

The Fusion of Japanese Zen Aesthetics and the Image of Machi-Man (Townspeople) – Reflections in Ukiyo-e and 19th Century Paris Montmartre Art

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Abstract

The three core elements of Japanese Zen art aesthetics are mono no aware, yugen, and wabi-sabi, but these are only modern research interpretations of Zen art aesthetics. By tracing the roots of Rinzai Zen Buddhism from China, free from the written word, this paper finds that Zen Buddhism has influenced Japanese culture in both thought and life and has fused the cultural practices of the Japanese townspeople's society over time. Therefore, the article analyzes the connection between the Japanese Zen aesthetics and the culture of the Machi-man (townspeople). At the same time, the paper also argues that the relationship between Zen art aesthetics and the townspeople spread worldwide with the spread of ukiyo-e as an art form. This relationship is visualized in the form of case studies, including but not limited to the use of ukiyo-e artworks to substantiate this relationship and the analysis of the works of Toulouse-Lautrec to decipher how this relationship between aesthetics and townspeople has been learned in foreign lands.

Keywords: Japanese Zen aesthetics, machi-man (townspeople), Ukiyo-e, Montmartre art

1. Introduction

The aesthetics of Japanese Zen art is a mingling and combination of Zen Buddhism's doctrine of detachment from the written word and traditional Japanese art forms. This aesthetic thought, which arose and developed under the influence of Zen Buddhism in Japan, is fundamentally based on the philosophical outlook of Zen Buddhism. It is also an evaluation and judgment of Japanese native art and culture. Zen Buddhism has been spread to Japan

from China since 1192. In real terms, Zen Buddhism was formally introduced to Japan from China during the Kamakura period when Buddhism was in full bloom. With the continuous exchanges between Zen monks in China and Japan, two of the five schools and seven sects of Zen Buddhism: the Linji School (“Deshan Bang (blow), Linji He (shout).” Linji School inherited Mazu Daoyi’s “The Buddha is in the Heart” and Huangbo Xiyun’s “The Nature is the Heart, the Heart is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Dharma.” In light of this, there is a famous sentence in Zen ideology called “Yixin Yinxin Xinxin Buyi,” which can be translated as “Spread through the heart and there are no different ideas through the spreading.”) and Cao Dong School. (Cao Dong teaches his students through percussion and shouts; the master should learn from others and shout accordingly. During this time, there should be no negligence. His method, regardless of his meditation and progress, only needs to achieve the knowledge and vision of the Buddha, which is “the heart is the Buddha.”) The two major Zen schools were introduced to Japan from China and formed the two mainstream Zen schools of thought in Japanese Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism first appealed to the samurai class, and both its values and the teachings of the Linji school of “blow” and “shout” as expressed in their scriptures were similar to the behavioral patterns, expressions, and living habits of the Japanese samurai class. Zen Buddhism came to symbolize the samurai's simplicity, restraint, and discipline, and quickly penetrated Japanese life from the samurai class. The simple ideas of Zen Buddhism have permeated the world and lives of the Japanese people, and have gradually become the foundation of their thinking and study. The Japanese people have formed and developed the aesthetic idea that Zen is culture, and culture is beauty.

This is summarized in the concept of “Zen Aesthetics,” which has been distilled into the main characteristics of the traditional Japanese aesthetics of “mono no aware,” “yugen,” and “wabi-sabi.” The main qualities that have been refined are the concepts of traditional Japanese aesthetics. This article focuses on a concept called “Zen aesthetics.” When cultural activities such as poetry and painting were closely related to Zen thought and the spread of Buddhism, Zen officially became a part of culture and art, and it had its artistic aesthetic. It was mainly in the Muromachi period that this artistic aesthetic took shape. Kato Choichi once said, “The culture of the Muromachi period was not influenced by Zen, but Zen became the culture itself.” The word “Muromachi period” in the Chinese translation includes the word “machi” for “townspeople's culture,” where the word “machi” is the name of the later Edo period. In this case, the word “machi” is the precursor to the concept of “townspeople,” which was later referred to in the Edo period. In other words, during the Muromachi period, the shogunate's policy of “the lowering of the top”(下克上) led to the development of castle towns, which were centered on the castles of the daimyo, as a combination of political and economic activities. In the following years, as the towns continued to develop, by the mid-to-late 17th century, the townspeople had become a group of wealthy people who specialized in industry, commerce, and trade. This paper will center on the specific connection between the aesthetics of Japanese Zen art and the culture of the townspeople.

By analyzing the Zen thought that was active during the Muromachi Shogunate period and the Phellodendron thought that broke with the tradition in the Edo period, which contained the concepts of “mono no aware,” “yugen,” and “wabi-sabi,” the article will further analyze

their influence on the thinking of the "townspeople" and the impact of "townspeople" culture on the aesthetics of Japanese art. To further analyze its influence on the thinking of the "townspeople" and the specific influence of the "townspeople's" culture on the aesthetics of Japanese art, it is important to understand the relationship between the "townspeople" and the "townspeople's" culture. To better illustrate this relationship, this paper will use case studies to visualize this relationship. This includes but is not limited to, the use of Japanese ukiyo-e works to illustrate how the aesthetics of Japanese Zen art have reflected the existence and living conditions of the "townspeople" in specific artistic expressions. We will also look at the works of 19th-century Parisian "Machi" artists to discover how Japanese Zen aesthetics, through ukiyo-e art representations, spread oriental and Japanese ideas and elements of Machi culture to Europe, where they were inherited and developed.

2. Early Machi and Zen Art Aesthetics: The Muromachi Period

(Muromachi Zen Thought: Mainstream Thought, Folk Transformation or so-called Popularization and Secularization, and the Early Forms of the Machi)

The core social culture that is widely accepted and used in Japan is a culture of confrontation. In a study of why robots are widely used and accepted in Japanese society (Robot and ukiyo-e: implications to cultural varieties in human-robot relationships), it is shown that the Japanese social pattern of a person and a robot looking at a third object together is very similar to the composition of the Edo period Japanese ukiyo-e painting of a mother and child looking at something other than themselves (Osamu Sakura, 2021). This perspective of looking at a third object expresses to a large extent a very clear social division in Japanese society. For example, there is a relative lack of social status for women. This is also true of the townspeople class in Japan. To more effectively understand the relationship between Japanese "towns"(町) and Zen art aesthetics, this section examines the relationship between towns and Zen aesthetics in chronological order, including, but not limited to, analyzing the formation, manifestations, and specific aesthetic expressions.

Concerning the Zen aesthetics of the Muromachi period, we first look at the social development and historical background of the period. Then look at the Muromachi period's culture and Zen tradition. Besides, we need to look at the specific connection between a more traditional idea of communal culture and the common culture spawned by the peasants and the townspeople. Then, we will explore and understand the Zen art aesthetic of the Muromachi period and its influence on the thought and development of the castle town. Since the Heian period, Confucianism declined and was replaced by Zen Confucianism centered on the Wushan Zen monks. In addition, the emperor of the Muromachi period, Emperor Go-Daigo, was fond of Buddhism when he was the crown prince, and Zen did not only exist as a doctrine to be practiced. Zen was not just a doctrine to be practiced, it was more of an essential part of daily life.

For instance, the daily documents of the Zen were written in parallel prose, mostly in Si Liu style, with references to Buddhist quotes and Confucian classics, which flourished and long lasted in Japan. There are many other examples of the intertwining of Zen thought and its cultural and artistic expressions of the same period, such as renga, sarugaku, and nohaku,

which were improved and innovated from sarugaku. As a result of the strong support of the samurai class for the development of Zen and Confucianism, the Wushan system of Zen Buddhism was established in Japan, and the corresponding related literature was also developed. The Muromachi period was a period of relative social stability in Japan, during which the Shintoist movement fell silent, the Linji school, which was supported by the samurai class, began to grow and develop, and the Wushan system in Japan gradually took form. The Zen ideology of the Muromachi period was also reflected in the cultural aspects, such as a certain kind of slim, delicate and sensitive aesthetic that was popular at that time, and the architectural design and layout of the Kinkaku-ji (金阁寺) and Ginkaku-ji (银阁寺) temples etc. (Japan's five mountains also known as Fusan five mountains and ten temples, in the Muromachi era, the shogunate modeled on the Southern Song dynasty set up "five mountains and ten temples," the institutions and facilities are complete, Kyoto, five mountains were referred to as Tenryuji Temple, Sangokuji Temple, Jianrenji Temple, Dongfukuji Temple, Manshuji Temple, and ten temples are such as Josoji, Rinpocheonji Temple, Zenryuji Temple, Ankokuji Temple, Hakuboji Temple, Pumonin, Hirojakuji Temple, Myogikuji Temple, Daitokuji Temple, Ryuusoji Temple.) Since Zen Buddhism continued to develop, it has penetrated further into folk life in spirituality.

2.1 Muromachi Era Mainstream Zen Thought and Its Popularization

A Zen monk who contributed much to the popularization of Zen thought during the Muromachi period¹ in Japan was Ichijou Soushun, who is also the prototype of the famous Japanese animation "Clever Ichijou"(聪明的一休). Ichijou Soushun (1394-1481) was a Zen monk of the Linji School in the middle of the Muromachi period. It is said that he was the son of Emperor Komatsu after Japan, and he had extraordinary historical achievements in Buddhism, poetry, calligraphy, and waka, and was an outstanding representative of the Wushan culture, and was known as one of the three most wonderful monks in Japan, together with the evil monk Dogen and the master of Dharma, Koukai. At the age of twenty-five, he received the Dharma name Ichigo. At the age of twenty-seven, while sitting and meditating near the Lake, he heard the hissing of crows and thought that the undifferentiated wisdom he had before he was born was his original reality. So he had an epiphany and wished to return to his true self. He wrote it in *The Collection of Crazy Clouds* (狂云集) and *Hearing Crows and Having a Province* (闻鸦有省). (“豪机瞋恚识情心，二十年前即在今。鸦笑出尘罗汉果，日影玉颜奈何吟。”) ² When he was twenty-nine years old, he went with his master Huazhou to Dade Temple to participate in a puja on the anniversary of the death of Huazhou's teacher. On that day, he wore a cloth coat and a pair of straw shoes, and Huazhou chided him, "Why do you wear like that?" Ichijou Soushun returned that not to be a crowd. By far, he

¹ Muromachi period (1336-1573) was originated from the shogunate in Kyoto. This period was first set by Ashikaga Takauji in 1336. He unified and dominated Japan by establishing a regime of buke. During this period, the unification of the North and the South of Japan was realized. After, around 1467, the shogunate's authority was severely damaged by the emergence of the Yeonin Rebellion. The prolonged war left Kyoto riddled with holes, and the shogunate fell apart, forming the so-called era in which the lower levels restrained the upper levels.

² Ichikyu Munochun. Ichikyu monk poetry collection. East China Normal University Press, 2008.

repudiated false trappings and claimed to be Huazhao's sole successor. He had the view that the pure Zen of the Tang and Song dynasties inherited from Linji, Yangqi, Songyuan, and Xudang had been transmitted to Japan, and then from Daiyin (大应) through Daiteng (大灯), Chewong (彻翁), and Yankai (言外) to Huazhao (华叟), whose heir was none other than Ichijou. Since the death of Huazhao, Ichijou has traveled widely, witnessing the disasters of the Kashi Rebellion and the Ein Rebellion, during which the power of the Muromachi Shogunate was weakened by the local lords and daimyo (大名). Most of his ideas were born out of his personal experience as a monk who traveled all his life, never committing himself to a major temple again (one sometimes commits oneself to a place, but not to the brat of the place). He was a wild monk who traveled all his life, never again committing himself to a big temple. At the age of sixty-four, he published a small book called "Skeletons" (《骸骨》), which was intended to teach Buddhism to the common people in a simple and in-depth way, with short stories and paintings of various kinds of white skeletons, some of which were gathered together for a drink, and some of which were men and women sharing the same pillow³. He wanted to use these intermittent and simple paintings to express the Zen view of life and death, that is, "there is no movement and no death". He wanted to use these intermittent, simple paintings to express the Zen Buddhist view of life and death, which is "no movement, no stillness, no birth, no death, no going, no coming, no right, no wrong, no abiding and no going." (Liuzu Tanjing, 2001)⁴ This book was later reprinted many times and continued to be widely distributed among the people until the Edo period⁵. In the account of Ichijou Soshun's life, it is written that one New Year's Day, Ichijou walked along the road with a skeleton in his hand and that he did such an absurd and shocking thing on the joyous New Year's Day to have an epiphany, so that people could see the skeleton and realize that everyone would turn into white bones one day, and understand the truth that there is life and there must be death. Given Ichijou Soshu, he aimed to bring the world to enlightenment. Then all behavior would have a basis, but ordinary people's enlightenment is always bound by wealth, fame, environment, and status, which is the loss of freedom. Ichijou Soshun was different in that he could explore the fundamentals of the way to the point where the world realized that he was not to be understood.

As the most influential Zen master of the Muromachi period, we can regard Ichijou Sōshū's thought as part of the mainstream, coupled with the fact that he was the sole heir to the Linji school. This thought was not only recorded simply through his published books, but also through the Zen aesthetics and reasoning that many of his friends who befriended him learned from him. All of these great men of culture and art came to visit him because they adored Ichijou's Zen style. Many of these cultural and artistic figures admired Ichijou's Zen style, because of his unconventionality and the charisma of Ichijou's personality, which was passed

³ Zhu Lili. "Chinese Intelligence in the Diaries of Japanese Muromachi Zen Monks: Monks, Merchants, and Information Transmission in East Asia." *Fudan Journal: Social Science Edition* 1(2013):10.

⁴ Yang Zengwen. *Liuzu Tanjing* (New Dunhuang Edition). Religious Culture Publishing House, 2001.

⁵ The Edo period (Tokugawa period) is a division of Japanese history running from 1603 to 1867. This period marks the governance of Edo Tokugawa shogunate which was officially established in 1603. This period is the early modern period of Japan and it is also real ruled in the hands of the shoguns.

on to Noh artist Koharu Zenchiku, and to Japanese artist Shohaku Soga, and those who made great contributions to waka, renga, tea ceremony, and painting. This laid the foundation of Japan's traditional culture.

2.2 Ideology and Art of the Castle Town (城下町)

During the Muromachi period, the concept of a castle town was developed⁶. A castle town is a city in Japan centered around a castle, not so much a city as a gathering place around a lord's residence, mostly a settlement or a town hall (marketplace), and is called a Yamashita (山下) or a Nigashita (根小屋) in Japan. There are not many records of castle towns, but most of the historical urban analyzers of medieval Japan have explored this part of the city. According to Haruko Arada (胁田晴子) in *Urbanism in Medieval Japanese History*, the huge urban type represented by Kyoto and Kamakura, the secondary urban type dominated by the national capitals, which were the centers of local administration, and the small and medium-sized towns along the main lines of transportation, as well as the uchi-machi and the jōshimachi. Towns and castle towns flourished in the late Muromachi period. In addition to the traditional urban centers such as Kyoto and Kamakura, Yorimasa Cho (门前町) was gradually formed around Buddhist temples and shrines. As the feudal lords (大名) took up residence with their retainers (家臣), castle towns were formed underneath the castle. These towns were centered around the lord's castle, which had both administrative and commercial functions, and the lord's castle generally had administrative functions and military defense capabilities. Most of the castle towns were built on dangerous mountainous terrain or were mainly residential. As a result, castle towns took the form of cities with capabilities other than administrative, residential, and military functions, i.e., commerce, transportation, temples, and harbors. In these places, there were usually inns, stables, stores, large temples, warehouses, etc., and by gathering merchants and traders in the castle town, the territory became a center of commerce, industry, and transportation.

Therefore, from the socio-political point of view, the Muromachi period was a time when the "lower class conflicted with the upper class" (下犯上的时代), and the tutelary daimyo of each country expanded their power and began to disregard the centralized power of the Emperor, who had been forgotten and were marginalized from the political arena. With the emergence of political divisions, peasants and a new generation of merchants and citizens established their armed forces for self-protection, and the merchants and citizens with generation relationship to merchants were collectively known as the townspeople. Similarly, Buddhist temples and monasteries also established their armed forces, and the two were intertwined and combined, as in Chuboku and Tohoku in Honshu, where the peasants combined with Buddhist beliefs and opportunities to become Buddhist groups to form a strong political force in the form of religion. This political power also changed the way the townspeople of that time viewed art and their understanding of art and culture to a great extent.

Against this background, the greatest achievements in folk art creation were Noh and Kyogen,

⁶ Zhao Fuli. (2019). Formation and Development of Modern Japanese Machi Thought." Northern Literature 5(3).

of which Zeami is the best representative at present. Zeami was one of the most famous Sarugaku actors and playwrights in the early Muromachi period. He was a great admirer of Ichijou Soshu, and incorporated one of his Zen teachings into his Noh plays, based on his absorption of Sarugaku, he proposed the three paths of “Seed, Sake, and Write” (種、作、書) according to his understanding of Zen, and based on Zen's key points, established the “Sequence, Break, and Rush” (序、破、急). Based on his understanding of Zen, he proposed the three ways of “planting, making, and writing,” and established the unprovoked structural principles of "order, breakage, and haste" following the essentials of Zen, laying the foundation for the aesthetics of Zen, which is called “yugen”. Later, with the growing power of the peasants and townspeople, folk literature gradually emerged, and more forms of creation appeared, not just samurai literature such as the Taipingji (太平記), which inherited the Zen ideology of Wushan literature, but also short, easy-to-understand novels and renga, such as the Asakusa-ko (御伽草子). Although ogakuso first appeared in the Edo period, it was more of a transitional short prose work that filled the gap between the court literature of the Heian period and the literature of the common people of the Edo period. These literary works fully reflected social reality and were very accessible in their literary expression, similar to Ichijou's Skeletons, only more popular with the general public. This medieval literature was written to a large extent in contact with Buddha, focusing on secular love, marriage, and family, and conveying and developing Zen Buddhist ideas from real problems into its literary expression.

In the case of ukiyo-e (Edo period prints), for example, which were based on Muromachi period ink paintings, a distinctive feature of the art of painting in this period was the decline of "Yamato-e" and the popularity of ink paintings modeled on the Song and Yuan styles of painting. The foundation of Japanese ink painting was laid by the Zen monk Ruyaku and his disciple Zhou Wen, and its perfection was achieved by Zhou Wen's disciple Sesshu Toyo. Sesshu Toyo traveled to China and learned ink painting techniques from the famous Chinese painters of the time, Li Zaihe and Zhang Yousheng, which enriched the cultural context of Japan. Tosa Koushin (1434 AD - 1525 AD) used the techniques of Chinese painting on Yamato-e, developed highly traditional techniques, and revitalized Yamato-e. Kano Masanobu (1454 A.D. - 1530 A.D.) was a court painter for the Shogunate and also used Chinese ink painting techniques to develop Yamato-e in the service of Ashikaga Yoshimasa and Yoshimasa. His son, Kano Motonobu (1476 A.D. - 1559 A.D.) inherited his father's style and demeanor and developed the Kano school of painting. His posthumous works include *the Seaside Flowers and Birds* (海辺花鸟图) (1513 AD) and *the Eight Scenes of Xiaoxiang* (瀟湘八景图). No ukiyo-e works remain from the Muromachi period, and the Muromachi ink paintings imitated in the Edo period prints reflect the preferences of the farmers and townspeople of that time, i.e., the portrayal of very specific scenery, animals, and crops, and the depiction and expression of their lives in a realistic manner, with not a lot of content in the paintings, and one or two subjects being sufficient for the expression of the entirety, which is deeply related to the Zen culture that is engraved in the marrow of the bones of the Japanese people.

3. Industry, Commerce, Trade and Zen Aesthetics: The Edo Period

It is well known that in Japan there is Bushido and Machinando. Bushido expresses the stubborn, traditional spirit of the Japanese warrior. Machinando, on the other hand, was used to explain the wisdom of Japanese merchants about economic affairs, to explain the role of merchants in terms of universal principles, and to seek a place for merchants. This was mainly because during the Tokugawa Shogunate, the samurai were at the top of the pyramid, residing in the middle of the ruling class giving one the privileges of a feudal military aristocracy. They looked down on merchants. Until the rise of merchants in the late Tokugawa Shogunate, the samurai gradually sold their privileges to the merchants to survive, and the political status and identity of the merchants changed.

In the Edo period, there was a system of registering the status of the merchants, as the scholars of Japanese Confucianism believe that there was a difference between the superior and the inferior of the ruler and the ministers, and the superior and the inferior of the father, the son, the brother, the husband and the wife in the family. It is recorded in the Book of Revelation (黙识录) that Miyake Shosai said, "When the superiority and inferiority of the ruler and the minister are determined, just as the way of father, son, brother, and husband is practiced. The king and the subject are determined, which also constructs the path of father and son, brothers, and wife and husband." This kind of morality, which was only about superiority and inferiority and not about emotions, was the very normal form of marriage and family among the samurai families at that time. Between the samurai and the townspeople was the morality of the peasants, whose morality influenced the townspeople to a certain extent. The morality of the peasants in feudal Japan lacked the conditions for engaging in written activities, and so their moral thoughts and experience in moral education were often a unique system of folk ethics that was passed down by word of mouth. In the Edo period, more than 80% of the Japanese population were peasants, and most of the admonitions passed down among the peasants were admonitions that mainly demanded unconditional obedience to the ruler. Among the townspeople, that is, the industrial and commercial practitioners of the cities, the superiority, and inferiority of men and women were not as stark and strict as the difference in status between men and women among the ruling class and the samurai class, as they were shown in works of ukiyo-e, which included paintings of both beauties and servitors.

Unlike today's Japan, the townspeople of feudal Japan were the most disreputable and unappreciated bottom of the social hierarchy. This disrespect was because they were considered to have taken money from the cities and the hard-working people, and they were not allowed to stay in the same places as the rest of the class of people, so although many merchants were wealthy, even the wealthiest social class, they were not able to enjoy a higher social status. They were unable to show off their dress and wealth in public because they were merchants. As a result of this class solidification, Japanese townspeople often traded with samurai, or in the process of passing on their business from one generation to the next, sent the next generation to get a good education to learn the ways of economics and running a business. After the middle of the Edo period, the market for commodities developed greatly, and a commercial economic circle centered on Osaka, Edo, and Kyoto was formed

throughout Japan. Every day, merchant ships from all over the world loaded with rice, sake, salt, and handmade goods anchored at the port of Edo, and more than half of these products were sold in Edo's market. Based on this, the townspeople's thinking developed and matured, and the economic power of merchants was greatly manifested, but the feudal society's concept of inferiority and superiority and the hierarchy of status made it impossible for them to gain a foothold, and even though most of them proclaimed and advocated the idea that "the samurai is not noble, nor are merchants cheap," it was still difficult to break the prejudice and contempt.

For townspeople, money could be earned, but there was nowhere to spend it. Thus, brothels, temples, and residences became the few places available to the townspeople for using this money and enjoyment. For one thing, from the first to the twentieth day of the first month, there are numerous worship services. When the cherry blossoms are in full bloom, the townspeople come out to enjoy the cherry blossoms. As summer progresses, various festivals ensue. The townspeople's place of enjoyment is called "Yuri " or "Yakusho," and it is the birthplace of fashion and trend-setting in the Edo period and the most distinctive symbol of the townspeople's enjoyment in the Edo period. The girls who worked in the Yuri were dressed and trained according to the standards and aesthetics of the Edo period. The biggest Yuri were Shimabara in Kyoto, Shinmachi in Osaka, and Yoshiwara-machi in Edo, where people had fun and spent a lot of money, especially the big merchants, rich men, and tycoons who spent a lot of money in Yuri, which was unbelievable. This not only exposes the trade practitioners' low status but also how much suppressed social formations did townspeople held. As a result, they are dominated by a decadent and vain hedonism, and they pursue wealth and carnal pleasures by any means necessary. In Yuri, the townspeople also constructed an aesthetic sense for the stage and women they saw. It was later passed down as "粹 (iki)". It came out of the townspeople's culture and the normality of their lives, and formed the integration of the phenomenon against the backdrop of the impermanence of death and the moral idealization of the samurai who refused to bow down, and the means to achieve the goal of the charming appearance in the red-light districts of the merchant's living space.

Secondly, although most of the temples cooperated and the shogunate, there was more mutual support between the townspeople and the monks. The Edo period (1603-1867) was Japan's last period of feudalism. As the Shogunate no longer tolerated Christianity and went on a rampage to kill Christians, and the peasants were not afraid of the butcher's knife to riot and denounce officials, the wealthy townspeople gradually began to straighten their backs and dare to taunt the poor and downtrodden samurai. The divisions of the feudal class in Japan began to reshuffle (北島正元, 《江戸时代》, 2019). The Japanese martial regime no longer held a position of supreme authority. The Shogunate adopted a closed-door policy to weaken the impact of Western civilization. By the middle of the Edo period, even the Shogunate was in a financial crisis. Naturally, the Zen Buddhist temples and monks could not fully rely on the Edo Shogunate and the samurai who were on the payroll to support them. They needed more money for incense burning and the vitality of living in the world (material provision and spiritual support). Therefore, the townspeople became a consequential source of support

for them. The Edo townspeople, through their exposure to Zen culture, have also developed a sense of truth called "Tomono (通)", which the townspeople have learned from the Zen words "Shimeonen (諦念)" and "Tatsukan (达观)", that is, "江戸子不留过夜钱" (in Edo, where fires and earthquakes are common, money must be spent before disaster strikes) (The Structure of Iki, 2016)⁷. This kind of thinking is understandable, and the Chinese have the same principle: when you are poor, you think of change; when you change, you get through; when you get through, you get through; only the Chinese have a more open-minded view of money, while the Japanese have a value and judgment of money that is similar to their view of life and death.

Third, the difference between machiya and buke-yashiki is obvious. In terms of architecture, the castle tower represented the majesty of the samurai class, and underneath the castle tower, the retainers could be assigned to live in a residence. The higher the status, the closer the residence was to the castle. As a result, the samurai's yashiki could be categorized mainly into noble lords (daimyo, 大名), middle-ranking samurai who were qualified to visit the shogun (hatamoto, 旗本), and lower-ranking samurai (gokenin, 御家人). Although there were some hierarchical distinctions between samurai homes in terms of exterior and interior construction, most of them revered the tea ceremony. This tea ceremony flourished among the samurai class, the nobility, and the shogunate during the Edo period, who also constructed tea rooms for their houses with niches in which to hang the will of Zen in each room. Machiya, on the other hand, were markedly different, serving as residences for merchants and craftsmen, and were not only residences but also stores, offices, warehouses, and workshops. The overall area of a single townhouse is rectangular, with the part of the building facing the street being the store and the rooms in the back being the residence and parlor, while the warehouses are more often in the form of a study. The gardens were not as extensive as those of the samurai yashiki, so there were only a few small courtyards to enjoy. There are ordinary townhouses and there are also townhouses in Kyoto, which are larger than ordinary townhouses and are called Kyoto townhouses. The front view of the house is about three rooms, and it is built along the street, with the rooms arranged side by side as you enter from one side of the entrance, so that you can go all the way from the store to the inner room. The Edo Machiya is also different in that it has an alleyway between two neighboring houses, so that you can enter the back of the garden, and the rooms facing the street are used as the mud rooms, while the interior is no longer equipped with passages, and there is no grill in the front, and the house has a symbolic curtain hanging under the eaves to provide a full view of the Edo cityscape. This kind of house structure is deep and uninteresting, coupled with the townspeople's low status in Japan's feudal and traditional society cannot go out and stay too much, ukiyo-e and miniature bonsai became a form of their appreciation of art and embodiment of artistic aesthetics. The townspeople are passionate about customary paintings, mainly ukiyo-e reflections of the town culture and creative expressions with town subjects as the core content. They often say: "Just to live in the present, to gaze at the bright moon, white snow, cherry blossoms, and maple leaves, to sing, to drink, to float and float to your heart's

⁷ Okakura Tenshin and Kuki Shuzo. (2016). Book of Tea · The structure of Iki. Shanghai People's Publishing House.

content, to forget all the troubles in front of you, to follow the waves like a gourd, this is what we call ukiyo-e." With the continuous erosion of ukiyo-e by the townspeople's culture, the spirit of painting in the Edo period was no longer an existence patented by the aristocracy and samurai class, but more of a pastime for the townspeople's life. To be able to better adapt to the needs of the viewers, the subjects of ukiyo-e became more and more extensive to include the people's recreation and entertainment, with beauties, servitors, theater paintings, landscapes, spring paintings, martial arts, histories, and so on.

4. The Equivalent Class of “Townspeople” and Ukiyo-e in the Western World

With the modernization of European art in the nineteenth century, the form of European painting was no longer confined to the traditional academic mode of painting, and the Japanese art of ukiyo-e made its debut in the Western world as a work of the Japanese National Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair⁸. Since then, the independent and parallel art forms of East and West were broken, and what was reconstructed was an overlapping and intertwined art.

Born in 1864 in Albi, France, an artist who has long been called the "Soul of Montmartre," was handicapped from an early age. In addition, the continuation of cousin marriages in the French aristocracy stopped the development of his leg bones at an early age, and he was only 150 centimeters tall. He was Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. In his works, we see a peculiar perspective, different from the structure and proportions of the human body painted by other artists. Born into an aristocratic family, he received a good education and in 1882 he gave up his university studies to study painting. He studied for a long time with the deaf and mute painter Rooney, who specialized in animals, and was then baptized in the academic style in the studios of the painters Léon Bona and Fernand Colmont.

In 1886 he set up his studio in Montmartre, and at the same time immersed himself in the nightlife of the Montmartre Heights, where he dated Suzanne Valladon, who was the toast of the Montmartre dance studio. He had a relationship with Suzanne Valadon, who was a big hit in the Montmartre dance studio, and then with Carmen Gaudin after they broke up, but he had a harmful relationship and even contracted syphilis, which made him distrustful of women and at the same time indulge in Montmartre's nightlife. This is why he was chosen as the subject of our study, as his forms of entertainment and consumption were very similar to those of the townspeople. In his art, we can see a lot of images depicting the Gladys Mill and the nightclub Moulin Rouge. Respected for his wealth and his aristocratic status, he began a series of colorful posters of the Moulin Rouge for the famous Parisian entertainers of the time. Toulouse-Lautrec's work was very much in keeping with the character of the Moulin Rouge girls, through the use of very vivid colors and the dress and kicks of the Moulin Rouge girls. His works attracted many upper-class men and women to the Moulin Rouge, and he became a guest of the Moulin Rouge. In his later works, there are also many depictions of all kinds of entertainers and customers. These depictions were more of a record of life as he saw it, as in the case of his paintings of French prostitutes in Montmartre after 1892. He moved to live in a prostitute's apartment on the rue du Mill, where he depicted men coming and going at

⁸ Sooke, Alastair. (2018). Van Gogh and Japan: The Prints That Shaped the Artist. BBC.

different times, and lived with the prostitutes from an observer's point of view to document the real life of the prostitutes.

It is easy to see that Toulouse-Lautrec, who lived in the heights of Montmartre, was consciously or unconsciously playing a role very similar to that of an ukiyo-e artist. Both the lithographs he used for his posters and his recordings of artists at the Moulin Rouge and prostitutes in their apartments are very similar to the ukiyo-e depictions. It should be noted that Toulouse-Lautrec has been collecting Japanese ukiyo-e since 1883. He had studied and copied ukiyo-e paintings many times, and applied many of the techniques to his oil paintings and other works so that his works not only have the impressionist color brushwork and the legacy of the Art Nouveau movement but also the tension of ukiyo-e. This paper argues that ukiyo-e, especially the painting of beauties, deepened Toulouse's understanding of the portrayal of prostitutes or entertainers, and led him to paint a large number of works in 1888 depicting Parisian prostitutes or entertainers and the various spectators who came to and from the Moulin Rouge⁹. During this period, his work was exaggerated and even scandalous, as he made a point of exaggerating the expressions of the figures and distorting their features. This perspective method focuses on treating each figure as a protagonist so that they are not isolated characters but overlap to create a sense of space and a back-and-forth relationship. Take the master of landscape painting, Hiroshige Kagawa, as an example. The ukiyo-e of Hiroshige Kagawa is a very typical work of focal perspective, and this kind of focal perspective is also often used in the works of Toulouse-Lautrec. He tries to pull down the horizontal line in perspective to the upper part of the painting, so that the vanishing point in the work is moved to a certain point outside the painting, making the spatial distance inside the painting become an upward-slanting line. In addition, Toulouse-Lautrec used rhythmic contour lines in his portraits to depict clothing and physical features. He would also use very contrasting colors to differentiate between subjects with prominent features and crowds like dark shadows to portray the nightlife of Montmartre. To a certain extent, it would also exaggerate some of the distinctive features of people. Such distinctive features include but are not limited to, nostrils and lips. This is also very much like the way Japanese ukiyo-e is portrayed. For example, in Toshusai Sharaku's paintings, the eyes of Japanese Kabuki are deliberately minimized, and the shape of the eyes is mostly drawn as rounded pea eyes. In the paintings of Suzuki Harushin, the women in the beauty paintings are mostly slender with high eyes. This interaction between ukiyo-e and European Impressionism is very novel because it is not only a convergence of brush strokes, techniques, and content, but more of a convergence of subject matter, a convergence of ideas, and a convergence of thinking of the painter's subject.

In addition, Toulouse-Lautrec inadvertently painted many of the townspeople of France, even though these people were not ever called townspeople in France. The *In the Café* was painted by Toulouse-Lautrec under the influence of *Absinthe*. Edgar Degas depicted a corner of the Café Nouvelle Athene in Paris, France, in 1875, where the painter's friend, Tess Sedan, and the actress, Ellen André, sit side by side with a glass of absinthe in front of them, both disillusioned and alone, not interfering with each other, but in the same trance. Absinthe is

⁹ La Mure, Pierre. (1950). *Moulin Rouge: a novel based on the life of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*.

considered to be a painting that reveals the social reality of the time, as *In the Café*. He attempted to portray the underclass of Paris. In the picture *In the Café*, he painted an old prostitute and her lover sitting at a small table drinking wine. However, when we consult the painter's history, we can learn that the man is a pleasant and lovely young man named Maurice, while the woman is a young woman with a beautiful physique. However, Toulouse-Lautrec deliberately magnified their ugliness, and both the color and the expression on the man's face in the picture carry a frivolous tone. The overall background of the picture is dominated by the color orange, which is transformed into a vaudevillian attraction that dramatically presents a social topic. The woman in the picture looks rude, while the man sitting next to her expresses a sense of decadence, which reveals the artist's sense of mockery. Another famous work with a strong sense of irony is *Moulin Rouge's Misunderstanding*. This work is plain to see the shades of ukiyo-e because although Toulouse-Lautrec did not learn the white space of ukiyo-e, he boldly discarded it. In this work, he boldly abandons the conventional perspective of European art, creating a subjective sense of space with lines and crowds, and making the task unique and appealing through the use of large areas of monochrome and exciting colors. In this painting, he uses green as the ambient and background color to set off the brightly colored woman in red, a group of gentlemen active on the dance floor, and a pair of men and women dancing in the center of the picture, which is different from the surrounding characters because of their bright colors as well. The new dancer in the center of the picture dances on tiptoe in a humorous and unrestrained manner, while the dancer holds the hem of her skirt in each hand and raises her left leg in a kicking position, fully demonstrating her status as a Moulin Rouge dancer. In contrast, the facial indications are dull, with some numbness and a contradictory sense of stretching. The sharp, vibrant colors of the picture give the work itself a slackened sense of bustle, in which a strong desire for expression is aroused. In Montmartre, Toulouse-Lautrec painted a lot of Moulin Rouge spectators, tailors, clowns, prostitutes, etc. Though these people would not be called "townspeople" in France, under the condition of political and economic social class division, they were the traders at the bottom of French society. Toulouse-Lautrec depicted them consciously or unconsciously with his own emotions. This kind of depiction expresses an understanding of each of them and their personalities. In his paintings, he used a great deal of ukiyo-e inspiration and a style of painting that was integrated into the works of Art Nouveau and Post-Impressionism. In terms of subject matter, he chose the Moulin Rouge and the nightlife of Montmartre, using posters and lithographs to document the unconventional Parisian nightlife in the Montmartre area. In terms of ideas, he uses satire and ridicule to reveal a cultural ecology and the unseen life of the city's underclass.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the aesthetics of Japanese Zen art were formed among the people based on the Rinzaï school of Zen Buddhism, which is a traditional school from Chinese Zen Buddhism, and by combining it with the social pattern and life culture of the Japanese townspeople. The way of formation is similar to the formation process of most civilizations, which may come from a primitive and ancient culture, on a piece of land, blending with the local customs, breeding, and nurturing among the people. Japanese Zen art aesthetics in the ukiyo-e is

particularly prominent, the ukiyo-e constantly embodies some of the ideas of Japanese Zen but also portrays a lot of integration of Zen thought of the Japanese townspeople's class social life. With the continuous development of the Japanese ukiyo-e, it spread from East Asia to Europe. At that time, it had the artistic mecca of catching up with the whole world and was imitated and inherited by the Montmartre artist Toulouse-Lautrec. By analyzing his works, it is not difficult to see that when the Japanese Zen aesthetic was borrowed through ukiyo-e, the Japanese Zen art aesthetic was inextricably linked with the townspeople class. In other words, Zen thought and the townspeople's culture passed on to each other, influenced each other, and gradually formed a kind of Japanese Zen art aesthetic that combined the townspeople's culture with secularism.

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