

Details please about Kurakawa Shinzaburo's 1898 work Seishoo yoroku.

Copilot said:

Copilot

Kurakawa (Kurokawa) Shinzaburō's *Seishō yoroku* (清賞余録, 1898) is a late-Meiji Japanese art publication that functions primarily as an **illustrated catalog (図録) of a connoisseurial exhibition of East Asian artistic and cultivated objects**. Below is a detailed breakdown of its nature, contents, and significance.

Basic bibliographic facts

- **Title:** 清賞余録 (*Seishō yoroku*, often translated loosely as “Gleanings of Refined Appreciation”)
- **Author/editor:** 黒川新三郎 (Kurokawa / Kurakawa Shinzaburō)
- **Publication date:** Meiji 31 (1898)hathitrust+1
- **Format:** 2 volumes (乾・坤; upper/lower fascicles), traditional Japanese bindinghathitrust
- **Length:** c. 30 + 37 folded leaves (no pagination)go
- **Language:** Japanese (with heavy use of classical Chinese-style text)hathitrust

Nature and purpose of the work

1. Exhibition catalogue

The work is **not a theoretical treatise** but a **record of an exhibition held in March 1897** organized by Kurokawa and associates.hathitrust

- It documents objects shown in a **cultured gathering or display (likely connected to literati or tea culture circles)**.
- Comparable to earlier Edo-period “tea gathering catalogs” (茶会図録), preserving:
 - items displayed
 - their arrangement
 - aesthetic context

2. “Connoisseur culture” document

The title 清賞 (“pure/refined appreciation”) indicates its orientation toward:

- elite aesthetic taste
- cultivated viewing practices
- Chinese-inspired literati culture

It reflects **Meiji-era continuation of Edo cultured hobbies**, especially:

- tea ceremony (茶道)
- bonsai / horticulture
- flower arrangement (生け花)
- calligraphy and painting

Contents and structure

A. Types of objects catalogued

The catalog includes a wide range of artistic and cultured objects:

- **Chinese and Japanese paintings**
- **Calligraphy (especially Chinese-style)**
- **Bonsai and plant displays**
- **Flower arrangements**
- **Tea utensils and implements**
- **Bronzes, ceramics, lacquerware, and decorative objects**

These reflect the interlinked arts of the “**bunjin**” (literati) and tea world.

B. Arrangement into “seats” or display groupings

The scanned text shows the exhibition divided into “**seats**” (席) or sections—typical of tea gatherings and exhibitions:

- “First seat”
- “Second seat”
- up to multiple sections

Each section lists:

- artworks (paintings, calligraphy scrolls)
- display objects
- occasionally the artists or makers

This structure replicates **how visitors physically moved through the exhibition.**

C. Listings of artists and objects

Entries typically include:

- artist names (often Chinese masters or Japanese literati painters)
- brief descriptions or titles
- type of object (scroll, screen, vessel, etc.)

Some examples (visible in the digitized text):

- landscape paintings
- calligraphy excerpts
- bird-and-flower paintings
- scholar’s objects (inkstones, seals, incense tools)

D. Display aesthetics

A distinctive feature is attention to **arrangement and combinations:**

- Objects are not listed abstractly but **as displayed ensembles**
- Includes:

- placement (e.g., on stands, tables)
- pairing of painting + flower + vessel
- seasonal or thematic coherence

This is crucial for understanding **Meiji aesthetic presentation practices**, inherited from tea ceremony conventions.

Cultural and historical significance

1. Continuity of literati (bunjin) culture

Even in the rapidly modernizing Meiji period, the book shows:

- ongoing reverence for **Chinese art and scholarship traditions**
 - use of classical Chinese language conventions
 - emphasis on scholarly taste over popular art
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2. Tea culture and exhibition culture

It documents the transformation of:

- **tea gatherings (茶会)**
into
- more formal **public or semi-public exhibitions**

This reflects a broader Meiji trend:

- systematizing and documenting traditional arts
 - presenting them in modern, quasi-museum formats
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3. Early art-historical documentation

Seishō yoroku is valuable as:

- a **primary record of actual objects in circulation in 1890s Japan**
- evidence of **collectors' networks and taste hierarchies**
- a precursor to modern museum catalogues

4. Synthesis of Chinese and Japanese aesthetics

The catalog highlights:

- strong Chinese influence in painting and calligraphy
- integration with Japanese practices (ikebana, tea utensils)

It exemplifies a **hybrid “Sino-Japanese cultured aesthetic”** dominant among elites.

Title meaning

- **清賞 (Seishō):** refined / pure aesthetic appreciation
- **余録 (yoroku):** supplementary records or “gleanings”

👉 So the title roughly means:

“Supplementary Records of Refined Appreciation”

—suggesting a curated record of aesthetic experiences.

Physical characteristics

- Traditional **fukurotoji (bound booklet) format**
- Printed from woodblocks or early modern printing methods
- Minimal apparatus:
 - no page numbers
 - sometimes no table of contentsarchive

This makes it closer to an **art object itself** than a modern book.

In summary

Seishō yoroku (1898) is:

- an **illustrated exhibition catalog** of a 1897 curated display
- documenting **paintings, calligraphy, bonsai, tea objects, and decorative arts**
- organized by display “seats,” emphasizing **aesthetic arrangement**
- a key source for understanding:
 - Meiji-period connoisseur culture
 - continuation of literati traditions
 - early modern Japanese exhibition practices

Sources



Results from a moment of research on MS CoPilot Chat, 06/02/26 a.m.