

## Observations on the Mutual Influence of Asian and Western Paper Conservation Practices

### ABSTRACT

With the Book and Paper Group reaching its twenty-fifth year, it is opportune to reflect on where our traditions of paper conservation are drawn from and how innovations make their way into studio practice and eventually into presentations and publications. The materials and procedures used and the sensibilities exercised in Japanese mounting studios have long been admired by Western conservators and viewed as a fertile resource for expanding the possibilities of conservation treatment, particularly for works on paper that are fragile, large, or unusual in format. The initially available sources of information on the subject of mounting were limited but they rewarded repeated study. It has been fifty years since the publication of R. H. van Gulik's *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, almost forty since Masako Koyano's *Japanese Scroll Paintings: A Handbook of Mounting Techniques*, thirty-five since the Freer Gallery production of *The Art of the Hyogu-shi* with Takashi Sugiura, and twenty-five since the appearance of volume 9 of *The Paper Conservator*, Hyogu: *The Japanese Tradition in Paper Conservation*, as well as the first of Katsuhiko Masuda's practical courses in mounting procedures. Publications, presentations, seminars, and exchange programs since then have been directed at both introducing Japanese workshop practices to Western conservators less familiar with the subject and presenting the particulars of practice in more detail to more seasoned audiences. Several Western museums have mounting studios with established histories, and the handful of conservators in the West who have completed the rigorous training in a mounting studio serve an invaluable function as ambassadors of the profession, clarifying the misconceptions that can be derived with the best of intentions from differences of languages and culture.

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Conservators from Asia have completed Western graduate programs in conservation and similarly organized degree programs have been established in Japan. In light of the wide variety of works cared for by paper conservators and with the benefit of at least the last twenty-five years of exchange between these traditions of best practice, how have the treatment objectives of both groups of conservators become more considered and how have our working practices improved? And with the exercise of treatment procedures inherent to this exposure, can any specialty so intimately identified with a long-standing and respected tradition of conservation be undertaken with credibility outside of the original geographic or educational framework of practice?

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In anticipation of this twenty-five year anniversary of the Book and Paper Group, I was looking through early publications by it, as well as those from the Institute of Paper Conservation—which began five years earlier—to be reminded of what subjects were of interest to our profession in 1981. As I looked over the record from that first meeting in Philadelphia I was surprised to actually remember sitting in the audience as a recent graduate listening to, among others, Timothy Barrett on the subject of making specialized Japanese and Western papers for conservation and Keiko Keyes on alternative cleaning procedures in which she revived the discussion of light bleaching. There was also a presentation in the general session by Stefan Michalski on the history of suction tables, which, of course, attributed their development for paper conservation to Marilyn Weidner, who also happened to be at the time the chairperson of the Board of Examiners for the Certification of Paper Conservators, a regrettably short-lived AIC program that preceded the Institute of Paper Conservation accreditation by eighteen years. And of particular interest to the subject of this presentation, Yoshi

Nishio gave a very instructive introduction to the materials of Japanese painting.

In combination with the best European traditions of paper conservation that are passed down in studios and through the professional literature, we now take for granted that some exposure to Asian practices, however introductory or thorough, is both available and considered essential to the development of a well-trained paper conservator. Thirty years ago information on the subject was much harder to come by. In 1958 Robert van Gulik published *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, two-hundred pages of which dealt with the mounting of paintings, including samples of the papers and fabrics used. The sensibilities that Keiko Keyes shared in her teaching reflected her expertise with *Ukiyo-e* prints and her familiarity with Japanese studio practices. And in 1979 Masako Koyano had published her slim volume on Japanese scroll paintings with the support of AIC, *Japanese Scroll Paintings: A Handbook of Mounting Techniques*. There were specialists working on the collections at the Boston Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Freer, as well as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert, but it took several years for less-guarded professional exchanges to develop. Inquiries were politely accommodated but I gathered there was no clear understanding why they were being made. Of course, Japanese brushes, Japanese papers, and wheat starch paste adhesives were available in the studios in which I was being trained, but so were thermoplastic adhesives and lining methods with stretched Western papers, large quantities of adhesive, squeegees, and rollers, as well as fabric linings and Dacron interleaves—techniques that felt somewhat inelegant in comparison, even to someone with my very limited experience.

In 1971 the Freer Gallery produced the film, *The Art of the Hyogushi*, in which Takashi Sugiura and his colleagues, in just one hour, executed the complete treatment of a six-panel folding screen, a large Buddhist hanging scroll painting, and the transfer of a *Ukiyo-e* painting to a panel. I understand that some procedures depicted in that film are no longer current practice, but when I saw it for the first time it was a revelation. The availability of more information about Chinese and Japanese studio practices represented a development in paper conservation that was concurrent to, and as important as, the very purposeful analytical research on materials and procedures that were presented in Western publications and conferences. The confidence that Asian paintings conservators demonstrated about how objects responded; the scale of their projects; the thoroughness of treatment that a remounting represented; and the purposeful quality and integration of their materials, tools, and procedures made a very deep impression on many of us.

Interest in these exchanges was clearly gaining appeal in Japan, Europe, and North America. In 1980 UNESCO

sponsored Katsuhiko Masuda's first course on the Conservation of Oriental Art at the Museo d'Arte Orientale in Venice. In 1984 Mary Wood Lee organized the Seminar on the Conservation of Japanese Screens at the Pacific Regional Conservation Center, during which Takashi Sugiura directed a group of Western paper conservators in the treatment of Japanese screens. In 1985 Paul Wills, one of the earliest Westerners to complete the full training in a Japanese studio and who had returned to the British Museum, edited volume 9 of *The Paper Conservator*, Hyogu: *The Japanese Tradition in Paper Conservation*, which was entirely devoted Oriental paper conservation. By 1988, when the International Institute for Conservation (IIC) held its conference on the Conservation of Far Eastern Art in Kyoto, the momentum of exchange was astonishing, with Westerners working in Japan and Chinese and Japanese mounters working and teaching in the West. Surmounting not inconsiderable cultural and linguistic barriers, Japanese and Chinese conservators recognized the interest of Westerners and appreciated the mutual benefits of exchange. And the Western conservators who had completed the notoriously demanding training scheme of a Japanese studio were particularly well positioned to promote a more well-rounded and more precise understanding of their practices, which they did most generously.

While there are certainly areas where Asian and Western traditions of practice are exercised independently because the materials and the purpose of the piece, or the body of reference work with which one has to be familiar, are so different, there are many more occasions where the overlap of traditions fosters some insight about a more appropriate or safe treatment design. As someone whose experience with Asian art is primarily in the treatment of Japanese screens and Chinese murals, in addition to Western objects that are similar in their scale of treatment, I have benefited fundamentally from exposure to how Asian lining techniques and mounting formats make for more protected treatments, and from studying the esthetic decisions inherent to treatment.

The terms "Asian," "Oriental," and "Far Eastern" have obvious general geographic meanings, but they are too generic for the purpose of discussing traditions of conservation practice. The pioneering scholar of Asian art, Ernest Fenollosa, speaks of the arts of China, as well as Korea and Japan to which they were transported beginning in the sixth century, as a single esthetic movement. The painting media, supports, formats, and vocabulary of composition and draftsmanship were absorbed, but they were also synthesized with preexisting esthetic sensibilities and reinterpreted as new forms distinctive to their cultures. The hanging and hand scroll, the folding screen, album page, and fan are formats found in all three of these great and greatly different nations. The dimensions and charac-

teristic features of Chinese and Japanese architecture and esthetic developments such as the tea ceremony in Japan, were particularly influential in how paintings and their formats came to look different and to be assembled from different material combinations. The mounting of a thoroughly Japanese scroll or screen is different from the mounting of a Chinese scroll or screen in the paper and silks, adhesive preparations, brushes, surfaces to which adhesives are applied, and esthetics. While in the West we have been exposed to both of these traditions, I confess my own bias of understanding when I venture to say that the practices we identify in North America with Asian conservation are more those of Japan than of China. This has to do with the paintings that came into different European and North American collections, the relative number of Japanese and Chinese mounters that came to practice outside of their own countries, and how Westerners gained access and came to understand the procedures and materials particular to each tradition. The increase and detail of explanation about specifically Chinese practices is a very welcome addition. The point is that if there is something about Japanese or Chinese conservation treatments that is applicable to Western works, we have to distinguish specific differences in procedure to evaluate their relevance with precision.

We have shared concerns about the priorities of conservation and the objectives of treatment. The mounting formats that have evolved over centuries and the materials from which they are assembled speak directly to concerns about physical protection, care in handling, and reversibility. A scroll is mounted with large margins of silk above and below the painting. Wrapping it around a roller buries the surface area of a painting within where it is protected from exposure. The tight rolling and the burnished backing paper keeps uniform pressure on the surface to mitigate the formation of planar distortions, not unlike the way European prints and drawings used to be housed in volumes for their protection and reference. And like a Western binding, the scroll has a dynamic, three-dimensional structure.

A screen painting is inherently more exposed but the format also incorporates protective features. The lattice core makes it light in weight, and the panels, always even in number, are hinged to be folded against themselves for protection of the painting surfaces, so that the decorative papers on the reverse which bear the exposure came to be considered sacrificial. The moldings and brocade margins also lend the painting additional protection specifically where handling will occur. The light weight and possibility of folding makes for safer handling and storage of a full-size screen, the weight of which is thirty-five pounds and the surface area approximately sixty-five square feet. The assembly of the panels from multiple layers of paper adhered in different configurations results in a structure

that reinforces the painting during changes in the environment, to which screens were subject in their use as furnishings, and allows for safe removal of the painting sections by virtue of the final *ukekake* layer, which is applied in small overlapping squares that can be removed from the surface without extensive moisture.

The point I would like to illustrate about the formats is that the circumstances of aging and exposure have been anticipated, including the eventual need to replace the materials that support the work of art. The mount is also designed to enhance the painting, like our Western mat and frame, the long overdue history of which has been given welcome attention in recent publications. The patterns, colors, and materials and the combination of brocades that surround a screen, or in particular a scroll, are chosen to be appropriate in subject matter, historic period, color, scale, and dimensions. I find it particularly helpful that Japanese publications now often include the full mounting in their illustrations and that more attention is given to them in Western catalogues, such as the 2002 publication *The Written Image: Japanese Calligraphy and Painting from the Sylvan Barnett and William Burto Collection*, which includes very instructive commentaries by Sondra Castile. Finally the custom of rotating works on display in accordance with different seasons or events limits exposure, provides an opportunity for inspection, and prevents a disregard for the painting bred by overfamiliarity.

The formats of Asian works are also viewed as adaptable. Handscroll sections, fans, albums pages, and wall paintings are remounted as hanging scrolls. Hanging scrolls, sliding doors, and wall sections are remounted as folding screens. These changes are not viewed as compromising to the integrity of a work but as addressing a *fait accompli* of changed circumstances. In considering the susceptibility of folding screens in Western buildings, which are often displayed flat against the walls or as separated panels, I have had occasion to raise the question of whether a painting in need of complete treatment should be remounted as a single panel or without hinges, specifically to eliminate the source of potential structural damage. Of course that entails other compromises, such as sacrificing the quality of composition that is enhanced by the intended zigzag display.

Chinese and Japanese paintings obviously are not uniform in their execution, condition, or sensitivity to intervention, and works since the late nineteenth century can have problems for which the behaviors of older works are not reliable precedents. However, there is a regularity of problems encountered and a framework for how a painting is conserved that lies in the format. This might be a little different than what is found in Western institutional studios, where conservation objectives, procedures, and materials are by necessity more diverse to address problems peculiar to works on paper as varied as chalk or

fiber pen drawings, graphics in synthetic media, and three-dimensional works, as well as the problems encountered by paintings, objects, and textile conservators for which collaboration is opportune. Asian painting conservators have welcomed developments from the West that reflect this experience, specifically the suction table for consolidation, cleaning, and use as a leafcaster; synthetic resins for consideration as consolidants; cellulose ether adhesives; and research given to ascertaining the quality of materials such as protein adhesives and retouching media.

Because many paintings have a history of multiple remountings, Asian conservators are familiar with the evidence of repeated exposure to extensive treatment, which is a more recent experience for the general work of paper conservation in North American collections. This experience with the reversibility of earlier treatments guides the refinement of procedures for new mountings. There is a discerning approach to what earlier materials and repairs merit salvaging for reuse. There is also a restrained approach to retouching that reflects an appreciation of the painting's integrity, of course, but also a confidence in the esthetic cultivation of the viewer to look beyond media loss to what is evidence of the original execution. I think this is mirrored as well in our own more gingerly approach to old master drawings, where there can be a similar and not unappealing patina that is evocative of how fragile draftsmanship can be. The conservation of the accessory brocades, hardware, and decorative papers rather than their replacement arises when they hold interest as examples of the decorative arts themselves, because their combination is distinctive or associated with a piece, or because it means that less intrusive conservation procedures can be undertaken. In theory this has made one aspect of conserving Asian works in Western studios somewhat easier because it minimizes the need to access an extensive collection of historic or reproduction brocades for replacement. However it does mean that more time is invested if the original silk borders and papers on the reverse of a screen are conserved. A similar approach can be taken to Western works where we take a fair amount of trouble to maintain original mounting materials, not just because they might have documentary evidence, but because they have a harmony of age in their appearance or a sympathetic response as a material.

There is a tradition in Japan of institutions hosting one or more private studios to conserve paintings of the most importance. The objects that they are treating are not necessarily from the institution, so they function more as facilities where conservation is equated with treatment, than as museum departments that have an exclusive responsibility for the ongoing conservation of a collection. There is a lot of curiosity about the fabled studios of Misters Usami, Oka, Fujioka, Yamauchi, Endo, and Handa, and as someone with only a visitor's exposure to

some of them, my knowledge is inherently limited. But as a conservator in private practice, I have been impressed by their level of organization and how that affects the treatment designs. In addition to functioning as studios at the pinnacle of their specialized practice, they also function as training facilities, as research centers, and, not unimportantly, as self-interested commercial enterprises. With someone typically spending a decade or more in training at one location, there is a thoroughness gained from seeing how a variety of condition problems are addressed by experienced senior staff, and there is an institutional memory that I know from my own experience has unique value. Unfortunately, the studio system was also associated in the past with a great deal of secrecy, a circumstance that is often identified with apprenticeship training in any profession or culture. But that has changed, in part I understand from exposure to Western examples of professional exchange and from a mutual curiosity about studio practices. This can be seen in the documentation of projects, which is now much more accountable, as well as very high-quality and revealing publications from the private studios. There now exist university-level programs in conservation, some with the expectation that they will inform the practice of museum management, some as a preliminary step to entering a studio for practical training. There is a familiar lament about the programs feeling little responsibility for assisting their graduates in finding positions, but one studio head I spoke with indicated that he welcomed the broader professional outlook that he felt this training provided. With the full conservation and remounting of any large scroll or screen taking hundreds of hours that have to be budgeted, the organization of labor found in the traditional studio allows for the investment of time that is critical for such extensive work to be undertaken carefully.

The Japanese studio is supported by an enviable network of specialized trades, including paper and brush makers, brocade weavers, printers, adhesive purveyors, and accessory and tool suppliers. I think any Westerner finds this availability to be exceptional but there are concerns about the continued survival of some trades in the numbers that make for the level of quality that is viewed as critical. Our widespread adoption of these tools and supplies is probably the most obvious indication of our indebtedness to Asian conservation practice. Where would the refinement of our procedures be if we had not been introduced to the variety of brushes for different paste, water, and lining applications, to wheat starch paste, and to the huge variety of Japanese papers for facing, mending, filling, and lining? Not only do mounting procedures illustrate the integration of these tools, but they also instruct us to fully exploit the qualities of a material, to gain complete familiarity with the working qualities of it in a range of applications. I wholeheartedly support new product development and the imaginative use of different materials. The

variety of options now available to us has made many procedures safer and more effective, such as the use of *jinfunori* and nebulizers, for instance. I have observed, however, that understanding the varied potential working properties of any single product like starch paste in dry, thick, thin, or aged forms, often provides a foreknowledge of results that is elusive if too many products are considered.

In the fifth-century Chinese treatise by Xie He, the *Critical Theory of Painting*, reference is made to copying great works of painting, so that what resonance they have can be captured for transmission to original productions. As I said earlier, Western conservation practice has benefited immeasurably from exposure to the Asian procedures for reinforcement, specifically in how their formats are assembled in sections, how linings are built up gradually, and by the methods of containing risks that are inherent to any treatment. My admiration for what takes place in a mounting studio is unabashed, but in the adoption of procedures it is essential that we be mindful of how Western papers and media differ in their behavior and how Western works have their own integrity of format.

Consider the treatment of a seventeenth-century late Ming copy in black ink and limited color on silk of an early Ming scroll painting by Tan Yin, circa 1500, that was mounted on plywood for display in the Blue Loggia at Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio in Wisconsin. Paper conservators understand that the controlled use of moisture is at the heart of many of our treatment procedures, and as I have gained experience in the treatment of large-format works I have come to understand how critical it is to define the specific objectives exposure is meant to address to determine the necessary level of introduction. Objectives include removal from a mount, removal of linings or an adhesive, reducing planar distortions, cleaning to reduce staining and to facilitate repairs, lining, and mounting. Our examination of the painting and experience with similar materials told us that whatever cleaning could take place would happen in much less time than would be required to replace the linings, even with four pairs of hands available, so we wanted an even state of limited absorption rather than a state of saturation. Facings of rayon paper introduce moisture gradually and absorb released discoloration, they protect the media, and their wet strength supports a fragile object during handling, particularly in combination with Mylar, which has also found favor in both Japanese and Chinese studios (fig. 1). Older compromised linings were removed, but the paper layer behind the silk was kept—what I have learned from working in China is called the “life layer” for understandable reasons. The method of reinforcement with multiple layers begins with a lightweight first lining that that allows for the object to dry more quickly and evenly, after which tears can be adjusted, losses filled, and additional linings adhered until the work is reinforced suf-

ficiently for its final disposition. An interesting variation to this remounting was that instead of using a traditional wooden lattice core panel covered on both sides with multiple layers of paper, an aluminum honeycomb panel was prepared with only the front side covered (fig. 2). The reason for this was that a traditional panel in such large dimensions would have to be an inch thick, and the available depth on the wall was only half an inch, the same thickness as the original plywood (as well as that of the replacement honeycomb panel). Only one side has to be covered because a honeycomb panel can resist the contraction strength of multiple layers of paper, whereas a lattice core needs counter-mounting (an aluminum panel is twice the weight of a traditional lattice frame).

What made this treatment a hybrid? It is a Chinese painting, on continuous display, in an icon of American architecture. The panel structure is derived from Western painting conservation while the treatment and surface preparation used Japanese materials and procedures. Because the large stain at the bottom was in the paper below the silk as much as the silk itself, local bleaching and



Fig. 1. Seventeenth-century Chinese painting from Taliesin being prepared with a facing of rayon paper



Fig. 2. Seventeenth-century Chinese painting after treatment and mounting on an aluminum honeycomb panel

rinsing were possible after the first lining was applied, although with only limited success. Similar stain reduction techniques have been used on Western works on fabric as well as Asian works on paper. Because bleaching agents are not widely used in either Japan or China, I welcomed comments from several textile conservators and scientists, specifically about the safety of exposing protein fibers to bleaching agents. Because I sensed that it was viewed with no more wariness than bleaching cellulose fibers, I felt that it was a legitimate difference with traditional practice. The inpainting was confined to tear edges and abrasions on the

original surface. Rather than use watercolor, the pigments of which are absorbed more by the paper, the only media used were the light-brown extract of boiled paper called *su-su* with occasional graphite additions, which is sufficiently lightfast but more easily removed. I was exposed to this medium when learning about screen conservation, but I came to learn that it was a sympathetically viewed option for Western works under similar circumstances. With tests conducted at the National Gallery for use on a color field painting and an article on the subject by Pier Townsend in *The Paper Conservator* (2002), I think it can also be viewed as a material that has crossed traditions and generations of practice.

Silk is a very difficult surface to work on and I've been very impressed with how discrete the extensive repairs that can be called for on scrolls appear, a good example of which is the large scroll at the Metropolitan Museum attributed to the tenth-century painter Dong Yuan (which was the subject of the 1999 publications *Along the Riverbank* by Maxwell Hearn and Wen Fong and *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting* by Judith Smith and Wen Fong). What I've been struck with is the strategy for matching the background and alluding to the design without continuing it enough to be labeled as reconstruction or restoration. Part of this comes from the use of toned lining papers, either to brighten the background by using a lighter one than before or to disguise extensive networks of damage by using a darker one; in either case other linings are what is seen on the back. Toned linings are useful on Western works for esthetic reasons as well, when it will be the layer seen on the back, and to simplify filling losses. However pleasing the tone of traditional plant materials or watercolors, the use of diluted acrylics for toning eliminates the risk of solubility, although a drawback is that a Japanese paper can become too sized in feel. This is generally a strategy for historic works where less time is available to direct at the cosmetics of the project, but it can also be used when the original paper is very thin and fills are built up on the back after lining. A drawback, of course, is that in a future treatment the inpainting is not salvageable if the lining is removed.

Familiarity with specific formats has been very helpful in ascertaining whether there are benefits to the complete disassembly of a work for treatment. For example, of a pair of two folding screens (figs. 3–4), all of the repairs on one were made locally in the interest of having the treatment take less time (85 hours). In comparison the overall remounting of the second screen in comparable condition took 275 hours; however, it was done in order to conserve both the painting and the back papers (figs. 5–6). The real interest is whether disassembly contributes to a treatment being more safe, more effective, or more craftsman-like, by which I mean that the painting appears to have aged benignly rather than to have been restored. With the heavier papers used on Western works, overlapping seams can



Fig. 3. Japanese screen before local treatment

be a source of staining, because of slower drying, or a source of planar distortion because they constrain expansion. Is it safer to spare a work the manipulation that separation involves, or to facilitate handling smaller sections of a piece? Does it facilitate the gradual building up of reinforcement that allows for corrections in tear registration, filling, intermediate and final flattening, and the control of expansion and moisture penetration during lining and remounting?

Using fabric as a lining remains a viable option to support large works and to conserve traditional mounting formats such as a stretcher or a roller. This has been improved by exposure to Asian materials and practices, primarily by using multiple layers of interleaving paper to promote better adhesion and reinforcement and to insulate a work on paper from the texture of the fabric. In effect, the stretched fabric is lined with Japanese paper, integrated with the pounding brush, and allowed to dry before the object is mounted. Less adhesive is necessary, there is less expansion, and the assembly dries more quickly. While this is a familiar and durable format, such large, unsupported surface areas can be compromised by seams and by their response to environmental changes.

The Japanese panel overcomes the limitations of working with standard-size materials because the lattice core can be made in almost any dimension as either a panel, with both sides covered, or as a fixed wall surface, with one side covered. The multiple layers all have very specific functions, including insulation from a wooden framework whose shifting could otherwise transmit tears, building up the rigidity of the panel, capturing air that will mitigate changes in relative humidity, and, finally, making



Fig. 4. Japanese screen after local treatment

reversibility possible because the small overlapping squares of the final *ukekake* layer facilitate separation of the object from the surface. The surface that does result has a wonderful undulation about it as well that is less rigid in appearance than hard panels. We have found that it functions well with Western objects that need particularly subtle reinforcement, such as degraded sixteenth-century intaglio printed maps, and of course for objects that will be on display in unregulated environments. After years of unadulterated affection for this technique I did come to appreciate that it is not universally applicable to Western works. For instance, we mounted a fresco cartoon on a screen-type panel and, while very well reinforced, in hindsight I regret both that it appears so much more flat than it ever did as an assembly of cut-up pieces, and that it obscures the legibility of the holes for pouncing (figs. 7–8). Wallpapers and murals have been mounted with this surface preparation, but a solid attachment to plaster walls prepared with fabric and Japanese paper is not necessarily undesirable, mainly because it constrains the response to changes in humidity of works on heavier Western papers with media that are so subject to cleavage.

The conservation of Japanese woodblock color prints, which has been refined as a distinct area of specialty within paper conservation, has influenced the approach to Western works as well, specifically in relation to sensitivities to moisture and steam, the three-dimensional texture of a sheet, and the attention given to the appearance of the back. This correlates in sensibility with the treatment of old master prints and drawings, a subject that Jane McAusland has spoken about with a great deal of authority and which is reflected in the recent Roy Perkinson translation of the Max Schweidler manual, *The Restoration of Engravings, Drawings, Books, and Other Works on Paper*.

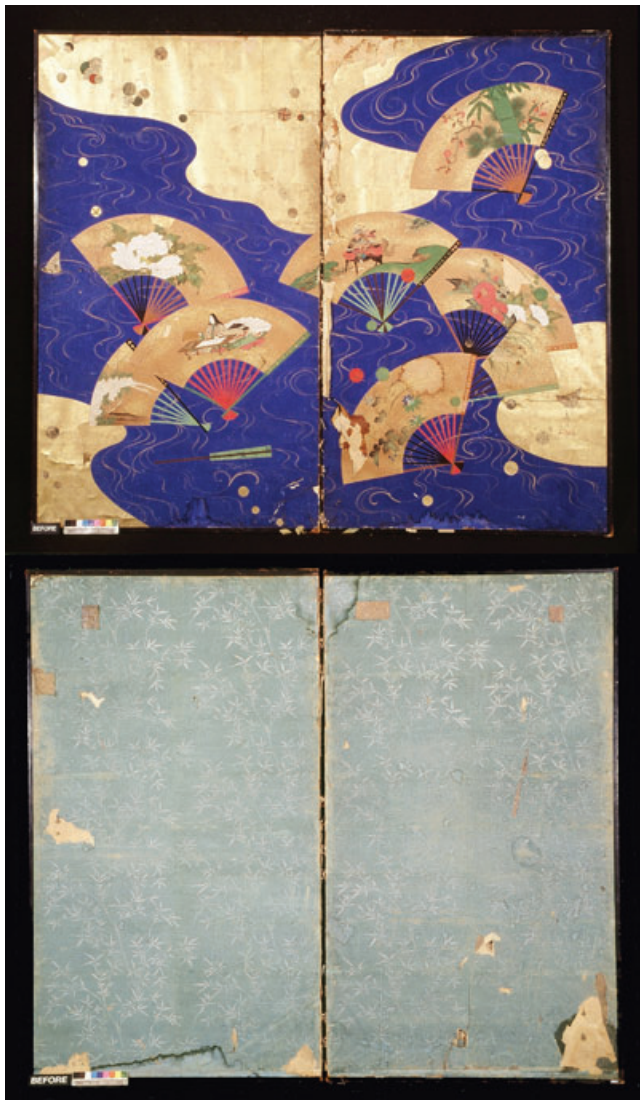


Fig. 5. Japanese screen before overall treatment



Fig. 6. Japanese screen after overall treatment of painting and back papers

Procedures used on scrolls for reinforcing tears with cut strips after lining, for minimizing the overlapping edges of a fill on thin paper, for burnishing the linings, and for assembling sections and flattening under tension have been enormously useful as well, particularly on very lightweight or translucent Western works such as drawings on tracing paper.

Because the objects paper conservators care for are so varied and because those variations are inherent to the importance of different works, specialized training and practice is essential for the most sophisticated and appropriate treatments to be undertaken. While our studio undertakes local treatment of scrolls, we recognize that we are not in a position to do overall remountings. It requires an understanding of the art history and response of the original media and support, a knowledge of procedures,

and a familiarity with mounting formats and materials, that can only be gained by the thorough and constant exposure to practice that occurs in a specialized studio. Addressing the conservation needs of the painting is one area of expertise, but another is assembly of the mount so that it unrolls effortlessly and hangs true. This requires handling of paper, adhesives, silk, and brushwork that strikes me as close to the pinnacle of technical ability.

When knowledge about Asian treatment procedures became more widespread and consideration was given to their use on Western objects, the welcome was not universal. Our profession is inherently conservative, as it should be, and the benefits of change have to be demonstrated. Our understanding has improved immeasurably from having more conservators of Asian paintings working as colleagues in our institutions and from thirty years of expo-





Fig. 7. Seventeenth-century Italian preparatory cartoon in charcoal on multiple sheets of overlapping paper before treatment

sure to practices that have filtered into our treatment vocabulary. This exchange has enhanced the North American and European traditions of inquiry, analysis, and practice that are the foundation of our training as paper conservators, and the Book and Paper Group has done much to promote these advances.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In preparing this paper I consulted colleagues who know infinitely more than I do about Asian conservation practices, how they have changed in Asia during the same period, and how the specialty has changed in response to being undertaken in western museums: Phillip Meredith, Yoshi Nishio, Andrew Hare, Sondra Castile, Brigitte Yeh, and Victoria Blyth Hill, from all of whom I've learned a great deal by working alongside or in ongoing conversations over the decades. Any observations that I have made that were learned, insightful, or imaginative are theirs; any that were impolitic, mistaken, or painfully obvious are mine.

I would like to pay special tribute to Takashi Sugiura, who died last year at the age of ninety-three, and for whom Yoshi Nishio published an obituary in the *AIC Newsletter* that captured the esteem in which he was held. Mr. Sugiura was head of the Freer Gallery studio for thirty-



Fig. 8. Seventeenth-century Italian preparatory cartoon after treatment and mounting on a Japanese screen style panel

five years and the subject of the 1971 movie, which I am sure I had seen at least a dozen times before I was given the chance to work with him in 1984, when he directed twelve paper conservators in the screen project at the Bishop Museum—all of whose training was very different from the apprenticeship he began at age fourteen. He was an immensely knowledgeable and patient teacher who directed us all with sure-footedness in a busy working studio. Among his many qualities that left a lasting impression were that he seemed most youthful, at age seventy-three, when he was engrossed by a treatment procedure. He solicited and had a keen but critical interest in our comparisons of Asian and Western conservation practices. When I say that model can serve all of us well in our professional lives, I trust I speak for anyone who has had the good fortune of exposure to a great teacher.

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T. K. McCLINTOCK  
Studio TKM Ltd., Conservation of Fine Art and Historic  
Works on Paper  
Somerville, Massachusetts  
tkm@studiotkm.com