

## *Notes on names, terminology and dating*

All scholars today are presented with the numerous practical issues involved in trying to produce works that are scholarly, yet do not alienate those who do not have a background in their area of expertise. To this end, I compiled a glossary of the more important terms and names included here as an aid to those without a grounding in Japanese studies. I have also chosen to refer to the leading historical figures by their more familiar, rather than their linguistically or historically pure, names. For instance, I use the terms ‘emperor’ and the ‘shogun’ and the names that individuals are most commonly referred to in scholarly literature, such as Emperor Go-Mizunoo and Emperor Go-Yōzei. These names were given to the emperors posthumously, yet they are nevertheless the most immediately recognisable identifications for these figures. I also use Fujiwara Teika rather than Fujiwara [no] Sadaie. Although both readings for this poet’s name are seen in dictionaries and articles, Western scholars most often refer to him as ‘Teika’. In addition, following the example of the *Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*, except after family names of one or two syllables, I have omitted the medial ‘no’ commonly given in aristocratic names.

In Japan, there has always been a frustrating lack of coherence in the way people have been referred to, even in diaries and other documents that are written while, or shortly after, the person lived. Such variations often make it impossible to determine which reading or term can even be considered ‘historically correct’. One instance of this is the reading of the name of the famous family of painters, the Kano (Kanō). Modern scholars use both long and short voiced ‘versions’ and there are fine historical examples for each. Nevertheless, a choice needs to be made, and I decided on Kano, following the example of the late Carolyn Wheelwright.

Another problem with strict adherence to historical practice is that many people made multiple name changes during their lifetime, and used alternate names on poetry or art. As seen in Appendix 1, Nobutada used several different primary names during his lifetime and to juggle these throughout this text is unnecessarily confusing. All the more reason, I believe, to use general terms and the most commonly used names while acknowledging their limitations.

I frequently use the terms ‘aristocrat’ and ‘courtier’ in this book. Though there is some difference in nuance between these words, it is subtle enough that I feel justified to use them interchangeably. I use them to refer to those who, like Nobutada, kept their family names and did not hold a position in a religious establishment. Siblings who became priests and nuns had extremely close ties

with their families – much more so, in fact, than is commonly acknowledged. They shared the same heritage and played a very active role in aristocratic society. Nevertheless, as members of the religious community, they had different names, priorities and roles in society. While in no way intending to underestimate the considerable influence of aristocratic nuns and priests, I nevertheless put them in a related but separate category for the purposes of this study. In addition, many warriors had high court rank, were culturally astute and socialised actively with members of the court, particularly after retirement. They remained outside the inner cliques of the aristocracy because they were not born into the role, however, and thus, to my mind, cannot be considered to have the same standing as men as like Nobutada, or even his lower-ranking cohorts.

Throughout the text I refer to the ‘courtly tradition’ when discussing themes based on poetry and literature from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries. I prefer this to terms such as ‘classicism’ and ‘renaissance’, my objections to which are discussed in Chapter 3. While recognising that not all famous Japanese literary greats were aristocrats, the themes included in this discussion all have their roots in aristocratic traditions, and they primarily celebrate the poetic and artistic achievements of the court.

As is the common practice in China and Japan, family names are given first, followed by personal names. Temple names end with the suffixes ‘tera’, ‘dera’ or ‘ji’. Historical Japanese names are given family names first, followed by personal names. On second reference, one generally refers to people by their personal name. Monk’s names also have two parts, neither of which comes from their family, and here, as elsewhere, they are often referred to by the first-listed name.

## Dating

There has been considerable discussion about the use of period names in Japanese studies. I prefer to sidestep the quicksand of ill-defined periods and eras such as ‘Tokugawa’, ‘Edo’ or ‘Momoyama’. Whenever possible I use more specific spans of dates (e.g., 1600–50), century designations or portions thereof. I occasionally do refer to era names (*nengo*), particularly that of the Keichō (from 10/1596 until 7/1615) and the subsequent Genna (lasting until 2/1624), which are clearly defined and usually of short duration. When giving specific dates, the order is: 1) the era name; 2) which year of this era; 3) the month; and 4) the day. For example, Nobutada died on the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month of the nineteenth year of the Keichō era, which is given as (Keichō 19/11/25).

With some qualms I use, in the title and elsewhere, the ambiguous term ‘early modern Japan’. Scholars of Japanese history use this phrase to describe the period after ‘medieval’ and before ‘modern’. Here, I treat the period roughly from the middle of the fifteenth century until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Although ‘early modern’ can properly be stretched until well into the nineteenth century, and many of the points made here are pertinent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one needs to draw the line somewhere and because this study concerns Nobutada, who died in 1614, a century after his death seems a reasonable endpoint. Since the Keichō era was the period of Nobutada’s greatest artistic output, I have centred the discussion on these years, with the first and last chapters having more general discussions of the periods before (1450–1598) and after (1615–1715) this era. These ‘cut offs’ are somewhat arbitrary, but these years include the life dates of most of the key people mentioned here and works of art that are directly related to this study.

Ages are in Japanese traditional terms, thus a person was one year old when born. Death anniversaries are similarly calculated, for example, the third anniversary of someone’s death would be commemorated two years after the death itself. Intercalary months – ‘extra’ months that were added because of the use of a lunisolar calendar – are so noted.

Appendix 2 is a chronology of events that occurred during Nobutada’s lifetime. For simplicity and following the lead of my Japanese colleagues, I have used Western years and associated these with their Japanese era name counterparts—official court-established year designations. In reality, these are not equivalent: the last month or so of Japanese ‘years’ fall early in the subsequent year in the Western calendar. In addition, the *nengo* were sometimes changed late in the year. For instance, most of the year given as Keichō 1 (1596) was actually Bunroku 5 until the end of the 10th month, which was in December in the Western calendar. When dealing with Japanese materials alone there is rarely a problem with this but in needs to be taken into account when working with European sources.