

Japanese Art, Aesthetics, and a European Discourse: Unraveling *Sharawadgi*

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At the origin of a voluminous discourse on picturesque taste in eighteenth century England stands an essay by Sir William Temple (1628–99) that contains the word *sharawadgi*, which he claims is Chinese. As a result of his introducing this concept, Temple is considered the originator of the English landscape garden movement. In extended academic debates on urban planning or contemporary art, the term has played an ever-increasing role since the mid twentieth century. Several attempts have been made to decipher the word and grasp its meaning. Nonetheless, *sharawadgi* cannot be apprehended in terms of sound and meaning only. It needs to be understood from a functional and historic context in the lands of its origin—Japan as we will see—as well as a practice of landscape design in Europe where it inspired new creative ideas. Imported art works, strikingly with their Japanese aesthetics, were re-interpreted to fit a European understanding. This reconstruction in turn was framed within the complex world of European tastes for landscape and other applied arts. Men of letters, widely learned and erudite like Temple, maintained their networks by writing letters and exchanging books and other gifts, eager for the most recent news on developments in the world of learning. In northern Europe these *savants* communicated in French, English, Dutch, German, or Latin; conceptual ideas were sometimes expressed in Greek. Temple’s world was this cosmopolitan Europe, receptive to the beauty of Asian art and concepts like his enigmatic *sharawadgi*. This paper intends to unravel the meaning and context of the word in Japan; to show the context in which it traveled to Europe and entered the circles of Temple; and to make clear how he placed it in a slightly different setting to serve his purpose. It concludes that “literary picturesque taste” is a proper translation for *sharawadgi*.

Keywords: Constantijn Huygens, Ernst van Hogenhoek, kimono design, lacquer ware, literary picturesque taste, *sharawaggi*, *sharawadji*, William Temple, *share* 洒落, *shara’aji* 洒落味, *sharawaji* シャラワジ

Temple and Irregularity: *Sharawadgi*

Sir William Temple was an important statesman and essayist. He successfully worked on the Triple Alliance of 1668 and negotiated the marriage of Princess Mary of England and the Dutch Prince of Orange, who became King William III of England in 1689.¹ His negotiations for an alliance between the Netherlands and England were clever and successful, but abused later by others. Suffering ever more from gout, he asked the king to relieve him of his duties. In his *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus; or Of Gardening in the Year 1685*, he justified his turn from politics, that is so contrary to the tranquility of mind, the only true happiness for man, as the Epicureans had demonstrated.² Temple started a second life among his books in 1686 in the gardens of an estate he named Moor Park. A contemporary drawing of Moor Park shows an idiosyncratic design in the lower part of the garden featuring purposeful serpentine lines for the design of paths and waterways. Temple's garden stream enhanced the beauty of the natural landscape in a studied fashion with contrived bends and curves that typified his garden paths as well.³ This non-geometric section was separated from the formal squares and rectangles of the main, traditional, classicist garden, and echoed Temple's endeavour to express beauty in irregularity. This is clear from a passage in *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*:

What I have said of the best Forms of Gardens, is meant only of such as are in some sort regular; for there may be other Forms wholly irregular, that may, for ought I know, have more Beauty than any of the others; but they must owe it to some extraordinary dispositions of Nature in the Seat, or some great race of Fancy or Judgment in the Contrivance, which may reduce many disagreeing parts into some Figure, which shall yet upon the whole, be very agreeable. Something of this I have seen in some places, but heard more of it from others, who have lived much among the *Chineses*; a People, whose way of thinking, seems to lie as wide of ours in *Europe*, as their Country does. Among us, the Beauty of Building and Planting is placed chiefly, in some certain Proportions, Symmetries, or Uniformities; our Walks and our Trees ranged so, as to answer one another, and at exact Distances. The *Chineses* scorn this way of Planting, and say a Boy that can tell an hundred, may plant Walks of Trees in strait Lines, and over against one another, and to what Length and Extent He pleases. But their greatest Reach of Imagination, is employed in contriving Figures, where the Beauty shall be great, and strik the Eye, but without any order or disposition of parts, that shall be commonly or easily observ'd. And though we have hardly any Notion of this sort of Beauty, yet they have a particular Word to express it; and where they find it hit their Eye at first sight, they say the *Sharawadgi* is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of Esteem. And whoever observes the Work upon the best Indian Gowns, or the Painting upon their best Skreens or Purcellans, will find their Beauty is all of this kind (that is) without order.⁴

1 See *Biography in Notable Names* 2013 for Temple's biography and political role.

2 Temple 1690 (written c. 1685, and published 1690). Amery (2004, p. 5) points at Heraclitus with Michel de Montaigne as an inspiration for Temple. See Miller 2006 on Temple, philosophy, gardens, and Epicurus.

3 This is illustrated and discussed as an expression of the discourse on irregularity in Kuitert 2013, pp. 168, 169, 171 (figure 10), Plate VI.

4 See Temple 1690, pp. 57, 58. The punctuation, italics, and capitals are as in the original.

Strikingly, Temple elevated a lack of classicist order to the level of a taste for irregular beauty. To support his statements, he introduced the Chinese imagination that he observed in their “figures ... without any order or disposition of parts.” The Chinese even have a word for this notion of beauty: *Sharawadgi*, introduced by Temple as if it was a Greek philosophical concept. It arises when “they find it hit their Eye at first sight, they say the *Sharawadgi* is fine or admirable, or any such expression of Esteem.” To be sure, Temple saw his *Sharawadgi* in the “contrivance of figures,” that is to say in invention of images or designed motifs, in “painting upon their best Skreens or Purcellans” and “*Indian* gowns.” The aesthetics of *sharawadgi* should, therefore, not be searched for in gardens but in decorative arts. And, as in those days “*Indian* gown” was a term used for a fashionable type of robe from Japan, “*Chinese*” too might here have meant “*Japanese*.”⁵

***Sharawadgi*: European Interpretations and Discourse**

Temple’s *sharawadgi* had to wait for more than two decades before it entered the written discourse with Addison’s indirect reference in his “On the Pleasures of the Imagination” in 1712.⁶ Henceforth, the term returned in an increasing volume of writings on the picturesque landscape, even addressing the designs of Frederick Law Olmsted.⁷ In spite of the inconclusiveness of its meaning, context, and historicity, *sharawadgi* continues to animate discourse among designers, artists, planners and architects today, generating several attempts to uncover the real meaning of the word.

A first attempt to decode it more precisely was made by Y. Z. Chang, who proposed the Chinese compound noun 洒落瑰琦 (that he romanized *sa-ro-(k)wai-chi*; today written *sālùguīqí*) in the sense of “the quality of being impressive or surprising through careless or unordered grace.”⁸ Chang’s assumption was based on meaning and similarity in sound, and showed no concern for historic provenance; neither was it placed in an understanding of European discourse. In a very short note, E.V. Gatenby in 1934 proposed *sharawadgi* as the Japanese adjective *sorowaji* 揃ハジ, meaning “not being regular.” Again, he showed no concern for history or context; meaning and sound alone mattered.⁹ Qian Zhongshu proposed in 1940 the Chinese *san lan* 散亂 “scattered and disorderly,” or *su lo* 疏落 “widely scattered and disorderly,” with *wai chi* 位置 “position and arrangement” for the second syllable, as adjectives with a noun, once more only taking sound and meaning into account. Nevertheless, Qian dwelt extensively upon perceptions of China in seventeenth century English literature, and discussed Temple’s ideas about Confucianism in which he placed his *sharawadgi*.¹⁰ Susi Lang and Nikolaus Pevsner concluded in 1949 that no trustworthy

5 See for example, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, March 30, 1666. Pepys’ “*Indian* gown” was a Japanese robe that he hired when sitting for a Dutch portrait painter, exactly like Temple did for his portrait by Gaspar Netscher, now in the National Portrait Gallery. See Lubberhuizen-Van Gelder 1947, pp. 143–44 and Kuitert 2013, p. 166, Plate IV.

6 Addison 1712, p. 81; see also Batey 2005, p. 196.

7 Notable contributions have been made by Alexander Pope (1688–1744) and Horace Walpole (1717–97). In a letter of Pope, *sharawadgi* shows up as *sharawaggi*; see OED 1989, vol. XV, pp. 176–77 entry *sharawaggi*. See Pevsner 1944, and Lang and Pevsner 1949 for the role it played in eighteenth century discourse. Smithson (1973) introduced the term in connection with the landscape design of Olmsted. See also Murray 1999 *passim*.

8 Chang 1930.

9 See Gatenby 1934 extending a short remark in Gatenby 1931, p. 518: “It seems possible that the word is from Japanese ‘*soro-waji*’ (揃ハジ), ‘not being regular,’ a form of the verb *sorou*.”

10 Qian 1940, pp. 375–76.

decoding as a Chinese word existed, but gave an extended discussion on a possible Chinese provenance of *sharawadgi*. It was a first endeavour to track the route the word may have traveled.¹¹ More important, though, was their understanding of the role the term played in the establishing of a taste for the picturesque in England. They provided an historic frame for the English discourse on this taste, which positioned *sharawadgi* as a possible clue to aesthetics in art or architecture. A Japanese translation of Lang and Pevsner appeared in 1980, where *sharawadgi* is simply rendered as a Japanese phonetic *sharawaji* シャラワジ without further comment.¹²

The efforts of Lang and Pevsner inspired further debate. For example, Jurgis Baltrušaitis introduced *sharawadgi* into French discourse in 1957, and placed it in the context of romanticism and *Chinoiserie* in European garden history. He proposed both the Chinese *sa-ro-(k)wai-chi* or *san-lan-wai-chi*, and *sorowandji* as Japanese origin, changing some spelling in adapting to the French. He uncovered nothing new on the word itself. In another influential piece, Louis Marin in 1976 expanded the *sharawadgi* discourse to the field of garden philosophy. With this elevated position of the term, *sharawadji* (sic) entered the field of the semantics of sound in the urban environment. Augoyard, for example, could state in 1995 that *sharawadgi* was an aesthetic effect of “completeness that creates itself sometimes when mentally viewing a sonorous theme or a complex sonorous landscape of which the beauty cannot be explained.”¹³ In a less elevated German debate, *sharawadgi* was understood as an “impressive and sudden effect of natural grace” by Christian Meyer (1999), and it shaped a debate on modernity and art where the term “can be grasped as an indication of the reciprocity between aesthetic programs and their real historical foundations in general, and consequently as a reference to the question of how spectators can relate to that.”¹⁴ Recently, *sharawadgi* has surfaced again in the urban planning debate, with such proponents as Aitchinson (2010) and Vidler (2011), who understand the term as artful irregularity in town planning.¹⁵

In the meantime, the search into the real or historical meaning of *sharawadgi* continued. In 1997 Shimada Takau proposed the Japanese *sawaraji* in the sense of “let’s not touch” or *sawarazu* “not touching.” Although Shimada too has little concern for history or context, he does offer a short discussion of the European understanding of Chinese gardens in the days of Temple.¹⁶ The next year, Gatenby’s *sorowaji* was elaborated by Ciaran

11 They point to Xin-fo-Cum, a Chinese intellectual whose appearance in England is too late for Temple’s essay, and refer to a description of a Chinese garden. However, Temple writes he heard about irregular gardens; see Lang and Pevsner 1949 and Pevsner 1944.

12 Pevsner 1980, pp. 145–53, 376–79.

13 Baltrušaitis 1957, p. 109. See Marin 1976 on nature and the art of gardening, illustrated with Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. On soundscape, with references to Martin 1979 (sic; should be Marin 1976) and the Sublime with Emmanuel Kant, one may read the “Lexique des Effets Sonores” in Augoyard et al. 1985. The phrasing of the *Lexique* recurs frequently in research on the theme. See for example Chelkoff 1988, or Augoyard and Torgue 1995, p. 126: “*Sharawadji*. Cet effet esthétique caractérise la sensation de plénitude qui se crée parfois lors de la contemplation d’un motif sonore ou d’un paysage sonore complexe dont la beauté est inexplicable.” It was brought to the German discourse on urban soundscape in Hiebsch et al. 2009, pp. 41, 44.

14 “‘Sharawadgi’ läßt sich ... als Hinweis auf die Wechselwirkung zwischen ästhetischen Programmen un deren realgeschichtlicher Fundamentierung insgesamt begreifen und in weiterer Folge auf die Frage, wie sich BetrachterInnen dazu in ein Verhältnis setzen können.” Meyer curated an exhibition and published a set of essays on modernism, modern art, architecture, and historic context; see Meyer and Poledna 1999, pp. 6 ff.

15 Aitchison 2010, pp. 14–18 and passim, Vidler 2011, also Macarthur 2007, relying among others on Fleming et al. 1980, p. 296 and Cronin Hastings 1944.

16 Shimada 1997.

Murray as a Japanese dialect pronunciation *shorowaji*, supposedly pronounced *sharawadgi* in Dutch, translating it as “would not be symmetrical.” Murray surmises that Temple picked up the term in The Hague. In a later book, Murray has given an extensive discussion on the meaning of *sharawadgi* in English discourse from the eighteenth century on without corroborating his opinion on derivations or transmission of the word.¹⁷ Recently, Gao Lei and Jan Woudstra have given the Chinese *shī yì huà jìng* 詩意畫境 or *shī qíng huà yì* 詩情畫意 “poetic and picturesque emotions,” again relying on similarity of sound and probable meaning. They locate it within a discussion of the poetic meaning of Chinese gardens.¹⁸

Not mentioned by the above authors is Nakamura (1987), who suggested the Japanese compound noun *shara’aji* 洒落味 for *sharawadgi*.¹⁹ This assumption comes closest to Temple’s meaning, and involves a plausible Japanese context. The sounds are close to *sharawadgi*, and it is a noun. It relies on an Edo period word *shara* and a meaning that is clearly about taste (*aji* in Japanese), which was Temple’s purpose. Nakamura frames *shara’aji* in its English context of picturesque taste following Lang and Pevsner, and he names François Caron (in the service of the Dutch East India Company) as a likely informant. Caron was indeed knowledgeable in things Japanese. However, Nakamura offers little evidence, and fails to explore the history or meaning of *shara’aji* in Japan. None of the above suggestions looks into the decorative arts, although Temple clearly writes that *sharawadgi* is observed in porcelain, robes, and screens. Most striking though is that, apart from Gao and Woudstra, none of the above authors makes reference to a dictionary definition of the word. Given the varied and, at times, surprising directions in which opinions have unfolded, the pressing question arises: what then is *sharawadgi*?

Sharawadgi—Shara

The following pages demonstrate that *shara’aji* is indeed the root of *sharawadgi*.²⁰ Before investigating the present usage of the word, some deduction is required to locate its earlier history, as it has not appeared yet in records of the Edo period. Nevertheless, from its two syllables, *shara* and *aji*, an unambiguous and clear meaning can be reconstructed that fits

17 Murray’s derivation appears to rely on an oral communication from Kanai Madoka, who “...uttered the magic formula. *Sorowaji* was indeed obsolete in the standard language when Temple wrote; but it was still current in Kyushu. Filter *sorowaji* through the Kyushu dialect, and you get *shorowaji*; filter this through Dutch, and you get what Temple got: *sharawadgi*.” See Murray 1998a, p. 21. The same derivation, again without any further sources or external evidence, can be found in Murray 1998b, pp. 211, 213 and Murray 1999, p. 37. Another informant of Murray is Daido Fumiko who proposed *shareta niwa; aji ga aru niwa* “a garden showing an impressive degree of taste” (Murray 1999, p. 275, footnote 90, and Murray 1998b, p. 213). Daido guessed *share* and *aji* correctly, but Murray does not elaborate on this suggestion. *Share*, anyway, was never applied to gardens in the earlier Edo period, but to human behavior and applied art works. The context and meaning of Daido’s suggestion do not fit. Translating *shareta niwa; aji ga aru niwa* as “a garden showing an impressive degree of taste” is also erroneous.

18 Gao and Woudstra 2010.

19 Nakamura 1987. This is a challenging interpretation, which I have referenced on several occasions. See Kuitert 1988, pp. 320, 342; 1991, pp. 139, 143; and 2002, pp. 249, 267. Incidentally, Nakamura was not aware of the existence of today’s *share’aji*.

20 In *sharawadgi*, the ‘*w*’ gives the connective between the two ‘*a*’s of *shara* and *-adgi*. In Japanese the romanized *w* is not of great significance (Edwards 1903, pp. 41, 42). In Edo times ‘*w*’ was a semi-vowel, blending into the vowel *i*, *u*, *e*, or *o* in front of which it stands, it remains only in front of an *a* (Rothaug 1991, pp. 55, 57). In Nagasaki dialect, the Japanese *wa* is the same as *a* (Motoyama 1976, p. 26). *Wadgi* reads as *adgi*. The Japanese *aji* あじ when written in kana as あぢ is romanized as *adi*, *adzi*, or *adji*. However, *Vocabulario* (1630, p. 6) gives a romanization as *agi*. There are no objections to spelling *sharawadgi* as *shara’aji* in modern romanization.

history and context. And as speech is naturally richer than the written word, certainly before the advent of mass media, the possibility that *shara'aji* was used in conversation cannot be denied.²¹ The reasons for Temple to propose it as a Chinese, and not a Japanese word, stem from his perception of China as a central state, where Japan was only on the periphery.²² Indeed, as with many things Japanese, the deeper roots of *shara'aji* are found on the continent: *shara* 洒落 is a classic Chinese word, pronounced *sālùò* in modern Mandarin.²³ It meant “to drop quickly without hesitation,” and referred to trees that shed all their leaves in just a few autumn days. It later came to mean “frank and open-minded, not fussing over things” relating to human personality and character.²⁴ At first these meanings were used in Japan too; *shara* as an uninhibited mental state was seen as exemplifying a positive attitude to life.²⁵ But soon *shara* was also understood in literary salons as open minded, but fully controlled, poetry composition.²⁶

The meaning of the word subsequently changed with ever-increasing popular use, although it always implied verbal mastery in some form. Among men of letters “frank in composition” changed to “witticism” or “wordplay.” The *shara* of a text could be praised; it was a particular, often multi-layered, humor or wit contrived with reduced statement, puns, rebuses, riddles, anagrams, or equivocation.²⁷ Written not in Chinese characters but with the kana *しゃら* or *しゃら*, *shara* entered colloquial speech and soon came to imply “being quick and witty in conversation,” as part of a stylish attitude of the sort that can be seen in mass produced story books.²⁸ These increasingly popular genre stories featured a lot of dialogue often with the gay quarters as a stage. With their theatres and brothels these attracted large numbers of people: clients, curious tourists, and others hoping to find employment in the entertainment industries. An internal system of education and ranking accorded status to the performance of an actor or a prostitute, and naturally visitors would gossip and judge. Written commentaries on the stars and starlets of the high street in turn became popular as published books and role models determined not only manners in speech, but also clothing, and dressing of hair.²⁹ It could all be *shara*, so that the meaning of the word extended to personal and showy adornment; at the same time, the idea of literary mastery became diluted. Indeed, the *shara* attitude was in confrontation with the respectable traditions of

21 After all, Temple writes that he has heard (not read) about irregular forms of garden design, and observed design without order in works of art.

22 See Kuitert 2013, pp. 169–72. Qian 1940 locates Temple's *sharawadgi* in the frame of English perceptions of China.

23 It was proposed as the first syllable of *sharawadgi* in Chang 1930, p. 223.

24 See Morohashi 1984–1986 (vol.7, p. 353 [no. 18774–38] and vol. 6, p. 1088 [no. 17374–26]) on サイラク、シヤラク灑落 and シヤラク洒落. Morohashi cites Pan Yue 潘岳 in his “Rhapsody on Autumn Inspiration” (*Qiu xing fu* 秋興賦). For the later meaning of the word, Morohashi relies on a citation of Yuan Mingshan 元明善 (1269–1332).

25 Within the Neo-Confucianist frames of thinking of Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561–1619), for example, *shara* is a liberal state of mind, unaffected by anything around. See Ishige et al. 2009, p. 866.

26 See *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2001, vol. 6, p. 1168 (entries *しゃらく*, 洒落, 灑落), which cites *Chūka jakuboku shishō* 中華若木詩抄 (ca. 1520). *Nihon kokugo daijiten* also cites the dictionary *Ekirin bonsetsu yōshū* 易林本節用集 (1597).

27 See Tsuchiko 1887 and Suzuki 1961 extensively on *shara*, *share* 洒落 where the term is used for “verbal mastery” in many forms throughout Japan's history from Heian times onward.

28 See *Kadokawa kogo daijiten* 1987, vol. 3, p. 257 and *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2001, vol. 6, p. 1168 where *shara* is rendered as a stylish, brazen or flippant attitude, citing Tomiyama's *Chikusai* 竹齋 (1615–24), which is a pioneer of the *kanzōshi* story book genre.

29 On the so-called *hyōbanki* 評判記, see Noma 1973.

poetry and literature, at least in the first half of the seventeenth century.³⁰ Because it was about dandyism and contrived stylishness, *shara* was easily used in a pejorative sense.³¹

This frivolous mood of the floating world hardly changed with the Great Meireki Fire of March, 1657 that razed almost three quarters of the capital Edo. Many precious kimonos were lost in the fire, unbalancing kimono business throughout Japan. To counter a foreseen collapse in the market, the Edo bakufu took measures to curb luxurious spending on clothing; maximum prices were set and imports were prohibited. In efforts to overcome these restrictions, kimonos became lavish in design rather than material. Motifs covered the cloth from shoulder to foot in audacious asymmetry, exposing a lot of white, saving expensive dye material; an added meaning was doing things just as you



Figure 1. Appreciating and evaluating attitude, style, showy dress, manners, and speech, in short judging *shara*, were an important aspects of a visit to an entertainment district. It was a reciprocal thing between ladies of pleasure and their clients, as humorously shown in a color wood block in the style of Hishikawa Moronobu. *Takabyōbu Kudamono katari* 高屏風くだ物かたり. 1660. Collection of Tenri University Library.

like, proud about being gorgeous anyway. This psychology lay behind the large stylized motifs with riddles and wordplay that characterize fashion design in the decades after the fire.³² The *shara* of kimono related directly to these emblematic motifs, as can be seen in a fashion book *Onhiinagata* 御ひいながた.³³ Like in *shara* wordplay, the riddles and allusions of *shara* motifs could be unexpected and multi-layered, as is suggested by the examples in Figure 2. The picture to the left shows bridges through a field of iris, suggesting the Eight Bridges of the *Ise monogatari*; on purpose only five bridges are represented. As a surprise, three others can be found on the front of the kimono. The middle picture is more intricate: umbrella-hats, *kasa* 笠, are shown above an egret, *sagi* 鷺, which would be read as magpie, *kasasagi* カササギ. As the bird stands on a bridge, any Japanese would associate it with the legend of *Tanabata* 七夕, where a group of magpies stretch their wings to make a bridge for crossing the Milky Way, *Amanogawa*. By this wonder of nature, the two lovers in the legendary story could meet. The right side picture shows a pattern titled *Chaya'some* 茶やそめ.

30 See Tanaka 1996, pp. 39–40 on the use of *shara* in *Chikusai*. Tanaka gives a more precise meaning of the word than the dictionaries cited in note 28 above. The protagonist *Chikusai*, after whom the story is titled, is confronted as a man of the new world with venerable tradition when he encounters Mikawa's Yatsuhashi, where travelers were expected to compose instant poetry. Such had been the custom ever since the *Ise monogatari*.

31 See *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2001, vol. 6, p. 1168 which cites *Kashōki*, also *Okashiki* 可笑記 volume three (1642) where a dressed up prostitute is harshly cut down for her *shara*.

32 See Yomiuri Shinbun Ōsaka Honsha Fujinbu 1974, pp. 154–57.

33 Examples of pictorial *shara* riddles of the Kanbun period (1661–73) in *Onhiinagata* (1666) are decoded in Maruyama 1986, p. 223, and in Kyoto National Museum 2001, p. 23. See also Ueno 1974, vol.1, pp. 24–25. *Shara* picture riddles were standard in *yūzen* 友禪, a dye technique and design style for mass produced kimono. See the introduction of *Yūzen hiinagata* (1688) with quotes and comment in Ueno 1974, vol.1, pp. 43–46. *Yūzen* was praised for its allusive *shara* design in the late Edo period *Kinsei itsujin gashi* 近世逸人画史, pp. 283, 311, 312. Theories of applied design were best developed in the seventeenth century on kimono wear as demand was high, production was large, and the masses eagerly bought books about it.

It is an abbreviated garden design with chrysanthemum, *kiku* 菊, at a traditional garden fence, *magaki* 籬, on which kimonos were hung to get the scent of chrysanthemum. Waves come in, suggesting *kikusui* 菊水, a symbol of longevity. Dressing up in such *shara* styled kimono was an audacious fashion statement.

Style consciousness, the *shara* physiology, was of utmost importance for personal survival in the floating, urban world of the Edo period. From the 1770s there even appeared a specialized genre of *shara* books—so called *sharebon* 洒落本—full of witty conversation and comments on stylish behavior. The pronunciation of *shara* had by now changed to its modern colloquial form of *share*.

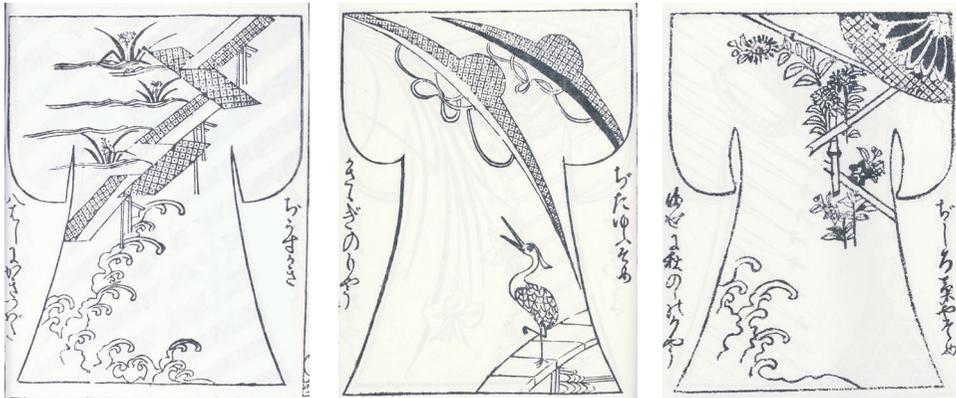


Figure 2. Literary allusion in kimono design. From the pattern book *Onhiinagata* (1666).

Aji and the Meaning of *Shara'aji* in Japan

Aji 味, あじ, あぢ was an important concept in Edo Japan too. It stood, and stands, for taste, first of all the taste of food in the mouth; its meaning extending to taste as preference or inclination.³⁴ *Aji*, in an even wider sense, came to mean elegant appearance, an amusing point, the delight, or the (poetic) taste of things. It was an aspect of appreciation, but also a capacity for creating new things. *Aji* in the kimono workshop involved the graphic evocation of a design motif. Motifs could range from famous sights or *meisho* 名所 and classic court poetry or scenes from the *Genji* or the *Ise monogatari* to novel ideas derived from linked verse or fashionable witty poetry. Most of these thematic motifs had been a cultural expression exclusive for the highest elite; now all of these entered the everyday world of the Edo period masses. Recent literary inventions from the popular urban cultural scene were added to it as well. It was the playfulness of *shara* that made it possible to synthesize all these themes, from highbrow to popular into art.³⁵ Themes could now be reduced to peculiar, pictorial motifs that in the kimono industry were called “patterns to taste” *ajiwai moyō* 味わい模様.

34 See *Vocabulario* 1630, p. 6 on preference, which gives: “*gacumon no agini noru = gustar del studio*.” This translates as 学問の味に乗る = having a taste for studying.

35 See Okakura 1938, pp. 215, 216 on the entry into society of the well-educated samurai appreciating *shara*. Okakura sees *shara* as a design mechanism that connected the world of established arts in the seventeenth century with novel, popular arts. Fujii 2012, p. 179 points to townsmen painters, the *machi eshi* 町絵師 of *yūzen* 友禅 kimono design, who could combine all these art expressions through *shara*.

Here, *aji* signified the magic of pictorial illusion, something that was a novel mechanism for the Edo masses. For them the literary was now grasped in the design of objects in their daily environment.³⁶ Though *shara* related to the allusion in the motifs, the “taste” of this kind of pictorial beauty was expressed by *shara’aji*. It was *aji* that set the visual allusion apart from the simple *shara* that sufficed for mere wordplay. *Shara’aji*—as a compound noun—was the refined taste of decorative motifs in a material object like a kimono, where *shara* again implied literary contrivance. “Taste” in *shara’aji* was not the modern sense of a personal capacity to discern beauty. It was the literary and layered mood thrown off by the pictorial patterns in applied art that could be “tasted”; it was not the taste *for*, but the taste *of* a certain design motif.

Shara’aji thus defined as a concept covers precisely the revolution in design of the second half of the seventeenth century. The term must have been around as a spoken word, likely in the workshops of decorative arts where such things mattered. Other compound nouns with *aji* as suffix referred to a similar comprehensive appreciation of elaborately decorated personal property. *Kire’aji* (rendered variously as 切味, 鋭味, きれあぢ, きれあじ) or “cutting taste” designated the bewitching beauty of a sword: the properties of the sword when wielded, including its sharpness, appearance, and feel.³⁷ *Kura’aji* (鞍味 or くらあじ) meaning “saddle taste” was an evaluation of the saddle extending to the horse, or the man on it.³⁸ In such samurai vocabulary, *aji* denoted complex, high levels of esteem. A saddle or a sword was the most desirable object in life, an expensive token of status for a man of war. These were excessively pricey works of art decorated with lacquer, inlaid metal work, gold, leather, or other technique or material, with motifs that could be “tasted” like everything else for their magic, hence the *aji* in *kire’aji* and *kura’aji*. Both compound words marked an appreciation of the sword or saddle by the adroit user. They were not employed with the distance of the art critic. Indeed, *aji* had this extended meaning of doing something expertly. *Shara’aji* referred therefore to the appearance, the “taste” of *shara*, but also implied skillfully contrived design.³⁹

Though no extant Edo period records featuring the compound *shara’aji* have been found yet, it exists in modern Japanese pronounced *share’aji* and is transcribed with kana, Chinese characters, or a combination of both: しやれあじ, しやれ味, 洒落味. It may be found

36 See *Miyako hiinakata* 都ひいなかた (1691) in Ueno 1974, vol. 2, pp. 4–5. The preface of this design model book bears witness to the flood of pictorial patterns (many of thematic landscape scenery) that in the decades before the book came out had become available—at least as a fashion dream—for the masses. Wordplay with lettering in kimono design (similar to *ashide* 蘆で, so-called reed-script painting) had been popular already before the Meireki Fire in the 1650s (see Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan 1998, p. 176). On *ajiwai* あぢはひ as *omomuki* おもむき, 趣 (appearance, effect) see *Kadokawa kogo daijiten* 1982, vol. 1, p. 82.

37 See *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2001, vol. 4, p. 619, which cites a late Muromachi period, early Edo period *kyōgen* piece, Torahiro-bon *Kyōgen* 虎寛本狂言. See also *Kadokawa kogo daijiten* 1987, vol. 3, p. 135, which cites the late Edo period *Hakkenden* 八犬伝.

38 See *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2001, vol. 4, p. 1033, which cites a kabuki play *Fukujumaru* 福寿丸 (vol. 1) of 1696.

39 The dictionary quotes given for both words (see notes 37 and 38 above) refer to someone who wants to see, or sees, the saddle or the sword *in action*: “Really, this horse is almost too magnificent; I want to see how it rides!” (*Makoto wa konata no o-uma ga amari migoto na yue, kura’aji o mo mitō zonzuru* 誠はこなたの御馬があまり見事なゆへ、くらあぢをも見たう存る). “Indeed, the ‘cutting taste’ of this long sword is really something!” (*Satemo, sono tachi no kire’aji wa nanto yūtazo!* 扱、その太刀(たち)の切れ味は何と有たぞ). Compare with *aji* in *aji o yaru* 味をやる (doing or handling something skillfully): *umaku yaru, jōzu ni shikonasu* うまくやる, 上手にしこなす (see *Kadokawa kogo daijiten* 1982, vol. 1, p. 81). *Aji* in the compound words refers to the saddle or the sword that is made skillfully, but also handled skillfully.

sparingly in literary criticism;⁴⁰ but it is frequently used in commercials for kimono, which are described, for example, as having abundant *share'aji*.⁴¹ In kimono fashion magazines, it refers to the coordination of a sash, *obi* 帯, with that of the kimono, and to the occasion of wearing these. Ingenuity of matching demonstrates mastery of *share'aji*. The aesthetics of today's *share'aji* focusses the attention of fashion critics on the classic chic of the reduced motifs, the *mon'yō* 文様, again with the traditional vocabulary of their commonly understood allusions.⁴²

One motif valued today as *share'aji* is *chaya'tsuji* 茶屋辻, namely a graphic representation of landscape, printed in few colors, done in Edo times exclusively on thin summer cloth.⁴³ In history, the *chaya'tsuji* motif arose at the origin of *shara* in the applied arts, and may serve here to illustrate developments and the meaning of Edo period *shara'aji* more precisely. The origin of *chaya'tsuji* is to be found in the house of Chaya Shirōjirō 茶屋四郎次郎, a purveyor of order-made clothes to the shogun. He owned a shop in Kyoto, and was befriended by Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), a leader of Kyoto's *avant garde* art. The group around Kōetsu produced, among many other things, lacquer ware with intricate allusions to classic literature, valued for its *shara*.⁴⁴ Shirōjirō too created a wide variety of *shara* motifs for clothing, all suggestive of classical literature or theatre, establishing the fame of *chaya'some* 茶屋染, one of the earliest standards of kimono design for the masses from the Kan'ei period (1624–44) on.⁴⁵ At the end of the century, the name *chaya* became affixed to the more narrowly defined *chaya'tsuji* landscape representation, which was used exclusively for the kimono of high-ranking women. The public eye could see *chaya'tsuji* for the first time in the early 1680s in a catalogue attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu.⁴⁶ Hishikawa was valued

40 It is found, for example, in Taishō period literary criticism on Matsuo Bashō (Higuchi 1923, Introduction *Johen* 序編, p. 2). See also Takasu 1921 p. 156, who uses *share'aji* in evaluating Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* and the novels of Aeba Kōson (Takasu 1921, pp. 246, 247).

41 On the websites of *Kimono ichiba* of Rakuten one finds *share'aji tappuri* 洒落味たっぷり (abundant *share'aji*); *share'aji ga saeru* 洒落味が冴える (vivid *share'aji*); and *share'aji afureru* 洒落味溢れる (brimming with *share'aji*).

42 See, throughout, the glossy magazine *Utsukushii kimono* 美しいキモノ where *share'aji* is found for example in such writings of kimono critic Kimura Taka. See also Kimura 2008. *Utsukushii kimono*, Winter 2012 (no. 242, p. 75) gives an illustrative example. Subdued motifs of *shōchikubai* in kimono design are matched to a New Year's occasion. The *share'aji* is in the subtlety of matching motifs with time, place, and occasion. The word for (traditional) motif has changed since the seventeenth century from *moyō* 模様 to today's *mon'yō* 紋様 or 文様 that carries a stronger flavour of something patterned.

43 *Chaya'tsuji* having *share'aji* elegance: *miyabi na share'aji* 雅なしゃれ味 on: item.rakuten.co.jp/kimonoichiba6/570793 /retrieved February 20, 2013.

44 On the *shara* of Kōetsu lacquer ware, as exemplified in his *Funabashi makie suzuribako*, see Okada 1964. Chaya Shirōjirō was the name of the shop in Kyoto for several generations from the mid sixteenth century. There were branches in Nagoya and Edo from the mid seventeenth century. The shop was deeply involved with foreign trade, and members of the Chaya house feature in the logs of the English and Dutch at Hirado and Dejima. Shirōjirō Kiyotsugu (1583–1622), considered the third in line, had a residence in Takagamine, the art village of Hon'ami Kōetsu. See Kyōto-shi Seishi Rekishi Jinbutsu Daijiten Hensan Inkai 1997, p. 447; Koizumi 1994, pp. 1068, 1069; and Mizutani 2004. Okada 1964 provides a critical review attributing the contrivance in design to the craftsmen working for Kōetsu, not to Kōetsu himself, who posed as producer, not designer. On the popularity of a big bridge with hidden literary motifs in kimono design, see Kawakami 2007, pp. 76–78.

45 Ido 1918, p. 210 quotes *Jochū jōfuku ryakki* 女中常服略記, 1806: *Chaya'some* was started in the Kan'ei period by Chaya Munekiyo 茶屋宗清, also known as Koshirō 小四郎 (1593–1627) (see also Mizutani 2004, pp. 107–109). The kimono fashion catalogue *Shokoku onhiinakata* (1686) gives 32 *chaya'some* samples, on which see Endō 2002, p. 23, and Ueno 1974, vol. 1, pp. 35–37.

46 *Shiki moyō shorei ekagami* 四季模様諸礼絵鑑 (1681–84, attrib. Hishikawa Moronobu) gives a picture of *chaya'some* as elaborate *chaya'tsuji* landscape, very similar to Figure 3 given here (Endō 2002, p. 29). See also Nagasaki 2005, which makes however no reference to this *Shiki moyō shorei ekagami*, an important clue to the history of *chaya'some* and *chaya'tsuji*.



Figure 3. An eighteenth century summer kimono (*katabira* 帷子) featuring the *chaya'tsuji* motif. Tokyo National Museum 1983, *Rōkaku ganryūsui mon'yō* 楼閣岩流水模様, no. 3866.

for the *shara* with which he arranged his pictures.⁴⁷ *Chaya'tsuji* typified the developments that took place in the course of the seventeenth century when the wordplay of *shara* entered applied arts and crafts to enhance and deepen the enjoyment, the *aji* of designed motifs. The multi-layering of allusions, read from the motifs strengthened this taste, the *shara'aji*, as explained by Figure 3. The thatched pavilions (*tomaya* 苫屋) at a deserted seashore may have pointed to the poetic loneliness expressed in such classics as Fujiwara no Teika's poem "*Miwataseba...*," but other associations remained open. One of the pavilions is a multi-storied, thatched pagoda-like structure and could be pointing to a Chinese legend, in which a *shinkirō* comes up from a *hamaguri* shell. Letting the eye travel leisurely over the motifs was the way to appreciate their phantasmagorical poetic space.

From the form, meaning, and historic context of *shara* and *aji* then, it becomes clear that *shara'aji* expressed the mastery of producing "taste" as suggestive invention in the design of an object of art. *Shara'aji* cannot have referred to the personal taste of aesthetes. To state it simply: *shara'aji* was not a word for art critics, but a word used by manufacturers of art. *Shara* was the brainchild of craftsmen. It is only natural therefore that *shara'aji* is not found in Edo literary sources. It denoted the concealed artifice of poetics in motifs enjoyed by wealthy, highly intelligent and sensitive art lovers, and elite connoisseurs. Even if one were aware of the mechanisms of imagination or even the existence of the term *shara'aji*, it would be perfidious to art and render one foolish to write or only say that the *shara'aji* of a picture was well

⁴⁷ The late Edo period (1824) history of painters *Kinsei itsujin gashi*, pp. 283, 311, 312 praises the superior level of the *shara* of Hishikawa Moronobu, the inventor of genre painting. See also the Hishikawa style print in the *hyōbanki* in Figure 1. On the popularity of landscape scenery as a design motif in the textile industry from the mid seventeenth century, see Kirihata 1988.

accomplished. If a daimyo lady were to address a friend with the words, “Indeed, your kimono is possessed of great *shara’aji*,” she would be banished on the spot.

A Japanese Intelligence Network: Huygens, Factory Chiefs, and a Merchant

Temple must have learned about such Japanese aesthetics in The Hague. As a first source we may think of Dutch diplomat and poet Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687), who was well informed in matters of East Asia and Japan. He was a good friend of Temple; the two men discussed their gardens, and Huygens had earlier in fact compared the irregularity of natural growth in his garden with the design of a Japanese robe.⁴⁸ Huygens enjoyed playing with words and promoted for example the Japanese *wata*, meaning cotton wool, a word which was to be used in Dutch as *watten*.⁴⁹ He was well aware of the literary pictorial taste regarding lacquer ware, as shown by one of his letters to Mary Stuart, Queen of England. This letter, quite humorously, is composed as if it was written by the Chinese emperor himself, and proves that Huygens understood the mechanism of *shara’aji* precisely.⁵⁰ He could very well have introduced it to Temple who, indeed, used a diluted form of the same literary model when introducing the Chinese as his spokesmen on *sharawadgi* in his essay written in 1685, the same year as Huygens’ letter. Huygens in turn acquired an understanding of such matters through his close contacts with persons returning from East Asia, and Japan in particular. In his correspondence, we find for example an exchange of letters with Jacob Specx (1589?–after 1647) about porcelain and “Indian craftsmanship.”⁵¹ Specx had been in Japan for almost ten years as the chief of the Dutch factory in Hirado; he was deeply involved in the lacquer ware trade, and close to the Huygens’ family.⁵² Another widely experienced Japan-traveler in the circles of Huygens was François Caron (1600?–1673). Caron arrived in Japan as a young cook’s mate in 1619, and later served as factory chief for many years before leaving Japan in 1641. Caron was well respected in Japan, and was in private contact with many leaders of society. Again, the Huygens family was in various ways closely involved

48 See Huygens’ *Hofwijck* (1653) in the text edition Strien 2008, p. 53. See Kuitert 2013 on the discussion between the two men, and see Bachrach 1987, pp. 68–75 on their friendship.

49 See Kuitert forthcoming.

50 Without mentioning *shara’aji*, Huygens described the emblematic, literary pictorial of a lacquer screen as “... the most curious, skilfull and artificial drawings and limninge ...” that represent “... the noble collection of those manifold chosen and selected characters, containing in [the] excellent Asiatic language the wittiest speeches, proverbs, emblems, parables, paradoxes and other higher mysteries...” (Worp [1917] Zesde Deel, pp. 456, 457, a letter of September 27, 1685 [no. 7231]). This letter concerns the cutting up and reusing of a lacquer screen, a barbarian act about which “the Chinese Emperor” complains.

51 For letters between the two, see Worp (1913) Tweede Deel, p. 158, March 28, 1636 (no. 1367); Worp (1914) Derde Deel, pp. 120–21, November 16, 1640 (no. 2577); and a letter (May 11, 1647, Archives DiEP Dordrecht 1501–2000) by Specx to Huygens thanking him for having sent one of his works.

52 Specx had been in Japan from 1609–1612 with a second term 1614–21; he had a daughter with a Japanese wife. After his return to the Netherlands, he married Magdalena, sister of Philips Doublet (1590–1660). This man’s son, Philips Doublet junior (1633–1707), married Huygens’ daughter Susanna. See NNBW 1924, VI 1251–54 and Worp (1913) Tweede Deel, p. 158. For an extensive discussion on Specx and the lacquer ware trade by order, see Impey and Jörg 2005, pp. 241–45.

with the Carons.⁵³ Specx and Caron had a profound knowledge of Japan and its arts, and could conceivably have shown, given, or sold objects to Huygens. Caron returned in 1641 to the Netherlands as a last chief, fully proficient in Japanese, providing the European *savants* with information on Japan. The country had just been officially closed to trade with Catholic Europe in 1639; and although the Chinese and the Dutch were allowed to keep trading factories in Nagasaki, these were heavily controlled. Chiefs had to be replaced yearly. In the Netherlands, Caron lost favor because he accumulated excessive personal profit in Batavia; also he felt not fully acknowledged as a Japan-specialist. More and more involved with French politics, he finally moved his household to Paris in 1666 at the height of his career in France. The Dutch regarded this as close to treason. Someone like Huygens or a Temple would have covered up any relations he may have had with Caron, at least in public. Letters were presumably burnt.⁵⁴

With increasing limitations set by the Japanese government on foreign trade, and the Dutch settlement in Nagasaki in particular, it was no longer possible for a head of the mission to stay as long in Japan as Specx and Caron had done. The chances for a Dutchman to become proficient in Japanese and transmit intelligence on matters like *shara'aji* back were slight after 1639. Be that as it may, it must have been in the Netherlands in the 1660s or -70s that Temple picked up his *sharawadgi*, perhaps from a “Dutchman, who had been long in the *East-Indies*.” This reference appears in an exchange of information with Huygens on gout, which had affected Temple since his early forties. Having arrived in the Netherlands it grew worse, and he blamed the Dutch weather for it. Concerned about his friend’s agony, Huygens presented him with a little book on a traditional East Asian treatment by moxibustion.⁵⁵ Temple was happily surprised by the beneficial effects, and wrote an *Essay upon the CURE of the GOUT by MOXA*, which he published in 1677. It was addressed to his friend Huygens and reported on his successful experiments on himself and others with *moxa*.⁵⁶ Temple spoke of an *Indian* method practiced in China and Japan; however, according to Temple, the Chinese are in all forms of traditional medicine much better than the Japanese. *Moxa* is of course a Japanese word. Temple confused the origin, on purpose maybe, to praise the Chinese. When talking about other treatments of gout, Temple mentioned body-massage: “A *Dutchman*, who had been long in the *East-Indies* told me, in one Part of them, where he had lived some Time, the general Remedy of all that were

53 See Boxer 1935 for a biography. Caron had five children with his Japanese wife, who died early. Huygens brother in law, David de Wilhelm, was a witness at the wedding of Caron with his second wife. (See Strien and van der Leer 2002, pp. 95 and 108 on family relations.) The mother of this second wife was a niece of Huygens. He supported one of Caron’s daughters from this second marriage financially. The Huygens’ family provided Melchisédec Thévenot (1620–92), who was always curious about things Japanese, with an introduction to Caron, which is clear from his letters to Huygens’ son, Christiaan (1629–95). See CKCC 2013, huyg003/0926, 1661-12-11; huyg003/1009, 1662-04; or huyg003/1026, 1662-06-22.

54 A letter from Caron to Huygens about family affairs cannot have been the only one they ever wrote. See Worp (1915) Vierde Deel, p. 239, October 25, 1645 (no. 4172).

55 This was Buschoff 1675. See Worp (1917) Zesde Deel, p. 373, February 24, 1676 (no. 7011), for a letter from Huygens to Buschoff giving notice that Temple will send a servant to find out more about the treatment. This servant was the German doctor, Theodore Coledy (see Temple 1677, p. 140). Buschoff 1675 was based on experiences by the author’s father, Bernhard Busschoff (1620?–74), a Protestant minister in Batavia. This Bernhard, in turn, was taught by an “Indian Doctress” from Quinam, the province south of the old capital Hué. Michel 2003 gives a reprint of the English translation of Buschoff supported by ample research.

56 Temple 1677, the title adds: *Written to Monsieur de Zulichem*. Huygens was Lord of Zulichem.

subject to the *Gout*, was rubbing with Hands... done by Slaves, continuously all day ...”⁵⁷ Who was this Dutchman with whom Temple could sit and talk about his gout? We have to delve a little deeper into the network to find the answer.

Henry (Heinrich) Oldenburg (1619–77) was the secretary of the Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge, and a friend in Huygens’ circle. In 1669 he had published *Some Observations Concerning Iapan, made by an Ingenious person, that hath many years resided in that Country*.⁵⁸ It was a set of answers to questions that were posed to an anonymous informant who had recently returned from Japan. This was a fresh piece of journalism providing new knowledge on Japan, the first since Caron’s book of more than thirty years before.⁵⁹ Circles around Oldenburg were enthusiastic about the Japanese proficiency of this “ingenious person” who has been unambiguously identified as Ernst van Hogenhoek (?–1675).⁶⁰ A few years later Huygens and Temple came to discuss gout, and again Oldenburg was deeply involved.⁶¹ Japan specialist Van Hogenhoek must have been Temple’s Dutchman in the discussion on gout as his *Observations* referred to *moxa*.⁶² So, who was Van Hogenhoek?

Ernst van Hogenhoek arrived in Japan on business. The Dutch had been importing Chinese porcelain to Europe, but after the fall of the Ming dynasty this trade collapsed. Now orders for similar wares were placed with potters in Japan. This trade by order was profitable as goods could be tailored to the tastes of clients. Lacquer ware, more exclusive and profitable than porcelain, had already been successfully ordered for many years to fit markets outside Japan. Van Hogenhoek was a smart merchant and directly involved in this trade. He was among the Dutch who negotiated prices with Kyoto lacquer craftsmen, who had come to Nagasaki in November 1656.⁶³ This year a formidable order was placed for cabinets, palanquins, and even “little elephant houses.” These were the elaborate couches, *howdah*, saddled on the elephants of the Indian elite that were ordered through the Dutch and made in Japan. Van Hogenhoek was in direct negotiation with these craftsmen from Kyoto when they came to Nagasaki, and would have learned from them terms in decorative

57 Temple 1677, p. 143.

58 See *Some Observations* 1669, and Michel 2002.

59 The first version of Caron’s Japan reports also appeared in the form of an interview. See Caron 1636. Many reprints and re-editions followed.

60 See Hall and Hall 1967, vol. IV, p. 417 with a letter to Oldenburg valuing Hogenhoek higher than Caron. Van Hogenhoek entered the VOC in 1648, arriving in Japan in summer 1651, if not earlier (Michel 2002, p. 12). He served with a status of junior merchant on Dejima from October 1654 to November 1662, but no records are extant on his official appointment from October 1660 to November 1661 (Michel 2009/2011). He was in Japan for nine years, and a further eight years in the wider region of the East Indies.

61 In November 1675, Huygens sent Oldenburg Buschoff’s treatise on gout. See Worp (1917) *Zesde Deel*, pp. 368–69, November 16/26, 1675 (no. 6995), letter from Huygens to Oldenburg. He recommended that the treatise be explained by the Society to the medical doctors in the presence of a theologian, because Bernhard Buschoff was a Protestant minister, “whose Profession was to tell Truth” (Temple 1677, p. 140). Oldenburg, Temple, and Huygens were on familiar terms, as another of Huygens’ letter shows (see Worp [1917] *Zesde Deel*, p. 380, September 15, 1676 [no. 7031]). The Society sponsored the publishing of Buschoff’s treatise, which appeared in an English translation in the next year. See Buschoff 1676 in Michel 2003.

62 *Some Observations* 1669, p. 984. In 1669 Ernst van Hogenhouck attended a family affair of Gysbert van Hogenhouck, a Lawyer of the Court of Holland. See *Maandelyke uittreksels* 1762, p. 343. This suggests that Ernst was a member of the eminent Van Hogenhoek family. (The family name is also spelled Van Hogenhouck, or Van Hoogenhoeck.)

63 Lunsingh Scheurleer 1941, pp. 64–68 gives a set of quotes from the *Dagregisters* by Zacharias Wagenaar of Dejima from November 1656 about the proceedings of negotiations on merchandise. In these years, Kyoto lacquer workers came to Nagasaki every year. See Impey and Jörg 2005, p. 32.

arts and fashions. His stay of nine years, unusually long after *sakoku* policies had taken effect, was more than enough for him to gain a good understanding of Japanese. In the end though, accused by the VOC of engaging in private trade, Van Hogenhoek was removed from his post and came to work on the Dutch fleet active on the coasts of China. In January 1665, however, he rather suddenly returned to Batavia, and was back in the Netherlands not long after that. After a few restless years in and around The Hague, we find him in Danish service as a salaried commissioner for the Chamber of Commerce from April 1671. Soon, he set off on a Danish ship as head of a Danish mission to open trade relations with Japan.⁶⁴ But the mission failed and Van Hogenhoek died at sea in December 1675.⁶⁵ There is no doubt that Ernst van Hogenhoek was engaged with the circles of Huygens and Temple, and that he was the one who brought in the idea of *shara'aji*. He was the only experienced Japan-traveller around and was highly respected, though only outside the Netherlands was this openly acknowledged.⁶⁶ After his defection to the Danish, Oldenburg, Temple, and Huygens had no desire to refer by name to Van Hogenhoek, just as they had avoided naming Caron.

Literary Picturesque Taste—Conclusion

Among the treasures that Ernst van Hogenhoek brought back from the East were four excessively pricey Japanese lacquer cabinets.⁶⁷ Such cabinets entered the highest circles in Europe, and many are still found in royal collections. As huge sums were paid for them, it was only natural that clients would have them made according to their taste. In this respect, it is intriguing to see that from the mid seventeenth century, export lacquer was no longer decorated with abstract geometrics but decorated in a pictorial style.⁶⁸ The type of cabinet that Van Hogenhoek brought back depicted landscapes seen along the way of the regular official trip of the Dutch to Edo. Panels began with a scene of Dejima and then showed scenery along the Tōkaidō highway often with Mount Fuji in the background; travelers—including some foreigners—were also depicted.⁶⁹

64 Hogenhoek led the negotiations with local lords and representatives of the Chinese emperor about conditions for trade in 1664. A detailed account can be found in *Nederlandsche Reizen* 1786, pp. 117–25, and Dam 1639–1701, p. 457. For his adventures in Danish service, see Boyer 1959, pp. 12–13.

65 In Nagasaki waters, the Nagasaki magistrate, being informed about the ship's intention, learned that Van Hogenhoek was on the ship without the consent of the VOC, and refused to let the mission enter its harbor (see Dam 1639–1701, p. 457).

66 Temple was in the Netherlands for the first time from December 1667 to June 1671. Van Hogenhoek, in spite of his major role in trade negotiations with China, became a nuisance to the Dutch, and remained a minor figure in Dutch history. Outside the Netherlands, he was valued more highly. For the Danish, he was the hero who challenged the jealously guarded monopolies of the VOC (see Boyer 1959, pp. 12–13). He left a strong impression on the secretary of Louis XIV, Henri Justel (1620–93). See his letters of May 20 and June 13, 1668 to Oldenburg, full of admiration for Van Hogenhoek in Hall and Hall 1967, vol. IV, pp. 416, 417, 440 and 441.

67 *Some Observations* 1669, p. 985: “The Author of this Accompt hath 4. Cabinets of this workmanship, which he affirms to have cost him above 40000 crowns, which he will not sell under 80000 crowns.” A sum of 40,000 crowns was valued at 100,000 guilders in Van Hogenhoek's days, hundred year salaries for a man like Constantijn Huygens. Such outrageous advertising of merchandise in the *Transactions* that published *Some Observations* was clever, but no doubt aroused the ire of the VOC.

68 The full-fledged pictorial style is seen as having started in the 1650s. See Impey and Jörg 2005, pp. 83–85. I would like to thank Cynthia Viallé and Christiaan Jörg for their various communications on export lacquer.

69 See Schweizer et al. 2011, pp. 21–23; see Impey and Jörg 2005, p. 41. Cynthia Viallé and I have recently begun joint research on the landscape representation on such cabinets.



Figure 4. The decoration on the front panel of a lacquer cabinet in the Royal Collection, Netherlands, shows landscape scenery. One from a set of two in the Collection Huis ten Bosch, supposedly acquired by Van Hogenhoek.⁷⁰ Illustration from Trousselle 2008, p. 113.

Landscape representation in Japan had already a well-established canon of literary pictorial imagery that elicited moods and memories that had been—and could be expressed once more—in poetry, prose, art, or in garden design.⁷¹ This thematic landscape representation was expanded in the seventeenth century to include the layering of riddle and association of *shara*. Lacquer ware craftsmen had successfully complied with the demand for such added fabrication by art producers like Kōetsu, but were now confronted with Dutch requests for representations of topographical landscape scenes, including foreign travelers themselves. Artistically speaking, this was a new challenge to their understanding and mastery of *shara'aji*, as the pictorial had to be adapted to European ideas. Naturally, the

70 Michel 2002, pp. 220–21 discusses the high possibility that these cabinets were acquired by Van Hogenhoek. See also Lunsingh Scheurleer 1941, pp. 71, 72 on William III acquiring this set of two cabinets in 1683 after a visit to the offices of the East India Company.

71 Representation of literary motifs in garden art has a long tradition beginning in the Heian period (Kuitert 2002, pp. 45–51). Writing was literally interwoven with landscape design in *ashide* painting, forming the origin of *chaya'some* and *chaya'tsuji* motifs (Ido 1918, p. 210 quoting *Morisada mankō* 守貞漫稿, vol. 16 in facsimile Asakura 1974, p. 289a). On landscape imagery in early Edo period Japanese lacquer ware, see Watt and Brennan Ford 1991, p. 157, who give many examples of literary themes from *Kokinshū*, *Shin kokinshū*, and *Genji monogatari* (pp. 209–213; 254–57; 266, passim).

word would have featured in negotiations over the ordering and pricing of such cabinets.⁷² Such business talk was removed from elite literary discourse. Craftsmen, not unlike today's kimono makers, would have used the word *shara'aji* in discussions about their designs. They would have argued over the relative merits of a pine tree or some chrysanthemum, in order to achieve more *shara'aji*. Craftsmen of the seventeenth century did not write much; rather they worked, and talked to retailers like Ernst van Hogenhoek. And Van Hogenhoek could not of course have anticipated that his *sharawadgi* would become a catchphrase in literary discourse on the picturesque, not to mention on urban soundscape in Europe. But like Huygens, Van Hogenhoek must have grasped that *shara'aji* was a question of literary motifs, shown though on his cabinets, as picturesque scenes of real, topographic landscapes. That Temple expressed a similar awareness can be read from his words on designed motifs "which may reduce many disagreeing parts into some Figure, which shall yet upon the whole, be very agreeable."⁷³ But most of all, Temple wanted to stress the irregular in the exotic landscape representations that he had seen with his own eyes on works of art from the East, and to bring in this irregularity as an illustration to his own ideas.⁷⁴ Without touching upon the meaning of *shara'aji*, he thus took the word from its correct context of "contrivance of figures," and placed it in the different setting of taste for landscape gardening, leading to an array of deviating interpretations in later centuries.

The seventeenth century world of landscape representation in Japanese gardening differed from Europe, and was not concerned with *shara'aji*. Be that as it may, "literary picturesque taste" seems most fit as a translation for Temple's term—that is, until other historic records are uncovered to shed new light on the usage of the word. As such, the message *sharawadgi* brought shows a fascinating parallel to the picturesque expressed in the Dutch landscape paintings that entered England in the same period. But this is a subject for further research.

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72 Lacquer cabinet exports peaked between 1658 and 1665 when these *comptoirs* were ordered by the dozens (see Lunsingh Scheurleer 1941, pp. 63–69). Van Hogenhoek arrived in 1651 and left 1662, and was therefore in Japan during most of this period. The invention in design stems from the lacquer workers themselves, and not from either their commissioners or their producers (see Okada 1964). Topographical scenery in lacquer cabinets appeared in an age of rapidly growing production and popularity of topographic landscape painting in the Netherlands.

73 Temple's *reduce* was changed to *produce* in later editions, making the meaning of the phrase incomprehensible (see Temple 1690, p. 57).

74 See Kuitert 2013, p. 172.

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