Oranda Jin Taiitsu

Japanese paintings by Murase Taiitsu (1803–1881)

with an introduction by Stephen Addiss
We are proud and happy to have the opportunity to realize an exhibition about this wonderfully individual and eccentric artist of 19th-century Japan: the poet-painter and commentator of his time Murase Taiitsu (1803–1881).

He first came to my attention many years ago when I added *A Japanese eccentric, the three arts of Murase Taiitsu*, the catalogue by Stephen Addiss, to my bookshelf, and I was immediately drawn to him. I was not only attracted by the freedom and humour of Taiitsu’s work, but also felt that his historical message, political engagement, and his irony – which I think is quite a rare phenomenon in Japan – made him even more special.

An odd man out.

His work gives the impression of total spontaneity, and of course it is. Nevertheless, all of it was preceded by careful study, and a painstaking search for the right composition, to which, once found, Taiitsu remained faithful.

I am grateful to Stephen Addiss, for his stimulating enthusiasm, and for writing the introduction to this catalogue, which then forced me to take the subject more seriously than I would have done otherwise. Thanks Stephen!

My mainstay, Henri Kerlen, thank you for your translations and comments. Elmer and John, many thanks for your support, and Robert, thanks for getting me back on track and for making another one of our catalogues – again, I think, one to be proud of. Anna, you do not like to be mentioned, but still: thank you.

Jon de Jong
July 2015

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**Bibliography**

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Murase Taiitsu: an introduction

Stephen Addiss

It is now 36 years since I prepared the first Taiitsu exhibition and catalogue outside of Japan (*A Japanese eccentric: The three arts of Murase Taiitsu*), and I am very pleased that Jon de Jong is now preparing the second. Even in Japan, Taiitsu (also pronounced Taiitsu) is not very well known outside of his home town of Inuyama, but there he is a hero; his paintings and accompanying objects are displayed in Inuyama Castle, including his reading glasses and inkstone, and also a copy of the catalogue mentioned above.

Although he remains somewhat obscure in other areas of Japan, there is a vitality and joy in Taiitsu’s brushwork, both in painting and in calligraphy, that distinguishes his work from that of other scholar-painters, and that has proved very appealing outside of Japan. I hope that this second exhibition will allow more museums and collectors in the West to appreciate his lively, energetic, and idiosyncratic works.

Taiitsu was born to a farming family in Kozuchi (now Mino City), north of Nagoya, in the seventh month of 1803. He was a second son, but after his elder brother died in 1807, Taiitsu became the family heir. He first studied Buddhism, Confucianism, and literature at the local Soto Zen temple, and then in 1821 Taiitsu moved to Nagoya for further study. His uncle Murase Tōjō (1791-1853) was a friend of the great scholar Rai San’yō (1780-1832), and through Tōjō’s introduction, Taiitsu was eventually able to become a pupil of this famous historian and literatus, in part by claiming that he wished to follow the path of literature. Attending this Kyoto school was a crucial event in Taiitsu’s life, and there are several interesting anecdotes about his studies with San’yō.

One story tells how San’yō, when seeing his pupil sleeping at his desk, threw an inkstone at him. Taiitsu never dared to nod off again. Another anecdote recounts how San’yō’s close friend Shinozaki Shōchiku (1781-1851) came to visit one day. The two literati, strolling in the countryside, allowed Taiitsu to accompany them. San’yō asked his pupil to cook a red snapper, so Taiitsu cut the fish into pieces and boiled them in a pot without first cleaning off the scales. Upon tasting the result, San’yō knitted his brows and scolded Taiitsu, who aptly replied that he had learned everything that San’yō had taught him, but he had never been instructed how to cook! A more serious problem occurred when Taiitsu spent all the money his family had sent to him in the Gion red light district of Kyoto. When his uncle Tōjō said he would withdraw Taiitsu from the school, San’yō replied that the young man had some merit and deserved one more chance. San’yō also suggested that future money be sent to him for safekeeping.

After San’yō died in 1832, Taiitsu returned to Kozuchi as his uncle’s assistant teacher; five years later he moved to Nagoya to open his own Confucian academy. Because he disliked the way Confucianism was ‘sold’ at local government schools, he allowed his students to pay what they could. A successful teacher, he was invited in 1844 to serve as the Confucian scholar for the Yōdōkan, the Nagoya academy of the Naruse clan. He made three requests of the chief retainer: being allowed to wear samurai robes when lecturing before the lord, being allowed to smoke, and being allowed to fart. The latter came from his fondness for satsuma ino (sweet potatoes); the retainer laughed and agreed, and Taiitsu ended up teaching at the Yōdōkan for more than twenty years.

Devoted to studying and teaching Chinese poetry, in 1849 Taiitsu invited his students to help him produce a compendium of 1,500 Chinese verses called the *Yogekes shisen*. Modeled upon a Sung dynasty compilation, this work emphasized poems about nature and daily life. Four years later, Taiitsu published a selection of poems by Kan Sazan (Chazan, 1748-1827), a leader in the new, more personal style of Japanese kanubi (Chinese-style) poetry that was based upon Sung and Ming, rather than Tang dynasty models. Taiitsu’s own poems, many of which had been composed during his years of teaching in Nagoya, were gathered and published in 1878 as the *Taiitsu-shū*.

Taiitsu also wrote a preface for a satiric book about sexual matters, the *Daitō kigo* (*Great eastern bedroom talk*) that soon became taboo and is now very rare. To get an idea of the content, the question is posed whether eating or sex was more important. The answer was that one must eat every day, but one might have to wait three years for sex. Unlike other Confucians, Taiitsu also inscribed paintings of courtesans and composed a few poems of his own referring to sex through the metaphor of clouds and rain. He also wrote how he recalled the pleasures of the Gion fifty years earlier; these were now just “the dreams of a cold and lonely white-haired old man”.

Although he held an honourable scholarly position in a major city, Taiitsu missed living in a natural setting. One of his poems makes clear how he enjoyed the act of painting as a means of evoking the world of nature:

*Past fifty years old, my spirit is not at rest;*
*I’m still confused, and my hair is mottled with white.*
*Living in the city for ten years as though in the countryside,*
*I play with the brush every day to bring forth mountains.*
Taiitsu’s ink paintings generally follow the Nanga (literati) tradition, supported by his ideology as a Chinese-style scholar. His works are more overtly eccentric than those of professional Nanga masters because of his strongly individualistic and somewhat anti-authoritarian personality, and also because he could paint for his own enjoyment rather than expecting to sell his works. Taiitsu was well aware of the unconventional nature of his art, and inscribed several landscape paintings, including two in this exhibition, with the following quatrain:

All the methods that restrict man don’t apply to me,  
What you see in this painting is my natural place.  
Where peaks and ridges pull back, there is some elbow room;  
Pale ink penetrates the forest, and distant mountains emerge.

Taiitsu reiterated his attitude towards painting as an act of personal expression, sometimes difficult to achieve, in several other poems. For example, he inscribed on one of his landscapes:

Clouds and mist have been in my breast all my life,  
And the transmission of painting has never been blocked;  
Yet who knows what unexpected results appear?  
I painfully paint mountains, but only vagrant peaks appear.

Other excerpts from his poems show a similar expression of the literati persona:

Directly copying clouds and mist from within my breast,  
I have no desire to climb the hills and peaks of professional artists.  
Painters contend over brush and ink, but who can climb the hills and peaks within?  
I’m proud that my scholarship comes first and landscapes afterwards.

Painting seems to have been secondary to Taiitsu during his days as a Confucian scholar, since he was primarily devoted to teaching. He was famous for enlivening his lectures with local dialect and humour, and for puffing on a pipe so constantly that students became accustomed to clouds of tobacco smoke. His continuing fondness for sweet potatoes caused him to pass wind noisily, even in front of important officials (one of his seals says “fart master”). He did not drink alcohol, however, so he wrote that his odd behavior had no excuse:

My years pass sixty, but I have accomplished nothing,  
I swallow my ambitions, give up all hopes.  
I don’t drink, yet seem crazy, how would I be if fond of wine?  
I’m just an old man full of crisscross ideas.
A scholar and teacher all his life, Taiitsu did not try to become involved in the political struggles at the end of the Tokugawa era. As a pupil of Rai San’yō, whom he revered throughout his life, Taiitsu certainly must have been loyalist in his sympathies. In fact, he created a number of paintings, poems, and calligraphy scrolls based on the story of the early 14th-century Emperor Go-Daigo who attempted to exert imperial rule during an age of warrior control over Japan. Despite his personal feelings, Taiitsu stayed out of the governmental struggles of his day; nevertheless, his life was affected by the result.

I studied literature a little, but returned empty;
Now I shamelessly wear a Confucian’s robe.
Living in a small town, I cannot compete for leadership—
I yield to the young warriors.

In 1868 the Yödōkan was merged with the official academy of Inuyama, the Keidōkan, and in 1870 Taiitsu moved to Inuyama to become its resident Confucian scholar. With the abolishment of the feudal system, however, such schools lost their support, and the following year the Keidōkan was closed. While many Confucians became involved in the new government, Taiitsu retired.

Taiitsu and his family, never wealthy, were now very poor. He earned a meagre living through private teaching, but he had to rent out his house to a merchant as a salesroom. Taiitsu taught his classes under a tree, and became known more and more as an eccentric. He loved to paint as the spirit moved him, whether or not the occasion was appropriate. He spontaneously depicted bamboo on his daughter’s new wedding tansu, causing her to weep, but at the wedding banquet he behaved even more oddly. Feeling the urge to paint, he went upstairs to the bath-room, stuck toilet paper on the walls with ink, and painted bamboo complete with signature and date. His son-in-law was upset, but the wedding guests went one by one to the privy to see the result and decided it was a masterpiece.

Like most literati painters, Taiitsu often painted landscapes, drawn from his imagination rather than directly copied from nature. He boldly emphasized the basic elements of mountains and trees, while leaving significant empty spaces to suggest water and the sky. In addition, he frequently sketched one or more small human figures, universalized rather than specific, strolling, drinking tea, or just enjoying the scene. By the skilful use of forceful dark ink in some areas, most often trees, and lighter ink in others, usually mountains, he was able to create notably strong compositions. These were enhanced by his contrasts of sharp black lines and softer grey wash, as well as a variety of tonalities, sometimes in single brushstrokes. The result is that his landscapes are alive and breathing, rather than static.

Taiitsu also painted plant and animal subjects, but he was unusual among scholar-artists in that at least half his paintings feature specific human figures. Rather than portraying the Chinese sages or poets of the literati, he depicted famous personages from Japanese poetry and history such as Saigyō, Bashō, Sen no Rikyū, Nawa Nagatoshi, Kusunoki Masashige, Bingo Saburō, and Ōishi Yoshio.

A fine example of Taiitsu’s painting of historical figures is that of Emperor Go-Daigo’s devoted follower Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336) saying a final farewell to his 10-year-old son Masatsura (1326-1348). The armour-clad warrior leans down towards the smaller figure, and both his pose and facial expression suggest his sorrow without any excess emotionalism unbecoming to a samurai.

Entrusted by the Emperor with a mission that would cost him his life,
He was not like other men who steal away when favors have ceased;
His great action, rare at any time, makes men weep,
Having put on his armor, he now must part with his son.
The rich inktones in the painting and the vibrant calligraphy above it make this one of Taiitsu’s strongest figural works.

For a painting of Bashö, Taiitsu transformed a haiku by the master into a Chinese-style quatrain. The original has only ten words in Japanese, a few more in English, and since the name Bashö literally means ‘banana plant’, it is also Bashö in the storm:

bashō nowaki       banana plant in the storm—
shite tarai ni ame wo I listen to the rain
kiku yo kana       on the tub at night

Taiitsu’s poem specifies what was left unspoken in the haiku, and here the rain only arrives halfway through the quatrain:

The wind rips the banana leaves up, down, and sideways,
But as yet no rain accompanies this lonely feeling.
Then, as evening deepens, I move my seat to avoid leaks from the roof:
From the bottom of my tub, from time to time I hear the sound of raindrops.

In addition to well-known figures, Taiitsu also occasionally painted everyday people, such as begging monks. During the Tokugawa era, Buddhism had often been scorned by Confucians, and now in the early Meiji period it was considered obsolete by many reformers. In one of his scrolls, Taiitsu gently satirized monks by portraying them with an element of caricature. However, his inscription makes clear that Taiitsu had sympathy for them and their difficult life:

With only their begging bowls they travel to the far horizon,
When do they ever sigh and complain?
It’s absurd for a Confucian to gnash his teeth—
Who eats to the full, and who goes cold and hungry?

The brushwork of this painting is typical of Taiitsu’s figure studies. He typically used lively, unmodulated (even-width) lines with a few areas of tonally varied wash. The calligraphy, done with the same brush as the painting, continues the free and energetic movement, so that both the words and the figures convey a spirit of movement and dance. Despite Taiitsu’s own difficult life, he thus expressed his unique humor and vitality.

Taiitsu also depicted Ōharame, the humble women of Ōhara who traditionally carried firewood on their heads into Kyoto. He portrayed them with lively brushwork, a full range of inktones, and a slight touch of humor. Their faces, rendered with a bare minimum of
Fig. 2. Begging monks

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太乙老人三絶, 白雪
93.3 x 32

何曾	Begging monks
一鉢天涯客	With only their begging bowls they travel to the far horizon
何曾發感慨	When do they ever sigh or complain
儒生妄切歯	It’s absurd for a Confucian to gnash his teeth:
孰飽孰饑寒	Who eats to the full, who goes cold and hungry (Addiss)
Comp. Söjin ’83, p. 9

The poem reflects Taiitsu’s ideas as a Confucian about the Buddhist clergy: they are well fed, but nevertheless always asking for more. After 1872 monks were forbidden to go on traditional begging rounds (Seo, Zenmi 2011, p. 12).

Fig. 3. Ōharame

Signed: Taiitsu nanajühachiö heidai, 太乙七十八翁併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太乙老人三絶, 白雪
126 x 31

八瀬小原女子戴薪図「大原女」
木綿褌白喚声柔	Wearing simple white cloth, they call out gently,
高戴束薪肩譲頭	Carrying bundles of firewood on their heads instead of their shoulders.
銀闕瑤台金粉地	In this place of silver palaces, jasper terraces, and gold dust.
野装楚々亦風流	Their graceful rustic dress is also elegant. (Addiss)
cf. Söjin ’83 p. 4; Söjin ’88 # 31; Ichinomiya # 28

Ōharame are the young women from Ōhara who brought firewood into Kyoto, a two-and-a-half hour journey on foot each way.
dots and short brushstrokes, are full of rustic spirit, but Taiitsu found their modest garments to be as praiseworthy as the luxurious splendors of Kyoto:

\begin{quote}
Wearing simple white cloth, they call out gently,
Carrying bundles of firewood on their heads instead of their shoulders.
In this place of silver palaces, jasper terraces, and gold dust,
Their graceful rustic dress is also elegant.
\end{quote}

Painting for his own enjoyment, Taiitsu maintained his scholarly persona until his death in Inuyama in 1881. His landscapes and figure studies were not taken very seriously during his lifetime, but local people found them more valuable after his death. It is said that his daughters, living in poverty, would rent out Taiitsu’s seals to his former pupils who copied his paintings, so the detection of forgeries is particularly difficult, but the finest works can be authenticated by their controlled but freely personal brushwork.

While Taiitsu’s art has only gradually become more popular in other areas of Japan, in Inuyama he remains a beloved figure. During my studies of his life and art I was treated very well by the local populace; everyone was delighted that Westerners would be able to see Taiitsu’s works. A year after the exhibition, I went back to Inuyama to visit and thank those who had helped me, and I found a welcoming committee waiting at the railroad station. Much to my dismay, they informed me that I was now to give a lecture on Taiitsu to the local Taiitsu fan club, and I was whisked to a large room in a business office. Since I had not prepared for this, I was quite nervous until I saw that several people had brought along their Taiitsu paintings and calligraphy. Therefore, instead of trying to give a lecture, I enjoyed unrolling the scrolls and chatting with their owners, and the conversation soon widened; everyone seemed to have a good time. It was refreshing to discover that club members included the local historian Yoshida Gyöichirö, grade-school and high-school teachers, the town’s fire chief, its sanitation inspector, the abbot of a local temple, a group of housewives, and a taxi driver. Taiitsu, at least in Inuyama, had become an artist for everyone, and I’m sure he would have found that the highest possible compliment.
1. Mount Fuji

Signed: Taiitsu nanajühachiö heidai, 太乙七十八翁併題

Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 大一老人三絶、白雪

winter 1881
43.4 x 65.5

題富岳圖
英雄爭戰賭山川
冷笑高蟠東海天
世態浮雲變朝暮
屹然誰似萬斯年

At a picture of Mount Fuji
Heroes fought wars and conflicts among themselves over mountains and rivers.
He looked down on it with a cool smile from high in the sky at the Eastern Sea.
Every morning and every evening changed the sight of him with floating clouds.
Who is it that rises as high on such eternity?

cf. Sōjin 1988, p. 46

Fig. 4.
Sōjin ‘88, p. 46
2. Gassaku meeting: Jinsei Ichiraku (Human life is one party)

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin geikoku, 大乙老人戲墨
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Nōzan sanmoku.

A gassaku is a meeting where poets and painters come together to discuss each other’s work, work together and enjoy each other’s company.
3. **Gassaku album by Taiitsu (a.o.)**  
summer of 1866  
9.7 x 6.3

The introduction (title) and the first painting are by Taiitsu. Based on a comparison of styles, the other 15 pages of calligraphy and paintings are most probably by Taiitsu’s (to me unknown) pupils.

- The soul of colour, *Shinsai*, 神彩
  - Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin, 太乙老人
  - Seal: Tenka, 天華

- Dance performance
  - Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin giboku, 太乙老人戯墨
  - Seal: Tenka, 天華
4. Horse

Signed: Taiitsu nanajyukyo (79) gihoku.
太乙七十九翁戯墨
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & sanmoku,
大一老人三絶、濃山散木
Spring of 1881
137 x 62.7
5. Three calls at the thatched cottage

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai,
太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu &
Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶, 白雪
135 x 62.6

草廬三顧
戦鼓惡聞甘作農
傍觀九士縫誰縫
草廬地僻無人訪
三顧風雲起臥龍

Three calls at the thatched cottage
It is horrible to hear the war drums, and so much sweeter to occupy oneself with farming.
From a distance he looks at the nine regions, who will stitch the seams?
The grass-covered cottage is secluded and no guests ever come.
After three visits, the stormy clouds [Liu Bei] made the crouching dragon [Zhuge Liang] rise. (HK)

Liu Bei made three calls at the thatched cottage when he sought the aid of Zhuge Liang, a master strategist then living in seclusion. ‘Crouching dragon’ is Zhuge Liang’s nickname.

Fig. 5
Internet image
6. Han Xin grovelling

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶、白雪

Han Xin grovelling
He who would be a general one day
was grovelling under someone’s crotch.
Still, people noticed his broad chest.
When he was installed he wondered
whether the incident had been real or just a dream (HK)

cf. Ichinomiya # 33

Han Xin (230?–196 BC), then a poor youth, was humiliated by a
group of ruffians. He decided to stoop and crawl rather than take the
chance of being defeated. Later in life he became a famous general.
He was of great service to the emperor Liu Bang, who established the
Han dynasty.
7. Under the kotatsu

Signed: Höhi sensei (fart master) heidai, 放屁先生併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sansetsu & Hakusetsu, 大一老人三絶, 白雪
30.5 x 35.4

朝雲暮雨情  Making love
海門染指覺潮生  The narrow strait moistens the fingers that feel the rising tide,
漸入佳餚不可名  Slowly they reach out to paradise.
此除孔丘亦何有  Apart from Master Kong, wouldn’t anyone know
朝雲暮雨一般情  that this is what it feels like to be in the throes of love? (HK)
cf. Sōjin ‘83, p. 5; Ichinomiya # 18

In order to heighten the playful mocking atmosphere, the poem contains several allusions to high-brow classical literature. ‘Master Kong’ refers to Confucius.
8. **Sixteen rakan**

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin santsatsu & Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶，白雪
135.7 x 64

六仙僧事有無
古傳信作頑愚
龍生銙詛知何回
畢竟仙僧是佛奴

**Sixteen rakan**

*The sixteen Elders obstinately dispute the nature of 'existence' and 'non-existence' according to ancient texts, yet they have no idea of the real use of the dragon-creating alms bowl. After all, these elders are slaves of Buddhist law.*

(John Stevens)
cf. Sōjin '83, p. 12;
_An enduring vision_, 2002, cat. # 47

Another playful Confucian comment on Buddhism in the early Meiji years (see also fig.1, _Begging monks_).

In Japan the sixteen _rakan_ (Sanscr. _arhats_, Elders) are particularly popular in Zen Buddhism, where they are presented as models of behaviour and defenders of Buddhist moral values.
9. The loyal retainers of Ako

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Murase shi Rei Taiitsu, 村瀬氏藜太乙
130 x 30.2

赤穂義士
名声休檀一荊軻
四六英雄奈比多
平日銘心歳寒語
佩華和雪試如何

The loyal retainers of Ako
There is not only one Jing Ke
There were 46 such heroes in this world
Every day they inscribed in their hearts
That their swords would glint in the snow (Addiss)

cf. Addiss # 15, Sōjin '83, p. 10 (p. 13, 47 rōnin); Sōjin '88 # 10; Ichinomiya # 44

This poem refers to the story of the 47 loyal retainers, who avenged the death of their master. It compares their heroism to that of Jing Ke. Jing Ke (?–227 BC) was famous for his failed attempt on the life of Ying Zheng, king of the state of Qin, who later became China’s first emperor (r. 221–210 BC).
10. Fujitsuna Aoto, the story of the lost cash

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hokusatsu,
大一老人三絶, 白雪
132.1 x 54

A torch of fifty sen was used to dredge up ten,
Immediately everyone spoke about such foolishness.
This was an official matter, whether the lord knew of it or not.
He maintained that it was worthwhile to spend thousands. (HK)

The minister Fujitsuna Aoto was celebrated for his righteousness and disinterestedness. He is a character from the novel Azuma kagami, written at the end of the 13th century. In 1812 his story was used by Takizawa Bakin in Aoto Fujitsuna moryōan (illustrated by Hokusai).

Once, Aoto dropped ten sen in a river. In order to regain the money, he spent 50 sen on men and torches. He told his friends, who did not understand the excessive expenditure, that the 50 had benefited others; for this reason his actions could not be called unprofitable. (Joly)
11. The empress Jingü

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu,
大一老人三絶, 白雪
135.2 x 60.8

The empress Jingü
She promptly crossed the waves and subjugated everyone.
The three Korean states became a province, the sea a canal.
Once this virile country was praised for its army without enemies,
I am moved by memories and my tears richly flow (HK)

According to the *Nihon shoki*, the empress Jingü (169-269) and her armies successfully invaded Korea.
12. Tokiwa Gozen and her children

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sansetsu & Hakusetsu, 大乙老人三絶，白雪

The gods protect the two children and shield the baby too
On their way, they are overtaken by an endless blizzard
Their fate seems sealed; how could they know the infant would become a tiger,
that his teeth would tear enemies apart and turn their white banners red? (HK)

Tokiwa Gozen (1138-c. 1180) was the wife to Minamoto no Yoshitomo, and
mother of three sons, the youngest of whom became the great general
Minamoto no Yoshitsune. She is primarily associated with an incident during
the 1160 Heiji Rebellion, in which she fled through the snow with her three
young sons.
13. Moving west

Signed: Taiitsu nanajyūyō (79) heidai, 太乙七十九翁併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶, 白雪
Date: 1881, the fourth day of the first month
125.7 x 46.8

西行
皇城忍看日萧々
北面武人朝去朝
一擲妻児是難事
爾来無物孰银猫

Moving west
It’s sad to see the Imperial palace daily more desolate,
Each dawn sees more samurai moving to the north
Leaving one’s wife and children is truly a hardship.
Since that time there is nothing but this silver cat. (Addiss)
cf. Addiss # 9; Sōjin ’81 # 42; Sōjin ’92 # 4; Ichinomiya # 46

Nanchuan saw the monks of the temple of Nanchu fighting over a cat. Seizing the cat, he told the monks: ‘If any of you can say a word of Zen, the cat will be spared.’ No one answered and Nanchuan cut the cat in two. When the teacher Zhaozho returned to the monastery, Nanchuan told him what had happened. Zhaozho took off his sandals, put them on his head, and walked out. Nanchuan said: ‘If you had been there, you would have saved the cat.’
(http://sweepingzen.com/nanchuan-kills-a-cat/)

Like children, the monks were quarreling over a cat. It would kill the cat. The situation in Japan at the end of the Edo period might be compared with this Zen koan. Imperialists (south) and the bakufu (north) fighting each other. Despite the outcome of the conflict, it would mean the end of the old capital.
14. Ebisu

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Murase Shi Rei Taiitsu & Yukumo Nagamizu, 村瀬氏藜太乙, 行雲流
87.5 x 31.2

He looks ahead laughing, enjoying spring.
Without uttering a word of wonder, he opens people’s eyes.
Who knows what is enough in life, will live without malice.
Like a god without money and completely at peace. (HK)
cf. Sōjin ’88, # 22

Ebisu

Ebisu, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (shichifukujin) and also the patron of fishermen, was the first child of Izanagi and Izanami, the deities who created Japan. Legend has it that he was born without bones. He is the only one of the seven whose origins are purely Japanese, without any Hindu or Chinese influence.
15. The sound of fulling in the moonlight,  
*Gekka ni chinsei* (woman pounding cloth)

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanetsu & Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶. 白雪

A pale moon sinks into the clouds  
And it is lonely here,  
Despite the sound of the fulling block.  
Who would know that I think of him with every stroke?  
These chilly clothes I have to send to him so far away. (HK)

* cf. Söjin ’83, p. 10; Söjin ’88, # 16; Ichinomiya # 29

This poem fits a tradition of Tang-poetry. In these poems women think of their men who are fighting aggressive barbarians on the borders in the cold north-west.
16. Yoshimitsu

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Murase Taiitsu & Hakusetsu, 村瀬太乙,白雪

138.3 x 62

新羅三郎
関意家兄戦已危
前途急追奈何時
英雄却有從容處
秘曲授傳師氏児

Shinra Saburō
Now that the war is at a dangerous point, he worries about his older brother.
The future is precarious and how long will it all last? But heroes also know to take their ease,
The family’s music is passed on to the son of the master. (HK)

The poem refers to a story from the Kokon chomonjū (1254): Shinra teaching Tokiaki to play the shō.

Tokiaki was the son of the great shō player Toyohara Tokimoto (1058-1123), who was the teacher of Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (a.k.a. Shinra Saburō, 1045-1127). Yoshimitsu teaches Tokiaki an old song, which he learned from the boy’s father. Intending to prevent the boy from going into battle, he convinces Tokiaki that his skills are needed at the imperial court. The older brother mentioned in the poem is Minamoto no Yoshiie (1039-1106).

(Stevenson, 100 aspects of the moon # 70)
17. Sakurai Station (Kusunoki Masashige parting from his son at Sakurai)

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai

Seals: Murase shi Rei Taiitsu & Yogi, 村瀬氏藜太乙，餘技

106.4 x 30.6

Sakurai station

Entrusted by the Emperor with a mission that would cost him his life,
He was not like other men who steal away when favours have ceased.
His great action, rare at any time, makes men weep.
He has put on his armour, and now he must part with his son. (Addiss)
cf. Addiss # 11; Sōjin ‘88 p. 45; Ichinomiya # 43

Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336) and his son Masatsura (1326-1348) were fighting the Ashikaga clan on the side of the emperor Go-Daigo. Masashige advises Go-Daigo to leave the capital to the Ashikaga and seek shelter on mount Hiei. The emperor, however, is unwilling to give up the capital and insists that Masashige confront the Ashikaga’s superior forces. Masashige obediently accepts the emperor’s foolish command, thus becoming a model of samurai loyalty. On his departure he leaves his son his death poem, which implies that Masatsura should remain in the emperor’s service.
18. A visit to the Yūshōji temple

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 大一老人三絶, 白雪

圖案尺寸 134.4 x 32.4

遊祐正寺
互光明減隔煙霞
背指城樓十萬家
塵裏春風慣不好
清明踐約問閑花

A visit to the Yūshōji temple
One by one the lights grow weaker, separated by fog and mist.
The temple’s back wall faces the city gates and thousands of homes.
I am not yet used to the whirling dust of the spring breeze,
And no flowers yet for the coming Qingming festival. (HK)

Qingming festival (also known as tomb sweeping day) provides an opportunity to honour the dead. It usually begins around 5 April and ends around 20 April. This Chinese festival is also celebrated in Japan.

Fig. 12
Sōjin 1981
19. **My natural place**

*Signed:* Taiitu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題

*Seals:* Yukumo Nagamizu & Murase Shi Rei Taiitu, 行雲流水, 村瀬氏藜太乙

102.3 x 29.7

Same poem as catalogue 20.

20. **My natural place (see ill. op page 2)**

*Signed:* Taiitu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題

*Seal:* Rei Taiitu, 藤太一

106.7 x 29.7

何法縛人吾不關
君看画是自然間
峰巒縮脚留餘地
淡墨穿林出遠山

*My natural place*

*All the methods that restrict man don’t apply to me,*

*What you see in this painting is my natural place.*

*Where peaks and ridges pull back, there is some elbow room;*

*Pale ink penetrates the forest, and distant mountains emerge.* (Addiss)

*cf. Addiss, # 22; Sōjin ’81, # 23; Sōjin ’83, p. 7*
21. Boiling water for tea in the green shade

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakuetsu, 太一老人三絶,白雪
150.2 x 45.5

緑陰煎茶
潺湲側耳路三叉
試人林間流亦斜
石底水清魚可數
緑陰設席品新茶

Boiling water for tea in the green shade
Walking by the crossroads, we can hear the babbling brook,
As we enter the forest, the stream also slants inward.
Below the rocks, the water is so pure we can count the fish;
In the green shade, we spread out mats to taste the new tea. (Addiss)
cf. Addiss # 21

Fig. 14
Addiss
22. At the paddy fields

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu,
大乙老人三絕、白雪
130.7 x 49.6

The brew bought at the local inn tastes good.
After the rain one walks further than was planned.
Before moving on one should reflect on a rich harvest.
From village to village, rice planters’ songs are heard. (HK)
23. Impromptu

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太乙老人三絶, 白雪
135.5 x 62

偶作
昨雨晴来無點塵
千村万落一時新
板橋々畔青々柳
遮斷橋頭分手人

Impromptu
Yesterday’s rain has cleared, no speck of dirt is left.
All of a sudden the villages and hamlets look new.
The wooden bridge between the green willows
extends from bank to bank.
People block it as they say goodbye. (HK)
24. **Boat trip in the vicinity of the Chibi (Red cliffs)**

*Signed: Taiitu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題*

*Seals: Taiitu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太乙老人三絶、白雪*

127.8 x 45.2

七月既望
七百年前蘇子遊
尋盥此夜泛漁舟
賢愚雖別情無別
白露橫江涼月秋

*The day after the full moon of the seventh month*

Seven hundred years ago Su Dongpo went on a trip.

Let’s find a tub to go out with the fishing boats tonight;

*The wise and the foolish differ but they share this feeling.*

*A dewy whiteness is on the river in the cool of the autumn moon.* (HK)

*cf. Sōjin ‘81, # 6; Sōjin ‘83, p. 8; Ichinomiya, # 17*

Su Shi (1036-1101), also known as Su Dongpo, was a government official. He is one of the most famous poets in classical Chinese literature. His essay ‘Excerpts from the Red cliff’ describes a boating party on the Yangzi river.
25. Leaving on a mule

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Nō, Rei Taiitsu & Chōgo sankaku Yūmai, 濃、藜太弌, 鳥噱山客犬瞑鳥

132.3 x 27.9

Inscription on a painting
In the Capital, however beautiful, you will not find a moment of rest
All day long one dreams of returning to one’s native village.
Those who can get on their mules and apply the whip;
The mountains at the stream are like the mountains at home. (HK)
26. Painters brag and contend

Signed: Taiitsu Rōjin heidai, 太乙老人伝
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太乙老人三絶, 白雪

Hills and peaks inside your mind
Painters brag and contend over brush and ink,
But who can climb the hills and peaks within?
If you ask what method was utilized by men of old,
The spirit resonance rose up, and its overflow
created mountains (Addiss)

cf. Addiss, # 23-24; Sōjin ’81, # 24-25;
Sōjin ’88, # 6 & p. 45; Sōjin ’92, # 10

Fig. 16
Sōjin ’88
27. Shikunshi, the ‘four gentlemen’  
(orchid, bamboo, plum and chrysanthemum)

Signed: Taiitsu nanajukyō gihoku heidai, 太乙七十九翁題
Seals: Taiitsu Rōjin sanetsu, Nōzan sanmoku & Hakusetsu,
大一老人三絶, 壱山散木, 白雪
Summer of 1881
141 x 46.6

Orchid
Imbedded in thorns and brambles
Yet in no way stained with dust,
Its pure fragrance known only to itself.
In the secluded valley it is like a beautiful woman. (Addiss)

Water plants
The water plant blooms with two, three flowers,
A chilly wind makes everything rustle.
After the rain cleared away in the evening,
The moon shines brightly on the surface of the pond. (HK)

Orchid
Imbedded in thorns and brambles
Yet in no way stained with dust,
Its pure fragrance known only to itself.
In the secluded valley it is like a beautiful woman. (Addiss)
Chrysanthemum
The yellow reflects the white,
Scent pervades the swirling dust.
The sight of spring has now lost its meaning.
At the eastern hedge stands a withdrawn and neglected man. (HK)
cf. Sōjin ‘81, # 27; Sōjin ‘88, # 28 & p. 44

Tao Yuanming (365-427), also known as Tao Qian, was a Chinese poet who is often regarded as the greatest poet of the Six Dynasties era (c. 220-589). Disgust at the corruption and intrigues of the court prompted him to withdraw from public life: “Life is too short to compromise on principles.”

Japanese apricot
The brook freezes over without a sound,
Horizontal branches catch the jade dust.
The red dots of the flowers are not yet visible,
Snow piles up on the people of spring. (HK)

The expression ‘jade dust’ refers to snowflakes.
28. Turtles

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakuetsu, 大一老人三絶, 白雪
110.3 x 32.6

尾頭兼手足
六躯欲完然
觸物團乎嘿
知君長有年

Turtles
Tail and head, arms and legs:
The body strives to be complete.
Touching these animals makes us laugh,
They let us know our years will be many. (HK)
cf. Berry, Unexplored avenues, 2001, p. 177 (# 86)

In Japanese and Chinese tradition the turtle is a symbol of longevity.
29. The egret

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetsu & Hakusetsu, 太一老人三絶, 白雪
127 x 31.4

飛去飛來遊自如
水田漠漠雨晴餘
善哉白鷺知吾分
不欲江湖窺大魚

The egret
Flying by, flying back, traveling freely
Over vast and boundless fields after the rain.
How wonderful! The white heron understands my nature
With no desire to search the rivers for big fish. (Addiss)

cf. Addiss, # 26; Söjin ’81, p. 29
30. Bamboo

Signed: Taiitsu Röjin heidai, 太乙老人併題
Seals: Taiitsu Röjin sanzetzu & Hakusetsu, 大一老人三絶, 白雪
52.6 x 14.7

竹
歲寒凋竹木
鳳尾拂煙塵
大雪垂猶緑
從容高節人

Bamboo
The winter’s chill withers the bamboo trees,
The phoenix tail sweeps through fog and dust.
The heavy snow makes them bend but they are still green,
And dignified like a high-minded gentleman. (HK)

cf. Söjin ‘92, # 13
Signatures & seals samples

1. Taiitsu nanajūhachī heidai
   Seal: Taiitsu Rōjin sansetsu & Hakusetsu
   Date: winter 1881

2. Taiitsu Rōjin
   Seal: Tenka
   Date: summer of 1866

3. Taiitsu Rōjin
   Seal: Tenka
   Date: spring of 1881

4. Taiitsu nanajūkū yō (79) gihō
   Seal: Taiitsu Rōjin sansetsu & sanmoku
   Date: spring of 1881

5. Höhi sensei (fart master) heidai
   Seal: Taiitsu Rōjin sansetsu & Hakusetsu

14. Taiitsu Rōjin heidai
    Seal: Murase Shi Rei Taiitsu & Yakumo Nagamizu

16. Taiitsu Rōjin heidai
    Seal: Murase Taiitsu & Hakusetsu

17. Taiitsu Rōjin heidai
    Seal: Murase Shi Rei Taiitsu & Yogi

25. Taiitsu Rōjin heidai
    Seal: Nō, Rei Taiitsu & Chūgo sonokazu Yūrei
河南卫人