Illustrated Maps on Public Display in Japan: Geography and Artistic Tradition

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Abstract: Japan has a plenitude of maps on display to the public. Some of them are utilitarian “land diagrams” that have been designed simply to help people find places, but others also serve as advertisements or explanations and have pictorial embellishments. Six examples of the former and twelve of the latter are reproduced and commented on in this study, which aims to explain the artistic side of such maps by categorizing the types of illustrations (abstract symbols, symbolic resemblances, idealized portraits, realistic portraits, and cartoon characters) and to establish links between the contemporary embellished maps and Japanese maps from the past, as well as to styles of pictorial art that have flourished in the history of Japanese art.

Key words: Japanese cartography, public maps, illustrated maps, Japanese art

Introduction

Japan has a rich cartographic heritage, and strains of its past continue to live in the present. Because maps in Japan are usually consulted for their topographic information, it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of Japanese maps these days are prepared exclusively, or near enough so, as scientific diagrams to represent locations and distributions of selected phenomena. This has not however always been the case, as many Japanese maps that have survived from the past are dripping with interesting artwork which perhaps accounts for their survival. Even today maps with a dominant artistic spirit are produced, and their topographic information often appears to be incidental or simply a frame of reference for the illustrations. Generally, though, the scientific component in these modern artistically inclined maps is not totally eclipsed, and a reasonable balance of the scientific and artistic components exists.

Commonly found illustrated maps are among the multitude which are displayed to the public throughout the country. These maps have been erected on streets and in other public urban and rural settings, as well as in the likes of temple and shrine compounds, castle grounds, and university campuses, mainly to assist people in finding places, but also occasionally to explain something from the past. About 500 examples of such maps have been photographed by the author as a prelude to this article and 36 have already been published (Potter 2002a, 2002b, 2003) as part of a visual “database” accompanied by relevant comments or observations. Here, eighteen more examples are reproduced and briefly remarked upon, while an analytical text has been composed to explain maps such as these and to point to historical precedents. A brief on terminology follows this introduction, and it is followed by a section on the eighteen reproduced maps (six unadorned and twelve illustrated or embellished) to provide a sense of context and, especially for the illustrated maps, an idea of contents that are rather typical. The fourth section then remarks on the cartographically standard artistic elements found in the maps, categorizes the illustrative material from the embellished maps, and explains how the illustrations in particular have roots in older Japanese cartographic practices and in artistic styles of painting that can be traced back to China before the eighth century A.D. and, in the case of an indigenous development, to Japan in the eleventh century A.D. A few supplementary comments are included in the conclusion, which otherwise serves as a reminder that “geography” need not be entirely a dispassionate science and that geographical works can transcend the academic discipline in regard to cultural value.
Terminology

A good source for Japanese cartographic vocabulary is Nihon Kokusai Chizugakkai (1998), while various works of an historical nature explain particular terms that are relevant to this study (e.g. Unno 1985, 1994, 1996; Katsuragawa Ezu Kenkyuukai 1988, 1989; Hisatake and Hasegawa 1993; Potter 2000, 2001a, 2001b). All of the examples which are reproduced in this article can safely be called chizu (地図, literally "land-diagram"), the generic word for "map" in contemporary Japanese, although words for certain types of map drop chi (地, land) in favor of an etymologically appropriate qualifier (e.g. seizu, 星図, for "star (星) map") or, optionally, to avoid an arguable redundancy (e.g. toshizu, 都市図, for "city (都市) map," although toshichizu, 都市地図, could be used). Various words might be used to express the topographic themes of the maps reproduced here, among which would be shinaizu (市内図, city map), annaizu (案内図, information map), shirozu (城図, castle map), terazu (寺図, temple map), rozenzu (路線図, route map), and kassenzu (合戦図, battle map). Those that are illustrated may also be referred to as echizu (絵地図, illustrated map, pictorial map, picture-map; literally "picture-land-diagram") or ezu (絵図, as for echizu; literally "picture-diagram"), e (絵) being a word for a picture with an artistic or esthetic, not scientific or mathematical, essence. Arguably, because all maps are theoretically artistic enterprises—with components that may be considered to be illustrations, and as a composition that may be considered in its entirety to be an illustration—any map might also be regarded as an echizu or an ezu, as was true in the case of ezu from sometime in the Heian Period (794–1192) until the beginning of the Meiji Period (1868–1912), but contemporary usage of these terms distinguishes echizu and ezu—illustrated, that is embellished or adorned, maps—as a subset of chizu (e.g. Nihon Kokusai Chizugakkai 1998: 22). Less commonly used, but readily understandable in Japan today, are mappu (マップ) and irasutomappu (イラストマップ), "loan words" from the English "map" and "illustrated map" for chizu and echizu/ezu respectively.

Examples of Maps on Public Display

Unadorned chizu

Six reproductions of unillustrated, as in not embellished or adorned, maps serve as examples of compositions which may be considered strictly utilitarian (maps 1–6). Focusing on topographic features, their information is presented diagrammatically, abstractly, and in a way that does little more than to let users know where selected places are. The esthetic appeal that they do have is one that supports their scientific component rather than arguably exists for its own sake or to advertise something on the map. It would not be an injustice to say that maps such as these are consulted for information about locations and do not hold a user’s attention for long.

The first map emphasizes transportation...
routes in the city of Kagoshima, lying along a small coastal plain between Kagoshima Bay and the local hills or mountains on southernmost Kyushu. It has several elements that would be expected of a good conventional map—a verbal title of the subject area, an indicator of geographical directions (north is to the left), a legend (in the upper right corner), clearly delineated routes, appropriate symbols and easy-to-read labels for selected sites, and color-coded features of the landscape (blue for the rivers and bay, dark green for the hills and mountains, and pink for the generally flat, built-up area)—while the supplementary map below it is a simple plan with accompanying verbal information about the bus stops near the Nishi Kagoshima train station, where the photograph was taken. In the close-up may be seen such ordinary symbols as a (circled) 文 (mon, bun) for educational establishments, a (circled) X for police stations, and a のと (a torii, a gateway to a Shintou shrine, literally “bird-perch;” here in a blue square) for a Shintou shrine, as well as relatively thick lines of alternating light and dark hues for railway lines. Also in blue squares are several types of two-dimensional abstract drawings, many of which are site-specific and thereby differ from the others, yet most could easily be removed and put on other maps to symbolize similar sites, examples being the jogger in the park at the upper right, the castle wall at the left, and the four columns such as that designating Sai-gou Park (西郷公園, Saigou Kouen) near Nishi Kagoshima Station just below the center.

Map 2, easily recognized as a conventional map, typifies the extremely common genre of urban-area map. The focus here is the prefectural government center in what was the city of Urawa (since May 2001, part of the larger city of Saitama), while Bessho Numa Park and its recreational pond may be seen to the right of the map, and Urawa Station and part of the Keihin-Touhoku railway line lie to the left. Although several buildings such as the Saitama prefectural offices (埼玉県庁, Saitama Kenchou, in the center) and a few parks are indicated, the system of roads and blocks for buildings dominates the composition, the names of the districts and their numerical systems being clear enough to make finding a given address relatively easy, at least to the block that it is on (e.g. the prefectural offices are in Takasago 3-choume (高砂3丁目), block 15). Such maps as this one are probably consulted frequently, and they are drafted so that the topographical information makes sense to a person who is reasonably competent with graphics. One of the results is that the maps are oriented so that what is in front of the user is in the top half and what is, for example, to the right when looking at the map is at the right on the map. In this particular case, the prefectural offices would be over the right shoulder of the map viewer, while the distant, out-of-view Tsukinomiya Park (dark green, in the upper left corner) would lie in front of and off to the left of the viewer.

Another common cartographic genre is that of land occupancy in a very small area, an example being mainly from the Naka-machi and Higashi-machi districts in the city of Odawara, Kanagawa prefecture, in map 3. The streets are indicated by yellow lines, with National Road #1 (国道1号, Kokudou Ichi-gou) providing a line of reference at the bottom and the Sannou River (山王川, Sannou-gawa) cutting across the map from the upper left to the lower right between two roads. Most of the occupants shown in the map are small businesses, many of which go by family names that include Ishikawa, Katou, Yamaguchi, and Uehara. Factories (製作所, seisakusho) and shops (店, ten) are well represented, while a woodworking shop (木工所, mokkoujo) and a repair
shop for automobiles (自動車整備工場, *jidoushaseibikoujou*) are conspicuous at the top center. Whereas the businesses, primary school (upper left corner), river, and national road are all represented simply through lining and verbal labeling, the religious sites shown on this map also have a conventional symbol, the swastika (卍) for the three Buddhist temples and a *torii* for the two Shintō shrines.

The fourth map is an example of a particular urban site, here a castle in the city of Aizu-Wakamatsu in western Fukushima prefecture. Although a (damaged) drawing of the main structure of the castle exists in its center, this map relies on geometrical shapes, coded colors (notably blue for the moats, brown for the buildings, and green for open spaces), and verbal labels and numbers to transmit information, while the roads and pedestrian paths are shown by colored-in double lines, akin to those in maps 2 and 3. Because the center of the map has several points of interest and could therefore be unattractively cluttered by labels, numbers and the accompanying key have been used to make the composition esthetically appealing. This sort of map is most likely appreciated for its graphic display of the castle grounds, yet a secondary use would be to find out how to leave the park.

**Map 3:** Untitled map of land occupancy in the city of Odawara, north to the top (May 1999).

**Map 4:** Tsuru-ga-jō *Kouen Annaizu*, Guide Map of the Park with Tsuru Castle (= Castle of the Crane), north to the bottom (Aizu-Wakamatsu, March 1996).

**Map 5:** Shinano-ji *Shizenhodō Azumino Ruuto Annaizu*, Guide Map of the Azumino Route of the Shinano Roads for Nature Walks, north to the right (Hotaka, November 1998).
Route maps are frequently encountered in Japan, especially at railway stations and along motor expressways, and maps 5 and 6 exemplify two types. The first highlights roads and rivers in the town of Hotaka, northwestern Nagano prefecture, where a nature hike that includes two sites for cultivating wasabi (a plant that is used as a mild spice, similar to mustard), two museums, and the ruins of a castle is recommended. In the close-up focusing on Hotaka Station, the conventional symbolization may be seen clearly: the alternating dark brown and white route is the railway line, the other lines are roads for cars and rivers (respectively orange and blue), while the torii and swastika refer to sites connected to Shintō and Buddhism, the character 神 indicates schools, and the (blue) dots are noted in the legend in the lower right corner of the complete map as locating guardian deities for travelers (護旅神, dou-sojin). The other example (map 6) is a diagrammatic route map, in which the railway lines have been straightened out and the stations put in neatly so that the topographic information does not conform very well to reality. Its function is to give the prices for one-way tickets from Yamagata Station, in the city of the same name, to destinations within the prefectures of Yamagata and Miyagi, plus some in the neighboring prefectures of Akita, Iwate, and Fukushima.

Illustrated land diagrams (echizu)

In this subsection, the twelve embellished maps which are reproduced and discussed cover a variety of topographic units from several settlements in part of a prefecture, through individual settlements, to places within a single settlement. Whereas all—even the last one which at first glance might not make sense—are utilitarian in that they provide an understanding of location or a means to find one’s way, their illustrations add an artistic element that transcends the basic requirement of showing locations, distances, and directions. In some of these examples, this ornamental element is not very forceful, but seems simply to make the map a bit more attractive and selected places on it recognizable through a visual impression. Others, however, are overwhelmed by this supplementary artwork, including to the point that the utilitarian function of the map might be lost, or at least command little interest.

Map 7 is a very busy, colorful composition covering northern Nagano prefecture, with the city of Nagano (長野市, Nagano-shi) occupying about half of the map. Linear topographic information—roads for vehicles, railway lines, rivers, and boundaries of settlements—is conventionally represented, with appropriate coloring and labeling where it is particularly useful, but it is the illustrations which attract attention. Around the map are rounded hillocks—many of which are snowcapped—that symbolize the local mountainous topography, while a variety of imaginative cartoons beckon viewers to selected sites of recreational interest. In the city of Nagano, for example, there is an undated fireworks display (in the center of the map) and the famous Zenkou Temple (善光寺, Zenkō-ji, upper center), and three skiing sites in other settlements are indicated, one including one of the ski jumps that were erected in the village of Hakuba (upper left) for the 1998 Win-
ter Olympics. The enlarged part shows the pictures in the lower left quadrant more clearly, and these include people enjoying a bath in mineral waters and a meal, as well as a dinosaur that symbolizes a natural-history museum in the city of Nagano and a shinkansen or, as it has been nicknamed in English, “bullet train” that speeds between Nagano and Toukyou in less than two hours. Despite this quick access, it is rather difficult to move around northern Nagano by train, hence this map includes an advertisement for rental cars in the lower right.

Uwajima, a city in the southern part of Ehime prefecture on Shikoku, is the subject of the next composition (map 8), which resembles a landscape painting more than it does a stereotypical map. Yet, important cartographic elements such as abstract symbolization of routes (railway lines, roads, shipping lines), labeling, and a selection of places are included, and it might be consulted for useful information to get to such sites as Warei Shrine (和霊神社, Warei Jinja) in the upper center, Uwajima Castle (宇和島城, Uwajimagou) in the center, and four temples (寺, ji) in the lower right corner. The painterliness of the work, however, dominates, and there are three relevant observations in this regard. First, it is an oblique perspective aiming north-north-west from a low-flying aircraft, the distant mountains leading to Cape Sata, the tip of the fingerlike peninsula that points at Kyushu, in the upper left. Next is the realistic impression of the mountains in the landscape and the various structures in the city, a different technique of portraiture from the idealized cartoons in map 7. The third observation is the use of the clouding-out technique, especially in the mountainous perimeter but also in the castle grounds and along the coast in the lower left, which is a means to highlight selected places and has a long heritage in Japanese art. In the close-up, these observations may be seen clearly, along with the use of leaving parts of the city blank to avoid drawing
attention to places that are not considered important. Outstanding in the close-up is the arena for bull-fighting (闘牛場, tougyuu jou, literally “fighting bulls place”), competitions in which the animals do a version of sumou (a type of wrestling akin to judo).

Another city map comprises the ninth example, this one having as its theme the water-works of Noshiro in Akitâ prefecture. The local railway lines (alternating black and white), important roads, the Yoneshiro River (米代川, Yoneshiro-gawa), the Sea of Japan (日本海, Nihon-kai), and two lakes (沼, numa) constitute the diagrammatic framework into which are fitted three-dimensional pictures. On the right side are two sets of rounded hillocks, one with a waterfall, but these are not dominant features as Noshiro lies at the western end of a plain by the same name. The buildings in the upper left are linked to health (a convalescence center for pensioners and a hospital) and sports (a gymnasium and a baseball field), and below the river along the coast are a thermal power plant and two housing estates connected to the lumber industry. Most of the remaining pictures, however, have something to do with the local waterworks, being two purification plants (浄水場, jousuijou; center and lower left), two water-supply ponds (配水池, haisuichi; lower left), two water-supply plants (配水場, haisuijou; lower right), and a pumping plant (ポンプ場, ponpujou; right center), while just to the left of the railway line in the center is the municipal office in charge of gas and water-works (能代市ガス水道局, Noshiro-shi Gasu Suido Kyoku). Similar to the structures in map 8, those in this map are reasonably realistic portraits, although more sanitized because they are isolated from their surroundings.

In map 10, of the town of Hiraizumi in Iwate prefecture, the outstanding illustrations are more real in that they are lifelike paintings. Nevertheless, the abstract symbolization is rather strong as the roads, railway line, and rivers dominate the composition, with conventional symbols for hot springs (源泉), Shintou shrines (社), and places for parking vehicles (a circled P) being discreetly included. There are twelve rounded hillocks to represent the mountains on either side, especially the western here, of the town, and that in the foreground with the character 大 (dai, big, large) would be connected to the local Bon festival that honors ancestors.
Notable among the paintings are those of Moutsuu Temple (毛越寺, Moutsuuji) and Chuuson Temple (中尊寺, Chuusonji), the main attractions here and found to the left and the right of center respectively. In the close-up from the bottom center are two of the paintings, one being of the ruins of the Buddhist establishment Muryoukouin (無量光院跡, Muryoukouin'ato) and the other of the belfry at Gikeidou (義経堂, Gikeidou), a Buddhist hall at Takedachi (高館).

Map 11 shows part of the southeastern section of the territorially large town of Minakami in northern Gunma prefecture. This is a rural area that is visited for its skiing, golfing, camping, and hiking opportunities, and the map captures the local sense of tranquility. Its mountainous topography is represented by the rounded hills, topped with green to designate their highland forests, and the conical trees do the same in the valley. The two streams which emerge from the mountains form the Hotaka River, which flows to the left and eventually into the long Tone River that rises in northernmost Gunma and, as the boundary between Ibaraki and Chiba prefectures, enters the Pacific Ocean. Three roads are drawn on the map, two of which (in yellow) are pedestrian paths leading to the Urami Waterfall (裏見の滝, Urami no Taki) and the Inner Shrine of Hotaka Shrine (武尊神社奥宮, Hotaka Jinja Okumiya), both in the lower center. The close-up reproduces the painterly façade of Hotaka Shrine and its torii, with the adjacent trees symbolizing the wooded surroundings of the shrine.

Whereas Hotaka is a humble Shintou shrine in the mountainous outback of Japan, Chion'in (知恩院) is one of the famous Buddhist temples in the old capital city of Kyouto. Located along the mountains of east-central Kyouto, the compound is in wooded surroundings as map 12 suggests, and it is a popular destination for tourists in an area that also includes Heian Shrine, Yasaka Shrine, and Kiymizu Temple. Similar to the map of Uwajima above, that of Chion'in is an oblique perspective with places of interest labeled, although map 12 is a complete portrait since it does not incorporate the fogging-out technique and make certain areas appear blank. If it were not for the labels, it would of course be possible to argue that this composition is not a map, there not being any abstract symbolization or purely diagrammatic graphics. Still, this work can be appreciated for
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Its informative nature that makes it a practical device for locating the various buildings and other components of the temple complex, examples being the main hall (御影堂, Mieidou, literally “honorable-image-hall”) near the center, the large bell that famously rings out the old year (大鐘楼, Daishourou, Large Belfry) at the upper right edge, and the cemetery in the upper left. Other than for finding places or learning their names, however, compositions such as this provide a visual testimony of the architecture and layout of a religious institution, even today an important element of the cultural landscape.

Mount Myougi is a conspicuous blown-out volcano in southwestern Gunma prefecture and the main attraction of the thirteenth map, which overlaps the towns of Myougi, Shimonita, and Matsuida. Although it is not pictured as a continuous mountain, its various peaks and vertical jaggedness have been portrayed in the discrete components that emphasize particular natural and cultural sites. One of the highest peaks, Mount Kondou (金洞山, Kondou-san), is at the center top, while the likes of other rock formations and waterfalls can also be seen, with hiking routes shown by dashed lines in the right half of the map and the east-to-west chain of mountains near the boundary with Saitama prefecture comprising the background. Included on the cultural side are two Shintou shrines (神社, jinja; upper left), three parks (公園, kouen) including one with a tennis court, a farm where children are pictured milking a cow (lower left), two art museums (美術館, bijutsukan; center left), an historical checkpoint (碓氷関所, Usui Sekisho; bottom center), and accommodations for visitors (top center). Whereas such elements of the natural and cultural landscape are drawn in an attractive way to capture their essence, the diagrammatic information (roads, railway line and stations, and rivers) is not particularly faithful to scale or shapes, but simply serves to get the user from place to place.

Parking areas along the expressways in Japan are generally smallish places for motorists to take a rest, but the one illustrated in map 14 is quite different. In the city of Saku, in east central Nagano prefecture, this “parking area” has been converted to a year-round recreational park on the southern slopes of Mount Hirao, and the map explains what is where and how the park might be enjoyed. While the inset at the upper left reduces the mountain and notes that it is used for skiing in the winter, the rest of the illustrative component focuses on the summer. At the bottom of the mountain is a European-style building which has a gift shop (a place to buy souvenirs and such like), an Italian restaurant, and a fast-food cafeteria, and the other drawings show people enjoying themselves at such outdoor activities as golf and picnicking. The diagrammatic component of the map is stronger at the bottom, where the parking spaces and the routes back to the expressway are indicated, yet the lines for the chairlift routes up the mountain and the torii...
for the Fuji Asama Shrine (富士浅間神社, Fuji Asama Jinja) near its summit are also abstract symbols.

Map 15 highlights (in red) a route for visiting five illustrated sites of historical interest to the west of the Akishino River (秋篠川, Akishino-gawa) in the western part of the city of Nara, and in the lower right quadrant it displays the site of the "imperial" palace during the Nara Period (710–94 A.D.). In this sample, the pictorial component is not too strong, as the diagrammatic is more outstanding, with the roads for vehicles, rivers, and ponds dominating, and the railway lines and stations, post offices, police boxes, and a school (文; not listed in the legend) being more subtly worked in, all using abstract symbolization. Although not pronounced, the drawings that represent the four temples and the Suzaku Gate (朱雀門, Suzaku-mon) on the southern periphery of the palace site are simplified likenesses, while that of the tomb for Tennou Suinin (垂仁天皇陵, Suinin-tennou-ryou; upper center) captures the shape of the burial mound as if it were viewed from directly above and, through the use of lines on the inside, makes an attempt to give an abstract third dimension. The enlarged part shows the façades of the main buildings of Kikou Temple (喜光寺, Kikouji) and Saidai Temple (西大寺, Saidaiji) more clearly, and the picture of the family taking a walk in the lower left of the entire composition is based on a view across the river of the main hall and one of the pagodas of Yakushi Temple (薬師寺, Yakushiji).

In the sixteenth map, which also combines routes with an historical theme, the diagrammatic and the illustrated components are not interwoven, but the latter is related to the site indicated on the map (noted below). The left side of the composition is entirely a conventional map that emphasizes roads for vehicular traffic and two railway lines in the towns of Arita and Nishi Arita, in western Saga prefecture on Kyushu, and into this framework have been fitted 21 numbered sites mainly of historical significance and three unnumbered that are informative in essence. Among the sites are a Shintou shrine and two Buddhist temples, but most are connected to the porcelain industry that has long been the local specialty, map 16 itself consisting of 28 ceramic tiles. The illustration to the right is of the first numbered site, the kaolin quarry at Mount Izumi (泉山礦石場, Izumi-yama Jisekiba; center, near the left edge) in the eastern part of Arita, and is set in the Edo Period (1603–1867 A.D.) when Arita flourished from its decorated porcelains. Here, men and women are portrayed in historical attire and at various jobs related to converting the local kaolin into implements such as the pots at the left. The long building is the kiln, fire and smoke being shown coming out of it at the top of the picture (partly obscured by a tree branch and leaves which are not a part of the map).

The word ezu (絵図) appears in the title of Map 16: Rekishi Kouen / Yakimono no Sato, Historical Park / Village of Pottery, north to the bottom (Arita, November 1997).
map 17, of an historical battlefield in the southeastern part of the city of Nagano where the armies of Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin faced off in 1561. Kawanakajima, the site of this and other battles, literally means “island between the rivers,” the two meant being the Chikuma (千曲川, Chikuma-gawa) and the Sai (犀川, Sai-gawa) that meet in the lower left corner and flow respectively from the upper right and the lower right on this map, and it lies in the southern part of the Nagano Basin. Besides the rivers, a few roads and railway lines and stations are shown by conventional, colored symbolization, while the same can be said to be true of the troop dispositions, those for the Takeda army being in red on the left and those of the Uesugi in blue on the right. The mountains drawn in perspective—those on the left and at the top as if viewed from the northeast and those on the right as if from the southeast—comprise the bulk of the non-diagrammatic art to emphasize the topography and, perhaps, to hint that the opposing armies did not have much in regard to escape routes. Similar to the reason for orienting the maps on public display, given in the discussion of map 2, that there are two perspectives within the composition may be attributed to adjusting the map to what the person consulting it can actually see, Mount Saijo (妻女山, Saijo-zan) and the chain of mountains behind it lying off to the left from where this map would be consulted, and Mount Chausu (茶臼山, Chausu-yama) and the mountains behind it being off to the right. Also shown on the two named mountains are structures and flags that symbolize the respective headquarters of the Uesugi and the Takeda, their flags respectively being blue and red.

Some maps, although not very common, are extremely imaginative. An example is map 18, in which the “big picture” comprises topographical information that does not reflect the reality of the subject and its surroundings, a high-rise structure named “Lamza” next to the Musashiurawa railway station in the city of Saitama. First, the land on which Lamza stands is not an island in the sea, but a flat urban tract that is dominated by the likes of concrete, metals, and glass, and surrounded by railway lines on the east and roads on the other three sides, that on the north being particularly busy, noisy, and dirty. Second, instead of there being hills or mountains as there are in the map, the local elevation is created by the two towers of Lamza, for which the hills or mountains serve as visual metaphors, those in the southeast being the (much) lower tower and the bigger ones in the western part representing a 28-story tower. The displayed layout of the Lamza complex is, however, a reasonably accurate portrait as if viewed from directly above, or from “in the Sky” as it says near the center of the map. Although the trees which are drawn in around the periphery of the property are at ground level, most of the rest of what is shown is elevated from the ground, the different sizes for the hills or mountains representing the relative
heights of the towers, and the path and garden along the eastern side being on a walkway that corresponds to the second floor of the buildings.

**Analytical Remarks**

Maps such as those reproduced here are high-quality samples of applied geography that required several stages of work before being put on public display. Initially, a decision had to be made to undertake each enterprise, and in most cases throughout the country it may be assumed that municipal authorities commissioned the projects, although other institutions such as temples, shrines, university administrations, and civic organizations would have done so in certain cases. Subsequently, the relevant topographic information would have been collected through a survey and/or perusal of existing maps, followed by a process of drafting the composition to include selected information as if viewed from a selected point so that the map would make sense to somebody using it. This stage would have required a myriad of standard cartographic decisions about (general) orientation, graphic representation, symbolization, lining, coloring, labeling, and at least some semblance of scale, as well as what (not) to include. The draft would then have been inspected, perhaps revised, and finally turned over to craftsmen who transferred it to a metallic, fiber-glass, wooden, ceramic, or paper surface, each of which involves its own techniques for producing the images and colors. Upon completion, the map would have been mounted in a generally functional (i.e. not ornamental) frame, which in some cases would also hold a protective, transparent covering, and then erected in an appropriate place.

The maps reproduced and discussed in this article were chosen because, although thematically unique, they are good samples of the various subjects and artistic methods for showing places that are found on publicly displayed maps throughout the country. All of these, and those which appear in related studies (Potter 2002a, 2002b, 2003), have an orderly diagrammatic component that provides a reasonably clear distribution of selected places and a meaningful sense of direction and, at least in regard to the core information, distance. Lining and coloring have been effectively used to distinguish the abstract elements of the composition, and the same is true for the pictorial elements in the illustrated maps. Virtually all include at least some abstract symbolization—most commonly in the lining for routes, but many also have abstract point symbols—with the only possible exception here being the realistic portrait of Chion'in (map 12). Orientation is generally consistent within a composition, but even in cases where distortions occur, as in maps 6 (railway lines) and 17 (battlefield) here, the labeling and portrayal of the diagrammatic information preserves the spirit of orientation by making it possible to understand the map without turning it (an impossibility, anyway, with these). The layout of the information is either from a planar perspective, as if viewed from directly above as is typical of most maps and is clearly so in twelve of the examples, or from an oblique, aerial perspective from the bottom of the composition (four examples), while two arguably employ both techniques of perspective (maps 13 and 17, the latter including two oblique perspectives of the mountains).

In regard to the illustrated maps alone (maps 7–18), the samples show a variety of pictures that convey elements in the natural and, particularly, cultural landscape, and they may be classified into five categories which are commonly encountered. One of these is shared with the unadorned maps, being the abstract symbols which do not resemble what they denote, but which are understood because of cartographic convention; among these are the *torii* for a Shintou shrine, the swastika for a Buddhist temple, and the character 文 (a reference to letters, culture, learning) for a school or college. Whereas these may be used for any site that fits their assigned designations, and by virtue of their being abstract do not look like what they represent, the remaining categories of the illustrations have in common a sense of life in that the pictures resemble or are caricatures of something real. These categories, discussed next, are symbolic resemblances, idealized portraits, realistic portraits, and cartoon characters.
Symbolic resemblances function as symbols, but differ from conventional ones in that they have not been reduced to complete abstraction and can easily be associated with what they represent. Whether a particular drawing differs noticeably, slightly, or not at all from its kindred within a composition, the important points are that a set of resemblances is internally similar and that they are not concerned with peculiar characteristics. The most common application of these illustrations—in general and also among the maps reproduced here—is to depict a mountainous landscape, the medium usually being rounded hillocks as is maps 7, 9, 10, and 11, while another popular type of symbolic resemblance are the trees which are used to indicate wooded or forested areas (maps 11, 14, and 18). Two other examples are the waves in map 18 and, because of the proportionality which suggests that it is not a simple abstract symbol, the torii in map 14. In another publication (Potter 2003) shaded hillocks, a spade for a playground sandbox, and internally identical, symbolic representations of castles, lighthouses, boats, and flowers have been included in this category.

Idealized portraits are illustrations which capture the essence of a subject with a sufficient degree of artistic license to argue that the impression is not supposed to be an exact replica or a reasonably detailed copy. In a sense, maps 7–18 all contain idealized illustrations, but its overriding attention to detail and the unbroken nature of the composition makes map 12 (Chion’in) an arguable exception. Although the idealized portraits are occasionally trivial, as with the two sets of trees lining roads in map 10 and the ship in map 18, or might form a backdrop as do the mountains in map 13, most tend to bring life to the map and inform the observer of (potential) objects or activities of interest. By far the most common type of idealized portrait is an architectural structure, notably a building, of which numerous examples can be seen in the illustrated maps here. Five of the maps (7, 8, 11, 13, 15) have generalized drawings of at least one building belonging to a Shintou shrine or a Buddhist temple, while secular structures include a high-rise (presumably) office building in map 7, the baseball field in map 8, various structures related to waterworks in map 9, the buildings for accommodations and the museums in map 13, the covered escalator and the multi-function building in map 14, and the kiln in map 16. Other examples of idealized portraits, although not as prominent, are vehicles for transportation on land or sea (maps 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, and—figuratively—18) and plants (maps 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14), and even the rather symmetrical, visually metaphorical hills or mountains of map 18 fit into this category.

Realistic portraits more strongly capture the unique spirit of a subject by being photographs or rather detailed, lifelike drawings, including to the point that the surroundings of the subject might be similarly depicted. In the case of photographed subjects, of which there are no examples here (see Potter 2002b, 2003 for some), the distinction between realistic and idealized portraits is obvious, but it is not always easy to differentiate among the artistic impressions. Attention to detail and an apparent attempt not to allow much in the way of artistic license would seem to be the defining criteria, which are best met here in the entire composition as well as the constituent parts of map 12. This is a detailed, reasonably faithful study of the layout of the buildings, other structures, paths, and empty spaces within the compound of Chion’in, as well as of its architecture, stone structures, and landscaping, while the foliage in and around the compound gives it a very realistic feel. Although none of the other reproductions offer a realistic composition in its entirety, four others do have drawings that are realistic or arguably so. The twelve inset paintings on map 10 appear to be rather faithful to reality, and map 8 has forested mountains, a distant chain of mountains, and some trees that could fit the description, as might some of the buildings and structures such as the castle and Warei Shrine. In map 13, the reasonably detailed portraits of the rocky outcrops contrast significantly with three generalized sets of mountains in the foreground and the double line of mountains in the background and might be considered as realistic, and the forested mountains shown enclosing the Nagano Basin in map 17 do a reasonably good job of charac-
acterizing the actual lay of the land.

The final category of the illustrations comprises cartoon characters, drawings of people and animals which lend a sense of animation to a composition. Six of the maps here have at least one picture of a person doing something, and four of them also have at least one animal. Map 7, a cartoonish enterprise as a whole, is filled with such people having fun at such activities as traveling in a car, skiing, watching fireworks, and dining, while the animals are samples of local fauna (a fox, bear, rabbit, and small bird), a dinosaur, and an antlered dragon in a pond. There are also many people in map 14, where they are shown in their entirety and illustrate possible ways to enjoy the park, and recreation is also the theme with those in maps 8 (an archer), 13 (children milking a cow, two tennis players), and 15 (a family on a walk). In contrast to the people in these maps depicting activities to be enjoyed, those in map 16 are at work and, given their clothing and equipment, serve to explain some of the jobs associated with Edo-Period pottery-making, supplemented by the composition being in the “floating world” style which developed and flourished, particularly, in the latter part of the Edo Period. Besides the animals mentioned above in maps 7 and 13, there is a dog in map 16 and a monkey, some deer, and two fighting bulls in map 8.

Despite all of these maps being “modern” in that their topographical information is current, or was at the time of manufacture, and that the same is true for the materials and technologies that were used, they have substantial roots in the past. On the one hand are similar genres of Japanese maps, especially in the prolific Edo Period, and individual old maps with meaningful similarities in spirit and/or content as those reproduced here can be cited without stretching the imagination far. Drawing attention to these genres and related samples is useful for putting the maps on public display into a proper perspective in regard to the cartographical heritage of Japan, which is done subsequently. On the other hand, and discussed afterward, is the fact that the illustrated maps also contain elements that can be traced in the history of pictorial art in Japan, some recent and others rather distant.

As noted in the section on terminology for this article, specific words can be created in Japanese to describe the topographical content of maps. Conventionally, and still most frequently, this has been done by adding the all-purpose word or root for “diagram” or even things visualized (図, zu; see Potter 2001a) to a word or place-name that expresses what is shown. This practice places an emphasis on the content of the map rather than on the fact that the composition is a “map,” and this becomes an important observation when it is realized that the various Japanese types of map tend to have much in common within a topographic genre (notably, the country, “province” or county, city or town, castle, shrine-temple, manor, mountain, river, land route, sea route), but not necessarily among the genres as a set. Partly because the emphasized content and purposes would differ among the topographic genres, and partly because there was no established “scientific” or graphic convention as to how “maps” as a whole ought to be drawn, different artistic styles were developed to portray the information which was required within each genre. Hence, a map of a city was quite likely (expected) to look different from, say, one of a shrine-temple complex or an overland route, and the graphics would reflect this, for example, by emphasizing the geometrical layout of a city and supplementing it with undetailed, relatively small drawings of important buildings (city map), through a reasonably detailed visual study of buildings and other structures in a compound (shrine-temple map), or by generalized portraits of the surrounding countryside and places of interest along the way (overland route map).

This may be seen, as a starter, by perusing the figures and plates for the chapters on pre-Meiji Japanese cartography in The History of Cartography (Harley and Woodward 1994; also Unno 1994, Miyajima 1994), a reasonably thorough introduction to the subject that is accessible to scholars, students, dilettantes, and others who use the English language. Among the reproduced examples from the various topographical genres are “county” and “provincial” maps of Seba county (ca. 1597), Setsu “province” (1605), and Nagato “province” (1649)
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(area-wise, akin to (≈) map 7 here); maps of the relatively large settlements of Edo (ca. 1658, 1671), Kyouto (by 1641, ca. 1642, 1741), Oosaka (1655, 1806), and Nagasaki (ca. 1760) (≈ maps 1, 8, 9, 10, and even 2, 3, 15, and 16); maps of the small, rural village of Kusooki (766) and manors of Kouno and Makuni (1143) (≈ maps 11, 13, and 14); a map focusing on Hiroshima Castle (ca. 1645) (≈ map 4); maps of the religious institutions Jingo Temple (1230), Kasuga Shrine (1300), and Gion Shrine (1331) (≈ map 12); maps of the overland route known as the “Toukaidou” (ca. 1654, 1690), the “Toukaidou” and another overland route known as the “Nakasendou” together (1668), and overland routes throughout the country (1683, 1744) (≈ maps 5, 6, 15, and 16); and imaginative maps such as those of “Bankaku” (萬客, literally “All the Guests,” 1822) and of places to go astray on the way to (spiritual) enlightenment (悟道迷所, Godou Meisho, 1846) (≈ map 18). Other topographic genres may be found in the same source, as can be a few others such as maps of mountains and rivers in the Japanese-language literature (e.g. Hisatake and Hasegawa 1993). Although in some cases it might be possible to argue that the topographic information was depicted differently because of the styles and technologies of a particular period, it is however possible to discern differences among the genres within a given period of time. The map of Otogi manor (1265), for example, does not resemble the topographic mandala of the Great Shrine of Kasuga (1300), while the maps of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries offer rather clear evidence that the likes of the county (conventionally, “province”) of Settsu, the city of Oosaka, and the highway known as the Toukaidou, for example, were to be expressed differently.

Within a topographic genre, however, certain artistic conventions prevailed, although they were subject to alteration over time as new information, stylistic or technical preferences, and technologies were introduced. A classic example that receives rather detailed treatment in The History of Cartography is the map of Japan which evolved through the elementary “Gyouki”-type map, an advanced version known as the “Joutoku(-ji)”-type, those based on models derived from county (“provincial”) surveys throughout the seventeenth century into the early eighteenth, and those based on Inou Tadataka’s survey of the coastlines and main roads of Japan from 1800 to 1815 (Unno 1994). Whereas each type of national map is sufficiently distinct to warrant its own appellation, there are such common threads as the subject itself, an emphasis on the two-dimensional shape of the country and its administrative divisions, and a planar perspective, as well as occasional overlapping or gradual transformation, that they can be classified together and seen to comprise the heritage of most of the mainstream maps of Japan today. At the other end of the territorial spectrum, for example, maps of shrines and temples have significant similarities within the genre, which is hinted at in The History of Cartography (Unno 1994) and is more evident in a recent publication devoted to them (Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan 2001). Not only is the subjective emphasis on the religious institution, but quite often the shrine or temple is also shown in an oblique perspective and in sufficient detail that particular buildings may be recognized and their architectural appearance be appreciated to some extent, a combination that continues to flourish on maps displayed at some shrines and temples. An examination of the Edo-Period city maps in The History of Cartography (Unno 1994) suggests that regardless of the city, the outstanding or immediately recognizable element was the layout of the roads and other routes for transportation, supplemented with selected sites of a generally public or religious significance. Whether of entire cities, other types of settlements, or parts of settlements, this approach continued through the Meiji Period (examples are in Jibunsha 2001) up to the present so that such maps as maps 2 and 3 are easily identified as belonging to the same tradition as the city maps in The History of Cartography.

Besides historical similarities within their topographic genre, such maps as those reproduced in this article and in Potter (2002a, 2002 b, 2003) also share artistic peculiarities with old Japanese maps. Among these are both planar and oblique perspectives, and even combina-
tions of the two. Many of the maps in The History of Cartography (Unno 1994, also Miya-
jima 1994 here) are clearly planar in perspec-
tive, while some such as those of Kasuga Shrine
(1300), the Nakasendou and the Toukaidou
overland routes (1668), and even Jambudvipa
(1710) employ oblique perspectives. Further
examples of oblique perspectives may be found
elsewhere, including in Hisatake and Hasegawa
(1993), Katsuragawa Ezu Kenkyuukai (1988,
1989), and Unno (1985, 1996). The purpose of
the oblique perspective is generally illustrative,
in the sense of displaying or hinting at visual
reality, and alongside two-dimensional facades,
it has also been applied to constituent objects
within a planar composition for illustrative or,
perhaps less commonly, symbolic reasons.
Sometimes, these illustrations are rather realistic
renditions of natural phenomena such as the
mountains on the maps of rice fields in the
village of Kusooki (766), the manors of Kouno
and Makuni (1143), Jingo Temple (1230), the
county of Seba (ca. 1597), and the Toukaidou
overland route (ca. 1654), while at other times
they show elements in the cultural landscape as
do, for example, the maps of Jingo Temple
(1230; buildings, torii, walls), Oosaka (1655; cas-
tle, temple, other buildings, boats), and sea and
land routes (1672; castles and other buildings)
(Unno 1994). The general tendency is for the
illustrations to depict selected elements in the
landscape in such a way that their uniqueness
is at least hinted at, if not conveyed in a rea-
sonably detailed fashion, and it may safely be
assumed that such illustrations were generally
included because they might be helpful to who-
ever was to use the map. That many of the
illustrations, past and present, are discrete in
that they may be isolated from the overall com-
position and viewed with little or no surround-
ing landscape suggests that they served as land-
marks, whether as subjects of interest in
themselves or as the likes of guide posts, and
that whatever was not considered important
was ignored for illustrative purposes or, as on
the map of the Nakasendou and Toukaidou
overland routes of 1668 (Unno 1994), was
clouded out.

Such artistic qualities as those mentioned
throughout this section transcend Japanese car-
tography itself and have counterparts in the
history of Japanese pictorial art, especially
painting. This is worth pointing out because
geographers, at least, tend to dismiss the artist-
ic side of maps in favor of their scientific (i.e.
facts, spatial analyses, mathematical reduc-
tions), perhaps because of the high value placed
on “science” by contemporary scholars, but also
to some degree because geographers are not
encouraged to delve into the creative arts, let
alone to apply them beyond a rudimentary
stage. The maps which are reproduced here
and in Potter (2002a, 2002b, 2003), and count-
less others throughout the country, are as much
in the realm of visual art as in that of science,
and in the case of the illustrated maps it would
be reasonable to argue not only that they are
more ornamental than utilitarian or informa-
tive (i.e. more artistic than scientific), but also
that the illustrative material commands more
interest than does the strictly, and certainly
symbolically abstract, topographical refer-
ences. What might be noticed more by non-
Japanese than by Japanese who give the illus-
trated maps more than a casual glance or
thought is that their illustrations have traits
that, for better or for worse, may be considered
“Japanese” in the sense that they generally re-
fect artistic elements that have evolved or, in
some cases, even originated in Japan. A de-
tailed study ought to be able to elucidate this,
but for the time being a few general observa-
tions about kara-e (唐絵, Chinese-style paint-
ing; i.e. that which may be traced to Chinese
models, in some instances before the Nara Pe-
riod), yamato-e (大和絵, Japanese painting; i.e.
that which developed in Japan, in a sense as a
reaction to Chinese-style painting, in the Heian
Period), shrine mandalas, ukiyo-e (浮世絵, pic-
tures of the “floating world”), and manga (漫画, drawn cartoons) will suffice.

It is difficult to specify concisely what distin-
guishes kara-e from yamato-e, the two main
strands of Japanese painting throughout his-
tory, because individual works might have
characteristics which might apply to either, but
a few general guidelines might be helpful, those
given here being derived from comments
mainly in Munsterberg (1985). As a starter, the
yamato-e is stylistically more ornamental or
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decorative in its appearance and essence, something that is reflected in the summation of the elements in a composition. Its lining tends to be expressive, dynamic, detailed, and defining, especially through the use of different thicknesses, and it creates forms that are simplified; on the other hand, the lining in a kara-e painting is most likely to be functional in that it establishes shapes and contours, does not dominate, and helps to create stylized forms. When used, color is often brilliant or striking in yamato-e and can be characterized as being delicate, subtle, bright, vivid, or clear in kara-e, suggesting that it is softer and less important in the latter. Space in yamato-e tends to be three-dimensional through an oblique perspective as opposed to an artificial three-dimensionality that is created by juxtaposing, generally, two-dimensional constituents. The figures in a yamato-e composition are not unreasonably disproportionate to their background, but the transitions can be abrupt because of the lining, while kara-e figures are usually disproportionately large compared to the background, and the transition is soft. When looked at as a whole, a yamato-e composition is more likely to appear somewhat confused, perhaps neurotic, and held together with overlapping elements than is a kara-e, which might be described as neat, clear, and calm. Using this as a guideline, and without going into detailed justification, it is possible to conclude that over half of the illustrated maps reproduced in this article have characteristics of kara-e (maps 7, 9, (perhaps) 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15) and that four have those of yamato-e (maps 8, 12, 16, and 17), with map 18 actually being neither as noted below.

Two of the maps mentioned as having yamato-e characteristics can, however, be classified into genres that are usually treated separately from yamato-e. Map 12, of Chion'in, is descended from a genre known as the "shrine mandala," which combined yamato-e characteristics with those of abstract, sometimes illustrated Buddhist diagrams known as mandalas. Having come into existence during the Kamakura Period (1185–1338), most shrine mandalas offered an aerial, oblique perspective of a shrine (technically Shintoist, but Shintou and Buddhism had been blended), showing its buildings and surrounding landscape, that could be used for purposes of worship. The illustration next to map 16, of Arita, might be considered a modern-day sample of ukiyo-e, which originated in the Edo Period as an offshoot of the paintings of "ordinary" life in the Momoyama Period (1568–1615) that had similarities with yamato-e paintings. As with the "shrine mandala" style of map 12, illustrating map 16 with a picture in the ukiyo-e would not have been a casual choice, but one of historical merit since it was during the Edo Period that Arita flourished through its porcelains, including those that are known as Imari ware because of their distribution through the neighboring port of Imari. Finally, map 18 does not exhibit truly Japanese artistic traits, but is rather akin to a European illustrated map from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, given away by the style of the compass rose with its Bourbonesque fleur-de-lis, the sailing vessel in the sea, the waves, and the perpendicular perspective and shading of the hills or mountains.

Six of the maps contain cartoon characters, five of which (maps 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15) are specimens of contemporary manga and the other (map 16) of manga from the Edo Period. The characters share a few artistic peculiarities in that their lining functions simply to create the shapes but does not contribute to a sense of motion, their colors are even, bright, but not forceful, and their forms are "flat" or two-dimensional, all of which suggest an influence from kara-e. Manga itself developed as a genre from the middle of the Edo Period, when it was related to ukiyo-e in its less-than-noble themes, and it has enjoyed immense popularity as a medium for amusement and education in the last couple of decades, partly because of its ability to be adapted to a wide variety of themes consumed by various reading audiences, and perhaps mainly because of its visual simplicity in conveying messages. In this regard, manga is also useful for advertising, which may be seen to be the force behind the cute characters in maps 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15, where the characters are depicted as having fun or at least doing something recreational, and even in map 16 where the characters might not be enjoying themselves, but are nevertheless a
tool for explaining an historical process that advertises the town.

**In Conclusion**

As a form of applied geography, the maps on public display throughout Japan are topographically informative and thereby rather useful for finding places and routes. They clearly demonstrate that cartography is a discipline that combines scientific and artistic elements and recalls the original spirit of the English and other words derived from the Greek roots "gea" and "grafo" (γεα + γραφω > "geography"), when reversed "to draw (or write about) the world." Perhaps most people, if asked, would identify geography as the academic discipline most closely associated with maps such as those reproduced in this article, although some might venture the more specific answer of cartography. Similarly, it may reasonably be assumed that the illustrated maps in particular would be considered to be more in the domain of art than in that of science, while the unadorned, unembellished maps might be thought of as more scientific or at least a synthesis of both.

More so than the scientific, the artistic side does however make maps appealing to a broad spectrum of society, and it is the artwork which can make a map interesting even after its life as a useful topographic instrument has elapsed. Other than geographers and cartographers, historians of geography and/or cartography, and collectors of maps, artists and art historians also examine, analyze, write about, and reproduce maps because of their merits in such things as forms or styles of expression, techniques, technologies, and sensitivity. Although the mapmakers (or the people related to a commissioned map) need to strike an effective balance between what is shown and how it is shown, geographers and historians of geography and/or cartography are more likely to be interested in the former, and students and connoisseurs of art and art historians the latter. As hinted at in this article, especially in the “Analytical Remarks,” there is ample material for studying past and present Japanese maps from an artistic perspective, an endeavor which ought to draw geographers back toward their intellectual roots, to the historic core of their discipline.

The examples given in this article serve as an invitation for scholars in geography to pursue this train of inquiry, especially in regard to the “illustrated” maps. As the section “Examples of Maps on Public Display” suggests, the artwork on such maps in Japan is readily connected to real-world objects, while the illustrations tend to bring some of those objects to life, something that enhances the role of many maps as local or regional advertisements. It is not unreasonable, for example, to assume that a tourist is more likely to want to investigate a Buddhist temple, especially one that is not exactly famous throughout the country, if it is characterized by a realistic or idealistic picture or even by a cartoon than if its location is simply symbolized by a swastika. Such types of illustration are discussed in the “Analytical Remarks,” and it must be noted that regardless of the type(s) of illustration used, the maps have been compiled in an esthetically pleasing manner, one with an overriding sense of harmony within a composition that comprises, in most cases, discrete, clear, identifiable pictures which might be isolated from the entire composition and seen as complete in themselves.

Although it would be expected that the topographical content of maps such as those reproduced in this article (and in Potter 2002a, 2002b, 2003) is Japanese, it might come as a bit of a surprise that the form—the appearance, the artistic styles—of the maps is also Japanese. This is pointed out through a few references to old Japanese maps and to Japanese artistic styles in the “Analytical Remarks” because it need not be obvious, and also because assumptions about the heritage of modern mapmaking, based on areas of innovation and routes of diffusion, could easily suggest a dominant European and (recent) American intellectual influence. When looking at such a classic example of kara-e as the eighth-century Kako Genzai Inga Kyou (過去現在因果経, Sutras of Past and Present Karma (≈ Cause and Effect); parts reproduced in, e.g., Paine and Soper 1981: 67; Ishikawa et al. 1982: 68–69; Munsterberg 1985: plate 32; Orihashi 1997: 177), it takes little mental exertion to identify many illustrated maps
on public display in Japan with the *kara-e* genre, and the cartoons on such maps belong to a tradition that evolved domestically. Although some characteristics of *kara-e* might be similar to those of the renaissance and neoclassicist styles of Europe (notably, the linear clarity and discreteness- unto- itself nature of the individual illustrations), and some of the *yama-to-e* might recall the European baroque and rococo (notably, the blending or overlapping that weakens the individual discreteness of components), for example, trying to establish stylistic roots in Europe for such illustrations as those on the maps reproduced in this article is bound to result in either an intellectual dead end or a neurotic twisting of words and ideas that might be impressive, but wrong. The same can be said for the cartoon figures in such maps, as their naive appearance, bright- and- happy feel, playfulness, and even sense of flippancy may easily be traced to past and present *manga*, as well as seen to reflect Japanese ideals in regard to recreational behavior, but it would be tortuous to argue that their models are to be found in Europe or America.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the maps on public display in Japan are perishable. Over time, and depending on their materials and location, they suffer from the likes of weathering and fading from exposure to the sun, and some of them get vandalized. Among the maps reproduced in this article, map 5 shows some wearing of its paint and wooden surface, map 13 bears evidence of rusting, and map 4 has a scratched-out castle, while the photograph taken of map 18 over two years later shows it in a worse condition that can be attributed to rain- based weathering. As these maps become significantly damaged or unsightly, or as their information becomes sufficiently out of date, they are taken away and most likely destroyed. Yet, some of the maps are interesting samples of mapmaking and/or of pictorial art that a reasonable effort ought to be made to preserve good or unusual samples that have outlived their practical lives of providing topographic information or serving as advertisements. They belong to a physically pervasive “family” of Japanese maps that appear not to have been given much scholarly thought or attention.

Map 18, showing visible wear from exposure to the natural elements 27 months after the original photograph was taken (Saitama, October 2002).

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Note

1. To avoid having to guess which Japanese names and words are considered to be within the domain of common English usage, and to provide a sense of consistency, all of them have been romanized according to how they are spelled in the Japanese syllabaries. Hence, instead of the “common” English spellings of “Kyushu,” “Tokyo,” “Ino,” and “Shinto,” for example, “Kyuushuu,” “Toukyou,” “Inou,” and “Shintou” have been used here.

References


(E); written in English

(J); written in Japanese

(Information about the places and art discussed in this article was acquired and/or checked by consulting a variety of English-language and, especially, Japanese-language published materials for tourism, on local history or geography (including maps and atlases), and about art; these have not been included here because they would make the list of references unnecessarily long.)