

A Parade of Pictures: An Examination of the Illustrated Evolution of Gion  
Matsuri Throughout Japanese History

By

Alexandra J. Miller

B.A., Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2012

Submitted to the graduate degree program in the Kress Foundation Department of Art History  
and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts.

---

Chair: Dr. Sherry Fowler

---

Dr. Maki Kaneko

---

Dr. Amy McNair

Date Defended: 21 November 2016

The Thesis Committee for Alexandra J. Miller  
certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

A Parade of Pictures: An Examination of the Illustrated Evolution of Gion  
Matsuri Throughout Japanese History

---

Chair: Dr. Sherry Fowler

Date Approved: 21 November 2016

## ABSTRACT

This study of the Japanese festival known as Gion Matsuri examines a range of images, from seventeenth century painted screens of the capital and its environs to early twentieth century woodblock prints, based on their political and economic relationship with society. By viewing the illustrations through a political lens, in contrast to previous scholarship that focused on the religious evolution of the celebration, I show how the Japanese government utilized images of a traditional festival to bolster its authority over the city of Kyoto. Through iconographical and iconological analysis, I found that representations of the festival were directly tied to shifts in political eras throughout history and, in some cases, they functioned as false claims of prosperity. I also consider the impact Westernization had on the portrayal of the Matsuri. The incorporation of Western style features and imagery into the images aligns with the transformation of the festival from a religious celebration into a contemporary tourist and commercial holiday experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Thank you, Dr. Sherry Fowler, my thesis advisor, for your encouragement, motivation, and guidance during my writing process.
- I would like to express my gratitude to the other members of my thesis committee: Dr. Maki Kaneko and Dr. Amy McNair. Thank you very much for your continual support and advice throughout my years in Graduate school.
- Special thanks to Dr. Marsha Haufler and Dr. Maya Stiller who challenged me to perform to the best of my ability both inside and outside of the classroom.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Origins of Kyoto’s Gion Festival.....	3
Gion Matsuri Representations in <i>rakuchū rakugai zu</i> .....	12
Sanjō screens.....	14
Uesugi screens.....	15
Shōkōji screens.....	20
Funaki screens.....	21
The Calm Before the Storm.....	24
Utagawa Hiroshige II’s Pre-Meiji Gion Matsuri.....	26
Preservation of Japanese Culture within a Westernized Community.....	27
Tokuriki Tomikichirō’s <i>Gion Festival Eve</i> .....	29
Maekawa Senpan’s <i>Gion Matsuri</i> .....	31
Community Standards.....	32
The Cult of <i>Goryō-e</i> .....	33
Conclusion.....	34
List of Figures.....	36
References.....	38

## Introduction

The Gion Matsuri (祇園祭, Gion Festival) is a complex and intricate amalgamation of cultural beliefs and religious rites originally affiliated with an epidemic that swept through the city of Heian (平安; modern-day Kyoto) during the ninth century. Ceremonies and rituals were conducted to pacify and appease the enraged and malevolent spirits who created the numerous epidemics that infected the city. As Japan experienced numerous political, economic, and religious progressions throughout its history, the objectives of the Gion Festival evolved and changed. Furthermore, as the festival's association with the dynamic nature of society developed over time, the artistic renderings of the festival similarly transformed.

Previous scholarship on the visual representations of the Gion Festival tends to focus on either the festival's affiliation with the tourist industry as demonstrated through Michael Roemer's essay, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," or more commonly the festival's religious elements seen in the research by Christian Roy, Penelope Mason, Susan McKay, and Tamara Hareven. Several scholars like Christoph Brumann have focused on the Kyoto community's contemporary artistry in preparing the floats and performances for the festival as described in his article, "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto." A prime case study on the Gion Festival community is presented by Riitta Salastie in *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?: An Analysis of the Urban Conservation in Kyoto*. This scholar's research and documented interviews with the participating neighborhoods and organizations provides insight into the local community's social pressure and cultural responsibility in maintaining this impressive festival.

In contrast to the majority of researchers, I analyze the Gion Matsuri from a predominantly political standpoint to trace the evolution and explain the purposes behind specific

constructions of festival pictures. I also strive to demonstrate how the administrative government used or changed aspects of the festival to validate their rule, transforming an originally religious and community-based celebration into an endorsement of their authority. I finally compare this political evolution of the Matsuri to a more contemporary function of the festival. This paper will consider selected representations of the Gion Festival vis-à-vis the political and social advancements of Japanese society based on their diverse compositions of the floats and parades, and the image's general demonstration of political agency.

I begin by introducing the history of the Gion Matsuri, with consideration of the historical, cultural, and religious implications attached to its annual celebration. Within this context, I will use iconographical and iconological analyses of specific painted screens of *rakuchū rakugai zu* (洛中洛外図, “Scenes in and around the Capital”) to explain how the various depictions of the Gion Festival represent the historical changes in Kyoto's political and societal atmosphere. Scholars devoted to researching the *rakuchū rakugai zu* screens such as Matthew McKelway analyze their political nature vis-à-vis the political endeavors of the Ashikaga shogunate and the environment of the city after the civil war in the fifteenth century; while using a similar approach, I take the subject further and expand it to focus solely on depictions of the famous Gion Festival. Given the extensive period of political accord in Japan from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century and lack of drastic variation in the images of the festival during that time, this paper moves forward in time to provide a brief discussion on Utagawa Hiroshige II's woodblock print *Gion Festival in Kyoto* (1859) and analyzes it as an exemplar of artistic representation of the festival prior to the national reformation of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. This essay concludes with an examination of modern woodblock prints, Tokuriki Tomikichirō's *Gion Festival Eve* (1933-34) and Maekawa Senpan's *Gion Matsuri*

(1946), to explore possible objectives behind the integration of Westernized facets into the Gion Matsuri images. The correlation between the modernization of Japan and the transformation of a traditionally Japanese cultural and religious celebration into a commercial holiday is readily apparent in these prints.

### **Origins of Kyoto's Gion Festival**

The origins of the Gion Matsuri derive from an era when pestilence was common during the rainy summer months,<sup>1</sup> where water would turn stagnant and insects would propagate, giving rise to diseases in people, animals, and vegetation.<sup>2</sup> The disease-causing deities (*ekijin*, 疫神) and spirits were believed to be the wrongly mistreated or executed members of the imperial court (such as a falsely implicated prince or cabinet member unjustly accused as a criminal).<sup>3</sup> Thus, in 863 C.E., Emperor Seiwa (850-878 C.E.) hosted a ceremony of rituals and offerings in the palace garden, Shinsen-en (神泉苑), as a way to appease the unpacified souls of noblemen, which was the earliest recorded occasion of such an event.<sup>4</sup>

A few years later in 869 and after a particularly devastating season of illness (smallpox, dysentery, tuberculosis<sup>5</sup>), by order of the emperor several *mikoshi* (御輿/神輿, portable shrines/palanquins) and sixty-six halberds (long-handled spears with axe-like blades<sup>6</sup>), each

---

<sup>1</sup> Christoph Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto: Claiming a Right to the Past* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 165.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Roy, *Traditional Festivals: A Multicultural Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2005), 184.

<sup>3</sup> Neil McMullin, "The Enryaku-ji and the Gion Shrine-Temple Complex in the Mid-Heian Period," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14 (1987): 166; Joseph Cali and John Dougill, *Shinto Shrines: A Guide to the Sacred Sites of Japan's Ancient Religion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 146; Michael Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," in *On the Road to Being There: Studies in Pilgrimage and Tourism in Late Modernity*, ed. William H. Swatos, Jr. Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), 193.

<sup>4</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 146.

<sup>5</sup> McMullin, "The Enryaku-ji and the Gion Shrine-Temple Complex in the Mid-Heian Period," 166.

<sup>6</sup> Susan McKay, *Japan (Festivals of the World)* (Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1997), 8.



representing one province of the empire, were carried in a procession to Shinsen and subsequently destroyed in order to symbolically purify the city.<sup>7</sup> As epidemics swept through the capital over the following years, month-long ceremonies of rituals, prayers, and offerings to the *ekijin* as well as to the ghosts of cursed court officials (*goryō*, 御霊) were held;<sup>8</sup> this eventually developed into an annual event including a procession carrying *mikoshi* across the Kamo River in Heian.<sup>9</sup> The intention was to mollify the malevolent and plague-causing souls while simultaneously providing elaborate entertainment for the general population.<sup>10</sup> By the sixteenth century, the ceremonies included moving throughout the city in order to clean the streets of the disease-ridden dead. *Mikoshi* were also carried around the capital to encourage the *kami* enshrined within the palanquins to rid the area of pestilence. The purpose of the festival eventually evolved into saving people not only from epidemics, but also from warfare, earthquakes and other natural disasters.<sup>11</sup>

The physical and religious origins of the Gion complex (a.k.a. Gion Shrine [Gion jinja, 祇園神社], later known as Yasaka Shrine [Yasaka jinja, 八坂神社]) are often debated; however, most historians agree its initial founding transpired in the middle of the ninth century when a monk installed the Medicine Buddha, Yakushi Nyorai, at the site.<sup>12</sup> The shrine is currently located at the foot of the Higashiyama hills on the eastern edge of Kyoto with its contemporary

---

<sup>7</sup> Roy, *Traditional Festivals*, 183; Christoph Brumann, “Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto,” *American Ethnologist* 36 (2009): 284.

<sup>8</sup> Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan,” 193.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Phillip McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 50.

<sup>10</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 50; Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 165. A continued discussion on the topic of *goryō* will be continued later on in the paper.

<sup>11</sup> Mason, *History of Japanese Art*, 173 and 233. The timeframe for this depends on the text. Some researchers say this festival was created around 974 C.E., while others declare its origins derive from the eleventh century.

<sup>12</sup> McMullin, “The Enryaku-ji and the Gion Shrine-Temple Complex in the Mid-Heian Period,” 165.

architectural layout taking shape towards the end of the Heian period (794-1185 C.E.).<sup>13</sup> At present the shrine's main entrance stands a two-story, three-bay gate at the top of a long staircase. A large stone *torii* rises in front of this south gate. A vermilion *torii* at a side entrance is typically used during festivals and celebrations as *mikoshi* that carry the enshrined *kami* travel through its pillars.<sup>14</sup> The shrine's Buddhist origins and the consequential installation of both Shinto and Buddhist halls within the complex originally indicated the religious syncretism at the site in medieval Japanese history.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to the shrine's construction, during the eighth century the deity Gozu Tennō (牛頭天王, Sk. Gavagriva),<sup>16</sup> the Ox-headed Heavenly King, protector from illness, was enshrined at the location as a divinity.<sup>17</sup> According to legend, while traveling along the South Sea (Nankai, 南海) with the hope of seeking shelter, the poor man, Somin Shōrai,<sup>18</sup> saved Gozu from his desultory wanderings. In gratitude, Gozu advised the man to brand his (and his descendants') doors with a straw ring so they would be protected against disease and illness. Gozu's role, as the protector from epidemics, is believed to have traveled to Japan from India via the Korean peninsula.<sup>19</sup> One tradition describes how an Indian native journeyed to Japan, settled in Banshū (near modern Kobe), and taught the worship of Gozu Tennō. Another legend portrays Gozu traveling to the present-day site of the shrine in 660 C.E. and curing an emperor's illness.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto," 281.

<sup>14</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 143.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>17</sup> McMullin, "The Enryaku-ji and the Gion Shrine-Temple Complex in the Mid-Heian Period," 165.

<sup>18</sup> The name of the "Somin Shōrai" (蘇民将来) lucky charm in Japan derives from this legendary character.

<sup>19</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 165.

<sup>20</sup> Helen B. Chapin, "The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 54 (1934): 283.

Regardless of his origins, Gozu Tennō, along with his wife and son, remain the principal deities enshrined at the site.

Gion Matsuri has evolved into a month-long celebration of over forty purification rituals,<sup>21</sup> ceremonial offerings, and symbolic parades serving not only the *kami* of Yasaka Shrine but also the many individuals who travel from the far reaches of the archipelago to visit Kyoto for this annual summer event.<sup>22</sup> Today starting the first of July each year, Yasaka Shrine as well as nearby independent organizations, conduct ceremonies to enchant the gods and attract visitors; tea ceremonies, flower umbrella processions,<sup>23</sup> theatrical and instrumental performances also take place during this festive time.<sup>24</sup> No less than ten days before the main celebration, adjoining neighborhoods in the Muromachi District of Kyoto work to assemble thirty-two traditional wooden floats—constructed entirely with the help of straw rope and wooden wedges in the absence of screws and nails<sup>25</sup>—representing the individual communities participating in the parade. Twenty-three of the floats are one-story structure *yama* (山, mountain) wheeled-carts standing at twenty feet tall and weighing between 1.2-1.6 tons each.<sup>26</sup> They are pulled by a group of fourteen to twenty-four men dressed in jackets, straw sandals, and hats. Before the wheels were attached to the carts in the 1960's, they were carried on long poles.<sup>27</sup> Initially incorporated

---

<sup>21</sup> An example of one of these rituals is called Mikoshi Arai meaning “*mikoshi purification*.” It is the purification of the *mikoshi* with water from the Kamogawa River. This is done prior to the moving of the deities of the Yasaka Shrine to the palanquins for their trip to a temporary shrine. This movement of the deities around the city will be explained in more detail later on in the paper. “The Gion Matsuri Festival,” Kyoto Visitor’s Guide, accessed November 2, 2016, <http://www.kyotoguide.com/ver2/thismonth/gionmatsuri.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 194.

<sup>23</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 157; “Gion Matsuri: the Highly Anticipated July Festival,” KCP International Japanese Language School, last modified July 30, 2012, <http://www.kcpwindowonjapan.com/tag/hoko-float>.

<sup>24</sup> Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 203.

<sup>25</sup> *Gion Matsuri* (1994; Tokyo, Japan: NHK International, 2008), DVD.

<sup>26</sup> Tamara Hareven, *Families, History, and Social Change: Life-Course & Cross Cultural Perspectives* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 263.

<sup>27</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 156; Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 147 and 159.

into the parade in 998 C.E., *yama* are characterized as carrying life-sized historical Japanese figurines and over-sized representations of animals and insects.<sup>28</sup> These puppets—arranged to depict historical and legendary scenes—are accompanied by a *shingi* (a sacred tree, often a pine) as well as the occasional miniature Buddhist statue or shrine (*hokora*, 祠).<sup>29</sup> The second style of float are the *hoko* (鉦), three-story structures towering at eighty feet and weighing up to twelve tons, not including the massive wooden wheels at the bottom, each averaging seven feet in diameter.<sup>30</sup> It takes no less than thirty to forty men to pull and push these enormous carts with long straw ropes. The nine *hoko* floats are representations of the sixty-six halberds used in the original purification celebrations but were not added to the parade as floats until 1225. From the roof of each float juts a sacred tree (bamboo or pine), a beacon thought to serve as a temporary resting place (*yorishiro*, 依代) for *kami* invoked during the festival to descend and join the celebrations.<sup>31</sup> All of the carts are elaborately decorated with carvings, lacquer, brass, gold, and tapestries covering all sides.<sup>32</sup> Similar to the *yama* floats, *hoko* also include a stage where troupes of sixty or more musicians (*hayashikata*, 囃子方) wearing patterned *yukata* distinctive of their neighborhood play a specific type of *Gion-bayashi* (Gion festival music); their instruments include a variety of percussions and flutes.

One of the most unusual aspects about the *yamaboko* is the use of over 900 tapestries (*maku*, 幕) displayed on the floats during the festival.<sup>33</sup> The tapestries have varying names

---

<sup>28</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 147; Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 194.

<sup>29</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 158.

<sup>30</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 308; Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 196.

<sup>31</sup> Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 194 and 204. This phenomenon was known as *yorishiro* and began prior to the Heian period.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

depending on their location: the front, the sides, and the back of the *yamaboko*. Other *maku* hang in layers from the stage, the roof, and the decorated railings.<sup>34</sup> A variety of styles are used to create the tapestries' patterns, colors, and images: satin weaving, gold brocade, *karaori* (Chinese-style brocade), *kenmonsha* (patterned silk gauze), Yuzen dying, paintings, embroidery, and tapestry weaving.<sup>35</sup>

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, trade with foreign countries (Korea in the fourteenth, Europe in the sixteenth, and China from the sixteenth to the seventeenth) promoted the collecting of dyed and woven fabrics. The foreign quality of the ornamental tapestries demonstrated a level of sophistication and culture by those using the material.<sup>36</sup> During the Edo period (1615-1868), the occasional Japanese-made tapestry would be used in the parade; however, the construction techniques of these particular tapestries often derived from Chinese methods. As new tapestries are quite costly to produce, most of the tapestries currently used are protected in climate-controlled storehouses to preserve the material and prevent any damage.<sup>37</sup> Many, however, either disintegrated or were given away as their artistic qualities and pricelessness were misunderstood.<sup>38</sup> Many of those preserved or restored to good condition are still used during the festival and parade.

The first day of the Gion Matsuri festivities begins on July first when the *chigo* (a sacred child about ten years of age with a heavily painted white face and golden crown<sup>39</sup>) is purified at

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 198; Kenzo Fujii, "Tapestries Used for Kyoto Gion Festival and their Preservation" (lecture presented at the International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Japan, July 15-22, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Fujii, "Tapestries Used for Kyoto Gion Festival and their Preservation."

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 198; Fujii, "Tapestries Used for Kyoto Gion Festival and their Preservation."

<sup>38</sup> Fujii, "Tapestries Used for Kyoto Gion Festival and their Preservation."

<sup>39</sup> Chapin, "The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival," 287.

Yasaka Shrine while the local priest recites prayers to promote a safe month of events and rites.<sup>40</sup> Up until the fifteenth century, each *hoko* would carry a *chigo* during the parade—young boys from wealthy neighborhood families who were chosen and thus treated like gods—until eventually almost all of the *chigo* were replaced by life-like puppets; the Naginataboko (the first float of the parade) still carries a living *chigo*.<sup>41</sup>

During the next several days of the month Shinto priests visit the various neighborhood floats to recite prayers and purify the objects each *yamaboko* plans to use during the parade.<sup>42</sup> The three days leading up to the main parade (July 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>), the evening festivals called Yoiyoiyoyama Matsuri (宵々々山祭), Yoiyoyama Matsuri (宵々山祭), and the Yoiyama Matsuri (宵山祭) take place and people gather to visit local vendors, play games, buy souvenirs (straw amulets, candles, and food), attend dance and fashion performances, and admire the detail and craftsmanship of the *yamaboko*.<sup>43</sup> Nearby houses hoist lanterns and open their doors to display family heirlooms, precious works of art, and folding screens; this event is commonly known as the “Folding Screen Festival” (Byōbu Matsuri, 屏風祭).<sup>44</sup> It is a custom leftover from the cleansing and airing of houses each year,<sup>45</sup> and, according to the Helen B. Chapin’s early twentieth century research, correlates with the traditional practice of presenting young marriageable daughters dressed in silk kimono alongside precious works of art; within the original context, both the women and the art were admired for their beauty.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Roemer, “Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto’s Gion Festival,” 203.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>43</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 164.

<sup>44</sup> *Gion Matsuri*, DVD.

<sup>45</sup> Penelope Mason, *History of Japanese Art* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 173.

<sup>46</sup> Chapin, “The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival,” 286.

However, it is the Yamaboko Junkō (山鉾巡行, Floatcart Parade) that remains the highlight of the festival. On the morning of the seventeenth, thirty-two floats leave their neighborhoods and line up single file along Shijō Avenue, awaiting the start of the parade. Prior to the celebration, a lot drawing takes place to determine the position of the floats in the parade. A young boy (not the *chigo*) draws the lottery from a lacquered box.<sup>47</sup>

The *chigo*, standing atop the Naginataboko, uses a sword to perform the ceremonial act (*shimenawakiri*, 注連縄切り) of cutting the *shimenawa* (注連縄, a straw rope delineating sacred objects and locations) hanging across the street to initiate the commencement of the parade.<sup>48</sup> The parade ensues for three to four hours along a two-mile course through Shijō, Kawaramachi, and Oike Avenues, eventually returning home via Shinmachi Street.<sup>49</sup> As the Yasaka Shrine's compound stands outside of the old city limits, the parade does not pass by the complex.

After the main parade, three *mikoshi* are carried out of the shrine on the shoulders of dancing men, who spend five hours traipsing through the streets of Kyoto<sup>50</sup> in the hopes of convincing the enshrined deities (Gozu Tennō and his family) to purify the city of any current and future pestilence.<sup>51</sup> This procession (*shinkōsai*, 神幸祭) occurring on the seventeenth of the month concludes with the palanquins' storage at a temporary abode (*otabisho*, 御旅所) within the city limits bringing them closer to the people of the community and, thus, blurring the boundaries of the sacred and secular, and the pure and impure.<sup>52</sup> This closeness also promotes a

---

<sup>47</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 160 and 162.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>50</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 205.

<sup>51</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 54.

<sup>52</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 166; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto," 281.

more physical and spiritual connection with the *kami* enshrined within the *mikoshi*.<sup>53</sup> On the twenty-fourth of the month, after a week of enjoying the festivities, the enshrined *kami* and *mikoshi* are transported back to Yasaka Shrine via another long procession (*kankōsai*, 還幸祭) where they remain out of sight until the following year.<sup>54</sup> These original processions have set a precedent for other ceremonies throughout the Japanese archipelago.<sup>55</sup>

Up until the Pacific War, there had been two separate parades: the first parade (Saki no Matsuri) on the seventeenth with the floats moving eastward along Shijō Street initiating the start of the festival, and the second parade (Ato no Matsuri) on the twenty-fourth moving east on Sanjō Street to mark the return of the *mikoshi* to the shrine; each procession toured one half of the district. However, due to financial stipulations and traffic complications, the parades were merged after the war and held annually on the seventeenth of the month.<sup>56</sup> While the celebrations technically take up the entirety of July, the majority of the rituals are performed during this week-long interval.<sup>57</sup> During the 1960s, the processions were integrated into one parade; they were separated once again in 2014.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the religious implications behind the Gion Festival's inception, the parade was officially canceled during the Ōnin War (1467-1477). A thirty-year hiatus of the parade followed the end of the war until its revival in 1500 by the Ashikaga shogunate.<sup>59</sup> As a result of government support, the festival became a celebration of the city's economic development after

---

<sup>53</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 207.

<sup>54</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 166

<sup>55</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan," 193.

<sup>56</sup> Hareven, *Families, History, and Social Change: Life-Course & Cross Cultural Perspectives*, 171; "Tradition of Two Yamahoko Float Processions to be Revived at the Kyoto Gion Festival," Gion Matsuri, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://www.gionmatsuri.or.jp/foreign/en>.

<sup>57</sup> Gion Matsuri Hensan Iinkai, *Gion Matsuri* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976), 32.

<sup>58</sup> "Tradition of Two Yamahoko Float Processions to be Revived at the Kyoto Gion Festival."

<sup>59</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 133.



the destruction caused by the war.<sup>60</sup> As the festival evolved into a financial burden for the new government, it was occasionally delayed or cancelled; however, during the prosperous years, the shogunate often encouraged and demanded the festivals to be held. The annually scheduled Gion Matsuri became an indicator of the stability and prosperity of the Ashikaga rule.<sup>61</sup>

Although the *yamaboko* decorations provide evidence of the festival's incorporation of religious beliefs, the religious origins of the celebrations are lost to many spectators. Many of the celebrations now focus on the commercialism of cultural legends, myths, war epics, and traditional Chinese and Japanese classical tales.<sup>62</sup> Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Gion Festival began attracting scholars and travelers, exploiting the large-scale tourism revolving around the month-long *matsuri*.<sup>63</sup> Due to the emerging festival tourism, the parade's route was redirected away from the smaller neighborhood streets to the larger avenues of the city in order to accommodate the increasing number of people who travel from all over the country to partake in the festivities.<sup>64</sup> However, even though it is not obvious, some contemporary Japanese people are still motivated by religious values and strive to maintain the religiosity of significant rituals and events.

### **Gion Matsuri Representations in *rakuchū rakugai zu***

The *rakuchū rakugai zu* (洛中洛外図, "Scenes in and around the Capital") are a genre of painted *byōbu* (屏風, folding screens) often existing in pairs and used as decoration in Japanese interior

---

<sup>60</sup> "About the Gion Festival Screens," Kyoto National Museum, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/kaiga/gion.html>.

<sup>61</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 131 and 133.

<sup>62</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 128, 165 and 248; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 292.

<sup>63</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 172 and 246.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 172; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 283.

design.<sup>65</sup> This name originates from the terms *rakuchū*, referring to inside Kyoto (the capital of the Japanese archipelago for a thousand years), and *rakugai*, defined as the vicinity around the capital.<sup>66</sup> The Japanese art historian Matthew McKelway defines the term as simply, “folding screen paintings that depict the city of Kyoto.”<sup>67</sup> *Rakuchū rakugai zu* encompass a multitude of styles and artistic techniques, but cites similar themes and locations within the city. These panoramic images display the relationship between the capital and its inhabitants amongst depictions of the neighboring natural elements (mountains, foothills, and fields) and local religious venues (temples, shrines, and seasonal festivals).<sup>68</sup> Despite the turmoil and destruction occurring throughout this era, the screens present a peaceful representation of the capital. Less vital or controversial elements such as barren fields and city ruins are replaced with highly stylized gold-dust clouds and an ebullience of commoners, merchants, and samurai.<sup>69</sup> These images provided statutory power to the shogunate whose clout resided on sustaining the harmony and welfare of the general population.<sup>70</sup> The primary areas within the images established the prestige of the shogunate (through the representations of the Imperial Palace, the aristocratic mansions, and the *bakufu* and daimyo headquarters) and revealed a prosperous and thriving

---

<sup>65</sup> Oliver Impey, *The Art of the Japanese Folding Screen* (Oxford, U.K: University of Oxford, 1997), 12-13.

<sup>66</sup> “About the Gion Festival Screens,” Kyoto National Museum, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/kaiga/gion.html>.

<sup>67</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 1 and 237. According to McKelway, the character for *raku* 洛 derives from the Chinese city name Luoyang; the kanji’s additional pronunciations include *kyō* 京 and *miyako* 都, both which are synonymous with “Kyoto” and were utilized by the twelfth century. McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 237.

<sup>68</sup> Masafumi Yamasaki, ed., *Kyoto: Its Cityscape Traditions and Heritage* (Tokyo: Process Architecture Co., 1994), 18.

<sup>69</sup> Timon Screech, “Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto by Matthew Philip McKelway Review,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 34 (2008): 181.

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Lillehoj, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting, 1600-1700* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 16 and 172. There are numerous examples of panoramic images of the city of Kyoto on fans and subsequent *byōbu*; however, given their lack of depiction of the Gion Festival, I will not be discussing those images.

community via a bustling merchant neighborhood and numerous seasonal festivals, such as the Gion Matsuri.<sup>71</sup>

One of the earliest known examples of *rakuchū rakugai zu* are the Sanjō screens (1525/30) attributed to the artist Tosa Mitsunobu (1434-1525) of the Tosa School (figure 1).<sup>72</sup> Named after their earliest known owners, the screens reveal the city of Kyoto during a time of political chaos.<sup>73</sup> As the Ashikaga struggled to maintain shogunal control over the city these screens present an image of peace, opulence, and resurgence after the destruction created during the Ōnin War (1467-77). The years following the completion of the war featured numerous restoration projects by officials—reconstruction of buildings (the imperial palace, shogunal mansion, and various aristocratic homes), the rehabilitation of surrounding landscapes from the wartime defoliation, and the recall of priests and nobles who sought refuge elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> Thus, through the strong presence of architectural structures and urbanization associated with the Ashikagas (i.e. the Gold and Silver Pavilions, bustling commercial districts such as Muromachi Avenue, various Zen monasteries, and the Hosokawa mansion/shogun's residence in paralleled importance with the Imperial Palace),<sup>75</sup> and the elimination of or de-emphasis on unfavorable elements, this new city arrangement indicated a stable and idealized shogunal rule.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the representations of the city within these screens are not objective given the ruling power's desire to portray a sense of prosperity even when there was little or none present.

---

<sup>71</sup> Mason, *History of Japanese Art*, 171.

<sup>72</sup> Screech, "Capitalscapes," 182; Yasuhiro Satō, "Perspectives on "Scenes of the Capital," *Monumenta Nipponica* 22 (2007): 216.

<sup>73</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 46.

<sup>74</sup> Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 35.

<sup>75</sup> Sandy Kita, *The Last Tosa: Iwasa Katsumochi Matabei, Bridge to Ukiyo-e* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 173. McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 48 and 62.

<sup>76</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 45.

A conclusive example of political and social affluence is the presence of the Gion Matsuri, which consumes the top half of the right screen's third panel (figure 2).<sup>77</sup> Despite pale gold clouds obscuring a majority of the city—masking any ruin leftover from the war—, the most notable aspects of the procession are the towering *yamaboko* swaying above the miasma, their halberds piercing the sky at random intervals around the block. The presumed Naginataboko, with tapestries of varying colors draped down its sides, is pulled by five men, the ropes in their hands appear as faint lines on the screen. The colors of the warrior-style clothed men effectively match the reds and greens of the floats' fabrics. The *chigo*, dressed in white, looks down at the meager crowds of men and women below. While the carts are pushed and pulled by small groupings of men—ropes grasped by the individuals on the ground steady quivering halberds atop the floats—three small *mikoshi* are carried by tunic-clad men into the city from Gion Shrine at the top of the screen. With red square bases and grey-blue covers, the palanquins symbolize Gozu and his family traveling through the city proper, ridding the area of pestilence and exuding a sense of prosperity and peace.<sup>78</sup> Given the Gion Matsuri's reliance on shogunal sanction, the presence and continuation of the festival and procession during this era of discord is evidence of Ashikaga political stability and security.<sup>79</sup> The Sanjō screens became the ideal model for subsequent *rakuchū rakugai zu*.<sup>80</sup>

Another important pair of *rakuchū rakugai* screens, known as the Uesugi screens, was illustrated in the 1560s by the painter Kano Eitoku (1543-1590), a major artist within the Kano school known for applying gold leaf to the background of his paintings (figure 3).<sup>81</sup> While most

---

<sup>77</sup> Mason, *History of Japanese Art*, 177.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>79</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 62.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>81</sup> Impey, *The Art of the Japanese Folding Screen*, 18.

scholars agree the Uesugi screens were commissioned by the daimyo Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582),<sup>82</sup> the scholar McKelway argues that the screens were instead commissioned by the shogun Ashikaga Yoshiteru (1536-1565) for the renowned warrior Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578) (a rival of Oda Nobunaga).<sup>83</sup> According to McKelway, despite the supposed commission of the screens occurring between 1568 (Oda Nobunaga's occupation of Kyoto) and 1578 (Uesugi Kenshin's death), the majority of the images portray elements of a 1540s and 1550s Ashikaga governed capital city rather than evidence of Oda's notoriety. While numerous historians have pondered over this matter, McKelway provides several possible solutions to this conundrum: the artist Kano Eitoku may have painted them at an earlier date before their acquisition by Oda Nobunaga; they were created in the 1570s with earlier screens in mind; or they were painted prior to the 1560s by someone other than Eitoku.<sup>84</sup>

Named after the recipient, Uesugi Kenshin, this pair of six-folding screens of ink and gold leaf on paper was passed down for generations through Uesugi clan members.<sup>85</sup> The screens themselves depict both the aristocratic residences in Shimogyō (the lower capital) as well as the Ashikaga clan's ruling district in Kamigyō (the upper capital).<sup>86</sup> This cohesion of imperial presence and military reign, of samurai mansions and Ashikaga affiliate temples (Konrenji, Nanzenji, Myōkakuji) indicates a strong and prosperous regime.<sup>87</sup> The Gion parade was initially painted as a "visual signal of the political and economic strength of the Ashikaga shoguns who had reestablished and sanctioned the festival."<sup>88</sup> The screen's strategic designs and

---

<sup>82</sup> "About the Gion Festival Screens," Kyoto National Museum, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/kaiga/gion.html>.

<sup>83</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 128.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 98 and 101.

<sup>86</sup> Rhiannon Paget, "Exploring Japan's Ancient Capital Inside and Out," *The Japan Times*, October 16, 2013, 1.

<sup>87</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 119.

<sup>88</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 195.

illustrations—such as two elaborate festival processions converging on the shogunal palace in the fourth panel<sup>89</sup>— support the idea of the Gion Shrine *kami*’s protection of the Ashikaga shogunate implying that only through the Ashikaga’s leadership could the city have prospered.<sup>90</sup>

Each section of the Uesugi screens illustrates the most noted aspects of the city’s famous architectural and political achievements (the Imperial Palace) along with a range of seasonal rituals and festivals, like the Gion Matsuri. The Gion Festival and parade are painted on the right screen’s third panel (figure 4). Amidst the gold clouds and row of one-story houses, eight *yamaboko* are led by the Naginataboko along the crowded streets of the city. Adorned with animal skins and red, blue, green, and white tapestries decorated with gold thread, the floats are pushed and pulled on their wooden wheels by armor-clad figures.<sup>91</sup> The height of each halberd atop their floats is striking; ropes fastened to the edges of the carts appear as the only method of keeping the masts afloat. The *yamaboko* often depicted Chinese and Japanese historical tales and legends through the images, decorations and figurines adorning the carts. For example, a reproduction of a voyage to Korea was illustrated on a boat-style *hoko*, a float painted amidst a grouping of gold clouds at the bottom of the panel,<sup>92</sup> and is dedicated to Jingū, a legendary Japanese Empress and heroine.<sup>93</sup> In the foreground, a scene from the *Kojiki* (古事記, an eighth century record, both historical and mythological, re-telling of the origin of the Japanese archipelago and numerous Shinto deities) was commemorated on the one of the floats. Under the aegis of the Ashikagas, some of the festival floats also incorporated imagery of the Ashikaga shogunate’s patron deities.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 119.

<sup>90</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 195.

<sup>91</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 133.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>93</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 197.

<sup>94</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 133 and 135.

While the Naginataboko, near the bottom of the screen, transports the *chigo*, the other *yamaboko* carry Buddhist statues, miniature red *torii* gates, or troupes of musicians dressed in white. Several of the *yamaboko* also bear trees or branches, their bases wrapped in green fabric to provide balance and stability. Surrounding the floats are crowds of people adorned in tunics with straw hats atop their heads. Spectators can be seen peeking from alleyways and several of the houses are painted with their doors wide open and people sitting outside, showing off their precious objects to the crowds. The staggering mass of animated people provides an enthusiastic ambiance as elation radiates from those enjoying the festival. *Mikoshi* are seen carried across the Shijō Bridge on the shoulders of elaborately costumed men.<sup>95</sup> The overall depiction of the Gion Festival throughout the Uesugi screens differs from the previously illustrated Sanjō screens with the Uesugi panels displaying a more lively and populated capital wedged into the small spaces between the gold leaf clouds. Despite the unpainted destruction from the Ōnin War, the frenzy of boisterous people cascading through the streets and the elaborate foreign tapestries decorating the *yamaboko*—indicating a flourishing trade center—allude to the expansion and proliferation of the Ashikaga shogunate.<sup>96</sup>

Albeit indications of the festival confirms the prosperity of the Ashikaga shogunate via their sponsorship of the floats,<sup>97</sup> the cultural celebrations were in fact organized, dominated, and preserved by the townspeople, the temples, and the Gion festival district (Yama Hoko Cho) in Kyoto.<sup>98</sup> The continued evolution of the festival as a neighborhood-based celebration and the economic growth of the city is revealed through the increase in size and embellishments of the

---

<sup>95</sup> William P. Malm, “Music Cultures of Momoyama Japan,” in *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, eds., George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1981), 180.

<sup>96</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 195; McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 100 and 133.

<sup>97</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 196.

<sup>98</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 174; Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 167; Hareven, *Families, History, and Social Change*, 264. Brumann implies that this district encompasses only the specific areas who contribute and participate in the festival with floats, games, performances, and food stalls.

*yamaboko* vis-à-vis the earlier *rakuchū rakugai zu* (Sanjō and Uesugi screens);<sup>99</sup> the floats emblazoned with rich colors and large frames emerge from between the small houses of the city thus portraying an overwhelming sense of sophistication, status, and pride for the district who maintained, decorated, and built them each year. The *machishū*, the ordinary townsfolk and craftspeople of the city,<sup>100</sup> was an amalgamation of classes and economic means, but were largely considered separate from the elite and warrior classes of society.<sup>101</sup> Yet, by participating in a variety of cultural and religious activities like pilgrimages and festivals, they found they could break through class barriers, particularly with their financial contributions to the festivities.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the *machishū* embraced their new power and status by designing and sponsoring the floats, one float per neighborhood, during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>103</sup>

During the mid-1500s, the Gion Festival underwent drastic bureaucratic transformations. Due to the numerous wars occurring through the sixteenth century, the political and physical devastation of the country prevented the continued observance of the festival. With the destruction of over 2000 buildings and a reduction of Kyoto's population from half a million to 40,000 the reconstruction of the city took many years.<sup>104</sup> However, the townspeople still strove to celebrate the festival despite the shogunal authorities' decision to suspend the events due to both undesired community insurgency as well as unavailable finances. Continued negotiations between government officials and shrine representatives resulted in a short suspension of the summertime festival with a decree for reinstatement a few months later only if the local

---

<sup>99</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 170.

<sup>100</sup> Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 292.

<sup>101</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 147.

<sup>102</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 198.

<sup>103</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 175-176.

<sup>104</sup> Riita Salastie, *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?: An Analysis of the Urban Conservation in Kyoto* (Finland: Helsinki University of Technology, 1999), 34.



communities could fund the festivities.<sup>105</sup> Given the presence of a financially weak shogunate, the local bourgeoisie had no other choice but to fund the celebrations.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, the Tokugawa shogunate's administrative control over the religious institutions authorized them to forbid the Gion Shrine from hosting the festival during the Edo period.<sup>107</sup> Thus, the wealthy townspeople claimed personal ownership and responsibility of the festival insisting the parade could take place without any religious institutional financial support or affiliation.<sup>108</sup> Eventually, the patronization of Buddhism and temples by the Tokugawa shogunate allowed for Buddhist ceremonies such as memorial services and burials to legally transpire while the emperor maintained his high position within the Shinto pantheon.<sup>109</sup>

Akin to the previously mentioned screens, both the Shōkōji *byōbu* and Funaki screens illustrate a panoramic view of the capital under a new governmental ruling by the Tokugawa shogunate. Considered one of the oldest pairs of Edo-period (1615-1868) *rakuchū rakugai zu*, the Shōkōji screens provide a rare depiction of the Gion Festival (figure 5).<sup>110</sup> Traditionally, the *yamaboko* parade traveled a predetermined course crossing the Kamo River at Shijō before winding through the Lower Capital's streets. However, alluding to historical events that occurred only twice in history during the seventeenth century (1604 and 1615), the parade in the screen, instead, passes by the gates of a dramatically illustrated Nijō Castle, the residence of the first Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1542-1616) (figure 6). Despite Nijō Castle's construction under Toyotomi Hideyoshi's (豊臣秀吉, 1536-1598) guidance, upon his victory at

---

<sup>105</sup> Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 217.

<sup>106</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 99.

<sup>107</sup> Salastie, *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?*, 34; John Whitney Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1991), 171.

<sup>108</sup> Salastie, *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?*, 34.

<sup>109</sup> Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, 185.

<sup>110</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 186.

the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu appropriated the building for his own personal use, thus destroying any associations it maintained with previous regimes.<sup>111</sup>

Additionally, while the castle was never considered a political or military residence, it functioned as the headquarters for the Tokugawa during their stay in the capital.<sup>112</sup> According to McKelway, the Tokugawa's primary motive for the redirection of the parade was to dissuade city residents from commemorating a celebration at the Hōkoku Shrine that honored Toyotomi Hideyoshi.<sup>113</sup> This change was also made to validate Tokugawa authority over the spiritual realm, receive blessings and protection from the deities and convey a sense of political hegemony after the final triumph over the Toyotomi clan (1615).<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, the Funaki *byōbu* (a set of screens formerly owned by Dr. Funaki)<sup>115</sup> also references the contentions between the former government under the Toyotomi clan (presented through architectonic imagery such as the Great Buddha Hall [Daibutsuden] of Hōkōji) juxtaposed against the newly celebrated Tokugawa Ieyasu's rise to power (evident through the grand display of Nijō Castle) (figure 7).<sup>116</sup> However, compared to the Shōkōji screens, the Funaki screens convey a more centralized governmental power despite the initial perception of its demonstration of an inconclusive political resolution between Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa Ieyasu.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the scenery of the Funaki screens illustrating a 1614-15 capital city, the artist, Iwasa Matabei (1578-1650), or those who worked closely with him and painted in his style,

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 190-92 and 195.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>116</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 178; "About the Gion Festival Screens," Kyoto National Museum, accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/kaiga/gion.html>.

<sup>117</sup> McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, 192 and 195.

likely completed the images between 1622-24 (such evidence is drawn from the inclusion of several architectural establishments having only been built in the few years prior).<sup>118</sup> However, these screens suggest the peacefulness of the everyday lives of the common people (the *machishū*) rather than displaying a sense of an overbearing military power.<sup>119</sup> Despite illustrating the political growth of a new era archetype of Edo-period *byōbu*, the Funaki screens, populated with an estimated 2,728 figures, depict an idealized city enhanced by the commoners rather than staunch militaristic manifestations.<sup>120</sup> As the Tokugawa were preoccupied with governing the land, the screens present a pre-militarized society. Instead, these images emphasize the civil circumstances of the time and the involvement of the Tokugawa in cultural and artistic matters.<sup>121</sup> For this reason, the Funaki screens do not align with the other cityscapes depicted during this time, which focus on a world inhabited by warriors rather than the everyday commoner.<sup>122</sup> Compared to earlier examples of *rakuchū rakugai zu*, gold clouds are scarce and instead the space is filled with the lives of the city's inhabitants.<sup>123</sup> The top right of the left-hand screen displays a localized Gion Matsuri surrounded by hordes of similarly illustrated people (figure 8). Some parts of the festival depict less crowded areas with vibrantly colored balloonesque decorations, quite unlike the traditional *yamaboko* seen in previous portrayals.<sup>124</sup> Their rounded shapes are highlighted by patterned circular sections of color. Floral and geometric designs adorn the rippling tapestries; tall halberds and trees quiver in the air atop the floats, carried, pushed, and pulled by armor-clad men. Spectators watch from crowded windows

---

<sup>118</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 265.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>120</sup> Mason, *History of Japanese Art*, 246; Paget, "Exploring Japan's Ancient Capital Inside and Out."

<sup>121</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 188.

<sup>122</sup> Kita, *The Last Tosa*, 173.

<sup>123</sup> Mason, *History of Japanese Art*, 246.

<sup>124</sup> Malm, "Music Cultures of Momoyama Japan," in *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, 181.

as the festival decorations maneuver through the streets, their bulky forms seemingly swaying in the wind. Toward the top of the screen is a dense crowd surrounding several *mikoshi*. Quite paltry compared to the floats further down the road, the palanquins are carried on the shoulders of men. With a border of gold clouds circumventing the parade, the reflection on one of the palanquin's gold covered bodies is heightened as a result of the contrast with the drab and faded colors of the platform upon which it rests. To the right of the crowd, several women with hair hidden beneath white cloths cover their mouths as they gaze upon the grand spectacle. The streets are filled with merchants' shops, food stalls, and a bustling city life, which enhances the ambiance of a growing and rebuilding capital. The festival expressed the vitality and sustenance of the merchant class and the commoners, as well as the authority from both the Tokugawa clan and the Imperial family.<sup>125</sup>

As previously discussed, *rakuchū rakugai zu* as a whole emphasize variant political and social changes during medieval and early modern Japanese history. The scholar Mary Elizabeth Berry correlates these artistic screens' (including specific *rakuchū rakugai zu*) representation of a consolidated and hopeful capital and social world with images from temple and shrine mandalas and handscrolls. The screens incorporate an array of prominent locations, from the Imperial palace and shogunal mansion to noble residence and military compounds and residences, from temple and shrine complexes to distinguished gardens, market streets and commercial districts.<sup>126</sup> Typically illustrated in a cyclical and seasonal pattern, the images present space, time, and nature in a single amalgamous scene. Artists tended to accentuate patterns of achievement via abstract or misty gold clouds while downplaying controversial religious

---

<sup>125</sup> Lillehoj, *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting*, 188.

<sup>126</sup> Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 295-297.

landmarks such as Enryakuji on Mount Hiei.<sup>127</sup> While painters strove to eliminate any contentious features, the unavoidable presence of the palace, shogunal mansion, and military elite still heavily implied a politically authoritative realm.<sup>128</sup> As the political structure transformed during the fifteenth to sixteenth century, artists commissioned by the shogunate centralized an array of motifs emphasizing the elevated commerce via images of infrastructures and consumers; entertainment and festivals, like the Gion Matsuri; and authoritative power with illustrations such as the Hosokawa mansion within their paintings.<sup>129</sup> This panoramic view of the capital assisted in highlighting the broadening political, economic, and social developments of society well into the Edo period.<sup>130</sup>

### **The Calm Before the Storm**

While the previous images of the Gion Matsuri express the political and economic tensions permeating throughout the city of Kyoto, images depicting the festival during the Edo period express a calmer and more leisurely pace of activity. Widely conceived as a two-hundred-year era of amity with political stability, travel ataraxia, population growth, and architectural advancements, there was also an increase with an engagement of worldly pleasures.<sup>131</sup> For example, developed during this time were *ukiyo-e*, or woodblock prints produced between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries that advertised the pleasures and hedonistic mentality of the “Floating World.”<sup>132</sup> With the rise of a class of merchants and artisans, leisurely activities were

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 296-297.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 300-1.

<sup>130</sup> Frank Hoff, “City and Country: Song and the Performing Arts in Sixteenth-Century Japan,” in *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, ed., George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1981), 147-8.

<sup>131</sup> Marije Jansen, *Hiroshige’s Journey in the 60-odd Provinces* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), 7.

<sup>132</sup> The Yoshiwara was a licensed red-light district on the outskirts of the city of Edo from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century; it was notorious for its ephemeral atmosphere.

now enjoyed by any who could afford them, such as the rising affluent merchant class. The scholar Frederick Harris states that these woodblock prints advertised the local entertainment, from tea houses, shops and restaurants, to bars and brothels.<sup>133</sup> As the popularity of *ukiyo-e* grew, walls and sliding doors of houses were decorated with the prints.<sup>134</sup> The conventional themes within the print making industry were landscapes, kabuki actors, and *bijinga* (beautiful women).<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, despite the instating of the Tenpō Reforms in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, some published content featuring historical figures and events, landscapes, children, and classical Japanese legends and narratives flourished.<sup>136</sup>

The woodblock print artist, Utagawa Hiroshige II (二代目歌川広重, 1826-1869) often demonstrated an amalgamation of traditional Japanese elements and expression of daily luxuries within his work. Born as Suzuki Chinpei (鈴木鎮平), Hiroshige II changed his name to Shigenobu during his apprenticeship under Utagawa Hiroshige I (歌川広重, 1797-1858), and then inherited the name Hiroshige upon his master's death. After dissolving his marriage in 1865, Hiroshige II moved to Yokohama from the capital of Edo to work on prints of foreigners. Despite his separation from the Hiroshiges and taking the name Kisai Risshō instead, he is still

---

<sup>133</sup> Frederick Harris, *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print* (Tokyo and Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2010), 11.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>136</sup> Designed by the Tokugawa shogunate, the Tenpō Reforms (1841–43) were a response to an increase in crime, poverty, and discontent in the city and designed to restore a feudal society emphasizing the (Confucian) Japanese family, and thus purge society of any impurities appropriated from the pleasure districts. Despite its ineffectiveness, for a short time they succeeded in censoring illustrations of contemporary political events, social and cultural changes in the community, and specific warriors and the ruling families. Frederick Harris, *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print* (Tokyo and Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2010), 146; Lawrence R. Bickford, *Sumo and the Woodblock Print Masters* (New York and Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994), 127; “Tempō reforms,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v, accessed November 4, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Tempo-reforms>.

considered the most successful and talented student of Hiroshige I, with his print style and thematic composition closely resembling that of his master.<sup>137</sup>

An example of this combination of tradition and gratification is Hiroshige II's *Gion Festival in Kyoto* from the series *One Hundred Famous Views in the Various Provinces* (諸国名所百景京都祇園祭礼, *Shokoku meisho hyakkei Kyōto Gion sairei*) (1859) (figure 9). This print depicts a close-up of a beautifully-adorned *hoko*, a myriad of cloud and floral designed fabrics with an assemblage of greens, blues, reds, and yellows decorating its sides; a group of musicians sitting towards the back of the floats' stage harmonize their instruments while the *chigo*, noted for his headdress, looks down at the lingering crowds. The halberd-style top and tree stretches upwards from the float's black roof, fading into the pale blue of the sky as a bright blue winding river, a jaggedly sketched forest, and a gray silhouette mountain range constitute the background of the image. A large building with a veranda looms to the right of the float as a gathering of people watch the parade from behind a yellow fence at the building's base. Given the purposeful perspective of the print, the lower half of the float and the men who pull the *hoko* must instead be imagined by the viewer.

The country experienced external pressures towards the middle of the nineteenth century, such as the strain to reform under Western guidelines. Furthermore, the Tokugawa regime and feudal (daimyo) system disbanded, the four partisan class system disintegrated introducing a new class structure with simplification of class statuses (daimyo and courtiers were considered nobles, samurai were gentry, and everyone else were labeled as commoners) vis-à-vis a free economic society, and a coveted rapid modernization took hold of a newly unified country.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> J.P. Filedt Kok, ed., *Hiroshige and The Utawaga School: Japanese Prints c. 1810-1860* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1984), 62-63.

<sup>138</sup> Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*, 253, 281-282.

Hiroshige II's image was produced at the beginning of the political and social shifts that eventually led to the Meiji Restoration and the return of political authority to the emperor in 1868. It maintains the colorful, lively, and traditional characteristics of previously depicted Gion Matsuri parades, thus emphasizing the consonance present in the city prior to the numerous political transformations imposed upon society. The bright banners and accoutrements adorning the *hoko*, the musicians' performance in tempo with the float's march along the street, the *chigo*'s captivated audience, and the cool and calm clouds billowing behind the parade contribute to the still serene atmosphere of this annual cultural celebration.<sup>139</sup>

In spite of the stringent preservation of the Gion Matsuri during the numerous legislative revolutions and natural disasters throughout the Edo period, such as the massive fires occurring in 1708, 1788, and 1864, the more drastic political changes occurring during the Meiji period (1868-1912) and Shōwa era (1926-1989) culminated in some additional modifications of the festival, like the change of the festival routes from narrow side-streets to the wider Oike, Kawaramachi, and Shijō streets.<sup>140</sup>

### **Preservation of Japanese Culture within a Westernized Community**

The transformation of the Gion Festival from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries varied as a result of the changes in the political and social atmosphere. In the early stages of the festival, the customs were singularly devoted to honoring the gods in order to dispel diseases, such as tuberculosis, lurking within the city. Many of the floats maintained Buddhist effigies as part of

---

<sup>139</sup> An additional Edo representation of the Gion Matsuri is in the artist Okada Shuntōsai's copperplate engraving *Parade of Floats of the Gion Festival on the Seventh Day of the Sixth Month*. See "Parade Floats of the Gion Festival on the Seventh Day of the Sixth Month," Boston Museum of Fine Arts, accessed September 16, 2016, <http://www.mfa.org/collections>.

<sup>140</sup> Salastie, *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?*, 34; "Kyoto Gion Matsuri," Ashikariyama, accessed September 20, 2016, <http://www.ashikariyama.jp/gionmatsuri-e.html>.



their designs.<sup>141</sup> However, as time progressed, the parades shifted to not only providing entertainment for the Yasaka Shrine gods, but also to attracting and captivating the elite of society in order to encourage their participation in community events.<sup>142</sup> According to Christoph Brumann's research, while rituals and ceremonial practices are preserved, an emphasis in the religious practices of the festival decreased over time.<sup>143</sup> Prior to the shift in governmental control during the Meiji Restoration, the Gion Shrine and festival had always incorporated both Shinto and Buddhist rites into their practices.<sup>144</sup> However, with Buddhist suppression dominating the country during the Westernization, the Gion Shrine was forced to eliminate all relations with Buddhism, including its name and the deities enshrined at the site, reinvented as a "purely" Shinto sanctuary.<sup>145</sup> The shrine's name was eventually changed to its modern name Yasaka, which references the Korean immigrants of the Yasaka Clan who had settled at a nearby temple (Hōkanji).<sup>146</sup> Gozu Tennō was identified as the Shinto *kami* Susanoo no Mikoto (須佐之男命), with his wife and son also christened with new names, Kushinadahime (櫛名田比売) and Yahashira, respectively.

Despite the continued preservation of the festival's traditions, many people also began to incorporate Western aspects into their daily lives.<sup>147</sup> Images of the Gion Festival, particularly modern woodblock prints, depict the drastic changes that were taking place in society. This evolution is evident in the work of Tokuriki Tomikichirō (1902-2000). With a background as a

---

<sup>141</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 204.

<sup>142</sup> Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 205.

<sup>143</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 204 and 207.

<sup>144</sup> Chapin, "The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival," 284.

<sup>145</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 172; Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 146.

<sup>146</sup> Cali and Dougill, *Shinto Shrines*, 146.

<sup>147</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 172-3.

Sōsaku Hanga (創作版画, Creative Prints)<sup>148</sup> artist, he captures the lively mood of the annual summer festival in *Gion Festival Eve*, a print from a twelve-print series titled *New Views of Kyoto (Shin Kyoto fūkei)* (1933-34) he worked on in conjunction with the well-known woodblock print artists Asada Benji and Asano Takeji (figure 10).<sup>149</sup> Playing a major role in the continuation of woodblock art, Tokuriki's print displays a bustling nighttime Yoiyama festival ambiance enhanced with a large tapestry and lantern covered *yamaboko* in the foreground with an assemblage of accentuated figures walking the streets of the city. Men and women appear in both Japanese and Western clothing; the focal point is a mother holding the hands of her two young children as they maneuver through the crowds. Electric streetlights juxtaposed against the decorative *yamaboko* lanterns alludes to the incorporation of Western technology, science and art into Japanese culture after the inception of the Meiji period and Westernization of Japan. This pre-World War II work subtly expresses the intricate relationship between Japan and the Western world; it also creates a sense of intimacy with Kyoto-born civilians via its incorporation of specific elements associated with the city of Kyoto, such as the common scene of the *yamaboko* lanterns. The new political regime is not viewed as dismantling Japanese customs. Instead of encroaching upon Japanese cultural traditions, the many visual elements within the work highlight the new ideas brought over from the West, demonstrating the subtle inclusion and acceptance of Westernization in the culturally significant and illustrious Kyoto festival. The print specialist Oliver Statler commented that Tokuriki Tomikichirō's affinity towards colorful landscapes and themes appealed to the general population.<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Sōsaku Hangakai is a community promoting the self-carving and self-printing of woodblock prints.

<sup>149</sup> Helen Merritt, *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints: The Early Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 89.

<sup>150</sup> Oliver Statler, *Modern Japanese Prints* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1959), 121. Additional prints of the Gion Festival by Tokuriki Tomikichirō are printed in color.

The artist Maekawa Senpan (前川千帆, 1888-1960) is another prime example of an artist who depicts traditional Japanese images, such as Kyoto's famous Gion Matsuri, alongside evidence of the political and social exchange with Western cultures. Born into a family of Kyoto artisans with a wide-range of skills involving lacquer ware, textile dyeing, and metalwork, in addition to learning other media, such as oil painting Maekawa taught himself woodblock print making.<sup>151</sup> Although he was widely known for his satirical work published in a variety of print magazines and serials (such as *Tokyo Pakku*), he often made images of people's everyday activities.<sup>152</sup> As a member of the Sōsaku Hanga movement like Tokuriki Tomikichirō, Maekawa often incorporated Western aesthetics into his work.<sup>153</sup> During the time of World War II and the American occupation of Japan (1945-1952), Maekawa focused on the representation and preservation of Japanese national pastimes, particularly hot springs and traditional festivals.<sup>154</sup> Due to or in spite of the effects of the war, he eventually became known for his political independence and patronage of traditional Japanese arts.<sup>155</sup> His prints were not conceived as overtly political and they became quite popular with the occupying American forces. Responding to his newfound audience, Maekawa created works dedicated to the brilliance, color, and extravagance of traditional Japanese festivals and customs.<sup>156</sup> Due to the occupying troops' curiosity in native Japanese customs, Maekawa promoted images representing conventional and historical practices; this assisted in educating the Western forces in Japanese culture.

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>152</sup> Merritt, *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints*, 219; Statler, *Modern Japanese Prints*, 45.

<sup>153</sup> "Very Brief Introduction to Ukiyo-e, Shin Hanga and Sōsaku Hanga," Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints, last accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/articles/print-genres---ukiyo-e-shin-hanga-sosaku-hanga>.

<sup>154</sup> Merritt, *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints*, 221.

<sup>155</sup> "Maekawa Senpan," British Museum, accessed October 15, 2014, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/term\\_details.aspx?bioId=146144](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=146144).

<sup>156</sup> Merritt, *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints*, 222.

Maekawa's print, *Gion Matsuri* from the series *Picture Notes on Native Customs of Japan* (日本民俗図譜, *Nihon minzoku zufu*) (1946) depicts a single stylized and geometrically shaped *yamaboko* being pulled around the streets of Kyoto (figure 11).<sup>157</sup> The simple color palette retains a mixture of subtle yellows, reds, muted blues, and a variety of greys. The cart appears relatively modest compared to previously illustrated floats. The platform at the top is stereotypically filled with musicians dressed in white as well as a *chigo* standing at the front looking down towards the crowd of people. The roof and sides of the *yamaboko* are decorated with red banners and ribbons, the colors striking against the yellow wood of the cart. An elaborately decorated angled roof presides over the platform, supplying a foundation for the halberd, unseen in the print, perched at the top. Participants of the parade are noted for their white or black garb, wearing hats to match their ensembles. Both spectators and members, illustrated in Maekawa's stylized form, carry fans and umbrellas, sheltering themselves from the summer's heat. Women in colorful yukata and men in Western-style clothing take up the majority of the avenue, their faces and eyes raised to the sky as the *yamaboko* passes through the street. Some spectators watch from nearby building windows, their faces and bodies highlighted by the darkened rooms behind them. The space of the image overtakes the boundaries of the print. Enlarged and magnified, the viewer becomes invested in the parade, achieving a sense of closeness and familiarity with the crowds lining the street. This direct involvement in the jovial attitude of the celebration creates an emotional connection with the image's viewers. Dedicated to the preservation of traditional Japanese aesthetics and celebrations, Maekawa presents one of

---

<sup>157</sup> "Gion Matsuri from the series Picture Notes on Native Customs of Japan," Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints, last accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/maekawa-senpan-1888-1960-/gion-matsuri-from-the-series-picture-notes-on-native-customs-of-japan>.

Japan's most honored festivals in a welcoming setting admired by both a Western and Japanese audience.

### **Community Standards**

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Gion Festival began attracting scholars and travelers, exploiting the large-scale tourism revolving around this month-long *matsuri*.<sup>158</sup> Due to the emerging festival touristy, the parade's route was redirected away from the smaller neighborhood streets to the larger avenues of the city in order to accommodate the increasing amount of people who travel from all over the country to partake in the festivities.<sup>159</sup> As discussed in this thesis, many pictures of the Gion Matsuri portray the varying levels of crowds participating and enjoying the festival: the architects who build the floats each year following the procession of carts; the priests, musicians, and *chigo* presented atop the floats; the merchants selling their wares in stalls; the spectators admiring the *yamaboko* as they maneuver along the busy streets. This atmosphere of community, even within local districts, has been relatively constant over the centuries despite the evolution of the festival into a commercial holiday and tourist activity.

Although the *yamaboko* have retained a relatively consistent form since the festival's resurgence after the Ōnin War, the local neighborhoods still compete independently with each other to produce the most elaborate and monumental float.<sup>160</sup> Each cart is cared for by specific neighborhood residents (merchants and craftspeople) who not only assemble the floats, but also accompany them during the parade.<sup>161</sup> The pride of those who engage in the building of the

---

<sup>158</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 172 and 246.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 172; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 283.

<sup>160</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 388; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 291; Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 196.

<sup>161</sup> Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto," 281-2.

*yamaboko* each year has continued throughout history. Previously perceived as a lower status in society, the *machishū* used the festival as an opportunity to transcend class boundaries, achieve a sense of honor and respect, and identify themselves on par with the elites through their elaborate example of artistry.<sup>162</sup> *Ennoshitano chikaramochi* (縁の下の力持ち) or the “power from below that upholds a house, an institution, or the entire society,” demonstrates the position of the Gion festival community preserving this thousand year old festival for the rest of the city.<sup>163</sup>

### **The Cult of *Goryō-e***

Throughout this thesis I have discussed the political reasoning behind the continued celebration of the Gion Matsuri as well as its incorporation into various famous pieces of art throughout Japanese history. Herbert Plutschow discusses additional motivation for the maintained festivities, which revolve around the origins of festival, or the cult of *Gion Goryō-e*. According to legend, *goryō* 御霊 or *onryō* 怨霊 are malevolent deities both worshipped and feared by the Japanese.<sup>164</sup> The deities’ attitude towards society is directly correlated with a community’s reverence towards the spirits. As stated earlier in the paper, politically wronged or murdered victims of society (members of the imperial family as well as priests, officials, warriors, and women) were the suspected evil spirits. Beginning in the tenth century, these deities were worshipped with the hope that pacifying their anger would dissuade them from causing war, calamities, and social upheavals. This belief continued through the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Just like the Fujiwara clan, the Ashikagas held the Gion Festival to gain favor from the spirits, thus demonstrating to the people of the city their mandated

---

<sup>162</sup> Hareven, *Families, History, and Social Change*, 262 and 265.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>164</sup> Herbert Plutschow, *Matsuri: The Festivals of Japan* (Surrey: Japan Library, 1996), 16.

political authority. However, the shogunate tended to placate victimized warriors instead of the deities, which may have resulted in the countless political and economic struggles and wars during this time period.<sup>165</sup> Such an argument for spirit pacification may prove misguided given the Tokugawa's failure to appease the daimyo who were denigrated during the formation of the shogunate in the seventeenth century.<sup>166</sup> This understanding of the Gion Matsuri's inception provides insight to the notion of how the festival was utilized by the ruling political government to benefit their rule.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the preservation of the Gion Matsuri over many centuries, the depictions of the festival transformed in ways akin to the political and social changes experienced by society. Presented in the *rakuchū rakugai zu* (i.e. the Sanjō and Uesugi screens), the presence of both military personnel and upbeat crowds shows the purported prosperity created by the Ashikagas. Then during the Edo period, the Funaki screens expressed the changes made by the ruling of the Tokugawa clan via the magnitude of the crowds and the routes, which the parades took around the city streets. These specific *byōbu* present a politically skewed image and affirm the economic implications of the Gion Festival during the late fifteenth to the seventeenth century. While traditional paintings of the celebrations such as *rakuchū rakugai zu* revolve around the pride of the ruling families, as Japan encountered Westernization the imagery of the Gion celebration focused less on the symbolism of the current economic and religious atmosphere of the general public to more on the political ventures of the Japanese and their relationship with foreign

---

<sup>165</sup> Plutschow, *Matsuri: The Festivals of Japan*, 17.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

powers. The amalgamation of the Western and Japanese technology, evident in the contemporary renderings of the festival, such as Tokuriki Tomikichirō's woodblock print *Gion Festival Eve*, characterizes the celebration as a mixture of divine rituals and boisterous entertainment.<sup>167</sup> Furthermore, images of traditional festivals such as Maekawa Senpan's *Gion Matsuri* were often used to attract Western visitors by accentuating the rich cultural heritage of the Japanese people.<sup>168</sup>

Additionally, the paintings and prints discussed in this thesis demonstrate the changes that occurred in overall composition of the Matsuri. The depiction of the festival begins with a generic panoramic view of Kyoto in the *rakuchū rakugai zu* with the Gion Matsuri imbedded into the illustration at varying intervals throughout the city. Over time, artists presented a singularly focused representation of the floats and festivities in the modern and contemporary images, emphasizing the importance of a more personal and intimate experience with the culture and heritage of this festival.

As is common with centuries-old traditions, the origins of the Gion Festival have long since faded away. Despite the deemphasis on religion, the fervent preservation of the festival also perpetuates a long-standing sense of community amongst the Japanese. With over 3,000 community members who participate in the parade each year,<sup>169</sup> and up to half a million visitors who show up to enjoy the various events and processions,<sup>170</sup> the Gion Festival remains one of the most prominent traditional events in Japan.<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 214.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>169</sup> Brumann, *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto*, 158.

<sup>170</sup> Roemer, "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival," 191; Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case," 278.

<sup>171</sup> Chapin, "The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival," 282



## LIST OF FIGURES WITH SOURCES

Due to copyright issues figures have been omitted from the thesis. Please use the following as a reference.

**Figure 1.** Tosa Mitsunobu (1434-1525) *Rakuchū rakugai zu*. Sanjō screens. Right screen. 1525/30. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. Each 138 x 58.7 cm. National Museum of Japanese History, Sakura. Source: Matthew Phillip McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), plate 2b.

**Figure 2.** Sanjō screens. Detail, right screen. Gion Festival procession. Source: See Figure 1.

**Figure 3.** Kanō Eitoku (1543-1590). *Rakuchū rakugai zu*. Uesugi screens. Left screen. 1560s. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. Each 160 x 364 cm. Yonezawa City Uesugi Museum. Source: Matthew Phillip McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), plate 3b.

**Figure 4.** Kanō Eitoku. Uesugi screens. Detail, right screen. Gion Festival procession. Source: See Figure 3.

**Figure 5.** *Rakuchū rakugai zu*. Shōkōji screens. Early seventeenth century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. Each 155.4 x 351.5 cm. Shōkōji, Toyama. Source: Matthew Phillip McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 188-89.

**Figure 6.** *Rakuchū rakugai zu*. Shōkōji screens. Detail, Nijō Castle. Source: See Figure 5.

**Figure 7.** *Rakuchū rakugai zu*. Funaki screens. Seventeenth century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; color on gold-leafed paper. Each 162.7 x 342.4 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Source: National Treasures & Important Cultural Properties of National Museums, Japan. “The Area in and around the Kyoto City (Funaki-version).” Last accessed November 22, 2014.  
[http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100318/000/000?mode=detail&d\\_lang=en&s\\_lang=en&class=&title=&c\\_e=&region=&era=&century=&cptype=&owner=&pos=289&num=4](http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100318/000/000?mode=detail&d_lang=en&s_lang=en&class=&title=&c_e=&region=&era=&century=&cptype=&owner=&pos=289&num=4).

**Figure 8.** Funaki screens. Detail, left screen. Gion Festival procession. Source: See Figure 7.

**Figure 9.** Utagawa Hiroshige II (1826-1869). *The Gion Festival in Kyoto* (1859) from the series *One Hundred Famous Views in the Various Provinces*. Color woodblock print. 35.4 x 24.6 cm. Source: Boston Museum of Fine Arts. “The Gion Festival in Kyoto.” Accessed October 5, 2016.  
<http://www.mfa.org/collections>.

**Figure 10.** Tokuriki Tomikichirō (1902-2000). *Gion Festival Eve* (1933-34) from the series *New Views of Kyoto*. Woodblock print. 22.3 x 34.4 cm. Source: Helen Merritt, *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints: The Early Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), 90.

**Figure 11.** Maekawa Senpan (1888-1960). *Gion Matsuri* from the series *Picture Notes on Native Customs of Japan*. 1946. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper. 24.1 x 18.1 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Source: Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints. “Gion Matsuri from the series Picture Notes on Native Customs of Japan.” Last accessed November 22, 2014.  
<http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/maekawa-senpan-1888-1960-/gion-matsuri-from-the-series-picture-notes-on-native-customs-of-japan>.

## REFERENCES

- Ashikariyama. "Kyoto Gion Matsuri." Accessed September 20, 2016.  
<http://www.ashikariyama.jp/gionmatsuri-e.html>.
- Berry, Mary Elizabeth. *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Boston Museum of Fine Arts. "The Gion Festival in Kyoto." Accessed October 5, 2016.  
<http://www.mfa.org/collections>.
- Boston Museum of Fine Arts. "Parade Floats of the Gion Festival on the Seventh Day of the Sixth Month." Accessed September 16, 2016. <http://www.mfa.org/collections>.
- British Museum. "Maekawa Senpan." Accessed October 15, 2014.  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/term\\_details.aspx?bioId=146144](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=146144).
- Brumann, Christoph. "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto." *American Ethnologist* 36 (2009): 276–99.
- . *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto: Claiming a Right to the Past*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Cali, Joseph, and John Dougill. *Shinto Shrines: A Guide to the Sacred Sites of Japan's Ancient Religion*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013.
- Chapin, Helen B. "The Gion Shrine and the Gion Festival." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 54 (1934): 282-89.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Tempō reforms." Accessed November 4, 2016.  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Tempo-reforms>.

- Filedt Kok, J.P, ed. *Hiroshige and The Utagawa School: Japanese Prints c. 1810-1860*. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1984.
- Fujii, Kenzo. "Tapestries Used for Kyoto Gion Festival and their Preservation." Lecture presented at the International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Japan, July 15-22, 2009.
- [http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/training/curriculum/third/curriculum\\_4.html?#/point1](http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/training/curriculum/third/curriculum_4.html?#/point1).
- Gentles, Margaret O. "Modern Japanese Prints." *The Art Institute of Chicago Quarterly* 53 (1959): 13-17.
- Gion Matsuri*. 1994. Tokyo, Japan: NHK International, 2008. DVD.
- Gion Matsuri. "Tradition of Two Yamahoko Float Processions to be Revived at the Kyoto Gion Festival." Accessed September 15, 2016. <http://www.gionmatsuri.or.jp/foreign/en>.
- Gion Matsuri Hensan Iinkai. *Gion Matsuri*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976.
- Hall, John Whitney. *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1991.
- Hareven, Tamara. *Families, History, and Social Change: Life-Course & Cross Cultural Perspectives*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000.
- Hoff, Frank. "City and Country: Song and the Performing Arts in Sixteenth-Century Japan." In *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith, 133–162. Honolulu: University Hawai'i of Press, 1981.
- Hur, Nam-lin. *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000.
- Impey, Oliver. *The Art of the Japanese Folding Screen*. Oxford, UK: University of Oxford, 1997.

- Jansen, Marije. *Hiroshige's Journey in the 60-odd Provinces*. Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004.
- KCP International Japanese Language School. "Gion Matsuri: The Highly Anticipated July Festival." Accessed November 3, 2014. [http://www.kcpwindowonjapan.com/tag/hoko float](http://www.kcpwindowonjapan.com/tag/hoko_float).
- Kita, Sandy. *The Last Tosa: Iwasa Katsumochi Matabei, Bridge to Ukiyo-e*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.
- Kyoto National Museum. "About the Gion Festival Screens." Accessed October 2, 2014. <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/dictio/kaiga/gion.html>.
- Kyoto Visitor's Guide. "The Gion Matsuri Festival." Accessed November 2, 2016. <http://www.kyotoguide.com/ver2/thismonth/gionmatsuri.html>.
- Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints. "Gion Matsuri from the series Picture Notes on Native Customs of Japan." Last accessed November 21, 2016. <http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/artists/maekawa-senpan-1888-1960-/gion-matsuri-from-the-series-picture-notes-on-native-customs-of-japan>.
- Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints. "Very Brief Introduction to Ukiyo-e, Shin Hanga and Sōsaku Hanga." Last accessed November 21, 2016. <http://www.myjapanesehanga.com/home/articles/print-genres---ukiyo-e-shin-hanga-sosaku-hanga>.
- Lillehoj, Elizabeth, ed. *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting, 1600-1700*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.
- Malm, William P. "Music Cultures of Momoyama Japan." In *Warlords, Artists, & Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith, 163–86.

- Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981.
- Mason, Penelope. *History of Japanese Art*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.
- McKay, Susan. *Japan (Festivals of the World)*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 1997.
- McKelway, Matthew Phillip. *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.
- McMullin, Neil. "The Enryaku-ji and the Gion Shrine-Temple Complex in the Mid-Heian Period." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14 (1987): 161-84.
- Merritt, Helen. *Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints: The Early Years*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.
- National Treasures & Important Cultural Properties of National Museums, Japan. "The Area in and around the Kyoto City (Funaki-version)." Last accessed November 28, 2016.  
[http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100318/000/000?mode=detail&d\\_lang=en&s\\_lang=en&class=&title=&c\\_e=&region=&era=&century=&cptype=&owner=&pos=289&num=4](http://www.emuseum.jp/detail/100318/000/000?mode=detail&d_lang=en&s_lang=en&class=&title=&c_e=&region=&era=&century=&cptype=&owner=&pos=289&num=4).
- Paget, Rhiannon. "Exploring Japan's Ancient Capital Inside and Out." *The Japan Times*, October 16, 2013. Accessed October 2, 2014.  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2013/10/16/arts/exploring-japans-ancient-capital-inside-and-out/#.VITbh1b4vwI>.
- Plutschow, Herbert. *Matsuri: The Festivals of Japan*. Surrey: Japan Library, 1996.
- Roemer, Michael. "Religious Tourism in Japan: Kyoto's Gion Festival." In *On the Road to Being There: Studies in Pilgrimage and Tourism in Late Modernity*, edited by William H. Swatos, Jr., 187-218. Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2006.
- . "Ritual Participation and Social Support in a Major Japanese Festival." *Journal for the*

- Scientific Study of Religion* 46 (2007): 185-200.
- Roy, Christian. *Traditional Festivals: A Multicultural Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2005.
- Salastie, Riitta. *Living Tradition or Panda's Cage?: An Analysis of the Urban Conservation in Kyoto*. Finland: Helsinki University of Technology, 1999.
- Satō, Yasuhiro. "Perspectives on 'Scenes of the Capital'" *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* by Matthew Philip McKelway." *Monumenta Nipponica* 2 (2007): 211-219.
- Screech, Timon. "Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto by Matthew Philip McKelway." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 34 (2008): 180-184.
- Statler, Oliver. *Modern Japanese Prints*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1959.
- Yamasaki, Masafumi, ed. *Kyoto: Its Cityscape Traditions and Heritage*. Tokyo: Process Architecture Co., 1994.