Towards the Asian Cultural Council: Blanchette Rockefeller and Her Engagement with Asia, 1951-1986

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Introduction

On April 6, 1971, Blanchette Ferry Hooker Rockefeller delivered a formal talk to New York’s Colony Club titled, “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad.” Mrs. Rockefeller had visited Japan for the first time in 1951, where she spent six weeks in Tokyo with her husband, John D. Rockefeller 3rd, who served as an unofficial cultural attaché to Douglas MacArthur’s Japan Peace Commission. Like his mentor—former High Commissioner for Refugees of the League of Nations, and first US Ambassador to Israel—Dr. James G. McDonald, Mr. Rockefeller spent most of his time as part of the commission interviewing political, economic, and cultural authorities to find ways of improving cultural relations between the two countries. As a result, John devised a model based on bilateral cultural exchange—a two-way street. Toward that end, he later planned and built a conference center, the International House of Japan, where scholars and public officials from Europe and the United States exchanged ideas with their Japanese counterparts. These luminaries included the likes of Arnold Toynbee and Eleanor Roosevelt. Rockefeller’s Japanese collaborator in that venture was an internationally minded journalist, Shigeharu Matsumoto. The Rockefellers and Matsumotos formed their own two-way relationship spanning the rest of their respective lives, as well as those of their children.

At the same time, Mr. Rockefeller’s wife, Blanchette, forged her own collaborative endeavors in Tokyo. In her 1971 luncheon address to the Colony Club, Blanchette recalled that while her husband engaged Japanese public officials during their 1951 visit, she “began browsing around Tokyo with the guidance of army wives and cultural and educational people from General MacArthur’s staff.” In effect, she pushed open the doors to her own two-way avenue of cultural exchange. Just as her husband had been moved by his experiences two decades earlier while standing in the Forbidden City in Beijing or wandering around the delicate flower gardens of Kyoto, Blanchette’s first visit to Asia left an indelible impression. She wrote: “I would tell you much about those first impressions of Japan but suffice it to say that the spirit of the
people, broken by war and defeat and shattered by incredible loss of life, was even then endearing to me and I wanted to learn more about their inner thoughts and their shy and sensitive qualities.”

Three years after her return from her first visit to Tokyo, Mrs. Rockefeller made good on her declaration to learn more, setting the stage for significant contributions to cultural exchanges between Americans and Asians. She enrolled in an Asian Affairs graduate program at Columbia University, where she took courses for three years under the direction of distinguished Japanese historians including Hugh Borton and George Samson. Annual travel to Asia, duties with family, and leadership responsibilities at the Museum of Modern Art (where she would serve twice as president, including a thirteen-year tenure (1972-1985) that oversaw the expansion of the museum) prevented her from writing a culminating master’s thesis. Nevertheless, Mrs. Rockefeller completed numerous research papers and gained adequate knowledge to navigate the world of art, history, and culture in East and South Asia.

Were her studies to have been the sum of her Asian-related activities, they would be noteworthy, but they were simply one facet of her engagement with Asia. Additionally, while she took classes, she continued to engage in people-to-people contacts with those whom she had met in Japan, namely the Shigeharu Matsumoto family. Bundles of letters document the unique interactions that complimented her academic studies. Third, Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller continued to travel to Asia until the former’s death in 1978, giving Mrs. Rockefeller the opportunity to refine her appreciation of Asian art to the point that the couple created their own continental art collection that would be showcased at the Asia Society headquarters in New York. Ultimately, Mrs. Rockefeller’s collecting penchant and philanthropic largesse motivated her to establish the Asian Cultural Council (ACC), a private organization that perpetuated the grant-making legacy of her husband’s then thirteen-year-old JDR 3rd Fund, which continues to support the creation, performance, and teaching of Asian artistic forms.
While Mrs. Rockefeller was by no means the only individual, male or female, whose enthusiasm for Asia had institutional impetus, the relative lack of knowledge of the experiences that led her to advocate for the endowment of the Asian Cultural Council deserves greater attention. Several important studies published in a cluster around the turn of the twenty-first century focused particularly on the role of women as cultural ambassadors for Asia in America. Mari Yoshihara’s 2003 monograph, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*, for example, examined consumer preferences for Asian designs in the early twentieth century, the print-collecting activities of individuals including and Lucy and Abby Aldrich (later Rockefeller), down through the production of Ruth Benedict’s window on Japanese culture, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. In the same year (2003), Christina Klein’s *Cold War Orientalism: Asia and the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, explored mainstream American sympathies towards Asian culture as conveyed in mass media, including the writings of James Michener, the genesis of the *Reader’s Digest*, the film adaptation of *The King and I*, as well as Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*. Klein’s more recent work explores the role of the Asia Foundation as a catalyst for cultural production during the Cold War, more precisely touching on film production in Korea. While Yoshihara’s and Klein’s studies encompassed Asia more broadly, Karen J. Leong’s *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*, examined how cultural exchange and production intersected with US-Chinese relations, including Pearl S. Buck’s work as founder of the East and West Association.

While this study emphasizes the evolution of Blanchette Rockefeller’s interest in Asia and the subsequent founding of the Asian Cultural Council, it bears understanding how such a study fits within the field of Asian cultural exchange during the twentieth century. This endeavor revolves primarily around the interplay of two terms invoked by scholars to assess the nature of US-Asian cultural exchange. The first of these terms, “orientalism,” hearkens back to Edward Said’s extensive efforts to uncover ways in which Europeans and Americans represented Asia, the Middle East, and its inhabitants throughout the age of imperialism. As an extension of that work, cultural historians like
Yoshihara, Leong, and Klein examined American representations of Asia, East Asian in particular, given US engagement with the region, beginning primarily with the opening of trade with China and Japan, along with the implosion of the Spanish Empire, which facilitated American expansion and trade in the region. By and large, these representations by cultural historians hinged on power relations between Asians and Americans. For Yoshihara’s wide-ranging study, she defined orientalism as “Western ways of perceiving, understanding, and representing the ‘Orient’ that are founded upon the material reality of unequal power relations between the West and the East and upon the belief in the essential difference between the two.”

In the context of US-Chinese cultural relations, Leong assessed the intersection of US foreign policy priorities and the ebb and flow of power relations as expressed culturally during the twentieth century. Thus, the idea of orientalism carried a pejorative meaning in the ways in which Americans, for example, viewed the typecast roles played by Anna May Wong in Hollywood films, alternating with the concept of a Chinese “mystique” in instances when the virtue, hard work, and sacrifice aligned with US initiatives in the region, including efforts to save China from communism during the final hours of Mayling Soong and Chiang Kai-shek’s tenuous mainland legitimacy in the late 1940s. This shift began, in Leong’s estimation, at the onset of the Great Depression, as “Americans began to imagine China differently, no longer an alien and distant culture and land, but as a demonstration of the promise held by American democracy and culture to transform other nations.”

Klein’s Cold War Orientalism extended the narrative of cultural representation and reception beyond World War II, illustrating how “middlebrow intellectuals, texts, and institutions tried to educate Americans about their evolving relationships with Asia, and how they created opportunities – real and symbolic – for their audiences to participate in the forging of these relationships.” Most importantly, we learn from Klein’s early work that these exchanges “brought these alliances to life, by translating them into personal terms and imbuing them with sentiment, so that they became emotionally rich relationships that Americans could inhabit imaginatively in their everyday lives.” These interactions, based on “reciprocity,” approach what Leong denominated as an Asian – or more precisely Chinese – mystique, which, unlike orientalism,
reflected mutual dignity and humanity across the Pacific frontier. Ultimately, it was Klein who suggested a further refinement of US-Asian cultural relations. In this “post-orientalism,” as articulated in Melani McAlister’s important work, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*, “The meanings of the Middle East [and we might add here, Asia] in the United States have been far more mobile, flexible and rich than the Orientalism binary would allow.”

If Klein, Leong, and Yoshihara offer a spectrum of ways of seeing US-Asian cultural exchange over the course of the twentieth century, Robert Shaffer, as well as Christina Klein in her later work, examine the institutional foundations that yoked internationalism and domestic U.S. considerations. Shaffer’s essay, “Pearl S. Buck and the East and West Association: The Trajectory and Fate of ‘Critical Internationalism,’ 1940-1950,” evaluates the formation and contributions of Buck and her second husband’s efforts to “[educate] . . . Asians and Americans about each other and [strengthen] . . . ‘people to people’ ties between them.” Shaffer highlights the positions taken by the East and West Association, shedding light as well (as does Leong in her monograph) on the linkages between foreign policy, racial disparities in the United States, and decolonization worldwide. Dissonance between organizational objectives and US engagement in Korea sounded the death knell for the East and West Association. More recently, Klein’s journal article “Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Asia Foundation and 1950s Korean Cinema,” begins with a narrative analysis of the Asia Foundation, initiated by the Central Intelligence Agency to promote cosmopolitanism – or “openness towards the ‘free world’ – in a number of cultural forms throughout East Asia “that combined indigenous and foreign elements and exhibited worldly command of up-to-date techniques and ideas.” Klein argues that “Cold War cosmopolitanism is perhaps best understood as the Asian counterpart to America’s Cold War Orientalism” Like Mrs. Rockefeller’s Asian Cultural Council, the Asia Foundation provided material support in the form of grants to cultural producers, albeit through government channels rather than private philanthropy, in the case of the ACC.
Thus, this assessment of Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller’s Asian exchange encompasses her ways of seeing the region (which might be defined as post-orientalism) and the institutional trajectory of the ACC vis-à-vis similar organizations including the East and West Association and the Asia Foundation. While Mrs. Rockefeller’s interests were piqued in Japan, through study, travel, and person-to-person interaction, her vision of Asia became richer and encouraged her to consider “Asian culture” as a wide range of possibilities, rather than as a monolith. It is important, as well, to note that Mrs. Rockefeller’s journey and eventual endowment of the Asian Cultural Council lacked many of the overt political motivations and intentions that were foundational to other organizations, indeed the very ones analyzed by Klein and Leong, that were founded by Pearl S. Buck (The East and West Association) as well as the Asia Foundation (initially chaired by James Michener, but in point of fact a civilian front for a CIA-sponsored organization). It is in this sense, as well as through our window on Mrs. Rockefeller’s intimate friendship with the Matsumoto family, which could very well be a stand-in for the many “reciprocal” relationships — in the same vein that Klein articulates in limning idealized Asian-American encounters — that she forged with Asians throughout her travels and at her and her husband’s homes in New York, that I have chosen the term of “compassionate orientalism” to define the nature of her exchanges with the region and its individuals.

**Family Influences**

Mrs. Rockefeller’s interest in Asia had several sources. First, her mother’s (Blanche Ferry Hooker) own art collecting likely acquainted Blanchette with non-Europeans and their striking environs for the first time. Jean Leon Gerome’s *Camels at the Well*, a donation from her mother, now hangs in the art museum at Vassar College. Mrs. Rockefeller’s mother’s interest in Asia extended far beyond Gerome’s austere depictions of desert life in the Maghreb. The daughter of Dexter Ferry, Jr., flower seed industry scion (and, himself, an art collector), Blanche tended carefully to the design and landscape of the flora at Chelmsford, a rolling estate of lakes and sylvan gardens situated near
Greenwich, Connecticut. In 1935, she embarked with two of her daughters, Adelaide and Helen, on a May to June tour of Japanese and Chinese gardens. She took recommendations from her son-in-law, John D. Rockefeller 3rd, on gardens to see, stopping off at one site for an extra day without the entourage of “garden girls” traveling together. By the end of May, daughters Adelaide and Helen tested her patience, but the prospects of heading to the mainland before heading home compelled Blanche Hooker to keep exploring. “I can’t bear to go home without seeing China as everybody says now is the time – its marvelous civilization has reached the top and history shows that every great nation when once it begins to lose – never regains its place again,” she confided to Blanchette.16

China presented a matter of serious inquiry. To distinguish the trip from previous vacations, she noted in a letter home to daughter Barbara, “We are looking at this all as a summer course in Oriental art and history and not as a pleasure trip.” In Mukden (present-day Shenyang), the trio took in the delights of the Qing dynasty by car, before embarking on a train ride from Liaoning province to Beijing, passing through “bandit land.” Hosted by an expat living in Beijing’s Western Hills, Blanche and her daughters visited temples and gardens, prompting a change of heart on behalf of the Hooker matriarch: “Until today, [Adelaide] and I have been against Chinese temples on the whole, but between [the temple at Pi Yun See, or Temple of the Azure Clouds] and the Imperial Summer Palace, where we had picnic lunch and wandered around with [a] guide till sunset, we now admit they have some fine artisanal features.”17 All along, Blanche conceded to Blanchette, “I think of you a hundred times as day and imagine all the fun Johnnie and you will have over here someday.”18

Second, Blanchette’s mother-in-law, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, to whom Blanchette referred to early in her 1971 speech as another mentor, also shared her passion for art. Nine years later, in an oral history chronicling brother-in-law Nelson’s involvement with the Museum, Blanchette recalled:

Between Nelson and his mother . . . they kindly helped me to become more involved with the Museum. Mrs. Rockefeller wanted to give me a freer opportunity for expression. She was an amazing mother-in-
law. She knew that John (JDR 3rd) shared his father’s opinion of twentieth-century art and she understood my desire to know more about it.\(^9\)

As was the case for Blanchette, Mrs. Abby Rockefeller’s exposure to Asia preceded her marriage to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. As Mari Yoshihara outlines in *Embracing the East*, Abby’s father actively collected Asian books, objects, and visual art, an enterprise that she and her sister Lucy carried on with contemporary industrialists, including Morgan, Havemeyer, and Frick. Ironically, it was Abby’s sister who acted as surrogate art collector, helping her younger sister collect at least 700 Japanese prints that were subsequently donated to the Rhode Island School of Design.\(^9\)

Most influential were the shared experiences Blanchette and her husband had in Asia. As she noted to her audience in 1971, they traveled to Japan for the first time together in 1951, in conjunction with the signing of the US-Japan Treaty of Peace. In addition to making her own surveys of a still devastated, but now renewing Tokyo, Blanchette also pursued formal efforts to bring symbols of cultural exchange back to the Museum of Modern Art. At the end of 1952, John 3rd reached out to Nelson with a proposal for the Museum. “It is my understanding,” he wrote:

> That for many months now the Museum of Modern Art has been interested in bringing to this country a Japanese house for erection in the Museum Garden. When Blanchette and I were in Japan last year, she was asked by the museum staff to pursue the idea with those interested. This she did. While some problems still remain to be dealt with, the situation would appear to be approaching the point where it might become a reality.\(^21\)

Blanchette’s husband offered to donate $50,000 as a lump sum, or any amount above that which would be necessary, to have a home brought from Japan to New York, as a gesture of international cooperation and cultural diplomacy. “That the Museum is developing this plan pleases me very much, for I believe it can mean a great deal in interpreting a phase in Japanese life as well as portraying an important development in modern architecture.”\(^22\)
The specifications for design of the house were exacting and the degree of expertise contracted peerless. Though first proposed in 1952, the house would not be completed and delivered to the Museum of Modern Art until 1954. A report drawn up prior to construction noted that Mr. Jonzo Yoshimura, director of the Commission for the National Preservation of National Treasures, would serve as the architect of the project, with assistance for landscaping layout proffered by a Mr. Ito, himself a “13th generation Japanese carpenter.” Three Japanese craftsmen would be flown to New York to erect the structure.  

Reception of the experiential edifice could be qualified as nothing short of a success; 120,000 visitors attended the exhibit in 1954, with a second season the following year. In a process that must have borne something of the ritualistic tone of the renewal of Shinto temples, the New York Herald noted, “The garden has been replanted, the pool filled, paper sliding screen walls cleaned, new matting put down on the floors, and dishes put back on the shelves.” Following its exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art that year (from April through October), the structure was dismantled, shipped to Philadelphia, where it has remained in the Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center in Fairmount Park.

While Mrs. Rockefeller’s interactions with her mother and mother-in-law regarding Asia leave little sense of the latter’s feelings about the region, her enthusiasm for bringing the model home and tea garden in New York illustrates her deep interest and detailed contributions towards the endeavor. In the earlier years, Mrs. Rockefeller’s awareness of the region seems little more than ornamental (an inventory of their belongings in the wake of burglaries near their Beekman Place residence in New York City reveals one Japanese wooden partition gifted from Mrs. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller). According to Yoshihara’s study, such consumer engagement with ornamental orientalism was typical for the age. Blanchette’s full investment in bringing Japanese architecture and philosophical functionality to New York demonstrate something completely different.
While work on the tea garden and house commenced, Mrs. Rockefeller pursued graduate studies in Japanese art and history at Columbia University. She began with language study, “knowing that we would be returning to Japan in the future,” but indicated that she did not make as much progress as she would have liked. “I was advised by a good friend, who knew Japan well, not to attempt the language but rather to study the art and history of Japan,” she remarked in her talk. “My friend tactfully indicated that my age would make it difficult to learn Japanese sufficiently well to carry on anything but a weak . . . conversation.” After watching her son, Jay, struggle “[for] three years in Japan to really learn the language fluently,” she took her friends advice and, at the age of forty-three enrolled in courses at Columbia University’s Institute for East Asian Affairs.25 “My hat and shoes were often carried,” she recalled, “in a paper bag on the subway en route to classes and back in order to be ready for formal lunches or teas.”26 Blanchette’s return to school was extraordinary in the sense that she maintained her high social profile while attending school, creating the International Council for the Arts at the Museum of Modern Art, and mentoring Misao Matsumoto, daughter of her husband’s collaborator with the International House of Japan.

Taking the subway to Columbia between 1954 and 1956 held its own rewards. “One or two courses a semester were a joy,” she recalled, “and I fully appreciated the opportunity to learn what I needed and wanted to know.” She reflected at length on the question of education in relation to art collecting in her 1971 luncheon address, noting: “The results were the most gratifying of my short academic career! I never got my M.A. because we kept going to Asia each January for four to six weeks, so, alas, I was a ’drop-out,’ but the full benefits of my studies were derived and I really didn’t think I or anyone else cared whether I would boast [of] a Master’s Degree.”27

On another occasion, Mrs. Rockefeller clarified the extent of her preparation. In an interview with the Archives of American Art for the Smithsonian Institution in 1970, she indicated that she finished the course work for the M.A.
and would have liked to have written a thesis, but her and John’s travels took priority.\textsuperscript{28} Her professors were also aware of the balance between learning in the classroom and on the road. On one of her term papers for a course on Asian art, Professor Hugh Borton scribbled across the top that she might want the paper for her upcoming travels. In sum, returning to the classroom illustrated not only the preparation Blanchette received that would make her a more discriminating art collector but the far-reaching influence of lifelong learning, as well. “After those two and a half years at Columbia,” she observed during her speech to the Colony Club, “I felt [comfortable] on my further travels with at least a general if not profound knowledge of the arts of Asia and the overall history of Japan.”\textsuperscript{29}

Blanchette had no regrets later in life, acknowledging that as an undergraduate at Vassar in the 1920s, she had given equal attention to social, academic, and service activities. Her academic performance at Columbia improved markedly, perhaps because of her specific interest in Asia. “I think they were sort of astonished,” she later recalled in reference to her younger, fellow students, “to have an old lady like me in the class so they paid more attention to me.”\textsuperscript{30} The main evidence from which we may draw conclusions about Blanchette’s education in the Asian Affairs program at Columbia University includes mid-term examinations from courses dealing primarily with Japan, as well as research papers preserved in her papers. Also included in folders dealing with her mid-life return to university were notes from each of her classes. In addition, there were photostatic copies of documents outlining the different hand gestures of Buddhist and Hindu statues, one clear indication of her interest in sculpted bodhisattvas from Southeast Asia that distinguish her own Asian collection, as well as the one jointly held with her husband.\textsuperscript{31}

Philosophically, Blanchette stressed the far-reaching influence of Confucianism on Japanese culture and society. She singled out thirteenth-century Confucian thought as formative on the Tokugawa culture, particularly in the subsequent structure of familial and social relations. In her mind, these influences likely accounted for the collective, often anti-democratic, nature of Japanese society during the balance of Japanese history. Just as Confucian thought continued to
dominate Japanese culture in the twentieth century, Rockefeller felt that individualism would take time to nurture as well, for “individual rights is something that takes many generations to develop. The belief that the will of the people prevails rather than strength [of a small, militaristic leadership] has to be demonstrated by experience in democratic government, after so many years of military dictatorship.”

Similarly, Mrs. Rockefeller argued that toleration with collective Japanese cultural norms rather than forced conversion to Western mores should be the rule rather than the exception. On one midterm assignment, students were tasked with imagining themselves as advisors to General Douglas MacArthur at the handover of power to the Japanese, an event from which Blanchette and John were not too far removed. Mrs. Rockefeller recommended the extension of freedom and human rights for all Japanese, creation of a civil police force, distribution of information about Japan during the war, encouragement (if not in the expectation of compliance) with democratic institutions, and a constitutional convention, whose work should “suit the particular way of life, culture, and temperament of the Japanese people.” Towards that end, she offered as this caution—occupation authorities should “carefully avoid seeming to determine the course of the [constitutional] committee’s thinking, or to inflict its own conception of government thereon.” These conditions were followed by an admonition to give the vote to all Japanese, including women over the age of 18, thereafter, to be followed by general elections to the new government.

Perhaps born out of personal experience, having now visited Asia on several occasions, Blanchette wrote, at the conclusion of her essay:

In the carrying out of these various recommendations I would like to make the following general comments. The Japanese are a naturally obedient and well-disciplined people, and the use of extreme harshness or heavy-handed authoritarian techniques should not be necessary. They have had an overdose of such things and are now bewildered and at a loss. Kindness and firmness will be far more effective in gaining their cooperation. I believe that all of these recommendations should be carried out with the participation of the Japanese themselves and that every effort should be made to bring
their leaders along in the thinking of SCAP, not through pressure or intimidation, but by friendly and quiet education and discussion. Only in this way will they develop a sure understanding of their new opportunities and responsibilities in the post-occupation world.34

Blanchette’s personal experiences also appear to have shaped the substance of her research papers. For example, in her Modern Japanese History course, she wrote a term paper on the mission of US diplomat Townsend Harris to Japan during the late 1850s. Mrs. Rockefeller highlighted that following on the heels of Admiral Matthew C. Perry’s penetration of the Tokugawa cultural cocoon, Harris cultivated strong relations with Tokugawa officials, priming their interest in Western technology and trade. Negotiating from a position of weakness, Harris secured an enhanced trading agreement as well as access to additional trading ports, an accord subsequently ratified by the US Congress. Mrs. Rockefeller’s interest in Harris paralleled the cultural work that her husband had been commissioned to do, as part of the US drawdown in Tokyo. To be sure, Mrs. Rockefeller did not conflate the missions of Harris and that of her husband, but she culled the former’s diaries and papers to gather evidence of a culturally sensitive outsider who came to Japanese culture later in life. Much like the concept of US-Japanese culture representing a “two-way street,” as articulated by her husband, Mrs. Rockefeller assigned credit for the treaty to “Townsend Harris on the United States side and to Lord Hotta and Ii Naosuke on Japan’s side.” Harris’s probity and fairness made him a “friend and counselor of the people to whom he was accredited.”35

Mrs. Rockefeller also made sensible connections between Japan’s extensive history and contemporary events, as manifest in a paper on Japanese immigration to the United States. She acknowledged the strong association between the militaristic nature of the Tokugawa’s daimyo-based society and the emergence of a nationalist ethos under the Meiji. But her paper also extolled the resourcefulness of Japanese immigrants as part of the global out-sourcing of Asian labor during the late nineteenth century, including to Hawaii, where tens of thousands of Japanese worked on tropical plantations. Their industry, she argued, later invited the scorn of the mainland California elite, which led to a ban on issuing passports to new Japanese workers after 1911, an order further
enshrined in the Immigration Act of 1924. Mrs. Rockefeller contrasted these nativist onslaughts with the benevolence of the Japanese, who, when they had learned about the Great Earthquake in San Francisco of 1906, “sent relief through the Red Cross more generously than all other nations of the world combined.” Nativists then greeted Japanese scientists who had come to study the effects of the earthquake by stoning them in the streets. Such sorry treatment, she concluded, while not justifying Japanese warmongering, “played directly into the hands of the militaristic elements in Japan and furnished an excellent basis for the advocacy of an aggressive imperialistic foreign policy.”

Showing her broader understanding of Asian relations, Mrs. Rockefeller emphasized that this not only impacted the United States, but also “justified to their followers the past and future policies of imperial aggression in Korea, Manchuria and China.”

While politics and sociological concerns dominated her husband’s interests in Asia, Blanchette Rockefeller hoped to identify home-grown cultural influences across the vast spectrum of Asian cultures, including in Japan. For example, she argued on a midterm exam that during the Tokugawa period, indigenous influences “in theatre arts and literature and in wood-block prints, pottery, brocades and lacquers” were most prominent. Nor was Japanese originality limited to the material and visual arts. In another research paper, Mrs. Rockefeller observed that the emergence of a written Japanese language, a hybrid of Chinese and novel Japanese characters, made way for poetry that reflected “a cultural independence around Nara.” These brief poems—known as manyoshu—composed of two stanzas, numbered in the thousands and originated in courtly circles from men and women (which she emphasizes at two points in her paper). “It is safe to say that in the Manyoshu, we have an excellent example of the way in which Japan has made her own contribution to world culture.” This pursuit of the “authentic” surfaced again in Blanchette and John’s Asia Society art collection, which was not a systematic nor encyclopedic oeuvre, but instead, a select number of pieces “representative” of the diversity of Asian art forms with an eye to what distinguished one culture from another.
Mrs. Rockefeller went on to write a lengthy research paper on woodblock prints for Professor Hugh Borton. She considered the wood-block prints (ukiyo-e), often considered “folk art,” to be among the most representative Japanese genres, beginning in the sixteenth century. Blanchette argued that ukiyo-e prints, reflecting the culture of the merchant class, clashed with the ageless ambitions of Buddhist transcendence – the apotheosis of Japanese culture and religious thought. Despite her intellectual interest in the origins of ukiyo-e, Mrs. Rockefeller’s paper seems to have made little difference on her collecting habits (which generally featured objects rather than prints). Woodblock prints account for no more than three works in the jointly curated Asia Society collection. Additionally, no nineteenth-century Japanese prints were among her private collection of items auctioned two years after her death. In retrospect, Mrs. Rockefeller’s education boosted her confidence and sharpened her interests: “Maybe they thought it was remarkable I could do anything . . . [she wrote in reference to her classroom peers],” she later noted, “But it was very exciting. It got me really interested in Oriental things. And I always felt sorry for John because he was doing the collecting while I was the one having the fun of learning about it.”

Mrs. Rockefeller’s studies, and particularly the precision of her work, introduce an aspect of cultural exchange rarely evidenced in the archives and paramount to understanding the elevation of her thought and collection of art manifest in her subsequent travels and administrative decisions regarding her and her husband’s wealth after his death. The degree of study and reflection particularly on Japanese history and culture infused a level of competence into her later observations, often missing in the comments of uninformed orientalist travelers described by critical theorist Mary Louise Pratt in her seminal book, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Mrs. Rockefeller’s intellectual foundation, centered on Japan, gave her the confidence to later branch out in a cautious embrace (recognizing that she was not a trained curator of Asian art) of other Asian art forms, particularly those emanating from the Buddhist and Hindu traditions of the Indian subcontinent.
**Travels**

When Blanchette spoke to the Colony Club luncheon in 1971, she gave some insight into the rigor of her and John’s annual trips to Asia. She noted:

The travel was hard work but I got better at it with practice. We managed to visit most of the exciting art sites in Southwest Asia before the holocaust of this dreadful war in Vietnam closed them to tourists. We spent three days [at] Angkor Wat and the other marvelous temples of the Khmer civilization. We visited Borobudur and Prambanan in Java and the ancient ruins of the great city of Pagan in Northern Burma. We went to Kabul in Afghanistan and took the ten-hour motor trip up over the high mountain passes of the Pamir ranges of Central Asia to Bamiyan where Kublai Khan had passed through that beautiful fertile valley and where early Buddhist monks had carved mammoth images of the Lord Buddha in the cliffs along the river’s edge.43

The Rockefellers did not visit all of these sights in one trip, yet this description provides some sense of the ambitious sweep of their travels. Furthermore, this abbreviated description of their journeys throughout Southeast Asia and the Near East is reflective of the curriculum Blanchette absorbed during her last semester studying Asian and Middle Eastern art at Columbia.44

At least one of the letters Blanchette wrote home to her children survives, which gives some sense of the ways in which her enthusiasm for Asian art intersected with a solid academic grounding in East and Southeast Asian art at Columbia. Writing from the Railway Hotel in Aurangabad, India, on February 5, 1959, Blanchette began with familial salutations, then noting that their schedule had been interrupted from sightseeing “and meeting with people in the usual sense” (John D. Rockefeller 3rd’s primary mode of inquiry while abroad), as John recovered from a routine illness.

Blanchette took advantage of opportunities to behold viharas (monasteries) and stupas (stone shaped shrines) placed in caves created by Hindu monks near Ellora. She then narrated for her children the symmetries of Indian faith
traditions by describing representations of deity in clear language, but in a way that signaled her formal training. She wrote:

Then there is the famous Hindu temple to Siva, called Kailasa, which is somewhat later and famous for its elaborate and fine sculptures in dark – almost black – rock. The scale is very large, and the variety and skill of the carvings done out of solid rock working from the top down is extraordinary. There is also a Jain temple or cave which appears very much like the Hindu ones except that the sculptures are all of a smaller and finer scale, and all the human figures are without garments. I have learned that the Jains were founded by an earlier Buddha type leader who preached an even more ascetic and humble life than Buddha. It was helpful to see the three types of temple caves in close juxtaposition.45

As Mr. Rockefeller recovered, Blanchette also visited mosques in Aurangabad, narrating the vivid local colors which would have kept her reader’s attention, noting that “there were elaborate water works and a pond full of hungry carp which would jump for popcorn when given a chance by the local children.”46

Finally, Mrs. Rockefeller offered up subtle political observations about everyday life around her. Even as she relaxed at the hotel waiting for John to recover, she noted that the Chinese ambassador and his entourage were put up in adjacent rooms. While she found it impossible to strike up a conversation with the reticent officials, she did not let the opportunity escape for a mildly political observation: “It does seem ridiculous that Americans must come to India to be able to meet person-to-person individuals from China and many of the other pro-Communist countries!” Apropos, Blanchette and John read passages to each other from The Ugly American as he recuperated. She jocularly told her son Jay, studying at a Japanese university, to take note. “We don’t like the book or the way it was written, but we do find it stimulating.” In her private hours she wrote letters, napped, and read “a good biography on Nehru . . . which I am reading to myself.”47

These rich, single-spaced, five-page missives contained all of the daily difficulties of travel, but also soared to literary heights, as in her descriptions of
Ellora’s ecumenical caves (with its influences of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism), not to mention the frescos of Ajanta, of which she noted:

The colors and details are ravishing and one wonders what a wonderful sight they must have been before so much of the total was destroyed. I think my favorites are the Boddhisatva holding the lotus bloom with head tipped on one side and eyes that follow you like the Mona Lisa – and the small dark-skinned head and shoulders of a princess with turban and whites of slanting eyes showing almost in the dark. One could study the detail for many hours and with bright lights and keep finding new and delightful bits of composition.48

This passage is significant because while much of the historical detail and context included in Blanchette’s letters for the sites she visits could be paraphrased and gleaned either from guidebooks, viva voce commentary of a tour guide, or class notes from back at Columbia, these aesthetic gems glisten in her own voice and authority.

Travel to Asia generally was one of the intended objectives and outcomes of international relations in the twentieth century. For example, as Julia Mickenberg has painstakingly researched, many young American women sought out alternative modern realities in the Soviet Union during the first third of the twentieth century. These women deliberately courted alternative gender and sexual mores they perceived as part of the “Soviet dream”— something they perceived as absent in the United States.49 Conversely, during the Cold War, the State Department actively encouraged Americans to travel to emerging world locales “as an opportunity to forge intellectual and emotional bonds with the people of Asia and Africa.”50 Clearly, Mrs. Rockefeller’s experiences fall within the proscriptive activities outlined here by Klein, which were intended to strengthen international relations informally, as is evident in Mrs. Rockefeller’s letters home, but also provided further experience to engage culturally throughout the region. She had little motivation to flout the social norms of the United States as did fellow women during the early twentieth century in the Soviet Union, but instead looked for points of cultural commonality with her peers throughout Asia.
People-to-People Relations

The cultural turn in John and Blanchette’s travels in Asia emerged as the 1950s drew to a close, a fact that suggests that her study at Columbia shaped the nature of their subsequent endeavors. What marks this shift also reflects, in some senses, Blanchette’s appreciation for what she and John could not do without translators. Blanchette acknowledged the impact of this limitation, even as their cultural activities facilitated their people-to-people contacts abroad and later at home. Indeed, the two-way street that her husband had emphasized in his report on US-Japanese cultural relations for John Foster Dulles now linked Beekman Place, their townhome in New York City, and Fieldwood Farm, their Westchester County residence adjacent to the family estates in Pocantico Hills, to the rest of the world. Speaking of friendship, its development through travel, and the mutually beneficial exchanges that it offered their family, Blanchette remembered:

We met many talented and delightful people as we went our way on these unofficial but serious study trips. My husband at first was more inclined to emphasize the political and sociological aspects of the countries we visited in his quest for understanding, but soon he came to feel as I did, that the cultural aspect of civilizations as old as these was the most congenial meeting ground with people whose languages we did not know and whose books we could not read. We could look with them at temples and palaces, attend performances of their ancient dances and learn to enjoy their haunting and unfamiliar music.51

This passage underscores the limits of what the Rockefellers could learn about the places and peoples they visited. To solve complex social, economic, and political problems, the pair would need to do more than simply drive through the South Asian countryside or speak with experts in capital cities. An affinity for cultural events remained the most sensible option for promoting international understanding.
If the language barrier limited the scope of what the Rockefellers, together, believed they could learn and accomplish in Asia, the relationships they made enriched their experiences. Blanchette remembered: “Each year or two we would return to see newly made friends in these far-away places, and communication became easier. They, too, would occasionally make a return visit to us in New York or Tarrytown as they came here on official business or to the United Nations or to teach or travel in our country.” The pursuit of knowledge compels people, then, regardless of age, sex, color, or ability, to go to extraordinary lengths, as we have seen throughout the book, to satisfy an inner need. What is extraordinary in Blanchette’s case is the degree to which these human exchanges, fruits of extensive travel, enriched the lives of those she met, as well as her own. There is, perhaps, no better example than her personal relationship with the wife and daughter of Shigeharu Matsumoto, her husband’s Japanese partner who managed the International House of Japan in Tokyo.52

Blanchette met the Matsumotos on her first trip to Japan in 1951. At Christmas the same year, she gave her new friends memberships to the Museum of Modern Art, as well as reproductions of pieces in its collections. “Those valuable reproductions bring your museum very close to our life in Tokyo and stir up the desire to visit it one day quite soon,” Hanako Matsumoto—Shigeharu’s wife—wrote to Blanchette in an expression of gratitude for the gifts.53

Their next meeting came two and a half years later. Blanchette consoled Hanako Matsumoto while her husband, Shigeharu, recovered from an emergency gall bladder removal in New York following a trip to Europe. At the same time, Blanchette took charge of finding a suitable American university for the Matsumotos’ daughter, Misao. Blanchette drove the pair to Connecticut College in New London to visit the campus, as well as arranged for the Matsumotos to visit Vassar, Mrs. Rockefeller’s alma mater. As the Matsumotos looked back at their relationship with the Rockefellers, their professional interests, to be sure, brought the families together, but it was the informal kindnesses—“reciprocities,” as Christina Klein might describe them—shown to each other that cemented their friendship.
“Misao has decided to follow your family tradition,” wrote Hanako to Blanchette some weeks later, adding the important caveat that “she will have to work very hard to keep up the standard.” Family honor, national pride, and the Matsumotos’ unique relationship with the Rockefellers all contributed to high expectations. Indeed, the International House was never far away from any discussion of their relationship. The Rockefellers’ visit during the summer of 1955 coincided with the inauguration of the new facility. “Do not be surprised to see a very modern house with big glass windows,” Hanako continued in her letter to Blanchette, “the architects want you to see through beautiful green trees even across the beautiful building before entering!”

Due to her parents’ affiliation with International House, Misao also enjoyed opportunities to meet other prominent Americans, as she prepared to leave Tokyo for Vassar. The International House and Columbia University arranged for scholars and public dignitaries to visit Asia and lecture in Tokyo. One of the first women to receive this honor was the former first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. She was in residence at the International House during the summer of 1955 and wrote in her newspaper column, “My Day,” on August 20, 1955:

Here I am back in Japan . . . Mrs. John Allison, wife of our ambassador, met me at the airport and she was accompanied by Professor Takagi and Mr. and Mrs. Matsumoto and their daughter who leaves for Vassar very shortly. Her brother is already studying in America so this is the second member of the family to continue their education in the United States. I am so glad that she will be at Vassar so she will only [be] five miles away from Hyde Park so that I can see her on weekends occasionally.

It is not known whether they did meet during Misao’s two years in Poughkeepsie, but the path had been laid for future encounters.

Blanchette’s official role as a member of the Vassar Board of Trustees brought her to campus on occasion. A page three article in the Vassar Chronicle on Saturday, February 26, 1956, entitled, “Chronicle Salutes the Trustees,” elaborated on their role in making decisions affecting student life and campus
development. “The present Board is composed of persons of great importance in both civic and national affairs . . . but all have a special interest in education.” Among the twenty-one trustees, the article continued, “Blanchette Rockefeller is distinguished in the field of art because of her great contributions and effort toward the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art, and was a member of Brearley School [Board of Director’s] from 1933-1939.” A week earlier, Blanchette had been in Poughkeepsie for board meetings and hoped to meet with Misao. She already had scheduled time with her daughter, but wrote to Misao that she “would love to catch a glimpse of you . . . I wonder if you would feel like having breakfast with me on Saturday, as we have done before.”

Blanchette’s primary mentoring took place during Misao’s first summer at Vassar. Misao enrolled in a child development seminar at Vassar and spent the rest of the summer tending and tutoring children. Blanchette provided job references and sought out meaningful opportunities for Misao, but she left the critical decisions up to Misao. When Misao was faced with the prospect of having to drive children around town, Blanchette judiciously advised her of the potential risks. “You asked my opinion about your undertaking to do driving this summer,” Blanchette wrote in reply to Misao’s query. “Personally, I think you should try and go ahead and get your license in June, as I suggested, but I do believe that it would be better if you would get a job that did not involve the responsibility of driving someone else’s car, and particularly where children are involved.” Misao subsequently accepted au pair positions that did not require driving but indicated that during her summer seminar at Vassar, her instructor allowed her to drive around Vassar’s campus. “I think it is wonderful to be able to practice with other cars passing by and yet it is quite safe because [the] speed limit on campus is 20 miles [per hour].”

One year after her arrival in the United States, Misao proclaimed: “Being [at your home] during the same time as last year, I recollect myself who was uncertain in new environments. How different I was this time! Coming back ‘home’. I enjoyed every minute I spent with any of you.” The same unrestrained confidence accompanied her back to campus. “Vassar seems entirely different . . . [and] I hope to be less passive in class this year,” she observed. Fewer letters
to Blanchette during her senior year were one measure of that newfound self-assurance. The *Vassar Miscellany* recorded that Misao attended the international ball in December 1956, occupying the head post among those students garbed in traditional clothing of their home countries.\(^{58}\)

Blanchette was busy with her own schoolwork during the fall of 1956. “I am taking a course at Columbia on Middle Eastern and Indian art which is most interesting and a wonderful preparation for the trip we are planning [to the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma] for January and February,” she noted in a letter to Hanako. Misao’s progress was also on her mind.

Some weeks ago I went up to visit [daughter] Sandra and Misao at Vassar and had a wonderful time. I think you would be amazed and delighted to see your lovely daughter adjusting so well to college life. Sandra tells me that everyone in their group adores Misao and that she makes a very real contribution with her greater maturity and understanding of human nature. She is looking so well and pretty that you need have no concern of her except that some young American or Japanese boy may fall in love with her before you get her home again!\(^{59}\)

As Misao approached graduation, Blanchette and John stood in for Shigeharu and Hanako to support their adopted Japanese daughter alongside their own daughter, Sandra. Misao struggled to find words adequate to express her appreciation for Blanchette’s friendship. “I hope that you know me well enough by now that I always enjoy the visit with you very much whether I tell you in words or not,” Misao wrote. After one visit, she observed, “I appreciated that you treated me as a family member.”\(^{60}\) During the spring of 1957, after having visited the Rockefellers again, Misao confided, “It is not the subject we talk [about] nor a kind of thing that we do together that gives me all the pleasure and enjoyment. But it is the company itself that gives me the highest pleasure in your house. . . . Seriously, I appreciated your kindness to give that amount of time for me in spite of your heavy schedule. Who can be luckier than I?”\(^{61}\)
In late September, Misao boarded an ocean liner headed to Southampton, England, with several of her friends from Vassar. They were to begin work as *au pairs* and Misao intended to continue her education there. Blanchette went down to the pier to see her off. She spent the entire morning helping Misao prepare for their parting. It might be said that Misao’s time in the United States did as much to bring the Rockefellers and Matsumotos together as their shared professional commitments. As Misao left New York, Hanako observed in a letter to Blanchette, “Our relation became so close through your extra special feeling towards Misao and now we hope and trust it will develop still more through Jay’s being here.” Jay would study in Tokyo from 1957 to 1960, where, Mrs. Matsumoto promised, “There is always a bed ready for him.” On the docks in September, however, Blanchette said goodbye to yet another young protégé. Their correspondence would extend four decades into the future. But on this day, they parted at the pier, while “Uncle Johnny” bid farewell Misao from his office high above the city in the RCA building at Rockefeller Center.  

Misao’s departure for Europe and Japan closed an extraordinary period in Blanchette’s life. She was a scholar, a mentor, a museum builder, wife, and mother. Travel inspired her to return to school to pursue graduate studies with two of the premier Japanologists of the day: Hugh Borton and George Sansom. She only mentioned her course work once to Hanako in their letters, but even that brief aside suggests its close relationship to her and John’s yearly travels to Asia. Blanchette’s organizing efforts in bringing the Museum of Modern Art’s International Council to life paralleled her academic pursuits at Columbia and expanded MoMA’s worldwide outreach. But it was her mentorship of Misao and her deepening friendship with Hanako Matsumoto that authenticated her conviction in the concept of cultural dialogue. Blanchette gave of herself to enhance Misao’s educational experience at Vassar. While Misao’s knowledge of American life deepened, Blanchette’s academic work qualified her to be more observant during her own experiences in Asia.
Collecting

Travel to Asia eventually turned to a commitment to assemble a representative collection of artistic themes across the continent. Blanchette Rockefeller’s greatest satisfaction in art collecting was the collaborative effort with her husband subsequently gifted to the Asia Society for permanent display in its Park Avenue headquarters. That joint effort notwithstanding, there are ways to identify Blanchette’s personal preferences and contributions to the work she and John 3rd did collectively. Ultimately, her preferences in Asian art generally aligned with her interest in Buddhist objects and more particularly with modern Japanese art. To elucidate Blanchette’s individual preferences, we must first turn to the documentation that accompanies the joint collection. Sherman Lee, curator of the Cleveland Museum of Art’s distinguished Asian collection from 1958 to 1983, consulted the Rockefellers on their art collecting, beginning in the 1960s. While he identified only a few differences in their artistic preferences in the foreword to their collection’s catalog, he did note that “Blanchette was drawn to the earlier wares and tomb figurines,” so abundant in the joint collection.\(^6\) One of the recurring motifs in the collection was the Buddhist figure of the bodhisattva, which was also prominent in Blanchette’s personal objects later donated to the Asia Society. Of the thirteen pieces listed in the 2017 catalog that she personally gifted to the Society, fully six were bodhisattvas, followed by four figures from Hindu mythology, including two Vishnu and two sculptures of consorts Shiva and Parvati (see Table 2). While we should not ascribe too much credence to intentions not explicitly spelled out by Lee or the Rockefeller’s themselves, Blanchette’s affinity for the bodhisattvas parallels her academic interest in Buddhist ritual (manifest by the legend of hand gestures included in her written work and study notes from Columbia). The fascination with Hindu figures also aligns with her interest in representations of Indian spiritual mythologies reflected in the letters she wrote home to her children.

Two years after Mrs. Rockefeller’s passing, Christie’s auctioned fifty-five pieces from her personal collection, a catalog of which reveals her affinity for modern Japanese art (see Table 1). Two artists predominate: abstract master Genichiro Inokuma, represented by seven images, including Mondrian-like cityscapes and
austere monochromatic landscapes; and, five objects representative of Masayuki Nagare’s stone works, including Jizo, a volcanic andesite sculpture resonant of the designs of Romanian Constantin Brâncuși (a favorite of Mrs. Rockefeller in the collections of the MoMA). Including those works of Nagare, approximately twenty percent of the pieces were objects, the rest some sort of visual canvas or print. In terms of color and tone, the fifty-five pieces are largely monochromatic. Thematically, they center around abstract representations of urban life, open landscapes, and birds. Most striking, however, are the number of pieces given to her by the artists, or with whom she had professional relationships. A black granite piece, for example, was created by Nagare, whom “Mrs. Rockefeller invited to come to the United States . . . where he lived half the year until returning to Japan in 1975.” On a previous visit, the catalog also notes, “Mrs. Rockefeller bought five pieces of Nagare’s works.” Another piece, Bird’s Nest, composed of wood, nylon and plastic, and framed in wood, was purchased from Allan Stone Gallery in New York, but the artist, Kobashi Yasuhide had been identified as a promising artist by Nelson Rockefeller. Not surprisingly, many of the pieces were purchased through her work with the Museum of Modern Art. Fully nine of the fifty-five pieces were gifts from the artists themselves. This illustrates further Mrs. Rockefeller’s penchant for close, engaging relationships with those in the world of art, be they staff, trustees, or artists themselves. The private collection says little about the more collaborative approaches to Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller’s joint collection, but at least gives us a sense of her personal preferences. Inasmuch as the Asia Society collection still rotates at its headquarters in New York, it is entirely appropriate to distinguish her from simply an art collector and suggest that she played a creative role in one of the best known privately assembled and publicly displayed collections in the United States today.

The Asia Society and the Asian Cultural Council

After John D. Rockefeller 3rd’s death in 1978, unexpected tax burdens jeopardized the Asia Society founder’s pledge towards construction of the organization’s Park Avenue and East 70th Street headquarters, as well as his
provision of an endowment to showcase his and Mrs. Rockefeller’s art collection. At stake, the Society’s trustees contended, was the opportunity to emphasize the importance of US-Asian relations at a time when China intensified its engagement with the West. Despite the uncertainty of full funding for both the building and the collection, the board resolved to move forward with construction of the new headquarters as well as a place for the collection.66 A week later, George Ball, chairman of the Asia Society’s board of trustees, reaffirmed the organization’s commitment to raise the funds necessary to carry out John D. Rockefeller 3rd’s original vision.67

Despite the initial concerns of its executors, the JDR 3rd estate made significant donations to the Asia Society over the next few months. Asia Society president, Philips Talbot, acknowledged a gift of one million dollars to the museum’s capital campaign on April 4, 1979. One month later, JDR 3rd’s estate released $3.5 million dollars for maintenance of the collection, as well as $650,000 for a modest acquisitions’ endowment. Mrs. Rockefeller also insisted that the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Cultural Exchange Program, started in 1963, continue as an extension of the Society, a task for which the executors charged Elizabeth McCormack and others to explore. McCormack would be indispensable to the work of the Asian Cultural Council, as it would be called, until her passing in December 2020.68

Even as she continued with the 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign of the Museum of Modern Art, Blanchette made time to participate in Society events, wear fund-raising hats for both organizations, and identify prospective leadership for the Asia Society board of trustees. Her main priority, however, remained perpetuating her husband’s Cultural Exchange Program in its new guise as the Asian Cultural Council, the only privately funded organization sponsoring cultural exchange between the United States and Asia, at the time. By November 1979, the structure and objectives of the reinvigorated organization were in place. According to a Council pamphlet, “The emphasis of the grant program . . . [was] on providing individual fellowship awards to artists, scholars, students, and specialists in the visual and performing arts for activities involving cultural exchange between Asia and the United States.”69 In previous
years, approximately fifty grants had been extended annually. Of these, approximately thirty were for Asian artists and scholars coming to the United States, with five generally awarded to Americans “for PhD students conducting dissertation research.” Miscellaneous grants were awarded to special “exhibitions, performances, films, conferences, and related activities.” The Asian Cultural Council began operations on September 1, 1980. Richard Lanier served as the director of the Council with Blanchette as chair, and Elizabeth McCormack, Laurence Sickman, and Isaac Shapiro rounding out the board of trustees.

At their January 1983 meeting, the board of trustees identified early beneficiaries of the ACC. At a luncheon hosted in the Ambrosia Room on the sixty-fourth floor of Rockefeller Center, the trustees met with Professor Rustom Bharucha, among other grant recipients. Typical of other beneficiaries, Dr. Bharucha hailed from Asia (in his case, Calcutta - now Kolkata, India), received his training in North America (Yale University) and then, in Rustom’s case, taught theatre at St. Lawrence University, “to gain as much practical experience in theater in the United States as he can before ultimately returning to India.” By the time of their meeting, Bharucha had secured a contract for publication of a book based on his dissertation regarding “political theatre in Bengal.”

Unique funding streams enabled the ACC to think globally about the footprint of its work. While conventional grants poured in from General Foods, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, to name only a few, Japanese and Hong Kong-based donors set the stage for targeted, Asian-based initiatives. The Seibu Retail Group, based in Tokyo, pledged to establish an endowment for the Council in March 1983, a prelude to the creation of an ACC office in Tokyo itself later in the 1980s. The Seibu Foundation had already been sponsoring US artistic performance and intellectual activities in Japan and hoped to achieve greater synergies working together across the Pacific. The two-million-dollar endowment, targeting US-Japanese exchanges, and officially known as the “Japanese-United States Arts Program of the Asian Cultural Council,” surpassed any gift from “a Japanese corporation to an American arts organization.” Two weeks later, Blanchette
announced plans to reciprocate a visit from Seiji Tsutsumi to New York, when he formally announced the endowment, by traveling to Tokyo.\textsuperscript{74}

In April and May 1985, Blanchette and the ACC board traveled to Tokyo and Hong Kong to further cement the organization’s presence in Asia. Remarkably, while JDR 3rd and Blanchette had helped to establish the International House in Tokyo and the International House in Delhi in the post-World War II era, Blanchette was on the cusp of creating her own network of institutions throughout Asia. While in Tokyo, the board of trustees met with their counterparts in the Seibu Retail Group, the International House, the Japan Foundation (which had contributed an endowment to the ACC to establish additional travel/study fellowships between the US and Japan), and the Japan-United States Arts Program Advisory Committee. All this served as prelude to establishing an ACC office in Tokyo. The second week of the trip found the ACC board of trustees in Hong Kong, where they met with Kenneth Fung, an empresario and advisor to the ACC, as well as “sixty guests of Mr. and Mrs. Fung,” Filipino, Thai, and Japanese guests intimately connected with ACC operations in Asia. Grantees from throughout Asia met with and performed for the entourage.\textsuperscript{75}

Blanchette mingled modern and ancient influences on sight-seeing excursions during the two-week trip. She traveled with Porter McCray, a long-time associate of JDR 3rd’s, for the Cultural Exchange Program to Kyoto (where her husband had been mesmerized by Japanese gardens during his visit there in 1929) before returning to lunch in Tokyo at a “1930’s moderna [sic] studio with a traditional Japanese House plan.” Free time blended with meetings in the homes of principal brokers of trans-Pacific funding for the ACC. “As interesting as it all will be,” Lanier observed in closing his itinerary for Blanchette, “I know how taxing it is to be on call, as it were, for such a long stretch, and I really do appreciate your willingness to go to bat for the ACC in Tokyo and in Hong Kong.” “What a tireless chairman!”\textsuperscript{76}

Success followed on the heels of the board’s return to New York. One attendee from the National Humanities Center praised Blanchette Rockefeller for her
leadership in Hong Kong. “I returned feeling that the ACC, under your leadership, is in excellent shape and has a bright future.” (Charles to BHR, May 6, 1985) Plans for expanding the Asian-based International Advisory Committee beyond Seiji Tsutsumi and Kenneth Fung, raised the question of bringing a Korean member of board. To top off many of the private successes of the journey, Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post featured an interview with Blanchette concerning her work in Asia and philanthropic causes.

In November 1986, Blanchette, Richard Lanier, and Elizabeth McCormack returned to Asia to consult with local leaders and grant recipients. Of paramount importance was the opening of an ACC office in Hong Kong, a jumping off point for eventual efforts to capitalize on the opening up of China. According to a local newspaper report, “The eventual goal is to establish a 3-way network which will enable artists and specialists from the U.S., Hong Kong, and China to work together on projects of international exchange as well as to engage in individual artistic and research activities.” Seiji Tsutsumi and Kenneth Fung provided initial support for an ACC presence in Asia, as well as the generous use of office space by Mr. J.S. Lee of the Lee Hysan Estate Co. Ltd. and a grant of $25,000 for its initial activities. Blanchette asked Kenneth Fung to direct activities at the new Hong Kong office. By the close of the decade, the ACC endowment reached over four million dollars in value and approximately one hundred awards were made each year to deserving artists. Further financial security resulted from an agreement between the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to support the ACC on an on-going basis.

Conclusion

The institutionalization of the Asian Cultural Council stands as the most substantive landmark of Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller’s passion for Asia. In November 1992, shortly after Mrs. Rockefeller’s passing, Peter Johnson, a Rockefeller family associate and confidant, observed, “Three of Blanchette’s rather important activities seem to have been missed in the obituary by Mark Mornen.” Johnson enumerated the art collection of the Asia Society and their
joint collection of American art as two of Blanchette’s accomplishments. The third, the Asian Cultural Council/JDR 3rd Fund, Johnson noted, “was largely Blanchette’s idea.” He continued: “This jewel of the philanthropic sector has been one of the most effective cultural and educational organizations in the post-war period. Moreover, Blanchette’s decision to continue its work after JDR 3rd’s death allowed for a very important collaboration with the Japanese to mature.”

More fundamental for Mrs. Rockefeller was her unique evolution as a student of Asia, beginning with Japan. While her activities did not evoke the charged political rhetoric of Pearl S. Buck, as manifest through the East to West Association, or derive directly from US government policy, as the Asia Foundation did from the CIA, the Asian Cultural Council is still making grants to artists and institutions throughout Asia. In its diversity, it reflects the post-Orientalist spectrum of traditions and interpretations identified in an Asian context. It is also indicative of the ways in which Mrs. Rockefeller’s education, interpersonal relations, family, art collecting, and philanthropic management contributed to a still vibrant institution of cross-cultural exchange. It might also be appropriate to note that while she began as an observer—an orientalist—her education and commitment to the arts led her to embrace the same type of cosmopolitanism, or artistic response from Asians as discussed by Christina Klein in her work on Tokyo, but was of a nature, since the ACC has long outlived the Cold War, that remains relevant and fluid today.
Table 1
Inventory of Contemporary Japanese Art from the Estate of Blanchette H. Rockefeller

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Accession</th>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kaki (persimmons)</td>
<td>Kobayashi Kokei</td>
<td>Ink and color on prepared paper</td>
<td>Masuda Yoshinobu, Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>59-11</td>
<td>Hidai Nankoku</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td>Mi Chou Gallery, NY</td>
<td>Commissioned by NY Port Authority to create largest free-standing stone sculpture for WTC towers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Symphonic poem – fine day</td>
<td>Hasegawa Saburo</td>
<td>Block applied ink on paper</td>
<td>Masudo Yoshinobu, Japan</td>
<td>Four panel screen, musical notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>City Composition</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Willard Gallery, NY</td>
<td>Monochromatic with light blue accents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enclosure</td>
<td>Nagare Masayuki</td>
<td>Black granite</td>
<td>None listed</td>
<td>“Mrs. Rockefeller invited Nagare to come to the United States in 1962, where he lived half of each year . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Kitaoji Rosanjin</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Paulownia</td>
<td>Shinoda Toko</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td>Nippon Club, New York</td>
<td>2 panel screen, black and pencil yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Roulette: Ancient Shield</td>
<td>Kikuhata Mokuma</td>
<td>Enamel paint and assemblage on wood</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>brash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Composition 1964</td>
<td>Isumi Shigeru</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>waves</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>History of Space</td>
<td>Sato Key</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Sewer grate, monochromatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A contemporary stoneware vase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A bizen-style brazier</td>
<td>Kitaoji Rosanjin</td>
<td>Stoneware, Natural ask glazes with firemarks</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bird’s nest</td>
<td>Kobashi Yasuhide</td>
<td>Wood, nylon and plastic, framed in wood</td>
<td>Allan Stone Gallery, NY</td>
<td>“Nelson Rockefeller was one of the first influential American collectors to recognize Kobashi's work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Nagare Masayuki</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Late Cold Spell</td>
<td>Takeuchi Seicho</td>
<td>Hanging scroll, ink on paper</td>
<td>Yamada Chisaburo, former director of Museum of Western Art, Tokyo</td>
<td>Exhibited at the Tarrytown NY Union Church, May 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Munakata Shiko</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Ruth Asawa</td>
<td>Aluminum and copper wire mesh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Work is represented in MoMA and Whitney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Yoshihara Jiro</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Tokyo Gallery</td>
<td>Inverse minus sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Onosato Toshinobu</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Mondrian-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Wave's Voice</td>
<td>Niizuma Minoru</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Wooden stand, block granite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Freeing</td>
<td>Nagare Masayuki</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td></td>
<td>“executed in 1959”; looks like a rotor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Dark oval</td>
<td>Kawabata Minoru</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Egg like with green accents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Winter fields</td>
<td>Kazuki Yasuo</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Formes Gallery, Tokyo</td>
<td>Earth-like painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Untitled (red)</td>
<td>Saito Yoshishige</td>
<td>Oil on wood</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Charcoal, gouache, and pencil on paper</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td>Like underground Diego Rivera, Detroit, organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Watercolor and ink on paper</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td>Setting sun on cardboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Gouache on newsprint</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smeared calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Black and White</td>
<td>Tsutaka Waichi</td>
<td>Oil on burlap</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Mary Kay flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Jizo</td>
<td>Nagare Masayuki</td>
<td>Andesite (volcanic rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Looks like Romanian sculptor's work that is in MoMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Image of gate, black</td>
<td>Kawabata Minoru</td>
<td>Acrylic on canvas</td>
<td>Jack Tilton, New York</td>
<td>Abstraction of Chinese ideagram for gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Onosato Toshinobu</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Another Mondarian like painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ouevre 6</td>
<td>Saito Yoshishige</td>
<td>Oil on wood</td>
<td>Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo</td>
<td>Similar in composition and color to 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33a</td>
<td>Third world-the world under</td>
<td>Hamada Chimei</td>
<td>Etching, framed and glazed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earthy, organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33b</td>
<td>Procession</td>
<td>Hamada Chimei</td>
<td>Etching, framed and glazed</td>
<td>Fukushima S., Tokyo</td>
<td>Flat, abstracted procession of people, hunched over, Orientalist in connotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Calligraphy</td>
<td>Shinoda Toko</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td>Nippon Club, New York</td>
<td>Heads of wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Market in snow</td>
<td>Kawasaki Suzuhiko</td>
<td>Yoseido Gallery, Tokyo</td>
<td>Fish market in snow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Bunraku puppet</td>
<td>Maeda Seison</td>
<td>Masuda Yoshinubo, Tokyo</td>
<td>Very much like two wood prints in the Asia Society Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mizube (water’s edge)</td>
<td>Kayama Matazo</td>
<td>Yoseido Gallery, Tokyo</td>
<td>Bird and shadow on abstracted surface</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Impromptu</td>
<td>Hasegawa Saburo</td>
<td>Masuda Yoshinubo, Tokyo</td>
<td>Like 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Blessed home</td>
<td>Kobayashi Ryusho</td>
<td>MoMA</td>
<td>Like 38, 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Itadaki (pinnacle)</td>
<td>Nagare Masayuki</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>City composition</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Collage on screen print</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Nuts of tea</td>
<td>Kazuki Yasuo</td>
<td>Formes Gallery, Tokyo</td>
<td>Earthen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Yellow submarine</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td>Signed, “To Mrs. Blanchette Rockefeller;” Mondrian in composition, monochromatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Inokuma Genichiro</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td>Abstrated blobs ice skating in snowstorm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Seven deadly sins</td>
<td>Ikeda Masuo</td>
<td>Staempfli Gallery, New York</td>
<td>Barn in a snowstorm, like market in the snow, also 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>No. 294, Ningen kukan</td>
<td>Maeda Josaku</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>A stoneware flask</td>
<td>Hamada Shoji</td>
<td>Gift of the artist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>A Shigaraki ware flower vase</td>
<td>Gary Moler</td>
<td>Wood box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chestnut</td>
<td>Kayama Matazo</td>
<td>Oil on gouache on gold leaf paper</td>
<td>Jane Nessler Gallery, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>A canary</td>
<td>Kayama Matazo</td>
<td>Oil on gouache on paper</td>
<td>Jane Nessler Gallery, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Small bird</td>
<td>Kayama Matazo</td>
<td>Oil and gouache on paper</td>
<td>Jane Nessler Gallery, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53a</td>
<td>Haniwa</td>
<td>Noma Seiroku</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53b</td>
<td>Haniwa</td>
<td>Noma Seiroku</td>
<td>Ink on paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Universal brotherhood and international peace</td>
<td>Bundo Shunkai</td>
<td>Ink on paper, hanging scroll</td>
<td>Gift of artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Owl</td>
<td>Katsura Yuki</td>
<td>Watercolor on paper</td>
<td>Vibrant, monochromatic image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

Pieces from Estate of Blanchette Rockefeller in Asia Society Collection, New York City, New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Description</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair of Bodhisattvas in the pensive pose</td>
<td>China, Hebei province</td>
<td>570 CE</td>
<td>Marble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>India, Bihar, Apsahd</td>
<td>675-700 CE</td>
<td>Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of a man</td>
<td>Pakistan, Gandhara area</td>
<td>2nd-3rd centuries</td>
<td>Schist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiva-Parvati</td>
<td>India, Bihar or Bengal</td>
<td>10th-11th centuries</td>
<td>Copper-Alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>India, Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>11th century</td>
<td>Copper-alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara</td>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>9th century</td>
<td>Copper alloy with inlays of copper and silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>5th century – 750 CE</td>
<td>Gilt copper alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiva and Parvati</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>10th century</td>
<td>Stone with traces of gold leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara</td>
<td>Western Tibet</td>
<td>15th-16th centuries</td>
<td>Copper alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Late 8th century</td>
<td>Copper alloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>North China</td>
<td>Early 8th century</td>
<td>Earthenware with multicolored lead glazes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowl</td>
<td>China, Jiangxi province</td>
<td>1426-1435 CE</td>
<td>Porcelain painted with underglaze cobalt blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaisajyugayguru Buddha (healing)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>898-1185 CE</td>
<td>Gilt copper alloy with wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of covered hexagonal jars</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>17th century</td>
<td>Porcelain painted with overglaze enamels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller (cited hereafter as “BHR”) “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad,” Rockefeller Family Archives (cited hereafter as “RFA”), Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Papers (cited hereafter as “BHR Papers,” RG 53, series 3, box 49, folder 377, Rockefeller Archive Center (cited hereafter as “RAC”).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
6 While this study will highlight Klein’s article on Korean film and the Asia Foundation (below), she has subsequently published a monograph on the topic entitled, Cold War Cosmopolitanism: Period Style in 1950s Korean Cinema (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020).
8 Yoshihara, 3.
9 Leong, 1.
10 Klein, Cold War Orientalism, 7.
11 Ibid., 8.
15 Ibid.
16 Blanche Ferry Hooker to BHR, June 2-3, 1935, RFA, RG 53, BHR Papers, Series 1 – Hooker and Ferry Families, Hooker, Blanche Ferry—Letters to BHR, 1919, 1929-1951, Box 4, Folder 33, RAC.
17 Blanche Ferry to Barbara Hooker, July 11, 1935, copy in author’s possession.
18 Blanche Ferry Hooker to BHR, June 2-3, 1935, RFA, RG 53, BHR, Series 1 – Hooker and Ferry Families, Hooker, Blanche Ferry—Letters to BHR, 1919, 1929-1951, Box 4, Folder 33, RAC.
19 BHR, Hugh Morrow Interviews, Subseries 2, Blanchette Rockefeller Interview, July 14, 1980, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RG.4, III 4 Q.2, Box 2, Folder 18, RAC.
22 Ibid.

39 RAC RESEARCH REPORTS
25 BHR, “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad.”
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
29 BHR, “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad.”
30 Oral history interview with Blanchette F.H. Rockefeller, Archives of American Art.
31 “Principles of Artistic Practice,” handout, Plate XV, “Gestures,” Collection RFA, RG 53, Series 3, Box 45, Folder 362, RAC.
32 BHR, “History 198, Midterm Final Examination,” May 19, 1955, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Item 45, Folder 362, RAC.
33 BHR, “History 196, Final Examination,” Spring 1956, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 45, Folder 362, RAC.
34 Ibid.
36 BHR, “Japanese Immigration and the United States,” History 196, Columbia University, 6, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 45, Folder 362, RAC.
37 Ibid., 20.
40 BHR, “The Rise of Ukiyo-e in Japan; and Some Great Artists of the Primitive Period,” History 198, Columbia University, May 1955, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 45, Folder 362, RAC.
41 Oral history interview with Blanchette F.H. Rockefeller, Archives of American Art.
43 BHR, “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad.”
44 Ibid.
45 BHR, correspondence with family, February 5, 1959, copy of letter in author’s possession.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
50 See Klein, 23.
51 BHR, “Amateur Collecting at Home and Abroad.”
52 Ibid.
53 Hanako Matsumoto to BHR, January 26, 1952, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 34, Folder 261, “Japan Correspondence, Matsumoto Family, 1952-1989, RAC.
54 Hanako Matsumoto to BHR, 10 May 1955, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 261, RAC.
56 BHR to Misao Matsumoto, February 7, 1956, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 261, RAC.
57 BHR to Misao Matsumoto, 12 March 1956, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 262, RAC; Misao Matsumoto to BHR, 5 July 1956, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 262, RAC.
59 BHR to Hanako Matsumoto, 11 December 1956, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 261, RAC.
60 Misao Matsumoto to BHR, 5 June 1957, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 262, RAC.
61 Misao Matsumoto to BHR, 18 March 1957, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 262, RAC.
62 Hanako Matsumoto to BHR, 21 September 1957, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 34, folder 261, RAC.
65 Ibid., 34.
66 Confidential Memorandum, For Trustees of the Asia Society Only, “Executive Session at Meeting of Members and Trustees of the Asia Society held on January 18, 1979,” RFA Collection, RG 53, Box 16, Folder 120, “Asia Society Correspondence, 1959, 1961/1979-1989”, RAC.
67 George M. Ball to John D. Rockefeller IV, January 24, 1979, RFA Collection, RG 53, Box 16, Folder 120, “Asia Society Correspondence, 1959, 1961/1979-1989”, RAC.
68 JDR 3rd Estate to George Ball, May 9, 1979, RFA Collection, RG 53, Box 16, Folder 120, “Asia Society Correspondence, 1959, 1961/1979-1989”, RAC.
70 Richard Lanier to BHR, “Materials for your Meeting with Richard Lyman,” August 9, 1979, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 129, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1979-1983” RAC.
75 “Schedule of Asian Cultural Council, Activities in Asia, Spring 1985,” RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 130, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1984-1986,” RAC.
76 Richard Lanier to BHR, “ACC Schedule in Asia,” April 10, 198, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 130, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1974-1986” RAC.
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80 Kenneth Fung to BHR, January 5, 1989, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 131, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1989-1993” RAC.
81 Richard Lanier to Colin Campbell, June 7, 1989, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 131, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1989-1993” RAC.
82 Richard S. Lanier to BHR, et. al., June 28, 1989, RFA Collection, RG 53, Series 3, Box 17, Folder 131, “Asian Cultural Council, Correspondence, 1989-1993” RAC.
83 Oral history interview with Blanchette F. H. Rockefeller, Archives of American Art; Peter Johnson to John Harris, 30 November 1992, RFA, BHR Papers, RG 53, series 3, box 33, folder 255, RAC.
84 Klein, “Cold War Cosmopolitanism,” 283.