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Notomi Kaijiro: An Industrial Art Pioneer and the First Design Educator of Modern Japan

Fujita Haruhiko



Figure 1

Notomi Kaijiro, immediately before the 1862 Envoy to Shanghai (from Notomi Sensei Dozo Kensetsu in ed., *Notomi Sensei Dozo Kensetsu Kinen-cho*, 1934).

I. Early Industrial Art and Design Education in Meiji Japan

It was around 1900 when design started to be taught at a few higher educational institutions in Tokyo and Kyoto. These government schools began to produce a number of design pioneers, who were influenced by the British Arts and Crafts, French Art Nouveau, and Austrian Secession movements and, from the mid-1920s on, the German Bauhaus. However, Japan's history of design education goes all the way back to 1887, when Notomi Kaijiro (1844–1918) established a municipal technical school in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture (*Ken*), the *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko*, which soon became a prefectural school, the *Ishikawa Ken Kogyo Gakko*.¹

The school was followed by the *Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko* (Takaoka, 1894) and the *Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko* (Takamatsu, 1898), both established by Notomi, and the *Saga Kenritsu Arita Kogyo Gakko* (Arita, 1903), which became independent from the *Saga Kenritsu Saga Kogyo Gakko* when Notomi concurrently directed these two schools in Saga Prefecture. This was the final place in which Notomi dedicated himself to education in industrial art and design in Meiji Japan.

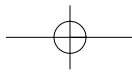
II. The 1862 Envoy to Shanghai

Notomi was a *samurai* and retainer of Nabeshima of the Hizen Saga domain (Saga Prefecture, after the establishment of the prefectural system in 1871), which was entrusted with the defense of Nagasaki, then the sole international port where Chinese, Korean, and Dutch merchants alone had been allowed to trade during the period of national seclusion (1639–1853).

In 1862, Notomi was sent by the Hizen Saga domain in a shogunate ship to Shanghai (figure 1). With him was young Takasugi Shinsaku, Godai Saisuke (later Godai Tomoatsu), and Nakamuta Kuranosuke on board among other *samurai* from different regions. In Shanghai, they heard the guns of the Taiping Rebellion, and realized the reality of China,² which also had adopted a national isolation policy, but afterwards was reduced to semi-colonial status after the end of the Opium Wars against Britain. From this experience in Shanghai, they became convinced that Japan must strengthen itself to avoid a similar fate and, in

1 Today, "*kogyo*" is the Japanese equivalent of "industry" or "technology"; and "*kogei*" means "craft." In the Meiji era, however, there was no very clear distinction between "*kogyo*" and "*kogei*." In this paper, we therefore use Romanized Japanese rather than English translations for the names of schools, to keep their original Japanese names and meaning as they were.

2 K. Notomi, "Shanghai Zakki" ("Miscellaneous notes in Shanghai") in the Toho Gakujyutsu Kyokai, ed., *Bunkyo Ni-nen Shanhai Nikki* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Shobo, 1946), 3–37. See especially 6–14.



Takasugi's case at least, came to the opinion that the weakened Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867), which was still the Emperor in Kyoto and all domains of Japan under subjection, must be overthrown by force.

This envoy to Shanghai is much less known in the design history of Japan than another 1862 envoy to Europe led by Takeuchi Shimotsukenokami, a shogun's retainer, who was, together with his entourage, depicted in an issue of the *Illustrated London News* when they visited the International Exhibition of 1862.

III. The *Meiji* Restoration and Notomi's Early Career

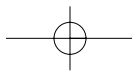
After coming back from Shanghai, Takasugi, together with his comrades, made a night attack on the British legation then under construction in Shinagawa of Edo (now Tokyo). This was two days after Takeuchi's return from Europe. Takasugi of the Choshu domain (now Yamaguchi Prefecture) was becoming a central figure in the movement to overthrow the shogunate.

Godai also was opposed to Britain as a retainer of Shimazu of Satsuma (now Kagoshima Prefecture), which, together with Choshu, was one of the most powerful domains. He once was taken prisoner when Satsuma fought against Britain in 1863. After having observed the power of the British fleet, however, Godai and some of his comrades changed their attitude toward Britain and Europe in general. Leading a number of students sent abroad by the domain, Godai went on a tour of Europe in 1865, and imported European arms, ships, spinning machines, and the like. The *Meiji* Restoration of 1868, mainly led by the Satsuma and Choshu domains and announced the formal return of political power from the shogunate to the emperor, became possible partly through the introduction of Western technology by the Satsuma, Choshu, and Hizen Saga domains. After the *Meiji* restoration, Godai became a business magnate.³

Nakamura, who laid foundations for the Navy of *Meiji* Japan, became the director of the Naval Staff College and afterwards held the first post of the Chief of the Naval Staff before he suddenly stepped down from office at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. The actual facts of the case have not been completely revealed.⁴ But, it is conceivably possible that Nakamura, who had witnessed the tragedy of Shanghai and known not only the weaknesses but also the latent power of China, as well as the common fate of East Asia, did not support a war with China. A better explanation for his stepping down is to be found in the so-called domain or clan government, in which men from the former Satsuma and Choshu domains held a large majority, and tried to control not only the political elite but the military leaders as well. Nakamura was a fellow *ex-samurai* with Notomi from the Hizen Saga domain, which had become even more advanced in Western science and technology, but politically backward with respect to the Satsuma and Choshu domains.

3 Nihon Keiei-shi Kenkyujo ed., *Godai Tomoatsu Denki Shiryo*, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Tokyo Keizai Shinposha, 1971); and M. Miyamoto, *Godai Tomoatsu Den* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1931).

4 T. Nakamura, *Nakamura Kuranosuke Den* (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1995). Reprinted edition of the same title privately published in Tokyo in 1919.



Unlike these fellow loyalists of the Restoration period, Notomi did not render any distinguished military service. Being physically weak, he often was sick in bed even in Shanghai. Although one of the reasons why he was chosen for the 1862 envoy was, perhaps, that he was good at sketching, he drew little in Shanghai because of his illness. After returning from Shanghai, he led a quiet life in his domain to nurse his delicate health during the Restoration days. He was, in a sense, a *samurai* not with a big sword but with a small paintbrush. However, he also was a typical *samurai* who tried to utilize his paintbrush not for himself but for the campaign to “Increase Production and Promote Industry,”⁵ to which the *ex-samurai* class contributed its major efforts in the *Meiji* era (1868–1912).

After the *Meiji* Restoration, Notomi again went over to Shanghai as a trade adviser of the Saga Domain Company carrying samples of sundry goods and seaweed which were among the main export items of Japan during this period. Although successful, he realized that the export of processed goods would be more profitable than that of raw materials, a basic principle of international trade.⁶ Notomi thought that the export of industrial art objects in which Japan traditionally excelled over many other countries, was of prime importance for the country and, in 1871, went to Yokohama to master Western painting and to study the essentials of international trade. This was the year in which the Emperor’s court finally dismissed its *daimyo* governors⁷ and consolidated their domains into new prefectures. From this year on, Notomi worked, both nominally and virtually, for his country instead of for his former domain.

IV. The 1873 Vienna and 1876 Philadelphia Expositions

In 1873, Notomi was a technical official at Japan’s exhibition bureau for the Vienna World Exposition, *Weltausstellung 1873 Wien*. Many other technical and administrative officials of the bureau also were from Saga Prefecture. Their president was Okuma Shigenobu (1838–1922), and vice-president was Sano Tsunetami (1822–1902). Both of them were *ex-samurai* of the former Hizen Saga domain. This was another example of clan solidarity, but a rather peaceful one. It was a byproduct of the Iwakura Mission to the United States and Europe (1871–73), which mainly aimed at the revision of the so-called Unequal Treaties between Japan and the Western powers.⁸ The Iwakura Mission included numbers of leading figures in politics, and many of them were from the former Satsuma and Choshu domains. Because they were out of the country, the Japanese delegation of the Vienna World Exposition was composed mainly of men from Hizen Saga.

Seventy-seven Japanese men accompanying Gottfried Wagner (1831–1892) went over to Vienna to participate in the World Exposition of 1873 (figure 2). The Japanese shrine and garden con-

5 The *Shokusan-kogyo*, (“Increase Production and Promote Industry”) was a major policy of the Japanese government in the early *Meiji* era in order to realize the ideal of the *Fukoku-kyohei* (“Rich country and strong military”).

6 S. Hata, “Kogei Kyoiku no Senkusha, Notomi Kaijiro Sensei” in *Nihon-Shikko* (March, 1964): 3–9.

7 After the *Meiji* restoration, *daimyo* (regional rulers) were temporarily appointed governors of their former domains by the court.

8 The *Meiji* government sought to revise and replace the so-called “Unequal Treaties” concluded with the Western powers during the 1850s and 60s.



Figure 2 (left)

Japanese delegation to 1873 Vienna World Exposition. Photo taken in Vienna, January 1874 (From O. Umeda ed., *Waguneru Tsuikai-shu*, 1938). Notomi appears on the right side in front of a column.

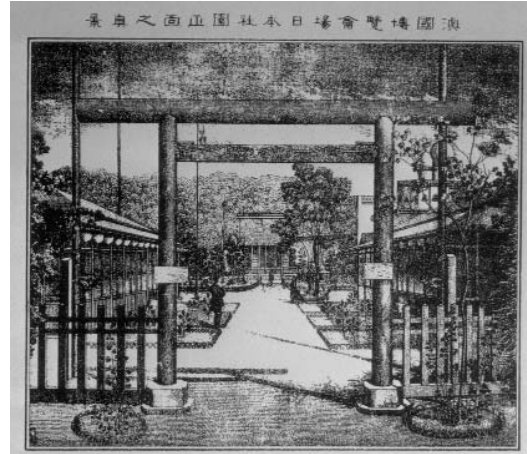


Figure 3 (right)

Japanese shrine and garden constructed in Vienna for the 1873 World Exposition (From Y. Tanaka and S. Hirayama eds., *Okoku-Hakurankai Sando-Kiyo*, 1897).

constructed for the World Exposition (figure 3) possibly was suggested or even designed by Notomi, whose father was a leading *Shinto* priest. Wagner, who came to Japan in 1868, was a technical consultant and teacher from Germany. He helped local authorities improve the kilns in Arita. It was the beginning of his connection with the Hizen Saga domain. After the Vienna World Exposition, he played an even more important role in the campaign to “Increase Production and Promote Industry.” His idea was to adopt modern Western technology to reinforce rather than replace the traditional crafts of Japan. After great success in Vienna, where Japanese crafts gained public favor, the Japanese government began to regard them as important merchandise.

Notomi also acted as an exhibition jury to select excellent works exhibited at the exposition in Vienna.⁹ After the World Exposition, some members of the Japanese delegation, including Notomi, stayed on and studied in various European cities. Notomi visited several potteries in Europe. A mass-production method using plaster molds was one of the most important things he learned in Europe. On his return, he taught this method to students from pottery-producing centers of Japan at the exhibition bureau in Tokyo. This undertaking later was handed over to the *Kangyo-ryo*, an office for industrial development at the Ministry of Home Affairs.¹⁰

Two years after returning, Notomi was made an administrative official at Japan’s exhibition bureau for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. He proposed the production of design sketches for craft objects to be exhibited at the exposition. The bureau hired artists to draw the sketches, which then were distributed among skilled craftsmen all over the country for production. In Philadelphia, Notomi again acted as an exhibition jury.¹¹

V. From Tokyo to Kanazawa

Inconsistent policy by the *Meiji* government was an obstacle which Notomi had to break through. In January 1877, Notomi’s teaching at

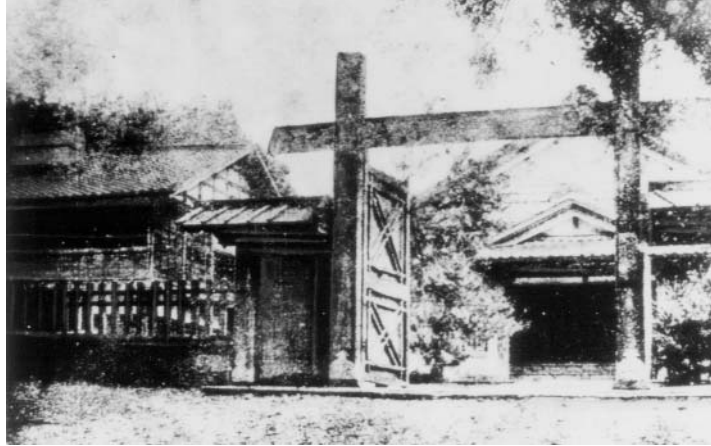
9 Y. Tanaka and S. Hirayama, eds., *Okoku-Hakurankai Sando-Kiyo* (Record of Participation in the Vienna Exhibition) (Tokyo: Moriama, 1897), Jyo-hen (Vol. 1), 43.

10 Ibid., Ge-hen (Vol. 3), 107–108.

11 Ibid., Ge-hen (Vol. 3), 108.

Figure 4

The *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko* (renamed *Ishikawa Ken Kogyo Gecko* in April 1889, *Ishikawa Kenritsu Kogyo Gakko* in May 1901), Kanazawa, in the late 1880s. (Courtesy of the *Ishikawa Kenritsu Kogyo Koto Gakko* and K. Hamagishi, Kanazawa).



the Ministry of Home Affairs again was handed over to the Ministry of Industry, which gave priority to government enterprise over private business, and which finally abolished the teaching post in June 1877.

Notomi then resigned and, with another industrial-art pioneer, Shioda Makoto (1837–1917), established a private pottery, the *Edogawa Seito-sho*, for teaching and making pottery in Koishikawa, Tokyo. They made pottery utilizing the European mass-production system. They also established a soap works, a lacquer laboratory, and a cast-copper laboratory at the *Edogawa Seito-sho*. The pottery was a success as a place for experiments and education, but a failure as a business, and finally closed in 1882.

After the closing of the *Edogawa Seito-sho*, Notomi acted as a circular technical advisor in Ishikawa Prefecture giving guidance to the ceramic, copper, and lacquer industries. Besides technical guidance, he also helped to establish the first modern trade guild in Japan. All of the services he rendered in the trade and industry of the prefecture led to the establishment of Notomi's first school, the *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko* in 1887.¹²

VI Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko, 1887— (Ishikawa Ken Kogyo Gakko, 1889)

The *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko* was the first public technical school outside of the *Tokyo Shokko Gakko*, which had been founded as a government school in 1881, but was renamed *Tokyo Kogyo Gakko* in 1890. Therefore, it was the first “*kogyo gakko*” of Japan, and was something of an art school as well (figure 4). At that time, there was no very clear distinction between schools for higher technical education and those for secondary one. Boys and girls between thirteen and twenty-five years of age were admitted to the regular departments and divisions of the *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko*, and men and women as old as thirty could be its semi-regular students.¹³

The *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko* consisted of three departments, namely, the departments of Drawing, Art Crafts, and Common

¹² Ibid., Ge-hen (Vol. 3), 110–113.

¹³ K. Takahori, et. al., *Kenko Hyakunen-shi* (Kanazawa: Ishikawa Kenritsu Kogyo Koto Gakko, 1987), 17–18.

Table 1

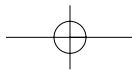
Comparative tables of curricula of Notomi's technical schools.

c. 1888
Kanazawa (later Ishikawa Ken)
Kogyo Gakko, Study Subjects (except speciality)

Subject	Department		
	Drawing	Art Crafts	Common Crafts
Divisions	Japanese Historical, Botanical, Animal, Landscape, Figure Paintings Division	Wax Modelling, Pottery Painting, Embroidery, Wooden-Stone- Ivory- Sculpture, Dye Painting Division	Dyeing, Sewing, Pottery Making, Marine Products, Lacquer, Cast Copper Division
Reading			
Writing			
Arithmetic			
Physics			
Chemistry			
Economics			
Bookkeeping			
Drawing			
Geometry			
Special Lectures			
Prose and Poetry			
Archaeology			
Application to Products			
Zoology and Botany			
Painting Reproduction			
Drawing from Nature			
Calligraphy			
Perspectives			
Experiments			
Mechanics			
Analyses			

1894
Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko, Study Subjects (except speciality)

Subject	Divisions			
	Wooden Sculpture	Metal Sculpture	Copper casting	Lacquer
Writing				
Mathematics				
Physics				
Chemistry				
Industrial Economics				
Industrial Bookkeeping				
Drawing				
Mechanical Drawing				
Design				
Applied Drawing				



1898
Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko, Study Subjects
 (except speciality)

Subject	Department					
	Woodwork			Metalwork		
	Divisions	Wooden Sculpture	Lacquering	Mechanical Woodwork	Metal Sculpture	Casing
Writing						
Mathematics						
Physics						
Chemistry						
Industrial Economics						
Industrial Bookkeeping						
Freehand Drawing						
Mechanical Drawing						
Design						
Applied Aesthetics						

 Offered in 1898
 Not offered in 1898

1900
Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko, Study Subjects
 (except speciality)

Subject	Department					
	Woodwork	Metalwork	Lacquer			
	Wooden Sculpture	Mechanical Woodwork	Metal Sculpture	Mechanical metalwork	Gold Lacquer	Mechanical Lacquer
Reading						
Writing						
Mathematics						
Physics						
Chemistry						
Industrial Economics						
Industrial Bookkeeping						
Drawing						
Mechanical Drawing						
Design						
Applied Aesthetics						
Moral Lessons						
Military Drill						

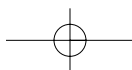




Figure 5
Notomi Kaijiro, director of the *Ishikawa Ken Kogyo Gakko*, around 1890. (Courtesy of the *Ishikawa Kenritsu Kogyo Koto Gakko* and Y. Ito, Kanazawa).

Crafts. To judge from its curriculum (figure 9), the Drawing Department was a kind of design department. The Art Crafts Department concentrated on crafts. The Common Crafts Department was a department of industry and technology, rather than that of crafts. However, what they called Common Crafts was neither mechanical engineering nor chemical engineering. The Common Crafts Department consisted of divisions of dyeing, copper casting, marine products, sewing, lacquering, and pottery making. Therefore, compared with the Art Crafts Department, which consisted of divisions of wax sculpture, drawing for dyeing, pottery painting, wood-stone-ivory sculpture, and embroidery, the Common Crafts department dealt with crafts for the common man. “*Futsu*” of “*Futsu-kogei-bu*,” the Japanese name of the Common Crafts Department, means “common,” “ordinary,” “average,” or “everyday.” For example, both lacquered and marine products were not only a Japanese specialty, but also what Japanese people, average as well as above average, used and consumed every day. The word and concept of “*futsu*” was important in the history of design education in modern Japan.

We can understand the Department of Drawing as a kind of design department, judging from its position in the school. However, five units of the department were for “Japanese History Painting,” “Botanical Painting,” “Animal Painting,” “Landscape Painting,” and “Figure Painting.” Therefore, it was more of a department of painting mostly applied to product surfaces.

A characteristic subject of study was “Prose and Poetry.” Appreciation of the beauty of nature in the four seasons and the classics, Japanese as well as Chinese, were considered essential for future designers and art craftsmen.¹⁴ Students of the Common Crafts department did not take this subject and “Archaeology.” Instead, they took “Experiments,” “Mechanics,” and “Analyses.”

The *Kanazawa Kogyo Gakko*, a municipal school, became prefectural as a result of Notomi’s efforts, and was renamed *Ishikawa Ken Kogyo Gakko* in 1889. For all his success, Notomi’s health rapidly declined. He suffered from pleurisy, and fell into a critical condition the following year (figure 5). To make matters worse, he was entangled in political strife. It was the year when the *Meiji* Constitution finally was promulgated.

The *Jiyuto* (Liberal Party), Japan’s first national political party, and the *Rikken Kaishinto* (Constitutional Reform Party) of Okuma Shigenobu gained a majority in the first session of the Imperial Diet against the government ruled by the Satsuma and Choshu clans. However, the Cabinet was still organized by the latter, and the two political camps were pitted against each other all over the country. It was around this time when Notomi from the former Hizen Saga domain, was degraded from being director to head instructor of the school. Following this, he was further degraded to teacher, and finally to part-time instructor. It was probably the hardest time for him as an educator.

14 In *Meiji Japan*, talent for poetry and art, including calligraphy or penmanship, was considered essential for respectable people, and many men had their own artist’s name, that is, a poet’s name or pen name. For instance, Notomi Kaijiro also was known as Notomi Kaido, and Kuroki Yasuo, who took Notomi’s chair as his successor in Takamatsu, was much better known as Kuroki Kindo.

Figure 6

The *Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko* (renamed *Toyama Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* in October 1901), Takaoka, in the 1890s. (Courtesy of the *Toyama Kenritsu Takaoka Kogei Koto Gakko* and K. Joho, Takaoka).



Figure 7

Carved and lacquered tray, *Tai-bon (Mukai-dai)*, designed by Notomi in 1894–97. (Courtesy of the *Toyama Kenritsu Takaoka Kogei Koto Gakko* and K. Joho, Takaoka).

VII. *Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko*, Takaoka, 1894—

Asked by Tokuhiisa Tsunenori (1843–1910), Governor of Toyama Prefecture, Notomi subsequently established the *Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko* in Takaoka in 1894 (figure 6). Takaoka was a center for traditional crafts such as cast-copper products and lacquer ware.

In Takaoka, Notomi did not adopt the ambitious but rather complicated department-division system of his former school for the *Toyama Ken Kogei Gakko*. The new school simply consisted of divisions of Wooden Sculpture, Metal Sculpture, Copper Casting, and Lacquer. A division of design, the Drawing Department in Kanazawa's case, was, at first, not established there. This does not mean that Notomi abandoned design education in Takaoka. As can be observed in the curriculum of Takaoka's four divisions, design subjects were included in each division (table 1). Possibly owing to his experience in Kanazawa, Notomi seems to have realized that design should be taught in every division, and that all future craftsmen should learn design at their schools.

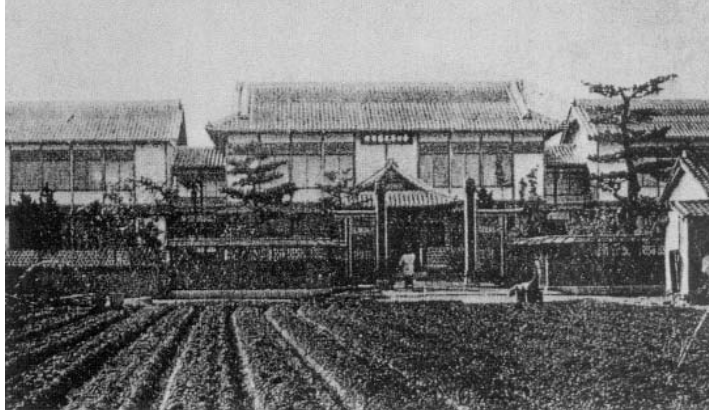
Although Notomi was still in poor health and working in a director's office with a bed on which he could lay himself down at any time, his administrative work was successful in Takaoka. He also tried to use his influence in the interest of Takaoka crafts with his own design experiments. A large carved and lacquered tray, called "*Tai-bon*" or "*Mukai-dai*" (a pair of red snappers) is a rare existing work designed by Notomi (figure 7).

In Tokyo, one of his fellow countrymen and the past president of Japan's 1873 Vienna Exposition bureau, Okuma, took office as Prime Minister in 1898. It is said that Notomi was suggested by Okuma to administrate the first and only official art school in Japan, *Tokyo Bijyutsu Gakko*, which was then in turmoil, but he declined the offer not only because he wanted to teach future industrial artists rather than painters or sculptors, but also because he wished to avoid any suspicion of clan-government favoritism.¹⁵ Instead, Notomi moved to Takamatsu in Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four main islands, to establish another technical school there.

15 S. Hata in *Nihon-Shikko* (March 1964): 8–9.

Figure 8

The *Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko* (renamed *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* in May 1901), Takamatsu, in the 1900s. (Courtesy of the *Kagawa Kenritsu Takamatsu Kogei Koto Gakko*).



VIII. *Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko*, Takamatsu, 1898—

Again, it was Tokuhisa who asked Notomi to come to Takamatsu to establish the *Kagawa Ken Kogei Gakko*. Tokuhisa had been transferred to the Governorship of Kagawa Prefecture in 1896. He was Notomi's fellow countryman and called "*Kangyo-chiji*" (the Governor who encouraged industry). These two fellows from the former Hizen Saga domain worked together and promoted the development of local industry.

Founded in 1898, teaching at the Takamatsu school began in a temporary building. Its new building, completed in 1900, was supervised by Notomi, and possibly designed by him as well (figure 8). Its symmetrical form was considered "*Byodo-in*" in style after the Phoenix Hall, *Ho-o-do* of the *Byodo-in* of Uji. It might also have reflected that of another Phoenix Hall, the *Ho-o-den* built in Chicago as a Japanese pavilion for the world's *Colombian Exposition of 1893*.

The school started with four educational divisions, namely Wooden Sculpture, Mechanical Woodwork, Lacquering, and Metal Sculpture.¹⁶ The Mechanical Woodwork division was for wood-working by machine, as can be read in the school regulations reported by a local newspaper: "Today's industry of this country is practiced mainly by hand without the help of machinery. As industry develops and wages rise, however, it is natural and a matter of course to use machines in industry. Therefore, we teach how to use machines to produce various things and call the teaching unit for it Mechanical Woodwork division."¹⁷

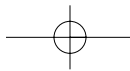
The word "mechanical" is significant for the design history of modern Japan, because here an important concept was reflected in the name of that teaching unit itself. The original Japanese word Notomi used for it was "*yoki*."¹⁸ Between 1898 and 1900, Casting and Mechanical Metalwork divisions were added to the school, which was further reorganized in 1900 into a very symmetrical department-division system (table 1). Notomi's idea of industrial art and design education seems to have been reflected in full in this curriculum. The school was renamed *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* in 1901.¹⁹

16 It might have started with five divisions. Historical records vary in details.

17 *The Kagawa Shinpo*, February 20, 1898. Quoted in Hyakushunen-kinenshi Hensan linkai, *Takamatsu-kogei Hyakunen-shi, Motozue* (Takamatsu: Kagawa Kenritsu Takamatsu Kogei Koto Gakko, 1998), 48.

18 "Yo" of "*yoki*" is the Japanese equivalent of "use"; and "*ki*" means "apparatus," "instrument," or "machine."

19 Other noticeable subjects added to the curriculum around 1900 were "Moral Lessons" and "Military Drill." Physical exercises became important in the age of nationalism. The modern Olympic Games, started in Athens in 1896, also reinforced this tendency.



IX. *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* visited by Frank Lloyd Wright

A young American architect visited the *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* in Takamatsu in 1905. He called the school “Takamatsu Industrial Arts.”²⁰ It was Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) on his first visit to Japan. An undated manuscript kept in the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives of Taliesin West shows us his sensitive observation of this school, sympathetic understanding of the culture and history of Japan, as well as critical attitude toward the Westernization of this country.

Wright, who had caused a theoretical revolution in the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States by his famous speech “The Art and Craft of the Machine” of 1901, was not in favor of the use of machinery in Japan in the manuscript. One of the reasons why he was against the introduction of machines into Japan was already shown in his 1901 speech:

The machine has emancipated these beauties of nature in wood; made it possible to wipe out the mass of meaningless torture to which wood has been subjected since the world began, for it has been universally abused and maltreated by all peoples but the Japanese.²¹

Before Takamatsu, Wright perhaps had visited Kyoto, judging from the above-mentioned manuscript: “As to the director of the foreignized Kyoto school said to me, with an apologetic smile, ‘We must now be quick, Old Japanese method become too slow, we can no longer afford, European method cheaper, I think?’”²² Wright’s response to this opinion is shown in his comment on the school’s collection: “The ‘collection’ of this school consists of the worst of French, German and Italian Renaissance, rows of foreign horrors.”²³ The collection seems to have consisted mainly of European turn-of-the-century items rather than real Renaissance ones, and the school must have been the *Kyoto Koto Kogei Gakko*, which had been founded in 1901 as the third “*koto kogyo gakko* (higher technical school)” of Japanese government, but actually was called “*koto kogei gakko*,” because it was a more art-oriented technical school.

At the *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko* in Takamatsu, Wright found a “small but true Japanese” collection instead.²⁴ He also found that, under its director’s leadership, they still inculcated “Pure Japanese.”²⁵ The director at that time was Kuroki Yasuo (1866–1924), an authority on the Chinese classics. He succeeded Notomi, who had left for Saga in 1901 after establishing the foundation of the school. Kuroki’s father was a priest and an eminent leader of the *Shinto* religion of the Takamatsu domain (later Kagawa Prefecture). Notomi and Kuroki thus had something in common in their backgrounds. Unlike Notomi, Kuroki did not paint, but he was a master calligrapher as well.

“Pure Japanese” teaching at the school probably was what Kuroki inherited from Notomi. For instance, drawing sketchbooks

20 Undated manuscript, Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin West, 11. Professor Tanigawa Masami kindly showed me a copy of this manuscript sent from the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives. Margo Stipe of the Archives dated it around 1905–6. Hereafter we refer to it as F.L. Wright, 1905/6.

21 Frank Lloyd Wright, “The Art and Craft of the Machine,” (1901) in Edgar Kaufmann and Ben Raeburn, eds., *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 66.

22 F.L. Wright, 1905/6, 8.

23 *Ibid.*, 8.

24 *Ibid.*, 10.

25 *Ibid.*, 11.

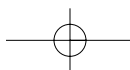


Figure 9

Drawing for a metal flower-vase, a graduation design, by Kobayashi Sadashichi, 1901. (Courtesy of the *Kagawa Kenritsu Takamatsu Kogei Koto Gakko* and I. Yamamoto, Takamatsu).



of Kobayashi Sadashichi,²⁶ one of the first graduates of the school, are full of flowers, birds, fishes, insects, and the like, drawn with a hair-pencil in Japanese style (figure 9). Although Notomi introduced various Western things and ideas, he was conservative in terms of drawing methods and design aesthetics. F. L. Wright, one of the most progressive architects of the time, also was conservative in this respect. He wrote:

There seems to be but one hope for the artistic future of the Empire. It lies with the conservative party in Japan....²⁷

When young Kuroki entered Tokyo University in 1885, an American scholar, Ernest Fenolosa (1853–1908), who had contributed to the reassessment of traditional Japanese art and brought its appreciation to the West, was teaching philosophy and logic there. After teaching at a few schools in Tokyo, Kuroki came back to Kagawa Prefecture and taught at its normal school before being appointed Director of the *Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Gakko*. Among the frequent visitors to Kuroki's house in Takamatsu was Nogi Maresuke (1849–1912), then the divisional commander and lieutenant general, and a later symbol of loyalty and sacrifice after his self-immolation with his wife in the evening of the funeral of the Emperor *Meiji*.²⁸

Wright visited Takamatsu probably to see Kuroki and his school. He might have had an interest in its school building as well, but did not mention it at all in his manuscript: "The Director, Kuroki, was proud of the fact that the arts have never been separated from the crafts in Japan, and suggested that it might be a good subject for thought on the part of his arch enemy, the Western art school. And can we say that a truly great art is possible when the arts and crafts are not united?"²⁹

It was not simply a Japanese idea, but also Wright's own opinion as well as something we may find in William Morris or even in the 1919 manifesto of the German Bauhaus. It was Notomi,

26 Now kept at the Kagawa Kenritsu Takamatsu Kogei Koto Gakko.

27 F.L. Wright, 1905/6, 9.

28 General Nogi visited Kuroki once a month to learn Chinese poetry and calligraphy. This friendship was unshaken until the ritual suicide of Nogi and his wife on the evening of the funeral of the Emperor *Meiji* on September 13, 1912.

29 F.L. Wright, 1905/6, 17.



Figure 10
Ornamental wooden tray or “*Marugaku-Hakusai-no-zu*.” (Courtesy of the Kagawa Kenritsu Takamatsu Kogei Koto Gakko).

however, who laid the foundation for it, as has been shown, by not separating design courses from other craft courses, but by uniting them into one in his school curriculum.

Wright’s close observation continues:

In this wonderful little school, an all around training includes painting, lacquer, and carving. Their results are astonishing. In none of these things is the process of manufacture allowed to be lost in the finished result. It is made an artistic and interesting circumstance in the result; as in a small wooden saucer where the strokes of the carving tool in cutting away the wood had been given a rhythm, which so serves as a finished decoration that the mere record of trimming off superfluous wood at the back of the saucer is an artistic feature, the only one attempted in the result.³⁰

What Wright observed possibly was a course in the Mechanical Woodwork division rather than that of Wooden Sculpture. Although they had announced at the opening of the school in 1898 that “various processes are carried out by using machine” in the former division, what they actually used in their early days were manual-turning apparatus, because “steam-operated big machines, which might be used in large cities, are not necessary yet in local areas.”³¹ Wright wrote, “I was glad to know that such integrity existed, fighting though it is for its existence against fearful odds, and I was ashamed to realize that we of the West in the arts stand for its fatal enemy.”³²

Unfortunately, there is scarcely any record of the early years of the school which include the Mechanical Woodwork division left in Takamatsu. Almost all school records and artworks, not to mention its buildings, were destroyed in the fire of 1926. The new buildings of 1928 were again burnt to the ground in 1945. Takamatsu was severely bombed at the end of World War II, and most of it was consumed by fire. The above-mentioned sketchbooks were kept in a house outside of Takamatsu City, and are rare survivors from its early days. An undated circular wooden board entitled “*Marugaku-Hakusai-no-zu*” may possibly be a rare work of art reminiscent of its Mechanical Woodwork division (figure 10). It is a work by Mori Shodo (1887–1967), who had studied at the division and graduated from the school in 1905, when Wright visited Takamatsu.

X. A Change of Direction:

Art and Design Education Around 1900

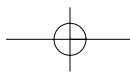
Wright, who partisanly observed the fight against the “fatal enemy,” however, was not optimistic about the arts and crafts of Japan at all: “Whoever has noted the change that has come over the Japanese arts and crafts in the past four years, notably the difference between their exhibit at the Columbian and the St. Louis expositions, has witnessed the beginning of the end.”³³ The difference between

30 Ibid., 15–16.

31 The *Kagawa Shinpo*, February 20, 1898, in Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Koto Gakko, *Takamatsu Kogei Hyakunen-shi: Ishizue* (Takamatsu: Kagawa Kenritsu Kogei Koto Gakko, 1998), 48.

32 F.L. Wright, 16.

33 Ibid., 1905/6, 8.



Japan's exhibit at the *World's Columbian* (Chicago, 1893) and the *Louisiana Purchase* (St. Louis, 1904) expositions must have been clear for such Americans as Wright who had become interested in Japanese art and architecture in Chicago. Japan's westernized exhibit distinctly went on increasing in number after the *Columbian Exposition*.³⁴

The change started in 1896, when Western Painting and Design divisions were newly established, and the former Painting division was renamed the Japanese Painting division at the *Tokyo Bijyutsu Gakko*, where the only "pure Japanese" arts and crafts had been taught since its opening in 1889. It was a restart of westernization in art education in Japan, and Okakura Kakuzo (1863–1913) who had, together with Fenollosa promoted Japanese art resigned as director of the school in 1898.³⁵ This was the year in which Notomi was suggested by Okuma to be the administrator of the school.

Design education also was started at the *Tokyo Kogyo Gakko* (later Tokyo Koto Kogyo Gakko), first at its affiliated teachers' training school in 1897, and at a regular division called "*Kogyo-zuan-ka*" of the principal school in 1899. It was started to supply design teachers then in growing demand to local technical schools. "*Kogyo-zuan-ka*" which literally means "Industrial Design Division" aimed at "*futsu*" (common) products rather than "*bijyutsu*" (fine arts) works. Its naming was as significant as those of Kanazawa's "*futsu-kogei*" (common crafts) and Takamatsu's "*yoki-mokko* (mechanical woodwork)" or "*yoki-kinko*" (mechanical metalwork) in design history. Notomi did not participate in the planning of design education at the *Tokyo Kogyo Gakko*, but his ideas undoubtedly took the initiative in the education of industrial art and design in this country.

It was also in 1897 when Notomi's school in Takaoka was planning its own design division. As we saw before, it had consisted of divisions of Wooden Sculpture, Metal Sculpture, Copper Casting, and Lacquer; and a design course had been incorporated into the curriculum of each division. Its Design and Painting division was created in 1899 after Notomi's departure for Takamatsu. It is not clear if he supported the establishment of the new division, judging from the fact that he did not create a design division at his next school in Takamatsu.

While Notomi's schools in local cities remained prefectural and for secondary education, the two government technical schools in Tokyo and Osaka evolved into institutions of higher education, and the third government technical school in Kyoto was, as was mentioned before, established as the first "*koto kogei gakko*." Notomi's schools were, more or less against his own will, partly becoming preparatory schools for these higher schools and particularly for the *Tokyo Bijyutsu Gakko*.

34 For example, while there had been only three pieces of "Paintings in Oil" (Western) against forty-seven pieces of "Paintings" (Japanese or Chinese) at the 1893 exposition, there were twenty-eight of the former against sixty-four of the latter at the 1904 exposition.

35 In Japan, Western painting and sculpture had been taught by Italian teachers at the *Kobu Bijyutsu Gakko*, an affiliated art school of the *Kobu Daigakko*, Imperial College of Technology, between 1876 and 1883.

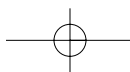


Figure 11

The *Saga Kenritsu Saga Kogyo Gakko Arita Bunko* (former *Saga Ken Kogyo Gakko Arita Bunko* before June 1901, renamed *Saga Kenritsu Arita Kogyo Gakko* in April 1903), May 1902. (Courtesy of E. Hirokawa, Arita).



Figure 12

Notomi Kajiro, after retirement, at the age of sixty-nine (Courtesy of A. Kanaiwa, Arita).

XI. Last Years: Saga, Arita, and Tokyo

When Wright was in Japan in 1905, Notomi was in the final phase of his teaching and administrative career in the education of industrial art and design in Saga Prefecture. He was fighting his last fight in his native land. Since his arrival at the *Saga Ken Kogyo Gakko* (soon renamed *Saga Kenritsu Saga Kogyo Gakko*) in April 1901, Director Notomi had been very active inside and outside of the school. He remodeled its curriculum, made its branch school in Arita independent as the *Saga Kenritsu Arita Kogyo Gakko* (figure 11), and promoted the development of craft education for women as the advisor of a newly-founded private girls' school in Saga City. However, Saga's prefectural assembly, then in political entanglements, was not for him. It was ruled by a majority which made a political issue of everything including Notomi's school.

This political strife continued for years. Notomi, whose views differed from those of the majority, resigned as director of the *Saga Kenritsu Saga Kogyo Gakko* on April 1, 1905. He kept his teaching post at the *Saga Kenritsu Arita Kogyo Gakko* for a while, but retired from the school for reasons of health and age on April 10 of the same year, at the age of sixty-two. He left his native land for Tokyo before long and never returned (figure 12).³⁶ Wright left Yokohama for Vancouver on April 28, 1905.³⁷ Notomi continued his design activities in Tokyo. He established a design office in Tokyo with his fellow artists, inventing various things, producing many paintings in the Chinese and Japanese traditions. He died at the age of seventy-five in 1918, on the eve of the beginning of modern design education in Europe.

36 S. Ide, *Notomi Kajiro Ryakuden* (Nishinohon Shinbunsha, 1976), 66–70.

37 M. Tanigawa, "On photos Wright supposedly took on his first visit to Japan in 1905," *Nihondaigaku Kogakubu Kiyo Kogaku-hen BunruiA*, 37 (1996): 117–33. Wright and his patron client, Mr. and Mrs. Willits, sailed from Vancouver on February 21, and arrived at Yokohama on March 7, 1905.