The One-Mat Room of Matsuura Takeshiro (1818–1888) was constructed in late 1886 out of fragments of old wood donated by antiquarian acquaintances from all over Japan to commemorate his upcoming seventieth year. The room is a creation of originality and complexity that serves as a powerful lens through which to survey Japanese attitudes toward “things” in the nineteenth century and to draw back and trace some of the longer-term changes in those attitudes. The One-Mat Room reveals a mixture of religious belief and playful persuasion that had a long tradition in Japanese arts, above all in the way of tea, which in the nineteenth century was itself adapting modern modes of collecting.

I first encountered this tiny structure a century later as part of the Taizanso villa on the grounds of International Christian University in Mitaka, a western suburb of Tokyo (fig. 1). The room settled there in the 1930s after three successive moves from its original construction as a lean-to addition to Matsuura’s house in the Kanda district of downtown Tokyo. The One-Mat Room today enjoys a celebrity status never intended by its creator, who requested that it be used to cremate his remains.

The first biography of Matsuura Takeshiro in any language appeared in English in 1916, by Frederick Starr, an anthropologist from the University of Chicago (fig. 2). Starr had first visited Japan in 1904 to collect a group of Ainu people and their artifacts for display at the Louisiana Purchase centennial exposition in Saint Louis later that year. It was then that he encountered maps and drawings of Hokkaido that Matsuura had made after his celebrated explorations of Japan’s northern islands in the 1840s and 1850s. In his account of Matsuura’s accomplishments, Starr wrote that although the Japanese are “to an extraordinary degree non-individual, impersonal, and given

Lessons from the One-Mat Room: Piety and Playfulness Among Nineteenth-Century Japanese Antiquarians

Henry D. Smith II
Many of the donated wood fragments are ordinary in appearance, but true to their frequent description in A Solicitation of Wood Scraps as “old wood” (furuki), most seem worn or weathered, some with traces of paint. About a dozen of the donations are visually distinctive. Item no. 44, for example, is an elaborate carving of peonies said to be a decoration at the end of a beam (furuki) to serve as pillar for the tokonoma alcove. Many of the donated wood fragments are ordinary in appearance, but true to their frequent description in A Solicitation of Wood Scraps as “old wood” (furuki), most seem worn or weathered, some with traces of paint. About a dozen of the donations are visually distinctive. Item no. 44, for example, is an elaborate carving of peonies said to be a decoration at the end of a beam (furuki) to serve as pillar for the tokonoma alcove.

The pieces of wood used to construct the One-Mat Room had been solicited by Matsuura from his wide network of friends. He sent out appeals from as early as 1879 (seven years before the completion of the study) for objects of historical significance. His printed catalogue of these objects, A Solicitation of Wood Scraps (Mokuhen kanjin, February 1887), lists eighty-nine items, of which all but six are pieces of wood, some designated for multiple uses. Most came from Shinto shrines (36) or Buddhist temples (40), and the remainder from secular historical sites. About one-third of the religious sites are of national renown, including the shrines of Ise, Izumo, Kumano, Kasuga and Daizaifu Tenmangū, and such temples as Ho-ryu-ji, Shitenno-ji, and Daisho-in and Daitokuji. In the One-Mat Room, the wood was used as a bracket for a projecting warmth in the winter (fig. 4). The overall floor area (including the alcoves) was about 3.33 square meters (54 square feet), and the ceiling 2.90 meters (six feet three inches) high. The One-Mat Room was a small but comfortable space for its declared function as the study of its owner, with ample room to greet a single guest (as in fig. 1). It is worth mentioning that Matsuura was a small man, about four feet ten inches in height (not unusual for his era).

The inscriptions to the right refer to the antique desk to the lower left (donation no. 93 in Mokuhen kanjin), offering a poem for Matsuura Takeshiro Memorial Museum, Matsuura. Photo by author.

The inscriptions to the right refer to the antique desk to the lower left (donation no. 93 in Mokuhen kanjin), offering a poem for Matsuura Takeshiro Memorial Museum, Matsuura. Photo by author.
eave over the south window. Little is known of the donor, Fukuuda Takanari, except that he worked for the Tokyo city government early in the Meiji period (1868–1912).

Even more distinctive is item no. 42, a post from a railing around a building at Kuno-ji Temple (renamed Teshuji) in 1910 in Shimizu, Shizuoka Prefecture (fig. 6, also visible in fig. 7). The post has here been placed upside down, its decorative lotus-shaped finial “hanging” downward to serve as an abbreviated alcove pillar (tokobashira), by convention a piece of wood on which great attention is lavished. This witty placement makes it the single most eye-catching ornament in the study. The finial is one of fully seven items donated by Mochizuki Jisaburō, an antiquarian from the Tokaidō post-town of Ejiri with whom Matsuura inevitably stayed on his frequent journeys between Tokyo and west Japan.

**Mapping the One-Mat Room**

Matsuura Takeshirō achieved his greatest fame as an explorer, from 1845 to 1870, between the ages of twenty-eight and forty-one, when he made six expeditions to “Ezo,” the northern lands of Japan beyond the main island of Honshu, first as an individual and then in the employ of the Tokugawa government. Driven by what Frederick Starr described as “a veritable passion for mapping,” as his interests turned away from the north frontiers and back to his roots in western Japan, and to Japanese history. From the late 1850s until his death in 1871, he laid out forty-five maps of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, with a thousand years.

Almost none of the pieces of wood, however, bore any marks that might identify either its origin or donor. For this, it was necessary to turn to the catalogue that served as the master codebook for the entire project, identifying in detail the source, history, and donor of each of the 90 items. Can we be sure that any given piece of wood came from the site described, or that it had the history that was alleged? Not really. Matsuura himself was sometimes critical, noting for example that number 84 was “popularly said to be from the tree from which Benkei [the semi-legendary warrior-priest companion of Minamoto no Yoshitsune, hero of the Genpei War of the late twelfth century] was born,” to which he added: “This is not true, of course, but I simply record what has been said.” Matsuura clearly understood that his project was rhetorical, not literal, and that the confirmation of each piece as authentic was beside the point.

**Wood Scraps Send Out Light**

The catalogue begins with a prefatory section that opens with a four-character Chinese phrase written by Sōkei Bokuju, the chief priest of Daizō-ji in Kyoto: “Wood scraps send out light” (Keppen bikari o hanatsu). Dedicatory calligraphy of Matsuura Setsujo, 1895. Collection of Matsuura Takeshiro Memorial Museum, Matsusaka. Photo by author.

The One-Mat Room project that he designed to celebrate his seventieth year was essentially a joining of two types of mapping, first of the religious and historical sites from which the pieces of wood had come, and second of his network of friends who donated these “wood scraps.” Each entry in the catalogue recorded the source of the piece of wood, and often something of its history; the name and province of residence of the donor; and the wood’s use within in the One-Mat Room. In this way, each item was thus simultaneously mapped in geographical space, in historical time, in Matsusaka’s own social network, and finally within the architectural space of the tiny study. Here is an example:

No. 82 Watanabe Makoto, Ichikawa, Kai Province [donor]
Clay bells used for the festival ceremonies at Kanazakura Shrine, Mitakeyama, Koma District
Kaigane no to
To receive these clay bells
Mitsukage no ni
from the Mitake shrine of
ni bunisuzu o
the lofty peak of Kai,
tama ni umare
is for me like making contact
nare ni
chiyo o farki toka
with a thousand years.

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The catalogue begins with a prefatory section that opens with a four-character Chinese phrase written by Sōkei Bokuju, the chief priest of Daizō-ji in Kyoto: “Wood scraps send out light” (Keppen bikari o hanatsu) (fig. 7). This nicely captures the aura of the One-Mat Room, and evokes the special Japanese feeling for wood as a medium of religious power. Trees themselves, of course, are the home of kami spirits, but the gods can also “reside” (yadoru, komoru) in inanimate objects, investing them with a spiritual power that can either threaten or protect. Japanese amulets (o-mamori), in particular, are for the most part made of wood or paper (itself a wood product). This enables us to conceive of the One-Mat Room as a comprehensive collection of talismans that gather in the protective powers of the greatest shrines and temples in Japan.
The four dedicatory Chinese poems following the title calligraphy in the introductory section of A Solicitation of Wood Scraps all celebrate the wonder of a room just one tatami mat in size, suggesting that its very smallness is a source of strength, as though vast reaches had been compressed into a dense space of special resilience. One of the poets writes, “With scarcely space for the knees, it must be solid / with a heart like steel, never tilting or bending,” while another suggests that “Its greatness can only be compared to the hills, its durability to that of steel.”

The prefatory texts also establish “One-Mat Room” (Ichijo-jiki) as the proper name by which Matsuura styled his project from the start. He did provide an alternate name of “Kusanoya” (Grass Abode) in his signature at the end of A Solicitation of Wood Scraps, suggesting the lineage of hermit’s huts—above all, that of the famed poet Saigyo— in Yoshino, of which a painting on wood was donated as number 52, which Matsuura calls “the main image of my little room.” Although “Kusanoya” was used by the Kii branch of the Tokugawa family, who maintained the room for a number of years, “Ichijo-jiki” seems more appropriate.

ANCIENT Weathered WOOD from ŌSEZAKI SHRINE

The power of sacred wood in the One-Mat Room is strongest with those pieces, eight in all, that are said to have come not from the lumber used in buildings, but from particular trees of note. Some are said to have been planted by famous priests or historical figures, and as we have heard, one allegedly gave birth to Benkei. Each has an irregular surface that preserves the form of the original tree. Japanese have long prized ancient wood of odd shapes, and it is no surprise that some should have been sent along to Matsuura, each with its own story.

One such piece of wood provides a useful way to illustrate the One-Mat Room in practice, the “old piece of Chinese juniper from Ō-sezaki Shrine” donated by Akiyama Terue of Izu province and used as the “lintel above the small north window” (fig. 8, also visible in fig. 1). Number 54 in A Solicitation of Wood Scraps, this 42-cm piece of wood immediately draws the visitor’s attention with its golden brown color and wonderful sculptural quality, having been eroded into deep, undulating channels that resemble waves of the sea.

The wavy pattern of the wood accords perfectly with Ōseizaki Shrine—its age certified by appearance in Regulations of the Engi Era (Engi shiki) of 905—that sits on a tiny peninsula jutting northward from the northwest corner of the Izu Peninsula. Over the centuries, it came to be revered especially by sailors in Suruga Bay, who would stop by the shrine in passing and make small offerings of stones. Today, Ōseizaki is visited mostly by divers lured by the clear deep waters around the promontory, but it is also famous for an ancient grove of Chinese junipers, declared a national “natural monument” in 1932 as the only large concentration of ancient trees of this species in Japan. Most striking is the “Sacred Tree” (Go-Shinboku) of Ō-sezaki Shrine on the Izu Peninsula. It may well have been from this very tree, from which protrude many twisted dead branches, that the wood was taken. The function of the wood within the shrine itself is unknown, but in some way, the donor Akiyama was able to secure a piece of it for Matsuura.

Akiyama Terue (1843–1902) was a generation younger than Matsuura, and had a distinguished career as a priest at leading Shinto shrines during the Meiji period, serving as chief priest at Mishima Shrine from 1881 until 1895, when he became chief priest at Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto. Matsuura would have often stopped at Mishima Shrine, one of the great sanctuaries of eastern Japan, during his travels along the Tokaido in the 1880s, and doubtless met Akiyama in those years. In a letter that Akiyama wrote to Matsuura in July 1886, we learn that Matsuura had specifically requested the wood, although we have no idea how he learned of it. Akiyama’s letter
The small size of the One-Mat Room has misled some commentators to describe it as a tearoom. Matsuura was certainly aware of the asidious search by Sen no Rikyū for a minimal tea space, an effort that had a lasting impact on Japanese architecture and aesthetics. But he was not in competition with tea, a pastime that he seems to have considered rather frivolous. The stated purpose of the One-Mat Room was that of a study, revealing his priority of literary and scholarly pursuits.

In this sense, the One-Mat Room was what the architectural critic Taki Kōji has called a “lived house” (shiraretatame), in this case a functional study with space to entertain a single guest. It was not a performance stage like a tearoom, made clear by Matsuura’s own drawings of the room in A Solicitation of Wood Scraps (see fig. 4), showing it filled with clutter of objects, various of which were themselves donations. Of the 89 donations listed in the catalogue, 73 were movable furnishings—books, paintings, trays, a hibachi with implements, a desk and some decorative objects. Unfortunately, all of these have disappeared, probably lost when the One-Mat Room was moved in about 1908 from the Matsuura family residence in Kanda to the Nanki Bunko library in the Azabu district of Tokyo.

Mapping a Life: The “Manifesto” of the One-Mat Room

The intimate nature of Matsuura’s project was reflected in the physical features of A Solicitation of Wood Scraps itself, a book of small proportions (6 1/2 cm high by 10.5 cm wide) that is a wood-carved facsimile replica of his own hand-written text and hand-drawn images (fig. 10 and see also fig. 4). The book was legally published by Matsuura himself, and distributed privately to his friends—although one surviving copy lists a price of “eight sen” (about forty cents in American money at the time), suggesting that a demand had developed for a commercial edition.

The most compelling testimony of the personal meaning of the One-Mat Room is to be found in the “Manifesto” that appears as the final four pages of A Solicitation of Wood Scraps. It is in effect a final mapping, that of his own life. Critical to this reading of the “Manifesto” is Matsuura’s underlying Buddhist belief in the ultimate insignificance of the phenomenal world. He had aspired to the Buddhist priesthood from an early age, and became
a practicing Zen monk following a serious illness while traveling in Kyushu at the age of twenty, taking the priestly name of Bunkei. He never seems to have settled down for long to temple life, but this experience determined his entire view of life and the material world.

After explaining the small size of the room, as described above, he turns to the nature of its materials:

I have made this room by piecing together old scraps of wood that were sent to me from friends in the various provinces. Thus it serves as a way for remembering my friends day and night, reminiscing on who gave this piece, who gave that. In this way, I do not forget the generous spirits of my friends, and have managed a way to tell others about their fine words and deeds.

Having provided this tribute to his network of friends, Matsuura then turns finally to the matter of evanescence, insisting that “I did not presume to build the room with the thought that it might survive for later generations.” Citing the parable from the Lotus Sutra in which the phenomenal world of suffering is compared to a burning house, he requests a fiery end: “When I die, I would ask that this place be torn down, the wood used to burn my remains, and the ashes then removed to Mount Ōdai.”

The very idea of removing his ashes to Mount Ōdai (or Ōdaigahara, as it is known today) was as eccentric as that of building a one-mat room, but for Matsuura it seems uncannily appropriate. Located deep in the mountains behind Takeshirō’s own birthplace near Matsusaka on the Kii Peninsula, at the point of intersection of the three provinces of Ise, Kii and Yamato, Mount Ōdai is the wettest spot in all Japan, with annual rainfall of over 4500 mm. Less a peak than a “great high plain” (the literal meaning of Ōdaigahara), it serves as the watershed for much of the Kii Peninsula, in particular for those rivers that nourish the most sacred areas of ancient Japan: Ise, Kumano and Yoshino.

Mount Ōdai was feared in Takeshirō’s day as the home of a great serpent, and rarely ever climbed. As a final expression of his own spirit of exploration, however, Takeshirō set out in his last years to conquer Ōdai and to break down the superstitions surrounding it, climbing the mountain twice while he was gathering the materials for the One-Mat Room. He apparently hoped to open the mountain for colonization (a goal achieved today by its status as a popular tourist site). So Mount Ōdai only made sense as the place where Matsuura should himself come at last to rest, transformed to ash by the flames of the One-Mat Room and the deep personal and historical memories it contained, and transported to the source of the water that gave life to some of the most sacred areas in all Japan. In this way, he himself would continue to circulate among the gods that he worshipped.

The Absorption with Things

Despite Matsuura’s protest that his conceit of a One-Mat Room had nothing to do with manazuki, the project reflects the ideal of suki, which is critical to how the Japanese think about and deal with things. The word emerged early in the Heian period (794–1185), derived from the verb *suki*, meaning “to become single-mindedly attracted to things to which one has taken a liking; to become wholly absorbed.” The noun was used first to connote love (particularly erotic love), but was also applied to the arts, especially to the art of *waka* poetry.

Edward Kamens has proposed in his provocative book about *utsukakura* (poetic place names) in *waka* verse that a preoccupation with collecting “fetishes and curios” is related to the “famous places” (*meisho*) of poetry that functioned as *utsukakura*:*.

Poets yearned to connect directly with the places of which they sang in verse, many of which they had never visited. Indeed, many were places that no longer existed, requiring special effort to acquire any physical traces. Kamens uses the term “*waka* fetishism” to describe this obsessive longing for physical objects connected with poetic words. The most revealing anecdote about such desires, and about the refined style with which it was consummated, concerns two tenth-century poets known for their *suki*, Nōin (*1088–1150*), author of *Utsukakura* and Fujiwara Tokinobu (dates unknown). The story is recorded around a hundred and fifty years later as a parody of the extremes of *suki*.

Tokinobu, an expert archer, was a man of taste (sukimono). When he first met Nōin, the two men were impressed with one another. Nōin said, “I have something to show you in commemoration of your visit today,” and drew from within his robe a small brocade bag. In it was a single shaving of wood. Showing it, Nōin said, “This is my treasure. It is a shaving from the time of the construction of Nagara Bridge.”

Tokinobu was overjoyed, and pulled from within his own robe an object wrapped in paper. He opened it and revealed that it contained a dried frog. “I have here a frog from Ise.” They were both struck with wonder, and each returned his treasure to his robe, then parted company. People today can only sigh at such behavior.¹¹

Much like the wooden fragments in the One-Mat Room, Nōin’s wood shaving and Tokinobu’s dried frog are physical fragments from famous sites internalized by *waka* poets: the Nagara Bridge over the Yodo River, and Ise, celebrated as early as the tenth century in the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems* (*Kokinshū*) for the cry of its frogs.¹² Of course, this legendary meeting of the Heian poets revealed a fundamentally different approach to things from that of Matsuura. The poets’ world remained largely in the imagination, while Matsuura had visited nearly all the places represented in the One-Mat Room, although he insisted that the wood fragments were far more important as signs of the friends who gave the wood than of the actual places.

In the Muromachi period (1392–1573), *suki* passed from the art of poetry to the art of tea, for which the word became in time a virtual synonym, creating in turn the word *sukiya* to refer to buildings constructed in tea taste. Today, by far the most common use of *suki* refers to tea practice itself or to *sukiya* architecture. More than any of the other Japanese arts, the way of tea negotiates a delicate balance between spirituality
and sensuousness through the display, handling and exchange of physical things, the “implements” (dega) that are so central to the history and practice of tea.

Although Matsuura’s concept of the One-Mat Room was in part a direct challenge to the tearoom, he was independent of any connection with the formal practice of tea, or indeed with any organized aesthetic. And yet, the entire project of the One-Mat Room would not have been possible without the broader impact of tea in Japan, a thoroughly object-based art that encouraged sensitive appreciation of things. Just as tea masters have always insisted on tea as a form of sociality, so Matsuura insisted that his ultimate concern was with the network of friends brought together by the One-Mat Room.

The Playful Handling of Things

A final important twist on the concept of suki is revealed by the word mono no zaiki that we have already encountered in the “Manifesto,” which specifically joins suki with things (mono), to suggest a strong element of playful individuality in the handling of objects. In successive dictionary citations of the word, we can sense its evolution: 1) “to strive for witty effect” (Banmei-bon setuyōsha, 1468–87); 2) “to have a taste for odd things, things that are different from the ordinary” (Shiga nikai, 1534); and 3) “to have a strong sense of curiosity” (Nippo jisho, 1603–4). These qualities of mono no zaiki as curiosity and a taste for the unusual continued to be cultivated throughout the Edo period (1603–1868), both in the formal arts, notably in haikai poetry networks (Bashō’s verse “A butterfly attracted to flowers without fragrance: a true mono no zaiki”), and in the world of Edo popular literature (gozaishu). In some cases, mono no zaiki parodied itself, as in the so-called “treasure competition” (sakura-awase) parties staged by Ota Nanpo (1749–1823) in the Tenmei era (1781–84), flamboyant events where worthless fake objects were presented as true treasures with great fanfare.

Matsuura did not engage in tea or popular literature, but his father, a samurai in the domain of Tsu (the home of Motoori Norinaga, the great eighteenth-century scholar of “national learning”), was a practitioner of both haikai poetry and tea gatherings, so we may presume that Takeshiro developed a well-honed sense of the complex and affectionate attitudes toward things that were nurtured by those arts.

Antiquity and Love of the Past

In the world of Edo mono no zaiki, both things and the way in which they were presented were prized for wit and originality. But, in the late Edo period, a far more sober attitude to things was evolving. In part, this was the product of the Qing Chinese model of “evidentiary studies” (kōkyōga), which encouraged a spirit of close observation and careful attention to both textual and physical evidence. More fundamentally, it reflected the increasing exposure of more and more Japanese to the vast diversity of the physical world by way of travel and exploration—key sources of Matsuura’s own scholarship.

And, of course, the spreading “national learning” (kōkyōga) movement provided a different kind of stimulus, seeking to transform the very shape of the past that Japanese intellectuals created in their minds. All of this began to change in the nineteenth century with the discovery of literally buried history, revealed by things dug up from the ground, which was effectively the birth of modern archaeology in Japan. This connection is the focus of a provocative book by Suzuki Hisayuki, in which he seizes upon the notion of “lovers of the old” (kōkōka) as a distinctive class of men in the transition from Edo to Meiji. Matsuura Takeshiro is mentioned as a founding member of this class. Suzuki stresses that the illustrations of the old objects of these collectors, using the most advanced printing techniques, was a crucial way for them to promote their interests, and he includes Matsuura’s woodblock-printed The Pleasures of Scattering Clouds (Hatsuun yakyō, 2 vols., 1877 and 1882) as an example.

Suzuki uses the word “kōkō” for the group he analyzes, but this is not a word that they would have recognized, although it accurately describes their taste for the past. It is basically a Meiji translation of the English “antiquarian,” an inclination that operated in a completely different context in Japan. In Europe, those interested in the more distant past turned to the stone monuments of classical antiquity. In Japan, monuments were built mostly of wood, frequently destroyed by fire and regularly rebuilt, so that physical remains of the ancient past were rare and fragile. Reading through A Solicitation of Wood Scraps, one notes how many pieces were salvaged from fire or recycled through rebuilding or repair. The conception of the One-Mat Room was peculiar to such a perishable culture of wood—Matsuura asked that it be burned, not preserved. It was in a sense the ultimate anti-monument.

A “liking for the past” (kōkō) was nothing new in Japan, nor in the many Chinese sources to which Japanese of the Edo period often turned, and it had grown vastly in the final years of the Edo period. For people like Matsuura, “old” and “things” could not easily be considered separate from each other. Unlike the more literary-minded scholars of national learning, who were led from words to the past, these mono no zaiki were attached to the particularity of each object, preferring the use of actual-size rubbings as the basis for their woodblock-printed illustrations. The new university-based practitioners of “kōkyōga” (written with the characters meaning “think about” rather than “love” the past) looked at the objects they collected as “specimens,” valued not individually, but as the basis for comparison with other objects in order to develop systems of classification. For the kōkōka antiquarian, the aesthetics of the object were primary, while for the archaeologists, visual appeal was secondary.
As Suzuki demonstrates, the new academic “professionals” in the university departments of archaeology quickly displaced the old curiosity-driven monozuki-type collector, such as Matsuura and Ninagawa Noritane (1835-1882), who donated a scrap of wood to the One-Mat Room. These two camps ended up in two separate modern disciplines that were just then in their formative stages: “art history” and “anthropology.” The tensions between the two approaches still provoke angry debate and new ideas. In his day, Matsuura Takeshiro was “object-oriented,” as were so many of his generation of amateur collectors and observers, but if he had been born a generation or two later, we can imagine him equally intrigued with the great debates over classification that emerged only in the last decades of his life.

EPILOGUE

Vast changes occurred in the later Meiji period about the ways things of personal and historical meaning were handled. The commercial market in old things grew phenomenally and was quickly globalized, with striking results. Western preferences came to influence Japanese art markets, and vice versa. An entirely new body of “collectors” emerged in Japan from the new capitalist class, imitating Western models, pushing aside with their wealth the older haphazard style of monozuki collectors, who were largely indifferent to market value and did not even have a word for “collection.” (Matsuura himself, as we have seen, did buy and sell objects to finance his antiquarian travels, but his refusal to haggle suggests a casual attitude to profit and a primary interest in sharing.) They only understood the pleasure of showing selected items that they owned to special friends who might appreciate them for their beauty—and oddity. The notion of a personal showing project. Perhaps the best image is that provided by Sugiura Baitan’s instructions to cremate his remains with the wood from the One-Mat Room were made in the “Manifesto” of Mishonen kanjō, 22.

2. The other materials were paper (two books and two paintings), iron (a pair of long nails used to handle charcoaled in ibuki), clay (for a set of bells) and stone (as a step at the eastern entrance).
5. Ryubushin is also known in Japanese as ibuki (scientific name, juniperus chinensis), and is found in China and along the coasts of Japan. Ōzeki represents the northern limits of its range in Japan.
6. This is from a collection of letters written to Takeshiro by donors to the One-Mat Room. It was mounted as a scroll, and is in the Matsusabu Family Papers of the Historical Documents Division of the National Institute of Japanese Literature in Tokyo. For a photograph and transcription of the letter, see Smith, Taizanso and the One-Mat Room, 244-45.
8. “Mount Ōsakura” is today called Ódaigahara, elevation 615 meters, located on the border of Nara and Mie Prefectures. For more on Matsuura Takeshiro’s relationship with Mount Ōsakura, see Smith, Taizanso and the One-Mat Room, 66-70.
11. English translation from Kamens, Utamakura, 166.
12. For details on the complexities of each of these antiken, see Katagiri Yōichi, Utamakura unukushita jōtei (Dictionary of utensil and implements) (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1983), 107-10, 207-12.
14. Monezaki ya nisshaku kai ni tenma dō.
15. For details of the 18th century, see Hokama Ishikawa, “The World of Geisha: Playful Writers of Late Eighteenth Century Japan” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1964), 64-73. It is revealing that the introduction to Takara-awase no ki, the printed “Record of the treasure competition,” cites as precedent for such competitions the story of Nojin and Tokushō, as related above—a tale about things that seem to have been perfect for the geisha sensibility.

For all its expansive mapping of history and geography, reflecting the career of its creator as an explorer, the One-Mat Room is an intensely inward-looking project. Perhaps the best image is that provided by Sugiuira Baitan in his dedicatory poem, in which he sees Matsuura as “at times reaching out like a dragon, at others bunching up like an inchworm.” In other words, after a life of expansive activity, he was shrinking into a tiny physical space that has remained symbolically vast.