

Between Revolutionary and Oriental Sage: Paul Cézanne in Japan¹

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Contributing to the discourse on a “Global Cézanne Effect,” this essay examines the artistic and critical reception of Paul Cézanne in Japan during the early twentieth century. The author pays particular attention to the complex relationship between the French artist’s painting practice and Eastern aesthetic theory. Compatibilities arise, at times, as a result of accidental or even willful mistranslations of French, English and German texts. The author also analyzes Cézanne’s reception in the context of German Expressionism’s foray into East Asia, along with the contemporary resurgence of Southern school literati painting.

Keywords: Kinoshita Mokutarō, Yanagi Muneyoshi, Yasui Sōtarō, Arishima Ikuma, Mushanokōji Saneatsu, Koide Narashige, Hashimoto Kansetsu, Orientalism, Fēng Zikāi, Nakai Sōtarō

Introduction

A full understanding of the global “Cézanne effect” requires a reconstruction of the intellectual milieus that received the artist in East Asia.² How did contemporary Japanese critics perceive Cézanne, and how did the artists interpret his style and rhetoric? These complex questions will guide the analysis herein, which has a particular focus on the theoretical as well as formal aspects that attracted Japanese artists to Cézanne. Yet these two fields—theory and practice—often diverge rather than converge when it comes to Cézanne in East Asia. Further, I hope to illuminate our understanding by examining not only factual information on Cézanne, but also conflicting interpretations of his work and writing, the accessibility of

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2 See Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999. In a paper included in this catalogue, Yasuhide Shinbata reports that Cézanne’s name was already mentioned in *Bijutsu shinpō* 1:7 (1902), p. 4 (Shinbata 1999). The pioneering study on the subject remains Hijikata 1946. See also Takumi 1986; Harada 1989; Sugita 1994.

his original works and the diffusion of the works in reproduction, and, finally, collections of his work and related social circumstances. The overlapping constellation of these diverse aspects, along both chronological and thematic axes, will account for the Cézanne effect in East Asia.³ Ultimately, I aim to show that the East Asian reception of Cézanne was not a peripheral phenomenon, but one that can provide an indispensable reading of the Cézanne effect within a global context. Indeed, the cross-cultural encounter between the Japanese artists discussed here and Cézanne both supplies unexpected dimensions and challenges conventional views of Cézanne that have heretofore been formulated within a Western value judgment system.



Figure 1a. Illustration of Cézanne's work, *Bunshō Sekai* 4:1 (January 1909).



Figure 1b. Illustration of Cézanne, frontispiece, *Bunshō Sekai* 4:1 (January 1909).

3 However, a thematic approach easily disrupts chronological order. Geographical inequalities must be also taken into account. There were Japanese who personally observed Cézanne's work in France; there were others who saw only reproductions available in Japan. Moreover, there is no clear distinguishing of Cézanne's direct influences from the ones filtered by Fauvism or Cubism. My concentration here exclusively on topics which have not yet been thoroughly investigated may threaten the requisite balance in description, but facts already known to Cézanne specialists are omitted here. In compensation, the author provides the readers with necessary references in the footnotes. Philological precision and meticulous research, which are prerequisite in Japanese scholarship, tend to overshadow and blur the more comprehensive structure demanded by a non-Japanese audience. Let me mention here that Japanese exhibition catalogues usually enjoy notoriety for their lack of accuracy and reliability especially in their English summaries of the essays. These chronic shortcomings are mainly due to three factors: extremely tight schedules for preparation, unfavorable working conditions of the curators (who are extremely few in number) and administrative obstacles, which exclude exhibition catalogues at public institutions from regular commercial circulation.

1. Revolutionary Artist

Les peintres qui devaient s'appeler plus tard les Impressionnistes, dans leur jeunesse, lorsqu'ils se trouvaient encore inconnus, à l'état d'élèves, étaient déjà d'instinct des indépendants, ils se sentaient entraînés à rompre avec les règles traditionnelles.⁴

Théodore Duret, 1906

Nakai Sōtarō 中井宗太郎 (1879–1966) translated Duret's opening phrase to his *Histoire de peintres impressionnistes* into Japanese in the July 1909 issue of *Bi 美* (4:4).⁵ Cézanne's name was in the list of the "Impressionnistes." Still, it was to take one more year before Cézanne was singled out by Japanese art critics.⁶ Arishima Ikuma 有島生馬 (1882–1974), after spending five years in Italy and France, returned to Japan in 1909 and published the first monographic essay on Cézanne in a leading monthly on literature and arts, *Shirakaba* 白樺 (Figure 2).⁷ Referring to Théodore Duret's book, Arishima characterizes the painter as "an artist, who, having penetrated the revolutionary spirit, loathed to follow outdated conventions."⁸ Was this Japanese view faithful to Théodore Duret's original?

A simple philological check would be enough to reveal that Arishima presented a completely opposite view, an antithesis of what the French author had proposed. In the original, Théodore Duret writes: "Il faut se garder d'en faire [de Cézanne] un homme pénétré d'idées révolutionnaires et de sentiments hostiles à l'égard des anciennes écoles."⁹ Evidently, Arishima dropped the initial caution of the French biography: "il faut se garder," i.e. "you must guard against ...," and dared to contradict the original.

The circumstances in which Arishima was asked to write the biographical notes suggest that this omission was not a careless mistake. Contemporary



Figure 2. Arishima Ikuma (Mibuma) in 1936, from Japan P.E.N. Club (ed.), *Thirty Years of Japan PEN Club*, 1967.

4 Duret 1906, p. 107. "Already in their youth, when they were still merely unknown students, the painters who afterwards came to be known as Impressionists were characterised by their instinctive spirit of independence. They felt a strong impulse to break away from the traditional; the painters to be named later as Impressionists were already instinctively independent while they were young, and still unknown, as students. They were tracked to break with the traditional rules" (Duret 1910, p. 105).

5 Nagai 2007, pp. 23–25. I owe these philological details to Nagai's *dépouillement*.

6 For a comprehensive Japanese Cézanne bibliography in chronological order, see Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, pp. 191–97.

7 *Shirakaba*, which translates as White Birch, was a magazine founded by a group of Japanese young students, more or less the Japanese version of the Bloomsbury group in London, and comparable to Wolpswede or the *Blaue Reiter*.

8 Arishima 1910, pp. 37–40. The English translation which Arishima did not refer to, goes as follows: "It is necessary, however, to be on one's guard against regarding him as a man full of revolutionary ideas and antipathetic towards the established schools" (Duret 1910, p. 179). Arishima may well have searched for a compromise with Camille Mauclair's view which he explicitly refers to. The latter qualifies the Impressionists as a revolutionary phenomenon in modern art history. See Mauclair 1904.

9 Duret 1939, p. 154. (The text of this part is identical with the 1906 edition from which Arishima made his Japanese translation.)

young Japanese intellectuals were eager to see in Cézanne “a revolutionary painter” at any cost. This was, in fact, the title of the cover essay by Yanagi Muneyoshi 柳宗悦 (1889–1961), which appeared later in *Shirakaba* (3:1 [1912]) (Figure 3). Apparently, Yanagi was asked by the editor, Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路実篤 (1885–1976), to write this essay so as to justify the position of their group.¹⁰ In this essay Yanagi did not fail to mention the first Post-Impressionist show in 1910, held at the Grafton Galleries by Roger Fry (1866–1934). This show had provoked a sensation, and Yanagi declared that London was “assaulted by this revolutionary typhoon.”¹¹ Yanagi tries to define Post-Impressionism but does not refer to the far from clear-cut preface of the Grafton Galleries’ show, now attributed to Desmond MacCarthy (1877–1952). Instead he relies on C. Lewis Hind’s rather dubious book, *The Post-Impressionists* (London, 1911). This book was, then, the only available illustrated book-length account of Post-Impressionism, and it was enthusiastically read and consulted by Yanagi and his circle. From Lewis Hind’s phrases, Yanagi singled out and translated the following part into Japanese:



Figure 3. Yanagi Muneyoshi in 1913, from Kyōto Bunka Hakubutsukan et al. 2009.

If a child were to ask, “What is Post-Impressionism?” I think I should tell that child about the Sermon on the Mount, and say, “If the spirit that gives life to the movement we call Post-Impressionism is in your heart you will always be trying to express yourself, in your life and in your work, with the simple and profound simplicity of the Sermon of the Mount. You will say what you have to say as if there were nobody else but you and Nature or God.” “Art is not beauty. It is expression. (...) Art (...) is the Expression of Personality in all its littleness, in all its immensity...”¹²

Lewis Hind was strongly influenced by the idea of *Expressionisten*, which Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1936) had developed in his monumental *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Modernen Kunst* (1904). In his book, Hind declared that he did not take the term Post-Impressionism seriously. Hind’s interpretation was almost a heresy, judging from today’s common understanding of Post-Impressionism. Even in a contemporary Japanese context, it would not take long before young intellectuals began to suspect the authenticity of Hind’s description. By 1913, within a year of the book’s publication, Kimura Shōhachi 木村莊八 (1893–1953) was accusing Hind of superficial journalism. Kimura also rectified the image of Cézanne as revolutionary. Referring to the English translation of Théodore Duret’s book, Kimura asserted the following: “Cézanne was revolutionary despite himself. His art was not an inten-

10 The monthly *Shirakaba* was seeking to justify its position in a public debate with Kinoshita Mokutarō. On this debate, named “Kaiga no yakusoku ronsō,” see, in English, Nakamura 1999.

11 Yanagi 1912. For this essay Yanagi largely refers to a newly arrived book by Lewis Hind entitled *The Post-Impressionists* (Hind 1911). On this issue, see Inaga 2002.

12 Quoted in Bullen 1988, pp. 187–88. See Yanagi 1912, p. 4. The original text by Lewis Hind is quoted here.

tional revolt.”¹³ Kimura attributed Cézanne’s enormous suffering in execution to his “strong sincerity in expressing what he saw without referring to any preconceived formulae.”¹⁴

Despite such instabilities in their search for a reliable Cézanne image, the importance of “expression of personality” was to remain the leitmotif of the young ambitious Japanese artists of the period. Also notable is Lewis Hind’s next phrase, following the above quote: “A man who expresses himself sincerely can extract beauty from anything. There is a beauty of significance lurking within all ugliness. For ugliness does not really exist.”¹⁵ We know that Yanagi was destined to become one of the most important aesthetic thinkers and activists in modern Japan. His own aesthetic creed, to be formulated in his popular crafts movement (*mingei undō* 民藝運動), consisted in overcoming the distinction between beauty and ugliness. Thus, the very core of Yanagi’s thought resonated with Hind’s seemingly idiosyncratic definition of Post-Impressionism. It would be no exaggeration therefore to suppose that Yanagi’s Mingei ideology was indebted to the modern Japanese misguided view of Cézanne, as well as to the somewhat distorted definition of Post-Impressionism at the initial phase of its reception in Japan around 1910.¹⁶

2. Imitating Cézanne

In 1907, the first Japanese contact with Cézanne’s work took place in Paris at the retrospective in the Luxembourg Museum. Among the visitors was Arishima Ikuma, who was to become the first main spokesman of Cézanne. The painter Yasui Sōtarō 安井曾太郎 (1888–1955) also visited the retrospective. As a disciple of Jean-Paul Laurens (1838–1921), Yasui had the occasion to see the August Pellerin (1852–1929) collection around 1909–10, an experience that deeply moved him. In Yasui’s paintings around 1912, Cézanne’s influence is



Figure 4. Yasui Sōtarō. *Tāburu no ue* (On the Table), 1912. Fukushima Prefectural Museum of Art.

evident both in the “modulation” of brush stroke (*Yokotawaru rafu* 横たわる裸婦 [Reclining Nude, 1912]) and in the composition of still life, particularly seen in *Tāburu no ue* ターブルの上 (On the Table) of 1912 (Figure 4).¹⁷ *Fujinzō* 婦人像 (Portrait of a Lady, 1912) is a conscious application of Cézanne’s method in the genre of portraiture.¹⁸ Around this period, many Japanese visitors marveled at Yasui’s intensive search for Cézanne’s vision. In 1923, Yasui reminisced about his days in Paris from eleven years prior and mentioned Cézanne’s *La Maison du pendu* (ca. 1873) as his favorite painting.¹⁹ The fact that this piece belonged to

13 Kimura 1913a, p. 1 and pp. 70–71, respectively.

14 Kimura 1913b, p. 32; Inaga 2002, p. 80.

15 Quoted in Bullen 1988, p. 188. Hind shows affinities with Julius Meier Graefe’s “Expressionismus.” As for the Japanese encounter with Roger Fry’s Omega workshops, see Reed 2009, p. 11 note 1 and p. 15.

16 On Yanagi, see Kikuchi 2004; Brandt 2007; and Nakami 2011.

17 Miyagi-ken Bijutsukan et al. 2005, p. 17.

18 Miyagi-ken Bijutsukan et al. 2005, p. 23.

19 Rewald 1996, p. 202.

the Collection Camondo allows us to confirm that Yasui saw the painting in a public exhibit of the collection in 1914, shortly before his return to Japan.²⁰ Yasui was so deeply imbued with Cézanne's influence that, after his return to Japan in 1916, it took more than ten years before he could establish his own personal style (*Fujinzō* 婦人像 [Portrait of a Lady], 1930; *Kin'yō* 金蓉 [Portrait of Chin-Jung], 1934).²¹ *Sotobō fūkei* 外房風景 (Landscape in the Bōsō Peninsula, 1932) is regarded as a breakthrough in his career, releasing him finally from the stylistic yoke of the French master (Figure 5). And yet, it would be easy to note Yasui's debt to Cézanne as the panoramic seascape strongly evokes *Vue d'Estaque*, which Yasui saw in the Luxembourg Museum (Figures 6 and 7).²² With Yasui's itinerary in mind, let us now try to understand what the imitation of Cézanne meant to the modern Japanese artistic experience.



Figure 5. Yasui Sōtarō. *Sotobō fūkei* (Landscape in the Bōsō Peninsula), 1932. Ohara Museum of Art.



Figure 6. Paul Cézanne. *Le Golfe de Marseille vu de l'Estaque*, 1886. Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Rayerson Collection.



Figure 7. Paul Cézanne. *La Mer à l'Estaque*, 1878-79. Musée Picasso.

In 1911, Mushanokōji Saneatsu, the charismatic leader of the Shirakaba society, saw the ideal image of the artist in the life of August Rodin, Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne. “Looking at the reproduction of Cézanne’s painting with “Y.” yesterday, a kind of

20 Yasui 1928; Yasui 1956, p. 53; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, pp. 36–37.

21 Miyagi-ken Bijutsukan et al. 2005, p. 47 and p. 57. It would be interesting to compare Yasui's case with other foreign artists and ask whether any talented painter was as deeply affected by Cézanne as Yasui. See Stavitsky and Rothkopf 2009.

22 The exhibition *Yasui Sotaro: The Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death* was held at the Miyagi Museum of Art and elsewhere in 2005 (Miyagi-ken Bijutsukan et al. 2005).

religious feeling arose in me. (...) I mentioned to “Y.” that we should go forward.”²³ “Y.” is no one else but Yanagi Muneyoshi (Sōetsu) and the book in question must be Lewis Hind’s *Post-Impressionism*. In the following year, he adds the following:

Cézanne seems not capable of drawing straight even a simple vase. But the vase he paints is not the vase we can see with our eyes. He is stammering at worst and yet he is eloquent at best. His character allows him to be the most faithful renderer of nature, and yet he is at the same time the best of the mystics. As Meier-Graefe has said, he resembles in this sense Dostoyevsky, but in my opinion, Cézanne seems to go one step further in his detachment.²⁴

Mushanokōji’s intuitive observation was closely related to his admiration of the personality of the artist, suggesting that Cézanne had become a behavioral model for young Japanese artists of the twentieth century. As is well known, it was in the process, rather than in the fulfillment, of artistic creation that the Oriental tradition perceived the realization of a personality. Each brush stroke of the calligraphic performance represented the concretization of the creator’s spiritual state of mind. Traced letters and lines of drawings indicated the moral standard of the performer. Appreciation of the work of art consisted in the evaluation of the personality of its creator, and critics often admired and even venerated the moral distinction emanating from the work. It must be noted that the critic Julius Meier-Graefe, one of the key points of reference for Japanese artists, put emphasis on *Pinselfschwung* or “brushstroke,” partly dictated through Théodore Duret’s Japonisant initiative. The German critic confirmed the value of brushstroke as a positive sign of *Lebensbejaher* (“affirming life”).²⁵ This understanding of East Asian art appreciation and practice was particularly relevant in the case of Cézanne, as he himself put emphasis on the process of endless “*réalisation*.” Indeed, the academic notion of completion, or the so-called “*fini*,” gradually gave way to the “constructive stroke” (to use Theodore Reff’s key term), which vibrates through Cézanne’s compositions.²⁶

For the sake of argument, let us briefly summarize early Japanese commentators’ approaches to Cézanne’s work. Arishima Ikuma, probably echoing Gustave Geffroy (1855–1926), remarked: “Looking at Cézanne’s painting, I forget all the tiny defects and insufficiencies and feel as if I were literally absorbed in his personality.”²⁷ Yamawaki Shintoku 山脇信徳 (1886–1952), a painter highly praised by the Shirakaba society and dubbed the “Japanese Monet,” also observed that in Cézanne’s painting “the touch consists of nerve vibrations, and each touch reflects the artist’s personality as a whole.”²⁸ Kimura Shōhachi, one of the main promoters of Post-Impressionism in Japan, remarked in 1913 that “the confrontation of Cézanne’s touches and chromatic blots (*taches*) gives incredible intensity to the mass.” Kimura elaborated:

23 Mushanokōji 1911, p. 49.

24 Mushanokōji 1912, pp. 6–7.

25 Meier-Graefe 1904, p. 51; Nakamura 1999; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999. On the Japanese “*Lebensbejaher*” during the Taishō era, see Suzuki Sadami’s monumental work, Suzuki 2007.

26 See among others, Inaga 1997, ch. v.

27 Arishima 1910, p. 53. From November 1913 to May 1914, Arishima published his translation of Emile Bernard’s *Souvenir sur Paul Cézanne* (1913) in *Shirakaba*. Put together the translation was published in book form in 1920 with thirty eight reproductions, which were not included in Bernard’s original edition.

28 Yamawaki 1911, p. 106.

Their juxtaposition and combination bring to the surface of the painting a sort of fluidity (...) which allows one to trace the rhythm predominating Cézanne's painting. (...) By grasping the mass in fluidity (...), the rhythm proper to Cézanne begins to work distinctively on the spectators.²⁹

It seems that the Japanese searched for synchronization with the artist's own physical gesture in execution. They wanted to feel tactically the very breathing rhythm of the French master at work. These were vital conditions for the Japanese artists, who absorbed Cézanne's act of creation by imitating the French painter's inner personality.

The most typical illustration of mental identification through physical assimilation may be the case of Kishida Ryūsei 岸田劉生 (1891–1929). For the twenty year-old artist, the discovery of French Post-Impressionism through the journal *Shirakaba* was literally a revelation, “a rebirth.” In 1919, he recalled that his enthusiasm for Post-Impressionism was so profound that what happened could no longer be explained in terms of “inspiration,” but must be defined as “imitation” in the sense of *imitatio Christi*.³⁰ At the beginning of the 1910s, reproductions mainly in black and white, with a few exceptionally low-quality color illustrations, were the only source available to East Asian artists. Although they could imagine the original Cézanne only by way of these poor photographic illustrations, this handicap paradoxically reinforced their aspiration and yearning for, the maître d'Aix.

Within a few years Kishida Ryūsei's painting style underwent drastic change. But the direction of that change was the reverse of that seen in Western art history. His early Fauvist coloration remained in *B. L. no shōzō* B.L.の肖像 (*Bānādo Rīchi zō* パーナード・リーチ像 [Portrait of Bernard Leach], 1913), but the constructive composition and regular brush stroke already reveal undeniable influences from Cézanne (Figure 8).³¹ Becoming the leader of the Hyūzankai ヒュウザン会 group (named after the French *fusain*, or charcoal), Kishida gradually shifted his focus. Regarding his initial Cézanne fever, he reflected in 1915: “It is true that Van Gogh and Cézanne taught us to see nature from our inner necessities, and we learned from them that Art is the way to cultivate our True Life.” And yet Kishida was convinced in 1915 that he “could now better understand Cézanne than several years before,” as “Cézanne also saw in the classics ‘the ultimate truth in Art.’” This view clearly echoed Maurice Denis' or Emile Bernard's classicist interpretations of Cézanne. Kishida's



Figure 8. Kishida Ryūsei. *B.L. no shōzō* (*Bānādo Rīchi zō* [Portrait of Bernard Leach]), 1913. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

29 Kimura 1913b, p. 2.

30 Kishida 1919; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 176.

31 Takashina et al. 1987, pp. 152–53 (text by Atsushi Tanaka).

masterpiece of the same year, *Kiritōshi no shasei* 切通しの写生 (Road Cut through a Hill, 1915) is striking because of the subject matter that it shares with Cézanne's *The Railway Cutting* (Figures 9 and 10). And yet Kishida's vertically oriented composition, with an exaggerated frontal perspective of the hill, exhibits a striking contrast to Cézanne's horizontal panoramic view.

The Japanese painter recalled in 1915 half a year earlier: "The search for the essentials through the simplification of color and form [in Cézanne] eventually led me to feel intensively the need for realistic depiction."³² His still lives, such as *Tsubo* 壺 (Jar, 1916) or *Yunomi to chawan to ringo mitsu* 湯呑と茶碗と林檎三つ (Three Apples and Teacups, 1917) bear witness to Kishida Ryūsei's work in progress.³³ His awakening to Cézanne opened his eyes to the meticulous observation of reality. By 1920, Cézanne was overshadowed by the Northern Renaissance in Kishida's work as the Japanese master further searched for rigid materiality. This progress is visible in his *Seibutsu* 静物 (Still Life), where Kishida now explicitly follows the examples of Jan van Eyck and Albrecht Dürer. (Some of the signatures are in conscious imitation of van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* or Dürer's signature transformed into Chinese characters [Figure 11].) He found in them his spiritual ancestors. In Kishida's case, Cézanne served as a starting point for his artistic revelation, and the French master guided him to delve into past centuries so as to discover the roots of modernism in the history of Renaissance painting.

In the final years of his short life, Kishida ultimately returned to the Oriental tradition of vegetable still life not only in terms of the subject matter, but also as it pertained to the technique employed (Figure 12). *Tōgan nasu no zu* 冬瓜茄子之図 (White Gourd and Eggplants,

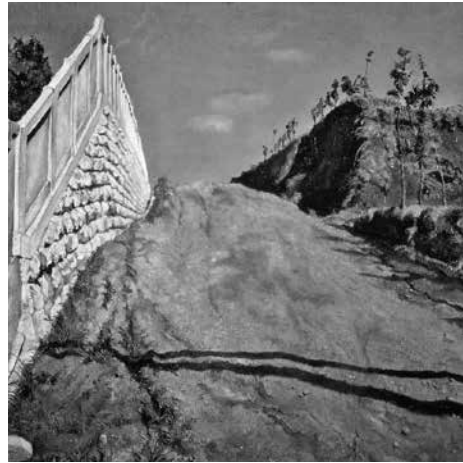


Figure 9. Kishida Ryūsei. *Kiritōshi no shasei* (Road Cut through a Hill), 1915. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.



Figure 10. Paul Cézanne. *The Railway Cutting*, c. 1870. Bayerische Staatsgemaldegammlungen, Munich.



Figure 11. Kishida Ryūsei. *Seibutsu* (Still Life: Three Red Apples, Tea Bowl, a Tin Flask and a Spoon), 1920. Ohara Museum of Art.

³² Kishida 1915, p. 9. (Quoted in Shinbata 1999, p. 176.)

³³ Kyōto Bunka Hakubutsukan et al. 2009: II, p. 41 and p. 43.

1926) betrays his indebtedness to the Chinese Northern Sung tradition (Figure 13). However, this does not necessarily equate to Kishida's ultimate departure from Cézanne. On the contrary, his rediscovery of the Chinese painting style further deepened his understanding of the French artist. He wrote the following in 1922:

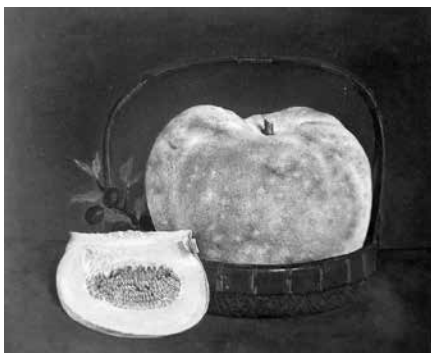


Figure 12. Kishida Ryūsei. *Tōgan budō zu* (White Gourd and Grapes), 1925. Toyohashi City Museum of Art and History.

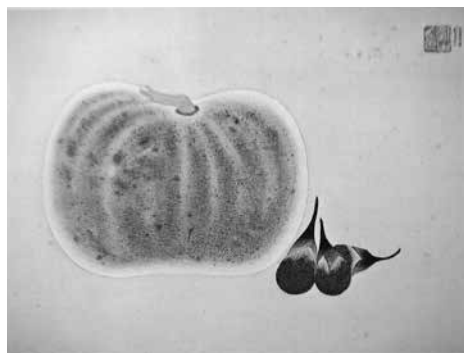


Figure 13. Kishida Ryūsei. *Tōgan nasu no zu* (White Gourd and Eggplants), 1926. Private Collection.

In Chinese painting scratches of the brush stroke or the blurred pigment on the paper or the silk screen are beautifully rendered. (...) This observation can also of course be applied to Western art. Originally Cézanne was on the whole rather artless when it came to technique. But through his own inner esthetic sense, he gave affirmative recognition to the sensation of haphazardness, which resulted from his awkward brush manipulation, turning it into an object of his deep contemplation. Such is the way which Cézanne explored, and here lies his greatness. Thus the deformed vases rendered in Cézanne's painting do not constitute a naive artistic shortcoming, nor do they amount to a simple curious maladroitness. On the contrary, it is in the deformity that a profound artistic life has its dwelling.³⁴

3. Theoretical Reflections

Alongside practical process, the Japanese artistic community also deepened its theoretical understanding of Cézanne. As a poet and sculptor, Takamura Kōtarō 高村光太郎 (1883–1956) studied with August Rodin until 1909. In 1915, Takamura wrote *Inshōshugi no shisō to geijutsu* 印象主義の思想と藝術 (Thinking and Art of Impressionism), a book that manifests a penetrating understanding of Cézanne. According to Takamura, it was with Cézanne that color and brush stroke ceased to be subordinate to representation, and began to serve for the complete determination of the artist's inner life. Within the formal qualities of Cézanne's painting, Takamura perceived a vibrating life force, one that particularly stemmed from the hand of the artist himself:

³⁴ Kishida 1922, p. 47. (Quoted in Nagai 2007, p. 253.)

If one looks at Cézanne's painting, one realizes that other ordinary paintings are full of lacunae. Something is lacking, and they appear inconspicuous. [Cézanne on the contrary] with a single empty bottle and its wallpaper background sends vibrations through universal life with its infinite forces. These vibrations are generated by a "modulation," which is rather difficult to put into words, as well as by a pressuring power. Naturally, in the background courses the living blood of the artist.³⁵

Clearly Takamura Kōtarō was conscious of the difference between the academic routine of the "modèle" and the unconventional "module" that Cézanne invented. The Japanese sculptor also had a clear idea that the "sensation colorante" in Cézanne was no longer reducible to the ordinary "relation des valeurs" taught at the Beaux-Arts. On Cézanne's pictorial "construction," Takamura further wrote:

Through his time-consuming observation of nature and by his superhuman conscientiousness, he realizes the color and the architecture, which inscribe in the pictorial plane a life of extreme intensity and minuteness.³⁶

Previously, and as early as 1910, Takamura had declared an expressionist manifesto *avant la lettre* with his text "Midori iro no taiyō" 緑色の太陽 (Sun Painted in Green). In this manifesto, Takamura put "an infinite authority to the artist's *Persönlichkeit*," and searched for the "absolute Freiheit" in art. Even if someone dares to paint the sun in green pigment, Takamura would like to "schätzen" this perception as the artist's "angenehme Überfall," and appreciate the "Gemütsstimmung" of the artist by measuring the fulfillment of his "Gefühl" in execution.³⁷ According to Professor Nagai Takanori 永井隆則, who has meticulously studied the Japanese reception of Cézanne, such an emphasis on "*Persönlichkeit*" was soon to reach a synthesis in the work of two leading contemporary scholars: Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), and Nakai Sōtarō.³⁸

Nishida, the most venerated and influential philosopher in modern Japan, recognized Cézanne as the best specimen of the "*Gestaltungstätigkeit*," by following Ludwig Coellen's *Die neue Malerei der Impressionismus* (1912).³⁹ In reference to Konrad Fiedler (1841–95), Nishida in 1909 found in Cézanne "eine Komplizierte Künstlerpersönlichkeit," and argued that the sense of artistic infinity in him stemmed from the "absolute Gestaltung" which concretized the "*Vorstellendes Bewußtsein*" of the artist through "*Geistige Lebensäußerung*."⁴⁰ In his *Kindai*

35 Takamura 1915, pp. 241–42. See also Nagai 2007, pp. 32–41 and 106–110.

36 Takamura 1915, p. 242.

37 Takamura 1910, p. 36. Takamura in his original used German terms without translation. We retain them here in order to approximate the tone of Takamura's original text.

38 For Nishida's case, see Nagai 2007, pp. 79–85. Ludwig Coellen, Conrad Fiedler, Adolph von Hildebrand, and Henri Bergson are Nishida's main references from whom he established the idea of artistic creation as intuitive act fusing subjectivity and objectivity in the realization of the higher personality. See Nishida 1923.

39 Nishida 1916, pp. 367–68. Nishida often gives his terminologies in German, without further explanation. We retain that practice here in order to approximate the tone of Nishida's original. Of course, one must be mindful of the fact that Nishida, in his later works, often gave these terms his own original connotations, which are divergent from those of the German original (Nagai 2007, pp. 43, 79–81, 99–101, and 176–78).

40 Nishida 1919, p. 2; Nishida 1966, pp. 43, 79–81, 99–101, 122, and 176–78. According to Nagai, Nishida's reading of Coellen was verified by Iwaki Ken'ichi. These German terms are strongly dated, and cannot be easily put into current English. The following might work as approximations: *Gestaltungstätigkeit*: capacity to form "*Gestalt*"; *komplizierte Künstler Persönlichkeit*: complicated artistic personality; *absolute Gestaltung*: absolute form-construction; *Vorstellendes Bewußtsein*: representing consciousness; *geistige Lebensäußerung*: spiritual life-expression.

geijutsu gairon 近代芸術概論 (General Introduction to Modern Art, 1922), Nakai also detects Cézanne's ideal in his pursuit of "a higher unity, a trinity combination of the self, nature and the Absolute Spirit." (This is obviously a Hegelian concept.) As Professor Nagai indicates, Nakai came to this revelation when he found Maurice Denis (claiming to) quote from Paul Sérusier (originally published shortly after Cézanne's death, in 1907). Let us quote the French original here: "L'utilité, le concept même de l'objet représenté disparaissent devant le charme de la forme coloré."⁴¹ The famous story of Cézanne's apple appears in this context. "D'une pomme d'un peintre vulgaire on dit: j'en mangerais. D'une pomme de Cézanne on dit: c'est beau! On n'oserait pas la peler, on voudrait la copier. Voilà ce qui constitue le spiritualisme de Cézanne."⁴² Nakai gives a philosophical speculation on the apple.

Translating this into Japanese, Nakai emphasizes the "spiritualism of Cézanne" in his own context. While Maurice Denis' "spiritualisme" may connote specifically Catholic notions of spirituality, Nakai understands it in philosophical terms as the opposite of materialism. Professor Nagai does not fail to recognize the gap, which certainly enabled the Japanese aesthetician to develop his idea of "higher unity" that artistic personality was expected to achieve in the course of his "realization."⁴³ I would add, however, that Nakai understood the term almost as the equivalent of "solipsism" (Nakai's own term) in the Buddhist context. As a matter of fact, Nakai suspected that "Cézanne's apple is not only One but stands for All at the same time, in which One is equal to All."⁴⁴ The notion of "One equals All" comes from *Hua Yan* 華嚴 (Kegon, in Japanese) Buddhism. Clearly Nakai saw in Cézanne an affinity for Oriental thinking, which he tried to associate with Western mysticism. As we shall see later, this association of ideas would lead to an unexpected consequence, especially in the modern Chinese reception of Cézanne.

4. "Cézannisme" in Practice

As a professor in aesthetics and art history, Nakai was the spiritual leader of a group of young painters at Kyōto Shiritsu Kaiga Senmon Gakkō 京都市立絵画専門学校 (Kyoto Municipal Painting school), known as Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai 国画創作協会 (Society for the Creation of National Painting). The group was founded in Kyoto in 1918 under the undeniable spell of the Shirakaba society in Tokyo (Figure 14). Among its members were Tsuchida Bakusen 土田麦僊 (1887–1936) and Ono Chikkyō 小野竹喬 (1889–1979). Undoubtedly Ono was the painter of the national style most directly inspired by Cézanne. *Kyōdo fūkei* 郷土風景 (Home Landscape, 1917) depicts Mt. Kokūzō (named after a Buddhist divinity) in Kasaoka (Figure 15), which the painter saw as the equivalent of *Montagne Saint Victoire*.⁴⁵ The "seeing as" reference, known as "*mitate*" is a particular way of topographical metonymy, a key concept in Japanese poetics epitomizing its peripheral subordination toward the center of civilizations. Previously "*mitate*" mainly referred to the Chinese classics. Ono's choice of *Mont Sainte Victoire* as a privileged Western motif testifies to the shift in his yearning. Nakamura Tsune

41 "The unity and the very concept of the object represented disappear before the charm of the colored form."

42 "Of an apple by a vulgar painter, one says: I would like to eat it. Of an apple by Cézanne, one says: It is beautiful! One would not dare peel it; one would wish to copy it. Here is what constitutes the spiritualism of Cézanne" (Denis 1907, p. 125; Denis 1993, p. 139). Nakai's translation of Maurice Denis is in Nakai 1922, pp. 162 and 166.

43 Nagai 2007, pp. 82–83.

44 Nakai 1922, p. 161.

45 Tsurumi 2009, pp. 178–85; Nagai 2010, pp. 4–5.



Figure 14. Commemorative photo of the founding of Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai, Kyoto, January 1918. Top (left to right): Nakai Sōtarō, Sakakibara Shihō; middle (left to right): Murakami Kagaku, Nonagase Banka, Tsuchida Bakusen; seated: Ono Chikkyō. From *Seitan 120 nen Ono Chikkyō ten*, 2009, p. 201.



Figure 15. Ono Chikkyō. *Kyōdo fūkei* (Home Landscape), 1917. The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.

中村彝 (1887–1924) tried two years earlier to discover a common motif with Cézanne in his *Ōshima fūkei* 大島風景 (Landscape of Ōshima Island, 1915).⁴⁶ And Hayashi Shizue 林倭衛 (1895–1945), who shares his experience in France with Ono, retraces the sacred mountain during his pilgrimage and stay in Provence (*Santo Vikutowāru san* サント・ヴィクトワール山 [Mont Sainte Victoire], 1925).⁴⁷

In terms of composition, the trunk of the tree interrupts the foreground of Ono's *Fūkei* 風景 (Landscape, 1917), cutting apart the background.⁴⁸ This was an intentional composition that Ono sought according to Cézanne's model. Needless to say, the same effect and contrast between the tree in the foreground and the mountain in the background were the key compositional devices Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 had introduced in *Kōshū Mishima goe* 甲州三島越 (Calza 2003: v-35-16) in his *Fugaku sanjū rokkei* 富嶽三十六景 (Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji).⁴⁹ A similar effect of looking “à travers” (Takashina Shūji 高階秀爾) may suggest the relevance of comparing Cézanne's *Les Maronniers du Jas de Bouffan en hiver* with Hokusai's *Hodogaya* 保土ヶ谷.⁵⁰ The fact that *Le Grand Pin* (1896, Museo Saō Paulo) attracted Japanese attention as early as 1916 (*Shirakaba* 7:12 [1916]) attests to the charm

46 Aichi-ken Bijutsukan 1992, p. 104

47 Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, p. 113.

48 Yamatane Bijutsukan 1995, p. 84.

49 Inaga 1983, pp. 29–46.

50 Rewald 1996, p. 551; Cézanne 1995, p. 113; Calza 2003, v-35-36, a, b.

that Japanese artists felt in the “*portrait d’un arbre*.”⁵¹ Despite Professor Tanaka Hidemichi’s 田中英道 “morphological” claim, however, no philological evidence has so far supported his hypothesis that Cézanne directly borrowed the composition from the Japanese ukiyo-e master.⁵² The question of Japonisme in Cézanne is still a matter of ideological and methodological controversy.⁵³

During his trip to Europe, Ono Chikkyō further developed his cubist composition in *Ponte Vekkio* ポンテ・ヴェッキオ (Ponte Vecchio, 1922) and other experimental drawings.⁵⁴ One of his colleagues and co-voyageurs, Tsuchida Bakusen, was also initiated into Cézanne’s originals during his stay in Europe (1922–23) (Figure 16). Tsuchida had assimilated Gauguin’s motifs in his earlier



Figure 16. Tsuchida Bakusen. *Les Parisiennes*, 1924. Location unknown.

screens. Manet’s *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* and *L’Olympia* also served as the composition model for his later works: *Ōharame* 大原女 (Woman Peddlers from Ōhara, 1927) and *Heishō* 平牀 (Korean Maidens Toilet, 1933).⁵⁵ As for his awakening to Cézanne, Tsuchida seems to have been guided by his friend Kuroda Jūtarō 黒田重太郎 (1887–1970). An artist in Western style oil painting, Kuroda was also known as a theoretician for his books such as *Sezannu igo* セザンヌ以後 (Cézanne and After, 1920) and *Mōrisu Doni to shōchōgaha* モオリス・ドニと象徴畫派 (Maurice Denis and the Symbolists, 1921).⁵⁶

Kuroda was then applying a moderate cubist style after Claude Bissière or André Lhote, as in *Minato no onna* 港の女 (Women of the Harbor, 1922).⁵⁷ Kuroda frequented l’Académie de Montparnasse in Tsuchida’s company. The drawing exercise there was based

51 Rewald 1996, p. 601; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 30; Haga 2010, pp. 97–122.

52 Tanaka 1986 (paper on Cézanne originally published in 1977). It is worth mentioning that Pierre Francastel proposed comparing the two pieces in discussion here (Francastel 1951, p. 329, note 73). See also Kurita 1999.

53 Around 1985 the present author was asked by a member of the advisory board of *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* to write a paper on the question of Cézanne’s Japonisme, but the article was later rejected by the editorial board as my philological and critical approach was not suited to the periodical’s art historical research specialization. The paper remains unpublished.

54 As for Ono’s sources both in the Orient and the Occident, see Noji 1995; Shioya 1995, pp. 155, 169, and 170–81. Bakusen seems to have possessed by 1916 a copy of *Cézanne*, published by Bernheim-jeune in 1914 (printed in 600 copies), which Ono Chikkyō could have consulted.

55 Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1997, p. 25 and p. 40.

56 On Maurice Denis’s impact in Japan, see Niigata Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2000. It is noteworthy that the circulation of the special issue on Maurice Denis of *Shirakaba* 14:6 was forbidden by the authorities for reasons of the “excessive sensuality and lewdness” of the illustrations. Mitsutani Kunishirō 満谷国四郎 (1874–1936) may be counted among the painters who “japanized,” so to speak, Maurice Denis both in his nude (*April*, 1916, conserved in Yumeji Art Museum; Niigata Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2000, p. 164) and in his seascape (*View of the Japanese Inland Sea*, ca.1917, Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art; Iio 2008, p. 200). We exclude these aspects from the present study.

57 Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, p. 61.

on the methodical application of Cubism. Tsuchida put this European experience into practice with his *Bugi rinsen* 舞妓林泉 (“Maiko” in a Garden, 1924) (Figure 17). Evidently, the trees in the background of the Japanese garden were carefully rendered by “sphere, cone, and cylinder,” faithfully following Cézanne’s famous doctrine which Émile Bernard had disseminated.⁵⁸

During the same period, another eminent painter was staying in Europe, Koide Narashige 小出 柵重 (1887–1931). His prize winning family portrait, *Enu no kazoku* Nの家族 (The Family N, 1919) shows his explicit reference to Holbein and Cézanne.⁵⁹ (A book on Holbein



Figure 17. Tsuchida Bakusen. *Bugi rinsen* (“Maiko” in a Garden), detail, 1924. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

and a Western style bowl with fruits are on the table.) However, in sharp opposition to the members of Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai, Koide was almost the only painter who remained immune to any visible influence from his stay in Europe. Returning to Japan, Koide made his distinctive position clear, detaching himself from any traces of Cézanne or Cézannisme (to use Gino Severini’s term).⁶⁰ And yet, this does not necessarily mean that Koide did not understand Cézanne. On the contrary, one may suspect that Koide understood Cézanne’s spirit better than any other modern Japanese artist. Indeed, Koide followed Cézanne’s determination of not imitating the style of anyone. Instead of imitating Cézanne’s bathers, Koide pursued his own rendering of a Japanese female nude, *Kami o tabaneru onna* 髪を束ねる女 (Nude Binding Her Hair, 1927).⁶¹

Koide was convinced more than anybody else of the inutility of catching up with the latest modes of the West. According to Koide’s prognostics, modern Western painting was already in decline from the seventeenth century with no hope of recovery. In its irremediable decay, its only remaining duty consisted in destroying the once established academic forms (anatomy, perspective, chiaroscuro), whereas the Japanese, alien to such Western academic teaching, were good at painting forms already decomposed to the limit from the outset. “Such were really happy circumstances, Koide ironically declared, because Japanese painting could earn, as it were, a new wife by making use of the divorce notice of someone other.”⁶²

58 On the propagation of Cézanne’s lesson by his followers, and especially on several myths created in the process, see, among others, Inaga 1986.

59 Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan et al. 2000, p. 37.

60 Severini 1921.

61 Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan et al. 2000, p. 77.

62 Koide 1930, pp. 52–53.

Logically speaking, therefore, Koide felt no necessity to imitate Cézanne's "*déformation subjective*" in order to achieve his own Koide style of "*déformation subjective*." Koide in fact did understand the significance that each brush stroke had to bear in Cézanne's execution. "With the simplified composition, the nerve of the painter has been intensified, and (...) every touch on the sky, on the tree or on the background has become an inscription of the individuality of the artist." Koide found therein Cézanne's similarity with the spirit of Chinese calligraphy. In addition, Koide also established a parallel between European and Chinese art history. If Post-Impressionism was a reaction against the hegemony of academic painting, so was the Southern Sung dynasty literati style, which emerged as a reaction to the formally predominant and official painting of the Northern Sung dynasty.⁶³ Koide detected strong affinities both spiritually and technically between Chinese Southern school painting (known as *nanga* 南画) and Post-Impressionism. Although Koide was not the first, nor the only, observer of such an analogous shift in style, this historical perception enabled him to keep his critical distance from the blind cult of Cézannisme in Japan.

Koide's deliberate detachment from Cézanne makes a sharp contrast with Kunieda Kinzō 国枝金三 (1886–1943), his colleague at Shinanobashi Yōga Kenkyūjo 信濃橋洋画研究所 (Shinanobashi Western Painting Research Institute) in Osaka inaugurated in 1923. Technically speaking, Kunieda's *Seibutsu* 静物 (Still Life, 1919) exemplifies the Japanese trend of faithfully rendering Cézanne's style, particularly in this genre.⁶⁴ Kunieda himself never went to France, but this geographical distance allowed him to realize a perfect imitation in painting skill. Paradoxically, Kunieda's marvelous pastiche was the proof of his insularity and ignorance, testifying to his position of an epigone, whereas direct experiences in France rationally dissuaded Koide from assimilating Cézanne with servility. Koide's inimitably glossy, and almost supernaturally lively, representations in *Sosai seibutsu* 蔬菜静



Figure 18. Koide Narashige. *Sosai seibutsu* (Still Life with Vegetables), 1925. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

⁶³ Koide 1928 (later integrated into his book, Koide 1930). It is worth noting that in the Chinese Southern school tradition, landscape is conceived as a mental map, a "landscape shaped in the artist's bosom" (*kyōchū sansui* 胸中山水).

⁶⁴ Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, p. 140.

物 (Still Life with Vegetables, 1925) do not fail to show his originality (Figure 18). These pieces gained the reputation of “being haunted” by some phantom like spirits.

5. Early Cézanne Collections in Japan (1921–60)

Gino Severini’s account of Cézannisme was translated into Japanese by the painter, Koyama Keizō 小山敬三 (1897–1987) in 1925.⁶⁵ By then, several original Cézanne works had been imported to Japan and publicly exhibited, most significantly at the first Shirakaba Museum Exhibition in 1921. Along with Dürer’s etching, *Justice* (*Shirakaba* I-59), Eugène Delacroix’s drawing of the *Lutte de Jacob avec l’ange*, August Rodin’s two nude drawings and one dry-point *Portrait de Victor Hugo*, and five drawings by Puvis de Chavanne, the show included four Cézanne pieces. These consisted of two oil paintings, one *Self Portrait* (Figures 19a, b)



Figure 19a. Paul Cézanne. *Self-Portrait with a Hat*, 1894. Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo.



Figure 19b. Mushanokōji Saneatsu with Cézanne’s *Self-Portrait with a Hat*. From Kyoto Bunka Hakubutsukan et al. 2009, p. 130.



Figure 20. Paul Cézanne. *Landscape*, 1885–87. On loan to Shirakaba Art Museum.

⁶⁵ Severini 1925.

and another *Landscape* (Figure 20), one water color of *Male Bather*, and one drawing *Étude* of a male nude.⁶⁶ Cézanne's two oil paintings were the main attractions of the show alongside Van Gogh's *Sunflower*, purchased by Yamamoto Koyata 山本 願彌太 (1886–1963) for the Shirakaba Museum project. (The piece was destroyed in 1945 by the American bombing of the city of Ashiya 芦屋.)

Kondō Kōichirō 近藤浩一路 (1884–1962), who was to become the model of the Japanese painter Kamo in André Malraux's (1901–76) *La Condition humaine* (1933), reported that the Japanese public looked at the original Cézanne for the first time with “a dazzle far beyond any joyful astonishment” in the April 1921 issue of the art monthly, *Chūō bijutsu* 中央美術.⁶⁷ The caricature illustration that Kondō inserted points up the quasi-religious attitude with which the Japanese public contemplated the original Cézanne that they had only seen in reproduction up until that point (Figure 21). He describes the reverent atmosphere surrounding the viewing as follows:

As if venerating religious relics, several of these Cézanne devotees retreat from the surface of the painting by at least two meters, for fear of committing any voyeuristic profanation, and being nailed in remote chairs, they contemplate the paintings in dead earnest, in the posture of penitence, just like silently praying for something invaluablely sacred.⁶⁸

It is remarkable that both of Cézanne's first two original oil paintings, which were accessible to the Japanese public as early as 1920, were the pieces that were left unfinished, remaining apparently in the state of *non-finito* (to use the term proposed by Josef Gantner [1896–1988], himself highly appreciated in Japan). Cézanne's particularity of not finishing was highly praised by the Japanese public, because it evoked his affinity with the so-called Oriental aesthetic of visible brush-strokes. Cézanne's refusal or inability to finish and the resulting non-painted spots, or vacant places left untouched here and there on the canvases, convinced the Japanese of the seriousness with which Cézanne struggled in the act of creation. Moreover, Cézanne's hesitation to finish also inspired the Japanese with another idea: Cézanne appeared as a rare Western painter who understood the void and lacunae as something positively significant.



Figure 21. Kondō Kōichirō. “Cézanne Exhibits in the First Exhibition of the Shirakaba Museum,” an illustration accompanying a review in *Chūō bijutsu* 7:4 (April 1921).

⁶⁶ A photo of Mushanokōji with the piece is known. See Kyōto Bunka Hakubutsukan et al. 2009, p. 130, fig. 19a. This exhibition reconstructed partially the works presented in the Shirakaba Museum exhibitions. See also the monthly *Shirakaba* 12:2, special issue for the Shirakaba Museum project, which contains black and white reproductions of the pieces presented in the exhibition.

⁶⁷ Kondō 1921, p. 63.

⁶⁸ Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 100. The illustration is reproduced in Shinbata 1999, p. 176.

Emptiness and incompleteness were the core of the Japanese sensibility that Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (1863–1913) claimed in his *The Book of Tea* (1906) separated Oriental spirituality from Western materialism. Schematically speaking, the Japanese marveled at Rodin's sculpture for its amorphous expressivity of “*la vie*,” and praised the sculptor's strong will to shape the form which led to a deep mental contemplation. Vincent van Gogh struck them as possessing an invincible will to venture to the limit of human capability at the risk of insanity. Cézanne's hesitating and awkward execution convinced them of his extreme sincerity. His seriousness gave rise among these Japanese to an almost religious feeling of awe. That perceived spiritual dimension in Cézanne accorded the French painter status as venerable master in East Asia. His popularity surpassed a simple enthusiasm for things Western. Something similar to the veneration of an old sage emerged. Contemporary Japanese intellectuals began to see in Cézanne something beyond the bounds of Western rationality, something that defied the notion of completeness and perfection.

One aquarelle deserves special mention in connection with the project of the Shirakaba Museum. *Climbing Road* attracted a Japanese readership since its reproduction was inserted in *Shirakaba* in 1915 (6:11).⁶⁹ Arishima Ikuma's monograph, *Sezannu* セザンヌ (Cézanne, 1925)—the first book-length biography published in Japanese—also contained an illustration of the piece. The original is known to be the only aquarelle signed by Cézanne himself from 1867. This early piece was purchased from the Galerie Bernheim-June in Paris in 1926–27 by Hosokawa Moritatsu 細川護立 (1883–1970), descendent of the Lord of Kumamoto, and a member of the Shirakaba society, who visited the gallery in company with Kojima Kikuo 児島喜久雄 (1887–1950). It is well known that the piece was reproduced in 1930 by an extremely sophisticated woodblock printing procedure, using several hundreds of different color plates manipulated with dexterity by a legendary modern ukiyo-e printing craftsman, Takamizawa Enji 高見澤遠治 (1890–1927).⁷⁰ The obsessively complicated technique that was mobilized for the realization of this costly woodprint reproduction is a testament to the significance that the Japanese amateurs of the epoch attributed to Cézanne. The original piece of aquarelle remains in the Eisei Bunko 永青文庫 collection, founded in 1950 by the Hosokawa family.⁷¹

The project of the Shirakaba Museum never came to realization, partly because of financial shortcomings, and partly because of the Great Kantō Earthquake, which erupted on 1 September 1923, putting an end to the publication of *Shirakaba*. The destiny of a work illustrates the circumstances in which *Mont Sainte-Victoire et Château noir* (1904–06) was purchased in 1922 by Hara Zen'ichirō 原善一郎 (1892–1937), son of the cotton millionaire, Hara Sankei/Tomitarō 原三溪/富太郎 (1868–1939).⁷² Originally, the piece was meant for the Shirakaba Museum and had already been sent to Japan by July 1923. However, the earthquake in the following September caused devastation in the Yokohama area, putting Hara's business in difficulty, and the piece had to be sold. In 1946, nine years after Hara's death, Ishibashi Shōjirō 石橋正二郎 (1889–1976) obtained the piece, which since 1962 has been in the possession of the Bridgestone Museum of Art in Tokyo.⁷³

69 Rewald 1984, p. 17; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, p. 67.

70 Takamizawa 1978.

71 Ishibashi Zaidan Burijisuton Bijutsukan 1997. Also refer to Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 24; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, fig. 67.

72 Rewald 1996, p. 939; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 36.

73 Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, pp. 65–66. See also Sankeien Hoshōkai 2006.

Also in 1922, the afore-mentioned Japanese style painter Tsuchida Bakusen was still staying in France, and it was there that he purchased one of Cézanne's *Bathers*, at the price of 35.000 frs. The piece was sold after the death of the painter in 1936 and eventually entered the Ōhara Collection.⁷⁴ The Ohara Museum of Art was founded by Ōhara Magosaburō 大原孫三郎 (1880–1968), a textile tycoon based in the city of Kurashiki 倉敷. The private museum—first of its kind in Japan—was opened to the public in 1930. However, the main pieces of Cézanne were deposited there later. Apart from Cézanne's aforementioned *Bathers*, the present collection contains a *Landscape* (Figure 20, mentioned earlier) that was lent to the museum in 1950 on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary. The initiative of the loan was taken by the benefactors of the failed Shirakaba Museum project, including such former members of the Shirakaba society as Hosokawa, Yanagi and Mushanokōji.⁷⁵

Another famous pre-war Japanese collection that included Cézanne's works was the Matsukata Collection. Matsukata Kōjirō 松方幸次郎 (1865–1950), owner of the influential Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company, acquired vast numbers of Western painting for the purpose of constructing a public museum. His legendary collection, containing 1,200 to 2,000 pieces of work, enjoyed an international reputation comparable to that of Sergei Shchukin (1854–1936) or Albert Barnes (1872–1951).⁷⁶ In 1917, Matsukata asked Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956) to design his museum. The planning was completed by 1922. However, due to the extremely high import tariff, the Matsukata Collection was not allowed to disembark on Japanese soil, and was forced to return to Europe. The economic recession after the First World War put the company in financial difficulty and the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923 caused a major financial crisis in Japan. With the world economic crisis in 1929 that followed, the museum project was definitively abandoned. It was at the fifth auction sale held on February 1934, i.e., at the moment of its dispersion, that the collection was shown to the public for the first time.⁷⁷

The ancient Matsukata Collection at that point comprised five oil paintings by Cézanne: *House with Cracked Wall* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Landscape, Aubert, Fruits on Linen, Rocks at L'Estaque* (Museo São Paulo), *A Boy Reading*, eight watercolors, and two lithographs.⁷⁸ After the first dispersion, Matsukata once again began to collect pieces of art in Europe. However, the French government seized this collection at the outbreak of the Second World War. It was only in 1959 that 371 pieces were returned to Japan prior to the inauguration of the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo in 1960, and were exhibited at the new museum building designed by Le Corbusier. Yet the French authorities judged that some of the works (eighteen in total) were treasures too important to be returned to Japan. Gustave Courbet's *Farmers of Flagey, Returning from Fair* (Besançon), Vincent van Gogh's *Bedroom in Arles* (Musée d'Orsay), Toulouse-Lautrec's *Justine Dieuhl*, Chaim

74 Rewald 1996, p. 459; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 2008, p. 45; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, p. 98; Ishibashi Zaidan Burijisuton Bijutsukan 1997, pp. 33–35.

75 See Suzuki 2009, pp. 85–94.

76 See Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 1989.

77 Ōya 2010. On the Matsukata, Hara, Ōhara and Fukushima Collections, Yashiro Yukio recorded his thoughts, which are precious, but the chronology and the accuracy in detail remain to be examined (Yashiro 1958).

78 Rewald 1996, pp. 760, 493, 648, 442, 788; Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 1990, pp. 103–104; Yokohama Bijutsukan et al. 1999, pp. 44–46. See also Kōbe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 1989, pp. 47–48, and 84.

Soutine's *Door Boy* (1928, Centre Georges Pompidou) were among them.⁷⁹ Three pieces by Cézanne fell into this category. An aquarelle of *La Mont Sainte Victoire*, at the Cabinet des dessins (as it was then called at the epoch) of the Louvre Museum was among the pieces in question.⁸⁰

6. An Oriental Sage

By the 1920s and 30s, more than ten original Cézanne pieces had been purchased by collectors in Japan and had become accessible to the Japanese public. At the same time, Cézanne began to be re-interpreted in a specifically contemporary Oriental milieu. In the context of Japanese art history during this period, the revival of the Southern Sung dynasty tradition occurred in conjunction with the vogue of Western modernism.⁸¹ This somewhat unexpected temporal convergence of Eastern tradition and Western modernism added a special dimension to Cézanne's reception in Japan. The most typical case may be the comparison between the French master and the final representative of the Japanese Nanga school, Tomioka Tessai 富岡鉄斎 (1837–1924).

Dermatologist, poet and writer, Kinoshita Mokutarō 木下杢太郎 (1885–1945) was the primary critic of the Shirakaba society's superficial enthusiasm for Cézanne and the Post-Impressionists. Yanagi's "Kakumei no gaka" 革命の画家 (Painter of the Revolution, 1912) was initially intended to defend the Shirakaba society against Kinoshita Mokutarō's accusation. In 1911, Kinoshita published an essay on the recent tendencies of non-naturalism in Western painting.⁸² Commenting on Wassily Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (1908), Kinoshita also proposed to interpret the Oriental literati painting as a kind of "decadent art of the nerve."⁸³ No doubt he borrowed the term of "*Nervenkunst*" from German critics like Meier-Graefe, Richard Muther (1860–1909) and Hermann Barr (1863–1934), who had used the term to qualify Japanese art in reference to the Vienna *Sezession* of the turn of the century.⁸⁴ Kinoshita did not fail to mention Cézanne in order to show that he understood the French master better than the opposing Shirakaba society. As a young student in the Faculty of Medicine, Kinoshita happened to accompany, on November 1911, a German specialist of Oriental art, Curt Glaser (1879–1943), to whom Kinoshita served as a personal interpreter. Glaser made a trip to Kyoto and became the first foreigner to have ever met the legendary literati painter and Shinto priest scholar, Tomioka Tessai, reputed to be the final incarnation of the Japanese Southern school tradition.⁸⁵ In later years (1921–24), Glaser, then director of the Kunsthistorisches Bibliothek in Berlin, invited Masamune Tokusaburō 正宗得三郎 (1883–1962) to his office in order to compare directly Tessai's work to Cézanne's monochrome.⁸⁶

79 Hyōgo Kenritsu Bijutsukan 2002, pp. 3–18.

80 Conisbee et al. 2006, p. 168. A complete list of Cézanne's works in Japan as of 2006 with color reproductions is in Nagai 2007. Unfortunately, however, the list does not include any information on the pieces which once existed in Japan; nor does it give any date of acquisition or other of those details which are indispensable for historical reconstruction. In the present study, I have excluded those works of Cézanne currently located in Japan, in those cases where they were acquired later than 1952.

81 The basic study on the subject remains Sakai 1988.

82 Kinoshita 1913.

83 Quoted by Ishii 1917, p. 34.

84 Inaga 1999.

85 Honda Noriyuki reports an anecdote of Curt Glaser's friendship with Tessai in Honda 1943, pp. 179–80. German architect, Bruno Taut (1880–1938), in his *Das japanische Haus und sein Leben* (Houses and People of Japan) also made the parallel of the two artists (Taut 1997). See also Taut 1992, pp. 155–57 and Odakane 1947.

86 Reported by Yashiro 1955, p. 216.

In 1922, Glaser published an album of Édouard Manet's drawings. In the preface, Glaser insists upon the fact that Manet's *dessin* and aquarelle bear comparison to Oriental ink paintings. "Just as drawings (*Zeichnung*) by Manet are no longer simple preparatory studies (*Studie*), so are the modern oil paintings (*Gemälde*) no longer what the *tableau* (*Malerei*) used to represent."⁸⁷ Here is a double operation. On the one hand, the European academic hierarchy is negated in the mirror of Eastern practice; on the other, the notorious shortcoming of Manet's unfinished "morceaux" or Cézanne's deliberately suspended execution is justified because of a kinship to Oriental ink handling (*Tuschmalerei*).

For his interpretation of the Oriental brush stroke and the Western avant-garde style, Glaser was in debt to Théodore Duret's pioneering Japonisant approach. But he also echoed increasing Oriental interest in the contemporary German speaking cultural sphere. Gustav Maler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (1907–08) and Alfred Döblin's *Die Drei Sprünge von Wang Lun* (1913) were just two prominent illustrations of the Oriental fever. Glaser's encounter with Tomioka Tessai in 1911 testifies to the conjunction of Western modernism and Oriental revival of the Southern school tradition in Japan. The fact that it happened in 1911 is not at all innocent. The Chinese revolution of the same year put an end to the Qing dynasty and some eminent Chinese scholars found refuge in Japan. Lúo Zhèn-yù 羅振玉 (1866–1940) was among the Qing dynasty survivors who took refuge in Kyoto and befriended Tomioka. The massive exodus of precious things Chinese and the arrival of literati calligraphers and painters certainly stimulated the rehabilitation of the Southern school of Chinese tradition in Japan.

Born in 1836, Tomioka was three years younger than Édouard Manet and three years older than Cézanne. Although their contemporaneity was rarely mentioned during his lifetime, it allows us to relocate the old Japanese scholar-painter in an international modernist context. As the ultimate incarnation of the literati painting in Japan, Tomioka Tessai in his 80s gained popularity. In his recollection in 1951, the afore-mentioned Ono Chikkyō remembers that as an adolescent, he "was caught and strongly moved by something new which was common both in Cézanne [which he saw in black and white reproduction] and in Tessai [exhibited at Heiandō 平安堂 Gallery, downtown Kyoto]." Ono continued:



Figure 22. Tomioka Tessai. *Taiko kyōryō zu* (Fishing Race at Lake Taiko). Private Collection.

87 "Nicht die Linie an sich, sondern in Kurzschrift einer Malerei ohne Farbe, die so wenig mehr Zeichnung im Alten Sinne ist, wie ein östliches Tuschbild. Aber was im Osten letztes Erzeugnis jahrhundertalter Tradition war, entstand hier [in Manet] auf den ersten Impuls einer Freien Eingebung, der Keine nähere Überlieferung diente" (Glaser 1922, n. p.).

Without any pretension to astonish the public, Tessai freely and powerfully executes, full of self-confidence. Free from any fictitiousness, his spirituality appears on every brush stroke, leaving tasteful lines on the paper. This has something in common with the potential power we feel in Cézanne . . . Looking at *Taiko kyōryō zu* 太湖競漁図 (Fishing Race at Lake Taiko [Tài Hú]), executed at the age of 84, one sees each line full of life and vividness (Figure 22). There is no lyrical poesy in this venerable old man, but his work reveals a solid volume of plasticity as an existing object. Isn't this the modern character which grasps us so tightly?⁸⁸

Despite this, Ono qualifies his assessment by saying, “the old painter himself was probably not conscious of his own modernity.” Such discourse has eventually paved the way for dubbing Tomioka Tessai as “the Oriental counterpart of Cézanne.” Cézanne’s contemplating of *Mont Sainte Victoire* was readily assimilated and identified with the Oriental way of conceiving the ideal mountain scenery “in one’s own bosom” as a mental and spiritual exercise. Though quite journalistic, such a posthumous reputation that equates Tessai with Cézanne (especially from 1957 onward), must be counted among the notable outcomes of the global Cézanne effect.⁸⁹

7. Rhythmic Resonance and Vital Movement

Tomioka Tessai’s reputation in his final years is better understood in the contemporary international socio-historical circumstances of the Taishō era (1911–26). It was no mere coincidence that many Japanese painters and writers all of a sudden took interest in comparing Post-Impressionists with the Japanese representatives of literati painting of the eighteenth century. Indeed Post-Impressionism penetrated the archipelago almost simultaneously with the revival of the Oriental tradition of the Southern school. “One may remark a similarity between Gauguin, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Ike no Taiga 池大雅 (1723–76), 与謝蕪村 Yosa Buson (1716–84) or Soga Shōhaku 曾我蕭白 (1730–81),” said the Western style painter Fujishima Takeji 藤島武二 (1867–1943) in 1911.⁹⁰ Kosugi Misei 小杉未醒 (1881–1964) also saw in Oriental “rice dot” technique a sign of the “most extreme impressionism,” hinting at its resemblance with the pointillism practiced by Seurat, Pissarro or Van Gogh.⁹¹ Nagahara Kōtarō 長原孝太郎 (1864–1930) equated the essence of Japanese art with impressionism, and appreciated in Cézanne and Gauguin “a strong taste of Orientalism.” He clearly felt some Oriental flavor in Cézanne’s painting style, and recognized his aesthetic familiarity with the East Asian tradition.⁹²

88 Ono 1979. (For an alternative rendering, see Nagai 2007, pp. 130–32.)

89 For the comparison between Tessai and Cézanne reported in the non-Japanese press in the post-war II period, see the documentation (in Japanese translation) in Sakamoto 1965, pp. 91, 107 and 124. The book traces Tessai’s reception in an international context. According to Sakamoto, the association of Tessai with Cézanne seems to have gained popularity after the success of the Tessai exhibitions in the U.S.A. (New York, Boston, Saint Louis, Kansas, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Colorado Springs, Santa Barbara) in 1957, in Canada (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Victoria, Ottawa, etc.) in 1960 and in the Soviet Union (Moscow and Leningrad) in 1961 as well as at the São Paulo Biennale in 1962.

90 Fujishima Takeji, “Yōgaka no Nihonga kan,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 10:11 (September 1911). (Quoted in Hayami 2008, pp. 9–10.)

91 Kosugi Misei, “Yōgaka no Nihonga kan,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 10:11 (September 1911). (Quoted in Hayami 2008, pp. 10–11.)

92 Nagahara Kōtarō, “Yōgaka no Nihonga kan,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11:2 (December 1911). (Quoted in Hayami 2008, pp. 27–29.)

The art historian Morita Kamenosuke 森田亀之輔 (1883–1966) went so far as to declare in 1915, in a tone both ethnocentric and self-aggrandizing, that one should remark “the influence of Oriental art” in the latest Western current of painting. In the wake of Post-Impressionism and Cubism, “Western painting became extremely Oriental, that is to say more and more subjective.” Morita singled out Cézanne (among others) as a “Japanese painter in the West. (...) This can be understood when one compares the so-called Oriental literati painting and the Western works stemming from Post-Impressionism.”⁹³ Not only Japanese painters but also an American author subscribed to this idea. Arthur Jerome Eddy (1859–1920), in his book inspired by the Armory Show in 1913, *Cubism and Post-Impressionism* (1914), reported that the Japanese preferred the latest extreme Western tendencies to the academic and conventional fine arts style. According to Eddy, Japanese artists found in the Cubists and Post-Impressionists what they had already cherished in existing Japanese aesthetic principles. By pointing to some of the most extravagant pieces composed of only several rough lines, a Japanese viewer is said to have remarked: “It is the manifestation of the best of the Japanese spirit of art,” whose guiding principle was called “*seidō*,” i.e., “*die lebendige Bewegung*” or “vital movement of things.”⁹⁴

With “*seidō*,” the American author touches on the Chinese classical key term of “*kiin seidō*” (in Japanese) or “*qì-yùn shēng-dòng*” (in Chinese) 氣韻生動, usually translated as “rhythmical resonance/vibration and vital movement.” Art historian and sinologist, Tanaka Toyozō 田中豊蔵 (1881–1948), in his seminal articles on *nanga* studies in 1913, explains “*ki-in seidō*” as a way of suggesting poetic sentiment (*Stimmung*) and feeling (*Gefühl*) uniquely through lines and colors, without relying upon the apparent shape of actual things in nature. The ultimate purpose of the Southern style painting, according to Tanaka, resided in the expression of the whole life of the artist, and Tanaka most valued the personal feeling of the self, emanating from the rendered objects.⁹⁵ The ideological proximity to German Expressionism as dictated by Takamura Kōtarō (mentioned above) is evident from the common vocabulary they use, such as “*Stimmung*,” “*Gefühl*” or “*Leben*.” Tanaka further proposed an analogical typology: as the Chinese northern tradition is to the Apollonian, so the Southern tradition may be characterized in terms of Dionysian inclinations. In this contrast of Apollo and Dionysius, one can easily trace Friedrich Nietzsche’s (1844–1900) first influence in Japan.⁹⁶

Several years later, Taki Seiichi 瀧精一 (1873–1945), editor in chief of the *Kokka* 國華 magazine for art research, reported in 1917 the recent tendency toward rehabilitation of the Southern school style of painting.⁹⁷ In the same issue, Tanaka Toyozō contributed “Iwayuru nanga teki shinkeikō ni tsuite” 所謂南画の新傾向に就て (New Tendencies of the So-called Southern school), and attributed the recent rehabilitation of the once despised Southern school to the penetration of Post-Impressionism in Japan. While criticizing the superficial degree of impressionism and the reliance on science of Neo-Impressionism, Tanaka praised the non-scientific and non-realistic approach of Post-Impressionism and evaluated it as a serious attempt to seize the depths of nature in accordance with spiritual necessity.⁹⁸ The

93 Morita 1915.

94 Eddy 1914, p. 147. (Quoted in Hayami 2008, p. 251.)

95 Tanaka 1913, p. 267.

96 Sugita 2010.

97 Taki 1917b, pp. 153–60.

98 Tanaka 1917, pp. 179–81.

following year, in 1918, Umezawa Waken 梅澤和軒 (1871–1931) published his monumental *Nihon nanga shi* 日本南画史 (History of Japanese Southern School Painting), and advocated an Orientalism (*Tōyō shugi*) as a necessary reaction to the chronic imitation of the latest Western mode that dominated the Japanese art scene. In the concluding part of his book, Umezawa declared that Japan, as one of the five superpowers, had to fulfill her duty as the leader of Oriental civilization. He stressed “the necessity of getting rid of the insularity of a parochial ‘Japanism’ so as to conserve better and advance Oriental art.”⁹⁹ Clearly in coincidence with the end of World War I, a new phase of Oriental-Orientalism emerged as an artistic ideology with the establishment of modern Japan as an imperial state monarchy.¹⁰⁰

Interestingly enough, the Oriental notion of *qi-yun sheng-dong* would be associated with the Western notion of “*Einfühlung*” elaborated mainly by Theodor Lipps (1851–1914). The German scholar had become so popular that an association, the Rippusukai リップス会, is said to have been founded among young students of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University around 1910–11. Tanaka Toyozō was a member. Lipps’ *Asthetik, Psychologie des schönen und der Kunst* (1903–06) was edited and translated into Japanese by Abe Jirō 阿部次郎 (1883–1959) in 1917, and *Grundlegung der Aesthetik* (1914) appeared also in Japanese in 1921–22 in Inagaki Suematsu’s 稲垣末松 translation. Although Lipps’ popularity was not at first directly connected with the rehabilitation of the Southern school of painting, it turned out that his distinction of “*Stimmungseinfühlung*,” “*Natureinfühlung*” as well as “*Einfühlung in die sinnliche Erscheinung der Menschen*” was extremely useful.¹⁰¹ Lipps’ schema helped Japanese aestheticians philosophically understand and justify the Chinese aesthetic tradition in relation to Post-Impressionism and/or German Expressionism.

Immediately after the end of World War I, the rehabilitation of the Southern school in Japan began to coincide with German Expressionism. Umezawa Waken, mentioned above, in his “Hyōgenshugi no ryūkō to bunjinga no fukkō” 表現主義の流行と文人画の復興 (The Vogue of Expressionism and the Rehabilitation of Literati Painting, 1921) succinctly summarized the West-East parallelism as follows:

In the West we saw the irruption of Expressionism, in the East the rehabilitation of literati painting. Both were typical artistic movements after the [First] World War. (...) And yet I stress that painters in Japan should incorporate the spirit of Oriental literati painting rather than the German Expressionism, which, by the way, is nothing but the successor of what we used to call Post-Impressionism in France, the German School being an amalgam of Post-Impressionism, Futurism, and Cubism.¹⁰²

Umezawa’s proposal would soon be followed by declarations claiming the superiority of Oriental aesthetics in world art. Two scholarly books are worth mentioning here. Ise Sen’ichirō 伊勢専一郎 (1891–1948), specialist in Chinese Art, published his *Shina no kaiga* 支那の絵画 (Painting in China), in 1922. Ise declares that “Lipps’ idea of *Einfühlungstheorie* had been already surpassed 1,400 years ago by the fifth century Chinese aesthetics of “*qi-yun*

⁹⁹ Umezawa 1919, p. 1011.

¹⁰⁰ Chiba 2003, pp. 56–68.

¹⁰¹ As for the English translation of Lipps’ idea, see Lipps 1903–1906.

¹⁰² Umezawa 1921, p. 233.

shēng-dòng” advanced by Xiè Hè 謝赫 (c. 479–502) of the Six Dynasties period.”¹⁰³ Sono Raizō 園頼三 (1891–1973), translator of Kandinsky’s *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, published for his part *Geijutsu sōsaku no shinri* 芸術創作の心理 (Psychology of Artistic Creation) in 1922, and pointed out the similarity between the Oriental idea of *qi-yun sheng-dong* and Kandinsky’s idea of “*das rein-malerische Komposition*” (a purely “painterly” composition) consisting of the “*Formen-sprache*” and “*Farben-sprache*” according to the “*Innere Notwendigkeit*” so as to communicate the “*Innere Klang*” of the spirit.¹⁰⁴ As an extension of such scholarly discussions, Yorozu Tetsugorō 萬鐵五郎 (1885–1927), one of the earliest Fauvists in Japan, epitomized the Orientalist conversion in the carrier of a talented avant-garde Western style painter (Figure 23). His reflection on “*Tōyō fukki mondai no kisu*” 東洋復興問題の帰趨 (Effect on Problem of Return to the Orient, 1927), written shortly before his untimely death, may be better understood in the particular context of the epoch. Yorozu’s essay was an attempt to evaluate Western painting according to the Oriental notion of *kiin seidō*. Yorozu defined *kiin* as the rhythmical muscular movement of the painter’s arm in execution, under the control of his (or her) inner rhythm of spirituality (through breathing). This ideal of the *nanga* served Yorozu as the ultimate criteria for artistic evaluation, which he applied to Western art. He singled out Cézanne in particular:



Figure 23. Yorozu Tetsugorō. *Jigazō* (Self-Portrait), 1912. Iwate Prefectural Museum.

It is true that in Western painting, there are many skillful, harmonious, astonishing, and also remarkable works in terms of volume and massive quantity. But quite rare are the works of art which inspire one to spiritual heights. (...) Only the works of art in proximity with the Oriental painting give the impression of spiritual serenity. Giotto and Chavannes are good examples. Cézanne as well as Van Gogh show the rhythm of the brush, the rhythm of color and the rhythm of composition, which are in common with the Oriental resonance of the brush stroke and the ink splash, thereby testifying to their attainment of the first condition of the Southern school of painting.¹⁰⁵

103 Ise 1922, pp. 9–11. Ōmura Seigai also saw in the Western impressionism and futurism “the penetration of the ideal of Oriental art” (Ōmura 1921, leaf 30).

104 Sono 1922, p. 143. The same year, Taki Seiichi also remarked that Kandinsky’s “inner Klang” had something to do with the Chinese notion of “*qi-yun*” by Guō Rùoxū (Taki 1922, p. 160). Yorozu Tetsugorō also located the starting point of what he called “Orientalism” in Western painting which shared principles in common with the Southern style painting (Yorozu 1922, p. 4; quoted in Nagai 2007, pp. 250–51). For English translation of these German terms, see Kandinsky 2001.

105 Yorozu 1927, pp. 5–6. A similar reversibility in the logic of comparison is also formulated by Bruno Taut in Taut 1992, p. 156. Taut claimed Grünewald to be the German Sesshū; and complained that the Japanese knew P.P. Rubens but did not know Kanō Eitoku’s greatness; Ogata Kōrin must be recognized as the origin of the European Jugendstil; Urakami Gyokudō was the primary impressionist *avant la lettre* and had to be compared to Van Gogh; Tanomura Chikuden had to be put side by side with C.D. Friedrich; while it was evident that Tomioka Tessai was Japan’s Cézanne, it was unjustifiable that nobody declared Cézanne to be the European Tessai, etc. Curiously enough, it was also in 1936 that the writer Shimazaki Tōson brought to Argentina Sesshū’s life-size reproductions to show “the most typical Japan” at the occasion of the International PEN club (Inaga 2008).

In the 1920s, artists living in Japan finally began to have frequent opportunities to view original pieces of French modern and contemporary art. Yorozu took advantage of this accessibility, but he was not always as satisfied with the original as he had expected. The originals were often inferior to the ones he had seen through available printed reproductions. Additionally, the originals showed several aspects that did not facilitate easy imitation on the part of the Japanese; a kind of inaccessibility that Yorozu felt, without being able to specify. This impenetrability caused pessimistic reactions in some of his colleagues. But it also provided the Japanese with the occasion to look back to Oriental practice. Yorozu remarked that such was the moment that brought him back to a new discovery of the heretofore unnoticed merits of the native tradition. However, this implied a drastic change in value judgment, a sort of dialectics of the master and the slave. Around 1911, as we have seen, Cézanne and Post-Impressionism served as the absolute criteria in Japan for the revelation of individuality in artistic expression. But by 1927, when Yorozu wrote the essay discussed here, it was the oriental criteria of *kiin seidō* that provided him with a measure for the evaluation of Western paintings.

8. The Cézanne Effect on China

Within twenty years or so, Eastern criteria replaced the Western. Cézanne's oeuvre as the artistic canon for revelation in 1913 was to be measured by the Oriental canon at the end of the 1920s. Such was the revolution that the global Cézanne effect instituted during the first twenty years of its infiltration into East Asia. Japan was an arena of competition between the West and the East. Previously, Chinese aesthetics had dominated the cultural sphere, and critics assessed artworks against classical Chinese standards. Westernization, however, came to overtake the Chinese hegemony. Chinese revenge took the shape of the re-orientalization of the Orient, of which imperial Japan claimed to be the initiator.

Hashimoto Kansetsu 橋本関雪 (1883–1945), a representative modern Japanese painters of the Southern school, played a pivotal role in this clash of styles. In his *Nanga e no dōtei* 南画への道程 (The Way to Southern School Painting, 1924), Kansetsu does not hesitate to judge Western expressionism against the Oriental point of view. He defines the Southern school as “the expression of the self, which consists of pushing out one's individual persona by insufflating one's own soul in the object which one borrows for the purpose.”¹⁰⁶ Obviously this definition of the Southern school is nothing but the one he borrowed from the account on Western expressionism. And yet, by way of preposterous rhetoric, reversing the cause and the consequence, Kansetsu pretends that it is recent Western art that is coming closer to the Southern school and not the other way round. According to him, Western expressionism is conceived from the Oriental subjective expression that had long been practiced in Asia:

In the works of Post-Impressionists, one may remark the colorful taste of the Southern school, and those who are endowed with a penetrating insight would not fail to see there a communicating sign of life subsisting in potentiality under the surface.¹⁰⁷

Based on this personal conviction, Kansetsu put forward the analogy between two art histories: Western and Chinese. He did not hesitate to propose an audacious stylistic comparison between individual artists. Shortly before, in 1917, the philologist Taki Seiichi,

¹⁰⁶ Hashimoto 1924.

¹⁰⁷ Hashimoto 1925, p. 127. (Quoted in Iio 2008, p. 241.)

then chair and founding father of the Department of Art History at Tokyo Imperial University, had manifested his skepticism toward superficial equations of literati painting with Western expressionism.¹⁰⁸ Tanaka Toyozō somehow shared his superior's opinion and hesitated to identify easily the Chinese literati "dilettanti" of the Southern school with Post-Impressionists. Tanaka nonetheless assimilated Ní Yún-Lín's 倪雲林 (1301–74) style with that of Jean-Baptist Camille Corot (1796–1875), as one of the "*Wandermenshen*" in the Forêt de Fontainebleau.¹⁰⁹

Resolutely, Hashimoto Kansetsu ignored Taki's precaution and took one step further. In his mental chart, Wáng Shígǔ 王石谷 (or Wáng Huī 王翬, 1632–1717) was to Paul Cézanne what Yùn Nán Tián 恽南田 (1633–90) was to Renoir, and Vincent van Gogh to Chén Lǎo Lián 陳老蓮 (1598–1652).¹¹⁰ The triangle may have been inspired by Meier-Graefe who designated Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin as the three core expressionists. It would of course be absurd to try to prove any rational justification for such a triangular analogy. What is important is to know that, for a painter like Hashimoto Kansetsu, the knowledge of the Chinese classics still worked as a template for the comprehension of modern Western painters. At the same time, Kansetsu tried to rehabilitate the status of the Chinese painters under Western cultural pressure. The seniority in the ranking may even have reinforced Hashimoto Kansetsu's claim of the superiority of the Chinese classics vis-à-vis Western modernity. As a matter of fact, Kansetsu, in his *Nanga e no dōtei* (1924), explains that the purpose of this book consists in "quietly meditating on the Southern school's position in the world and on its superiority."¹¹¹

Quite notably, the Japanese artists of the 1920s and 30s were not the only participants in Cézanne cults in the East Asia. Many students from Korea as well as from China were also affected by the same fever. Let us just mention one eminent example. Famous cartoonist and essayist, Fēng Zīkǎi 豐子愷 (1898–1975) followed Hashimoto Kansetsu, proposing in 1934 his version of the parallel. So as to facilitate memorization, he proposes the triangle of Cézanne-Matisse (Fauvism)-Picasso (Cubism), and superimposes their names on the triangle of the three most famous calligraphers in China, namely Yán Zhēnqīng 顏真卿 (709–785) famous for his emotional expression in his draftsmanship, Dǒng Qíchāng 董其昌 (1555–1636) famous for his cursive style, evoking Fauvism and Zhāng Xù 張旭 (Tang dynasty) whose playful free handwriting may be compared to Picasso. For the benefit of Chinese literati and students, Fēng could expect some heuristic effect, as he could offer by such analogies a comprehensive explanation for the stylistic characteristics of the three most famous European painters of the twentieth century.

As a theoretical and ideological basis for this operation, Fēng Zīkǎi had published, four years earlier in 1930, a seminal essay in the leading Shanghai monthly, *Dong Fang zázhì* 東方雜誌 (The Eastern Miscellany). What the essay sought to demonstrate is evident in its title: "The Triumph of Chinese Fine Art in the Contemporary World of Art." The title clearly echoes Hashimoto Kansetsu's phrase of "the Southern school's position in the world and its superiority." Kansetsu's *Nanga e no dōtei* was, in fact, one of Fēng's major references. In this essay, Fēng detected in Western Post-Impressionism "a tendency of Orientalization

108 Taki 1917a, p. 29.

109 Tanaka 1913, p. 217.

110 Nakai 1922, p. 93.

111 Hashimoto 1924, p. 17.

in Western painting,” which was recognized, according to him, by nobody other than the European artists themselves.¹¹² Fēng Zǐkǎi emphasized that in Cézanne’s art “the subjective deformation of nature” was predominant. To underscore this point, Fēng metonymically wrote of Cézanne’s apple as standing for the artist’s oeuvre:

The imitation of nature is no longer valuable, and the self of the artist becomes itself a natural resonance. . . The apple in Cézanne’s painting is no longer a fruit to eat, but it is a fruit for its own sake, an independent existence, and it has become so to speak a pure fruit.

To this observation (already familiar to us, thanks to Nakai Sōtarō’s book, mentioned earlier), Fēng added, however, a strange utterance which he attributed to Cézanne himself. According to Fēng, Cézanne had declared as follows:

All that exists is born because of myself. I am not only what I am, but at the same time, I am the origin of all that exists. I equal everything; without my existence God would not exist.¹¹³

How could Cézanne, as a faithful Catholic, make such an audacious utterance of solipsism, which is unorthodox if not entirely heretic? How did such a surprising confusion take place? What was the source of this utterance? The issue, however, far from being a simple matter of confusion or misunderstanding, helps us better understand the intellectual atmosphere and condition of the epoch in East Asia. Cézanne was anticipated as a mystical and religious figure, and he was accepted as such in China without causing too much suspicion.

As readers may have already guessed, the key to this enigmatic misattribution was hidden in Nakai Sōtarō’s writing. Nakai, as mentioned already, published the influential *Kindai geijutsu gairon* (General Introduction of Modern Art, 1922). One chapter, dedicated to Paul Cézanne and his art, accounts for Cézanne’s “*déformation subjective*” (the term stems from Maurice Denis), and touches on the story of Cézanne’s apple (as we have already seen).¹¹⁴ The enigmatic passage mentioned above does not appear in Nakai’s text, but it does serve as the exergue at the opening page of the chapter on Cézanne. The phrase does not belong to Cézanne himself, of course, but it was a quote from none other than Eckhart von Hochheim, known as Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1328), who was then enthusiastically read among high school students in Japan. As I have hinted above, Fēng would translate and adapt Nakai’s book into Chinese in 1934.¹¹⁵

112 Fēng 1930, p. 5.

113 Fēng 1930, p. 5.

114 By the way, “Cézanne’s Apple” would become the title of Meyer Shapiro’s famous and controversial article in 1968.

115 Although Nakai himself does not give any explicit reference, it turns out that Nakai’s quote from “Meister Eckehart” (sic) is based on his reading of Raphael 1913, p. 84. The first “Theoretischer Teil” (pp. 7–54) has the title: “Versuch einer Grundlegung des Schöpferischen” (Research into the Foundations of Creative Persons). Interested in the notion of creation, Sono Raizō also referred to the same book. This suggests the unusual popularity of Max Raphael among contemporary Japanese students in aesthetics, particularly in Kyoto. Nakai’s *Kindai geijutsu gairon* (1922) also owes its subtitle to the German book. While mentioning Max Raphael’s name in another context with a transcription into Chinese characters, Fēng Zǐkǎi does not seem to have suspected nor detected that Nakai had taken Meister Eckhart’s phrases from Max Raphael’s citation. As is well known, Suzuki Daisetsu, among others, would soon discuss certain similarities between Eckhart’s teaching and Zen Buddhism (Ueda 1965).

Did the Chinese author simply make a careless mistake in attribution? Rather, the circumstances allow us to suppose that Fēng Zǐkǎi wished to attribute the phrase to Cézanne even by mis-identifying the authorship. As I mentioned earlier, Nakai had inserted a somewhat strange interpretation in connection with the famous story of Cézanne's apple. "One equals All and All equals One"—this Buddhist view had been added by Nakai himself in his elucidations. Fēng did not fail to recognize Nakai's intention. The famous incantation from the *Hua Yan* sutra was obviously resonating with Meister Eckhart's preaching, which Nakai put in the exergue. Fēng was inspired by the similarity the Japanese scholar had hinted at, and "rationalized" his Japanese source to excess by substituting Meister Eckhart's words for the *Hua Yan* sutra.

So appealing was the affinity between the belief of a mystical Christian theologian of the late thirteenth century and the practice of a modern French artist that Fēng did not seem to have noticed his false identification. Perhaps Fēng's own devotion to Buddhism convinced him of the relevance of his otherwise incredible equation. This finally allowed Cézanne to "preach" Meister Eckhart's sermons in China. One may even suspect that Fēng's misattribution was something anticipated beforehand in East Asia and taken for granted, once it was formulated. The mystical image of Cézanne, covered by the aura of Buddhism, seems to have been accepted in modernizing China as a matter of course.

As far as I know, nobody before now has expressed any doubt about this merging of Meister Eckhart and Paul Cézanne, which Fēng slipped into his famous treatises.¹¹⁶ Why has this mystical union been overlooked, despite the fact that it happened in such an influential periodical as *Dong Fang zázhi*. In this paper I have tried to demonstrate the reason why this merging happened, and this incident proves the reach and depth of the global effect, which Cézanne was able to exert in Shanghai in the year 1930.¹¹⁷

Epilogue

Let me conclude with a reference to Morimura Yasumasa's 森村泰昌 (1951–) *Hibyō to sono aijin* 批評とその愛人 (Criticism and Its Lovers) of 1989 (Figure 24).¹¹⁸ The piece is a faithful reconstruction of Cézanne's *Apples and Oranges* (Figure 25), but each of the fruits takes on the physiognomy of the Japanese artist. Morimura's face is multiplied and printed on the surface of each of the spheres of yellow or red fruits. Obsessed by the multiplication, one cannot help hearing here the refrain of Buddhist incantation: "One equals All and All equals One." Paraphrasing Meister Eckhart's *mutatis mutandis*, Morimura might gladly have said: "I am not only what I am, but at the same time, I am the origin of all the *apples* that exist in Cézanne's painting." Cézanne's image as a solipsist Oriental, in the guise of Meister Eckhart, remains intact even in Morimura's post-modern pastiche, realized through his self-appropriation of Cézanne's apples. I wonder if Morimura, a graduate from the Kyoto Municipal University of Arts, knew that he faithfully followed the interpretation advanced à propos of Cézanne by one of the former presidents of his Alma Mater, Nakai Sōtarō, with whom I opened this essay.

116 Inaga 2006; Nagai 2007.

117 On the following phase of Cézanne's critical reception in Japan, see Nagai Takanori's work mentioned above (Nagai 2007).

118 See Morimura's homepage: <http://www.morimura-ya.com/>.



Figure 24. Morimura Yasumasa. *Hihiyō to sono aijin* (Criticism and Its Lovers), 1989. Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art.



Figure 25. Paul Cézanne. *Apples and Oranges*, ca. 1899. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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