



Wibke Schrape

# Ikeda Koson and the Construction of Rinpa

Pictorial Negotiation of Art History  
in Nineteenth-Century Japan

Wibke Schrape **Ikeda Koson and the Construction of Rinpa**



A Publication of the Studies of East Asian Art History,  
Freie Universität Berlin

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TO THE MARVELOUS M & M

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A Publication of the Studies of East Asian Art History, Freie Universität Berlin  
Edited by Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch and Antje Papist-Matsuo  
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## Note to the Reader

Japanese terms, titles, and names used in this manuscript are romanized according to the modified Hepburn system. The syllabic nasal “n” is always romanized “n” as in Rinpa and not Rimpa, even in quotations. An apostrophe follows a syllabic nasal within a word to indicate a new syllable as in Hon’ami. A macron indicates a long vowel such as Kōrin, but terms used commonly in English such as ukiyo-e, shogun, and Tokyo are written according to their English spelling. A list of characters at the end of the book provides the Japanese writing of terms, names, and book titles.

Japanese names are rendered in Japanese style, i.e., with the family name before the given name or art-name. If applicable, subsequent references are by art-name only, such as Koson for Ikeda Koson.

Japanese titles, signatures, and seals of Ikeda Koson’s works are notified in the Survey of Ikeda Koson’s Paintings and Prints, Appendix B. The abbreviation B| refers to this survey; A| refers to Appendix A and lists transcriptions and translations of historic sources mentioning Koson.

# Introduction

Japanese artists of the nineteenth century did produce artworks and art history. Painters were creators, designers, instructors, authenticators, traders, and publishers. Japanese painters from at least the seventeenth century onwards mediated their own artistic identities as well as artistic genealogies to stabilize family-run workshops and meet market demands. In the early nineteenth century, political and economic crises stirred up the art market and painters responded to the need to promote their artworks discursively with an increasing number of illustrated woodblock-printed books. These albums, manuals, and copybooks mediated orders of images that interacted with their painting production and promoted a pictorial art history. This premodern art history by painters unfolded in images supplemented by words and not in words supplemented by images—as in modern academic art history.

Academic art history emerged in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912) with newly established museums such as the Tokyo National Museum (Museum of the Ministry of Education, 1872) and the founding of art academies such as the Tokyo University of the Arts (Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku, 1887). These institution's directors often doubled as government officials and created a national art history in response to nation-branding demands. According to their narratives, modern Japanese art history emerged out of a century of artistic decline. Consequently, and much in harmony with European art historical narratives up until the 1990s, the nineteenth century seemed a lost century—nearly non-existent in art historical discourse, or at least not worth studying.

This first monograph on Ikeda Koson (1803–68) sheds light on yet understudied decades of the nineteenth century. It illuminates the artistic scenery of the late Tokugawa period (1603–1868) before the emergence of Meiji art and Meiji art history that dominates Japanese art history until today, with a range of evaluations and narratives still lingering on although questioned repeatedly. Ikeda Koson's multifaceted painting production rebuts the understanding of the late Tokugawa period as one devoid of art. More-

over, this analysis of Koson's works reflects images as mediators in art history and orders of images as means of pictorial, artistic, and art historical meaning and knowledge production. It thereby illuminates the creation and stabilization of the Rinpa genealogy through intertwined artistic and art historical orders of images negotiating art history.

## The Construction of Rinpa

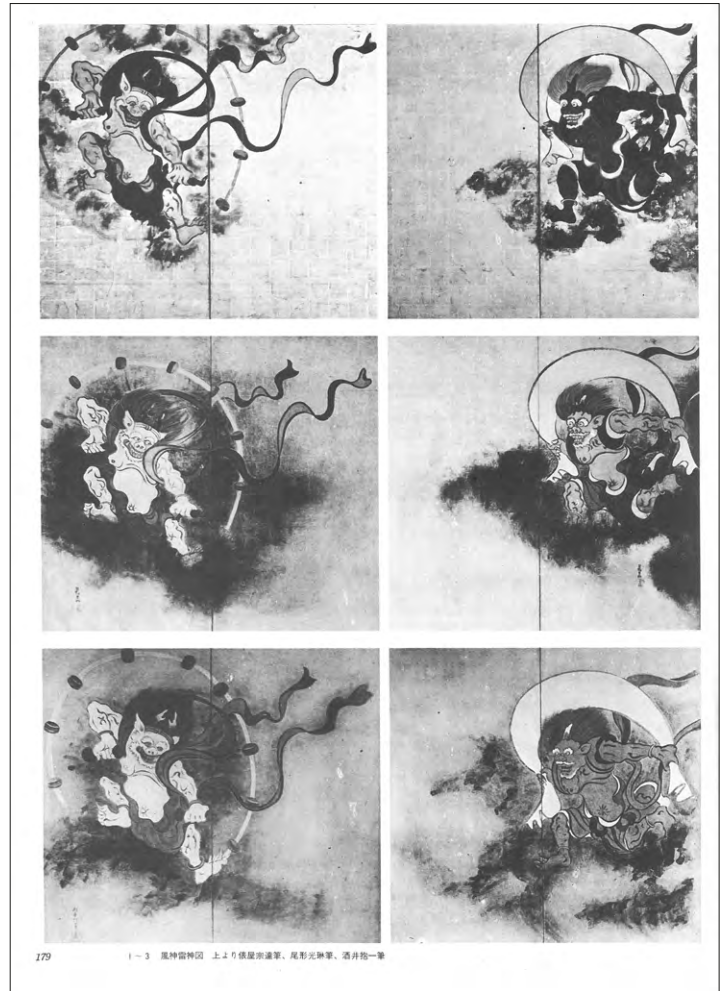
Rinpa as a promising art historical narrative—not as the much older artistic phenomenon—begins with Sakai Hōitsu's (1761–1829) activities around the centennial of Ogata Kōrin's (1658–1716) death in 1815.<sup>1</sup> The artist arranged a commemorative service and organized a retrospective exhibition of Kōrin's paintings. He further published a collection of seals used by Kōrin and other artists under the title *Digest of Ogata Lineage Seals* (*Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu*, 1813). This seal collection outlines the earliest genealogy of this artistic lineage. Last but not least, Hōitsu compiled and published Kōrin's compositions in the woodblock-printed copybook (*edehon*) *One Hundred Works by Kōrin* (*Kōrin hyakuzu*, ca. 1815). He and his disciple Ikeda Koson continued to publish copybooks with small-scale, monochrome reproductions (*shukuzu*) of compositions by Kōrin and his brother Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743). Koson further compiled Hōitsu's compositions. These copybooks shaped and promoted the visual canon of a self-declared artistic genealogy denominated Ogata lineage (Ogata-ryū) by Hōitsu. In this lineage, Ogata Kōrin served as a master painter and Hōitsu functioned as his legitimate successor.<sup>2</sup>

In the Meiji period (1868–1912), art historians in the emerging academic field of Japanese art history reconceptualized the Ogata lineage as Kōrin school (Kōrin-ha) and linked it to Western notions of decorative art. Deluxe publications such as *Masterpieces Selected from The Kōrin School* (*Kōrin-ha gashū*, 1903–06) promoted the invented painting tradition inside and outside of Japan as the essence of

Japanese aesthetics. This modern narrative of Rinpa nourished the image of a cultivated beautiful Japan (*utsukushii Nihon*) as part of its nation branding.<sup>3</sup> The recognition of Kōrin as a prominent Japanese artist in Europe around 1900 served as fertile soil to this notion of the Kōrin school as a distinctly decorative Japanese aesthetic.<sup>4</sup> In this process of canonization, Kōrin school paintings were commonly characterized as flamboyant depictions of literary and floral themes in close-up perspective. The characteristic materials—gold, silver, ink, and vibrant pigments—were applied in specific painting techniques such as boneless depiction (*mokkotsu*) and dripping effects (*tarashikomi*). This stylistic description is consistent with the appearance of many famous paintings by established Rinpa artists. However, numerous paintings do not fit into this scheme at all, simply because they focus on different subjects, use different materials, or are realized in different painting techniques due to theme or addressee of the artwork.

Nevertheless, art historians solidified the notion of the Kōrin school as an artistic genealogy with a unifying decorative style in the twentieth century. Different names for the genealogy, such as Sōtatsu-Kōrin school (Sōtatsu-Kōrin-ha) for the special exhibition of the same title at the Tokyo National Museum in 1951 not only delineate subgroups, but also correspond to favored fields of research at a certain time.<sup>5</sup> The special exhibition *Rinpa ten* at the Tokyo National Museum in 1972 established the final denomination of the group. Rinpa is in fact an abbreviation of the Meiji name Kōrin-ha, which combines Kōrin's second character "jewel" *rin* 琳 with the character *ha* 派 for school.

The emergence of Rinpa as a clearly defined artistic group in the twentieth century went hand in hand with the formation of an almost stable canon of the group's major artists and main artworks. After the Second World War, art historian Yamane Yūzō (1919–2001) successfully promoted a canonical Rinpa lineage comprising three generations.<sup>6</sup> It consists of Tawaraya Sōtatsu (?–1643?) and Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637) in the first generation, the brothers Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan in the second generation, and Sakai Hōitsu with his disciple Suzuki Kiitsu (1796–1858) as the seemingly last noteworthy generation of Rinpa artists, the so-called Edo Rinpa.<sup>7</sup> Yamane and his colleagues thus established Rinpa as a painting school of a few outstanding artists bound by a decorative<sup>8</sup> school style and a notable depreciation from the first to the last generation.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the otherwise



1 Illustration of the three *Fūjin Raijin* pairs of screens by Tawaraya Sōtatsu, Ogata Kōrin, and Sakai Hōitsu in: Yamane, Yūzō. *Sōtatsu to Kōrin (Genshoku Nihon no bijutsu, vol. 14)*. Tokyo: Shōgakukan 1969, p. 179.

constitutive family ties in traditional painting schools such as the Kano (Kano-ha) were replaced by a succession of masterpieces copied and thus serving as the crucial link between generations.<sup>10</sup> This substitution of copied masterpieces for family and workshop relations is commonly demonstrated by the example of the *Wind God and Thunder God Screens (Fūjin Raijin zu byōbu, Fig. 1)*.<sup>11</sup> Art historians' interpretation of Sōtatsu's, Kōrin's, and Hōitsu's pairs of screens as a series of masterpieces that establishes, promotes, and canonizes the artistic group Rinpa is an extremely successful order of images. The popularity of these screens in Japan today, as well as their prominent dis-

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play at the 2015 special exhibition *Rinpa: The Aesthetics of the Capital* at the Kyoto National Museum to celebrate 400 years of Rinpa, reveal the strength of this pictorial negotiation.<sup>12</sup> This book pleads not to deconstruct this order of images, but to critically reflect its inauguration and its lasting popularity due to the art historical and national means it serves.

In the 1990s, art historians such as Tamamushi Satoko actually began to deconstruct the meta-narrative of Rinpa as a pronounced Japanese decorative painting school and the restricted canon this notion mediates.<sup>13</sup> My study is embedded in this ongoing revision of the Rinpa tradition. It follows the pronounced shift of research to Hōitsu and Edo Rinpa as well as to artists difficult to integrate into the established Rinpa genealogy, such as Nakamura Hōchū (fl. late 18th – early 19th century).<sup>14</sup> This book addresses Ikeda Koson as a non-canonical Edo Rinpa artist who maintained Hōitsu's legacy and anticipated the twentieth-century conceptualization of the Kōrin school through his publications.

### Ikeda Koson in Art History

With the exception of one article by Helmut Brinker, Koson's artworks appear in Western language publications only in the form of short catalogue entries.<sup>15</sup> Four short articles including one in the journal *Kokka* (lit. *Flower of the Nation*) testify to a certain interest in the artist in the Meiji and early Taishō period.<sup>16</sup> However, Koson is excluded from the Meiji period outline of the Rinpa genealogy promoted in *Masterpieces Selected from The Kōrin School (Kōrin-ha gashū, 1903–06)*<sup>17</sup> that was fundamental for the twentieth-century conceptualization of the Kōrin school. His name and artworks vanished from Rinpa discourse for the next decades. In the late 1970s, Koson reappeared in Yamane Yūzō's catalogue raisonné *Rinpa kaiga zenshū (Paintings of Rinpa, 1977–80)* with two articles highlighting his publication activities and monochrome reproductions of three paintings.<sup>18</sup> Ten years later, the extended survey *Rinpa (Rinpa Painting, 1989–92)*<sup>19</sup> already comprises twenty-six paintings by Koson. The last volume reproduces his publications *One Hundred Newly Selected Works by Kōrin (Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu, 1864)* and *Mirror of Master Hōitsu's True Works (Hōitsu Shōnin shinseki kagami,*

1865) completely in the form of small-scale black and white reproductions as reference materials.<sup>20</sup> Further artworks by Koson can be found in various collection, exhibition, and auction catalogues.<sup>21</sup>

The appearance of Koson's artworks in Rinpa catalogues and exhibitions during the last three decades brought forth a number of Japanese articles focusing on this artist. Besides several short essays in minor academic bulletins,<sup>22</sup> five *Kokka* articles<sup>23</sup> focusing on newly discovered screens or major works manifest a growing interest in Koson and his paintings. In 2014, Ota Karin undertook a first survey of Koson's artworks while my study was in progress.<sup>24</sup> Last but not least, the discovery of a large, double-sided pair of six-panel folding screens (Freer Gallery of Art, B|50) inspired a first comprehensive study of Koson's biography and his artworks in *Kokka* published by Okano Tomoko in 2015.<sup>25</sup>

Despite this growing interest in Koson, there is still no comprehensive study of his artworks that are preserved and literally scattered around the world; his vast collection of model paintings in the National Diet Library in Tokyo, and his printed copybooks likewise remain understudied. Koson's impact on the formation of the Rinpa genealogy during the second half of the nineteenth century demands further reflection. Moreover, a corpus of primary materials remains more or less unstudied. It includes a collection of seals (IKI) in the Waseda University Library,<sup>26</sup> a copybook manuscript in the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (HSSK.II), and the vast collection of Koson's model drawings (*funpon*) consisting of ninety-nine sheets (KFP), five hand scrolls with smaller sketches (KFPZ.I–V), and two albums (IKSG, KEH)<sup>27</sup> in the National Diet Library in Tokyo. Tamamushi Satoko has addressed Koson's woodblock-printed copybooks *Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu* (KSHZ) and *Hōitsu Shōnin shinseki kagami* (KSSK.I) as sequels to Hōitsu's publications, but their comprehensive paratexts have not been sufficiently analyzed.<sup>28</sup>

This first monograph on Ikeda Koson synthesizes these research achievements and undertakes a comprehensive study of Koson's paintings. It thereby traces orders of images inside artworks, copybooks, and Rinpa publications to question the current understanding of Rinpa specifically and shed light on pictorial negotiations of art history in nineteenth-century Japan more generally.

## Koson, Rinpa, and the Nation

This book examines Ikeda Koson's corpus of paintings, model sketches, and copybooks as a manifold object of investigation. It traces his artistic and art historical activities and thereby analyzes the development of the Rinpa genealogy from Hōitsu's conception of the Ogata lineage to the early twentieth-century art historical construction of the Kōrin school. Ikeda Koson is a non-canonical painter engaged in the construction of the Rinpa genealogy. Following his activities and the art historical perception of his paintings therefore enables an analysis of the emergence of current notions of the Rinpa genealogy and the art historical canon it mediates. Although Hōitsu and Koson have been successful in establishing Rinpa as a leading artistic tradition of national prestige, until fairly recently they failed to incorporate themselves into this story of success. By bringing their work into focus, my research contributes to the understanding of Rinpa as a constructed artistic tradition that was promoted from Hōitsu and Koson onwards as an artist genealogy based on inter pictoriality instead of family ties. My analysis of Koson's paintings, model paintings, and copybooks demonstrates that this inter pictoriality did not restrict itself to the repertoire of literary themes and flowers and birds primarily associated with Rinpa. Rather, Rinpa painting calls on a wide range of pictorial modes and specific model paintings according to the subject, addressee, and purpose of an artwork.

The emergence of the Kōrin school is strongly entangled with the nation's aim to establish a pronounced Japanese identity through aesthetics and with the rearrangement of Japanese art history as an academic discipline during the Meiji period. With regard to this background, this investigation takes Koson's artworks and the perception thereof as a case study to reflect on continuities and discontinuities in the changing field of Japanese art history from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. One focus of my research therefore lies on artists' and art historians' use of pictorial evidence and textual narration as two different ways of producing knowledge. I specifically examine how artists and art historians employ paintings in orders of images to constitute and stabilize the Rinpa genealogy. Furthermore, I address the question to what extent these orders of images nourish a national identity and promote the image of a civilized beautiful Japan (*utsukushii Nihon*).

Finally, this monograph contributes to the ongoing reevaluation of the nineteenth century in Japanese art history that questions the narrative of an art historical void or a proclaimed decline of the arts in the pre-Meiji decades.<sup>29</sup> The quality and diversity of Koson's paintings, model paintings, and copybooks contradict both the alleged art historical void in the pre-Meiji decades of the *bakumatsu*<sup>30</sup> era and the twentieth-century notion that Rinpa declined with Hōitsu. Consequently, my analysis of Koson's works and their reception questions the applicability of Western art historical concepts such as style to Japanese paintings as well as the canon promoted by such concepts.<sup>31</sup> My examination of Koson's works in relation to his art historical publications seeks to articulate a more nuanced art historical terminology and conceptualization based on the artistic and art historical practices traceable in the visual cultures of the late Tokugawa period.

## An ANT Approach to Images

This book uses actor-network theory (ANT) as an overarching framework and a methodical inspiration. However, my engagement with ANT does not exclude other approaches such as history of reception, or art historical concepts such as inter pictoriality and pictorial evidence, but rather depends on them as a specialist's toolbox.

Actor-network theory<sup>32</sup> is an alternative social theory with the understanding of sociology as a science that traces complex association and translation processes (i.e. actor-networks) which constitute the social in the sense of a "sociology of associations" and "sociology of translations."<sup>33</sup> In this study, ANT shifts the focus of investigation from objects to processes of knowledge production that are conducted by a multitude of actor-networks. The term actor-network implies that agency is not realized by a single actor—"anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference"<sup>34</sup>—, but that a number of human and non-human actors is involved in order to let an action take place.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it is not my goal to describe Ikeda Koson's social, artistic, personal, or other networks. The term "network" in actor-network points at a different approach of study rather than at a specific object of study: "Network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described."<sup>36</sup> Latour's

## INTRODUCTION

notion of a network as “a string of actions where each participant is treated as a full-blown mediator”<sup>37</sup> accordingly addresses the movement, flow, or process, in which actions are taking place rather than an interconnected group of actors.

Latour further argues that scientists are involved in this process and that their accounts or texts are ultimately nothing else than mediators themselves—namely entities involved in unpredictable translation processes.<sup>38</sup> Researchers as actors continuously run the risk of modifying the studied object or scene in question. ANT therefore persistently demands the scholar’s self-reflection.<sup>39</sup> For example, I cannot investigate Koson’s artistic production without some kind of retrospective survey of paintings that possibly changes the art historical perception of the artist. Of course, this occurs in art history all the time. But, all the more, I seek to reflect my own involvement with artworks’ meaning production, art historical knowledge production, and canonization.

ANT was developed for the investigation of processual, intangible phenomena such as the social, which cannot be fixed to entities but which emerge of the intertwining activities of many actors or, rather, actor-networks. This is also the case with the art historical construct called Rinpa. The notion of Rinpa as a construct might recall in readers a need to deconstruct this phenomenon as something false, invented, or faked—and yes, Michel Foucault’s discourse analysis was one starting point for my research on Ikeda Koson and the importance of orders of images in art history. But ANT methodology, which developed as part of science and technology studies and focuses on the “construction of facts,”<sup>40</sup> shifts the focus from deconstructing the past to reflecting the past and understanding ongoing processes of construction:

In plain English, to say something is constructed means that it’s not a mystery that has popped out of nowhere, or that it has a more humble but also more visible and interesting origin.<sup>41</sup>

This study illuminates this interesting origin of Rinpa. It seeks to understand the construction of Rinpa by reflecting the past and present actors involved in this process as well as their concerns.<sup>42</sup> In this case, the making of Rinpa and its use in Japan’s nation branding demands an analysis of the complex interaction of artists, art historians, and artworks. The ANT principle “to follow the actors themselves”<sup>43</sup> includ-

ing their matters of concern and the traces they and their group building activities left behind functions as a guideline for this project. I thus take as a starting point Ikeda Koson’s artistic and art historical articulations—paintings, prints, model sketches, publications—and follow their way through the formation of the Rinpa genealogy from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century.

My research thereby draws especially on reception theory. I am, however, less interested in an examination of the aesthetic of reception or effect (*Rezeptionsästhetik* or *Wirkungsästhetik*) laid out as a function of viewing (*Betrachterfunktion*)<sup>44</sup> nor in a possibly complete history of written references on Koson. Instead, I aim at a reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) in the sense of a critical examination of sources and handling of sources.

I also draw on Bruno Latour’s distinction between “intermediary” and “mediator” as two distinct approaches to entities in processes of knowledge production. While an intermediary simply transports meaning without transformation and thus functions as a black box, a mediator communicates meaning in an unpredictable process of translation.<sup>45</sup> By tracing and analyzing the translation processes involved in the formation and promotion of the Rinpa genealogy, I illuminate continuities and discontinuities in the methods and concerns active in Japanese art historical knowledge production—from the nineteenth-century art history practiced by artists to the academic field maintained by art historians in the twentieth century. This includes an examination of the “immutable mobiles”<sup>46</sup> of the ever-changing Rinpa genealogy, meaning constant features that demand translation processes and assume different forms but remain essentially the same. I therefore analyze text and image as two different, but efficient mediators of art historical formations.

My research focuses on inter pictoriality in Rinpa painting as a way in which images act as mediators of artistic and art historical concerns. I specifically examine Koson’s extant paintings, his collection of model sketches (*funpon*, NDL), and his copybooks with a close look to inter pictoriality as a creative practice to visualize artistic traditions in the sense of a “pictorial memory” (*Bildgedächtnis*).<sup>47</sup> The concept of inter pictoriality originates from the poststructuralist term intertextuality and generally addresses “relations between images as well as their modes of transformation from one to another.”<sup>48</sup> I argue that inter pictoriality in Edo

Rinpa painting is based on shared model sketches and that it functions as an “immutable mobile” for the art historical construction of the Rinpa genealogy in its historical transformations.

ANT moreover highlights the complex relations between human and non-human entities and insists on the equal treatment of subjects and objects as actors involved in actor-networks. This reveals to me a promising way to deal with Alfred Gell’s stimulating concept of the agency of artworks.<sup>49</sup> Other theoretical approaches currently applied in art history such as the concept of performativity<sup>50</sup> and pictorial evidence<sup>51</sup> likewise address Gell’s notion of the agency of artworks. All these approaches attempt to reconsider the meaning and agency of images in the complex relationship between the production of an image, the actual image, and its reception. From the viewpoint of ANT, the question of how, where, when, and by what means artworks unfold agency comes along with a distinctive critique not only of the object-subject binary but also of the artwork-context binary:

Apart from religion, no other domain has been more bulldozed to death by critical sociology than the sociology of art. Every sculpture, painting, *haute cuisine* dish, techno rave, and novel has been explained to nothingness by the social factors ‘hidden behind’ them. [...] Nowhere has social explanation played more the role of a negative King Midas transforming gold, silver, and diamonds into dust. And yet, as one sees in religion, if you are listening to what people are saying, they will explain at length how and why they are deeply *attached, moved, affected* by the works of art which ‘make them’ feel things. Impossible! Forbidden! To be affected is supposed to be mere affectation.<sup>52</sup>

Latour argues that social context and inner quality of artworks were played out against each other in approaches of critical sociology in art history with the result that everything lost from the one side was gained by the other and vice versa. He criticizes the resulting emphasis on the bipolar object-subject relationship as well as the boundary of internalism and externalism or the autonomy of an artwork and its contextual influence. Instead, he demands that all actors enabling the perception of an artwork should be understood as mediators involved in the act of producing agency:

The more influence, the better. And if you are allowed progressively to influence the quality of the varnish,

the procedures of the art market, the puzzles of the narrative programs, the successive tastes of collectors making up a long retinue of mediators, then the ‘inner’ quality of the work will not diminish but, on the contrary, be reinforced. The more ‘affluence’, the better. It is counterintuitive to try and distinguish ‘what comes from viewers’ and ‘what comes from the object’ when the obvious response is to ‘go with the flow’. Object and subject might exist, but everything interesting happens upstream and downstream. Just follow the flow. Yes, follow the actors themselves or rather that which makes them act, namely the circulating entities.<sup>53</sup>

However, following these circulating entities is not as easy as it sounds. Difficulties increase especially when the circulation itself is not traceable through historic sources and when many of the potential mediators—such as the art market, but also private as well as public collectors—are not interested in transparency of the circulation of artworks. As this study is predominantly considering art historical production of knowledge, the focus is on the role of artists and art historians in the formation of the Rinpa genealogy. Other mediators in this process will be indicated just as far as possible.

This outline of my theoretical framework makes clear that my adoption of ANT is quite partial in so far as my focus is on images as a prominent type of mediator in art historical group formations. Although ANT demands a complete and impartial compilation and analysis of all possible actors involved in actor-networks, it is obvious that an impartial description or investigation is utopian. This is all the more the case when the objects of research belong to the past and the amount of historical data providing an impartial examination is thus remarkably reduced. Nevertheless, ANT provides me with a methodical approach to reflect my own research and stance as well as the effect of art historical standardizations in the making of the Rinpa genealogy.<sup>54</sup>

## About this Book

The first chapter approaches the object of research by tracing Ikeda Koson and his works in art historical writing according to the ANT principle to follow the actors. It introduces the person Ikeda Koson in the mirror of historic sources. I analyze repetitions and seemingly minor modifications of basic biographical



## INTRODUCTION

facts such as the rendition of his name and shifts in the biographical data in order to reflect strengths and weaknesses of art historical standardizations. A summary of the perception of Koson's paintings further sheds light on the relationship between art historical writing and the art market. Based upon these observations, the chapter closes with a discussion of artworks as actor-networks in art history.

Chapter two and three examine Koson's paintings in relation to the pictorial world of Rinpa. The second chapter focuses on Koson's production of folding screens, which are crucial for Koson's appreciation and evaluation as an Edo Rinpa artist. The chapter opens with a methodical introduction to key terms such as painting mode, pictorial mode, and interpictoriality. In a next step, I discuss Koson's main works in correlation to their subject matter and related pictorial and painting modes. The analysis of Koson's folding screens shows how artists in the nineteenth century mediated their own artistic identities in paintings and how art historians respond to such mediations by categorizing artists based primarily on a few main works. Special focus is set on the notion of heirloom paintings as strong mediators in the construction of Rinpa applied by artists and art historians.

The third chapter focuses on smaller formats such as hanging scrolls and albums and elucidates the diversity of Koson's paintings. It examines the artist's painting practices and engagement with different artistic constructs such as Rinpa, literati painting (*bunjinga*, alternatively also *nanga*), early genre painting (*fūzokuga*), and the *Yamato-e* Revival school (Fukko Yamato-eha). While some painting modes are clearly grounded in Rinpa pictorialism, others such as Koson's beauties, landscapes, and religious paintings indicate his involvement with other artistic traditions. The chapter aims at illuminating the complexity of Edo Rinpa pictorial production beyond the constricting canon negotiated by the early-twentieth-century promotion of Rinpa style. Moreover, the analysis of Koson's artworks highlights interpictoriality as a creative practice to appropriate pictorial modes and promote artistic lineages in the nineteenth century. The third chapter closes with conclusions on the chronology and characteristics of Koson's paintings.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to Koson's artistic activities beyond paintings. His *surimono* are introduced as an understudied field of Rinpa pictorialism which allows conclusions about the intertwined artistic and literati circles joined by Koson. A survey of the painter's collection of model sketches in the National Diet Library in Tokyo sheds light on his previously unnoticed students and intertwined processes of authentication, teaching, and publishing. The focus of research thereby shifts from artistic production to interlinked art historical activities. The chapter further discusses Koson's published copybooks as a pivotal element in the construction of Rinpa between Hōitsu's initial outline in the early nineteenth century and the modern understanding of the genealogy as Kōrin school. A comparison of Hōitsu's and Koson's copybooks emphasizes text and image as different mediators in processes of art historical knowledge production. I further illuminate how Hōitsu's and Koson's promotion of the Ogata lineage through copybooks correlates with the painting production of Edo Rinpa artists.

The fifth chapter illuminates the reconceptualization of the Ogata lineage as Kōrin school around 1900 and traces Koson's activities in this process. While Hōitsu's successors and Koson's own disciples were still continuing the painting production of the Ogata lineage well into the 1930s, art historians constructed an academic version of the artistic genealogy under the name Kōrin school. Publications such as Tajima Shiichi's *Masterpieces Selected from The Kōrin-School* promoted this modern version according to the Meiji state's needs for national aesthetics and paved the way for the continuous stabilization of Rinpa by art historians.

The Conclusion consolidates and reflects on different threads of thoughts traversing this book about Ikeda Koson and the construction of the Rinpa genealogy. It identifies the immutable mobiles that are maintained while triggering transformation in the continuous construction of Rinpa. The appendices compile several surveys on historical sources (Appendix A), Koson's paintings, prints, and publications (Appendix B) and signatures and seals on dated works (Appendix C).

# 1 | Ikeda Koson in the Mirror of Sources

## Tracing the Human Actor

Ikeda Koson is not a popular artist. He is known, if known at all, as the most important disciple of Sakai Hōitsu besides or, rather, after Suzuki Kiitsu. Koson is often considered to be equal in importance to Suzuki Kiitsu and art historian Kawai Masatomo even described them as “the twin great painters of Edo Rinpa.”<sup>55</sup> But this is simply not true. There is a large difference in the number and importance of extant artworks by Kiitsu and Koson, their noted disciples, their social rank, and the degree to which these two artists and their paintings have been studied.<sup>56</sup> Kiitsu’s presence is significantly more pronounced in the Rinpa genealogy at least from 1892 onwards, when he is included in the *Extended Edition of Digest of Ogata Lineage Seals (Zōho Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu)*. Moreover, price lists verify a notable difference in value between Hōitsu, Kiitsu, and Koson throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> In market valuation, Koson rather equals Suzuki Shuitsu (1823–89) than Kiitsu, who gains prices approximately three times higher than Koson, whereas prices for Hōitsu’s paintings are in a completely different league.

It is not my aim to canonize Ikeda Koson, although I might be unable to elude relative canonization as a secondary result of this study. In any case, the comprehensive article in *Kokka* on the rediscovered double-sided pair of screens with *Maple Leaves on a Stream* on the front and *Mountain Views* on the back (Freer and Sackler Galleries) in 2015 already took this burden off my hands: The article clearly aims at a reappraisal of the artist—and likely also achieves this goal due to the power of canonization this journal traditionally possesses in the spheres of Japanese art history and the art market.<sup>58</sup> In any case, this book is less interested in the person Ikeda Koson than in the textual and visual traces this artist left behind. Many of Koson’s paintings are astonishing documents of his artistic practice in the ambit of Hōitsu’s studio. Moreover, his published copybooks apparently seek to transmit his teacher’s artistic lineage through the *bakumatsu* period as a tumultuous age of change

from today’s viewpoint. But although the Ogata lineage eventually became a major painting school via the Meiji conception of the Kōrin school, Koson did fail to be recognized as notable artist and mediator of the genealogy for the longest part of the twentieth century.

This paradox of a painter successfully promoting an artistic genealogy that eventually excludes himself was a major starting point for my interest in Koson. However, this deceptively obvious and thrilling narrative of a forgotten artist became more and more blurred during my research. Traces of Koson’s artistic production can be found throughout the twentieth century. Accordingly, the question to ask is not why he was forgotten, but rather to what extent his art historical perception is interlinked with the general understanding of Rinpa. How does the general evaluation of the artist and his works change in accordance with more general shifts in the perception of Rinpa art and nineteenth-century Japanese painting?

This chapter introduces the textual and visual traces left behind by the person Ikeda Koson. It aims at a more comprehensive introduction to the object of research of this study and emphasizes the flexibility of this object in the lens of art history. In order to trace the human actor Ikeda Koson, I will refer to information transmitted by historic sources of the late Tokugawa and Meiji periods, while summarizing further reflections on his biography achieved by Japanese art historians, most notably Kawai Masatomo, Okano Tomoko, and Ota Karin.

## Names and Name Troubles

Ikeda Koson’s biography still remains largely obscure even where such basic facts as the spelling of his name or his dates of birth and life events are concerned. The following basic facts can be glimpsed from name and address directories published during his lifetime (A|1–11). Ikeda Koson’s name (*na*) was Sanshin. Three sources render this name with three different charac-

ters for “shin,” namely Sanshin 三信 (A|5), Sanshin 三辰 (A|1 and its reprint No. 2), and Sanbai 三倍 (A|6 and its reprint No. 9). In comparison, all signatures and seals known so far only use the characters 三信 or 叄信. I assume that the unreasonable rendition Sanbai—literally “three-fold”—can be explained as a misreading of the seal script variation of 信, which resembles the standard script 倍. The spelling 三辰 is given in the first historic entry on Koson from 1836, but not repeated once until 1891 as a variation of 三信 (A|13). All other historical sources either do not mention this name at all or stick to the spelling 三信 as in *Shoga waisui (Prosperous Essence of Calligraphy and Painting, 1859, A|5)*. The entry in *Shoga waisui* is the most detailed source on Koson during his lifetime and dates back to the height of his artistic career. The same spelling 三信 is repeated in the most influential source on Koson from the Meiji period, *Fusō gajin den (Biographies of Japanese Artists, 1888 [1884], A|12)*.

Comparing these sources and the preserved seals, I have come to the conclusion that Koson’s name (*na*) was Sanshin 三信 as used in many seals and signatures and stated in most sources from the late Tokugawa and Meiji periods. He also used the variation 叄信 and might have used the variation 三辰—literally “three dragons,” also readable as Mitsutatsu or Mitatsu—at an early stage in his career, but neither seal nor signature verify such a use so far. Instead, early paintings by Koson (B|1, 3, 4) are signed or sealed with the name Shūshin 秋信. This name is not mentioned in any historical source. Koson had already dropped it before his first reference in an artist directory in 1836.

Sanshin 三信 and 叄信 could also be read as Mitsunobu. This actually seems to be the more common reading of the name in the nineteenth century in correspondence to the frequent appearance of 信 in Japanese artist names. Moreover, when read Mitsunobu, this name indicates a respectful bond to Koson’s father, whose posthumous name is notified as Mitsunobu 光信 on his gravestone.<sup>59</sup> The occasional combination with Fujiwara 藤原 on a number of Koson’s paintings with *Yamato-e* subjects further warrants such a spelling.<sup>60</sup> And indeed, paintings signed or sealed with 藤原三信 were naturally attributed to a certain [Koson] Fujiwara Mitsunobu in early twentieth-century European collections,<sup>61</sup> whereas the current common transcription is Fujiwara Sanshin.<sup>62</sup>

The reason for this shift in the reading of 三信 from Mitsunobu to Sanshin during the twentieth cen-

tury can be attributed to a change in scholarly standardization. Nowadays, names are spelled according to their most popular Chinese reading (*onyomi*) as long as no proof of an alternative reading has been found in historical sources. Accordingly, the common reading of 三信 would be Sanshin even though the spelling Mitsunobu seems more suitable from a socio-historical and biographical point of view. Furthermore, the possible variation 三辰 does not allow a reading as Mitsunobu, which is another clue why scholars recently prefer the reading Sanshin.

An indicator for the more likely reading of the name Mitsunobu is the signature of the hanging scroll *Persimmon and Mushrooms* (private collection, B|54), which reads “Koson no shitsu no wo Mitsunobu utsusu” 孤村のしつのをみつ信寫. However, this playful signature is not definitive, as the name “Mitsunobu” is written half in kana and half in kanji and could be also understood to mean “three truths” in reference to the depicted two fruits and the cluster of mushrooms.

The artist most probably employed both readings, Sanshin and Mitsunobu, depending on the occasion. A consistent reading of the name as Sanshin appears scientific, but is, in fact, an artificial determination in accordance with current disciplinary standardization of a historically more flexible cultural practice. In order to cope with this phenomenon, I will henceforward use the reading Sanshin in combination with Koson, and Mitsunobu in combination with Fujiwara throughout this book.

A similar development can be observed in relation to the rendition of “son” in Koson with either the more commonly used 村 or the old-fashioned variation 邨. I became acquainted with the artist in the early twenty-first century as 池田孤邨, therefore, I was surprised to find that all directories and ranking lists from Koson’s lifetime, except one (A|11), render his name in the seemingly modern form 孤村. His signatures do not give any hint which use would be more appropriate, as both variations appear frequently on artworks. While more signatures are written with the variation 村, seals naturally show the ancient kanji version 邨. The only argument to render his name in the more unusual spelling is the fact that all dated signatures from his final four years including the prefaces in his copybook publications render his name as 孤邨. This indicates a preference for the more unusual writing towards the end of his life. However, it should be noted

that with only one exception—the already mentioned list of names *Bunjin mitate wakan chōjin* (A|11) from the late Tokugawa period—all entries of Koson in the Tokugawa, Meiji, and Taishō (1912–26) periods registered in Appendix A use the common form 孤村.<sup>63</sup>

In fact, the spelling 孤村 has been consistent until the rediscovery of the artist in the early 1990s. The five-volume catalogue *Rinpa Painting*, published by Kobayashi Tadashi and Murashige Yashushi between 1989 and 1992, states Koson's name as 孤邨. Subsequent articles in *Kokka* go along with this seemingly more historical spelling according to the stylistic practice of the journal to prefer traditional character variants. As a result, the artist is today as naturally spelled 孤邨 as it was written 孤村 in the nineteenth and the first eight decades of the twentieth century. This standardization can be easily observed in revised research on Koson from this time: In her article on Ikeda Koson's *Kōrin shinsen hyakuzu* from 1980, Tamamushi Satoko used 孤村, while she changed the writing to 孤邨 in the passage based on this article in her publication on Hōitsu from 2004.<sup>64</sup> What is the sense in such changes of artist names which do not originate from historical sources but from disciplinary standardizations? And what would be an appropriate approach to such developments? For lack of better regulations, I decided once more to stick to Latour's mantra to "follow the actors" and transcribe the name as accurately as possible in regard to signatures, seals, and scientific sources, but to use the historically more suitable and more convenient variant 孤村 for the time being in cases where it is undecided.

In comparison, Okano Tomoko and Ota Karin decided on 孤邨.<sup>65</sup> The reason given by Okano that Hōitsu preferred the variation 邨 in his studio name Ōson 鶯邨, to which Koson is clearly committed, is a strong argument. However, the homage or commitment of Koson's studio name to that of his teacher is not dependent on the chosen kanji variation. I rather think that Koson might have emphasized his commitment to his predecessors Kōrin and Hōitsu in rendering his signatures with the ancient variants in the case of the prefaces of the Ogata lineage copybooks. Whatever the case may be, although Koson is subordinated to his much more popular teacher in the history of art, the general spelling of his name should be derived from historical sources that are about him, and not from those concerned with his teacher.

The chosen name Koson 孤村 literally means "Lonely Village" and indicates a preference or compre-

hension of the self as a solitary or orphaned person. The interpretation of the name as lonely village is met by the historic description of the artist as a renowned Edo painter enjoying solitude (A|5).<sup>66</sup> The secondary understanding of "Koson" as "Orphan Village" is in all likelihood a homage to his teacher Sakai Hōitsu, as notified in the Hokuetsu directory *Hokuetsu meiryū ihō* from 1914–15 (A|18).<sup>67</sup> In the last month of 1809, Hōitsu moved to Ōtsuka in Negishi, an Edo neighborhood famous for warblers northeast of current Ueno, and he lived there until his death in 1829. During this period, he used the studio name Ōson 鶯邨, likewise recorded as 鶯村, literally the "Warbler Village."<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, the name Koson 孤村 includes a reference to his teacher Hōitsu as well as an indication of his personal preference for solitude which should be understood in the discourse of artistic and literary eremite culture, which Koson also reflected in some other studio names.

The sobriquet (*azana*) Shūji recorded in historic sources (A|1–2) suggests that Koson was a second-born son.<sup>69</sup> The name is used in several seals which appear on early paintings (B|2, 5, 6, 7, 27, 33, 37) and prints (B|W1, W2, W3). An article from the Meiji period also mentions Shūji as Koson's common name.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, directories from Koson's lifetime serve as points of reference for his use of studio names in relation to his places of residence. The first historical entry (A|1) from 1836 notices Koson as a painter living in Fukugawa Fuyukichō, a district in the current Kōtō Ward, east of Nihonbashi and south of Ryōgoku.<sup>71</sup> His studio name (*gō*) is given as Gasenken, a name that so far appears only once in a box inscription (*hakogaki*) for a pair of hanging scrolls (B|12). The box inscription also gives the date spring Tenpō 3 (1832). This indicates that Koson had established an independent studio by this time.<sup>72</sup>

In 1850 (Kaei 3), Koson is situated slightly northwards in Ryōgoku, a neighborhood belonging to the current Sumida Ward (A|3). The next entry in a directory from 1857 (A|4) states him to be living in Hamachō in the current Nihonbashi Ward, just across the Ryōgoku Bridge on the Western bank of the Sumida River. The next location, Ryōgoku Hisamatsuchō, where he is notified between 1859 and 1863 (A|5–6, 8–9), is actually in the same area of the Western bank of the Sumida River, close to Ryōgoku Bridge. During this time, he is also known by the studio names (*gō*) Renshinkutsu ("Cavern for Refining the Mind"),<sup>73</sup> and

Kyūshōken (“Old Pine House”), the last one obviously chosen to reflect his neighborhood.

From these references, it becomes clear that the artist probably moved several times between 1836 and 1863, but stayed roughly in the same area, close to the eastern and western bank of the Sumida River between Ryōgoku Bridge and Eitai Bridge.<sup>74</sup> Eventually, he moved to the neighborhood Mukōjima Susaki, further north on the eastern bank of the Sumida in his final years.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the frequent combination of the Ryōgoku Hisamatsuchō neighborhood and the studio names Renshinkutsu and Kyūshōken suggest that he used these names at least between 1857 and 1863.<sup>76</sup> The studio name Ren’an mentioned in *Shoga waisui* from 1859 (A|5) should be added to this list of frequently used names of his last years. In fact, the painter already used the name repeatedly from the late 1820s onward, making it one of his most frequent studio names next to Koson.

Furthermore, Koson’s seals reveal a couple more artist names (*gō*) such as “Kyūshō shujin” (“Old Pine Master,” IKI 8/56), “Kyūshō Dōjin” (“Old Pine Recluse,” IKI 9/56), and “Kyūshōbō no Inshi” (“Hermit of the Old Pine Dwelling,” IKI 27/56). These, just as Kyūshōken, clearly refer to the neighborhood Hisamatsuchō, where he lived from 1859 onwards. The already mentioned artist name “Fujiwara Mitsunobu” also appears on seals (IKI 33/56, 46/56) and in signatures. The studio name “Chaga Sanmai-an Shu” (“Master of the Hermitage for Concentrating One’s Mind on Tea and Painting”) from one of Koson’s most important seals (IKI 37/56) and its variation “Chaga sanmai” (“Concentrating One’s Mind on Tea and Painting,” IKI 39/56) reveal his inclination towards tea culture as well as an awareness of Buddhist meditation practice.<sup>77</sup> Another seal (IKI 40/56) reading “Tenki shodō” has been translated by Helmut Brinker as “the movements of our natural inner workings”<sup>78</sup> in reference to a phrase from the “Autumn Floods” (*Qishui*) chapter of the Chinese Classic *Zhuangzi* from the third century BCE. Another variation of this studio name with the philosophical term *tenki* is “Tenkikutsu” (“Cavern of the Secret of Nature,” IKI 51/56). The studio name “Hermitage of Natural Spontaneity” “Jinen’an” points to the related Daoistic key concept of *jinen* (Ch. *ziran*).<sup>79</sup> In this circumstance, I can only agree with Helmut Brinker’s conclusion:

Koson’s predilection for such extraordinary sobriquets hints at the artist’s wide-ranging knowledge and inter-

ests in Chinese culture and classical Chinese literature, and his sensibilities in refined Japanese traditions, such as the tea ceremony.<sup>80</sup>

This characterization matches the remarks on the artist’s personality given in *Shoga waisui*, a historical source which is of some importance here, as it is from Koson’s prime artistic period and the only source from his lifetime, which does reflect on his personality:

A renowned painter from Edo, in public highly [esteemed]. Nevertheless, he does not like being distinguished and enjoys solitude behind closed doors. Regarding the authentication of ancient calligraphies and paintings, nobody in the capital compares to him. He further is of such nature that he likes the way of tea (*chadō*) and is skilled in classical Japanese poems (*waka*). Loving lotus, he also has the studio name Ren’an.<sup>81</sup>

This description is complemented by a monochrome reproduction of a lotus leaf (A|5, B|W4) carried away by a dragonfly; signed with “Koson Sanshin utsusu” and sealed with “Sanshin” (IKI 31/56).<sup>82</sup> Okano Tomoko suggests that Koson’s fondness for lotus flowers might have been based on the gorgeous lotuses at the local lake Kyōko in Suibara, Koson’s place of birth.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the lotus and dragonfly are symbols for the transience of life, and the lotus was moreover associated with Chinese literati culture. It specifically evoked the Confucian scholar Zhou Maoshu (J. Shu Moshuku, 1017–73) and his passion for the lotus. Japanese artists developed a subject matter with the celebrated neo-Confucian viewing of lotuses from either a boat or a lakeside pavilion, such as in the hanging scroll *Zhou Maoshu Appreciating Lotuses* by Kano Masanobu (1434–1530) in the Kyushu National Museum, which is designated a National Treasure.<sup>84</sup> Although no depiction of this subject matter is known by Koson so far, the intellectual sphere suggested by this association matches the few descriptive hints which are noted in regard to his character and interests.

### Biographical Facts and Cultural Acts

Together with entries on the artist in *Fuso gajin den* (A|12) and *Hokuetsu meiryū ihō* (A|18), the above-mentioned sources sketch a basic chronology and general picture of Koson’s biography. Ikeda