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1 The Role Played by Zen "Kong" in Japanese Aesthetics

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6 **Abstract**

7 Japanese Zen Buddhism has led the way for Japanese aesthetics and has continued to bring
8 this aesthetic to the public, most notably in the form of ukiyo-e. Zen Buddhism is a branch of
9 Buddhism with the core principle of "no thought, no appearance, no dwelling," and "Katsu"
10 as its practice from Linji School. As Zen became integrated into Japanese life, meditation was
11 likewise manifested in social life, most notably in the Edo period. As a declining, last feudal
12 period in Japanese history, the Edo Shogunate was flawed in terms of notification. The
13 samurai class, which was attached to the Shogunate, was fundamentally lacking in subject
14 matter, and the Tokugawa family gave them the idea of Bushido but not its inner pillar.
15 Japanese merchants, who had no status, spent their money recklessly but gained confusion
16 and emptiness. Bijinga-e, who specializes in painting Japanese geisha in Ukiyo-e, shows all the
17 meanings of "Kong" through the composition, white space, and the form of people in the
18 painting. Most impressionists in the nineteenth century expressed their emotions and imitated
19 East Asian style artworks, and only "had the form but not the spirit." This paper thus
20 concludes that the status of "Kong" in Japanese Zen aesthetics is like a butterfly in an
21 invisible net, out of control and out of sight. Japanese Zen Buddhism has led the way for
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31 painting Japanese geisha in Ukiyo-e, shows all the meanings of "Kong" through the
32 composition, white space, and the form of people in the painting. Most impressionists in the
33 nineteenth century expressed their emotions and imitated East Asian style artworks, and only
34 "had the form but not the spirit." This paper thus concludes that the status of "Kong" in
35 Japanese Zen aesthetics is like a butterfly in an invisible net, out of control and out of sight.

36

37 **Index terms**— ?kong?, bijinga-e, zen, japanese aesthetics.

38 **1 Introduction**

39 nowadays, the world order is chaotic, the world pattern is fluid, and new possibilities can arise every day. The
40 sense of crisis brought about by the new coronavirus puts people in fear of being threatened by death every day.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHOD

41 The British exit from the European Union (Brexit) and the war between Russia and Ukraine make it impossible
42 to return to the complete peace of the past in a short period. There are growing sea levels, melting glaciers,
43 dwindling trees on the planet, and species going extinct with dramatically changing biodiversity. Each of those
44 crises acts as a threat, which makes it impossible for us to rely solely on ourselves for survival. As a result, people
45 are looking for spiritual support, some for their love of country, some for God, and others for a simple, "empty"
46 state of existence.

47 Such an era stimulated the consciousness of question and the desire to continue my exploration of the aesthetics
48 of Japanese Zen art based on the article An Analysis of the Status of Japanese Zen Art Aesthetics in Ukiyo-e:
49 From Katsushika Hokusai, the famous painter in the formation of Ukiyo-e, to Van Gogh. In my previous paper,
50 we opened the door to the desire to explore the aesthetics of Japanese Zen art. According to the previous article,
51 we opened up with a hot topic, namely the specific relationship between Japanese Zen art aesthetics and ukiyo-e,
52 to understand the dominant and driving position of Zen thought as deified philosophy in ukiyo-e by analyzing the
53 normative style, painting form, painting content, and structural lines of Hokusai ukiyo-e paintings. This paper
54 hopes to delve into the question of what ideas and ideologies in Zen Buddhism dominated the Japanese artistic
55 aesthetic. How was this aesthetic art articulated through the Ukiyoe that flourished in the Edo period? This
56 paper holds that this subjectivity, in essence, can be understood as the Zen empty ideology. This idea of Kong
57 drives human beings to express their abilities, roles, perceptions, and status through artistic expression in the
58 practice process, demonstrating the form and spirit of this artistic aesthetic through autonomous, purposeful,
59 and dynamic activities.

60 I have to clarify the use of the word "? (written as "Kong")" before we begin talking about its position. In
61 contemporary society, there are many expressions of Kong. When it is widely used in the aesthetic concept of
62 fashion and residential furnishing style, it often has a similar meaning to "sunyata" and "sabi," expressing the
63 normalization of white space, nothingness, and silence. Due to the fact that the Kyoto school incorporated the
64 purely empirical understanding of the classical German philosophy of Kant, Heidegger, and French philosopher
65 Sartre into their interpretation of Mahayana Buddhism, which led Kisaragi Nishida to propose the concept of
66 "absolute nothingness" equal to sunyata, a continuous negation called catuskoti expresses the dualistic idea that
67 one should not assert emptiness and one should not assert non-emptiness. But this is not the kind of "empty"
68 I want to research. Since I think that Kong is not the negation of a negation, nor is it nothingness, nor is it
69 the characteristic Japanese aesthetic of "dharma (open and quiet) 1," nor is it simply the "Sugata (emptiness)"
70 of the understanding of the text of the Heart Sutra. As it is said in the Treatise on the Many, "In sunyata,
71 emptiness is fullness, and fullness is emptiness; formlessness is formed, and formlessness is formlessness.
72 True emptiness is a magical existence." (Abe, Zen, and Western Thought, pp. 126-27). The word "Kong" is used
73 because it is specific to all civilizations and cultures, not simply the "emptiness" of the Japanese Kyoto School
74 and the Zen thought of the Cao Dong School.

75 Mono no aware, wabi-sabi, and yugen were the key terms and focuses of Japanese Zen aesthetics for a long
76 time. But this is not the entirety of the Japanese aesthetic, nor is it the entirety of the influence of Japanese
77 Zen Buddhism on its artistic aesthetic. Undoubtedly speaking, art is a form of expressing emotions and spirits.
78 By conveying such emotions and spirit through visual means, Japanese art aesthetic is always associated with
79 Japanese Zen thought. Therefore, this paper wants to explore this concept of Kong by selecting one of the
80 visible artistic expressions in Japan. This paper will analyze, interpret and visualize Kong through a type of
81 woodblock print Ukiyo-e. Focusing on the Bijinga-e of the Edo period, it will reveal the veil of the Geisha
82 (or so-called Geiko, Geigi, Oiran, and courtesans) rarely seen in civilian life from the gestures, character, body
83 shape, appearance, background, and costumes of the figures in the paintings, to open the door to the Japanese
84 merchants and samurai. It expresses the dimensions of Japanese thought and the general understanding of life
85 in an aesthetically pleasing way, further revealing the concrete manifestation of "Kong".

86 2 II.

87 3 Literature Review and Method

88 Contemporary analyses of Japanese Zen aesthetics are mostly limited to the researcher's field of study, such as
89 On the Beauty Painting in the Ukiyo-e researcher Xu Qing (2004), who belongs to the category of practical art,
90 so her focus is on the brushwork and painting styles of artists such as Kwaigetsudo Ando and Kita Kawagami.
91 Cox (2013), a member of the Department of Anthropology and the European Centre for Japanese Studies at
92 Oxford Brookes University, focuses his research on the popular and historical imaginings of the connections
93 between Zen Buddhism and Japanese culture. He also gives what kinds of Japanese aesthetic pursuits show
94 dynamic expression within anthropological descriptions and historical criticism. Then again, Jamieson (2018) is
95 a musician who tried to fill in the blank of the research on the influence of Zen and the Kyoto School on the
96 definition of contemporary music aesthetics through the cognition of Japanese music aesthetics. The subject the
97 researchers belong to has limited their thoughts and understanding of Zen and ukiyo-e. This paper will not be
98 confined to a single cognitive system and not just belong to one of the fields of aesthetics and religious philosophy,
99 nor art or fine arts. This paper is an interdisciplinary article with multidisciplinary knowledge background.

100 The paper draws on Daisetz Suzuki's (2019) definition of Zen, Zen Buddhism, Bushido, swordplay, art, and
101 haiku in Zen and Japanese culture, where he describes in simple, poetic terms what Zen is and highlights how its

102 focus on primitive simplicity and selfeffacement has helped shape an aesthetic that permeates Japanese culture.
103 Also, from a more Western perspective, Bayou's (2011) *Du Japon à l'Europe, changement de statut de l'estampe*
104 *ukiyo-e*, published in *Arts Asiatiques* (Paris) argues that such replicative Japanese prints shed their association
105 with pure classical culture but considered a "fad." This fad articulated an aesthetic attitude of "pleasure" and
106 portrayed a fleeting image of the world that influenced the European market in the second half of the 19th
107 century. After all, nineteenth-century Western artists, comfortable with the academy, needed a new language to
108 express contemporary ideas. The centuries-old fusion of East Asian philosophy and art was a decisive influence
109 (Rodríguez Llera, R, 2022, pp. 368).

110 Accordingly, I will analyze the Zen Buddhist idea of Kong based on the intellectual background of Linji Lu
111 and Huineng's *Tanjing*, the understanding of the personal experiences, creative styles, and paintings of *ukiyo-*
112 *e* artists such as Utagawa Yoshitaki and Hokusai, and the influence of these *ukiyo-e* work on Western post-
113 impressionism. The main research method I use for this study is to ask questions about the relationship between
114 Zen Buddhism Kong and Japanese art aesthetics and *Bijinga-e*. The research methods used in this article are
115 questioning, synthesis, discovery, judgment, analysis, comparison, and case study analysis using *Ukiyo-e* works
116 as core examples.

117 4 III.

118 5 Results and Discussion

119 a) The ideology of " Kong " (its original form in Japan)

120 Zen Buddhism is a branch of Buddhism that was born as a rebellion against the caste system established in
121 India after the Aryan conquest of the South Asian Subcontinent. This caste system divided Indians into different
122 groups and classes, namely Brahmins who were born in the mouth of Brahma, Kshatriyas who mastered and
123 manipulated politics, economy, military, and culture, Vaishyas who were in the lower position of Brahma named
124 farmers and merchants, Shudras who were of low status, and pariah who were not included in the list. When
125 the Brahmins weakened in the fourth century A.D., Prince Siddhartha broke the caste system, abandoned the
126 superiority he possessed, advocated the equality of all beings, and promoted the universalization, popularization,
127 and colloquialism of Buddhism. Thus, in the beginning, the Kong of "all is vanities" represented the dispossession
128 and despair of the once privileged aristocratic and intellectual minority and the absence of class and lack of
129 common knowledge. Moreover, this idea has existed since the beginning of Buddhism. Kong is considered in
130 Mahayana Buddhism to be divided into two parts: the Kong of humans and the Kong of dharma, i.e., the absence
131 of its own body and entity for human beings, and the absence of entity for the existence of all things that arise
132 from causes. Each branch of Buddhism has different interpretations of this "Kong," ranging from "two empty" to
133 "twenty empty," for example, from the four views of the *Madhyamakakarika* into human emptiness and dharma
134 emptiness, and "three empty" from the Differentiation of the Middle Way from the Extremes. Among them, the
135 "eighteen empty" are interpreted from the *Maha Prajna Paramita Sutr*, which considers that there are *adhyatma-*
136 *sunyata*, *bahirdha-sunyata*, *adhyatma-bahirdha-sunyata*, *sunyata-sunyata*, *mahasunyata*, *paramartha-sunyata*,
137 *samskrt-sunyata*, *asamskrt-sunyata*, *at�anta-sunyata*, *anavakarasunyata*, *prakrti-sunyata*, *svalaksana-sunyata*,
138 *sarvadharma-sunyata*, *abhava-sunyata*, *svabhava-sunyata*, *abhava-svabhava-sunyata*, a total of eighteen kinds of
139 *sunyata*. They are the foundation of the Nanzen thought of "?????????????????????" After all, this nothingness
140 is built on the great Kong of the ten worlds and ten directions.

141 Buddhism was introduced to China at the end of the reign of Emperor Ai of the Western Han Dynasty and
142 went through a long and arduous process in the Eastern Han Dynasty, the Wei, Jin, Northern, and Southern
143 Dynasties, and the Sui and Tang Dynasties. During this period, Zen Buddhism also passed through the six
144 groups of Huineng, Nanyue Huairang, Mazu Daoyi, Baizhu Huaihai, Huangbo Xiyun, and Linji Yixuan, the core
145 figure of the Linji school that eventually spread to Japan. Linji Yixuan, a native of Shandong Province in China
146 today, lived in a period when the Great Tang Dynasty had just issued a decree on the destruction of Buddhism,
147 demolishing more than 4,600 monasteries in the seventh year of the Huichang era, destroying more than 40,000
148 Caturdesa and Aranya, and returning more than 260,000 monks and nuns to the monastic world. However, the
149 Linji school survived as one of the most prosperous of the five houses and seven schools that emerged during
150 the Northern Song Dynasty³ , and as the ancestor of Japanese Zen Buddhism, which holds the premier seat in
151 Japanese Buddhism, the Linji school must have its uniqueness, which lies precisely in what it advocates "????é ?"
152 4 ." This normal mind of Linji school is based on material scarcity and intellectual barrenness, as it is said in the
153 Baizhang Qinggui that "one day without work, one day without food," and that the teachings of Linji school are
154 fundamentally based on an atmosphere of political and economic dependence and its "Kong" is also founded in
155 the realm of the need for self-sufficiency to exist.

156 The Linji lu says that you enter the mortal world, you enter the holy world, you enter the contaminated dust,
157 you enter the pure, you enter the land of various Buddhas, you enter the pavilion of Maitreya, you enter the
158 world of Vairocana, and every place is the land of existence, in which there is existence, decay, extinction, and
159 emptiness. The Buddha appeared in this world, turned the wheel of dharma, and later entered nirvana, but his
160 past and future are invisible to you, so it is useless to seek his birth and death. This kind of invisibility is what
161 Linji understands as the "empty appearance (??)," a kind of illusion of all things, such as the saying that "?????
162 ?????? ??????????????????" They are just empty names, and these names are also empty 6 . These empty

6 B) THE "PRACTICE" OF "KONG" IN JAPANESE SOCIAL LIFE AND ITS APPEARANCE IN UKIYO-E

163 forms are related to and born with all dramas which do not have 'self-nature' (all the dharmas in this world and
164 the next are without self-nature) and 'birth nature,' because the mind is empty. The dharma is empty, and the
165 single thought is decisively cut off and transcended.

166 6 b) The "practice" of "Kong" in Japanese social life and its 167 appearance in Ukiyo-e

168 The representation of the "Kong" in Zen is the master's "raised whisk" and "Katsu (to yell or to shout, to
169 browbeat, to scold, and hoarse)", as the fundamental Zen that leaves behind words. It is also the foundation
170 of Linji School 7 since there are inherent phrases called "???????" (Deshan Bang, Linji He.)." This "Kong" has
171 other manifestations in Japanese everyday life, such as the "Kong" of the declining rule and lack of authority of
172 the Muromachi Shogunate, the ritualistic "Kong" of Bushido that ends with seppuku, and the vacuous, flatulent,
173 degenerate "Kong" of the Japanese merchants' culture. The regime holders who cannot be autonomous and the
174 policies that cannot land from on high are the sticks raised high in the air. And all those abstract glory, rituals,
175 and punishments are the big stick hanging over the heart of the aristocratic warrior ruling class, the thought that
176 hangs for a decision. In addition, the shout that does not represent public opinion and the parasite that cannot
177 accomplish self-assertion are silent cries. The ultimate and pure expression of unanimity of thought by seppuku
178 is also the outreach of the soul, the silent cry, and the loyalty to achieve the purpose decisively and actively. The
179 merchants at the bottom of Japanese society, who could not get equality and respect, were looking for a place to
180 enjoy themselves amid the turmoil. Their wandering around Hanamachi, Karyukai, and Kagai was their silent
181 warning and cried to the society.

182 The Edo period was the last period of the feudal era of the warrior families in Japanese history, and the
183 paramount ruler was the Tokugawa family. Since the Tokugawa family eliminated its greatest political enemy,
184 the Tokugawa shogunate has wielded real power while the Mikado enjoys great prestige. The Edo Shogunate
185 established Bushido as their fundamental spirit from the ideological point of view, making the samurai work for
186 them with loyalty, righteousness, and courage as the benchmark of their living and hara-kiri as the code of honor
187 of their death. Bushido greatly revived the status of Zen in Japan, as Peter Haskel says: "The Japanese Zen as
188 we know it today is Tokugawa Zen, a teaching that looks back to its medieval roots but does it through the prism
189 of its particular concerns 8 ." The Zen revived by the Tokugawa family is mainly through zazen, meditation,
190 combat, and the spirit of "????? ???? (Fengfo Shafo Fengzu Shazu) 9 " for those who are absent-mindedness
191 and unconsciousness with a "Katsu" by the master. This method helped the military elite of the Shogunate
192 to consolidate militarism. It was also fundamentally different from the foreign values brought by the Christian
193 missionaries. Since the Shogunate during the Edo period forbade the Japanese from practicing Christianity,
194 all Japanese were required to register at Buddhist temples to ensure no conversions occurred. Later, after the
195 Tokugawa family took complete control of Japanese politics, reforms appeared frequently. They used the same
196 method on those peasants with martial families and warriors as obligations which led to turmoil in society. This
197 martial style of rule revealed the rulers' dictatorship and their bad habits in governance. The general citizens
198 and peasants, so-called the "machi people" of the Edo period, who were constantly being crushed and governed,
199 were powerless. However, they became aware of the commercial and handicraft industries emerging around
200 cities, ports, and temples based on economic development and became practitioners. These merchants disrupted
201 the Japanese dualistic class division between the samurai and non-samurai classes. The culture constructed
202 by these people gave the urban population the conditions and leisure to support, for the first time, art and
203 entertainment different from the aristocratic arts and culture and could satisfy the demands and participation of
204 the masses. This entertainment briefly escaped the class status and identity of the "aristocracy," but was limited
205 and constrained by its social environment and assets. Therefore, it was mainly expressed as personal, direct,
206 erotic entertainment for the masses.

207 In the Edo period of Japanese history, "Kong" was evident from the political system, the vassals, and the
208 masses. In terms of politics, the Shogunate system of the Edo period was based on the military, but it was in a
209 situation of internal and external troubles. For example, in the seventh year of the Kanaga period, the Shogunate
210 accepted the request to open a port under the coercion of the United States and later signed the Japan-U.S.
211 Treaty of Goodwill in Kanagawa. Thus, political emptiness was the "Kong" of having no power in the face of
212 the turbulent nineteenth century. The samurai class, the vassal of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and its antagonist,
213 the Japanese merchants, practiced "empty forms" in two ways, respectively. The Japanese merchants sought life,
214 and the samurai sought death, both of which were different in their demands, but both were making and fulfilling
215 their needs. The former sought the "floating world" and used it as a false reality. The latter sought to honor
216 and nobility as their synonyms and hara-kiri as their honor and ritual. Thus, each expresses "Kong" in different
217 acts from the inside. This kind of "Kong" from the heart, in essence, shows their inner emptiness and confusion.
218 That is to say, they do not know what they want, they do not know what they live for, and they do not know
219 what they die for.

220 In the late 17th century, with the rise of the Japanese merchants' thinking and culture, the Kano and Tosa
221 school of painting, which had served the court nobility, gradually lost its charm and was replaced by this type
222 of Ukiyo-e. Ukiyo-e, with its gorgeous style and explicit materials, was the best able to express the Edo period.

223 And the Bijinga-e was the most expressive of the "Kong" that existed from the hearts of the noblemen to the
224 ordinary people. After all, the degradation of Japan in the Edo period was from the state to the people.

225 **7 c) Contrast the expression of "Kong" in Japanese Ukiyoe and 226 post-Impressionist works influenced by East Asian civilization**

227 Most of the Bijinga-e are expressed and painted the Geiko and Geido. Although Geiko is an art and even a
228 national treasure in Japan, it is still a Japanese female The Role Played by Zen "Kong" in Japanese Aesthetics
229 performance tradition, a profession that serves to entertain wealthy clients. The job, which originated during
230 the Edo period and trained women to dance, sing, talk, and host in the Japanese performance style, was a
231 stage performance in Geisha 10 , fulfilling the role of emptiness as well as emptiness itself. Just as when some
232 dancers dance, their primary principle is to empty their minds, the rhythm of their bodies and the steps of
233 their feet are their expression and performance, and there is no exception to Geiko. After much practice in
234 traditional Japanese art forms, Geiko's behavior is revealed through a combination of habit and instinct. For
235 example, Kitagawa Utamaro's The Painting of a Women Playing in Shamisen uses vermilion, gofunn, ink, and
236 other Yamato-e pigments to freeze-frame the picture of the Minarai-Jaya performing her mastered shamisen, this
237 kind of static performance in Bijinga-e for the acting Geiko is also the expression of "Kong."

238 Ch?bunsai Eishi was born into a family that managed the general finance of a Shogun family, and he was
239 a member of the official hatamoto appreciated by the Tokugawa family. So, his series Six Immortal Poets is
240 exquisite, with well-groomed women, from the dresses on the leading figures to the bonsai behind them, all
241 exquisite. This full title of the Bijinga-e is about the Monk Henjo. Henjo (Yoshimine no Munesada) is the
242 grandson of Emperor Kammu and was a waka poet who became a monk of a temple after the death of Emperor
243 Ninmyo. The famous Yamato Monogatari writes about his love story with Ono no Komachi, a beautiful female
244 immortal poet. Most of his waka was light, beautiful, rich in emotions, and humorous. Such as the poet
245 "????????????????????????? (Pale green, the tree was covered with silk, with white dew pearls. On the willow
246 branches in spring, jade pearls are strung.) 11 " Henjo's waka is delicate, focusing on the most minor details of
247 the landscape, and he likes to portray it vividly and charmingly. In the Bijinga-e, there are exquisite bonsai of
248 plum blossoms, walls composed of bamboo leaf patterns, and a Karesansui made of fine sand and gravel outside
249 the door, plus some wellstacked stone groups of the miniature garden landscape, which are the setoff of Henjo's
250 waka. The three women in the picture also fill up the picture through their body language and body forms,
251 completing the plot of the story. But, no matter how subtle the images are, the women in these images are
252 treated with the same contempt as the waka, which is folk literature, and regarded as lingering interests by the
253 nobility. The other works of Ch?bunsai Eishi are also mostly large-scale, clean, and composed of welldressed
254 twelve-headed women. These works glorified 10 Foreman, Kelly (2008). The Gei of Geisha. Music, Identity,
255 and Meaning. 11 Jiang, Wenqing. (2021). Riben Zhonggu Hege 500 Shou: Pingan Shidai De Riben Hege. The
256 People's Press of Yunnan.

257 Kyoto, a city without the darkness that expresses the meaning of the floating world and leads a befuddled
258 life as if drunk or in a dream since that ever-bright city would be an empty city without those Geikos in the
259 painting. He often uses Nishiki-e and karazuri printing methods to depict his characters. He painted Bijinga-e,
260 from young girls to Kabuki. The women in his works are between extensive (Bijinga-e aesthetic before him) and
261 slender (Bijinga-e aesthetic after him). For example, in Lovers Beneath an Umbrella in the Snow, the dressed
262 similar men and women mean that their love is eternal. Such background with solid and single color makes the
263 picture mysterious, initially revealing the poetic tenderness of the quiet, yugen, and the subtlety of a possible
264 fall with a faint sadness. Another example is Kaigetsudo Ando, whose paintings depicted Geiko in the gesture of
265 standing or looking back, mostly shaped as a reversed Japanese character "?." That pin-up poses are a feature
266 of his paintings, such as Standing Portrait of a Courtesan and Showing a Courtesan. He was a merchant first
267 and last and often ran the Kaigetsudo painting workshop in the Suwa-cho district of Asakusa in Edo. He usually
268 sold his Bijinga-e to the significant number of pilgrims and travelers who returned from Shin-Yoshiwara, Edo's
269 pleasure district. In other words, from the picture to the way of buying and selling, Ando's works are empty in
270 the fictitious transaction, and he is the best representative of Japanese merchants' profit-seeking thoughts. 3)
271 in the series The Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwara is mostly pale red, presenting an indescribable lightness with
272 this light color, and a hazy light black color is added to express the color reflected from the distance as some
273 haloes appear to be erratic. In addition, there are bright blues (sora-iro), reddish blues (benimidori) reflecting on
274 peach blossoms, dark red (kurobeni) and dove feather grey (hatobanezumi) of smoldering flames, and bright and
275 clean whitish green (byakuroku) and aloeswood brown (tonocha) This is the so-called asymmetry and dissonance
276 (fause) that expresses the Zen meaning. The famous Chinese contemporary writer Eileen Chang once described
277 The Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwar in her Unforgettable Painting. She said, "The famous ukiyo-e The Twelve
278 Hours in the Yoshiwar, which depicts the life of Geisha in twenty-four hours. The attitude of the painter is
279 entirely different respect and solemnity, which is hard to be understood 12 ." She analyzed that Japanese 12 Dan,
280 Chen, & Zhang, Ailing. (1995). Xinbi Suiyi: about the Unforgettable Paintings. Mingzuo Xinshang (05), pp.
281 39-40.

282 Kabuki is selected from a group of people as an institutionalized existence as if the Geisha is a mass lover
283 trained by rules and regulations, and the weight of traditional habits is in the lightest small movements. In

7 C) CONTRAST THE EXPRESSION OF "KONG" IN JAPANESE UKIYOE AND POST-IMPRESSIONIST WORKS INFLUENCED BY EAST ASIAN CIVILIZATION

284 The Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwar, she only remembered the one in the day from 1 a.m. to 3 p.m. A woman
285 changed into a dressing gown late at night, one hand catching the light flowered dress on her chest to prevent it
286 from sliding down her shoulder, and the other hand holding an incense burner with a fine smoke floating from
287 the incense head. A maid is squatting on the side to serve, painted much smaller than the Geisha. The Geisha
288 stood there as if she were too tall, and her low hanging neck was too thin and too long, and her small white
289 feet, which had not yet reached the wooden clogs, were too small to fit, yet she did know that she was loved,
290 though she was alone at that time, the night seemed quieter and longer. Both the ukiyo-e and the understanding
291 from Eileen idealize the prostitute. This idealization is derived from the system where the Japanese made the
292 Geisha extraordinarily close to the standard of feminine beauty through rigorous training. What we see here is
293 the day from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., i.e., it should be a famous Geisha in Yoshiwara, and he realistically depicts the
294 Geisha writing haiku and poems to the guests on one side, playing what she has been cultivated during Shikomi
295 including culture, etiquette, language, decoration, poetry, song and dance, and music and music. The woman in
296 the middle of the scene is assigned to a room where she is alone to show her talent to the guests and interact
297 with them, and long scrolls filled with writing are scattered on the floor. Although it is not confident whether
298 she is a Tayu, a Yujo, or something else, at least she is a Yujo, since she was dressed in a gorgeous costume and
299 had a very high hairdo on her head. Although the women in these pictures are slaves (servants) of the yukaku
300 operators, there is still a hierarchy of high and low rank among them. Some are Yujos, while others are maids.
301 Isn't it idealistic and vague to ask each to live in their position and face all this with an ordinary mind? Utamaro
302 is known as one of the three great masters of Japanese ukiyo-e. He expressed not only the organ aesthetics and
303 social tendency and fashion of those kabuki actors but also the political ecology of the Edo period, as expressed
304 in Ehon Taikoki and Hideyoshi and his Five Wives Viewing the Cherry-Blossoms at Higashiyama, in which he
305 offended the government and was imprisoned for 50 days. Have to admit that Kitagawa Utamaro opened the
306 pinnacle of Bijinga-e followed by a decline. At the end of the Shogunate, culture, economy, and politics
307 were increasingly impoverished, and the political strength was slowing down, while the financial power of the
308 Japanese merchants was growing and the Shogunate, to which the samurai were subordinate, lacked authority.
309 Ukiyo-e, as a cultural product, was also affected. Painters tended to paint to satisfy the visual stimulation of
310 their buyers. For instance, Utagawa Kunisada's Bijinga-e were close to the culture of Japanese merchants, such
311 as Hoshi no shimo tosei fuzoku (Starfrost contemporary manners) and the Harvest of Leisure and Catching
312 Fireflies by the Sumida River (Sumida no hotarugari) all of which had a clear preference for a bent body with
313 some male tension inside of it. The style is to paint those women with a pig's head and a cat's back (????). This
314 style has also been taken by Keisai Eisen, Kikukawa Eizan, and others. It embodies the chic, carefully calculated
315 simplicity, and stylish Japanese aesthetic "? (Iki)" of the Japanese Geisha and the idea of "??"(real-life story)"
316 in Edo Rakugo. This perspective is derived from daily life and contains relationships and friendships connecting
317 people. This kind of tension and lively atmosphere, with the hazy painting technique, brings out the decadent
318 and depressed mood of Japanese society.

319 Bijinga-e with the "Kong" thought was widely imitated by European society in the 19 th century. After
320 the Universal Exhibition held in London in 1862, the works of the Ukiyo-e were sent to France, where artists
321 such as Stevens, Whistler, Tissot, Latour, Degas, Monet, and others collected the Ukiyo-e artworks. Among
322 them, the Post-Impressionism artists were most interested in this Asian art. Van Gogh's Pere Tanguy, Van
323 Gogh's La Courtisane (after Keisai Eisen), Monet's La Japonaise: Camille Monet in Japanese Costume, James
324 Abbott McNeill Whistler's The Princess from the Land of Porcelain, Gustave Leonard de Jonghe's The Japanese
325 Fan, Edouard Manet's Portrait of Emile Zola, Mary Cassatt's Woman Bathing, and George Hendrik Breitner's
326 Girl in a White Kimono are artworks that were produced after the Universal Exhibition when the artists were
327 strongly influenced by the Oriental art school. The Role Played by Zen "Kong" in Japanese Aesthetics not
328 contain the humble, degenerate, silent, and hollow emotions that pervaded Japanese people and society; rather
329 we can only perceive the feelings such as surprise and novelty. Besides, the figures in both paintings possess noble
330 status; they are more essential figures like nobles and wives rather than the prostitutes in the Bijinga-e. Some
331 may argue that Van Gogh's La Courtisane (after Keisai Eisen) depicts an uncompromising Japanese Geisha.
332 Indeed, Van Gogh's copying technique is even better, from the composition of the picture to the content of the
333 painting, which is very similar to Ukiyo-e. Even the frogs and cranes drawn in the background of the image
334 represent the "prostitute" in French slang. But the "Kong" here expressed in this copy from Eizumi Kisai's
335 Geisha in 1887 is the one Van Gogh's understanding, as he wrote in his 1888 letter to Theo Van Gogh. He also
336 felt the emptiness everywhere. He did indeed live in a great and true era of artistic revival, but the worn-out
337 traditions still exist. We are powerless and lifeless, and new painters are isolated, impoverished, and treated like
338 madmen. In the 1880s, Van Gogh was trying to break through the shackles, making his brushwork brutal, his
339 forms and colors gradually leaning towards the Eastern style, and even trying to understand Zen Buddhism to
340 understand Katsushika Hokusai. However, this is still unable to truly integrate his attitude and thoughts into the
341 Japanese color reproduction of his paintings, or at least his expression makes it difficult for us to see his proper
342 understanding of emptiness. These paintings are short of more profound thoughts and interests. Van Gogh never
343 visited the last feudal Shogunate in Japan. He could not handle the idea of emptiness of confrontation, samurai
344 spirit, and Machi civilization, with disunity, integration, poverty, and scarcity inside of it. He put it into his
345 work. Van Gogh showed a new rendering of the soul and body of a returned object attached to the native Europe
346 to which it belongs. It is a reproduction of the Kong aesthetic in the picture as if mirroring the people and

347 civilization of a distant Eastern land. The image only expresses the visual beauty without showing the sentiment
348 and story behind the content of the painting itself. As a result, the scenes have an impact on themselves, as Van
349 Gogh combines his distress and confusion with the scenes in the paintings, forming his expression of "Kong." Or
350 perhaps we should say that copy and imitate was originally Van Gogh's intention; after all, Van Gogh said to
351 Theo when he copied Hiroshige Kogawa's painting: "I have found something wonderful that I must copy 13 ." It
352 wasn't even just Van Gogh, but many others, such as Gauguin, who painted with Van Gogh for nine weeks in
353 Arles. Gauguin's A Courtesan, from the series Night Cherry Blossoms in the Pleasure Quarter, after Utagawa
354 Kunisadade, shows a woman with a stiff physique and a background of lamps, balustrades, and cherry blossoms,
355 In the background of the picture, the lamp, the railing, and the cherry blossoms all look like objects placed on
356 top of each other without any connection. The loneliness, contained in "leaning on the railing", looking at the
357 flowers, the moon, and the night, as well as the sadness and sorrow of the wind and the lamp, are not expressed
358 by Gauguin. In other words, in Japanese painting, the matter is the place where color moves and emptiness is
359 the attachment that is not separated from matter, just like the relationship between Courtesan and the railing in
360 the picture. Kong is not emptiness, but the true nature of all dharmas, the true nature of color and mind. The
361 European artists struggled, in replications, to find that mystery and vitality in Asian art that they could not
362 comprehend, to explore the symbolic depth of imitation that had gradually tapered off in traditional European
363 art forms. Perhaps this mimicry was effective, even laying a 13 Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh Arles: c.25
364 July 1888. Web Exhibits: <https://www.webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/18/514.htm> The Role Played by Zen
365 "Kong" in Japanese Aesthetics vital foundation for the post-impressionists, leaving greater pictorial space and
366 opportunity for their claim on the evasion of traditional art through the distinctive decorative subjects, elongated
367 image format, asymmetrical composition, aerial perspective, and abstract color of the Ukiyo-e, but this expression
368 lacked a critical understanding and inheritance of a key element in Japanese Zen aesthetics –"Kong."

369 8 Conclusion

370 In general, this paper argues that Kong in Zen and Japanese aesthetics has multiple meanings as it is not
371 subordinate to any interpretations or scriptures alone. We begin by analyzing the initial ideology of the Kong in
372 Japan. Buddhism emerged from Hinduism, passed through China, giving rise to Zen Buddhism, and then went
373 through many generations, dynasties, and transformations before arriving in Japan. From the Vajra Sutra to
374 the Baizhang Qinggui to the Linji Lu, the system and teachings were gradually developed and perfected so that
375 "Kong" was also perfected ideologically and theoretically. Second, we examine the practice of Kong in Japanese
376 daily life, often referred to as the Linji method of Zen practice (Katsu), among the samurai and the townspeople.
377 In this paper, we choose the Edo period, when the Ukiyo-e was formed, as the timeline for our case study. In
378 other words, we analyze "Katsu" in the last feudal era of Japan from three aspects: the ruling authority, the
379 Bushido culture of being towards death, and the carpe diem of the Japanese merchants. Finally, we put this
380 aesthetic into the context of paintings called Bijinga-e, the most famous art form in the Edo period, except
381 for the Ukiyoe. The gradual collapse of political power in Japan during that era brought a rich, evolving, an
382 additional form of amusements and popular developed Yoshiwars. Bijinga-e is a delicate representation of that
383 era, a true reflection of the emptiness, decadence, and dissipation of the samurai and the townspeople, a sign of
384 the decline and degradation of martial power, and a construction of all the meanings of "Kong." With the spread
385 of Ukiyo-e to the West, Bijinga-e was also copied by many famous Western painters of the Impressionist school.
386 Whether it is the Geisha in the Ukiyo-e or the noblewoman in the Western oil painting, that one thing remains
387 the same. The kind of reproduction after removing the modification of spirit and flesh is the loneliness and
388 desolation that the artist strives to express, the individual human's complicated loneliness, and the unreachable
389 breadth of thought and nature. What "Kong" can achieve is the lack of abundance, and what is mapped out is
390 the same space. However, the Japanese Zen aesthetic ideology of "Kong" has not been inherited. The capture
391 of Western reproductions in the context of Eastern painting is like a net that catches butterflies. The net waved



5

Figure 1: 5 ©



Figure 2: Figure 1 :



Figure 3:



Figure 4: Figure 2 :





3

Figure 6: Figure 3 :

8 CONCLUSION

392 and waved in the sky. The beauty of the "Kong" presentation of Japanese Zen aesthetics is like a flying butterfly,
393 always flying, not in the net. Nobody knows where it goes. ^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9}

¹ Dharma is a spiritual essence of "nature is beauty" based on the natural environments in Japan.

² Translated as: For the subject of awareness, the absence of thoughts, to be in all stages but free from all stages, and no basis is fundamental.

³ There is a saying: "?????? Lintian Xia, Dongyi Yu."

⁴ Translated as: Ordinary mind is the way.

⁵ Yuho, K. T., & MumonYamada. (2017). The Record of Linji. University of Hawaii Press. pp.221

⁶ Yuho, K. T., & MumonYamada. (2017). The Record of Linji. University of Hawaii Press. pp.221

⁷ Linji considerably developed this tradition and Katsu technique as the so-called "Linji's Four Shouts." He distinguished four different categories of Katsu: 1) the precious sword of the Diamond King, 2) a golden-haired lion crouching on the ground, 3) the search pole and the shadowed grass, 4) not working like a shout at all. Watson, Burton; tr. The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-Chi: A Translation of the Lin-chi lu. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-231-11485-0.

⁸ Haskel, P., & ?. (1990). Bankei and his world. UMI Dissertation Information Service.

⁹ Followers of the Way, if you want insight into dharma as it is, just don't be taken in by the deluded views of others. Whatever you encounter, either within or without, slay it at once. On meeting a Buddha, slay the Buddha. On meeting a patriarch, slay the patriarch. On meeting an arhat, slay the arhat. On meeting your parents, kill your parents. On meeting your relatives, kill your relatives. Then, you attain emancipation. By not cleaving to things, you freely pass through. Retrieved from Linji Lu. pp.236.

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