

SECRETS of Natural Beauty

What the Glamour Magazines Won't Tell You

BY JOANNA ROTTÉ YAMAMOTO

Beauty is its own excuse for being . . .

Emerson
"The Rhodora"

If you have traveled in Canada, Western Europe, or Japan, your eyes were surely delighted to contemplate the neatly pulled-together physiques and attire of the people you met. How can one but smile in remembering the pressed gray uniform over the trim body of a Parisian street-sweeper, the white gloves and navy-blue suit of a straight-sitting Japanese bus driver, or the pert apron of a counter-girl selling croissants in Toronto? The pervasive appearance of good looks met in cities and villages abroad is neither due to fashion—though in the cities there are enough men and women fashionably dressed—nor money. It rather seems to come from an epic sense of the self as a contributing element to a broader landscape (the neighborhood, the nation, the universe). If you asked them to comment on their apparel, they would be confused by your question and reply that they adopted a pleasant image for no other reason than to gratify each other and didn't everyone naturally dress this way?

It is different here at home. Of course, we are not without our fair faces: the California sunshine girls, rugged Midwestern football players, belles of the South, and sophisticates of New York. But is it not strange that in spite of our rash of health clubs, biochemical expertise, and beauty and psychological analysts to tell us how to look, act, and feel, our collective story reads as chapters in disarray. We are at heart a nation of runny-nosed, hyperactive children, spotty-faced violent teens, cardiac-failed middle-aged, and vacant-eyed old-aged.

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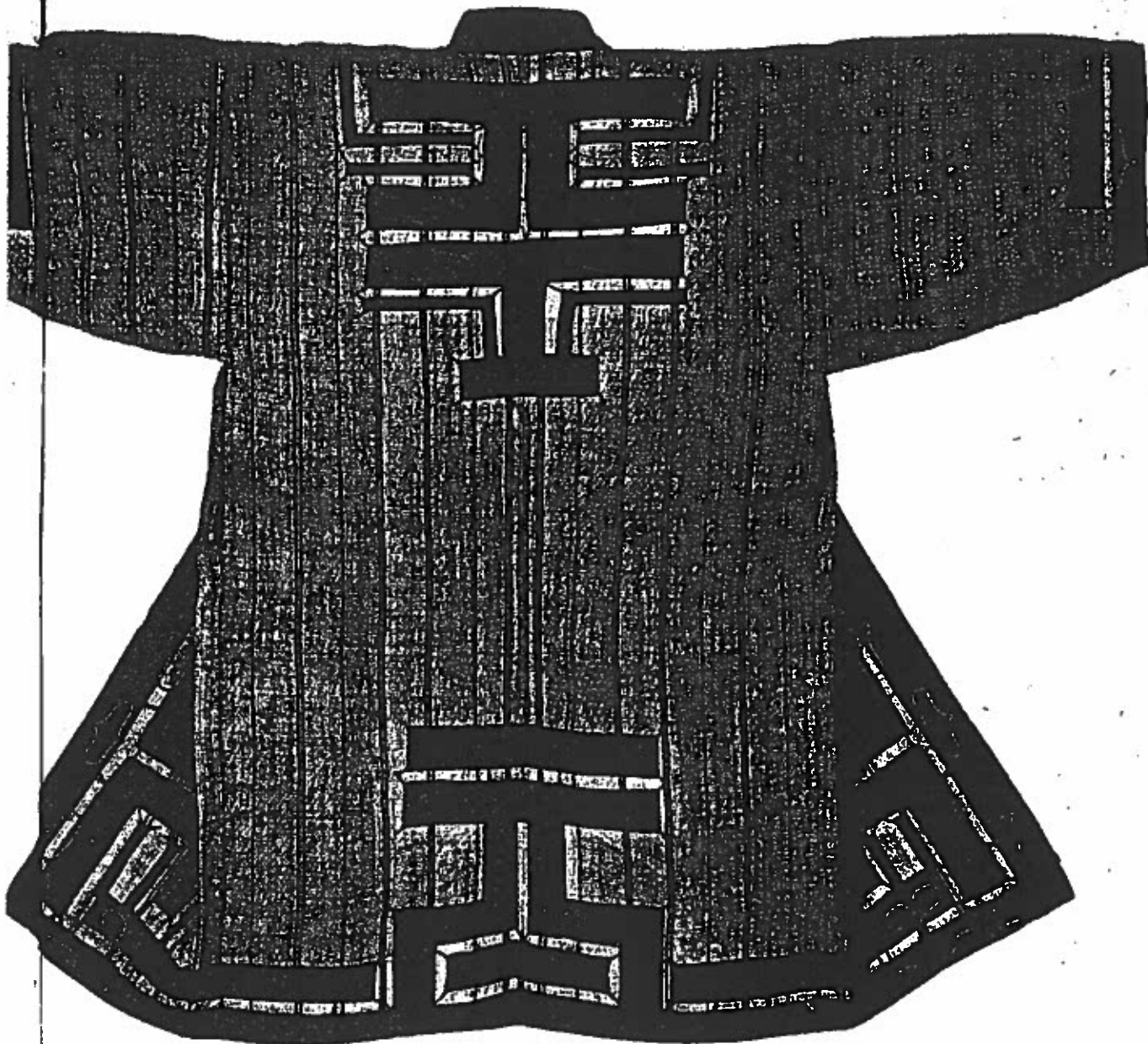
If our national image is not a sea of redundant blue-jeans, it is one of puffy, red faces descending into paunches wrapped in polyester. What has crept in to defeat us that we are so little able to uplift ourselves?

We are number one in crime, not kindness; wealth, not health; universities, not erudition; boredom, not art. Who among us today does not prefer television over a sunset, drinking over swimming, eating over sharing? Which one of us could do a cartwheel after the age of nine or dares to be seen under fluorescent light without makeup? How many read great books, attend to great music, or try to write an essay once they are no longer assigned? What kid irons his dungarees, and who but the girls from parochial school and a handful of waitresses wear tidy uniforms? Who can hold her spine up without the aid of a chairback, and what student can keep his feet on the floor and off the seat in front of him? From whence have come all these slouched backs, indulgent wills, and weak abdomens? How can a back born spry grow lazy so soon, a rosy face pasty, a fluent mind tired? What has happened to us that our most coveted state of being is ease?

'Tis the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might . . .

Keats
"Hyperion"

Could it be that Democracy, which includes organized religion, public education, compulsory medicine, and imposed technology, has done us in, relegating it socially and politically reprehensible to appear distinctive or strive for excellence? Holding to the middle, as Democracy demands, might be acceptable if good morals, good sense, good taste, and aspirations beyond one's physical comfort and a dime for the poor comprised the mentality of the mean. But such Democracy, as de Toqueville perceived, is conceivable only



when the leadership—such as that which penned our independence or chiseled Greek sculpture—is more wise than expedient, more soulful than self-full, more humane than partisan, more beautiful than popular.

Lacking a queen or emperor to symbolize the civilized human being, having lost our gods through their dying, and traded Nature for technological comfort, we find ourselves confused in the middle with nowhere known to reach but sideways and nothing imaginable to obtain but more designer labels. We have not the Palace Guards to recall the strength of our spines, depth of our past, and the magnitude of silence as a stroll through London evokes. We have the Secret Service. We don't use any costume resembling the silk kimono or pin-striped hakama to recall the service unto death of the men and women who walked

Made from the bark of an elm tree, this Ainu coat expresses the merging of the beautiful and the practical.

with the Genji or Heike in samurai Japan. We have "come as you are" wherever we are going.

Where are the confident ones who could inspire us with their peace of mind into seeing that we are yet members of a noble species? We have been such strong, independent, and free people! Now it seems we need so much help, not even remembering with what to wash our faces, cover our bodies, feed our abdomens, move our muscles, elevate our minds, cure our illnesses, or educate our children. America and Americans are sloppy because we have lowered our standards, broken the laws of God and Nature, and settled for less than Beauty.

*Ask counsel of both times: of the ancient time what is best;
and of the latter time what is fittest . . .* Francis Bacon
"Of Great Place"

Our tragic flaw comes down to narrow-mindedness. Having dissociated ourselves from our traditions and ancestors, as well as from the earth in which they lie and the skies that shine upon them, we have salvaged scant glory from the past and dreamed no less than a holocaust for the future. We are children wailing in the midst of a concrete wilderness inundated with mechanical toys.

In coming out of the woods so young, were we perhaps too breathless to comprehend the pitfalls of not looking back? Instead of pursuing the twisting upward road that Nature has staked out for us, did we perhaps headily run straight downhill, our sights set on success? Now, materialists and professionals, we sway on the brink of the dead-end sale of ourselves. Weak, dependent, and barely free people, we are hard pressed to recognize Beauty much less emulate her.

A glint of resurrection on the horizon is the "Back to Nature" movement through which some of us may yet lead all of us into a remembrance of what is true: that we are made in the image and likeness of God; that we have a nature humane, if not quite omnipotent; and that our destiny is to walk in beauty. It is both remarkable and fathomable that, from out of our steel enclosures, there should arise a hunger to feel the earth; that, from out of our dissipated bodies, there should arise a thirst to live in health. These are our intuitive, infinite, eternal longings for Beauty which no amount of possessions or depth of laziness could ever finally quell, Nature is so strong. Thus, to those among us who have already worked to shed the trappings of complicated existence, we must give thanks and applause.

But in turning to Nature we ought to be very careful to do so in ways that demand the utterance of our highest human nature, lest we return to primitivism or stultify in pragmatism. Science is available to us and we may use it; gratitude is known to us and we may deliver it. It is more heartening to read that a man or woman who harnesses the wind or collects the sun does so with a wondrous sense of reaching into the divinity that has been offered us in infinite supply, rather than with a glib satisfaction that the wind and sun are cheap sources of energy. It gives us a lighter feeling to know that a child chooses organic creams and lotions to care for the skin because the child senses the munificence of plant life and wishes not to contribute to the harm of animal life, rather than counter an allergy to chemicals. The motivation for our return to Nature wants the purity of Nature if it is not to shame or delude us further. We are Nature's mirror and, to the extent that we reflect her Beauty, we are beautiful.

Just before heading back into the woods, let us pause to coalesce some thoughts on Beauty, that we may grow more sensitive to that which we deem to reflect. Let us call upon some of those whose very work deals in selecting from Nature—a painter, weaver, organic chemist, dancer, poet, and chef—to transfer her Beauty into art or a lifestyle. And while their particular inclinations unwind before us, let us continue to thread our theme on Beauty with various literary references that have endured passing fashion. In this way, with poetry from the past and reality from the present, we might glean the aspects of that Beauty which shall enlighten our future.

STABILITY

Let us begin by imagining the fundamental content of Beauty to be energy that is electrifying in its vitality. We may call it ki, chi, prana, electromagnetism, or sex-appeal. It is the pulsation that lets us know there is Life within sounding to a rhythm unimpeded and continuous. It may be felt over a range of sensory levels from piercing to silent, splendrous to bare. It is in a sear of lightning that cuts a sky wet with pelting rain:



Blow, winds, and crack your
cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples,
drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking
thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at
once,
That make ingrateful man!

Shakespeare
King Lear

And it is equally in a cupful of sprouting grass that hearken spring:

To those who only pray for the cherries to
bloom,
How I wish to show the spring

That gleams from a patch of green
In the midst of the snow-covered mountain-
village!

Zen poet recluse
(Tang Dynasty)

The energy in Beauty may be expressed so grandly (as in the lightning) that we almost shut our eyes to it, or so humbly (as in the patch) that we almost miss it. But the life of either is magnificent in its very power to be what it is.

Everything beautiful impresses us as sufficient to itself . . .
Thoreau
"Autumn"

Every insect, animal, leaf, flower, and breeze of air that thrives in Nature is beautiful just because of its self-sufficiency. And although each is wholly impressed within its environment, each is alone in its identity and right to be itself. Whether it is the rose in potent bud, unabashed bloom, or honorable retreat with limp petals spotted brown by a scorching sun, the rose is beautiful because it is living the life of a rose—no more, no less. That life, in whatever stage of its incline or decline, may quicken us to thoughts of glory or quiet us to carefree sleep.



PHOTO BY JERRY HOWARD

The power to inspire that sits in Nature's lap is the very power that gives birth to the artist. If we ask our chosen painter-calligrapher, Kaji Aso (presently at work in his Boston studio) for his remembrance of the tell-tale moment of inspired truth, he will say: "One day when I was twelve, I was looking out the window and it was raining gently during early spring. The air was dark and gloomy. Then something caught my eye, something sparking out from a tiny tree, which was a tiny bud. Almost as I was watching it, it was growing there. That was when I discovered myself. I thought, 'Here is something; here is Beauty. My life is boring, but I could live with this Beauty.' Since it affected my eyes, I decided to become a painter."

It is this life-force that first strikes us to call something beautiful.

Whereas energy is eternal, life-force is limited to life-

span; but Beauty is subject to the correct functioning of the life-force. For as long as a creature is living the life fitting to its nature, its beauty is enforced. But when the rightful life of a creature is thwarted either by disease within or abnormal circumstances without, its rhythm of energy is disturbed. An off-beat flow of energy hampers the life-force; with a hampered life-force, beauty subsides and its opposite surfaces.

A tiger, for example, stolen from its natural habitat and confined to a cage, loses the life of a tiger. Though it remains alive, its power to use its energy correctly—to roam, hunt, leap, pounce, catch, and race through the thickness of the jungle—is aborted. Standing outside its cage, we may appreciate the tiger's coloring, or be amazed by its teeth, claws, or muscular haunches, but we are hard-pressed to find in it its tiger-ness. We find instead the neur-

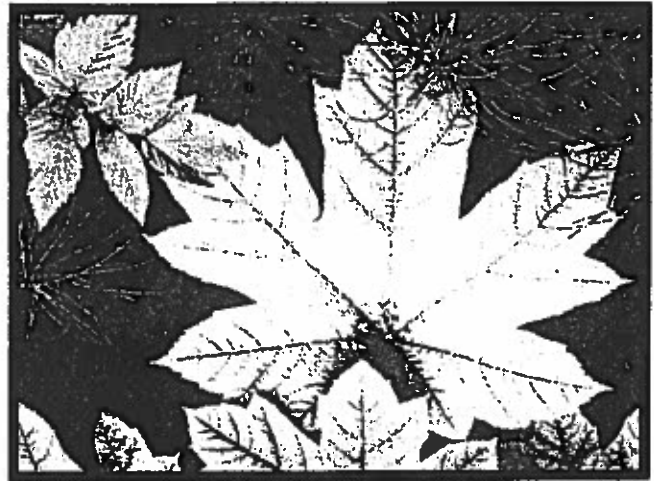


PHOTO BY TERRY BANNUA

osis of a creature whose nature has been checked and will remain so unto its most undignified death far from the thickets out of which it arose. A life-force denied its self-sufficiency ceases to be beautiful no matter how entertaining to behold.

What was any art but a mold in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose . . .

Willa Cather

The Song of the Lark

It is impossible to terminate the life-force of something while retaining its beauty in yet another form. Figuratively for our art and literally for our food, clothing, and shelter, Nature sacrifices her lives. If we are humble in receiving the offerings and make an effort to maintain the essence of the thing offered, we are justified in taking, receiving, and transforming lesser developed lives in order to sustain our own. The key to retaining Beauty is whether or not essence has been violated in the transformation.

For the work of a weaver or designer to be artistic, it must begin with elements from Nature and end with the retention of their meanings. For our guide to fabrics we have chosen Pegge Kirschner of Garnet Hill, a Franconia, New Hampshire-based supplier of natural fiber clothing and linens. Once but no longer a weaver, Pegge Kirschner bases her selection of a product upon whether it "derives from a source that has been grown, will eventually decompose and return into the earth, and feels good, meaning it is soft

(not abrasive) like cotton and wool, or airy like silk."

Aided by that point of view, we may decide that if cotton bolls transformed into a sweater still feel as cotton, their essence has not been violated.

The domestic art which daily puts us into the debt of Nature is food preparation. To elucidate how we may admit Beauty into our cooking, let us call on Hiroshi Hayashi of the Seventh Inn, a "Best of Boston" natural foods restaurant. Having trained in how to live as well as how to cook for ten years in Japan before coming to America (where he has lived with his family and students for the past eight years), Hiroshi Hayashi chooses to see the whole in every part: "The human body is a small universe . . . [With our food] we present the universe, not artificially with human intelligence, but naturally, though not primitively . . . Intuition is needed to prepare, for example, a fish . . . The fish comes with something given . . . All [elements necessary in order for human beings to eat] is given: fire, vegetables, water, etc. . . . We collect and mix their natural factors . . . Cooking is only a consequence of Nature."

From this we can deduce that the human intelligence which contrives to cook a fish into something other than a fish is the same intelligence which will imprison a tiger or add nylon to cotton. What we lack in revealing Beauty is not intelligence.

Our intelligence has evermore tried to assure us that we are superior to Nature or at least hold the upper hand. It deludes us into repeatedly trying to conquer, capture, or possess Nature. But she eludes us. Nature is free; possessing her means to have her not as she is meant to be. How fruitless, then, to tamper with the essences found in Nature; changed essence is meaning lost. If we wish to tamper, let us play with machines, to which we are superior because we have made them. There is much to be said for letting things be, as our painter Kaji Aso suggests in a poem written several years ago:

Water Flows
Moves
Whispers
Sparkling in varied light
As a creature, water is.
I cannot catch it
But, just standing by.

A receptive mind opens to all creatures and things coming down while it stretches up to meet them in an act of mutual thanksgiving. If the mind is not receptive, it is murderous. By applying cleverness rather than intuition, we make mistakes. By disrespecting human nature, we make trouble, even war.

The nature of a baby, for example, is being dependent. It is correct for an infant to crave and need care, attention, and almost complete support. A baby's natural dependency is the very source of its self-sufficiency and hence beauty. But a baby upon whom independence has been imposed (as when from his or her tiny mouth there protrudes an offensive bottle full of fluids no longer fit for even a calf; when the baby's inquiring body is restrained within a plastic-coated pen; or when the baby is not coddled, slept with, fed natural baby food, or dried off) is a baby whose life-force is in trouble. To demonstrate this, he or she cries, and in time becomes sick in mind or body. It demeans the beauty of a baby to initiate it into childhood before its human nature is ripe.

We adults, the other side of babies, have been provided with power and instinct aplenty to stand independently. To the degree that we naturally, rhythmically, and completely expel that power in positive directions, we are using our life-force correctly. By being one's natural self—an active, purposeful, peaceful, more empty than full, adult human being—we can live in good health.

Illness, tiredness, neuroticism, selfishness, aggression, chronic disease, etc. are aberrations indicating interruptions and stagnation in the normally smooth flow of energy. Such aberrations breed dependency upon doctors, caretakers, analysts, counselors, medicines, certain kinds of food, fellow workers, loved ones, and society at large to absorb our loss of vitality. It takes the time and effort of many people to restore someone to health, even oneself. The dependency—an act of theft—involved in the curing of illness is just as unnatural as the aberration itself. Healing—that is, a return to one's nature—ought to be wrought as quickly, succinctly, and independently as possible in order that the sufferer might be restored to self-sufficiency, resume work, and die of old age at home.



Chinese painting depicts a world of flowing Beauty.

Without health we are not free, least of all from the body. An unhealthy body or mind is one that always reminds us it is there. It hurts, does not feel good, is uncomfortable, heavy, and forever bothersome. Such a thing cannot be beautiful. That electrifying energy, life-force, and essential meaning about which we have been speaking all have to do with health. Fading Beauty is less the victim

of advancing years than of declining health.

What may we use as a criterion for judging health? That which we never cease to do while living—breathing. If our breath is long, smooth, and deep into and out of the abdomen, we are healthy, rarely aware of our bodies, and giving a peaceful feeling to those around us. Any other kind of breathing (shallow, abrupt, static, short, high-up) renders the breather and everyone in his or her presence not quite comfortable. Every kind of abnormal breath (from the extreme of a miserable consumptive; a coughing, choking smoker; a wheezer; a panting hot-head; an emotional gasper; a chest-breathing overeater; an upper-back-breathing underachiever to the familiar shoulder-breathing excessive thinker and/or desirer) is neither healthy nor pleasing. True laughter, which is long, deep, rich, and warm-breathing, is a sign of health and very pleasing. A person who breathes well, hence also speaks and laughs well, has the basic ingredients for good looks. How simple it is that Natural Breath, the great energizer and stabilizer, is the favorite companion of Natural Beauty.

If we breathe well, we are sure to become dissatisfied with our modern society and its resultant lifestyle. We will gradually feel a softening around the chest, a clearing above the neck, and a loneliness in the abdomen which will recall to us something far away and long ago we may chance to call Love. We will search for fulfillment, and our intuitive seeking will lead us back to our essential parents, Heaven and Earth. We will want to eat differently, wear softer clothing, activate our bodies, and participate in the life of all seasons through all weather, letting the elements fall upon us that we may be drenched with more energy to give back. At last we will become stable in ourselves because we will have found our meaning. And our life-force which may lean toward that of the lightning blast or the patch of green will be beautiful to the end of its lifespan.

Now comes the curtain on our first act in dreaming the reality of Beauty. What we know so far is what we may say with the voice of Hiroshi Hayashi: "All of us have lost our instincts from living in city life. We have to bring people, dogs, everything, back to Nature. Fight to be natural—which is very unnatural, but we must do it."

Even if it takes going to the extent of fighting one's own artificial self, let us yield to even the fight. Let us not hesitate to lose that which we are holding too much of, in order to win that which we cannot hold but will never exhaust.

BALANCE

Since we have ascertained that the vital life energy which functions through the breath to render us naturally stable is the content and meaning of Beauty, let us imagine what is Beauty's form, how does it function, and to what end? Without form, energy is chaos. And without energy or meaning to fill it, form is a shadow, empty. The form that Beauty takes is inseparable from energy.

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion . . .

Francis Bacon
"Of Beauty"

There are endless objects in the material world and countless inhabitants of the earth who have attractive, even

beautiful parts and features—the turn of a nose, mouth color, or shape of a leg. There are also tons of objects and rooms full of people who are beautifully formed. But it is not so much with the features of the face or parts of the body that Beauty is concerned, nor even with how they are symmetrically or asymmetrically in proportion to each other, but it is rather concerned with just how much form is unified in itself and balanced with content.

Fashion constantly begins and ends in the two things it abhors most—singularity and vulgarity . . .

William Hazlitt
"On Fashion"

Most of our fashion models, for example, are seemingly gorgeous in form: the face, structure, and proportions are something special. However, as the meaning of a fashion model is just as its name implies—model—its energy is static. A face posed in some fashion may be timely, but not timeless. The faddishness of the lifestyle that informs fashion is the very thing which topples it off our severely just scales of Beauty. Being mostly form and leastly content, fashion and its models do not strike a balance.

The clue to visualizing how content and form balance



each other in a natural human being is to see tension under control. Nature demands that tension be correctly placed in order that all else may be relaxed. Tension misplaced as in a tight jaw, pensive brow, pursed mouth, stiff neck, raised shoulders, twisted waist, knocked knees, swollen ankles, rigid fingers, or curled toes is what distorts the natural unity of form. The only center of tension proper to any form is its center of gravity, which in the human being is that point deep within the exact middle of the belly. Tension centered there enables the abdominal organs to con-



tract, the legs to be strong, upper body free, face bright, mind clear, and sex-appeal magnetic. Tension coming from elsewhere than that point which the Japanese call *tanden* dissipates sex-appeal and halts Beauty. Every part and feature of the body excepting *tanden* wants freedom in form and likewise in expression.

O beloved Pan, and all ye other gods of this place, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man . . .

Socrates
in Plato's *Phaedrus*

Our face mirrors our mind, which is connected to the body through the nervous system. The expression of the face reveals the happiness or unhappiness of the energy within the mind and body. It is useless, then, to worry over features and parts; but, given our penchant for anxiety, we do. For example, a woman recently sought an acupuncture treatment to remove wrinkles from aging skin as she had seen performed on local television. The suggestion of the practitioner, Koji Yamamoto, was: "Looking in your mirror every morning, make the best face you can—the face you like the most—and try to keep that nice face all day and evening and sleep with that nice face during the night."

If the face is imagined as happy, wrinkles and undesirable parts "vanish" even without acupuncture. The appearance of the outside stabilized by the inside makes a balanced marriage.

Skin, the largest organ of the body, is another reflector of what is happening inside us. To be beautiful, our skin must be fed its staple food, oxygen, and allowed to carry out its staple process, cell division. For further insight into the nature of our skin and how to keep it healthy,

Beauty in dance is the combination of strength and grace embodied by the ballerina.

we have asked Aubrey Hampton, founder of Aubrey Organics (natural, organic skin and hair care products) of Tampa, Florida for his findings. His advice, paraphrased, is to: "Keep the skin as natural as possible. If we must put unnatural substances on it, take them off as soon as possible. For the sake of its health, the skin should not be covered with powder or binders of any kind during nine to ten at night. That is the most active period of cell division, during which the most forceful exhalation takes place—all in accordance with the rhythm of the ocean.

"If the breathing process of the skin is stifled, aging is accelerated. Exposure to sun, especially in combination with suntan lotion, as well as the application of chemicals to the skin, stifle its breath. All make-up manufactured today is in some way chemical. Not since the time of Galen, an alchemist and physician of Rome in 300 A.D. (whose arts in creating natural make-up were handed down to him through the disciples of Cleopatra) has a completely natural, organic make-up been mixed. Make-up, contributor to the breakdown of the skin underneath, is therefore, an item to be applied sparingly, with discretion.

Just as we have come to know breath as the factor through which the life-force is manifested, we may now also know it along with freedom from tension as the factor through which appearance functions.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old, for as you were when first your eye I ey'd such seems your beauty still . . .

Shakespeare
Sonnets, CIV

To be glad with our parts and features, keeping them free of tension and letting them breathe, is to keep ourselves as young as we are. Age, a tool for the design work of Nature, is meant to take much time. We humans have no business to do with putting designs on Nature, to make ourselves look younger or older. Looking into food, Hiroshi Hayashi has seen that "design is but the working of intuition"—natural mind—to present food or ourselves as naturally as possible. Contrived design is not design at all but a mask covering it up. In other words, in those of Aubrey Hampton, "It is better not to try to make a round face long, but to accentuate the best feature. Beauty in men and women comes from an enhancement of each one's natural structure." If the structure is to be truly natural, what is there left for us to do but let it be?

The degree to which we follow our innate compass is the degree to which men are men, women are women. If we ask Bruce Wells, a resident choreographer and principal dancer for the Boston Ballet, for an example of Beauty in dance, he will say: "It is the superhuman quality . . . in the entire extension of the leg of a ballerina on point; in the flying aspect of dance."

For the form of the leg or entire energy of the body to be lifted to its highest inclination—to fly—is to yield to the history and prophecy of our evolution and destiny. To fly is to give up weight for essence, sacrifice parts for unity.

All Nature is but art, unknown to thee; all chance, direction, which thou canst not see . . .

Alexander Pope
"Ari Essay on Man"

CHANGE

If we turn to a poet, Robert Bly, for his description of Beauty, we will find in his images the air of all-acceptance that enables our own changes: "Beauty more and more seems to me linked to discipline. The discipline of the artist works to prevent the human ego from dominating, let us say, the poem. If the ego dominates anyway, the poem can have meaning, and yet not be strong enough to be beautiful. Intensity and thought sometimes talk the ego into moving out of the poem for an instant. If the ego does that, it leaves an open space. Then the consciousness of a thunderstorm, or a color, or a panther, or a jar can enter. When non-human consciousness stands in a work of art trembling beside highly developed human consciousness, then we have what is in art 'Beauty.' We experience the power of the beautiful."

The thunderstorm, color, panther, or jar will always come to us, no matter what. It is only in our having no desire to alter them or to impose ourselves that their Beauty can persist.

A philosophy of Zen tells us our path is:

Not to change it, but to be with the change.

Not to assess it, but to be in it . . .

D.T. Suzuki

Zen and Japanese Culture

It is finally, then, not an understanding of or even a merging with something in order to know it, paint, appreciate, or become it: It is a being in it. To be beautiful is to be in Beauty and the changes that Beauty ever takes. The Zen sense of Beauty is:

Not in form but in the meaning it expresses;

. . . this meaning is felt when the observing subject throws his whole being into the bearer of the meaning and moves along with it.

To feel Beauty we must become an object of Beauty. To be Beauty, we must throw ourselves into our nature and so be ourselves.



Every self that is itself in all its infinite change is beautiful. Any self that remains conscious of itself and its changes—a self divided—is not. Beauty is not something external with an ego of its own or a separate identity. When we meet it, as Kaji Aso reminds us, it is formless: "When Beauty comes out it drowns its own life, or its soul or spirit; and you can receive it. But you cannot grab it in your hands or with egotistical mind."

A violet does not think and so is never ugly. We human beings—because we think—scheme to change ourselves, possess the gifts of Nature, alter essences, and play a drama which even God would not. By overly relying on the rational hemisphere of our brains, we dissect ourselves, putting God, our nature, and Beauty on the outside, as if they were acquisitions. We have either forgotten what we knew before growing up or lost our natural mind altogether in a human-made infancy. "Being of natural mind," Hiroshi Hayashi has sensed, "depends upon how much you played in the fields as a child." When children play in the fields, they are in the fields, not looking, admiring, or cursing at them. They make no judgment of the fields, just as they don't judge themselves as children. They are children and fields, naturally.

Art is not a pastime but a priesthood . . .

Jean Cocteau

Our hope is not so much to go back to Nature but to be her. We must let the child, he of egoless mind, lead us to our salvation from ugliness, selfishness, greed, distortion, accumulation, sickness, stagnation, and polyester pants. How can the legs be legs when clothed in-laboratory findings? How can the body be relaxed when overfed? How can the mind be clear when it's full of itself? How can the soul laugh when it's too lazy to breathe? When the child fathers the man or woman—who makes an art of life—it is an act in the rhythm of Nature, divine as well as beautiful. To know God in oneself and in all else, and to know it is the same God, at last is to know Beauty. □