

These are excerpted English translation of the Japanese commentaries next to the exhibits at the venue. The handout is also available onsite.

## Art and Railway –150th Anniversary of Railway in Japan

(Saturday, October 8, 2022 - Monday, January 9, 2023)

### Commentary on the works

#### **No.3 Artist unknown, *Picture Scroll of Foreign Ships, after 1854***

--The gift of model 'steam locomotive' from the U.S.A.

At the time of the United States Navy Commodore Matthew Perry's second visit to Japan, the Matsudai, Tsuyama and Sendai clans sent their own survey teams including painters to Uraga where the fleet arrived, to record; the fleet on the sea, the appearance of Perry and his party, guns, the model 'steam locomotive' presented to them, and the Morse telegraph machine. Many picture scrolls like this work were produced by making the copies of those records.

#### **No.5 Utagawa Yoshitora [date of birth & death unknown], *Steam Locomotives in Transit, 1870***

#### **No.6 Utagawa Yoshitora, *Vehicles Operating in Tokyo, 1870***

--The fantasy brought by steam locomotives.

The opening of the Yokohama port in 1859 led to the production of numerous *nishiki-e* (woodblock prints) featuring Yokohama from the end of the Edo period to the beginning of the Meiji era. These are so-called "Yokohama *ukiyo-e*". Utagawa Yoshitora fantastically depicted foreigners, settlements and landscapes with foreign subjects. The steam locomotive with a chimney in the middle is different from the actual shape, but Yoshitora made it appear many times in his works.

#### **No.8 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi [1839-1892], *Steam Locomotive at Takanawa, 1871***

--Takanawa, the famous sight of Tokyo is already depicted.

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi was an *ukiyo-e* artist of the Utagawa school, active from the end of the Edo period to the Meiji period. In this work, scenes with the railway are featured as 'Tokyo *Meisho* [famous sights]', even though the railway had not yet commenced. This shows *ukiyo-e* were a news flash medium. The first steam locomotives introduced to Japan were British made, but it seems that Yoshitoshi used American steam locomotives as a reference, as the chimneys have a different shape.

#### **No.10 Utagawa Yoshitora, *Night View of Railway Opening Ceremony at Shimbashi Station, 1872***

--The great opening ceremony.

In Japan, the railway first commenced between Shimbashi (of Tokyo Metropolis) and Yokohama (Kanagawa Pref.). Both the stations were works of an American architect Richard Perkins Bridgens (1819-1891). They both look alike and the platforms were 151.5 meters long. This work depicts the day of the opening ceremony at the Shimbashi Station. When the Imperial train returned from Yokohama, the ceremony restarted and held gorgeously until night.

**No.12-1 Kawanabe Kyosai [1831-1889], *A Steam Locomotive Bound for Heaven, from Journeys through Heaven and Hell, 1872***

**No.12-2 Kawanabe Kyosai, *A Steam Locomotive Bound for Heaven, from Journeys through Heaven and Hell, preparatory drawing, 1872***

--Masterpiece of Kyosai, a great painter and print artist active in the late Edo through Meiji era.

The wholesales store owner Katsuta Gohei requested this work to Kawanabe Kyosai for the memorial service of his daughter Tatsu who died in 1869 at a very young age. It depicts Tatsu's deathbed, her ascension to heaven, her visit to hell under the guidance of the great king of hell Yama, and her rebirth in paradise. Kyosai could have been inspired by the temporary ran train between Shinagawa and Yokohama which started the same month when the work was produced, May 1872.

**No.22-a,b Kobayashi Kiyochika [1847-1915], *Shimbashi Station, 1881***

--Night scene of the city, Shimbashi station on a rainy day.

"*Kosen-ga* [light and line picture]" is a word for series of works made with traditional woodblock print techniques applying western painting techniques such as chiaroscuro and laws of perspectives by Kobayashi Kiyochika which was first released in 1876. The lights leaking from the Shimbashi Station illuminates the surroundings, also backlighting the people and *jinrikisha* in front of the station showing them as shadows. This is one of Kiyochika's best-known works.

**No.24 Inoue Yasuji (Tankei) [1864-1889], *Ueno and Taksaki, 1884***

--Japan's first private railway company started between Ueno and Takasaki.

Inoue Yasuji was Kobayashi Kiyochika's first disciple. The scene of Takasaki (Gunma Pref.) is depicted in the upper part of the work and the locomotive train is heading towards the building with "Takasaki Station" is written on. In the lower half of the work, there is a locomotive train just departed from the building written "Ueno Station." On July 28 1883, the first private railway company started between Ueno (Tokyo) and Kumagaya (Saitama Pref.) and extended to Takasaki the next year. It must have been because of the opening ceremony that both the stations are decorated.

**No.39 Tsuji Kako [1871-1931], *Train Picture Scroll, 1899***

--Microcosm of Japanese society in mid-Meiji era.

The classes of train in Japan were first; upper, middle, and lower, but they were changed into 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in 1897. The work produced in 1899 reflects the newly renowned classes. Tsuji Kako, one of the leading artists of Japanese-style paintings in Kyoto, painted over a hundred people of various nationality and professions. There are also people working at the station such as train conductors and newspaper vendors. It seems like the artist tried to draw not just a simple scenery of a station but also the microcosm of Japan at that time by using the station as a stage.

**No.40 Akamatsu Rinsaku [1878-1953], *Night Train, 1901***

--Feeling of excitement in the train at dawn.

This work by Akamatsu Rinsaku, one of the leading western style painter in Osaka, could be said the most famous railway painting in Japan. The work finely depicts the scene on the night train at dawn, with coziness of people waking up and glimpse of excitement on their expressions. It is said that Akamatsu painted this work based on his sketch while on the actual train which departed from Tokyo to Tsu (Mie Pref.) where he was assigned to leave.

The depiction of the seats suggests that the train is headed toward the viewer of the painting. The sky on

the left hand side is beginning to brighten, which indicates that side as east, suggesting that the train is headed north. These facts leads to the conclusion that the location of the painting is just before Nagoya Station on Tokaido railway line.

**No.41 Yamamoto Shokoku [1870-1965], *Shimbashi Station*, from *Fuzoku gaho* issue 241, 1901**

**No.42 Artist unknown, *Café in Narita Railway Train*, from *Fuzoku gaho* issue 274, 1903**

--Appearance of popular graphic magazine in Japan.

*Fuzoku gaho* was a first graphic magazine in Japan. The artist of *Shimbashi Station*, Yamamoto Shokoku made lithographs by the sketches he made at the site where the editors specified, which means that accuracy of the work was emphasized. At the end of the Meiji era, a tea lounge was provided on the local train of Narita Railway running between Ueno and Narita (Chiba Pref.) where alcohols, coffee, tea and snacks were sold.

**No.51 Suzuki Tsugio [1894-1984], *Turntable*, 1916**

--Unbelievable sight, gigantic black iron and labor.

Turntable is an equipment to turn the direction of locomotive trains efficiently, in other name switchyard. In the *Railway Dictionary* by Japanese National Railway published in 1958, because it needs huge power to turn the direction of the locomotive train, electric motor is normally used. But before it was electrified, the scene like this painting must have been normal. It is quite surprising to see only four personnel turning a gigantic steam locomotive train. The painting's dismal atmosphere could be Suzuki's impression towards the labor of these workers.

**No.56 Minami Kunzo [1883-1950], *Railway Opening Ceremony: Arrival of the Meiji Emperor at Shimbashi Station*, 1921**

**No.57 Minami Kunzo, *Railway Opening Ceremony: Yokohama Ceremony Hall*, 1921**

--Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of railway commencement in Japan.

These two works are depicting the railway opening ceremony held at Shimabshi and Yokohama stations in 1872 which the Meiji emperor attended. Although the works were produced in 1921, 50 years later of that event. In this year, 50th anniversary of the railway opening celebration ceremony was held in front of Tokyo Station. Prince Hirohito (later the Showa emperor) attended the ceremony for the sake of Taisho emperor. At this event, two paintings were presented to the prince, which depicted the Meiji emperor's imperial visit to both Shimbashi and Yokohama stations in 1872's ceremony. Those two works are now imperial treasures. The works exhibited are very similar with those of imperial treasures in size and composition, but small differences can be found by looking at them closely which indicate that these could be the study pieces at the final stage.

**No.62 Sugiura Hisui [1876-1965], *The Only Subway in the East Commences Service between Ueno and Asakusa*, 1927**

--The first underground railway in Asia.

Tokyo Chika Tetsudo [Tokyo Underground Railway]'s underground railway started on December 30 1927 connecting 2.2km distance between Asakusa and Ueno (now a part of Tokyo Metro's Ginza Line). Nextly, Shinkeihan Railway's underground commenced between Saiin and Shijyo-omiya (both in Kyoto) in 1931. In 1933, the first public underground railway in Osaka city opened between Umeda and Shinsaibashi. The Umeda Station's platform was an arched tunnel, but in Tokyo box-shaped tunnel was adopted as you can see in this Sugiura's work. To make the cross-sectional area of the tunnel as small as possible, for the electricity supply, underground railway do not use overhead rail line but use the third rail and collect the power from the lower part of the train body.

**No.68 Sato Tetsuzo [1910-1954], *Mr. Hirayama, A Porter, 1929-30***

--The porters of railway stations, so-called "Akabo"

Sato Tetsuzo was rejected from *Daichouwa* art group exhibition when he was 17 years old. There he was persuaded by the artist Umehara Ryuzaburo to actually look at the subject while he paint. That bitter memory made Sato to paint this exhibited work *Mr. Hirayama, A Porter* at the age of 19, which won the award at the 5th *Kokuten* art group exhibition in 1930. A porter who collect and transport travelers' luggage to the platform were called "Akabo," first started in 1896 at Sanyo Railway's stations, then spread nationwide. They were all self-employed, but joined in *Akabo* guild and owned stocks. Jobs, compensation and even tips were evenly divided. At its peak in the Taisho era (1912-1926) there were more than 70 of them working in the Tokyo Station, however the business fell into disuse after the 1960s.

**No.72, 76 Iwasa Yasuo [1902-1999], *Mother and Child Guarding a Railroad Crossing (1), (2), (1)1931, (2)1932***

--Pathos of the *Fumikiri-ban*.

Once, there were people called *Fumikiri-ban* [railway crossing guards or crossing inspectors] by the crossings. They engaged in warning crossers and to open and shut the crossing gate. However, their long and hard work lead to the guards' carelessness, resulting in horrific accidents. In addition, sometimes the family member had to take over the role because of various reasons. The motif of this work is a mother with a child (children [No.76]) who is working on behalf of her husband, waving a white flag meaning "passable." Two images are created from the same negatives using different techniques.

**No.77 Enokura Shogo [1901-1977], *Railway Switch, 1932***

--The gaze of an artist towards nook of a station.

Enokura Shogo is a painter who was active in prewar *Nikakai* art group. This was one of the superior works chosen and exhibited in the 19<sup>th</sup> *Nika* exhibition. The subject matter is a manual weighted converter, which is the simplest structure for a switch (or point) for railroad. The branching trail's opening direction can be changed by tipping the lever with a round-shaped weight towards either side. This device, commonly called "*daruma* [dharma]" is usually set on side lines and not on the main, therefore rarely seen. Enokura's gaze is focused on such corners.

**No.78 Sakurada Seiichi [1910-1999], *Tokyo Station, 1932***

--The first underground railway in Japan?

The white building of the Tokyo Central Post Office (built 1931) designed by Yoshida Tetsuro can be seen right behind the Tokyo Station (built 1914) designed by Tatsuno Kingo. Two different styles of these buildings, modernism reinforced concrete structured construction and classical steel-frame brick construction, are in vivid contrast. It was only 14 years that these two buildings were side by side in their original form, because of the air raid of Tokyo Station in 1945. Before, there was an underground pass between these two buildings where electric locomotive trains used to transport railroad mails. This was 12 years ahead of Japan's first underground railway opening (between Ueno and Asakusa stations) in December 1927, marking an important meaning for the railway history. The signature "Makino" is Sakurada's former surname before he inherited his grandmother of his father's side in 1937.

**No.88 Ishikawa Koyo [1904-1989], *Send-off Ceremony for Soldiers at Shinagawa Station, 1937***

--A record by a Metropolitan Police Department photographer during war.

A photographer Ishikawa Koyo, known by his shots of February 26 incident (1932) and the devastation of

Tokyo Air Raid (1945), was also a police officer of the Metropolitan Police Department main office. This work was taken from an elevated location. The Military Secrets Protection Law enacted in August 1937, prohibited an overhead photography from elevated locations for counterintelligence reasons. This work was made possible because of Ishikawa's unique position as a police officer. Such grand ceremonial send-offs as seen in this photograph gradually regulated and banned as the Sino-Japan War prolonged and the breaking out of the Pacific War.

**No.95 Ito Yasujiro [1888-?], *The Tenzan-maru*, 1942**

--The vision of the future betrayed.

Ito Yasujiro was a painter specialized in ships. The Tenzan-maru was a train ferry connecting Shimonoseki (Yamaguchi Pref.) and Busan (South Korea) built as a super-large cargo ship with a capacity of 2,048 passengers and a displacement of 7,907 tons in order to cope with the increased transportation volume after the Manchurian Incident. However, the Tenzan-maru never sailed as it appears in Ito's painting. The ship was painted in war camouflage color of gray-green when it actually sailed in 1942. Then sank by the attack of seven U.S. bombers. If there wasn't a war, Tenzan-maru could have sailed as painted in this work.

**No.98 Yamaga Seika [1885-1981], *Rushing Ahead*, 1944**

--A symbol of the nation rushing forward.

The subject matter of this work is Manchurian Railway's express train named "Asia." The train's high speed motion is expressed with the smoke trailing on the side, the steam from the body of the train, kaoliang field knocked down by the wind pressure, and blurred outline of the train body using the weft. The motif is very rare for a dyed textile works, and is one of the expressions that could only have been created during wartime. Yamaga was active in the *Teiten* and *Nitten* art group exhibitions and was elected to the Japan Art Academy member, also rewarded the Person of Cultural Merits. He was a master of traditional textile art, however he had an avant-garde side and made works that are unprecedented motifs.

**No.100 Sasamoto Tsuneko [1914-2022], *Special Car Service for U.S. Military Forces, from Showa Era, At that Time, That Person*, 1946**

--Railway and "Women Workers"

This is the shot of railway during the occupation period by Sasamoto Tsuneko, the first woman photo-journalist in Japan. Two women train conductors are on the train confiscated by the U.S. military. The first women workers were hired at railway bureau of Japan in 1900. Later on, to compensate for the shortage of personnel during the war, the number of women hired increased, especially in clerical positions. In 1944, the first women train conductors were hired at Nagoya railway bureau.

**No.106 Sato Teruo [1926-2003], *A Sleep in the Underpass*, 1947-56**

--"History" lying in the darkness of Ueno Station.

Sato drew people who slept at the Ueno Station underground pass for ten years after the war. Sato was mobilized for war when he was a student at the Tokyo University of the Arts in 1943. After 3 months in the U.S. Prisoner-of-War camp, sent back to Japan in 1946. At the same time people who lost their houses because of the air raids and such were forced to live in Ueno Station which remained unburnt from the bombing. These records by Sato of scenes right after war, in another perspective, can be said one chapter of the "railway history".

**No.108 Hamaguchi Yozo [1909-2000], *Fish Market Train*, 1951**

--The steam train that delivers freshness.

The Shimbashi Station became a freight exclusive station and the name was changed to Shiodome Station

when the Tokyo Station opened in 1914. In 1931, a railway line of only 2 kilometers from this Shiodome Station to the Central Wholesale Market in Tsukiji was laid by the Japan National Railway, calling it the Tokyo-shijo [market] Line. Efficiently transported fresh fishes, fruits and vegetables which were delivered from various regions to the market, there were 150 freight trains went in and out on a day at its peak. However the line was closed down around 1987 with the privatization of Japan National Railway. Hamaguchi Yozo painted this freight train of Tokyo-shijo Line. Hamaguchi is known as a leading mezzotint artist, a technique of etching.

**No.113 William Eugene Smith [1918-1978], series of works from HITACHI, 1961**

--What did the journalist see in Hitachi, Ltd.?

In 1960, American journalist William Eugene Smith was invited by Hitachi, Ltd., to record their main factory for producing electric locomotive trains in Mito (Ibaragi Pref.) and the offices in the region. From there, Smith's eye goes along the railroad tracks to Tokyo. He captured the scenes such as steam locomotive train running along rural and coastal areas, the dining cars where people enjoy their trip, and stations and cars at service day and night in the city, eventually reaching Tokyo Station. By capturing where the trains are made, where they run, and where to they are headed, Smith tried to express neither trains nor people, but the environment which is made by the relationship between railway and human.

**No.119 Oono Genjiro [1924-], Parting on the Platform, 1965**

--Akita's "golden eggs."

Oono Genjiro is an active amateur photographer who on the other hand worked as a high school teacher for a long time at his home town in Akita Prefecture. His work *Obako* which was selected in the International Photography Salon in 1952, was a catalyst of the photographer Kimura Ihee's masterpiece *Akita Obako*. Oono's eyes who perceived Akita for about a century, captures the scene of *shudan-shushoku* [young group of people from rural areas heading urban cities to get employed] of 1965. After WWII, the *shudan-shushoku* flourished during the period of rapid economic growth (mid1950s to 70s) and youngsters from rural areas newly graduated from middle or high school were called "the golden eggs."

**No.124 Yokoo Tadanori [1936-], Aesthetics of the End, 1966**

--Contrast between Eros and Thanatos.

The magazine *Jyosei-jishin's* series *Aesthetics of the End* by Mishima Yukio which started in April 1966, were essays about Mishima's own aesthetic and his outlook on life. The illustrations were done by the graphic designer Yokoo Tadanori who was at that time active in all direction. This exhibited work was inspired by Mishima's essays. Steam locomotive trains and railways frequently appear in Yokoo's art works and this work is one of the early ones. A half-naked and smiling female figure stands towards the left hand side of the steam locomotive and a lotus flower is painted on the other side, showing the vivid contrast of Eros (instinct of life) and Thanatos (instinct of death).

**No.126 Kazuki Yasuo [1911-1974], Smoke, 1969**

--Hope for the homeland entrusted on the train.

In 1943, just as he was beginning to emerge as a newcomer to the *Kokugakkai* art group, Kazuki Yasuo, then 31, was drafted and sent to a unit in the city of Hyrule, Manchuria. After the war, the troops were sent to Siberia by the Soviet Union Army and engaged in forced labor. It was May 1947 when he finally returned Japan. After his demobilization, he gradually created works based on this experience, which eventually came to be known as the "Siberia Series." About this work based on the memories in Hyrule, Kazuki later wrote, "The train connecting between Manzhouli and Qiqihar ran near our unit. The train disappears through the north side of the unit toward Xing'anling. ... The sound is too far away to be heard, but the

smoke is many times the size of the train as it flows squirming along. If I could get on, I can go back to Japan. Maybe there is someone headed for Japan riding on... How many times have I thought about this? In old days, people from Japan rode this train to study in Europe.”

**No.132 Kawaguchi Tatsuo [1940-], 113cm (Railroad), 1973**

--One railway line, two different worlds.

The standard gauge (the shortest distance between the two rails) for Japanese railway is 1,067 mm. The title of this work is thought to be the distance between the rails' head to head. Two photographs taken from "one" railway line. The work maybe is indicating that there are actually multiple worlds within what we usually perceive as one.

**No.140 Yanagi Yukinori [1959-], Tokyo Diagram H'6, 1994**

--Tokyo, abstracted.

This work is a diagram of abstracted Tokyo. The rectangle common in the twelve pieces are the Imperial Palace, and the lines around them are the underground railway route map. There were twelve underground lines in 1994 when this work was presented. The opening of Fukutoshin Line in 2008 and other lines extended, the route map is much different from what we see these days. Expressing Tokyo using only these two; the Imperial Palace and the underground railway, show the artist's keen insight. If you are to abstract Tokyo as minimal as possible, what would you do? That would clearly show your "vision of Tokyo."

**No.141 Ozawa Tsuyoshi [1965-], Jizoing, Kamikuishiki village, August 10, 1995, 1995**

--Recording the tragedy of the underground railway.

"Jizoing" is a series of works by Ozawa Tsuyoshi started in 1987 all around the world. The location of this work, Kamikuishiki village in Yamanashi Prefecture, was where the headquarters of the cult group *Aum Shinrikyo* was at. On March 20 1995 at 8 a.m., simultaneous terrorist attacks occurred in which sarin (poison gas) was sprayed on the underground railways' Marunouchi Line, Chiyoda Line, and Hibiya Line. Fourteen people were killed and approximately 6,300 were injured because of the attack. The sarin used in this incident was manufactured at the cult facility (known as "Satyan") shown in the distant background of this photograph. On 16 May 1995, the police enforced investigation of the facilities. Ozawa visited the place three months later and took the photos at dusk. The scene captures as if everything has ended after the frenzy of the cult leader's arrestment. There stands a *jizo*, between oblivion and commemoration.