

〈教育セミナー〉

第44回教育セミナー (2019)・「美しさの本質を考える」

日本における美人の変遷  
—飛鳥時代から明治, 大正, 昭和期までの美人の基準について—

白壁 征夫\*

**Transition of Beautiful Ladies in Japan**

Yukio SHIRAKABE\*

**Abstract**

I will briefly describe the history of Japanese facial skeletons before describing that of Japanese beauties. Japanese facial skeletons significantly changed with a diet shift from animal protein by mobile hunting and gathering to plant protein by sedentary agriculture probably around the 3rd century BC. In addition, Japanese facial features were diversified because different races immigrated from the north and the south to this vertically long country, and were mixed together. As far as women's faces are concerned, the first painting of female faces in Japan is a mural of beautiful women from Takamatsuzuka Tomb painted allegedly around the late 7th to 8th century. Japanese female faces in ancient times can be seen only in portraits and sculptures, which were commissioned by rich men. It may be said that the Japanese standards of beautiful faces were established by upper-class people in those times. Around the 17th century, Ukiyo-e artists began painting "Bijin-ga", or pictures of beautiful women who were popular among ordinary people rather than rich people. In addition, since photography was introduced into Japan in the late 19th century, the standards of beautiful faces in Japan significantly changed according to the facial preference of ordinary people. I will discuss the history of standards of beautiful female faces in the period shifting from painted portraits to photographed portraits in Japan.

**Key words:** the face of Japanese, the requirements of beautiful lady, painted portrait, photographed portrait.