

## 6. DIFFERENT FORMS OF *WABI* AS AN AESTHETIC CONCEPT

### 6.1. GENERAL

In previous studies, *wabi* as an aesthetic concept has been explained to express poverty or primitive simplicity, as well as imperfection or insufficiency.<sup>816</sup> *Wabi* is also said to be an expression of solitariness,<sup>817</sup> or the beauty of roughness including the ideas of modesty and poverty.<sup>818</sup> Some scholars do not even try to explain the meaning(s) of *wabi* in concrete terms. Yanagi, for example, says that, "the idea cannot be demonstrated in a physical sense; it must be conveyed by formless spirit."<sup>819</sup> This study admits that the sense of *wabi* in *chadô* is based on the "spirit", which in this study is understood to be the spirit of the *wabi* mind, and from the realisation of the *wabi* mind arise different forms of *wabi* as aesthetics (Chapter 2 and Chapter 6).

The two most influential definitions of *wabi* are by Okakura Kakuzo and Hisamatsu Shinichi (see 1.3), which have influenced the understanding of *wabi* as imperfect beauty. For Okakura, the idea of beauty in objects proceeds from imperfect to perfect by purposely leaving something unfinished for the imagination to complete. He continues his description of true beauty by saying that true beauty is discovered only by one who completes the incomplete in one's mind.<sup>820</sup> For Hisamatsu, imperfect beauty proceeds from perfect to imperfect. For him the imperfect exists beyond the perfect. Hisamatsu prefers the word asymmetry instead, and includes it as one of the seven characteristics of *chadô*. The beauty of *wabi* means demolishing symmetry. It means breaking the idea of symmetry in order to

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<sup>816</sup> Engel 1964, p. 284. Engel considers that *wabi* associated with the idea of imperfection and insufficiency is no longer distinguishable from the term *sabi*. For further information, see *ibid.*, pp. 278-285.

<sup>817</sup> Hirota 1995, p. 27. Hirota also uses "insufficiency" in describing *wabi*.

<sup>818</sup> Mizuo 1971, p. 131.

<sup>819</sup> Yanagi 1989, p. 184. See also Karaki 1989, p. 34; Kazue 1985, pp. 10-11; Mizuo 1971, pp. 8-13. Karaki explains *wabi* being an ambiguous term and he considers that *sabi* is "a higher" term than *wabi* because it lacks the idea of impermanence. Kazue also believes that *wabi* is an ambiguous term and cannot be explained with words and therefore, it is difficult to understand. Mizuo agrees with the difficulty of explaining *wabi* in concrete terms but attempts to explain it from different perspectives through the history of Tea in his book.

<sup>820</sup> Okakura 1989, pp. 75-76, 89.

exceed the state of symmetry, and therefore it is a negation of perfection and exists beyond symmetry.<sup>821</sup>

In this study, the dilemma of *wabi* as an imperfect beauty is not emphasised. It is considered to be just one form or expression of *wabi* among others. However, Hisamatsu's idea that beauty which is truly fascinating exists in a state beyond perfection; leaning towards the beauty of asymmetry is considered to be a higher expression of beauty than so-called perfect beauty. In this study, the notion of *wabi* as an aesthetic concept exists in the ultimate state of the mind, in the *wabi* mind, which is synonymous with the idea of the Buddha-mind (see Chapter 2). Once this state is reached, it becomes possible to understand the deeper expressions of beauty, such as *wabi* beauty in all its forms. Therefore, the sense of *wabi* is something more, something deeper than just a plain luxury, plain roughness, plain chill, or plain withered. Actually, these do not convey the sense of *wabi*; they are just expressions of beauty in their dictionary meanings, possessing no deeper and subtle nuances. The sense of *wabi* as an aesthetic concept has to be born through the *wabi* mind in order to attain a true and deeper understanding of these expressions of beauty, which are attained through the ultimate state of mind. Next, the expressions of *wabi* that have emerged through this ultimate state are discussed in concrete terms by giving examples of selected tea utensils.

## 6.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF WABI BEAUTY

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 demonstrated that both Jô-ô's and Rikyû's Tea possessed the sense of *wabi*. Next, the expressions, the characteristics, of *wabi* as an aesthetic notion are studied more in detail. The classification of *wabi* beauty is based on poems by Teika ("*miwataseba...*") and Ietaka ("*hana wo nomi...*"), along with the passage found in *Yamanoue Sôjiki* (see Section 5.2), and their metaphoric meanings describing the sense of *wabi* in *chadô* of the Great Tea Masters. According to these classical sources, five characteristics of *wabi* beauty may be found: luxury,

<sup>821</sup> Hisamatsu 1973, p. 62. See also Hisamatsu 1987, pp. 60-69, on the seven characteristics of *wabi* as beauty, and also Hisamatsu 1976, p. 24: the same seven characteristics are given to describe Zen aesthetics. For further discussion on the imperfect beauty, see also Mizuo 1971, pp. 132-133; Yanagi 1989, pp. 120-121; Kumakura 1987, pp. 155-158. Mizuo explains the beauty of *wabi* emerges from the opposite poles of perfect-imperfect which comes close to Yanagi's idea of true beauty based on freedom from the distinction of perfect and imperfect, i.e., the imperfect is identified with the perfect, and therefore, Yanagi finds the term irregular the more suitable word for the purpose. Kumakura, on the other hand, writes that it should be called a beauty of fundamental emptiness (*musô*) because it conveys the Buddhist idea of the impermanence in all things. Yanagi's idea on the beauty of freedom comes close to the idea of *wabi* introduced in this study. However, his study focuses on Japanese folkcrafts not on art objects in general and therefore, the idea of *wabi* beauty cannot be considered identical in these two cases.

chill calmness, austerity, golden *wabi*, and absolute subtleness, which emerge from the ultimate state of chill, lean and withered. All of these characteristics emerge from the ultimate state of the *wabi* mind. In the following, I propose to classify and analyse the metaphoric expressions of *wabi* beauty reflected in Tea-related classical sources.

### 6.2.1. Luxury

According to the poems "*miwataseba...*" and "*hana wo nomi...*" (see Section 5.2), which are said in *Nanpôroku* to illustrate Jô-ô's and Rikyû's ideas of beauty in *wabichadô*, the sense of luxury is brought out with metaphors of 'flowers and crimson leaves' or 'cherry blossoms in full bloom'. Both of these poems use negation to describe the sense of luxury. The images of 'flowers and crimson leaves' and 'cherry blossoms' is negated by the expression: 'there are no flowers and crimson leaves', or with the image that, instead of the abundance of flowers in full bloom, one wishes to show only one tiny branch of 'new green'. Similarly, negation is used in *Yamanoue Sôjiki* (Section 5.2), describing how Jô-ô's sense of *wabi* reflects the time after the full bloom of cherry blossoms at Yoshino and after the strong green of summer has passed. The negations are followed by affirmation in both of these two poems as well as in the cited passage from *Yamanoue Sôjiki*, which describes the beauty in Jô-ô's Tea: it should look like the autumn moon and crimson leaves. Even though an object, here a luxurious utensil, is negated, it still exists in the form of an affirmation (inverted negation): it refers to luxurious things in the autumn dusk or in early winter (see Section 2.3.1 on negative expressions).

Even the famed or luxurious tea utensils look more humble in a dim, straw-thatched hut than in bright luxurious surroundings. The humble and modest surroundings do not diminish their beauty, but rather deepen it. On the other hand, the contrasts are always more interesting than just having luxurious beside luxurious, which makes the result obvious and ostentatious (see Section 3.1.2 on Shukô's saying on 'the praised horse'). On the other hand, setting *wabi* next to *wabi* makes the result look simply poor and shabby (see Section 3.1.3.3 on natural serenity). Besides the charm of contrasting items, the mystery of the luxurious utensils used in Tea lies in the dim tea-room, as is suggested in Teika's poem and in *Yamanoue Sôjiki* (with the phrase 'the autumn moon and crimson leaves'). In the dark, dim tea-room even luxurious objects look more serene and calm, but in the light of a normal (modern) room they may look conspicuous, overly decorated, aggressive, or even wanton with their combinations of rich and strong colours. Hence, in the dark, dim tea-room, even otherwise conspicuous tea utensils look

very modest and serene, as if they had been made to be seen in the deep shadows of dark rooms.

This is very logical, since during the time of the Great Tea Masters only candlelight and moonlight were available, and even during the daytime, no matter how sunny the weather might be, the tea-rooms were made so that sunlight did not reach the furthest corners of the room. The luxury in the aesthetics of *wabi* always needs a shadow to soften and deepen its beauty. Even so, there has to be harmony between the colours and decorations used, and first of all, they must be skillfully made. The ideas of harmony and calm were at the heart of the *wabi* Tea in its style and ambience.

The idea of luxurious *wabi* comes close to the beauty of *yūgen* in *Nō* theatre, where the luxurious brocade costumes suggest the idea of refined luxury and the beauty of darkness. In *chadō*, the works of Ninsei would be representative of luxurious *wabi*, for example the large tea jars called *Fujinohana* (Wisteria; see Plate 12) or *Wakamatsu* (Young Pine) or his incense container called *Iroe Buriburi kōro*,<sup>822</sup> which are all beautifully decorated with rich colours, gold and silver. Some of the Chinese Ming dynasty porcelain<sup>823</sup> may also be included in this group of luxurious *wabi*. Being luxurious does not necessarily mean being multi-coloured, and therefore some red-lacquer carved trays from the Ming dynasty in China may also be included in this group.<sup>824</sup> Another type of luxurious *wabi* includes the lacquered pieces with mother-of-pearl decoration, such as an incense container called *Aogai* owned by Sen Sōtan (Plate 11c).<sup>825</sup>

Luxury is considered in this study basically to convey the idea of using colours and decoration in tea utensils. However, some of the utensils may be monocoloured, for example red or blue, but minutely decorated. Or, they may be multicoloured and skillfully painted. The beauty of these objects emerges from the contrast of their surrounding: the dark, dim tea-room with sober earthen walls. This conveys an impression of the most modest thatched hut at the seashore, allowing these luxurious tea utensils to become like the stars of the tea gathering, noticed because of their glorious beauty. In other words, the beauty of luxurious *wabi* emerges from the contrast of the other utensils used and the place, in this

<sup>822</sup> On the works by Ninsei, see Tōjiki, pp. 28-29, 128. For *Iroe Buriburi kōro* by Ninsei, see picture in *Chanoyu no Utsuwa*, p. 113. For more works of Ninsei, see Tōjiki, pp. 118-129, 138-147. Nonomura Ninsei was a ceramic artist who lived during the *Edo* period. He was born in Tamba but lived in Kyōto. His style of ceramics was called *omuroyaki*, based on the place in Kyōto where he lived and worked. Ninsei is also the founder of the so-called Kyōto ceramics.

<sup>823</sup> See pictures in Tōjiki, pp. 256-258.

<sup>824</sup> Red-lacquered tray with the design of a camellia. See picture in *Chanoyu no Utsuwa*, p. 120, or p. 15.

<sup>825</sup> For Sen Sōtan's *Aogai* incense container, see picture in *Sen no Rikyū – The 400th Memorial*, p. 231.

context referring to the modest, straw-thatched tea-house. The modest place and rough-looking utensils used together with the luxurious utensils strengthen the true beauty of the luxurious utensils and their beauty can be fully appreciated. However, one should be careful in combining luxurious or famed Chinese pieces with rough Japanese objects; as Shukô admonished in *Kokoro no Fumi* (see Section 3.1.2). The sense of luxury describing *wabi* beauty is subtle, not direct, and needs contrasts and shadows to reach its true beauty in *chadô*.

The idea of luxurious *wabi* is very different from *wabi* as an aesthetic concept, as understood in previous studies. For example, Tanaka Sen'ô sees *wabi* as an aesthetic concept, being the opposite of luxury and claims that in *wabi* no luxury exists.<sup>826</sup> In this study, it is shown that luxury can be one expression of *wabi* beauty, if it arises from the basis of the *wabi* mind, and therefore, it is different from just a plain and simple luxury. Compared to Kurasawa's classification in *Tankô*, February 1998, the idea of luxurious *wabi* is quite similar to his style called *yasashi*, the gentle style.<sup>827</sup> Luxurious *wabi* also shares similarities with Shinkei's idea that beginners should first master the 'correct and beautiful style' (*tadashiku utsushiku*: for more details see Section 3.1.2). A parallel exists in Tea, as Jô-ô (who was originally a *renga* master) taught that first one must master 'the correct style', which he called *shôfûtei*. This also included studying the old great masters and their magnificent songs, which in Tea terms means luxurious utensils.

On this note, Shukô already wrote in his *Kokoro no Fumi* that, through 'the preparations of the heart' (*kokoro no shitaji*) one attains the ability to learn and understand higher stages of beauty, such as *hie*, cold and withered (Section 3.1.2). The expression of 'preparations of the heart' may be understood as a metaphor for the study of the old great masters, i.e., the luxurious utensils. Rikyû also emphasised the importance of studying the luxurious style, but he taught this after mastering the simpler *wabi* style (Section 3.2.2) because he considered the luxurious style to be difficult for beginners to understand, as they pay too much attention to the outer appearance and do not yet possess the ability to distinguish

<sup>826</sup> Tanaka and Tanaka 1998, p. 82. They give two examples: one is *wabi*, the rough beauty and the other *iki* that possesses hidden luxury and the idea of epicurism. They let us understand that the idea of *wabi* does not convey these ideas. They are partly right: *wabi* does not convey the idea of epicurism in its asceticism, but it possesses the idea of luxury as discussed in this study.

<sup>827</sup> Kurasawa 1998, pp. 82-95. Kurasawa explains the style (*fûtei*) in arts to be divided into seven stages: The first three form the basis: chill (*hie*), gentle (*yasashi*) and withered (*kare*). The next three stages evolve through a transformation of the first three stages; they are chill and gentle (*hieyasashi*), chill and withered (*hie*), and withered and gentle (*kareyasashi*). The last stage he calls "formless" *fûtei* and explains it as similar to Zeami's "art of the flower of tranquillity" found in *Kyûi* (Notes on the Nine Levels). Both Zeami's *Kyûi* and Shukô's *Kokoro no Fumi* seem to create the basis for Kurasawa's discussion on the concept of *fûtei* in the arts.

good from bad, nor the true heart of the luxurious beauty. This is also supported by the study of Rikyû's tea gatherings which shows that, besides the development of an austere *wabi* style, with the years, his Tea became more luxurious. This is the opposite of the development of Jô-ô's Tea, according to the information provided in Jô-ô's tea gatherings (see sections 4.3 and 4.4). Rikyû's sense of luxury differs from Shukô (emphasising contrastive elements) and Jô-ô (use of shadows): Rikyû's luxury was more direct than Shukô's and Jô-ô's. He used truly luxurious utensils without hiding them in shadows or emphasising contrasting elements, but he focused on the sense of minimalism and let the luxurious items be like stars of the tea gathering. Therefore, Rikyû's luxury may be said to be more direct and energetic.

### 6.2.2. Golden *Wabi*

The idea of golden *wabi* is close to the idea of luxurious *wabi*, and therefore, someone may wonder why they are separated. In this study, the idea of luxurious *wabi* is understood to include objects with decorations and colours, but the idea of golden *wabi* includes only objects whose main colour is gold. The reason for discussing golden *wabi* separately is based on the unique technique of using gold and silver leaves in Japanese works of art, and especially in Buddhist-related art.

A similar idea has been introduced already by Kurasawa who explains that the golden *wabi* has developed from the basis of Jô-ô's luxurious *wabi* to the rough, 'thatched hut' style of beauty. Rikyû continued from this point to the state of the revival of luxurious beauty, i.e., the golden *wabi*. The main emphasis in Kurasawa's study is on the ideas of "going *wabi*", meaning from luxurious to rough and "returning *wabi*" from rough back to luxurious. According to Kurasawa, Jô-ô's luxury ("going *wabi*") is expressed by *negations* of luxurious things, and that Rikyû's luxury ("returning *wabi*") is the *negation of negation*, and therefore, it actually affirms the original luxurious and gorgeous beauty.<sup>828</sup> Kurasawa calls this a revival of luxury in Tea, and part of his notion of luxury is golden *wabi*.

In this study, I also came to the conclusion that golden *wabi* exists, but I would rather see luxurious *wabi* and golden *wabi* as two separate concepts. The approach and arguments to support this theory differ considerably from Kurasawa as is already evident in the section above (6.2.1) where the idea of luxurious *wabi* was introduced. I became aware of the idea of golden *wabi* through the understanding that, since Rikyû developed his teacher's (Jô-ô) idea of *wabi* further toward the ultimate state of chill, lean, and withered, it may be assumed that

<sup>828</sup> Kurasawa 1996, pp. 36-39. For more details, see Section 1.3.

Rikyû also developed the idea of luxurious *wabi* further than Jô-ô, into the idea of golden *wabi* in Tea. Golden *wabi* means the ultimate state of luxurious *wabi*, an idea suggested in Ietaka's poem in the phrase: 'I wish to show the spring' (*haru o misebaya*), referring to the bright, golden, sunshine of springtime. Compared to the 'evening dusk' described in Teika's poem describing Jô-ô's sense of luxurious *wabi* beauty, Rikyû's metaphor for spring may also refer to 'the dawn' after the evening dusk, conveying the idea of energy instead of the still-calmness that the image of evening dusk evokes.

In *chadô*, gold is used, for example, in brocade bags (*shifuku*)<sup>829</sup> covering the tea-caddy for thick tea (*chaire*; see Plate 6) or in brocade cloth used sometimes under the tea bowl (*kobukusa*), or in the brocade mounting of a hanging scroll. Gold is also used in Japanese lacquer ware decorations on incense containers,<sup>830</sup> in tea-caddies for thin tea (*natsume*), such as the *tsuta natsume*,<sup>831</sup> or in stationery boxes, such as the *Kasugayama makie* with designs of deer in the *Kasuga* mountains in autumn.<sup>832</sup> The *tsuta natsume* (Plate 8a) clearly conveys the idea of golden *wabi*: the black lacquer is almost covered with a golden design of ivy leaves. Because the design is simple, the feeling is calm in spite of the use of gold. Another way of using of gold in tea utensils is found in the *Kasugayama makie* stationery box. The black lacquer was covered with golden dust and the landscape created by using thicker layers of gold leaves. Here the feeling is more misty and modest and the patina lets us forget that the piece is, after all, a *makie* type of golden object (Plate 11a). Gold was also used on the rim of *tenmoku* tea bowls or sometimes in the glaze on tea bowls, such as in the tea bowl called *teiyô hakuji*.<sup>833</sup> In this tea bowl, decorations are made on top of the glaze and the result is beautifully misty, a dream-like scene. Apparently, the patina has given the final touch of taste to this piece. Sometimes gold was used in the decoration of ceramics, such as in the works of Ninsei (see Section 6.2.1), in the seashell incense container owned by Sen Sôtan,<sup>834</sup> or in repairing broken utensils, such as the *Ôido* tea bowl (large *Ido* type of tea bowl) called *Tsutsuizutsu*.<sup>835</sup> Since gold was used in decorations, it would be possible to combine these two categories of golden and luxurious, as Kurasawa did. However, in this study, luxurious objects and golden

<sup>829</sup> See the different kinds of brocade *Shifukus* for *Enza katatsuki chaire*, owned by Rikyû, in Yamanoue Sôjiki exhibition catalogue, pp. 80-81.

<sup>830</sup> See picture in *Chanoyu no Utsuwa*, pp. 111. For incense container with the camellia design, see picture no. 131.

<sup>831</sup> See pictures in *Chanoyu no Shikki: Natsume*, pp. 33, 40, 88. The *tsuta natsume* (p. 88) illustrates especially well the idea of golden *wabi* in Tea.

<sup>832</sup> See picture in *Chanoyu no Utsuwa*, pp. 116-117. On *makie*, see 4.2.1.2.

<sup>833</sup> See picture of *teiyô hakuji* in *Tôjiki*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>834</sup> See picture in *Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial*, p. 231.

<sup>835</sup> Kumakura 1991, p. 28.

objects are kept separate because the use of gold has philosophical aspects referring to the world of Buddha (explained later in this section), an aspect the use of colours does not possess.

It is known that the use of gold leaves, and sometimes silver, too, became popular during the *Momoyama* period in Japanese arts and architecture. The wealthy class probably used gold because it reflected light and made otherwise dark rooms lighter (silver darkens easily, therefore gold was more popular) or because it was said to suggest the golden and jewelled world of Amida's western paradise.<sup>836</sup> On the other hand, in some Buddhist paintings gold was used to separate the different worlds of the Buddha, for example, in pictures like *Raigō* or *Heike Nōgyō* where gold was used to connect or separate the Buddha world from the secular world.<sup>837</sup> The use of gold in Hideyoshi's Golden tea-room (Plate 5) is especially interesting, as it was said to be designed by Rikyū.<sup>838</sup> Rikyū, as well as the other Great Tea Masters, had studied Zen and was aware of the teachings of the Buddha, and he was very confident that the essence of *wabi* exists in the 'crystal-clear, pure world of the Buddha' (see Section 3.2.1). Therefore, it may be claimed that, philosophically, the Golden tea-room symbolised for Rikyū 'the other world', the Buddha's western paradise in this world referring to a time and place beyond this world. Aesthetically, it reflected the ultimate state of absolute luxury, but Rikyū may also have been considering the beauty of the patina when the glittering shine of the gold leaves had grown deeper and begun to drop off.<sup>839</sup> Economically and politically, the Golden tea-room was a demonstration of power for Hideyoshi. He did not hesitate to show his power at the Great *Kitano* Tea Gathering in *Tenshō* 15th year (1587) by displaying a collection of famous tea utensils in his tea stands.<sup>840</sup> Plutschow writes that the Golden tea-room might also

<sup>836</sup> Mason 1993, p. 218.

<sup>837</sup> Stanley-Baker 1990, pp. 73-75, 85, 97. See the pictures *Raigō* and *Heike Nōgyō*. In the picture *Raigō*, Amida, and his attendants appear above the mountain. *Heike Nōgyō* are *Lotus Sutra* scrolls commissioned by the members of the Taira clan, where in the upper left corner of the picture there is the figure of the Buddha on a cloud and in the lower right corner a figure of the Taira clan. These pictures illustrate well the use of gold in separating different worlds. The gold in the pictures connects and separates these two worlds where the Buddhas and ordinary people live, as clouds do in Western Christian pictures. It is also said that the Buddha was put into a golden coffin after he died.

<sup>838</sup> Haga 1997, p. 192. See also Kuwata 1943, p. 81; Karaki 1989, p. 80. According to Kuwata, Rikyū's name is not mentioned in the imperial diaries concerning the Golden tea-room, which are considered historically reliable sources. However, Karaki maintains that new information exists to support this claim.

<sup>839</sup> This is similar to the description of the beauty of the hanging scrolls in Yoshida Kenkō's book *Tsurezuregusa*, Chapter 82. A similar idea is noted by Kuwata, too. See Karaki 1989, pp. 80-81. Karaki cites Kuwata's book *Shinpan Sen no Rikyū*, pp. 87-89, which was, unfortunately, not available for this study.

have been used to show respect for the emperor, since it was used in the imperial palace.<sup>841</sup>

Researchers do not wholly agree on the nature of the Golden tea-room nor on its origins. Sen Sôshitsu describes the Golden tea-room: it contained three *tatamis* and a *tokonoma*, the walls and the latticework of the *shôji* in the Golden tea-room were covered with gold foil; *tatami* mats were made of a red fabric called orangutang skin and stuffed with wadded silk, and the edging of the *tatamis* was of gold brocade. All tea utensils were of gold and the cloths used in preparing tea (such as *fukusa* and *kobukusa*) were brocade. This may sound very elaborate and the feeling must have been absolutely astonishing with all the glittering gold and scarlet red. The Golden tea-room was built so that it was portable. In *Tenshō* fourteenth year (1586) first month sixteenth day it was carried from Ōsaka castle to Kyôto to be displayed and used in the tea gathering held in the Imperial palace.<sup>842</sup> According to Sen, whereas Hideyoshi's Golden tea-room was the product of power, Rikyû's one-and-a-half-mat room was the product of powerlessness. Thus, being so worthless in the eyes of the world, Rikyû's small tea-room might hold greater significance. Sen concludes that "Rikyû's pursuit of the ultimate ideal of tea in the face of the tea-room of gold further purified the ideal and made it more thoroughgoing".<sup>843</sup>

Karaki comments on the Golden tea-room that there is no reason to believe that Rikyû had any other connections to the Golden tea-room than those concerning his serving tea. He also cites Kuwata<sup>844</sup>, who writes that it was due to Rikyû's influence that the Golden tea-room was not made as a large tea-room (more than ten-mat room), but as a small three-mat room. According to Kuwata, the Golden tea-room is a combination of luxurious and *wabi* beauty, and in this sense it expresses the sense of *sabi* in its suggestion of the passing of time. He connects the Golden tea-room to the idea of 'a praised horse tied to a thatched hut'. Karaki disagrees with Kuwata that the Golden tea-room would be representative of Rikyû's taste in *chadô*. He believes that Rikyû was against the idea of building

<sup>840</sup> Kitano Daichayû no Ki, pp. 4-6. Hideyoshi had three sets. Among the utensils used, of which most were famous Chinese utensils, were Jô-ô's *Bizen* waste-water container, an ink scroll referring to Zen words, a *Bizen* flower vase, and a bamboo tea scoop. Apparently Hideyoshi had been influenced by his Tea advisor, Rikyû, who at the same time displayed his more modest tea setting with a bamboo tea scoop and lid-rest together with a Korean tea bowl. Besides these, Rikyû also used quite formal utensils, such as a celadon flower vase, a large tea jar, or an old bronze fresh-water container, even though it had the shape of a well bucket.

<sup>841</sup> Plutschow 1986, p. 113.

<sup>842</sup> Kuwata 1943, p. 81.

<sup>843</sup> Sen 1998, p. 176. See also Kuwata 1943, p. 77.

<sup>844</sup> In the new and revised edition of *Sen no Rikyû* (pp. 87-89), which was not available to me.

a Golden tea-room and that Rikyû made his point by designing this tea-room as a small three-mat room and that Rikyû was smiling bitterly at the project.<sup>845</sup>

I agree that the Golden tea-room is not representative of Rikyû's sense of beauty in Tea, but it is rather an extreme expression of one particular form of beauty that fascinated Rikyû: the ultimate luxury, i.e., the golden *wabi*. As noted also by Sen, the Golden tea-room might have helped to purify Rikyû's ideal of *wabi* style as well as the sense of luxury in Tea, and therefore, he combined the idea of a small and modest tea-room (thatched hut or far-away mountain village) with the luxurious and very formal use of gold. By doing so, he also brought out the idea of contrast or minimalist beauty which he emphasised in his Tea (see sections 4.4.2 and 5.2). Moreover, this study does not agree that Rikyû was sarcastic about the idea of the Golden tea-room, but rather that Rikyû positively wanted to plan it, and through the Golden tea-room he had the opportunity to express his aesthetic values and philosophical ideas in *chadô*. The study of Rikyû's tea gatherings also supports this idea, showing that Rikyû favoured many luxurious items as well as a luxurious style of serving tea, especially during his later years. According to his tea gatherings (Section 4.2.2), it is also seen that famed Chinese tea utensils always belonged to Rikyû's Tea from the beginning, and that he never totally abandoned their use.

Moreover, as the history of Tea and Rikyû's bibliography show (see Introduction), Rikyû was a wise man who had political and economical power while serving as Hideyoshi's Tea advisor and he was in charge of household matters.<sup>846</sup> This leads us to suppose that he also would have had the courage and position to stand against Hideyoshi if he had wished. For example Rikyû introduced his humble style of *wabichadô*, which was at variance with his style of Tea, making it possible for everyone, not just the wealthy and noble, to practice Tea. Therefore, it can be assumed that if the building of the Golden tea-room had been against his principles of *chadô*, Rikyû would not have accepted the order.

Based on the information above, it can be concluded that golden *wabi* exists. The Golden tea-room and some selected golden pieces discussed here all contain the spirit of *wabi*. However, it is not claimed that all golden objects would contain the spirit of *wabi*. Golden *wabi* is based on the philosophical idea of the golden paradise of the Buddha. It also conveys the images of the ultimate state of abso-

<sup>845</sup> Karaki 1989, pp. 80-81. See also Sen 1998, p. 176; Haga 1997, p. 192; Plutschow 1986, pp. 113-120. According to Sen, the Golden tea-room in its dazzling brilliance was in contrast to Rikyû's ultimate ideal of Tea in the grass hut, but further purified this ideal and made it more complete. Haga also believes that Rikyû was laughing ironically at Hideyoshi's Golden tea-room. Plutschow considers the Golden tea-room to be the start of a widening discrepancy between Hideyoshi's Tea and Rikyû's Tea, and a radical deviation from Rikyû's *wabi* style of Tea. However, he assumes that the Golden tea-room had Rikyû's approval.

<sup>846</sup> Tanaka and Tanaka 1998, p. 46.

lute nothingness, 'the other world', or the Buddha world. This theory is supported by Rikyū's philosophical concepts in *chadō*, emphasising the idea of attaining the absolute freedom, going 'beyond', which for him meant 'breaking the rules' of *wabichadō* (see Section 3.2.4). Finally, there is the fact that the Golden tea-room was displayed for the first time at the imperial palace for serving tea for the emperor who was considered to be the descendant of the gods. In these circumstances it was natural to conclude that the place where the emperor had tea was not of this world. The beauty of *wabi* in the Golden tea-room is based on the philosophical idea of breaking the rules of *wabichadō* (Section 3.2.4), going beyond to the world of the Buddha. It also holds aesthetic values of things becoming aged and gaining patina, and finally through them all, the golden *wabi* would attain its absolute state of beauty – its essential, true, nature.

### 6.2.3. Chill Calmness

The sense of chill calmness illustrating the *wabi* beauty in tea utensils is suggested in Teika's poem in the phrase 'in the dusk of the autumn evening', and in *Yamanoue Sōjiki* with the image of drifting showers in early winter and the falling of the autumn leaves (see Section 5.2). This group of tea utensils primarily includes famous Chinese pieces in addition to others of foreign origin, such as South-east Asian, as well as native Japanese objects. Like some luxurious utensils, the utensils included in this group do not all convey the sense of chill calmness; however some of them do, especially those expressing a sense of serene modesty.

The group of 'chill calmness' shares qualities of both the luxurious *wabi* and the golden *wabi*. Tea utensils possessing the sense of chill calmness are, e.g., black lacquer work, such as Rikyū's black *natsume* thin tea container (Plate 9b) which conveys the feeling of the dead-calm surface of the sea, celadon ware without any decorations, or metal ware (old bronze or gold) which is also without decoration. Chill calmness is suggested in formal tea utensils, and even in the famed Chinese utensils, which convey the idea of noble simplicity and a sense of coldness, such as Jō-ō's old bronze flower vase called *kodō sorori*,<sup>847</sup> which is simple in form and lacks any detail of decoration. As a metal element, the idea of golden *wabi* also possesses the sense of chill calmness by being simple in construction and yet conveying the sense of noble grace and reserve or a distant air (sublime), such as Hideyoshi's Golden tea-room. Some of the celadon pieces, such as the cylindrical type of celadon flower vase called *seiji tsutsu* (Plate 16) that originally belonged to Hideyoshi, or Jō-ō's famous blue celadon *chidori kōro* (incense container called Plover; see Plate 10a)<sup>848</sup> also possess the sense of chill

<sup>847</sup> See pictures in Yamanoue Sōjiki exhibition catalogue, pp. 75.

calmness by bringing to mind an image of the crystal clear, chill water of a mountain stream. The *chidori kôro* incense container has this effect, too, but it also conveys the sense noble grace in resting its the beautifully carved red lacquered stand and having a black lid with the golden-leg plover on the top. The use of celadon and old bronze was especially favoured by Jô-ô, but they were also used in Rikyû's tea gatherings during his sixties. (He favoured old bronze already in his thirties and forties, see Section 4.4.2.) In general, utensils belonging in this group are distant in their noble elegance and grace, yet they possess a sense of modesty in their simplicity. Utensils representing chill calmness may look so plain and normal that they are easily overlooked, but once noticed, their simple beauty will surprise an observer.

Concerning tea bowls, Jô-ô's white *tenmoku* is included in this group.<sup>849</sup> It has a sense of formality by being a *tenmoku* type of bowl with a golden rim. Its white cracked glaze gives an impression of cracked ice in early winter, and the feeling of calm this piece possesses suggests the deep silence of an early winter night. Tea-caddies, such as Jô-ô's *konasu* (Little Eggplant) tea-caddy for thick tea and Rikyû's wooden and lacquered *natsume* type of tea-caddy for thin tea are also representative of the group of chill calmness.<sup>850</sup> Even though Jô-ô's *konasu* tea-caddy for thin tea is a famous Chinese utensil, it possesses an extremely modest feeling and a sense of calm. The glaze gives the impression of a veil of frost suspended over the surface, emphasising this feeling. In contrast to the utensils mentioned above, the fresh-water container called Jô-ô *imogashira*<sup>851</sup> is from South-east Asia, and therefore it is not a famed Chinese utensil as many of the utensils in this group are, but belongs to the group of *sukidôgu*. This piece has a very strong feeling of chill calmness in its plain and slightly rough surface which suggests the texture and tone of frozen bare soil just before the snow falls in late autumn. The roughness of the piece seems to have been ground by the ice, and the result is 'smoothly' rough. The lacquered lid emphasises the sense of chill calmness resembling the dead calm surface of the sea.

Representative features of this group of utensils include their combination of luxury and chill calmness. Most of the utensils are monochromatic, being old bronze, blue celadon or black lacquer. Objects in the group of chill calmness

<sup>848</sup> See picture in Yamanoue Sôjiki exhibition catalogue, p. 77, or in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 71. Jô-ô (see Appendix) and Rikyû (see Section 4.2.2, comments about *chidori kôro* and celadon flower vase) also owned and used celadon pieces. See picture of *Chidori kôro* in Yamanoue Sôjiki exhibition catalogue, p. 56.

<sup>849</sup> See picture in Tôjiki, pp. 64-65.

<sup>850</sup> See pictures in Yamanoue Sôjiki exhibition catalogue, pp. 91-92, for another of Jô-ô's *konasu* type of thick tea container, and in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 71, for Rikyû's black lacquered wooden *natsume*.

<sup>851</sup> See pictures in Yamanoue Sôjiki exhibition catalogue, p. 55.

(similar to the luxurious *wabi*) belong to the proper style of Tea, *shôfûtei*, which for Jô-ô meant studying the correct style as well as the old masterpieces (see Section 3.1.1). Yet chill calmness represents a higher style than luxurious *wabi* within *shôfûtei*. Compared to Kurasawa's classification of the styles of art, chill calmness would belong to the groups of *hieyasashi* (chill and gentle) and *kareyasashi* (withered and gentle) because this group contains some famed Chinese items in addition to some everyday utensils adapted to be used in Tea apart from their original use. I would consider chill calmness to belong to the second level of the proper style, being one step advanced: it resembles Insetu's sense of Tea described in *Yamanoue Sôjiki*, evoking the bare branches of trees in late autumn's drifting showers (Section 5.2). The idea of golden *wabi* discussed in the previous section (6.2.2) also belongs into this level of style in Tea, even though it does not possess the sense of *kareyasashi* as the items belonging to the group of chill calmness do. Moreover, the idea of golden *wabi* is the manifestation of absolute luxury and conveys a strong sense of chill and non-worldliness.

#### 6.2.4. Austerity

*Wabi* signifies an austere sense of beauty, which has been referred to in previous studies as an imperfect beauty or beauty of asymmetry. In these contexts it usually is used to refer to the idea of poverty. In some studies, *wabi* is even called the beauty of noble poverty as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, this gives a misleading impression that an austere sense of *wabi* in *chadô* refers only to the outer appearance of tea utensils and to the materials used in the tea-houses, and moreover, that it means something plain, simple or superficial. According to this study, asymmetrical utensils or things which possess the sense of poverty do not convey the sense of *wabi* as such, but they are rather expressions of imperfection or poverty in their dictionary meanings. *Wabi* as an aesthetic concept in *chadô* means expressions of beauty attained in the ultimate state of the heart. It is born through the understanding of the *wabi* mind, and therefore, it also contains luxurious and golden items, the sense of chill and absolute subtleness (see Section 6.2.5). All these are expressions of *wabi* emerging from the ultimate state of the *wabi* mind. Therefore, the sense of austerity has to be born through the absolute state of mind, the Buddha-mind, and that is why an austere sense of *wabi* should not be called just a simple expression of poverty or imperfection.

It is seen as essential to make a clear distinction between the concepts of a simple austerity suggesting the expressions of poverty and a deeper sense of austerity which is gained through the realisation of the ultimate state of the *wabi* mind. Once the state of the absolute freedom of heart is attained, one reaches the freedom from all worldly affections and in this state even insufficiency turns into

sufficiency (freedom for contemplating the other world – the Buddha world). One does not desire a magnificent house and rare delicacies as daily food, but feels fully satisfied with a house that does not leak and whatever food that prevents one from hunger (see Chapter 2, especially Section 2.3.1). It is stated in *Nanpōroku* (see Section 2.3.6) that beginners cannot understand this sense of beauty because they have not yet attained the state of 'not-a-single-thing', referring here to 'the higher understanding' or to the *wabi* mind, which is reached by practising spiritual training over and over again and making it part of one's everyday life. The answers to achieve this state of 'not-a-single-thing' exist already in one's heart. Moreover, *Nanpōroku* (see Section 5.2) states that the 'thatched hut at the seashore' (*uranotomaya*) in Teika's poem and the 'faraway mountain village' (*yamazato*) in Ietaka's poem both are expressions of this ultimate state of 'not-a-single-thing' and expressions of the absolute freedom of heart (see Section 2.3.1).

The phrase 'not-a-single-thing' has both philosophical and aesthetic values. Philosophically, it refers to the ultimate state of mind, the site of enlightenment. In this meaning, it suggests the idea of freedom from attachments to material goods and idealises living in insufficiency. In Zen studies this state of mind is considered to be 'a first state' of studies, in which one should be ready to abandon everything, as can be observed in the first of the *Ten Oxherding Pictures*<sup>852</sup> where the oxherd leaves everything to seek the truth. In this sense, it also signifies freedom for the Buddha nature to emerge. this is something one needs to seek in one's own mind(heart).

In an aesthetic sense, 'not-a-single thing' which is explained in *Nanpōroku* using the images of a 'thatched hut at the seashore' and the 'faraway mountain village' refers to the state where the beauty of an item is recognised as such, even in rough and simple items which are considered to be manifestations of the austere form of life of the *wabi* style of Tea (Tea in a thatched hut). It gives the impression of living in solitude, far away, hidden from the busy world, similar to the tea-rooms built 'hidden in the city'. Here the state of 'not-a-single-thing' as an ultimate state is not understood to refer to the highest state of beauty in Japanese aesthetics, but rather to the state of no-mindness (*mushin*) which makes way for the absolute freedom of heart from all prejudices against new forms of beauty or new utensils adapted to Tea. This is the state where one becomes aware of what is good and what is bad, where one will have an eye for beauty and be able to create something of one's own for Tea.

The sense of austerity explaining the beauty of *wabi* in *chadō* is divided into two groups: firstly everyday utensils adapted to be used in *chadō* which contain foreign and native utensils. The second group includes rough and asymmetrical Japanese ceramics which were made as tea utensils, mostly during the *Momoyama*

<sup>852</sup> Hirota 1995, p. 299, 309-311.

period, having a strong sense of being natural and unfinished in their free form. The sense of rough austerity as a characteristic of *wabi* beauty is seen, for example, in the small tea-house with a thatched roof and dark grey earthen walls, looking austere and coarse. The idea of asymmetry, also relating to the idea of austere *wabi* beauty, is found in a tea-room in the use of different styles of ceilings and windows, or in the *roji* path with the non-symmetrical placing of stepping stones. However, in general, the construction of the tea-room is symmetrical and measurements are based on the size of the *tatami* mat. In tea utensils, things of irregular or rough appearance presented a new direction in Japanese aesthetics during the *Momoyama* period and the tendency of using Japanese utensils and creating new utensils to be used in Tea increased. These utensils cost next to nothing compared to the famed Chinese utensils used widely in Tea during Shukô's and Jô-ô's times. They were made of bamboo, such as Rikyû's bamboo flower vase called *Shakuhachi* (Plate 17b), or of paper, such as the *Ikkanbari* thin tea-caddies (Plate 9a) favoured by Sen Sôtan.<sup>853</sup>

The ceramics during the *Momoyama* period were quite heavy looking. Some of them had an unfinished look caused by their asymmetric form and uneven layers of glaze, such as *Shigaraki*, *Shino* and *Iga*<sup>854</sup> ceramics, and *Bizen* ceramics which possess the sense of a natural texture in its unglazed body and colour taken from burnt ash during the firing. Typical of *Iga* ceramics are irregularities in form or even cracks on the surface, making them look even more austere than, for example, *Bizen* ware. A representative of this group of utensils is the fresh-water container called *Yaburebukuro* (Plate 20b), which is very heavy looking because of its wide and round base form. It has quite a clumsy form giving it a solid, well-balanced feeling. Beneath a thin glaze, pieces of bits of gravel are visible, making the surface look even rougher. This fresh-water container is named Broken Sack, because of cracks in the bottom part which occurred accidentally during firing but became the 'soul' of the object effectively catching the observer's interest. The feeling of being asymmetric and incomplete is also strong in a *Shino* tea bowl called *Furisode* (Plate 23a) from the *Momoyama* period. The *Shino* tea bowl looks heavy and unfinished. It has a thick layer of glaze with shades ranging from white

<sup>853</sup> *Shakuhachi*: See picture in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 95. See also another of Rikyû's bamboo flower vases in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 96. This is the well-known leaking flower vase called *Onjôji* (see Section 4.5). *Ikkanbari natsume* is made of paper, which is covered with black lacquer. See picture in Chanoyu no Shikki: Natsume, pp. 29. For another type of *natsume*, see *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>854</sup> *Shino* ceramics tea bowl called *Furisode*: see picture in *Momoyama no Suki*: Chanoyu no Meiwan, p. 46. *Iga* ceramics fresh-water container called *Yaburebukuro*: see picture in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 193. *Shigaraki* ceramics fresh-water container called *Iso Shimitsu*: see picture in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 134. *Bizen* ceramics fresh-water container called *Mokurai*: see picture in Chanoyu no Utsuwa, p. 32.

to rustic red depending on how thickly the glaze was applied to the bowl. During this operation, some air bubbles formed beneath the glaze, which have turned into small holes during the firing. The glaze is slightly cracked and on the surface of the bowl, a sketch-like decoration is made with glaze. Other Japanese ceramics, such as *Bizen*, *Iga* and *Shigaragi* are generally considered to belong to this group of rough *wabi* utensils. Most of them are flower vases, or fresh-water or waste-water containers.

The second group of austere style of *wabi* utensils is composed of those everyday utensils which were adapted to be used in Tea outside of their original use, usually chosen under the skillful eye of the Great Tea Masters. This group of austere *wabi* utensils includes not only Japanese but also foreign utensils, such as Korean or South-east Asian objects and they all share the same feature of having been made originally to be used in everyday life, not in Tea. As examples of this group, Korean tea bowls, such as *Ido* bowls (Plate 24c)<sup>855</sup>, were made originally as rice bowls by unknown craftsmen. These everyday utensils were made at low cost and were available to everyone. Artistic elements in Korean bowls are said to be created accidentally. They should be considered to be folk crafts rather than as works of art because they were made by unskilled workers, not by an admired artist who has gained a reputation.<sup>856</sup>

Another good example of everyday utensils adapted to Tea is the fresh-water container called *tsurube*<sup>857</sup> which was originally a well-bucket made from bare wood (see Appendix; List of Jô-ô' Tea Utensils, no. 33). In Tea, bare wooden utensils, such as *tsurube* fresh-water containers or the wooden water scoop, *hishaku*, should be used only once so that the sense of freshness and purity is not lost. The calabash, *hyôtan*, was originally used as a water or *sake* container in everyday life, but in *chadô* it became a charcoal basket or a flower vase such as Rikyû's *Isshō* (One Smile; see Plate 15).<sup>858</sup> According to the *Matsuya Kaiki*, Rikyû started

<sup>855</sup> *Ido* tea bowl called *Kizaemon*: See picture in Momoyama no Suki: Chanoyu no Meiwan, p. 12. See also Yanagi 1989, pp. 190-196. Yanagi, indeed, loved this bowl: "When I saw it, my heart fell. A good Tea-bowl, yes, but how ordinary! So simple, no more ordinary thing could be imagined. There is not a trace of ornament, not a trace of calculation. It is just a Korean food bowl, a bowl, moreover, that a poor man would use every day – commonest crockery... No Tea-bowl exceeds in *Ido* bowl in beauty." (Yanagi 1989, pp. 191-192.)

<sup>856</sup> Korean ceramics and especially folk crafts were admired by Kawai Kanjirô who with Hamada Sôji and Bernard Leach made folk crafts popular not only in Japan but also in United States and in Europe. For further information, see Yanagi Sôetsu: *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty* (1989).

<sup>857</sup> See picture in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 135 (Rikyû's *tsurube*).

<sup>858</sup> For pictures of *Isshō* calabash flower vase and charcoal container with a sign *Ri* together with Rikyû's cipher, see Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, pp. 102, 161. See also Mori and Mori 1982, p. 100. "The idea of a flower container made from a gourd is said to have originated from the gourd carried by a pilgrim. Rikyû saw this pilgrim passing by with a canteen made from a gourd at his waist. Rikyû desired the gourd, and when he obtained it he

to use a calabash in his later years, first noted in his tea diaries in 1590, just a year before Rikyû's death. Fisherman's baskets, such as Rikyû's *Katsurakago* (Plate 19), or hatchet-case baskets, such as Rikyû's *Nata no saya*<sup>859</sup> (Plate 18b) were adapted to be used in *chadô* outside their original use as practical daily utensils.

The sense of austerity in tea utensils includes utensils which are irregular in form and made of low cost materials by a skillful artisan or by a master. This group of rough and irregular utensils contains Japanese pieces that were purposely made for *chadô*, or everyday utensils that were adapted to be used in *chadô* by the skillful eye of the Great Tea Masters, like Jô-ô and Rikyû. This group of utensils may include foreign utensils such as Korean tea bowls or utensils from South-east Asia, and they are generally made by unknown craftsmen. Features of this group of utensils are: they cost next to nothing and they have a strong sense of rural austerity. The austere style of *wabi* beauty is an aspect of the advanced style of art which is mastered, according to Shukô and Jô-ô, after one has mastered the correct style. This is something that beginners should not try to practise (see also Section 2.3.6 on spiritual training in *Nanpôroku*, and Section 5.2 on the poems of Teika and Ietaka). Rikyû, however, taught the reverse, that one should first learn the austere and modest style of Tea in order to be ready to truly understand luxurious beauty (Section 3.2.2). According to Kurasawa's classification of the styles of art, the austere sense of *wabi* beauty belongs to the *hiehare* (chill and withered) which was also mentioned by Shukô as being an advanced style in *Kokoro no Fumi* and was the goal of Jô-ô's studies of Tea, according to *Yamanoue Sôjiki* (see 3.1.2).

#### 6.2.5. Absolute Subtleness

The last characteristics of *wabi* aesthetics to be mentioned is the quality of absolute subtleness. This is suggested in Ietaka's poem using the words 'the green beneath the snow' (*yukimanokusa*), illustrating Rikyû's sense of *wabi* in Tea. A similar idea is also found in *Yamanoue Sôjiki* describing Shukô's and Rikyû's sense of Tea in the metaphors of 'trees of the early winter' or 'the snowy mountains'. This is closely associated with Shinkei's expression 'cold, lean and withered' (*karekashikete samukare*) in *Yamanoue Sôjiki*, used to describe the highest style of poetry. Jô-ô quoted Shinkei's saying and said that, in the end, *chadô* should also express these qualities. In this study, this kind of highest state is called

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made a flower container of it. He named it *Gankai*. Since then people have come to appreciate gourd flower-containers." (Mori & Mori 1982, p. 102, contains drawing of the flower vase).

<sup>859</sup> See pictures of *Katsurakago* and *Nata no Saya* basket flower vases in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, pp. 98-99.

absolute subtlety, reached at the ultimate state of the heart, the Buddha-mind, which is similar to the idea of a *wabi* heart as examined in sections 2.3.5 and 3.1.2. The metaphors mentioned above transmit the images of the black branches of trees without any leaves, or just a few withered and lean remains of last year's leaves in the cold winter or early spring, far away and deep in the mountains. The feeling is extremely rustic and austere. Yet, Rikyû's metaphor of the 'green beneath the snow' (*yukimanokusa*) conveys the idea of a new start and strong energy in its subtle sense of beauty.

In Section 6.2.4, 'the thatched hut' and 'the far-away mountain village' were described as signifying philosophically the ultimate state of 'not-a-single-thing', the absolute freedom of heart. Aesthetically, they express an austere and ascetic form of life and a rustic sense of beauty in tea utensils. The state of 'absolute subtlety' goes even beyond the ultimate states of 'not-a-single-thing' and 'austerity', both philosophically and aesthetically. Philosophically, this state of absolute nothingness, where one has reached unity with the original Buddha nature, suggests the state and place beyond the state of 'not-a-single-thing' described in the previous section, meaning the absolute freedom or the site of enlightenment. Absolute subtleness refers to the state of absolute nothingness, where the true and essential self, the Buddha nature emerges and through this state all acts become natural (see sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.7).<sup>860</sup> In the aesthetic sense, absolute subtleness emerges on the basis of 'ultimate austerity', and therefore it suggests the absolute state of 'ultimate austerity'<sup>861</sup> as described in *Yamanoue Sôjiki* with the metaphors of 'trees in the early winter' or 'the snowy mountains'. According to Kurasawa's classification of the styles of art, absolute subtleness is similar to his style of 'formlessness form' of beauty (*katachi naki no sugata*), being the highest expression of beauty.<sup>862</sup>

The expression of 'the first green beneath the snow' used in Ietaka's poem, conveys also the idea of change, or at least, a chance to change. In Rikyû's Tea, for example, this may refer to his new inventions in *chadô*, such one-and-a-half-mat tea-room, the *Raku* ceramics, or the use of a calabash as a tea utensil. Or, on the other hand, it may refer to the new valuing of tea utensils, such as Shukô's Chinese celadon bowl called *Aosudare* (Plate 24b). In this study, absolute subtleness is considered to represent the absolute state, the highest state of *wabi* beauty,

<sup>860</sup> Related to the idea of absolute nothingness in this study, see also Abe 1995, pp. 167-174. Abe interprets Nishida's theory on absolute nothingness, suggesting 'a place' and beyond that to the true place. He continues that absolute nothingness is determined neither as nothingness, nor as being, since absolute nothingness is the true final predicate. The final predicate Nishida calls "the transcendent predicate". According to Nishida, absolute nothingness determines itself without being determined from outside by any other thing.

<sup>861</sup> Compare with the idea of *hiekare* and *hieyasetakare* in Section 3.1.2.

<sup>862</sup> Kurasawa 1998, p. 88.

which means freedom to discover beauty without limits. In Rikyû's Tea this was the state in which one's true nature would be found. This state is attained after 'breaking through' the old rules and habits and 'killing both the Buddhas and patriarchs' (Section 3.2.4) and thereafter, it becomes possible to create something unique and special of one's own. Even though *Yamanoue Sôjiki*<sup>863</sup> described Rikyû's and Shukô's styles of Tea as resembling each other, we do not know very much about the practice of Shukô's Tea based on the material available at the moment. The difference between these two Tea masters is in their approach to the seasons. Shukô's absolute subtleness takes place in the last month of the year, conveying ideas of darkness and stability, with little vitality, little sense of life. But Rikyû's highest state occurs in the late winter (early spring) conveying the images of light, continuity and vitality, and within these lie a sense of absolute subtlety that is lacking in Shukô's sense of Tea with its merciless austerity and calm stability.

In *Chadô*, the absolute subtleness as an expression of *wabi* beauty is found in Rikyû's tea-room called *Taian* (Waiting Hut) at Myôkian.<sup>864</sup> *Taian* was most probably built around 1582 (four years before the Golden tea-room) and it well represents Rikyû's ascetic and minimalist sense of beauty in being only a two-mat room with a rather low ceiling (height of 1.81 m). One of its specialities is rounded ceiling corners in the *tokonoma* and the *shitajimado* type of window to which the *shôji*-screen can be hooked. The sense of ascetic simplicity and austerity is emphasised in *Taian* with the use of thatched roof, earthen walls and paper-covered windows making this microcosmic space quite dark. *Taian* also lacks decoration, such as *fusuma* paintings, and therefore, it gives a peaceful feeling of eternity and allows forgetting the time, place and earthly worries. If the Golden tea-room is said to represent 'breaking through' the rules of *wabichadô* (see Section 6.2.2), Rikyû's sense of absolute luxury, *Taian* can be said to represent the true nature, the essential nature of Rikyû's *wabichadô*.

Concerning tea utensils, an example of this group is Jô-ô's fresh-water container called *Onioke* (Devil's Bucket; see Plate 21).<sup>865</sup> Even though it is generally believed in this study that Jô-ô did not wholly reach the admired state of cold, lean and withered, to some extent he did, and this fresh-water container is one expression of this exception. *Onioke* conveys the ascetic and austere sense of beauty, being different from the utensils possessing the spirit of ultimate austerity (Section 6.2.4) or chill calmness (Section 6.2.3). The colour of the container shades from dark brown to reddish brown and its surface is rough because of the little stones

<sup>863</sup> *Yamanoue Sôjiki*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>864</sup> For further information, see Hayakawa 1995, pp. 7-37. Pictures of the *shitajimado* type of window on p. 8, and the *tokonoma* on pp. 11, 28.

<sup>865</sup> See picture in *Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial*, p. 49.

under the glaze. The shape is quite symmetrical and the wooden lacquered lid balances the rough feeling of the container. Even though *onioke* possesses the austere spirit, it also has an inner glow of calmness possible only for utensils belonging to this group.

Other tea utensils belonging to this group are, without a doubt, Rikyû's black *Raku* tea bowl called *Kamuro* (Worn-out; see Plate 22) and *Shikorohiki* (The Pulling of Armor Neckplates; see Plate 23b), which were both made by Chôjirô.<sup>866</sup> *Kamuro* is quite a tall bowl with a narrow mouth, a typical bowl for use during the winter season, keeping the tea warm and also transmitting the feeling of warmth to the guests. The surface is smooth and the glaze looks matt, giving a sense of the lean branches of a tree smoothed by the harsh, cold winter winds. *Shikorohiki*, on the other hand, seems to have a mica-glazed surface which is livelier than the *Kamuro* bowl. Yet, it gives an image of frost on the ground in the winter, but the rough *Raku* surface also conveys an image of potential growth; seeds beneath the frozen ground awaiting favourable conditions for a new season.

Shukô's celadon tea bowls, known by the names *Haran* (Vawes) or *Aosudare* (Green Reed-blind),<sup>867</sup> are of Chinese origin. They were supposedly considered unsatisfactory in China as celadon bowls because of the uneven colour of the glaze. However, these pieces were greatly admired in Japan by the Great Tea Masters. *Aosudare* is a good example of a utensil that was newly valued in *chadô* even though, being a Chinese celadon, it is extremely modest in feeling. The celadon glaze is uneven and here and there it has brownish shades giving an image of last year's beauty found in the spring under the snow. The frost has left marks on the surface, which does not diminish the beauty of the piece, but rather deepens it making the bowl look even more fascinating.

In this section it has been shown that different expressions of *wabi* beauty emerge and exist through the interaction of the absolute state of mind, the Buddha-mind. An understanding of *wabi* as an aesthetic concept grows from the luxurious to chill calmness, then to the golden *wabi* and on to the ultimate state of austerity, culminating in the state of absolute subtleness. Compared with Kurasawa's classification of the *fûtei* (styles and forms)<sup>868</sup> in Japanese arts in general, *hie* (chill), *kare* (withered), and *yasashi* (gentle) form the basic three levels and their transformations, the following three, higher levels of beauty: styles of *hie*-

<sup>866</sup> See picture in Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, pp. 151-152.

<sup>867</sup> Momoyama no Suki: Chanoyu no Meiwan, p. 10; Sen no Rikyû – The 400th Memorial, p. 39.

<sup>868</sup> Kurasawa 1998, pp. 88-93. See also Kurasawa 1983, pp. 124-127. Compare with Shinkei's words that beginners should follow the beautiful and correct (*utsukushiku tadashiku*), style (way). The withered style, *karetaru*, is for advanced students and the chill and withered style, *hiesabitaru*, is only possible for those who have attained *satori*.

*yasashi* (chill and gentle), *kareyasashi* (withered and gentle), and *hieikare* (chill and withered).

In my classification, luxurious *wabi* comes close to Kurasawa's style called *yasashi* and golden *wabi* is close to his *hie yasashi*. The sense of chill calmness discussed in this study shares common elements with Kurasawa's *hieyasashi* or *kareyasashi* and the austere style of *wabi* beauty is quite close to his definition of *hieikare*. The last, absolute subtleness, is quite similar to Kurasawa's *myōyō*, the excellent (highest) style. The expressions of *wabi* aesthetics are closely related to each other and some of them are overlapping concepts, such as the luxurious *wabi*, golden *wabi*, and the sense of chill calmness in *wabi* beauty. On the other hand, chill calmness also has a connection with the austere *wabi*: All of them have influenced the development of absolute subtleness, the highest state of *wabi* beauty which can be understood only in the ultimate state of mind, described in this study as being similar to the idea of the Buddha-mind, which is reached with the absolute freedom of heart, in the final stage of enlightenment.

