

Okakura Kakuzō's Nostalgic Journey to India and the Invention of Asia

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Many works in English by Tenshin, Okakura Kakuzō (1862-1913), deal with female figures. One such work could have been his graduating thesis for Tokyo Imperial University, if it had not been burned by his frustrated young wife, Motoko (1867-1924). In Okakura's final years, his intimate letters with an Indian poet, Priyambada Devi, became well known, and Fred Notehelfer rightly detects in them a kind of *amae*, or emotional dependence on a maternal figure (317). In a recent biography of Isabella Stuart Gardner, *The Art of Scandal*, Okakura is frequently mentioned, if not without some confusion (Shand-Tucci 254-257). The author, Douglas Shand-Tucci, concludes that "Okakura Kakuzō's finest English poems were addressed to Isabella Gardner" (257), but does not refer to Okakura's *White Fox* (1913), a verse drama which he dedicated to Gardner shortly before his death. It is not unreasonable to presume that in the case of *The Book of Tea* (1906), its first supposed reader was none other than Isabella Gardner, even though it is formally dedicated to the painter John LaFarge. Several months before the publication of the book, she had written to Bernard Berenson: "I am still full of the sentiment and flower of the great Tea Ceremony, the Chano-yu, which was performed here yesterday at 5 PM (candlelight) by Okakura" (January 22, 1905). In the guise of an address to Ko-chan, the cat which Isabella Gardner had given to him, Okakura wrote: "You and I know that wonder is the secret of bliss and that with reason comes the death of the beautiful" (October 4, 1911). "You" here implies, of course, Isabella Gardner, no less than the cat itself.

In this paper, my first proposition is to examine Okakura's "structure of dependence" on the maternal figure in *The Ideals of the Orient* (1903) and in the manuscript written in 1902 during his stay in Calcutta and only posthumously published as *The Awakening of the East* (1939). To what extent was Okakura's invention of "Asia" as "one" and a "united living organism" related to his journey to India? Is Okakura's (re-)invention of the "Orient" better understood in connection with his discovery of Indian motherhood? How was his nostalgia for the lost glory of India responsible for his political stance? What was the role played by foreign patrons and mediators in his Indian experience? To

answer these questions, we must focus on two particular women, Josephine MacLeod and Margaret E. Noble (known as Sister Nivedita).

I. Josephine MacLeod

Okakura's first book in English, *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Arts of Japan* (written in 1901, published in 1903), was based on the lectures he had given to English and American women in Tokyo. Among them was Josephine MacLeod (1858–1949), who was responsible for Okakura's trip to India in 1901–02. She was also closely linked with Nivedita of Ramakrishna Vivekananda, who wrote an important introduction to *The Ideals of the East*.

Josephine MacLeod was the daughter of a wealthy American family and became devoted to Vivekananda (1863–1902) from the time of her first acquaintance with him in New York around 1894. Her financial, material, and spiritual support played an important part in the first publication of Vivekananda's hagiography, and she was active in propagating Vivekananda's ideas in the West. The Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis was later supported by her. In his diary of life in England (written in MacLeod's house in Stratford-on-Avon, said to have once belonged to Shakespeare's daughter), Kazantzakis expresses his amazement at MacLeod's insatiable curiosity, even in her eighties, about the world around her. She used to say with a laugh, "Learning is my religion" (Atmaprana 109–110; Kazantzakis 250).

MacLeod was mainly responsible for Okakura's first trip to India and his meeting with Vivekananda. Okakura left Japan on December 5, 1901, disembarked at Colombo on December 29, and after a brief stay in Madras, arrived in Calcutta on January 6, 1902. He encountered Vivekananda the very same day (Horioka, *Okakura Tenshin kō* 102–103).

Of their encounter, Josephine MacLeod leaves the following memory:

One of the happy moments of my life was when after a few years at Belue [where Vivekananda resided], Mr. Okakura said to me rather fiercely, "Vivekananda is ours. He is an Oriental. He is not yours." Then I knew that there was a real understanding between them [Okakura and Vivekananda]. A day or two after, Swami [Vivekananda] said to me, "It seems as if a long lost brother has come"... And when Swami said to him, "Will you join us?" Mr. Okakura said, "No, I haven't finished with this world yet." (qtd. in Atmaprana 104).

Another biographer comments about this meeting: "Okakura's work for Asian unity and the preservation of Japan's traditional arts had just begun" (Prabuddhaprana 123).

Here is a sense of division of labour, so to speak. Okakura said that if the Indian excels in spirituality, and China is proud of its ethics,

in Japan it is "Art [that] is the expression of the highest and noblest of our national culture" (*Collected English Writings* 2:16). It is easy to suppose that Okakura was planning to realize in the artistic world what Vivekananda was realizing in the spiritual world. However, Vivekananda, who had been ill for some time, passed away six months later, on July 4, 1902, while Okakura was still in India. Some Japanese scholars have already suggested that the legendary success that Vivekananda had enjoyed at the International Religious Parliament at the Chicago World's Fair in September 1893 (Vivekananda, *Swami* 194-210) may have inspired Okakura in his promotion of Japanese art to the American public. Okakura's own lecture at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, entitled "Modern Problems in Painting—from a Japanese Standpoint," can be interpreted as an "imitation" of Vivekananda (in the strongest sense of following the same path) and is worthy of comparison with the Chicago lectures by Vivekananda. Apart from the obvious similarity of two Oriental intellectuals addressing the American public, the principal doctrine of both lectures was much the same. Okakura told Americans that for "conservatives" in Japan (whom we should not directly identify with Okakura himself):

Western society is not necessarily the paragon which all mankind should imitate. They believe in the homogeneity of civilization, but that true homogeneity must be the result of a realization from within, not an accumulation of outside matter. To them, Japanese paintings are by no means the simple weapons to which they are likened, but a potent machine invented to carry on a special kind of aesthetic warfare. (*Collected English Writings* 2: 78; Notehelfer 337).

If we replace "art" with "religion" and "Japanese paintings" with "Hinduism" (as a token of "tolerance and universal acceptance"), the parallels with Vivekananda's lectures are obvious.

Okubo Takaki, in his prize-winning book on Okakura Tenshin, has already analysed how Okakura appropriated Vivekananda's idea of Advaitism (199). The initial monistic idea of eternity and the ideal in a holistic paradigm—by which Vivekananda had preached toleration of every religion (Vivekananda, *Swami* 195-210)—was transformed, as it were, in an opposite direction by Okakura into the "spirit of living Advaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old" (*Ideals* 8) to explain the principle of the development of art in Japan. Moreover, there is a fundamental metaphor common to both thinkers. To illustrate his idea of the "universal religion," Vivekananda is said to have quoted from a hymn: "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee"

(Vivekananda, *Complete Works* 654). In the actualization of Oriental art, Okakura claimed that Japan is located at the point where all the different currents mingle.

There is an evident symmetry between Vivekananda's spiritual synthesis of world religions and Okakura's idea of self-realization and the actualization of Oriental art history. And undoubtedly, Okakura's idea that "Asia is one" which appears in the opening of *The Ideals of the East* owes part of its inspiration to Vivekananda's Advaitism, which Okakura explains as follows:

The word *advaita* means the state of not being two, and is the name applied to the great Indian doctrine that all which exists, though apparently manifold, is really one. Hence all truth must be discoverable in any single differentiation, the whole universe involved in every detail. All thus becomes equally precious. (*Collected English Writings* 1:128).

II. Sister Nivedita

Sister Nivedita (1867–1911) was born Margaret E. Noble in Ireland. Her encounter with Vivekananda in London in 1895 ultimately led her to become his disciple and she travelled to India in 1898. There she met MacLeod. In 1899, she published several articles, such as "Ideals of Hindu Women," and "Mother Worship," which "were highly appreciated" in some circles but also "attacked scathingly, particularly by the supporters of Pandita Ramabai, a Christian convert" (Nivedita, *Complete Works* 2:36). In 1900, Swan Sonnenschein & Company of London published her first book, *Kali the Mother*, which remains an English-language classic on Indian motherhood. She also wrote enthusiastically about Kropotkin's social and political ideas in 1900. Before Okakura's arrival in Calcutta in 1902, she had just published "Lambs among Wolves" in reply to missionary attacks against Indian culture (published in *Westminster Review*, April issue; also published as a book in 1903). Sister Nivedita, then aged thirty-four, was devoted to social reform and women's education in Bengal.

Josephine MacLeod and Sister Nivedita carried on a sustained correspondence. *The Letters of Sister Nivedita* (of which the third of three volumes is still unpublished) shows that more than one-third of Nivedita's published letters were sent to Josephine MacLeod. On average, "Magot" wrote every five days to "My Dear Yum Yum." Nivedita met Okakura in March 1902, and in her letters to MacLeod, Okakura's name first appears on April 19, 1902. (The published edition indicates that Nivedita began corresponding with Kakaju [sic] Okakura in 1901, but unfortunately no letter between Nivedita and Okakura appears in the first two volumes.)

On April 19, 1902, Nivedita calls her Japanese guest "Rhinoceros," and his team "Chieftain and his party": "The Chieftain and his party found life at Buddha Gaya frightfully hot, and while I was dressing on Monday the 28th [April] he suddenly appeared here [at the US Consulate in Calcutta]." She also complains, "How you even bore the weight of organising these Indian journeys, I do not know," and adds, "The Chieftain looks well," to the relief of her correspondent, and also hinting at the illness suffered during the journey. From Bagh Gazaar, on July 2nd, Nivedita writes "to Miss J. MacLeod" that "I never saw your friend [Okakura] look so lively or so natural. Perhaps he thought my surroundings bare—but he set himself to talk of 'the land of hope' [Japan] in which he lived—in a way that did me good."

This last passage, in which Okakura sees in Japan his Land of Hope, can be contrasted with the following lament by Vivekananda, which Nivedita recorded: "Our country is the graveyard of her own children, and the Paradise of every bully who chooses to outrage her!" (Nivedita, *Letters* 1:199; July 28, 1902). Indeed, travelling from Kobe to Yokohama in 1892, Vivekananda had remarked that as well as the rapid and steady industrialization and Westernization in Japan's military system and transportation, "the Japanese are one of the cleanest peoples on earth. Everything is neat and tidy," and he wished to send one of his younger brothers either to America or Japan, "Anywhere—out of Bengal" (Nivedita, *Letters* 1:199; July 28, 1902). As Guha-Takurta has judiciously suggested, "the patriotic fever of a rejuvenated Japan" and "a deep crisis of self-identity at the denationalization in India" were two sides of the same coin of Modern Asia (182). Nivedita's preface to Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* can be better understood in this particular context: "[I]t is of supreme value to show Asia, as Mr. Okakura does, not as the congeries of geographical fragments that we imagined, but as a united living organism, each part dependent on all the others, the whole breathing a single complex life" (*Collected English Writings* 1: 11). In this "united living organism," Nivedita found what she called the "all-pervasive syncretic force," which would realize the "Indian synthesis" under the guidance of modernized Hinduism. Clearly, Okakura's slogan, "Asia is one," was ready to exercise a direct political impact upon the aspirations for national unity in the Indian subcontinent. As a matter of fact, India was at that time under the threat of Bengal Partition, which was announced and put into effect in 1905, provoking massive anti-British demonstrations and boycotts, known as the Swadeshi Movement.

III. The Publication of *The Ideals of the East*

Until now, scholars have had difficulty in determining the extent of Nivedita's contribution to the publication of Okakura's first book. Nivedita's own confessions shed light on this unsettled matter. In a long letter dated September 14, 1902, Nivedita talks about the editor's "discretion in cutting up the book": "The first excision ... was peculiarly unfortunate, spoiling the whole music, and the sentence was restored in proof." Here is a detail which suggests difficulties in the editing of Okakura's forthcoming book. Her introduction (which we have quoted from) is ready and she hopes that her correspondent will be satisfied with it (Nivedita, *Letters* 1:507). She reports that Okakura is still working hard on another manuscript (probably the one to be published in 1939 as *The Awakening of the East*) and when tired or ill, he comes from time to time to her house for "visiting" and to be taken care of: "I fear he is working as hard as ever. It is that burning self-sacrifice in little things as well as big. No indeed, I do not need help in order to see the greatness of the man you brought" (*Letters* 1:504).

Nivedita's solicitude for her Japanese guest bears witness to Okakura's "structure of dependency" on a maternal figure. In fact, in Nivedita's letters to Josephine MacLeod, she refers to Okakura as "Your dear child," or "Nigu," or simply "N." In her "long letter about Nigu" where "He" indicates Vivekananda, who has just passed away, and "he" means Okakura, Nivedita even confesses to MacLeod that "Nigu and I play at his being 'a bad boy with a wonderful Mother'—and I am she." She also reports "how he is worshipped, by all who really know him." We are informed by Nivedita that Okakura was called "Khalki," or even "Krishina," by the local boys.

After Okakura's return to Japan in October of 1902, Nivedita was further engaged with his work. A letter to MacLeod in November 1902 reveals that Okakura was insisting upon her coming to Japan:

About Japan for my little one. I have a feeling that that was Nigu's plan—but it was never mentioned between us. And I hope if it comes it will be his spontaneous doing. I never saw anyone so generous and so thoughtful and at the same time with such a power to move men at his will, as Nigu. But I would hate him to be urged or persuaded on this point. (*Letters* 1: 518; letter 212, Nov. 1902).

She adds, "If I go to Japan at all, it must be as an Oriental!" At that time, Okakura was on the verge of giving up his dream of organizing the Second International Parliament of Religion in Kyoto with the collaboration of Oda Tokunō (1866–1911) who had joined Okakura in Vivekananda's residence in Belue in April 1902. Evidently Okakura was inviting Nivedita for this purpose. The following letter reflects a certain anxiety about Okakura's spontaneity, and hints at forebodings

about the failure of Okakura's planning: "[B]ecause of his illness] N. may have more difficulty in organizing things than he expected. I should not be surprised if a year of two of quiet work in Japan succeeded all his efforts and loss of health here [in India]." This last phrase reflects some concern about his overwork during his stay in India. The following comment also suggests their delicate relationship: "And our friendship and confidence are very poor. Poor too is the help bestowed, if we cannot feel that any good work is the Mother's work for him!" (*Letters* 1:519; letter 213, Nov. 19, 1902).

At first sight, this seems to suggest her role as a proofreader of Okakura's manuscript. Also intriguing is his attachment to a notion of eternal Motherhood. "The Mother" with capital letter "M" seems to mean the Supreme Grace in the Order of Ramakrishna, and Nivedita gave special importance to Indian Motherhood in her own writing. Still, "Mother's work" seems to conceal far more political meaning. The editor of Nivedita's letters was probably referring to this passage in making the following comments: "November 19 [Nivedita] becomes suspicious about Okakura's real intention behind his revolutionary activities in India. Ultimately [Nivedita] thought that Okakura was a Japanese agent" (1:39). We will examine the relevance of this comment later.

In February 1903, *The Ideals of the East* finally appeared. In a letter (address unidentified), Nivedita remarks:

Do you know, it seems to me that Swamiji [Vivekananda] was the real author of the little Kali-book [*Kali the Mother*, Nivedita's first book, published in 1900], and that then I had to help the Bairn [probably indicating her running of the Girls' school], and then the *Ideals of the East* and that only after three servings we were allowed, you and I, to produce this book [probably indicating *The Webs of Indian Life*, published on Sep. 1903]? I love to think that it is the flower of long service and help. Above all, I like to think that I did something for Him [Vivekananda] first. That consecrates everything. Though indeed the very thought of service is itself as a veil of consecration as I think—and even the least sacred is as sacred as the most. (*Letters* 2: 705–706).

Evidently, in the course of her intellectual life, Nivedita felt as great a responsibility for Okakura's publication as for her own. However, this letter also suggests that during the process, some "misunderstanding" occurred between them. (Unfortunately, an important page of this letter is missing, and we cannot say for sure what the problem was.) Incidentally, Nivedita slips in the following remark at the end of the same letter: "from Mr. OK [Okakura] a sweet letter-childish again," a further confirmation of Okakura's dependent attitude towards his female mediator in India. (The letter in question by Okakura has not been published and its present whereabouts are

unknown.) To understand what this letter implies, we need to consider the political activities Nivedita was involved in.

IV. Nivedita and the Indian Nationalist Movement

During Okakura's stay in India, Nivedita recorded his nationalistic attitudes and his worship of the Emperor. The following passage reflects the slight but decisive difference in their attitudes. When it came to gossip about the English royal family and Edward VII's "misfortune," Nivedita records that "N [Okakura] almost persuades me that sovereigns have not always and everywhere been vulgar and rich and self-indulgent and grasping at the show of power" (*Letters* 1:130; end July: Letter 197). Clearly, Okakura implies here either the Japanese Imperial family or some idealized "grandeur of Asoka." This reaction by Okakura also reminds us of a passage in *The Ideals of the East*:

The glory of Asia (...) lies in that vibration of peace that beats in every heart; that harmony that brings together emperor and peasant; that sublime intuition of oneness which commands all sympathy, all courtesy, to be its fruits, making Takakura [Godaigo], Emperor of Japan, remove his sleeping-robcs on a winter night, because the frost lay cold on the hearths of his poor, or Taiso [T'ai-tsung], of T'ang, forgo food, because his people were feeling the pinch of famine. It lies in the dream of renunciation that pictures the Bodhisattava as refraining from Nirvana till the last atom of dust in the universe shall have passed in before to bliss. (*Collected English Writings* 1: 130)

In reaction to Okakura's idealized vision of Asiatic "oneness," Nivedita makes her position clear. After recording Okakura's response, Nivedita continues:

But certainly in Victorian England with wealth and flattery unlimited, and manly activity cramped on every side, a Prince of Wales cannot be blamed for dissoluteness! Our Royal Family seems to me the most entirely appropriate summit of our Imperialistic system that could possibly be imagined. (*Letters* 1:130; end July: Letter 197)

It is evident that Nivedita did not shrink from criticizing Western imperialism.

Shortly after Vivekananda's death on July 4, 1902, she officially left the formal membership of the Ramakrishna Order and publicly declared her entire independence from the Order. The passage quoted above, written at the end of July, certainly reflects her accelerated anti-British attitude (Mukherjee 222-223). And it was precisely during the period when Okakura was staying in Calcutta that Nivedita was also experiencing her own transformation as a public figure. Is it a simple

coincidence that Nivedita was giving a series of public lectures on "The Unity of India" in Bombay, Madras, and other cities in India while she was busy proofreading Okakura's book on Asian unity and adding her own preface (August-September 1902)? Interestingly enough, in these lectures, Nivedita was making use of such expressions as "organic unity" that were also used by Okakura. We can certainly presume some kind of mutual influence between Okakura and his proofreader. "India is one" was the political slogan used by Nivedita.

Among her many activities, Nivedita is remembered for her (unsigned) protest against Lord Curzon's disrespectful remarks on Indian character in his Calcutta University Convention Address (published February 13, 1905). The administrative partition of Bengal into East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and West Bengal was announced in July, 1905 and implemented on October 16. It provoked widespread protest and boycott. In this Swadeshi-Boycott movement, Nivedita took an active role. In the following years, until her death in 1911, Nivedita's direct engagement with the Swadeshi (literally, national product) movement was later described as prominent. Rabindranath Tagore recalled that "We had not seen before an embodiment of the spirit of motherhood which, passing beyond the limits of the family, can spread itself over the whole country" (qtd. in *Atmaprana* 201). It is true that the once widely believed view that Nivedita first gave the Indians the ideal of nationalism seems to be historically untenable, according to recent studies by Indian historians (Mukherjee 223). The extent and the depth of her social influence are still to be determined, and statements claiming that contemporary Indian nationalists of different sects and brands—including extremists and revolutionaries—unanimously admired her for her sincere devotion to the patriotic cause must be closely re-examined.

However, if her high estimation of ancient Indian spirituality is criticized as one-sided on the grounds that it overlooks ancient India's material richness, such a criticism simply betrays an underlying Marxist-nationalist tendency in this critique of Nivedita. It is also debatable whether admiration for her was maintained "in spite of her foreign blood" (Mukherjee 223). On the contrary, the roles of mediator, supporter, and apostle played by white women like Josephine MacLeod and Sister Nivedita are worthy of systematic re-examination. The "white woman's burden" in the colony must be scrutinized when studying the formation of nationalistic ideology in the modernizing of Asia. A recent re-evaluation of Sister Nivedita by an Indian scholar (Jayaraman 1991) and a critical approach to the issue based on gender study (Roy 1995) need to be carried farther, as the former remains apologetic and the latter purely speculative (and totally relying upon second-hand sources). But it is clear that Nivedita's and Okakura's

views were closely related, and our understanding of *The Awakening of the East* should take into account the Swadeshi anti-British Movement.

Okakura's manuscript "We are One," published as *The Awakening of the East* (1939), is believed to have been prepared during his stay in India in 1901-02. Undoubtedly Okakura's most violently nationalistic writing in English, it was never published in his lifetime. And it was only in 1936 that it was suddenly "discovered" by the family and then printed, not in the English original, but in a Japanese translation in 1938, two years prior to the national celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the mythological foundation of Japan. These circumstances gave rise to a general post-war tendency among Japanese intellectuals to connect this writing directly with Japanese ultra-nationalism. Indeed, the publication of this work in 1938 must have been closely related to the contemporary situation, and it is undeniable that Okakura's manuscript could well have served the purposes of a militaristic state. Still, Okakura's initial intention can be better understood when it is seen in relation to Nivedita's political engagement in the Swadeshi movement. (In this interpretation, I agree, in principle, with Okakura Koshiro's relevant analysis; see *Sofu Okakura Tenshin*.)

Jayasree Mukherjee, a specialist in Indian socio-political history, is critical of "misinformation and exaggeration in the literature [on Nivedita] published by the Ramakrishna Order," and insists on the importance of Nivedita's Anglo-Irish background, linking it to the Sinn Féin movement (which she qualifies as "almost identical with our Swadeshi movement") and argues that "contact with the Anarchist leader Kropotkin and the Japanese revolutionary Okakura turned her into a staunch votary of nationalism" (222).

Apart from possible exaggeration on the part of Mukherjee, especially in terms of Okakura's ideological influence on Nivedita's political activities, it is remarkable that Okakura's nationalism can be regarded as "revolutionary" in the context of Bengali culture under British rule, and equally remarkable that such an interpretation still prevails among Indian scholars today (cf. Mitter 262-6). But this Bengali context at least offers a better understanding of the background of *The Awakening of the East*, which was clearly addressed to contemporary Indian people. And as Surendranath Tagore reminds us, it was written in the midst of heated discussions that Okakura had with young Indian male intellectuals in the Tagore family (65-72). However, this manuscript was also destined from the beginning to be read and corrected by his female proofreader, who was no other than Sister Nivedita. I think it is necessary to insist on this fact. I would venture that this manuscript was written for the sake of Nivedita, directly and

personally addressed to this Western woman, who to Okakura was the modern incarnation of the spiritual Mother of India.

The reason why the original manuscript of *The Awakening of the East* was not published remains to be investigated. Judging from the actual English text, it was hastily written. (Were it not for a Japanese publisher, it could not have been published as it is in English.) In particular, the conclusion looks uncertain and must have been re-worked. The fragment of the letter which suggests some disagreement between Okakura and Nivedita could account for the end of their collaboration on the final version of the manuscript. Okakura's nationalistic tone, in contrast with Nivedita's hatred of imperialism, was to be openly manifested in his next publication, *The Awakening of Japan* (1905), in which he justifies Japan's intervention in the Korean peninsula and tries to justify Japan's position in the Russo-Japanese War to Western readers. Japan as the hope of Asia in *The Ideals of the East* is now changed into Japan as an imperial superpower. With *The Awakening of Japan*, Okakura's solidarity with the colonized people of Asia was irrevocably lost. From this time on, it was out of the question for Okakura to publish the propaganda for agitation that he wrote enthusiastically during his stay in India. The declaration of "We are one" was no longer tenable because Japan was no longer "one" with the Asian people. This sense of loss of Asian identity seems to overshadow Okakura's final years. *The Book of Tea* (1906), Okakura's final book in English, also reflects this loss. "The average Westerner," Okakura says, "was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace: he calls her civilized since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on Manchurian battlefield" (*Collected English Writings* 1: 270). This ironical statement is not a sign of self-indulgence but could be read rather as a bitter confession of resignation. *The Book of Tea* is also regarded as Okakura's escape from international power politics and retreat into the aesthetic world of the tea ceremony. Still, it must be noted that in the same book, Okakura counted Nivedita as one of the exceptional Western writers who, alongside Lafcadio Hearn, could touch the heart of the imaginary Asia he had conceived: "It is rarely that the chivalrous pen of a Lafcadio Hearn or that of the author of *The Web of Indian Life* enlivens the Oriental darkness with the torch of our own sentiments" (*Collected English Writings* 1:272).

Judging from the circumstances, and apart from her supposed political or ideological disagreement with Okakura, Nivedita, in her last years of restless political activities in the Swadeshi Movement (which continued until her premature death in 1911), could no longer have had time to devote herself to any further collaboration with Okakura. To put it another way, the wide success of *The Ideals of the*

East would not have been possible were it not for MacLeod's encouragement and Sister Nivedita's devotion to the cause of the Asian people. The book was indeed the "flower of long service and help," and its slogan of "Asia is one" was not an empty fantasy but a realistic political manifesto in the social and historical context of colonized Asia at the beginning of the twentieth century.

To conclude, let us quote from Henri Focillon, who shared the same dream with Okakura between the two world wars:

De l'oeuvre des philosophes, des poètes et des artistes de toute l'Asie, le Japonais Okakura dégage la continuité, peut-être fictive, mais géniale comme structure, d'une pensée organique, un patrimoine commun, le patriotisme d'un continent stimulé par une race toujours tendue, en pleine possession de ses vertus. (iii)

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