf of difference in perception of cultural modes among those in Japan.³⁶ For many Europeans and Americans in Japan, such behaviour among the Japanese was no more than ersatz. Loti belittled the ball at the Rokumeikan, stating: 'This contemptible imitation is certainly interesting for the visiting foreigner to observe, but it reveals that this people has no taste and is absolutely lacking in national pride.'³⁷ Derided as mimicry, the intentions of the Japanese elite who participated in Western-style balls and banquets were often lost in their perception, whether by foreigners or sometimes their countrymen. Such criticism of the emperor is less

³⁴ Pierre Loti as quoted in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 394.

³⁵ Meech-Pekarik, *World of the Meiji Print*, 182–84.

³⁶ On the woodblock prints known as *kaika-e*, see: Suzuki Keiko, 'Yokohama-e and Kaika-e Prints: Japanese Interpretations of Self and Other from 1860 through the 1880s,' in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, eds. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

³⁷ Pierre Loti as quoted in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 394.

readily evident, but the objects on his table provide the British princes with the means for indirect comment.

The banquet for Prince Albert Victor and Prince George at the Akasaka Temporary Palace was attended by Japan's princes of the blood, councillors and ministers, as well as representatives of the different foreign legations.³⁸ The British princes described it as follows:

The dinner (to which all the ministers were invited) was served in a large hall that had never been used before ... There were a few huge china jars between five and six feet high, each containing a tree in flower, standing in the corners and by the sides of the doors, and with the exception of these there was no other furniture of any kind in the room beyond the dining-table and chairs, and the effect of this was cool and pleasing. The service of gold plate on the table was made by Garrard, and was the same which we had seen at Marlborough House before it was sent out some years ago. Its only ornaments are the imperial dragon and the chrysanthemum—the Mikado's crest. These flowers also are the only ones which are used for the decoration of the table. The dessert service of Minton china was an exact facsimile of the blue one with roses in plaques at Marlborough House.³⁹

No other account is as specific with regard the tableware employed upon the imperial table. Six years before, the dinner service by Garrard (e.g. **Figure 3.1**) and the Minton dessert service (**Figure 3.29**) were part of a dining assemblage purchased from British retailers by the Imperial Household Ministry. The princes were evidently aware of some part of this, having inspected the Garrard service before it left London. Commissioned from Royal Warrant holders and, in the case of the Sèvres-style Minton dessert service, closely echoing a service belonging to the British royal family (the service with 'roses in plaques at Marlborough House' indicating that commissioned to mark the wedding of the Prince of Wales, **Figure 3.47**), in Chapter 3 I argued that these objects were acquired for their sovereign

³⁸ Meiji Jingū Zōeikyoku, ed., 'Kenpō Kinenkan,' 1216; Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 5:563–64.

³⁹ Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante*, 2:39.

associations. Glossing over their own debts to France, to the British royal princes the Minton dessert service on the emperor's table was merely a copy: a 'facsimile' of that owned by their father.

Other aspects of the princes' description of the palace and its denizens reveal both familiarity and unease with the material culture they encountered. The uniforms worn at court sparked a similar recognition:

All the chamberlains were in European court dress, which had been made at Poole's, and was just the same as the English civilian uniform in dark blue, with gold braid on the front, wristbands and lappets of the coat pockets, the only difference being that instead of our oak leaf and acorn in the gold lace, the chrysanthemum was substituted.⁴⁰

It is unclear whether the princes were amused, flattered or discomforted by these material connections to their own court, but it seems reasonable to suggest that an exotic and other Japan fitted better with their worldview than accepting this country and its emperor on equal terms. Their account continues:

We could not help thinking how very much better the Japanese gentlemen would have looked in their own old court suits, which it seems such a thousand pities that they have abandoned, ... The dignity and the picturesqueness of their national court dresses, would add immensely to the effect of court receptions and ceremonies if it were again revived.⁴¹

Visitors to Japan often voiced such a desire, and yet even amid the apparent backlash against things Western in the late 1880s, the emperor, empress and court attendants retained their Western-style attire for key functions.⁴² Being picturesque was not the same as being equal.

Nonetheless, the princes paid due respect to their host, dressing and behaving appropriately. Ready for the dinner, they shifted into uniforms, and as the banquet drew to a close, they returned the courtesy shown them: 'His Majesty [the Meiji Emperor] proposed the health of the Queen, which we all drank standing,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2:30–31.

⁴¹ Ibid., 2:31.

⁴² For the empress' clothes, see: Hastings, 'Empress,' 678.

and then Eddy proposed that of the Mikado, in which all joined in a similar manner.⁴³ Their diaries more broadly indicate some regard for the country and its sovereign, but the form chosen for the banquet offered a measure of insurance in this regard. When Young dined in Japanese style, he could see no form or etiquette; by adopting the etiquette of his guests, the Meiji Emperor bound them into a performance for which they knew the rules. In following these rules, his guests accorded him respect, even if it may not have been entirely heartfelt.

The honoured guest

While Britain and the US were among the key nations with whom Japan sought to renegotiate trading treaties, Hawaii was seeking Japanese support. King David Kalakaua (**Figure 5.10**) visited Japan as part of his circumnavigation of the world in 1881. Kalakaua was the first ruling monarch to undertake such a journey, and the first head of state to visit the Meiji Emperor. Although the king originally intended to travel through Japan incognito, the Japanese were advised of his arrival and it was determined that he would be the emperor's guest.⁴⁴ Kalakaua's visit held political motivations. Conferred extraterritoriality in Japanese ports through a trading treaty, in some ways Hawaii held the upper hand.⁴⁵ However, Kalakaua also saw that Japan had much to offer. During his stay, the king proposed an Asian Federation under Japanese leadership for strength against Europe, and sought a marriage between his niece Princess Ka'iulani and the Japanese prince Yamashina Sadamaro.⁴⁶ Despite the seeming incongruity of an Asian monarch receiving a

⁴³ Prince Albert Victor and George V, *Bacchante*, 2:39–40.

⁴⁴ The fullest description of the trip is given by Armstrong: Armstrong, *Around the World with a King*. For an alternate narrative drawing on Kalakaua's diaries, see: Marumoto Masaji, 'Vignette of Early Hawaii-Japan Relations: Highlights of King Kalakaua's Sojourn in Japan on His Trip around the World as Recorded in His Personal Diary,' *Hawaiian Journal of History* 10 (1976). As context, an appraisal of Kalakaua's foreign policy and contemporary pressures on Hawaiian autonomy is given by Schweizer: Niklaus R. Schweizer, 'King Kalakaua: An International Perspective,' *Hawaiian Journal of History* 25 (1991).

⁴⁵ Marumoto, 'Vignette,' 62.

⁴⁶ The federation was proposed during a private meeting between Kalakaua and Meiji on March 11, see Kunaichō, ed., *Meiji Tennō ki*, 5:294–98; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 347–49. Inoue Kaoru subsequently informed Kalakaua that Prince Yamashina would not be able to marry Princess Ka'iulani as he was already betrothed: Letter from Inoue Kaoru to King Kalakaua, February 2, 1882, Bishop Museum Archives: MS KC Letters I-K Box 3.36.

Polynesian monarch in European fashion and the difference in the balance of power, the Meiji Emperor received his Hawaiian guest with the same courtesy later advanced to the British princes. On March 14, 1881, Kalakaua dined with his host.

The luncheon given to King Kalakaua was recorded by William N. Armstrong. Born in Hawaii to American missionaries, Armstrong returned to Hawaii as Attorney General, accompanying the king on his voyage as Commissioner for Immigration. Professedly derived from notes taken at the time, *Armstrong's Around the World with a King* was not published until 1904: six years after Hawaii's annexation and thirteen after Kalakaua's death.⁴⁷ Often contemptuous of King Kalakaua, Armstrong states that delay was necessary 'in order to permit a freedom of narration.'⁴⁸ The following extract is taken from Armstrong's description of the banquet:

The table furniture was of heavy gold plate, valued, it was said, at \$200,000. The royal dragon appeared on each piece. Fifteen large ornamental pieces, with most graceful outlines, were placed along the central axis of the table. Great vases filled with flowers were arranged around the room, producing a most attractive effect. ... The menu was printed on silk in both Japanese and English. There was no hint of Japanese diet; it was a European dinner in all of its details. Nor were any of the guests dressed in their native costumes; all were in European military and diplomatic costumes.

The description of the table setting given by Armstrong reveals more than the munificence and splendour of the imperial table. Host and guests alike wear European attire, and the banquet is carried out in European fashion. Conspicuously decorated with dragons, it seems likely that the silver Armstrong refers to was in fact the dinner service made by Garrard that would soon be used for the visit of the British royal princes (**Figure 3.21**). Regardless of the geographic origins of his guest,

⁴⁷ Although widely used for details of the king's journey, there are inaccuracies in Armstrong's account. For example, Armstrong states that Kalakaua was invested with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Rising Sun, but Marumoto has shown that the king was actually awarded the Grand Cordon and Star of the Order of the Chrysanthemum—the highest decoration employed by the Japanese court at that time: Marumoto, 'Vignette,' 59–60.

⁴⁸ Armstrong, *Around the World*, 4.

the banquet was served in European style, and the table set with the same items employed for visiting European royalty.

While material practices of hospitality served to construct Meiji as sovereign, as his honoured guest, they performed the same for King Kalakaua. As well as sketching the seating arrangement in his diary as noted in Chapter 1, Kalakaua recorded that, 'the Emperor lead [sic] me to the Luncheon Hall where he placed me at his right at the table.'⁴⁹ Kalakaua was treated with the courtesy due to a king, and recognised it as such. Even the delivery of dishes was choreographed to highlight the equality between the monarchs. As Armstrong notes, 'A servant stood behind each monarch, and the dishes were served by placing them at the same instant before them, so that there could be no suggestion of preference in rank.'⁵⁰ As the guest of the emperor, Kalakaua was invited to stay in the Enryōkan, from where he wrote in a letter to his chancellor, Charles C. Harris:

Our Reception has been most cordial and pleasant with the Emperor. He extended the hospitality of being his guest during our stay in the City of Tokio occupying the same buildings that General Grant did when he was here and other distinguished guests Prince Henri of Germany and the Duke of Genoa.⁵¹

That the hospitality accorded to him was on a par with that afforded 'other distinguished guests' made an impression on Kalakaua. While Armstrong was content to muse over the possibility of Meiji and Kalakaua sharing 'a common strain,' King Kalakaua was touched by the dignity of the reception afforded him, and regarded the visit a success.⁵²

As Chapter 1 described, the banquet is a shared performance that combines people, things and objects. The visit of King Kalakaua reveals how these elements combined not only to construct the Meiji Emperor as sovereign, but also his guest. While similar treatment was accorded to the British royal princes visiting some

⁴⁹ Entry for March 14, 1881, from 'Travel Journal of King David Kalakaua,' Bishop Museum Archives: MS MC Kalakaua 2.3.

⁵⁰ Armstrong, *Around the World*, 74.

⁵¹ King David Kalakaua as quoted in Richard A. Greer, ed., 'The Royal Tourist - Kalakaua's Letters Home from Tokio to London,' *Hawaiian Journal of History* 5 (1971), 76.

⁵² Armstrong, *Around the World*, 75.

months later, their response was different: shaped by their preconceptions of what Japan and its emperor should be and their own sense of place within the world. Kalakaua does not mourn the changes that have taken place in Japan, rather he is gladdened by the dignity of his reception. It would also be incorrect to disregard such occasions as superficial attempts to impress Western eyes. Imperial banquets in Western style were given for Japanese dignitaries and guests of other nations, Hawaii and later Siam.⁵³ Taking his place as host alongside the world's ruling elite, the emperor participated in performances that constructed his own sovereignty, while honouring his guests.

5.2 Beyond the Imperial Table

While his predecessors had been largely cloistered within the imperial palace in Kyoto, mobility and visibility were defining aspects of the Meiji Emperor's reign. The restoration was far from peaceful, and clashes among political rivals would continue into the early years of the Meiji era.⁵⁴ Many in Japan simply had little idea who the emperor was, let alone why they should pay him allegiance, and the regional hierarchies exploited by the Tokugawa shogunate had engendered lasting divisions. The imperial progress or *junkō* was one means employed to establish the new political centre.⁵⁵ Having moved from Kyoto to Tokyo—formerly the shogunate's powerbase Edo—the emperor undertook six major imperial tours through the regions between 1872 and 1885 (**Figure 5.11**), drawing together a fragmented country. As he travelled the length and breadth of Japan, the emperor also needed to eat, dress and sleep. Some of the personal objects used by the Meiji Emperor were gifted to local people: sake cups, wine glasses, even clothing. As with the ceramics discussed in Chapter 2, these personal things were treasured for the associations they held. In the years that followed, towns and villages celebrated

⁵³ For Western-style menus served to the emperor's ministers in 1875, and the Siamese prince in 1887, see: Akiyama, ed., *Tennōke no kyōen*, 15, 33.

⁵⁴ For these tensions and the ritual employed in their resolution, see: John Breen, 'The Imperial Oath of 1868: Ritual, Politics, and Power in the Restoration,' *Monumenta Nipponica* 51.4 (1996).

⁵⁵ On the significance of *junkō*, see: Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 42–55. For a materially- and visually-oriented discussion, see: Kasumi Kaikan Shiryō Tenji linkai, ed., *Meiji Tenno roku dai junkō* (Tokyo: Kasumi Kaikan, 2012).

these historic visits with commemorative exhibitions.⁵⁶ While records of such exhibitions offer a unique insight into the objects used by the emperor in these early years of his reign, they also suggest the changing meanings that these objects might hold. Once used to sip sake, a small lacquer cup might become an heirloom preserved for generations, featured in a local exhibition and photographed for posterity (**Figure 5.12**).

The banquets hosted by the Meiji Emperor were assemblages of people and things: their trajectories briefly enmeshed, they then had the potential to separate once more. Drawing on Gell's conceptualisation of distributed personhood, by which human agents 'were not just where their bodies were,' with objects serving as 'components of their identities as human persons,' together with conceptions of the social lives of things and object biography, the objects employed at these banquets may be understood as possessing the potential to carry imperial associations and indeed influence into new spaces.⁵⁷ Travelling even further than the emperor himself, these objects joined alternate assemblages. Given as gifts and publicly exhibited, in this section I explore how imperial tableware took on new roles and meanings as it too progressed beyond the palace walls.

Objects of memory and association

Guests to imperial banquets in the Meiji era did not leave only with memories. Produced in large numbers for presentation, bonbonnières filled with confectioneries and shallow saucers for drinking sake became material reminders of these occasions. While bonbonnières were typically made of silver, porcelain examples are also known and so this wider class of objects merits consideration. Sake cups given at imperial banquets, meanwhile, were typically made of porcelain instead of the usual lacquer, and featured designs similar to those featured on *kinri*-style tableware. Sometimes designed to mark a specific event, these small items carrying the imperial crest conveyed the emperor's munificence, and

⁵⁶ For example, see: Ueda Shidankai, ed., *Meiji Tennō hokurikutōkai gojunkō gojūnen kinen shashinchō* ([Japan]: Ueda Shidankai, 1928).

⁵⁷ Quotations from Gell, *Art and Agency*, 21. See also: Appadurai, 'Introduction;' Kopytoff, 'Cultural biography.'

autobiographical accounts reveal that they became treasured keepsakes for Japanese and foreign guests alike.

The presentation of dinner services by sovereign monarchs or other rulers served as an expression of amity that could also showcase a nation's craftsmanship. While East Asian porcelain could be found within the diplomatic gifts exchanged in Europe during the seventeenth century, in the early eighteenth century the development of local manufactories under royal patronage enabled gifts of domestically produced porcelain to secure a new level of prominence as tools of diplomacy.⁵⁸ By the early decades of the nineteenth century, 'porcelain gifts were ubiquitous in the European kingdoms;' a matter aptly illustrated by the dinner services presented to the Duke of Wellington following his success at Waterloo, which came from Sèvres, Meissen, Vienna and Berlin.⁵⁹ As Walton has noted, such gifts, 'added a prestige to the interior spaces in which they were displayed, similar to that conveyed by the wearing of ribbons on formal court dress. ... [representing] in tangible form evidence of special royal favour and esteem.'⁶⁰ Elevating donor and recipient alike, Meiji-era ceramics were employed to similar ends. Following their visit to Japan in 1879, former US President Ulysses Grant and his family received a number of gifts from the emperor including a dinner service of porcelain decorated in underglaze blue made by Seiji Kaisha: the service with animals in vines discussed in Chapter 4 (**Figure 4.1**).⁶¹ Dubbed 'the Mikado service' is clear that these objects have retained their association with the Meiji Emperor, but as yet other examples of gifts of complete dinner services remain rare. Smaller gifts of bonbonnières and sake cups, meanwhile, became a fixture of life at the Japanese court.

⁵⁸ On the role of porcelain in European diplomacy, see: Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, ed., *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710–63* (New York: Yale University Press/Bard Graduate Center, 2007); Guy Walton, 'Diplomatic Gifts of Porcelain: Objects of Prestige,' in *Along the Royal Road: Berlin and Potsdam in KPM Porcelain and Painting 1815–1848*, ed. Derek E. Ostergard (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 1993).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶¹ A separate service of Western-style tableware made by Kyoto potters including Kanzan Denshichi and Kiyomizu Rokubei was commissioned for the Grants by the Prefectural Government of Kyoto, see: Kyōtofu, ed., *Meiji no kyōyaki*. An outbreak of cholera during the Grants' visit, however, meant they were not able to visit Kyoto as planned.

The practice of giving small bonbonnières at imperial banquets is thought to have begun around the beginning of the third decade of the Meiji era (1887–1896). The earliest dated imperial bonbonnière is a silver jar-shaped piece engraved with *karakusa* arabesques and an imperial chrysanthemum crest (**Figure 5.13**).⁶² This bonbonnière was created to mark the celebration of the 2549th anniversary of the accession of Japan's first emperor, Jimmu: February 11, 1889, the day selected for the Promulgation of the Constitution. The use of metal bonbonnières might be considered a foreign import. However, the presentation of sweets to guests was also part of Japanese hospitality. At the age of three, the young Mutsuhito (later the Meiji Emperor) moved from the house of his maternal grandfather to the imperial palace in Kyoto. His father, Emperor Kōmei, gave him a box of dainties, and Mutsuhito made similar gifts in return.⁶³ In the gifting of bonbonnières to banquet guests, a mutually intelligible material practice was initiated.

The impact these small objects had on their recipients is illustrated by personal memoirs. For the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of the Meiji Emperor and Empress Shōken in 1894, bonbonnières were created in two designs: an oval lidded box with crane and turtle decoration, and a crane and turtle on a rock sculpted in the round (**Figure 5.14**). These bonbonnières echoed the silver centrepieces of cranes and turtles some four-foot high that were placed in front of the emperor and empress.⁶⁴ Auspicious designs for longevity in East Asian tradition, with the crane additionally symbolizing conjugal felicity, the turtle and crane were appropriate choices for the occasion. Materially, the bonbonnières acknowledged European practice of celebrating the silver anniversary. Pleased with her miniature, the Baroness D'Anethan recorded: 'Towards the end of dinner, beautiful little silver cranes were handed round, a gift to each honoured guest. They were lovely works of art, and will be charming souvenirs.'⁶⁵ Mary Crawford Fraser, attending as wife of the head of the British legation, was equally captivated by her gift, commenting: 'Beside the plate of every guest stood a miniature crane, with a tortoise at his feet,

⁶² Sensu Tadashi, *Kōshitsu no kyōen to bonboniēru* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2005), 42.

⁶³ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 31.

⁶⁴ Fraser, *Diplomatist's Wife*, 2:430.

⁶⁵ D'Anethan, *Fourteen Years*, 59.

exquisitely worked in silver and enamel, forming the cover to a casket of bonbons. These were the Emperor's gifts to his guests, and certainly mine is a curio that I should be sorry to part with.'⁶⁶ Fraser used an illustration of this small piece to close the second volume of her Japanese memoirs (**Figure 5.15**). Captioned simply, 'My silver crane,' the object and the event it recalled held an added poignancy for Fraser. Her husband, Hugh, died that summer and she returned to Britain soon after.⁶⁷ The crane and turtle motifs selected to decorate the covers of her memoirs five years later may have been taken from the oval bonbonnières distributed on this occasion (**Figure 5.14** and **Figure 5.16**).⁶⁸

Sake cups were employed in an analogous fashion within the space of the imperial banquet. Similarly small and equally finely made from materials including metal, tortoiseshell and (most frequently) porcelain, diners were presented with the cup they had used as a memento of the banquet. Baroness D'Anethan records how they were given almost surreptitiously:

January 6, 1896.—A lunch took place at the Palace for the Chefs de Missions and a large number of Japanese. A. [Baron Albert D'Anethan] brought back another of the little sake cups. These sake cups, which are used during the lunch, are of the finest porcelain, adorned by the Imperial arms in gold. They are greatly treasured by the invited guests, to whom they are presented after the banquet, being, as a rule, placed in the carriage or 'rickshaw of each individual, and found there when they drive away from the Palace doors.⁶⁹

Her use of the term 'another' reveals that the receipt of such small tokens was a regular occurrence in the life of her ambassador spouse. By the mid 1890s, porcelain sake cups had become a frequent fixture of imperial banquets.

D'Anethan's account is supported by the recollections of Mary Crawford Fraser, who was equally delighted by these small imperial gifts. Fraser connected

⁶⁶ Fraser, *Diplomatist's Wife*, 2: 430.

⁶⁷ D'Anethan, *Fourteen Years*, 75.

⁶⁸ It appears that guests received two bonbonnières: the crane-shaped bonbonnière given at dinner and the second bonbonnière given as guests left, see: *Ibid.*, 59–61.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

this practice with the local custom of sending delicacies back with a guest. Describing the behaviour of visiting Japanese children (circa January 1894), she wrote:

... they take a bonbon out of politeness, but it does not enter into their code of manners to be eager about food or to partake of it before strangers. They would, until quite lately, have expected to have their portion of the feast packed up in pretty boxes and put into their carriages, or sent to their houses after they had gone home. A reminiscence of this custom has brought me a charming collection of Imperial wine-cups; for whenever H [Hugh Fraser] lunches or dines with the Emperor, one of these is put into the carriage wrapped up in Palace paper. They vary a little in design, but are always of transparently thin white porcelain decorated with gold chrysanthemums.⁷⁰

In this way, Fraser suggests that the presentation of these little cups represented an adaptation of existing customs of hospitality. The porcelain sake cup enabled the performance of hospitality in accordance, albeit in adapted form, with local expectations. Meanwhile, the designs chosen for these cups left no doubt about their imperial associations.

Before the Meiji era, flattened sake saucers were commonly made of lacquered wood. Such vessels were also used in the imperial palace during the Meiji era: for example, a red-lacquered sake saucer with gold chrysanthemum crest presented to lady-in-waiting Awataguchi Ayako is said to have been for the emperor's daily use (**Figure 5.17**). However, as Fraser and Crawford testify, many of the sake cups given as gifts by the imperial household during the Meiji era were made from porcelain. The motifs that were used to decorate these cups share more in common with ceramic tableware than Edo-period sake vessels. In July 1892, the emperor and empress visited the Tokyo residence of Marquis Nabeshima Naohiro (1846–1921) for celebrations marking the building's completion and presented a pair of porcelain sake cups and a pair of wine glasses to the marquis.⁷¹ As well as

⁷⁰ Fraser, *Diplomatist's Wife*, 2:193–94.

⁷¹ Meiji Jingū, ed., *Meiji bunka e no izanai: oyukari no shinajina ni miru Meiji no shihō* (Tokyo: Meiji Jingū, 1997), 73.

the imperial crest, the sake cups feature long-tailed birds and rising clouds in gold (**Figure 5.18**). These motifs are very similar to those used on the *kinri*-style tableware of the Meiji era (**Figure 2.39**). In 1874, a set of three tortoiseshell sake cups with designs of cranes in flight and both naturalistic and stylized chrysanthemum flowers (**Figure 5.19**), was given to former *daimyō* Date Munetada together with two bolts of fine silk in respect of his 83rd birthday.⁷² Despite the difference in material, the motifs used on these objects are also similar to the designs found on imperial tableware. Integrated into imperial material culture through their design, these associations were carried with them as the objects were dispersed.

Both the bonbonnière and sake cups presented to guests possessed (and conferred) exclusivity in their ownership, serving as material testament to an individual's courtly dealings. The emperor's Japanese guests valued these items as much as his guests from overseas, though perhaps in different ways. Describing the New Year's Banquet of 1905, which was served in Japanese style, Baelz noted that guests were expected to take away with them the sake cups carrying the imperial arms and elements of the table decorations. 'It is strange,' Baelz observed, 'when the Emperor has risen to show that the feast is over and has left the hall, to see all or most of the elaborately dressed visitors take white linen cloths out of their pockets, wrap up these treasures and depart—cocked hat in one hand, spoils in the other.'⁷³ Noting that his servants were delighted if they might receive any small morsel from the 'mountain of good fortune' that was the imperial table, Baelz suggests an even greater potency for items with imperial associations.⁷⁴

Baelz' account is supported by the actress Higashiyama Chieko, who offered the following recollection of bonbonnières received by her family at imperial banquets:

To myself at that time, the Meiji Emperor seemed like a god. My father and adoptive father sometimes went to the palace to dine with the emperor, on those occasions they went out with a wrapping cloth of

⁷² Ibid., 74.

⁷³ Baelz, *Awakening Japan*, 334.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

fine white silk placed in the pocket of their court attire. Later, presented before my eyes were all the objects they had wrapped in this [cloth] before departing [from the palace]. The bonbonnières—silver caskets with a chrysanthemum crest, tied with a red and white cord—were incredibly beautiful. On the occasion of my marriage, I humbly received one of these boxes. I still have it to this time.⁷⁵

Connecting memories of her parents, her own wedding and her awe of the Meiji Emperor, Higashiyama's words underline the potential of these objects to carry imperial associations beyond the banqueting table, where, gradually wrapped with other memories and associations, these finely-crafted things became cherished possessions.

Sake cups and bonbonnières have since remained part of the material traditions of the Japanese court. Bonbonnières continue to be produced in inventive forms and are given at key occasions. In 1959 a box with a pair of mandarin ducks emblematic of marital fidelity was presented on the occasion of the present emperor's nuptials (**Figure 5.20**). A similar design was used for a bonbonnière to mark the marriage of his son, the crown prince, in 1993 (**Figure 5.21**).⁷⁶ Sake cups also continue to play a part in the marking of important occasions in the life of the imperial family. In 1990, Kōransha was commissioned to produce porcelain sake cups decorated with long-tailed birds carrying branches of flowering plum blossom for the celebration of the enthronement of the present emperor (**Figure 5.22**). A decade later, the company they made cups decorated with a chrysanthemum crest and leaves to mark the tenth year of his reign (**Figure 5.23**). Unsurprisingly, both categories of object have become highly collectible.

While gifts of entire dinner services were a significant undertaking, sake cups and bonbonnières served as table accessories that could be distributed to all guests at imperial banquets of the Meiji era. As they left the palace, these finely crafted items made strong impressions on those who received and inherited them. Laden with imperial associations and personal memories, they served as the

⁷⁵ Higashiyama Chieko as quoted in *Me de miru Nihon-shi: Meiji Tennō no seiki* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1974), 130. Author's translation.

⁷⁶ *Sensu, Kōshitsu*, 21, 25.

materialisation and material reminder of the emperor's munificence as host. The continued production and enactment of these objects and customs speaks to the development of imperial traditions, a topic that the final part of this chapter shall return to in due course. However, even when produced in their thousands, the sake cups made to mark imperial events could only be given to a defined few: those who attended events or made some other contribution. On rare occasions, however, imperial tableware also took on a more public role. Offered up as a model for Japanese craft, in 1885 the tableware of the Meiji Emperor was placed on display.

Exhibiting imperial ceramics

The Imperial Household Ministry played a valuable role in the public promotion of Japanese arts through the creation and support of Imperial Household Artists, but there were also instances in which objects commissioned for use within the palace were openly displayed. As noted in Chapter 3, the objects Garrard made for the Japanese emperor were exhibited in London before their despatch. This display revealed the accomplishments of Britain's silversmiths while also encouraging the British press to comment upon the Meiji Emperor's willingness to adapt to foreign ways. However, imperial tableware was also publicly displayed within Japan, as a request made to the Imperial Household Ministry in 1885 reveals. Borrowed from the table of the emperor, imported ceramics were displayed at an exhibition intended to stimulate and promote domestic production. Identifying the objects displayed sheds further light on their origins, while also revealing the changing role they played. Publicly associated with the Imperial Household Ministry and by extension the Meiji Emperor, these objects projected a certain image of the emperor, while also setting a standard for developing domestic production.

Japan's first *National Industrial Exhibition* was held in Ueno Park in 1877 with the aim of improving Japanese crafts and manufactures. Followed by a second *National Industrial Exhibition* in 1881, plans to hold these exhibitions on a regular cycle faltered with the planning of the third exhibition, which was originally slated for 1885, but postponed until 1889. In its place, the *Silk, Ceramics and Lacquer Competitive Exhibition (Kenshi orimono tōshikki kyōshinkai)* was held in Ueno Park, Tokyo, from April 1 to June 20, 1885. Ceramics displayed were limited to vessels for

eating and drinking marking a deliberate shift away from the art ceramics that had previously dominated at exhibitions.⁷⁷ Exhibits were submitted by companies and workshops from across Japan, including many of those encountered in this thesis: Seiji Kaisha, Kōransha, Kanzan Denshichi.⁷⁸ However, the imperial tableware displayed was not submitted by its makers, but by the Imperial Household Ministry.

On March 7, 1885, less than a month before the exhibition was due to open, Chief Secretary of the exhibition, Shinagawa Yajirō, wrote to the Imperial Household Ministry. Shinagawa asked whether the Ministry would submit a service of imperial ceramics for inclusion in the reference hall of the exhibition. A copy of Shinagawa's letter is preserved in the 'Reikiroku' of the Imperial Cuisine Division together with an unsigned list of items, but there is no further correspondence to indicate whether the petition was successful.⁷⁹ However, the same list of objects can be found in the exhibition report among the reference ceramics where they are attributed to the Ministry.⁸⁰ The objects exhibited comprised pieces from a dinner service, a coffee cup and teacup (**Table 5.1**).

Described in both the Ministry and exhibition listings as 'French-made with a gold paulownia crest,' I would claim that this denotes the dinner service with paulownia crest previously discussed in this thesis that was reproduced in Arita (**Figure 3.60**).⁸¹ The listing details a single dinner, soup and dessert plate, tureens in three sizes and so on, indicating that the items displayed constituted a representative sample and also corresponding closely with listings given in documents related to the commissioning of the dinner service with the paulownia crest by Seiji Kaisha in 1880 (**Table 5.2**). However, such a composition of a service was not in itself unusual, and other possibilities have been suggested. Mentioning

⁷⁷ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, 'Kyōshinkai shinsa hōkoku: Daiyonku daiichirui tōki' in *Meiji zenki sangyō hattatsushi shiryō*, vol. 10(3), ed. Fujiwara Masato (Tokyo: Meiji Bunken Shiryō Kankōkai, 1964), 333–34. For further discussion, see: Hanai Hisaho, 'Bijutsu to sangyō no wakare michi: Sanchishugi no gesai to Waguneru no "bijutsu no yoyo",' in *Meiji Taishō jidai no Nihon tōji: Sangyō to kōgei bijutsu*, ed. Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai ([Japan]: Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai, 2012).

⁷⁸ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, 'Kyōshinkai,' Chapters 4 and 5.

⁷⁹ Copy of letter from Head Organiser to Imperial Household Ministry, March 1885, from 'Reikiroku,' 1879–1885, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3059.

⁸⁰ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, 'Kyōshinkai,' 333–34.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Author's translation.

the French-made dinner set exhibited by the Imperial Household Ministry, Hanai included an image from the report (**Figure 5.24**) and offered the caption ‘French-made dinner set with gold crest,’ implying that this was the Ministry’s exhibit.⁸² However, this image is featured among a number of such illustrations included in the report for comparison of object shapes, the paulownia crest specified is not apparent, nor is the image titled in any way as relating to the Ministry. The explanation of the exhibits, however, provides details that help identify the Ministry’s submissions. The French service is described as possessing ‘a pure-white body and perfect forms onto which a French-style vine motif is drawn in gold,’ while ‘on each vessel in the centre or in one place on the outside, a paulownia crest [lit. medal] is drawn in thin outline.’⁸³ If the palmette border may be taken as ‘a French-style vine motif,’ the identification of these objects as belonging to the service with the paulownia crest is secured.

The coffee cup and teacup from the Ministry’s submission are evidently from a different service. Listed as ‘English-made with a chrysanthemum crest,’ this could describe items from the Minton coffee and tea service commissioned in 1875 (**Figure 3.29**), but in itself is not conclusive. Fortunately, the explanation of the exhibits has further details. Commenting that the coffee cup has a cylindrical shape, the form of the teacup is compared to the trumpet-shaped flower known as morning glory.⁸⁴ A similar comment was made in order documents for the Minton service, which specified ‘morning glory’ and ‘cylindrical’ shaped cups.⁸⁵ The exhibition report also notes that the original service comprised 42 pieces: the number of settings ordered from Mortlocks. Lastly, the exhibits are described as pink in colour with detailed painted patterns and gold-coloured lustre, featuring an imperial chrysanthemum crest with two crossed flags.⁸⁶ Thus securely identified as

⁸² Hanai, ‘Bijutsu to sangyō,’ 172.

⁸³ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, ‘Kyōshinkai,’ 347. Author’s translation.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 347–48.

⁸⁵ Confirmation of receipt of tableware, Imperial Cuisine Division, May 10, 1876, from ‘Goyōdoroku kōnyū,’ vol. 11, 1877, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 68979. Author’s translation.

Source 12.

⁸⁶ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, ‘Kyōshinkai,’ 348.

the Minton service commissioned for imperial use in 1875, the exhibition report offers further insights into these objects.

Identified as the dinner service with paulownia crest, the listing is clear that the objects in question were not the pieces made in Japan by Seiji Kaisha, but were made in France. Commenting that this ‘French-style dinner set of white porcelain with gold crests’ was ‘the product of a factory in Paris, France,’ the text of the report supports the assertion previously made by Ōkuma and advanced in this thesis that the models for the dinner service with paulownia crest were from Sèvres, its factory on the edge of Paris at Saint Cloud.⁸⁷ Noting that the pieces are from a service for sixty persons made in 1873, the text sheds new light on the service’s origins, which are as yet unrecorded.⁸⁸ Valuable though this information is, in considering the trajectories taken by these objects and the role that they played beyond the imperial table, the act of their display is also significant. Used to encourage domestic industry, they also gave visibility to the Meiji Emperor as consumer.

Displayed within the Reference Hall of the 1885 exhibition, these examples of imperial tableware were presented as models for emulation. Although both services were reproduced in Arita by Seiji Kaisha (**Figure 3.60** and **Figure 3.30**), the objects chosen for display were those made overseas. In each case, the judges’ report praised the quality and whiteness of the ceramic body, but the design was also presented as holding lessons for Japanese craftsmen. Describing the French-made dinner service with paulownia crest, the report states:

As a rule, tableware is most beautiful when it is neat and clean like these vessels, otherwise it is necessary only to decorate the border leaving the interior white or alternatively to decorate with gold or blue in a simple manner. Our workmen sometimes apply many colours to every vessel, which may be thought un-tasteful. This is not only true for Western tableware, but also for the tableware of our own country. Such

⁸⁷ Ibid., 347. Author’s translation. Ōkuma, ‘Kyūchū yōshokushi kō,’ 5.

⁸⁸ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, ‘Kyōshinkai,’ 347.

vessels as these should be good models for the production of vessels for eating and drinking.⁸⁹

Held up as a model not only for Western-style tableware, but also for tableware in Japanese style, the restraint of this imperial service's design was offered as a lesson in taste.

Previously seen only by the emperor's guests and those working in the palace, the exhibition of these placed them under public scrutiny. Many visitors would have seen these objects, but without their observations it is not yet possible to know whether viewing these objects affected their perception of the emperor. However, the exhibition report does reveal subtle ways in which these objects were used to situate the Meiji Emperor. Listed first among the exhibits in the Reference Hall, and also discussed first within the explanation of the exhibits, the tableware of the emperor is placed above the reference exhibits submitted by the other Ministries and Prefectures: the political hierarchy mapped out within the exhibits. The selection of objects from the best factories overseas also highlights the emperor's possession of cosmopolitan cultural capital. In contrast, objects belonging to Tokugawa Yoshiakira, eighteenth head of the Owari branch of the Tokugawa clan, comprised tea jars and tea bowls of Old Seto ware.⁹⁰ Describing the imperial tableware displayed, the report of the judges speaks to the institution of the imperial house itself. The decoration of the Minton coffee wares is 'resplendent.'⁹¹ Even the execution of the imperial crest serves as a reminder of nation, for its 'close resemblance to the design of the gold coin of our country' (**Figure 5.25**), while specification of the scope of the services alludes to the size and grandeur of imperial banquets.⁹² In the selection and discussion of objects, the Meiji Emperor is described through the objects he used.

During the early years of the Meiji era, pieces of the Meiji Emperor's tableware were occasionally publicly displayed. These occasions provoked and facilitated wider consideration of the emperor's material identity. The display of the

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 339–40.

⁹¹ Ibid., 348. Author's translation.

⁹² Ibid. Author's translation.

Garrard service in London in 1876 led the Times to comment that the emperor was seeking to become 'like any king or emperor of the West.'⁹³ Featuring pieces from imported European services, the 1885 craft exhibition in Ueno Park presented a model for industry while simultaneously constructing an image of a monarch in control of cosmopolitan cultural capital. This image was reiterated more recently by the 2000 exhibition *Kyōen* held at the Sannomaru Shōzōkan, which focused on tableware for Western banquets. No longer presented as models for industry, these objects retain potency through their association with the Meiji Emperor and the light that they shed upon this critical time in the cultural history of Japan's imperial house. In the next section this agency shall be followed into subsequent generations as the objects created for the Meiji Emperor served as models for the tableware of his successors, continuing in their work in constructing the sovereign identity of Japan's emperor.

5.3 Ceramics in Succession

The move to the Meiji Palace in 1889 heralded changes to the management of tableware orders within the Imperial Household Ministry. In the first half of the Meiji era, orders were handled by the Supplies Division, who negotiated with suppliers in response to the requests of the Imperial Cuisine Division. From 1890, the Imperial Cuisine Division took over procurement of tableware.⁹⁴ As a consequence, from that time orders for tableware cease to appear within the Supplies Division's purchase records: the *Goyōdoroku*. These years were also significant for the makers of imperial tableware. Having witnessed the closure of his workshop in 1889, Kyoto potter Kanzan Denshichi passed away in 1890. In Arita, Kawahara Chūjirō and Tezuka Kamenosuke—key members of Seiji Kaisha—died in 1889 and 1890 respectively; founding member, Tsuji Katsuzō, also withdrew from the company in 1889. Although the company survived a few years more, it shifted course.⁹⁵ Against such a background, it might be reasonable to assume that imperial

⁹³ 'Plate for the Mikado,' 6.

⁹⁴ 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

⁹⁵ This history is discussed in Chapter 6.

tableware changed at this time. However, many of the objects created in the early Meiji period retained a very real presence on the imperial table in the years, decades, even the century that followed. Both in the provision of tableware for the crown prince and in the setting of the state-banqueting table, ceramics developed for imperial use in the early Meiji era provided a material template for subsequent generations.

The handover documents transitioning orders for tableware from the Supplies Division to the Imperial Cuisine Division position two specific services within the material practices of the court. An internal Ministry document from January 1891 recording reserve pieces Seiji Kaisha wanted to sell noted that they comprised ‘ceramic vessels decorated in blue for use at the usual imperial table as well as ceramics with gold paulownia motifs for use at banquets given by the emperor.’⁹⁶ Listed in more detail in the supporting correspondence, the tableware decorated in blue described as that for the emperor’s general use appears to have been that featured in the 1875 designs discussed in Chapter 2. Meanwhile, the service with paulownia motifs used for banquets hosted by the emperor can be identified as the dinner service with paulownia crest discussed in Chapter 3. Highlighted somewhat by chance, further records and material objects reveal that these two services were employed on the tables of Meiji’s successors, the material core to new traditions of imperial dining.

Creating a crown prince

In 1891, Seiji Kaisha offered to sell the Imperial Household Ministry items of tableware that had been produced as reserves to insure against possible breakages during transit. The Ministry’s internal document notes that these included porcelain vessels decorated in underglaze blue for the daily use of the emperor. Items specified in Seiji Kaisha’s attached lists include tableware with imperial crest and mallow motifs. From this description, the everyday tableware of the Meiji Emperor in 1891 can be considered to follow the designs first implemented in 1875 and discussed in Chapter 2 (**Figure 2.36** and **Figure 2.37**). Therein, I examined how these

⁹⁶ Document for internal circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, January 29, 1891, from ‘Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,’ 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

objects (which were developed from Edo-period models) connected the emperor to his imperial past, while also linking him to the empress and empress dowager who were allotted similar tableware. A decade later, this cohort was expanded to include the emperor's son and heir: Haru no Miya (**Figure 5.26**).

In terms of the material realisation of the crown prince's role during the Meiji era, to date much attention has focused on the palatial residence constructed for his use in 1909: the Tōgūgoshō in Akasaka (**Figure 5.27**). Subsequently deemed too extravagant for this purpose by the Meiji Emperor and now used for state guests, the residence is noted for its resplendent neo-Baroque design incorporating Japanese motifs (**Figure 5.28**).⁹⁷ The tableware commissioned for the young prince's use at the time of his confirmation as heir, however, presents a contrasting aspect of the material construction of his role and identity. Examining archival records that discuss tableware created for the prince reveals a material culture in transmission.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, patterns established in 1875 for the tableware of the *mitsu gosho* (emperor, empress and empress dowager) were followed through the early Meiji era. Without access to later purchase records it is difficult to confirm what happened thereafter, particularly as these objects did not typically feature makers' marks. However, order documents from February 5, 1887, reveal the persistence of these patterns and the replenishment of the objects depicted therein. The value of these documents lies in the explicit connections they draw between motif and individual: as noted above the dishes for the emperor are described as 'imperial crest and mallow flower motif,' those for the empress dowager are 'imperial crest and tortoiseshell motif,' and dishes for the empress feature the 'imperial crest and clouds in waves motif.' However, further dishes were included among these orders: a set of Japanese-style tableware described as featuring the 'imperial crest and crane motif.' This order is marked for the use of Haru no Miya.⁹⁸

Son of the concubine Yanagihara Naruko, Haru no Miya (also known as Prince Yoshihito) was born on 31 August 1879. Two sons born to the emperor

⁹⁷ Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority*, Chapter 9.

⁹⁸ Requests for tableware, February 5, 1887, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 2, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69291. Author's translation. **Sources 30 to 33.**

previously died in infancy. Despite an apparently weak constitution, Haru no Miya survived to become his father's heir: the Taishō Emperor. Raised in the house of Nakayama Tadayasu, his great-grandfather and the maternal grandfather of the Meiji Emperor, Haru no Miya moved to the palace in 1885.⁹⁹ On 31 August 1887, the ninth birthday of the prince by Japanese reckoning, Haru no Miya was confirmed as the child of Empress Shōken. The occasion was marked by a banquet in Japanese style attended by palace dignitaries. The day was a happy one, and the Meiji Emperor poured sake for his son, the empress and the empress dowager. Two years later he would be confirmed as crown prince.¹⁰⁰

The purchase records of February 1887 detail an extensive service of tableware in Japanese style to be ordered from Seiji Kaisha for the use of Haru no Miya. Totalling 262 yen 12 sen, the order included small food bowls, dishes and cups, as well as larger bowls and lidded vessels. The order was placed on the same day that Seiji Kaisha was also requested to supply Japanese-style tableware for the emperor, empress and empress dowager (collectively summarized in **Table 5.3**).¹⁰¹ In each case, the quantities ordered are irregular, suggesting replenishments to an existing body of objects. This is also the case for the tableware for Haru no Miya, suggesting this was not the earliest commission of tableware for his use. The price of each item is the same regardless of who it was for, suggesting consistency among the objects. However, there are also differences in the objects ordered that merit consideration.

Each order includes a selection of small pieces for the table: tea bowls, soup bowls and such like. These are followed by larger objects: flattened bowls, deep bowls and lidded vessels with specified measurements. These only feature on the orders made for the emperor and Haru no Miya. In contrast, dessert plates decorated in blue or polychrome enamels are only listed for the emperor, empress and empress dowager. In Chapter 4, based on dimensions given in other records, I

⁹⁹ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 320–21, 397.

¹⁰⁰ Kokaze Hidemasa, 'The Political Space of Meiji 22 (1889): The Promulgation of the Constitution and the Birth of the Nation,' *Japan Review* 23 (2011), 135, 136. See also: Mohl, *Am Japanischen Hofe*, 85–86; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 415.

¹⁰¹ Requests for tableware, February 5, 1887, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 2, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69291. **Sources 30 to 33.**

argued that such pieces were in fact dessert plates with flattened rims in Western style. These do not appear to have been ordered for the prince. Lastly, a quantity of small dishes and drinking cups were ordered for the Meiji Emperor alone. In this way, the dishes ordered for Haru no Miya corresponded broadly with those for the everyday use of the *mittsu gosho*, but differed in some respects. While his order did not feature any Western-style dessert plates, he did share certain objects in common with his father that were not ordered for the empress or empress dowager: larger bowls and lidded vessels. As replenishments, any conclusion may only be tentatively drawn, but comparison with other orders may support an analysis of the material practices of each in the future. For the purposes of the present study, however, it is clear that tableware was employed to draw Haru no Miya into this inner circle of the imperial family.

The pattern described for the prince's use in these records is listed simply as 'imperial crest and crane motif.'¹⁰² The subsidiary pattern is not specified making identification difficult, but surviving designs and objects suggest that these items also followed the precedent of Edo-period *kinri* porcelains. Decorated with clouds and cranes in blue, a design for a dish held by the Tsuji family shows the distinctive blank central well of *kinri* porcelains (**Figure 5.29**). However, while each of the 1875 designs was marked for their respective user in the lower right corner, this corner has been carefully cut away on the design for the dish with cranes. Several examples among the tableware surveyed also feature cranes with the imperial crest: some of these may have been made for the use of Haru no Miya. In the Tsuji collections, a mis-fired bowl with broken foot-ring is decorated with flying cranes, interlocking lozenges and chrysanthemum crests (**Figure 5.30**). A similar bowl (**Figure 5.31**), this time with added overglaze enamels, features decoration of cranes and mallow: the flower depicted on the Meiji Emperor's tableware (**Figure 2.36**). Among the collections of Toraya, crane and mallow motifs can be found on a larger lidded vessel, bowls and dishes, as well as being reproduced in gold on a sake cup (**Figure 5.32**).¹⁰³ Without further records it is difficult to conclusively state

¹⁰² Ibid. Author's translation. **Source 33**.

¹⁰³ See also: **Survey 3**, TY001, TY042 and TY047 to TY053.

which, if any, of these designs was used for Haru no Miya, however given the care taken in their decoration and their similarity to other works of the Meiji era, it seems probable that some of these items were ordered for the prince's use.

While certain material correspondents of the 1887 purchase records for tableware for Haru no Miya remain elusive, these archival records reveal one means by which the young prince was created as Meiji's heir. Japanese in style and commissioned alongside tableware for the *mittsu gosho*, it seems that the prince's tableware also followed the design principles of Edo-period *kinri* porcelains: a suggestion supported (though not yet confirmed) by surviving objects. In this way, a new generation of the imperial family was ushered into the material practices that helped shape the identity of his father, the Meiji Emperor. Everyday objects for the emperor's table, the *kinri*-style tableware already looked back to an imperial past. Commissioned for the use of his heir, these vessels assumed their place in the imperial succession.

In service to the state

It was not only the *kinri*-style imperial tableware that set a model for future generations. The dinner service with paulownia crest also continued to be produced into the twentieth century with different companies in Arita working to the same designs. Fujitani observed that many of the traditions of modern Japan were developments of the Meiji era.¹⁰⁴ Here I examine one such tradition in its material form: the state banquet service as featured in Mainichi Shinbunsha's 1999 publication, *Kyūchū no shokki* ('Court Tableware'). Made of white porcelain with a gold palmette border, this service can be recognised as a descendant of the dinner service with paulownia crest. While its Meiji-era origins may already be understood in part, the material reality of such apparent continuity has yet to be elucidated. Considering the particular role and accumulating associations of this service, the power of these objects as an agent within the creation of this tradition can also be considered. Used at the imperial table over successive generations, this service has

¹⁰⁴ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, 9–18.

continued to play a role in the performance of imperial hospitality beyond the Meiji era.

Published in 1999, *Kyūchū no shokki* features table settings used at that time including that for a dinner held in honour of a state guest (**Figure 5.33**). The foliate-rimmed soup plate features an abstracted palmette border in overglaze gold. At its centre is a sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum crest, also executed in gold. Both the border design and overall form are the same as those found in the dinner service with paulownia crest, discussed in Chapter 3 and again in this chapter (**Figure 3.60**). The only significant difference is the crest: the imperial chrysanthemum instead of the paulownia. As such, this image invites reflection on the apparent continuity between the Meiji era and recent times, but also highlights potential for change. Shown together with cutlery, serving dishes and a menu, this near-contemporary table setting also demands consideration of the use of these objects. In the absence of similar examples from intervening 87 years, it would be unwise to draw too steady a line between the material practices of the Meiji era and those of the end of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, this example implies the continuing role of imperial dinner services developed during the Meiji era. Examining further evidence for this continued production, I will also consider the how the dinner service with paulownia crest was used during the Meiji era.

Based on imported originals, the dinner service with paulownia crest appears to have first been made within Japan in the 1880s. As noted above, the French originals for this service are said to have been made in 1873.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the earliest mention of the service in terms of a Japanese commission was in 1880, when imported samples were discussed.¹⁰⁶ Although not commissioned at that time, evidence can be found for repeated orders for items from the service during the 1880s. On 11 December 1884, a request was made for 15 soup plates, 2 dinner plates, 9 dessert plates, 10 bread plates and 5 flat dishes of 'Imari ware with an

¹⁰⁵ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, 'Kyōshinkai,' 347.

¹⁰⁶ Draft request (2 versions), Tezuka Kamenosuke to Supplies Division, July, 1882, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 139 and ㊦ 18.

imperial crest and gold patterns,' to be made by Seiji Kaisha.¹⁰⁷ In February 1888, 2 dinner plates, 2 soup plates and a serving plate with a 'gold paulownia motif' were commissioned from Seiji Kaisha.¹⁰⁸ Detailing a few pieces here and there, these orders reveal a service that was actively used and gradually replenished. The commission of a new dinner service was a costly undertaking. However, with component parts that could be supplemented and replaced, the assembled nature of the dinner service with paulownia crest supported, and perhaps encouraged, its continuing use within the court.

The absence of purchase records for tableware within the *Goyōdōroku* from the 1890s onwards presents a challenge in terms of tracing the trajectory taken by this service. Surviving objects, however, not only attest to its sustained production, but also reveal both continuity and change in its design. Unlike the Japanese-style imperial tableware, these Western-style vessels carry company marks. As well Seiji Kaisha and Tsuji, the marks of Kōransha and Fukagawa Seiji can be found (**Figure 5.34** and **Figure 5.35**). The chronologies of these companies attest to continuing production. Established in 1894, Fukagawa Seiji only began to receive imperial orders from 1910, fixing their productions to the very end of the Meiji era onwards.¹⁰⁹ Some changes to the design can be also discerned among the items surveyed. While all feature the palmette border, only Seiji Kaisha's works carry the paulownia crest (**Figure 3.60**), others using the sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum. A few of these carry the personal mark of Fukagawa Chūji (**Figure 5.35**), founder of Fukagawa Seiji. Fukagawa Chūji passed away in 1934 meaning that this change must have taken place by that date, though it could be earlier. Such variations aside, the objects produced by the different companies show a remarkable degree of uniformity in their designs. The clue to this lies in some of the early order records, in particular the recurring phrase '*mihon no tori*': 'as per the sample.' Retained by companies in Arita or dispatched from Tokyo, existing pieces provided the reference for new additions. In this way, uniformity was created among the service

¹⁰⁷ Request for objects, Imperial Cuisine Division, December 11, 1884, from 'Goyōdōroku kōnyū,' vol. 22, 1884, Archives of the Imperial Household Ministry: 69241. Author's translation.

¹⁰⁸ Request for objects, Imperial Cuisine Division, February 22, 1889, from 'Goyōdōroku,' vol. 1, 1888, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69299. Author's translation.

¹⁰⁹ Ōkuma, 'Meijiki no Fukagawa Chūji.'

as a whole even as objects were made at different times and by different companies.

While *Kyūchū no shokki* is able to state that the service featured is that used for dinners for visiting state guests, it is more difficult to make such a declaration for the dinner service with paulownia crest during the Meiji era. As has been acknowledged, from the records available, it is difficult to state precisely which dinner service was used when. In the accounts of dinners given to the British royal princes and the King of Hawaii in 1881, the silver-gilt service commissioned from Garrard in the 1870s was used. Other than its display at the 1885 exhibition, the first clear statement with regard the use of the dinner service with paulownia crest comes from the 1889 handover documents.

On December 22, 1889, the Head of the Imperial Household Ministry's Supplies Division, Omi Yoshinaga, wrote to Itsutsuji Yasunaka, Lord Steward of the Imperial Cuisine Division, regarding the management of budgets for Western-style tableware and kitchen implements. Passing responsibility from the Supplies Division to the Imperial Cuisine Division, the letter notes that the objects in question were ordered in response to the 'shortage of existing Western-style tableware for banquets in the Hōmeiden.'¹¹⁰ Subsequent documents detail a large order for silver and cutlery, glassware and gold-patterned porcelain, the last of which was to be made by Seiji Kaisha. Described in the records as 'Hizen-made ceramics with gold paulownia motifs,' these replenishments included pieces from the dinner service with paulownia crest.¹¹¹ When Seiji Kaisha subsequently offered to sell reserve stock at a discount to the imperial household, reference was again made to 'ceramics with gold paulownia motifs.' Here also the Ministry's internal document describes these objects as 'for use in imperial banquets.'¹¹² As such, it can now be confirmed that the dinner service with paulownia crest was routinely used for

¹¹⁰ Letter from Head of Supplies Division to Lord Steward of Imperial Cuisine Division, December 22, 1889, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

¹¹¹ Order summary and request for objects, Imperial Household Ministry, June 1889, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

¹¹² Document for internal circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, January 29, 1891, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

imperial banquets in the banqueting hall of the newly constructed Meiji Palace around 1890. With a large order made for replenishments made in June 1889, it is tantalising to consider that the dinner service with paulownia crest might have been the service employed for the banquet marking the Promulgation of the Constitution a few months before.¹¹³ Included only as blank discs within the paintings of this occasion (**Figure 1.54**), this cannot yet be confirmed. It is clear, however, that the gold service with paulownia crest was a principal service for the court as it started its new life in the Meiji Palace, fulfilling much the same function that it would over a hundred years later.

Other elements of the dinner service featured in *Kyūchū no shokki* may also be traced to the Meiji era. Among the records of the Imperial Cuisine Division is a document recording the commissioning of new silver tableware between 1902 and 1904.¹¹⁴ Included with this record are designs for trays, fruit stands and other vessels decorated with imperial crests and scrolling arabesques (**Figure 5.36**). The descendants of these designs can be found among the banqueting service for state guests employed in 1999 (**Figure 5.37**). Previously included in orders for the dinner service with paulownia crest, porcelain fruit stands and lidded tureens do not appear among the 1999 state banqueting service as recorded by *Kyūchū no shokki*. Supplanted by silver equivalents, these vessels no longer have a place on the table. Even where there is apparent continuity, adaptation can also be found.

Silver found its place on the imperial table during the Meiji era, just as porcelain had done two centuries before. The objects made from these materials became part of the imperial legacy: a legacy employed and adapted by future generations as suited their needs. In Chapter 3, I proposed that the Sèvres models for the dinner service with paulownia crest served to position the Meiji Emperor among an international ruling elite. As the trajectories taken by these objects and the objects modelled upon them continued beyond the Meiji era, they took on new roles and gathered new meanings. Where once these objects had referenced

¹¹³ Request for objects, Imperial Household Ministry, June 28, 1889, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

¹¹⁴ Copy of a document for internal circulation, Imperial Cuisine Division, July 2, 1903, from 'Reikiroku,' 1898–1903, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3063.

European monarchs, they are now more closely associated with the Meiji-era imperial court. Through the fact of their existence and in their use as models, these objects played an active role in shaping those that followed. As material things they connect the past with the future, both enabling and driving the formation of new traditions of imperial display that continue to mould the identity of Japan's emperors.

5.4 Vessels of Meaning and Association

The Tōzan Shrine can be found on the side of a hill in Arita, Kyushu. Crossing over the railway line that bisects the shrine steps, visitors encounter a *torii* gate made of porcelain. Dedicated to the shrine in 1888, this *torii* gate is the first expression of the shrine's close association with a craft that has been a mainstay of local industry since the Edo period. Looking back over the town, the names and logos of Kōransha and Fukagawa Seiji are conspicuous among the roofs and chimneys of this heartland of Japanese porcelain. Drawing closer to the shrine and peering beneath its eaves, a pair of dinner plates decorated with a golden palmette border and central chrysanthemum crest can be seen above the doorway (**Figure 5.38**). Dedicated to the shrine in 1955 by Fukagawa Akira, Head of Fukagawa Seiji, these plates were modelled on Sèvres originals reproduced in Arita since the early Meiji era. Encapsulating the multiple roles and trajectories taken by such imperial things, these plates are at once dinner plates, vessels of sovereignty, the material force of tradition, the pride of their makers, objects of display and of veneration.

While Chapter 1 introduced the broader material and social context for imperial tableware, here it has been possible to examine the diverse material practices within which this tableware was employed. Not limited to its use upon the imperial table, items of ceramic tableware were also given as gifts and publicly exhibited. Whether on the table, on display or privately treasured, these objects retained a close association with the Meiji Emperor, shaping his image and mediating his identity in a variety of contexts. The meanings inscribed into the objects through processes of design and commission sometimes differed from those generated by its viewers, and objects also gathered new meanings as they

lived out their own biographies. The dinner services and material practices created in the early Meiji era have also had their own legacy on successive generations. Whether in the use of sake cups and bonbonnières, or in the reproduction and reiteration of certain services and designs, these objects have not only been employed to shape the identity of the Meiji Emperor, but also his successors. In this it is possible to see the role of material things in the development of new Japanese court traditions.

Key among the resources consulted in the preparation of this thesis were the collections of the Arita workshops that produced imperial tableware during the Meiji era and twentieth century. Retained as reference samples, some of these objects kept by these companies are now displayed in company museums, honouring not only the emperor for whom they and their kin were commissioned, but also the companies that produced them. In this and the preceding chapters, little has been said of the agency of the makers of these objects. With designs taken from imported models or objects of the past, and conforming to the same patterns even if produced by different workshops, perhaps it seems that there is little scope for such agency. However, the makers of imperial tableware were far from passive in this process. In the final chapter of this thesis, I shall explore how the ceramic tableware they crafted to articulate the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor was also critical in the construction of their own identities. Just as the Meiji Emperor occupied a new role following the restoration of the imperial house, with new audiences to engage, so too did the craftsmen who produced his tableware. Whether fixed to the front of the local shrine or despatched to Tokyo for use in imperial banquets, the objects they made articulated their relationship with this unique patron.

Chapter 6: Making *Kunaishō Goyōtashi*

During the Kanbun era, the Edo merchant Imariya Gorobei stayed in Arita for two years under the commission of the Lord of Sendai; [there] he had Tsuji Kiemon produce porcelain, which the Date clan presented to the palace and the Sentōgoshō, after which [Imariya] procured porcelain for the emperor's meals at court, offered through the Nabeshima clan from that time onwards. In Anei 3 [1774] Tsuji Kiheiji V was appointed *Hitachi no Daijō*; reaching the Meiji era, Tsuji Katsuzō became *kunaishō goyōtashi* and supplied the porcelain for the emperor's meals.¹

Terauchi Shinichi, *Arita jigyōshi*, 1933

Writing a history of porcelain in Arita for the compendium of Japanese ceramics *Tōki zenshū* in 1933, Terauchi Shinichi concisely explained the origins of Arita's imperial porcelains. A merchant from the capital was sent to Arita, where a local craftsman, Tsuji Kiemon, made porcelain that his lords could then present to the imperial palace and that of the retired emperor. That merchant then procured further porcelain for the emperor's meals, and in 1774 Tsuji's descendant received the official name *Hitachi no Daijō*. Without break or stutter this history continues into the Meiji era, where Tsuji Katsuzō found himself appointed *kunaishō goyōtashi*—Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry—supplying porcelain for the emperor's table as his ancestors had done before him. Having died just four years before Terauchi wrote this passage, Tsuji Katsuzō was already written into an unbroken narrative of inherited tradition. And yet, Tsuji Katsuzō was also born into a time of great change. For Eliza Scidmore, writing in 1898, Tsuji Katsuzō was 'a bit of old Japan and real old Hizen that these modern times cannot produce or

¹ Terauchi Shinichi, *Arita jigyōshi*, vol. 15 of *Tōki zenshū*, ed. Ono Kenichiro (Tokyo: Tōki Zenshū Kankōkai, 1933), 12. Author's translation.

imitate.’² Rather than considering Tsuji a relict of some bygone age, here it is my aim to uncover what part Tsuji Katsuzō played in both the changes and the continuities he experienced during the Meiji era, following him as he found his own place in a changing world.

While company histories of varying scope have been written for Kōransha, Fukagawa Seiji and also Seiji Kaisha, such a history has yet to be written regarding the Tsuji house during the Meiji era.³ However, when considering the production of imperial tableware, Tsuji’s contribution stands out. Tsuji Katsuzō (1848–1929) was the eleventh of the Tsuji lineage. During the Edo period, as Ōhashi’s careful research has demonstrated, his ancestors furnished the imperial court in Kyoto with porcelain tableware decorated in underglaze blue.⁴ Tsuji himself was a founding member of the Arita ceramics companies Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha, who supplied much of the ceramic tableware used on the table of the Meiji Emperor. While the Tsuji lineage spans both Edo and Meiji in terms of imperial ceramics, Tsuji Katsuzō also stands at the juncture between the production of ceramics for export and domestic use in the Meiji era.

Although the structure followed will be broadly chronological: dealing with Tsuji’s family legacy, the companies he participated in and his application to use the title Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry, the aim of this chapter is not purely biographical. Tsuji did not simply inherit his role; while his family’s legacy was a potent one, it was not unassailable. For Tsuji to continue to take a share of imperial patronage, he would have to adapt and work. Even as he secured it, the nature of that patronage and the nature of his role as an imperial craftsman would change nonetheless. Using archival records and material objects, I will establish how Tsuji actively developed his role and identity. By drawing out Tsuji’s role as an imperial craftsman, but also one actively involved in the changing craft landscape of

² Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore, ‘Porcelain Artists of Japan,’ *Harper’s Weekly*, January 22, 1898, 87.

³ Nakayama, *Arita yōgyō*; Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*; Fukagawa Itta, ed., *Fukagawa Seiji of Meiji: Meiji no tōki ishō* (Saga: [Fukagawa], 2000); Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*. For discussion of the Fukaumi brothers who worked alongside Tsuji at Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha, see: Yamada Hiroki, ‘Kindai yōgyō to no sōgū: Arita no meikō Fukaumi Suminosuke Takeji kyōdai,’ in *Meiji Taishō jidai no Nihon tōji: Sangyō to kōgei bijutsu*, ed. Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai ([Japan]: Meiji Taishō Jidai no Nihon Tōjiten Jikkō linkai, 2012).

⁴ Ōhashi, ‘Shōgunke kenjō igai,’ 3–44.

export, expositions and domestic development, this chapter ties my thesis back into the existing scholarship on Meiji era ceramics, positioning this form of imperial patronage within its wider context. This chapter also gives space to the craftsmen who, exerting apparently little input over the development of designs, have been somewhat set aside in the preceding chapters. In those chapters I demonstrated how the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor was constructed through material things, here I turn that lens back on the artisan: in making the objects that made the emperor, Tsuji Katsuzō forged his own identity as an imperial craftsman.

6.1 By Descent or by Decree

In 1871, Tsuji Katsuzō inherited a unique legacy. As he became the head of the Tsuji family and its porcelain making workshops in Arita, he also succeeded to the prestigious role of supplying tableware to the imperial palace. That palace, however, was no longer in Kyoto. Moved to Tokyo following the Meiji Restoration, the material practices of the court were gradually being adjusted to meet the demands of the Meiji Emperor's new role. That same year, prefectural lords ceded their domains to the imperial house amid new structures of governance. Craftsmen saw existing lines of patronage irrevocably altered, even as they were dealing with the prospect of new global markets for their wares. As the palace adjusted to its new surroundings, titles Tsuji had inherited became redundant. The sections that follow examine the value of Tsuji's inheritance in the construction of his identity as an imperial maker, before exploring the changing nature of official forms of imperial patronage in the Meiji era and their intersections with craft, itself a fluid concept.

Tsuji Katsuzō: a legacy inherited

Just as new designs for Japanese-style tableware for the emperor, empress dowager and empress issued in 1875 looked to Edo-period models for their courtly motifs, entrusting imperial commissions to Arita's Tsuji Katsuzō offered a connection to the material practices of the past. As Chapter 2 discussed, the Tsuji family played a prominent role in the production of porcelain tableware for the imperial court during the Edo period, a role recognised through awards of title, rank

and, for a time, monopoly. For Tsuji Katsuzō, eleventh of the Tsuji lineage, this legacy and its narratives were key to the construction and articulation of his own identity as an imperial craftsman.

Tsuji Katsuzō was born at the end of the Edo period, in the twelfth month of Kōka 4, or January 1848.⁵ He was twenty years old when the Meiji Emperor was instated as sovereign-ruler. The eldest son of Tsuji Kiheiji X, Tsuji Katsuzō became head of the Tsuji lineage following his father's death in 1871.⁶ Living through the reigns of both the Meiji Emperor and the Taisho Emperor, Tsuji Katsuzō died in 1929—the fourth year of the Shōwa era—at the age of 81.⁷ A photographic portrait of Tsuji reveals a calm expression that little belies the political and social upheaval that impacted his life (**Figure 6.1**). Playing a significant part in the development of his hometown of Arita, he acted as mayor for the town between 1909 and 1923, and served as founding member of the companies Kōransha (est. 1875) and Seiji Kasha (est. 1879).⁸ A key player in Arita's ceramic industries, a maker and workshop-head, like many craftsmen of the Meiji era today he is accorded little more than a paragraph in a glossary of names.⁹

One of the few historic descriptions of Tsuji Katsuzō given in English relates to his participation in the Centennial International Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876.¹⁰ The Japanese commissioner, Shioda, wrote a catalogue of the Japanese ceramics exhibited in Philadelphia that were acquired by the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). The translated manuscripts

⁵ Tsuji Katsuzō (辻勝蔵) also used the name Tsuji Tsuneakira (辻常明).

⁶ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, and 'Tsuji-ke jidaisho,' Meiji-era (1868–1912), both Tsuji Collection. **Sources 38 and 37.**

⁷ Tokyo National Museum et al., eds., *Arts of East and West from World Expositions 1855–1900: Paris, Vienna and Chicago* ([Japan]: NHK et al., 2004), 315. Therein, Tsuji's birth year is given as 1847, but as the twelfth month of Kōka 4, this would be January 1848 in the Gregorian calendar.

⁸ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. **Source 38.**

⁹ For examples, see: Tokyo National Museum, *Arts of East and West*, 315; Kume Bijutsukan, *Kume Kunitake Keiichiro to Arita shikiten: Hizen no seibi o sekai no sangyō ni, shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Kume Bijutsukan, 2013), 19.

¹⁰ A further, contrasting, description is given by Scidmore in her 1898 article. Seemingly unaware of Tsuji's work for the imperial household, Scidmore denounced 'this most charming old man' as master of 'counterfeiting kilns' that made imitation Nabeshima wares: Scidmore, 'Porcelain Artists,' 87, 88.

prepared by the Japanese were expanded by Franks and published in 1880, but it is in Shioda's text that we find a description of Tsuji.¹¹ He wrote,

In the period Kwambum [sic. Kanbun] or about A.D. 1665, Daté, the prince of Sendai, sent thither [Arita] a merchant of Tokio [sic.], named Imariya Gorobei, to purchase an article made by Tsuji Kizayemon, which was afterwards offered to the Emperor. Since then the maker has been honoured annually by an order from the Court to supply the ware used in the palace, which is a very clear translucent porcelain, with cobalt decoration. The articles for the Emperor's own use, and for that of the imperial family, are ornamented with the chrysanthemum flower, or the imperial coat-of-arms. Kizayemon's grandson, Kiheiji, has been distinguished with an official name, Hidachi-no-Daijio [sic.]. ... Tsuji Katsuzō, a descendant of Kiheiji, is one of the distinguished manufacturers of the present day, and is especially skilled in piercing porcelain . . . He also receives employment from the Imperial Court.¹²

Although the pieces made by Tsuji included in the collection spoke more to an export market (**Figure 6.2** and **Figure 6.3**), drawing particular attention to their longstanding employment by the imperial household and the honours bestowed in its course, Shioda defines the Tsuji workshop—and Tsuji Katsuzō specifically—through their relationship with the imperial court. Presented in this way, Tsuji's role in supplying the imperial household becomes the natural product of his ancestry.

Tsuji himself did not passively inherit this legacy, but played a role in its narration. One of the key sources documenting the history of the Tsuji house is a family genealogy in manuscript form preserved by the family (**Figure 6.4**). The document concludes with the death of Tsuji Kiheiji X, and so may be assumed to have been written during the time of Tsuji Katsuzō, presumably under his direction.

¹¹ Franks added an introduction and item-level descriptions, as well as making minor edits to Shioda's script: Franks and Shioda, *Japanese Pottery*. Asami's translations of Shioda's texts are held by the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum: MSL/1884/2798, pressmark 86.FF.37.

¹² Franks and Shioda, *Japanese Pottery*, 87–88.

Handwritten in ink on paper, each generation is allotted an entry comprising their generation, name, and other details of their succession and achievements.¹³ It is these annotations that are most revealing.

Few and brief, the annotations made for the different heads of the Tsuji family divulge those events deemed most significant. The first annotation is entered under the third generation, Tsuji Kiemon. It concisely states: ‘The receiving of orders for the palace began from this generation.’¹⁴ Under the entry for the sixth generation head, Tsuji Kiheiji, is noted: ‘Sixth month, Anei 3 [1774], obeyed imperial command to supply [ceramics] directly. Styled *Hitachi no Daijō* with official post and presented with a cup from the emperor.’¹⁵ Subsequent annotations reveal additional tokens bestowed upon the family. In 1844 Tsuji Kiheiji IX received a picture of the Shishinden of the Kyoto imperial palace from Emperor Ninkō, and in 1856, Tsuji Katsuzō’s father, Tsuji Kiheiji X, received a cushion from Emperor Kōmei.¹⁶ As a genealogy, this manuscript documents the lineage of the Tsuji house, noting Buddhist names, dates of death, the time for which each generation held their inheritance, spouses and adopted children. However this history written in the time of Tsuji Katsuzō has another role: articulating the relationship between the Tsuji family and the imperial court over successive generations.

As the Meiji Emperor succeeded his father, Emperor Kōmei, as emperor of Japan, so Tsuji Katsuzō succeeded his father as craftsman to the imperial household. However, with the role of the emperor radically redefined, the structures around him were also soon transformed. As Japan was reformulated into a nation state, the feudal hierarchies of the Edo period and the identities they incorporated were torn away. Regional lords (*daimyō*) were instructed to cede their authority to the emperor in 1871, allowing for a new prefectural bureaucracy, and in 1876, the government abolished the right of *samurai* to wear swords and suspended the stipends they received. Having been granted the honour of court name and rank under the reign of Emperor Go-Momozono (r.1771–1779), the Tsuji family

¹³ ‘Tsuji-ke jidaisho,’ Meiji-era (1868–1912), Tsuji Collection. **Source 37.**

¹⁴ Ibid. Author’s translation.

¹⁵ Ibid. Author’s translation.

¹⁶ Ibid. For details of the cushion, see: Ozaki Yōko, ‘Kōmei Tennō kara kashi sareta shitomu: Tsuji Seijisha no shihō,’ *Sarayama* 77 (2008).

surrendered *samurai* status and ceded their stipend.¹⁷ Even before the Meiji era, the position of the Tsuji family was not impregnable, however. As Ōhashi has discussed, petitions to protect their monopoly over the production of imperial tableware in 1831 and 1847 reveal that other craftsmen were securing orders.¹⁸ As movement of raw materials increased and feudal control loosened, the craft landscape transformed. Moving into the Meiji era, Tsuji would face even more competition.

In such a time of flux, like the use of a bronze mirror in the design of a dinner plate, the writing of Tsuji's legacy takes on an added significance. In a letter to the Imperial Household Ministry reporting Tsuji's request to form a company with Kōransha in 1875, the Governor of Saga wrote, 'On that occasion, the above mentioned Tsuji Tsuneaki [Tsuji Katsuzō] submitted a letter detailing his continued succession in appointment for making [imperial ceramics], having a copy of this, I report to you.'¹⁹ The document in question is not preserved with this record, but it may be that it was not dissimilar to the genealogy above. Fully aware of the significance of his heritage, Tsuji invoked the power of precedent and harnessed the past in an effort to maintain his position as imperial craftsman. However, as the nature of this role itself was called into question, legacy alone could not be relied upon.

Creating *kunaishō goyōtashi*

During the Meiji era, the Imperial Household Ministry was a vital source of patronage for artists and artisans within Japan. The impact of this influence can be seen on numerous pieces designed and crafted in the period that employ archaic motifs and restrained decoration in what Ōkuma has termed the *kunaishō* or 'Imperial Household Ministry' style.²⁰ New forms of patronage were introduced and older ones discontinued. Even before he returned to commoner status with the

¹⁷ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. **Source 38.**

¹⁸ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 12–15.

¹⁹ Copy of letter from Governor of Saga Prefecture to Minister of the Imperial Household Ministry, August 18, 1875, 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 1, 1875, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, 68921. Author's translation.

²⁰ Ōkuma, 'Kunaishō-gata.'

social reforms of 1876, in 1871 Tsuji Katsuzō endured the abolition of the appellation *kinri goyōtashi*: ‘supplier to the imperial palace,’ which his forebears had been accorded.²¹ Between 1888 and 1891, new official titles were developed to further imperial patronage. While Tsuji would not be selected to serve as Artist to the Imperial Household, he would eventually be given permission to use another recently devised title, ‘Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry’ or *kunaishō goyōtashi*.

The legacy that Tsuji inherited in 1871 was soon put to the test. According to Tsuji’s curriculum vitae, that same year the accolade awarded to his ancestors: *kinri goyō* or ‘Supplier to the Imperial Palace,’ and the custom of official appointment that had seen his ancestors named *Hitachi no Daijō* were terminated.²² Five years later, a further blow was landed: the social reforms of 1876 causing the loss of his stipend as he returned to commoner status.²³ Stripped of rank and appellation, Tsuji continued to fulfil commissions for the imperial household, but did not have the official recognition such titles had previously offered. From this point, with no system in place for the regulation of *goyōtashi*, the only way to be a supplier of the imperial household was to secure their commissions. While the value of imperial patronage was not lost on the Imperial Household Ministry as it made purchases from the domestic exhibitions, it would be nearly two decades before more systematised forms of patronage were enacted.

In 1888, adopting the suggestion of the Japan Art Association, the Imperial Household Ministry awarded seventeen specialists the title *kunaishō kōgeiin*: ‘Artisan to the Imperial Household Ministry.’²⁴ Two years later, the system was modified. Renamed *teishitsu gigeiin* or ‘Artists to the Imperial Household,’ the scheme provided for the selection and support of twenty artists (expanded to twenty-five in 1906). Artists were selected by a committee convened by the Director of the Imperial Museum (now Tokyo National Museum), with each artist

²¹ ‘Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,’ c.1914, Tsuji Collection. **Source 38.**

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sato, *Modern Japanese Art*, 56, 78.

given one hundred yen per year.²⁵ Between 1890 and 1944 this revised title was awarded to a total of 79 artists, drawn from disciplines including painting, sculpture, textiles, lacquer and even photography. Five awards were made to ceramicists: Seifū Yohei III (1893), Miyagawa Kōzan I (1896), Itō Tōzan I (1917), Suwa Sozan I (1917) and Itaya Hazan (1934).²⁶ Title and benefits were held for life, and the scheme held as its aim the preservation of traditional techniques for successive generations. In this way, it may be seen as a precursor to the current system of *Jūyō Mukei Bunkazai* ('Important Intangible Cultural Properties') first initiated in 1950.²⁷

Although the patronage conferred through the system of Imperial Household Artists in the Meiji era was not limited to the so-called fine arts, nonetheless, care was taken to elevate its subjects from the everyday. As Sato has explored in his valuable work, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State*, the terminology applied to arts in Meiji-era Japan was adjusted as new ideas concerning art took hold.²⁸ According to Satō, the rapid shift in terminology from Imperial Artisan to Artist, *kōgeiin* to *gigeiin*, was similarly significant. To quote, 'I think that the word *kōgei* was changed to *gigei* two short years after the system was inaugurated because it probably represented a common, very run-of-the-mill and because the confusion between *kōgei* (craft) and *kōgyō* (industry) needed to be eradicated.'²⁹ Although considered by the selecting committee in 1890, neither Tsuji Katsuzō, nor any of the other makers of imperial tableware discussed in this thesis were granted this accolade.³⁰ The role they fulfilled and the patronage they received was somewhat different.

²⁵ For the full text of the 1890 regulations, see: Yokomizo Hiroko, 'Teishitsu gigeiin kankei shorui (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan hokan) gaiyō,' *Sannomaru Shōzōkan nenpō kiyō* 17 (2010–2011), 4–5.

²⁶ For an introduction to these five artists and their works, see: Aichi-ken Tōji Shiryōkan Gakugeika, ed., *Meiji no ningen kokuhō: Teishitsu gigeiin no waza to bi Seifū Yohei, Miyagawa Kōzan kara Itaya Hazan made* (Seto-shi : Aichi-ken Tōji Shiryōkan, 2010).

²⁷ Colloquially known as Living National Treasures. For a concise summary of the scheme's development, followed by discussion of craftspeople awarded this title, see: Nicole Rousmaniere, 'Continuity and Change: Understanding Japanese Art Crafts in Context,' in *Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan*, ed. Nicole Rousmaniere (London: British Museum Press, 2007).

²⁸ Sato, *Modern Japanese Art*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁰ Yokomizo, 'Teishitsu gigeiin,' 85.

In time, Tsuji, Seiji Kaisha, and Fukagawa Seiji, would all secure the title *kunaishō goyōtashi*: ‘supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry.’³¹ Its roots in the pre-Meiji appellation *kinri goyōtashi* or ‘supplier to the imperial palace,’ the role of *goyōtashi* may be considered akin to that of a royal warrant holder: creating or supplying the furnishings, clothing and comestibles required by the imperial family. There was also a strong practical dimension, the accolade conveying permission to access the palace on official business.³² While the system of Imperial Household Artists and the achievements of its cadre have been a focus of scholarly research, the system of *goyōtashi* has come under much less scrutiny. The hierarchies by which Meiji era bureaucrats sought to elevate certain craftsmen above the everyday appear to have persisted.

In the years that followed the discontinuation of official titles for those who supplied the palace, some abused the prestige that a commercial relationship with the imperial household could confer. Certain traders indiscriminately declared their position in promotional materials, while others falsely assumed the affiliation.³³ In response, a formal system governing the use of the appellation *kunaishō goyōtashi*, supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry, was established in 1891. In the absence of extensive research on this topic, the precise criteria of this system remain unclear, but it is considered that companies who wished to use this title had to seek permission and appear to have been subject to certain criteria, such as following the same trade for at least two years and garnering a good reputation in competitive exhibitions.³⁴ Overseas companies were also eligible to seek permission to use a similar title, and the British royal warrant holders Garrard, who supplied the silverware discussed in Chapter 3, were awarded permission in 1909.³⁵ The inclusion of foreign companies is significant: while Imperial Household Artists were

³¹ Seiji Kaisha received permission to use this title in 1892, Tsuji in 1900, and Fukagawa Seiji in 1923: Kurahayashi Shōji, ed., *Kunaichō goyōtashi: Nihon no ichiryūhin zukan* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983), 45–46.

³² *Ibid.*, 42.

³³ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 43–44.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 44, 46.

exclusively Japanese, competition for more everyday commissions was not limited by Japan's borders.

In 1900, Tsuji Katsuzō was awarded permission to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi*.³⁶ His application is examined later in this chapter, but the words chosen for his curriculum vitae are revealing, 'Received permission to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi* once again.'³⁷ The inclusion of the word *aratamete* or 'once again' reminds the reader that this was not a new accolade for Tsuji, but a restatement of something he had previously possessed. In the intervening years, Tsuji would fulfil numerous commissions for imperial tableware, both under his own auspices and as a member of larger companies. In many ways, he remained *goyōtashi* throughout. However, this cannot be solely attributed to the legacy he inherited. To remain an imperial craftsman, Tsuji had to continue to secure imperial commissions. As the needs of the court changed and developed, tradition alone would not protect Tsuji's position.

6.2 Adaptation and Cooperation

It is said that Tsuji's ancestors were able to create pieces other skilled workshops could not.³⁸ Possessing the skill to meet a patron's needs retained value in the Meiji era. Following in his father's footsteps, Tsuji had grown up around the production of imperial ceramics before he took over the family enterprise. However, the palace his father served was a different entity. As early as 1871, dinner services in Western style were commissioned for the Enryōkan (as Chapter 4 discussed), and the Meiji Emperor sampled Western cuisine. From 1873, such foreign forms of dining were increasingly employed at court, necessitating, as this thesis has observed, a new material culture of imperial dining.

Given the spectacular pieces submitted to international exhibitions, it may seem surprising to suggest that Arita's craftsmen might have found it difficult to meet the needs of their developing markets. An early Meiji-era dinner service in the

³⁶ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. **Source 38.**

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 12.

collections of Kyushu Ceramic Museum, however, bears witness to the challenge. Carrying the mark ‘Hichoza Shinpo-zo,’ associated with Tashiro Monzaemon, the service reveals a diversity of forms, lids, handles and knobs (**Figure 6.5**). While these challenges were largely met, the large oval platter indicates that others were still to be overcome: although painted in Japan, the blank was manufactured in Austria.³⁹

Porcelain technologies had followed divergent trajectories within Europe and Asia, and Japan’s Meiji-era craftsmen had to invest in and master new techniques if they were to compete in the international marketplace. It has already been shown that the Imperial Household Ministry was ready to look to factories overseas for tableware, commissioning dessert and coffee services from Minton and a dinner service from Sèvres. In order to secure and fulfil such orders, Tsuji sought additional support within the framework of collaborative ventures. By participating in the creation of the companies Kōransha (est. 1875) and Seiji Kaisha (est. 1879), Tsuji actively met the developing needs of the imperial household.

Kōransha: Inside the warfare of peacetime

Kōransha was established in Arita in 1875. Its founders: Fukagawa Eizaemon, Tezuka Kamenosuke, Tsuji Katsuzō and Fukaumi Suminosuke, were involved in the ceramics industry as producers or traders.⁴⁰ Founded on the heels of the Weltausstellung (international exhibition) held in Vienna in 1873, the development of Kōransha may be regarded as a response to the changing position of Japanese ceramics within the international arena. Returning from his travels with the Iwakura Mission, Saga-born Kume Kunitake urged that Japan be proactive in its trading relationships with overseas nations: ‘As for trade, it is not enough simply to open ports and await customers, [you] should make a profit in exports by going directly to foreign countries.’⁴¹ For Kume, international exhibitions were no less than *taihei no sensō*: ‘the warfare of peacetime,’ and he advised Tezuka Kamenosuke that ceramicists working in Arita should come together to create exhibits for the next

³⁹ Meiji Taishō Jidai, ed., *Meiji taishō jidai*, 56.

⁴⁰ For this early phase of Kōransha’s history, see: Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, Chapter 1.

⁴¹ Kume Kunitake as quoted in Kume Bijutsukan, *Kume Kunitake*, 18. Author’s translation.

international exhibition, which would be held in Philadelphia in 1876.⁴² Tsuji's participation in Kōransha may also be read within the context of such times. However, while Tsuji also participated in international exhibitions with Kōransha, I would suggest that it was not exposure to overseas markets that was his key motivation, rather a desire to meet the developing demands of the Japanese imperial household, which was now hosting banquets in European style.

Kōransha continues to produce porcelain tableware today, but the company has changed considerably. The founding contract for Kōransha cited an initial term of five years, April 10, 1875, to April 10, 1880, but as it transpired in 1879 three founding members departed: Tezuka Kamenosuke, Fukaumi Suminosuke and Tsuji Katsuzō.⁴³ While the company history written by Yamada explores some of these developments, it spans more than a century of the company's history and focuses from the outset on Fukagawa Eizaemon.⁴⁴ Although headed by Fukagawa, in this earliest iteration, Kōransha was structured more as an association of workshops.

The objects Kōransha produced reveal both corporate and individual identities. Exhibited as part of a group of 216 Japanese ceramic works gathered at the request of the South Kensington Museum's director, Philip Cunliffe-Owen, ceramics submitted by Kōransha to the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia number among the earliest items made under the company's auspices. Following the exhibition, the works were added to the South Kensington Museum's collection (now the Victoria and Albert Museum).⁴⁵ Including coffee wares by Tsuji, a dish by Fukagawa and vases by Fukaumi Suminosuke, the bases of these works combine the individual maker's mark with Kōransha's company mark of an orchid flower (**Figure 6.2**). Other vases submitted to the exhibition feature Tsuji's mark with that of Tokyo's Hyōchien workshop, and no mention of Kōransha (**Figure 6.3**).

⁴² Ibid. Author's translation.

⁴³ Kōransha company rules as quoted in Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 237.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Chapter 1.

⁴⁵ Cunliffe-Owen had asked that the Japanese develop 'an historical collection of porcelain and pottery from the earliest period until the present time, to be formed in such a way as to give fully the history of the art': Cunliffe-Owen as cited by Jackson, 'Imagining Japan,' 245. Jackson has noted that while the museum was particularly keen to acquire a representative collection of historical pieces, nineteenth-century wares were extensively represented and it is possible that pieces were made specifically for the exhibition.

Revealing a corporate identity that overlay, but did not subsume, the identities of its founding members, these marks suggest the collaborative nature of Kōransha. Furthermore, in Shioda's description of the collection cited above, Tsuji's family heritage was singled out for discussion, his individual identity retained within the wider company.⁴⁶ Winning a Certificate of Merit in Philadelphia, 1876, and a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1878, Kōransha offered a name and aegis under which its members could further their achievements.⁴⁷

Tsuji's motivations in entering into this venture contrast with those put forward by Kume. Rather than oriented exclusively towards 'the warfare of peacetime,' Tsuji's stated aims relate to an alternate stage: the table of the imperial household.⁴⁸ Written some years later (possibly during the Taishō era), his curriculum vitae gives the following account:

Meiji 8 [1875]: Established Kōransha. The motive for this was that previously in Meiji 4 [1871] orders were received from the Imperial Household Ministry to make vessels for the imperial table and other things; from that time to this there were frequent orders for the production of novel wares for imperial use, such as Western-style tableware, that were without precedent ...⁴⁹

While also noting a shared intention to 'improve methods and expand markets,' it is fulfilling imperial commissions without precedent that was foremost in Tsuji's own evaluation of his intentions.⁵⁰

Records from this time in the archive of the Imperial Household Agency support Tsuji's account. A copy of a letter from 1875 written by Kitajima Hidetomo, Governor of Saga Prefecture, to Tokudaiji Sanetsune, Minister for the Imperial Household, presents the following report on Kōransha's founding:

⁴⁶ Franks and Shioda, *Japanese Pottery*, 87–88.

⁴⁷ Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 264–65.

⁴⁸ Kume Kunitake as quoted in Kume Bijutsukan, *Kume Kunitake*, 18. Author's translation.

⁴⁹ The last entry in the document is dated to the third year of the Taishō era (1914), see: 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. Author's translation. **Source 38.**

⁵⁰ Ibid. Author's translation.

Tsuji Tsuneaki [Tsuji Katsuzō] recently submitted a request to form a company cooperating with other individuals in the same enterprise from this area ... Hitherto, graced with your orders, you have often appointed this person to undertake your commissions. However, regarding the founding of the aforementioned Kōransha (that being the company's name) ... it is thought that they should also make the orders for the Imperial Household Ministry. From now, on the occasion of your order, we ask that you make your order to this company.⁵¹

Accompanied by a record of an order for Western-style tableware, this document confirms the central importance of this venture to Tsuji: by joining in partnership with his colleagues in Arita, he could hope to meet the changing needs of the imperial household. Western-style tableware was not only needed for export.

These two sides to Kōransha—as producer for export and supplier to the imperial household—are alluded to in the company rules, which also shed light on Tsuji's role.⁵² The rules state that when an order was addressed to a particular member of the company, the individual in question was to bring this to the attention of his partners.⁵³ Tsuji and Fukagawa are mentioned by name as examples for how this would work in practice: in the case of orders from the imperial household addressed to Tsuji, Tsuji becomes the proposer, while Fukagawa would be the proposer of orders he received from foreigners.⁵⁴ In this way, the company rules elucidate different roles for Fukagawa and Tsuji. While Fukagawa's focus was perceived in terms of markets overseas, Tsuji's association with the imperial household is highlighted.

In March 1879 (a year before the company's initial term had run its course), the founding members of Kōransha—Fukagawa Eizaemon, Tezuka Kamenosuke, Tsuji Katsuzō and Fukaumi Suminosuke—together with Fukaumi's brother Takeji,

⁵¹ Copy of letter from Governor of Saga Prefecture to Minister of the Imperial Household Ministry, August 18, 1875, 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 1, 1875, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency, 68921. Author's translation. For Tsuji's request to Saga Prefecture in this regard, see: Nakayama, *Arita yōgyō*, 31–32.

⁵² For a complete transcription of the company rules, see: Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 232–39.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

applied to the Board of Trade for permission to split the company following differences in opinion over issues of management and investment.⁵⁵ Tezuka, Tsuji and the Fukuami brothers formed a new enterprise, while Kōransha continued under the direction of Fukagawa Eizaemon.⁵⁶

The future of imperial orders placed with Kōransha became problematic. In June 1879, Fukagawa wrote to the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, Utsumi Tadakatsu, to request that an order for imperial tea bowls, dishes and other Japanese-style tableware placed with Kōransha in April be handed on to Tsuji. Utsumi forwarded the letter to the Ministry, echoing Fukagawa's caution against haste and splitting the order among different companies.⁵⁷ It appears this request was granted, as in 1880, Tsuji Katsuzō submitted a request for payment for a sizeable order of Japanese-style tableware for the emperor, empress dowager and empress.⁵⁸ Kōransha went on to fulfil other imperial orders after the split, tendering new estimates for vases in October, 1880.⁵⁹ However, Fukagawa's request that this order for Japanese-style tableware be handed over to Tsuji is significant, and may indicate that Tsuji retained responsibility for such orders within Kōransha.

As the pieces exhibited in 1876 intimated, Tsuji's individual identity—an identity that hinged upon his work in furnishing the emperor's table—was maintained within the wider company of Kōransha. The records that document Tsuji's involvement within Kōransha make repeated reference to his role in supplying tableware for use by the imperial household, while Fukagawa Eizaemon appears to have been more concerned with export. As the company benefitted from its association with the legacy of Tsuji's ancestry, Tsuji was better positioned to meet the developing needs of his patron. Establishing a new company with his colleagues, Tsuji would continue to work towards this goal after leaving Kōransha.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 245-6; Nakayama, *Arita yōgyō*, 47.

⁵⁶ For details of this new iteration of Kōransha, see: Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, Chapter 2.

⁵⁷ Letter from Fukagawa Eizaemon to Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, June, 1879, and letter from Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture to Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry, June 17, 1879, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 20, 1879, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69024.

⁵⁸ Procurement register, Tsuji Katsuzō and Matsuo Eitarō to Supplies Division, April, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 3, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69034.

⁵⁹ Estimate for vases, Fukagawa Eizaemon to Nagasaki Prefecture Industry Section, October, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036.

Seiji Kaisha: Refinement for the dinner table

The four members that separated from Kōransha in 1879 drew up a contract for the formation of a new company in February that year.⁶⁰ Fukaumi Suminosuke, Tsuji Katsuzō, Tezuka Kamenosuke and Fukaumi Takeji were joined by Kawahara Chūjiro, and the company took the name Seiji Kaisha. While *ji* means porcelain and *kaisha* is company, *sei* can mean a person's spirit as applied to the task in hand or exquisite purity in an object's qualities: a suggestion of the refinement they set as their goal. Seiji Kaisha flourished, becoming a key supplier of ceramic tableware to the imperial household. Its success was short-lived, however, and ten years later, Tsuji decided to leave the company.

The split between Fukagawa Eizaemon and those members of Kōransha that founded Seiji Kaisha was precipitated by disagreements over the company's future direction. Tezuka was keen to see greater development of art-ceramics and refined vessels for daily use that could be exported, but this required further integration of the existing workshops and investment. Already experiencing success in the production of electrical insulators, Fukagawa was reluctant to move towards incorporation and the exposure to risk this entailed.⁶¹ The Fukaumi brothers, Tsuji and Tezuka resolved to start a new venture. Joined by Kawahara Chūjiro, a potter skilled in the use of plaster moulds that satisfied the uniformity and variety required of Western tableware, Seiji Kaisha set out to produce high-quality tableware as well as decorative pieces.

Documents appended to Seiji Kaisha's founding contract detail the company's technological basis and ideological direction. Production was divided into ten areas: clay preparation, production using old methods, the kiln, production using moulds, production using new methods, fine handwork (including carving), glazes, design, painting in underglaze blue and enamels, and firing of enamels. Tsuji was in charge of the clay's preparation, the kiln and glazes, and assisted on production using old methods, production using new methods and design. Fukaumi

⁶⁰ Copy of company pledge, Seiji Kaisha, February, 1879, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 329.

⁶¹ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 100–103; Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 14–16.

Suminosuke, Fukaumi Takeji and Kawahara Chūjiro shared the remaining production duties, while Tezuka Kamenosuke was placed in charge of the company's management, and given a supporting role in design (see **Table 6.1**).⁶² Equality and cooperation were stipulated as guiding principles.⁶³

The production of tableware was a focus for Seiji Kaisha. A history of Japanese regional ceramics edited by the Bureau of Agriculture and Engineering and published in 1886, reported that Seiji Kaisha had concentrated its efforts on the production of articles for everyday use for both export and domestic markets.⁶⁴ The 1885 *Silk, Ceramics and Lacquer Competitive Exhibition* in Ueno took such articles—vessels for eating and drinking—as its focus, and Seiji Kaisha exhibited tableware both Japanese and Western in style. The company's managing director, Tezuka Kamenosuke, was awarded 30 yen with the following evaluation:

Attaining thorough judgment of the condition of the marketplace in recent years, [Tezuka] found skill in making vessels and dishes for everyday use to be important and so made improvements to porcelain materials and form, as well as endeavoring to make items inexpensive and so expand markets at home and abroad.⁶⁵

Reading the market both in the international and domestic spheres, Seiji Kaisha produced the works each demanded. The prestigious, and challenging, commissions that Seiji Kaisha received from the Imperial Household Ministry may have helped drive the company's development. First, however, it had to secure these orders.

Previous studies of Seiji Kaisha and Kōransha have, albeit briefly, identified Tsuji's presence with regard the receipt of imperial orders by those companies.⁶⁶ Order documents preserved in the archives of the imperial household from the time of Seiji Kaisha's founding help nuance this assertion. Although I would concur that Tsuji's presence in the company was significant in terms of securing imperial orders,

⁶² Copy of company pledge, Seiji Kaisha, February, 1879, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 329.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, eds., *Fuken tōki enkaku tōkō dentōshi* (Tokyo: Nōmukyoku, 1886), 142.

⁶⁵ Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, 'Kyōshinkai,' 248. Author's translation.

⁶⁶ Yamada, *Kōransha 130 nenshi*, 7–8; Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 102.

there were additional factors. While orders for the Japanese-style imperial tableware were handed on to Tsuji in 1879 (as discussed above), the following year, Seiji Kaisha competed with Kōransha to supply a new Western-style dinner service: the service with animals in vines.

In 1880, the Imperial Household Ministry sought the assistance of the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, Utsumi Tadakatsu, in the commissioning of two dinner services for Western-style banquets: one to be decorated in gold with a paulownia crest, the other in underglaze blue with the ancient mirror design, or as described here, the dinner service with animals in vines. In Utsumi's covering letter of May 29, 1880, he states that Seiji Kaisha is an association of companies that counts Fukaumi Suminosuke and Tsuji Katsuzō among its members.⁶⁷ This note suggests that this may have been the imperial household's first dealing with Seiji Kaisha, and mentioning Tsuji by name, confirms the importance of his presence. Initially, both Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha were asked to furnish estimates for different elements of the two services: Seiji Kaisha provided an estimate for the bread plates, oblong dishes, comports, cups and saucers, while Kōransha offered an estimate for soup, dining and dessert plates, lidded tureens, oval and round dishes, vegetable bowls and elongated dishes.⁶⁸ With misgivings expressed that the resulting services may not be uniform, each company was asked to tender for the full order.⁶⁹ Seiji Kaisha and Kōransha would compete for the commission.

While the presence of craftsmen known to the Ministry—Tsuji and Fukaumi—was important in the company's initial introduction, issues of cost alluded to in the correspondence between Nagasaki and the Ministry may have decided the outcome.⁷⁰ At this time, even the foreign press was aware that

⁶⁷ Letter from Governor of Nagasaki to Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry, May 29, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 19.**

⁶⁸ Estimate for tableware, Kōransha, May, 1880, and estimate for tableware, Seiji Kaisha, May 25, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Sources 17 and 18.**

⁶⁹ Draft letter from Secretary of the Imperial Household Ministry to Governor of Nagasaki, June 19, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 20.**

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

spending had become an issue at the imperial court. As the Standard reported in 1879,

The Mikado has entertained the Ministers at a banquet, on which occasion he delivered a speech censuring their extravagance and luxury. In consequence of this reprimand the Prime Minister issued an order for the cessation of all superfluous expenditure in the development of commerce, and stopping the expenditure on public works. The Emperor's household expenses have also been reduced.⁷¹

Comparing the estimates submitted, it is apparent that Seiji Kaisha undercut many of Kōransha's prices (**Table 6.2**).⁷² Awarded the commission, numerous orders for tableware both Western and Japanese in style were subsequently placed with Seiji Kaisha.

Imperial commissions motivated Seiji Kaisha to achieve more. As Chapter 3 discussed, the dinner service with paulownia crest for which quotes were sought in 1880 was based on Sèvres' originals; Seiji Kaisha would also be called upon to make replenishments for the Minton coffee service commissioned in 1875. Given that other ceramic services in Western style had previously been commissioned domestically, this shift from imported to domestic products should not be overstated.⁷³ Nonetheless, it is significant that Seiji Kaisha was thereby led to reproduce tableware made by two of Europe's leading manufactories, both esteemed for their technical prowess. As Tezuka Kamenosuke noted in 1882 on receiving Sèvres' made ceramics as samples for an imperial commission, such an order would be 'prestigious even to foreign countries.'⁷⁴

Surviving correspondence around the orders for Western-style services suggests challenges posed, both in terms of technique and volume. In 1880, when making tureens for the dinner service with animals in vines, Seiji Kaisha noted that

⁷¹ 'Japan,' *The Standard*, April 14, 1879, 5.

⁷² Estimate for tableware, Kōransha, May, 1880, and estimate for tableware, Seiji Kaisha, July 18, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Sources 17 and 21.**

⁷³ Early examples including the Western-style dinner service commissioned for the Enryōkan in 1871 from Imari Prefecture discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ Draft request (2 versions), Tezuka Kamenosuke to Supplies Division, July, 1882, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 139 and ㊦ 18. Author's translation.

firing tureens with their bases attached could not be successfully achieved, and asked permission to fire them separately.⁷⁵ The scale of imperial commissions also escalated. The 1880 order placed with Seiji Kaisha required 240 dinner plates as part of a new 706-piece dinner service.⁷⁶ A decade later, when supplements to the dinner service with paulownia crest were required for banquets in the Meiji Palace, the company was commissioned to produce 600 dinner plates, 450 dessert plates and other items alongside several other imperial commissions.⁷⁷ However, if orders from the palace provided a challenge, the financial patronage they conferred was vital.

Seiji Kaisha offers a clear example of how export and domestic production were intertwined in Meiji-era Japan. Rallied under the slogans of *kokusan shōgyō* (increase production, encourage industry) and *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army), craft had been allotted a critical role as an exportable commodity that might aid the country's development. Seiji Kaisha developed a strong relationship with Abram French of French and Co., Boston. As Chapter 4 discussed, the Imperial Household Ministry even commissioned tableware employing French's orientalist designs, but there were other overlaps. In 1882, Tezuka Kamenosuke drafted a request for full prepayment of an imperial order. Committed to providing samples to French but struggling with their production, Tezuka appealed to his patron through national interest. To quote,

In these exceptional circumstances ... we would be grateful to borrow all of the cost as an advance payment ... While we understand that this would be without precedent, as stated above, strengthening confidence with regard to the favour of this successful foreign merchant will in the future open the way for prosperous exports to foreign countries.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Acknowledgement of order, Seiji Kaisha, October 5, 1880, from 'Goyōdoroku kōnyū,' vol. 5, 1880, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 69036. **Source 27.**

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Request for objects, Imperial Household Ministry, June 28, 1889, from 'Yōshokki oyobi chūgu shinchō shorui,' 1889–1891, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3076.

⁷⁸ Draft request (2 versions), Tezuka Kamenosuke to Supplies Division, July, 1882, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 139 and ㊦ 18. Author's translation.

The advantages Tezuka foresaw had additional appeal with regard his imperial clients. He continues,

Moreover, improving [our] production techniques will enable us to supply the ceramics for imperial use to your complete satisfaction.⁷⁹

While the favour of the imperial household offered a potentially valuable source of additional support, Tezuka established that the improvement of standards for their export wares would also benefit their work for the emperor's table.

Other domestic clients of Seiji Kaisha included the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Imperial College of Engineering, the navy and Mitsubishi, all of whom are documented as ordering Western-style dinner services.⁸⁰ The precise balance between Seiji Kaisha's domestic and export production is difficult to assess, but Kamochi has suggested that orders from the imperial family, Imperial Household Ministry, other government authorities and so forth accounted for more than half of the company's sales.⁸¹ With significant domestic and international orders, Seiji Kaisha invested in improving its products to the benefit of both. In 1885, the company secured special permission to import French porcelain-making equipment. According to the Bureaus of Agriculture and Engineering, the use of this machinery would secure nothing less than 'the restoration of Arita's prestige in porcelain wares.'⁸²

Seiji Kaisha flourished briefly. In 1889, Kawahara Chūjiro died. Having played a vital role in the company for his mastery of plaster moulding, his death was a blow.⁸³ Soon after, having reached the end of the founding ten-year contract, Tsuji withdrew from the company. After resigning, his curriculum vitae states that he 'continued in business, devoting [himself] solely to the production of items for use by the Imperial Household Ministry.'⁸⁴ Seiji Kaisha, meanwhile, continued to receive imperial orders for a time and in 1893, was granted permission to use the title

⁷⁹ Ibid. Author's translation.

⁸⁰ Order lists, Seiji Kaisha, April, 1883, Archives of the Arita History and Folklore Museum: ㊦ 134.

⁸¹ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 104.

⁸² Nōmukyoku and Kōmukyoku, eds., *Fuken tōki*, 142. Author's translation.

⁸³ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 155.

⁸⁴ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. Author's translation. **Source 38.**

kunaishō goyōtashi (Tsuji sought similar permission eight years later).⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the company did not fare so well, its later works perceived as showing decline. Before the factory was destroyed by a typhoon in 1905, it was reduced to merely processing clay.⁸⁶

6.3 'This Greatest Honour'

Tsuji described the relationship built between himself, his family and the imperial palace over the generations as 'this greatest honour.'⁸⁷ Having worked assiduously to supply the Imperial Household Ministry with the articles they required for nearly thirty years, in 1899 Tsuji applied to the Imperial Cuisine Division for permission to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi*: Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry. While he called upon the legacy of his family in this application, he was also able to demonstrate a lifetime spent in service to the imperial household. The objects produced by his workshop offer their own testament. Crafted with respect and care, the imperial tableware Tsuji made articulated his sentiment towards his patron. In making these works he made himself an imperial craftsman. Considering here Tsuji's application to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi* and the respect he articulated through his craft, it is possible to see how Tsuji both became, and was, an imperial craftsman.

Becoming *kunaishō goyōtashi*

In December 1899, Tsuji Katsuzō wrote to the Imperial Cuisine Division asking permission to display the mark of one receiving official orders from the imperial household.⁸⁸ The following year, he was authorised to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi*: Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry.⁸⁹ From the

⁸⁵ Kurahayashi, ed., *Kunaichō goyōtashi*, 45.

⁸⁶ Kamochi, *Maboroshi no Meiji imari*, 156.

⁸⁷ Letter from Tsuji Katsuzō to Imperial Cuisine Division, December, 1899, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 34.**

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Proposal for internal circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, April, 1900, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. **Source 36.**

information Tsuji supplied and the investigation made by the Imperial Household Ministry, it is possible to see how Tsuji was qualified to become *kunaishō goyōtashi*.

As noted in the first part of this chapter, the criteria by which individuals were permitted to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi* are not fully understood. It is however thought that in order to secure permission to use the appellation, the company or individual in question had to prove that they had been in the same line of business for a certain period of time and that they had achieved success in domestic and international exhibitions.⁹⁰ Introduced in 1891, in the first decade that the title was available, those awarded permission to use it came from diverse trades, but more than half were based in Tokyo (**Table 6.3**).⁹¹ Seiji Kaisha was the first company to be awarded permission to use the title for the supply of ceramics, followed by Tsuji.

In his brief cover letter, Tsuji prefaced his application with a statement of his family's heritage and his own continued appointment for the production of imperial ceramics. As he states,

... since around the Kanbun era [my family] was employed in the official orders for the palace. Continuing in succession since then, granted official orders, I am frequently engaged in the work of supplying [these orders]. Indeed I believe this to be the greatest honour to my humble family ...⁹²

Addressing the Imperial Cuisine Division, Tsuji expanded upon his credentials as he sought permission to publicly display his association with the imperial household.

A longer resume was enclosed with Tsuji's letter. The first half offers a history of his family's work in producing imperial ceramics, noting in particular gifts and honours bestowed upon them by the palace; the second half focuses on Tsuji and serves as an abridged curriculum vitae.⁹³ Tsuji highlighted his achievements at international and domestic exhibitions: medals granted at Philadelphia in 1876 and

⁹⁰ Kurahayashi, ed., *Kunaichō goyōtashi*, 43–44.

⁹¹ For the data used, see: *ibid.*, 45. As that publication acknowledges, it may not be exhaustive.

⁹² Letter from Tsuji Katsuzō to Imperial Cuisine Division, December, 1899, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 34**.

⁹³ Documents in support of application, Tsuji Katsuzō, 1899, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031.

at the Domestic Exhibition of 1877, and awards received at the 1877 Paris Exposition Universelle and the 1881 Domestic Exhibition.⁹⁴ As verification for his continued service to the Imperial Household Ministry, it records that Tsuji received his first imperial orders in 1871 and that he went on to work within Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha. Tsuji also enclosed copies of correspondence dating from the years in which Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha were founded that demonstrated his continuing involvement in imperial commissions through these transitions.⁹⁵ The evidence Tsuji offered to support his claim to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi* was not garnered solely by virtue of descent, but through his own efforts and diligence.

Receiving Tsuji's letter, the Imperial Cuisine Division investigated his financial standing, verifying the taxes he had paid through the offices of the Governor of Saga Prefecture. In February 1900, the governor's office furnished totals for Tsuji's business, prefectural and income tax.⁹⁶ It seems that the total was below that expected by the Ministry for those seeking use of the title *kunaishō goyōtashi*, as their evaluation states: 'compared to a usual merchant, the level of wealth is not so great.'⁹⁷

Fortunately for Tsuji, the Imperial Cuisine Division also recognised the exceptional nature of this case. They describe Tsuji as having, 'for some years made the usual ceramics for imperial use.' Acknowledging his family lineage as well as the results of their own investigations, their statement concludes, 'but regarded as a completely unique kind of craft, we seek to give permission as per the request.'⁹⁸ A maker of everyday things that were also exceptional, Tsuji's credentials as a craftsman, his own efforts as well as his lineage, secured him permission to use the title of *kunaishō goyōtashi* or Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry, as his curriculum vitae notes, 'once again.'⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Report from Governor of Saga Prefecture to Master of the Palace Table, February, 1900, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. **Source 35.**

⁹⁷ Proposal for internal circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, April, 1900, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 36.**

⁹⁸ Ibid. Author's translation.

⁹⁹ 'Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,' c.1914, Tsuji Collection. Author's translation. **Source 38.**

Being an imperial craftsman

In 1900, Tsuji was granted permission to call himself Supplier to the Imperial Household Ministry, but this title was not the only means by which Tsuji could express the honour of imperial patronage. In their evaluation of Tsuji's application, the Imperial Cuisine Division described his as a 'special kind of craft.'¹⁰⁰ Tsuji's works in porcelain recorded, and indeed embodied, the privilege he felt through his association with the imperial household. Each object made, whether by his hand or under his guidance, reiterated this greatest of honours.

In his work at Kōransha and at Seiji Kaisha, Tsuji worked as a maker and supervisor of the practical craft of ceramics. In both companies, according to the resume submitted with his 1899 application, he held the position of *shunin*: chief or person in charge. Working independently at the end of the nineteenth-century, his application to use the title Supplier to the Imperial Household acknowledges the staff working in his workshop, stating: 'I would like to display a placard with the mark of the official work for the Imperial Household Ministry on the shop front in order to make the manufacturing artisans and so forth engage with even greater care.'¹⁰¹ While it would be difficult to say how many of the imperial ceramics supplied under his name were crafted by his own hands, the objects Tsuji made—directly or otherwise—conveyed the respect he felt towards his patron.

Imperial tableware produced in Arita during the Edo period was devoid of marks, and the same held true for the majority of Japanese-style tableware made during the Meiji era. The Western-style tableware produced for the Meiji Emperor and his household, however, broke with this convention, and company marks can invariably be found on the bases of imperial tableware made in Western style. Essential for determining details of attribution among objects made by different companies to the same designs over long periods of time, these marks also suggest the relationship between artisan and patron.

¹⁰⁰ Proposal for internal circulation, Imperial Household Ministry, April, 1900, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 36.**

¹⁰¹ Letter from Tsuji Katsuzō to Imperial Cuisine Division, December, 1899, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 34.**

On the pieces submitted to the Centennial in Philadelphia in 1876 now in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tsuji's mark, reproduced alongside the orchid flower of Kōransha, is given with characters that read *hizen tsuji sei*: 'made by Tsuji of Hizen' (**Figure 6.2**). On other pieces made in this period, such as a lobed dish with gold lacquer repair in the family's collection, the mark is simply *tsuji sei*: 'made by Tsuji,' (**Figure 6.6**). Obvious though it may seem, these marks function only to identify the maker. In contrast, the majority of the Western-style tableware commissioned from Tsuji by the Imperial Household Ministry carries a different mark. Made to designs known to be for imperial use, examples from the service with animals in vines, the service with a paulownia crest, dessert plates with *kinri* motifs and the replenishments for the pink Minton service, all carry the mark *tsuji kinsei*: 'respectfully made by Tsuji' (**Figure 6.7**). Such marks not only identify Tsuji as the maker, but also reveal his relationship towards his patron.

It would be unwise to assume that the prefix *kin* was only employed for imperial commissions, and it may not even be that all pieces produced for imperial use were marked in this way. Pieces from other services ordered by the Imperial Household Ministry—specifically the service with birds over waves discussed in Chapter 4—do not feature this additional character (**Figure 6.8**).¹⁰² However, the same distinction can be found to a similar extent on works made by Seiji Kaisha. Many of Seiji Kaisha's products feature only the company logo as a mark (**Figure 6.9**), while others state *seiji kaisha shisei*: 'Seiji Kaisha made this' (**Figure 6.10**). The tableware produced to imperial designs, however, features the mark *seiji kaisha kinsei* or 'respectfully made by Seiji Kaisha' (**Figure 6.11**). This same *kinsei* style can also be found on imperial tableware from the late Meiji-era and twentieth century made by Fukagawa Seiji (**Figure 6.12**). Such an expression of humility serves to indicate the special nature of these commissions. Just as their correspondence employed certain honorifics with deference to their patron, the characters given on the base of these vessels also conveyed respect.

¹⁰² As noted in Chapter 4, this service employed patterns initially designed for export, so it is difficult to be certain of the intended consumer for the pieces preserved by the Tsuji family. Among the services produced by Kyoto-based potter Kanzan Denshichi discussed in this thesis, only the dinner set with chasing animals (**Figure 4.39**) features a *kinsei* mark, the character used for *kin* is different but has an equivalent meaning.

The vessels produced in Arita for imperial use further embodied the relationship of patronage through the very fabric of their craft. Typically unmarked, one of the defining characteristics of Edo-period imperial tableware was that the *karakusa* arabesque border applied to the underside of dishes was not drawn with a single brush-stroke as would usually be expected, but carefully outlined and filled (**Figure 2.9**). Entering the nineteenth century, foot rings were also shaved to a neat point.¹⁰³ Such care set the imperial tableware crafted by the Tsuji family apart from other wares of the Edo period.

Imperial ceramics made by Tsuji and the companies he belonged to in the Meiji era show similar refinement. Considering examples made by Seiji Kaisha in the 1880s, the fine repeat of the hand-painted overglaze gold border across the challenging fluted surface of a lozenge-shaped dish (**Figure 6.13**) and the careful variations in tone used to delineate animals chasing through vines in the service given to General Grant (**Figure 4.1**) demonstrate such care. Similarly, the unmarked Japanese-style bowls created for the emperor, empress dowager and empress according to designs instituted in 1875, dress the purest of white porcelains with delicate motifs in underglaze blue (**Figure 2.44**). The craftsmanship apparent in these works would have created uniformity among the wider service assembled at table, but also shows the attention its artisans paid to the task of making tableware fit for an emperor.

As previous chapters have shown, the tableware Tsuji created played a role in the construction and renegotiation of the emperor's identity: exquisitely made, they added to the prestige of his table. But the making of these objects also impacted upon Tsuji himself. Tsuji described his family's work in creating imperial tableware as 'the greatest honour.'¹⁰⁴ With each object he made for the emperor's table, Tsuji created himself as a craftsman to the imperial court, writing his own identity as he crafted these works.

¹⁰³ Ōhashi, 'Shōgunke kenjō igai,' 7, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Tsuji Katsuzō to Imperial Cuisine Division, December, 1899, from 'Shōinroku,' 1897–1902, Archives of the Imperial Household Agency: 3031. Author's translation. **Source 34**.

6.4 A Meeting of Maker and Emperor

Marked with an embossed imperial chrysanthemum crest, an invitation card preserved by the descendants of Tsuji Katsuzō reveals that on November 15, 1911, Tsuji was invited to attend a banquet with his emperor in Kurume, Kyushu (**Figure 6.14**). The emperor's health was failing, but on November 7, he boarded the imperial train at Tokyo and set off for Kyushu to view the Special Grand Army Maneuvers held near Kurume.¹⁰⁵ While the preservation of this invitation suggests something of the importance this event held for Tsuji Katsuzō, its significance is underscored by its citation within his curriculum vitae. In fact, Tsuji was invited to two banquets presented by the emperor in Kyushu that year, a matter also detailed within his advertisement published some years later (**Figure 6.15**).¹⁰⁶ Granted such precedence within Tsuji's life and achievements, the invitation Tsuji received from the imperial household stands as testament and reward of the relationship between this maker and his patron.

Prior to this encounter, the relationship between Tsuji and his emperor was constructed by means of objects, through craft and endeavour. At the start of the Meiji era, Tsuji succeeded to a unique legacy and title as craftsman to the court, but this inheritance was not sustainable purely on the merits of the past. In order to maintain his role, Tsuji adapted, working actively within the development of Arita's ceramic industry to meet both the changing demands of the imperial household and those of the wider world. During this time, the tableware crafted under his direction for imperial use paid tribute to the emperor through the fineness of its line, and the quality of its finish.

While Tsuji's presence was not a prerequisite of imperial patronage in the field of ceramics, it was a factor in the selection of Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha as suppliers of imperial tableware. The patronage these makers enjoyed was not exclusive, tableware was ordered from others including Kyoto's Kanzan Denshichi, and both Kōransha and Seiji Kaisha maintained their own links with the imperial household after Tsuji's departure. Even so, as Tsuji's ancestry provides a means of

¹⁰⁵ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 695.

¹⁰⁶ Copy of advertisement, c.1916, Tsuji Collection.

tracing imperial patronage through the Edo – Meiji transition, so too do his ventures reveal his own effort in sustaining that relationship. Building on the legacy he had inherited, Tsuji devoted himself to the production of ceramics for the emperor not as a relict of the past and product of tradition, but very much within the times that he lived.

The Meiji Emperor died on 30 July 1912; Tsuji Katsuzō would serve both the Taisho and Shōwa Emperors before he himself passed away in 1929. Although Tsuji held other roles within his lifetime, it is through his work with ceramics, and specifically the items that he created for the imperial household, that he repeatedly defined his own identity. When Tsuji Katsuzō received permission to use the title *kunaishō goyōtashi* in 1900, he recorded this event in his curriculum vitae with the word *aratamete*: ‘once again.’¹⁰⁷ Tsuji’s role as a craftsman supplying ceramics for the imperial table was enacted through a process of continuous renewal, order by order and piece by piece. By approaching Tsuji through the lens of patronage, the objects that he made are immediately set within those social relationships that gave them life.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Rireki: Jūichidai Tsuji Katsuzō,’ c.1914, Tsuji Collection. Author’s translation. **Source 38.**

Conclusions

This thesis took as its focus people and things: what makes them, what defines them and how they affect each other. In considering the Meiji Emperor and the ceramic tableware made for his use, the conventional terms ‘emperor’ and ‘Western’ have repeated throughout. However, neither emperor nor objects have revealed themselves to be conventional things. In these conclusions, I consider these two terms afresh, before returning to the hypothesis proposed in the Introduction and examining it against the discussion put forward. Having offered my conclusions in this respect, I shall evaluate these findings against the wider aim of this thesis to elucidate alternative roles for ceramics in Meiji-era Japan. Finally I suggest avenues in which this research could be profitably expanded.

Redefinitions

As is well attested, the Meiji Emperor did not hold the same position as his ancestors, nor did the Meiji Restoration confer much by way of actual political power to the imperial throne. While convention may term Jimmu and his descendants ‘emperors,’ the role of Japan’s emperors changed dramatically over successive generations. Such differences can also be found in their material worlds, but there is also a tension here: the value of lineage and tradition in underscoring legitimacy and providing an imperial identity cannot be overlooked. In examining the material culture and practices of Japan’s emperors, we can better understand how they positioned themselves in a changing world. Although the authority of the Meiji Emperor was enacted by his government, he had a critical role to play as sovereign figurehead for a nation operating on the global stage.

I have situated imperial tableware in pursuit of that role. To class these objects as Western or Japanese cannot fully explain the many meanings and values that they held. Here distinctions have been based largely on dining style, but objects may equally be categorized according to place of production, culture of consumption or style of decoration. In this way, each object may hold multiple,

overlapping meanings that also have the potential to change through time. These multiple axes by which objects can be defined suggest the choices made in their commissioning and the intent behind their design. To dismiss a comport as 'Western' is to overlook the myriad ways it may exceed this label. While the objects here discussed may be termed imperial tableware by virtue of their connection to the emperor's table, just as an emperor may be considered emperor by virtue of birth, success in such a role required more of these people and things.

Sovereignty by Design

The hypothesis put forward here was that ceramic tableware was used to shape the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor.

In considering the use of imperial tableware, my first chapter explored the significance of imperial banquets and how they took shape through the early Meiji era, demonstrating the introduction of foreign dining practices was not passive Westernisation, but deliberate and strategic. The second chapter went back to consider how ceramics were employed by the imperial court of the Edo period, highlighting elements of apparent continuity between this period and the Meiji era. Chapter 5 considered the wider use of ceramic imperial tableware and related items as they mediated the identity of the Meiji Emperor and his successors on and beyond the dining table. In considering how these objects shaped the Meiji Emperor's identity, two key strands were developed to show how diverse patterns were employed to articulate a sovereign identity. Chapters 2 and 4 examined the use of objects and motifs drawn from Japan's imperial past, while Chapter 3 addressed the introduction of both tableware and material practices from European courts to position the Meiji Emperor among an international ruling elite.

In drawing these chapters together, issues of chronology come to the fore. Although the objects considered were separated here according to form and style of decoration, the orders for each overlapped in time. In 1875, a full dining assemblage was commissioned from British makers at the same time that new designs were developed for imperial tableware in line with Edo-period conventions. In 1880, craftsmen at Seiji Kaisha and Kōransha were asked to provide quotes for two dinner services: the first based upon the imported products of Sèvres, the

second using a motif drawn from the collections of the Shōsōin. As the dinner service with paulownia crest, the Minton coffee service, the service with animals in vines and the individualised Edo-style porcelains were all replenished over the years that followed, to suggest that either domestic or foreign influences held sway at any particular moment would be unwise. Rather, the diversity of imperial ceramic tableware is not merely the result of palimpsest, but reflects a lived reality. Diverse as they may be, these items can nonetheless be accommodated within a single strategy: shaping the sovereign identity of the Meiji Emperor. As replenishments were gradually made, these items quietly reasserted themselves upon subsequent generations, coaxing them to share in the material practices of their forebears.

The wider aim for this thesis was to shed light on an alternative aspect of Meiji-era ceramics: the role played by ceramics within Japan. Developing the topic of Meiji-era imperial ceramics from glimpses and snippets in the margins of export-dominated narratives and exhibition catalogues has shown the greater potential for such study. Returning to focus on Tsuji Katsuzō in my final chapter, this patronage emerged as key to his own self-identity, and provides a key for understanding his endeavours within the changing craft-landscape of the time. In addition, this exploration of objects used in the palace permits a deeper appreciation of the Meiji Emperor. While decorative ceramics often hold top billing in artist-focused accounts, more quotidian wares enable a deeper appreciation of the role of material things in the lives of people. In the case of Japan's emperor, these objects were essential to the performance of his role at a critical time for Japan.

Both everyday and exceptional, the ceramic tableware commissioned by the Imperial Household Ministry and made by potters in Kyoto, Arita and Europe conveyed the emperor's sovereignty through layered meanings and associations. Connecting the emperor to rulers of centuries past and to those of distant lands through their design and in the material practices of their use, these objects positioned him as sovereign and invited others to do the same.

Future Avenues

Archival sources have been invaluable in achieving the aims of this project. Marrying records to the objects has enabled new narratives to be drawn out, but

the richness and volume of records has also proved an obstacle. With little work previously done on these records, they present a significant challenge to the researcher. From the work undertaken in pursuit of this thesis, it is clear that the purchase records and other documents in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency have much more to offer in terms of understanding the material lives of Japan's modern emperors. The possibility also remains that other sources exist that have yet to come into public view: the records of the Imperial Cuisine Division and details of the commissioning for designs in particular would shed further light on the topics discussed here. However, in the course of this research additional materials have been encountered that suggest alternative avenues into which this research could be developed. The three avenues considered for development here are: transfer, the architecture of engagement, and royal tableware beyond Japan.

Transfer has been a recurring theme within this thesis, and in developing this research further the mechanisms for that transfer—social and material—are an area I would like to examine. From the records examined, it has become apparent that prefectural governors and ambassadors both played a role in facilitating the procurement of items for the imperial household. During the Edo period, the patronage of feudal *daimyō* played a key role in the development of Japanese crafts. By uncovering the role played by these later intermediaries, networks of patronage in the Meiji era might be better understood. Material objects themselves may also serve as catalysts for transfers of technology and design. In this thesis, objects were circulated as models for new production. With many of these objects moving from west to east, understanding how material challenges of reverse-engineering samples of foreign tableware were met offers a counterpoint to the European development of porcelain technologies. Within this also the patronage of the emperor is key. As the Imperial Household Ministry demanded objects to match those of Europe's most prestigious factories, the challenge set to craftsmen was subtly different to that faced by their peers who sought to compete in markets overseas, suggesting the potential for a more extensive examination.

The tableware produced for imperial use in the Meiji era was only one element of a larger assemblage. As Chapter 1 suggested, these different elements all have potential for exploration and might offer additional insights into the

materiality of the Meiji Emperor's role. Of those elements, one stands out for further analysis: court architecture of the early Meiji era. While the Meiji Palace and Crown Prince's Palace have been the subject of intense study, much less has been written about Boinville's planned reception palace, or the Akasaka Banqueting Hall that is now part of Meiji Jingū. In particular, these two projects deserve comparison to each other. One European in style, the other outwardly Japanese, these buildings were specifically planned for the reception of foreign dignitaries and Japan's elite. Overlapping in time, the different approaches they reveal for the architecture of engagement in the early Meiji era hold much promise for research.

The critical analysis of royal and yet quotidian objects employed in this thesis could also be applied to the material objects of other courts. In the increasingly global world of the nineteenth century, other monarchs also adopted foreign forms of dining. The material choices made by the rulers of Siam (who also used Sèvres), the Korean court (who in the twentieth century used Japanese Noritake tableware) and others deserve fresh scrutiny. Enabling comparison with the Japanese examples discussed here, consideration of the choices made and what guided those decisions might further unpick blanket notions of Westernisation.

Reflections

As a museums professional, undertaking a doctoral thesis offered me the chance to do something different: to approach objects not found in European museum collections and elucidate an alternate facet of Japanese art. Studying these objects as a research student also gave me the time to chase fragments through the archives, to explore the varied contexts in which imperial tableware might be found, and so realise the value of Appadurai's guidance to follow the things themselves. In response I hope to have revealed something of the richness of these quotidian objects. Their place in everyday lived experience and performance gives them a potential that should not be overlooked by art historians. In the study of Meiji-era ceramics this potential had yet to be explored, but in this context perhaps more than any other—where the notion of fine arts may be seen as a Meiji-era introduction—it seems right that we should not dismiss them out of hand.

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