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Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Members of the Korean History Compilation Association having a picnic on a Chosŏn 朝鮮 royal tomb (Archives National Institute of Korean History)

Errata In the previous issue of *East Asian History* (No.28), the article 'Index of Mongol and Chinese Proper and Geographical Names in the *Sheng-wu Ch'in-Cheng lu* 聖武親征錄' by Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis, edited by Igor de Rachewiltz, was inadvertently left off the Contents page. The article commenced on p.45.

OKAKURA TENSHIN AND AESTHETIC NATIONALISM

史 John Clark

Introduction

Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覺造 (1862–1913), more usually known by his sobriquet Tenshin 天心, was that curious and specifically Meiji 明治 human product of Japan who appeared after the overthrow of the Edo 江戸 military clan government or *bakufu* 幕府. He was a student of Chinese, 'Western,' Indian, and Japanese ideas, and interested both in art and theories of the state. He served as a government bureaucrat, but was also a poet and writer in both Japanese and English. He worked as an art educationalist, an art-world administrator and an art-movement ideologist. He was engaged as a curator for the Imperial Household Museum and wrote major, pioneering works as a member of the first generation of modern Japanese art historians. In his views on the outside world he was both an ultranationalist and an internationalist as well as a cross-cultural entrepreneur. In his personal life he was an impassioned lover of children, women and art. There are greater thinkers and writers of the Meiji period, such as Nishi Amane 西周 (1829–97) or Mori Ōgai 森鷗外¹ (1862–1922), and there are more profound thinkers on Japanese art and aesthetics who came after him—notably the philosopher Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941), who wanted Okakura to have been his father.

Part of the complexity of Okakura's ideas is due to the many kinds of intellectual life he lived, and this often forces the reader of his texts simply to comment on their contradictions without imposing a resolution. I have tried to present this aspect of his thought by extracting significant excerpts from his writing and placing them in an analytical frame. It would be feasible to contextualize these utterances fully in the intellectual currents of their

I am most grateful to Kinoshita Nagahiro 木下長宏 for copies of his writings, and for the intellectual stimulation of his ideas and research. I would also like to acknowledge my general debt to the clarity and documentary precision which the work of Satō Dōshin 佐藤道心 has added to the understanding of Meiji art and its theorists over many years.

A much shorter version of this paper was given as my inaugural professorial lecture at the University of Sydney in September 2003 and in Chinese for a conference on Eastern Aesthetics organized by the National History Museum, Taipei, also in September 2003. I am grateful for a Visiting Fellowship at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, which facilitated work on this paper in 2003. I am also grateful for the comments of two readers in 2004 and the editorial work of *East Asian History*, which have made this essay more readable.

¹ See Richard Bowring, *Mori Ōgai and the Modernization of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Thomas R.H. Havens, *Nishi Amane and Modern Japanese Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

² See Kinoshita Nagahiro, “Okakura Tenshinron no keisei to sono hihan” [The formation of theories about Okakura Tenshin and their critique], in *Bigaku/Geijutsugaku no konnichiteki kadai* [Contemporary problems of aesthetics and art theory] (Tokyo: Bigakukai, March, 1999, pp.27–35). Hereafter referred to as Kinoshita, Bigakukai. Kinoshita’s other writings on Okakura include: *Shino.Meiro: Okakura Tenshin no bōhō* [The maze of poetry: Okakura Tenshin’s method] (Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1989); “Shōwa zenki no Okakura Tenshin” [Okakura Tenshin in early Shōwa], in *Nihon Bijutsuin Hyakumenshi* [The hundred-year history of the Japan Art Academy], (Tokyo: Nihon Bijutsuin, 1998) vol.7, pp.326–43; “Okakura Tenshin to senjika no shisō” [Okakura Tenshin and thought during wartime], *Amadamu*, no.40 (March 1999); “Okakura Tenshin to Bijutsushi” [Okakura Tenshin and art history], *Art History Forum* (Seoul) 2.2 (September 1999). In March 2005, Kinoshita Nagahiro published what will surely become the essential biography of Okakura in Japanese, but unfortunately it arrived during the very last stage of editing this paper and thus I am unable to incorporate a consideration of its views here. See Kinoshita Nagahiro, *Mono ni kanzureba tsui ni ware nashi: Okakura Tenshin* [When looking at things, there is no I; Okakura Tenshin] (Tokyo: Minerva Shobō, 2005).

³ The Meiji complexity of the term *kokusui*, ‘national essence,’ merits some analysis. According to the dictionary *Nihongo Daijiten* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1974), vol.8, *kokusui* means “The aesthetic aspect of the spiritual or material strengths particular to a country,” and is thus tied perfectly to the complex of aesthetic nationalism. According to this dictionary, the word originates in the work of Kitamura Tōkoku [北村透谷, 1868–94], who said in “Nihon no gengo wo yomu” [On reading the language of Japan], “yo mo mata kokusui wo konomeri,” [or, “I too like the National Essence”]. *Kitamura Tōkoku Shū, Meiji Bungaku Zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1978), vol.29, pp.167–8, reprinted this text from *Jogaku Zasshi* no.170, 13 July 1899,

times, but that would be a book-length task, one far beyond the scope of this survey.

Okakura’s retrospective significance is important, both inside Japan and in other Asian countries; and then there is his influence on modernist thinking in Euramerica before World War I. There were few Meiji figures who combined action and ideas with such intensity as Okakura and with such broad appeal, both in his lifetime and down to today across many artistic, intellectual and political groupings from both right and left within Japan. Furthermore, his books in English were widely read in Europe and North America as the quintessence of a modern Japanese aesthetic attitude. They were also the material signs of an exchange between the specifically modern art cultures of India and Japan, the first such ‘horizontal’ exchange in Asia.

From the general post-1945 perspective of, for example, Miyagawa Torao 宮川寅雄 in 1956,² Okakura should be understood politically as the holder of ideas which in respect to the 1930s would be called ‘ultranationalist’ (*kokusuitekiteki*, 国粹的),³ but in the field of art as a modern person of culture who made great contributions to the creation of art in civil society. In Meiji Japan Okakura’s ideas were part of an ideological current that held strongly to nationalist ideas. However, through his contemporary links to a coterie of supporters of his Japan Art Academy after 1898, his ideas were later to be associated with the ideology for the aggressive Japanese expansion on the Asian mainland that culminated in the 1930s. This is why many of them may be retrospectively regarded as ‘ultranationalist,’ even before this term was in wide currency. Questioning Okakura’s ideas forces critics in the period immediately after World War II, like Miyagawa, to confront the thinking of the later wartime period squarely. In Japanese intellectual history, the defeat in World War II marked both a continuity between the modern (*kindai* 近代) and the contemporary (*gendai* 現代) periods—via the institution of the Emperor as living symbol of the state—and a rupture, by the very fact of defeat and occupation. Understanding Okakura at that time was a critical recuperation in Japanese thought of a continuity with the Meiji period and with Japanese modernization against external imperialist pressures and their cultural forms.

/three months before the appearance of *Kokka*. Kitamura refers to earlier statements in no.168 about the Japanese language by Satō Hiroshi [Kan], to which Kitamura is clearly opposed. The last two sentences in which the citation from Kitamura occurs suggest that he is using the word *kokusui* in an anti-essentialist and critical sense: “In other words Mr Satō is one of the so-called national essentialists [*kokusuiteki*] and when people make efforts to reform or progress from this,

/the *kokusuiteki* look on in a haughty manner. I too like the national essence [emphasis is in the original], but I do not like those who use neither broad-axe or plough [to cut away redundant forms or sow the seeds of new ones] as if they had [already] adequately tilled the land which was uncultivated and undone. Right now our language and literature are progressing bravely together, and must await the time of the ordering of grammar, the generous opening up of argument, also a great progressing in the science of rhetoric.” Kitamura, *ibid.*, p.168.

What is Aesthetic Nationalism?

In Theory

There is no clear way of defining aesthetic nationalism. It involves the notion of a culturally authentic past focused on the genealogy of earlier values under the guise of perceiving their beauty; it also requires some method of asserting that these values which are discovered in the past can be projected forward into the future. Aesthetic nationalism remakes the past by associating it with a people, or with the culture of a limited geographical area, and projecting its values forward as a prescription of what the future should be, both for the presumed nation and those outside who associate with it.

I have analysed the application of notions of nationalism in modern Asian art elsewhere.⁴ This section takes up some broader intellectual issues as a foundation for what follows in detailed analyses of Okakura's texts, but these analyses do not claim any unity or seek to impose one that the texts themselves do not possess. Indeed, it will deliberately attempt to approach the issues raised by Okakura's ideas obliquely, and to convey their range and density.

Nationalism is articulated on two levels, that of the *intellectual* or *artist* who deploys literary concepts and abstractions of cultural essences in defining a nation, and that of a *quasi-religion* on the level of a people or a community which articulates a sense of belonging to a past which stretches on into, and constructs, a future. Aesthetic nationalism is the application to a nation, or some group linked to it by extension, of that contemplative attitude otherwise reserved for art objects. But it is also an ideology because it is projective and seeks to realize, or impose, a characteristic set of values attributed to art objects or more generally associated with a specific society, through the mediation of the nation, either on the conceptual level or as a specific and world-oriented agency.

Aesthetic nationalism articulates three discursive positions which define the relation of the aesthetic and the national:

1. As a direct discourse, with the relation to other discourses being superseded. Non-aesthetic values and expressions are regarded as of no consequence. Aesthetic values themselves typify a people, or place, via their embodiment of the essential qualities of a people, and by extension of the national.
2. As a deferred discourse. Politics is displaced into the discourse on what is valued and may be thought beautiful, or on what a culture values as 'our' beauty, because of some lack of willingness to understand directly, or create, the non-aesthetic values of a nation or state. That aesthetic nationalism usually involves critique and exclusion—ranging from passive denial to vigorous extirpation of a set of values considered 'ugly' or 'depraved' or 'not ours'—is indicative of its conservative, and sometimes reactionary nature.

⁴ See John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), ch.10.

⁵ Benedict Anderson as cited by David Carroll, "The Aesthetics of Nationalism and the Limits of Culture," in *Politics and Aesthetics in the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.119.

⁶ Carroll, "The Aesthetics of Nationalism," p.120.

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2nd edn., 1991), pp.16–19.

⁸ Christine M.E. Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzō: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context," *Positions: East Asian Cultures Critique*, 8:3 (Winter 2000, pp.605–36).

3. As a parallel discourse. The aesthetic is used as a rhetorical substitute or stalking-horse for the national. In this, politics is discussed via reference to the national values associated with the beautiful, or the beauty of some object whose symbolic use serves to unify a political unit or movement. The reverse may be the case where the beautiful is discussed in reference to a current national position or state of being. The characteristic of this third discursive position is extreme motility, whereby a thinker or artist is able to switch with alacrity between political discourse on the national and aesthetic discourse on the characteristics of the national. This would appear to have been Okakura's position in the key texts he wrote between 1900 and 1906.

All three discursive positions link discourse on 'us' (the national) with discourse on what is distinctively 'ours' (the aesthetic). These are types of the projective modality called 'style,' noted by Anderson: "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."⁵ Further, Carroll thinks that nationalism should be considered a culturalist ideology which transcends difference and where "at the core of transcendence in the fashioning of the imagined community lies the problem of the aesthetic as a political phenomenon, of art as the model for self-creation, manifestation, and self-recognition of a people."⁶ There is a difference between pre-modern and modern communities, and between the role of religions in the former and that of various mass media in articulating modern consciousness in the latter. In the former, unselfconscious coherence waned with the European explorations of the non-European world, a process which was accompanied by the gradual demotion of sacred language itself. Aesthetic nationalism is based on a longing to restore a natural and therefore unspoken coherence. It seeks to re-create a linguistic or cultural continuum, restoring the sacredness at a mass level that social solidarity has lost at the level of inwardly oriented community religion.⁷

What is missing from such recent general considerations about aesthetic nationalism is the preoccupation in Okakura's writings with rediscovered pasts after the long obstruction of the Tokugawa period. He places Japanese art in a genealogy from which he thinks it had been mistakenly cut off, that of a 'unitary Asia' by the imposition of the 'West.' Okakura's material was also conditioned by the model of Japanese uniqueness centered on the Imperial House that was prevalent in the 1880s and 1890s. It was unavoidable, despite all Okakura's play with clothing markers and linguistic self-empowerment across cultural boundaries, that he lacked any real concern with 'other-than-Japanese' minority discourse between Japan and other cultural continua. In the nineteenth century, when Japanese culture was struggling to withstand the pressures of Euramerican imperialism, there was no room for him to recognize such interstitiality, much as it unquestionably existed. Despite his play across boundaries, he seems to have been historically trapped by his search for domestic, origin-defining positions and their external negations.⁸

He could not adumbrate, as Bhabha has, a notion of cultural doubling—and not plurality—as constituting the hybrid situation of minorities between cultures, nor could he produce a discourse appropriate to an emergent cultural identity that was not intended to reconstitute the values or form-language of some original community.⁹ In fact Okakura's world, which was worked out in terms of a binary as a 'Japan-as-Asia' versus the 'West,' does not even have the plurality of a multiculturalism. His world-view lacks any sense of cultural others constituting the self: it does not acknowledge the Other. Let us reflect for a moment on the gap between Okakura's time and the late twentieth century, when the francophone Antillais Glissant could write that the Other

“is always-already in us, and if we know this to be the case, then there can be no simple sense of individual or cultural identity, no closed, totalising aesthetics or politics of nationalism of any sort, that does not, either affirmatively or negatively, deal with the Other in dealing with the self.”¹⁰

The central contradiction of nationalism is its search for an origin. This search hides the aestheticizing of a humanity which is only 'ours,' that is a 'national' humanity which nationalism turns into an ideological tool for the achievement of state goals. As Mark Redfield puts it, such “aestheticized political models ... actively produce violence as a by-product of their own impossible reliance on, and projection of, sociopolitical homogeneity and transparency.”¹¹ Okakura simply argues, through inflated and inflammatory rhetoric, for the genealogy of the aesthetic ideals which the Meiji state could represent. This was misplacing towards the past the ethical imperative towards the future that these ideals actually carried,¹² ones which Okakura, from a conservative position, orientated towards the creation of contemporary art. Okakura's shifting between the levels of 'Japan' and 'Asia' meant he agreed that the state's core mission was the use of pedagogy to acculturate its citizens to its past. But the imagining of a disinterested space had its “proleptic formal moment of identification”¹³ not with a 'universal humanity' *per se* which recognized cultural others, but with a 'Japan-as-Asia' that was somehow outside that humanity. Redfield thinks “the nation is a hallucinated limit to iterability,” that is a fantasized boundary to social replication, which “homogenizes time and space, draws and polices borders, historicizes itself as the continuous arc of an unfolding identity.”¹⁴ The state, in consciousness at least, is also a body which continuously incorporates a sense of loss. The origin, it claims, is never there to be found just as it is (*sono mama*) in the strata of an accumulated and recently excavated past. It is always constructed, frequently requiring the invention of new signs which mask this construction. This is why, as examined by both Redfield and Anderson, the nation requires monuments to those who sacrificed themselves for it, and why, I think, the ground from which the objects spring that carry this monumental function may be so contested.

⁹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.50.

¹⁰ As discussed by Carroll, “The Aesthetics of Nationalism,” p.135.

¹¹ Mark Redfield, *The Politics of Aesthetics: Nationalism, Gender, Romanticism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.22.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.46

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.54.

In Japan

¹⁵ Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), p.32.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.32. See also Okakura's St. Louis speech of 1904, "Modern Problems of Painting," in Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *Collected English Writings*, vol.1 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984). Hereafter referred to as *CEW*.

¹⁷ Pincus, *Authenticating Culture*, p.96.

¹⁸ Kuki Shūzō, "Okakura Kakuzō-shi no omoide" [In memory of Okakura Kakuzō] (c. 1937), in Kuki Shūzō, *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū*, vol.5, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The above theoretical explorations do not take us away from late nineteenth-century Japan; they help us see the range of approaches that could encompass it. I shall look at the implications of Okakura's notions of a Unitary Asia later, but here we should recall that Okakura was posthumously to serve as one of the ideological father figures for Japanese ultranationalism in the 1930s. The basic modality of his thought was to capture what Meiji Japan had lost under the impact of Western imperialism and "transform the pre-Meiji past into a repository of cultural value."¹⁵ If the theorization of the culturally authentic—and the establishment of an explanatory hermeneutic frame which allows it to be projected into the future—is the foundation of aesthetic nationalism, so that it is both a reconstitution and a projection of the past, then, as Pincus indicates, Okakura was the first major Japanese thinker "to discover in cultural theory an adequate substitute for politics," and who understood "modernization as the occidentalization of the world."¹⁶ In case the continuing impact of Okakura's fusing of the ideas of 'Japan' and 'Asia' should be doubted, Pincus points out that even in France in 1928, Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941) had quoted Okakura's *Ideals of the East* at the beginning of his Pontigny lecture *L'expression de l'infini dans l'art japonais* when he declared that "the history of Japanese art is the history of Asian ideals."¹⁷ Kuki gave copies of *The Ideals of the East*, which he had read in English, to his non-Japanese friends.¹⁸ Kuki also found it not unimportant to him that Okakura, as he was later informed, had once listened to a lecture at the Collège de France by Henri Bergson, the French philosopher whom Kuki so greatly admired.¹⁹

But whatever the forward-looking and potentially aggressive qualities of aesthetic nationalism, it oscillates between two positions. On the one hand, it is based on what ideologically purports to be a truer or more precise grasp of the past, a grasp whose strength is drawn from its reliance upon a broad range of historical contexts out of which those values seen as 'ours' arose. On the other hand, from the outset it privileges what is 'ours' by associating it with a particular mentality. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries aesthetic nationalism usually linked what was 'ours' with the culture and language of a specific race and a finite set of ascriptions. These uniquely privileged both the values carried by the aesthetically conceived body of the culture-state-nation-race, and the particular and closed set of origins which (in construction) pretended this was a 'natural' or essential body.

Okakura early on identified with the first position in the opening and unsigned article of *Kokka* 國華 [Flower of the Nation] in 1889:

Let us turn our eyes and observe the prospect of academic work in art. Eastern art history is still imprecise. Who is there who engages in historical writing and with regard to the communication and contact between our country and ancient Korea, China and the countries of Central Asia, who

has analysed the combination of artistic qualities from what is available and precisely described the outlines of their historical derivation?²⁰

He also made clear the future, prescriptive orientation of such repositioning:

Kokka wants to preserve the true aspect of Japanese art and wishes to see Japanese art evolve through its own special characteristics. Art is the art of the nation, and *Kokka* with the nation will not cease from promoting the protection of the art of this country.²¹

The second position, significantly, allows for foreign contacts and influence, only to de-privilege these via the attribution of a uniquely creative synthesizing and homogenizing quality to the people accepting them. This view was put forward at exactly the same time by Kuki Ryūichi 九鬼隆一 (1850–1931). He was the actual father of Kuki Shūzō, and Ryūichi remained a lifelong personal friend of Okakura, but would also prove in many ways to be Okakura's rival in public ambition as well as private passion. In his opinion,

The elements of the arts and crafts derive from the blood of races. There are many aspects which we should demand of others and should not forcibly obtain [of ourselves]. Our Japanese race has had natural talents in the arts and crafts from ancient times. By transforming all phenomena and in moving towards the separate field of painting and sculpture, by using the literature and culture of alien lands and then developing our own styles, being ever-changing, we have not lost our original taste.²²

Whereas in some constructions of aesthetic nationalism the attribution of uniqueness might stop there and even be tempered with some historical contingency, the second position in Japan at this relatively early stage went even further. It foreclosed the comparability of Japanese assimilation and transformation by its attribution to a unique and racially closed imperial line. In Kuki's words,

Through the historical reigns, that the imperial benevolence has for an elegant eternity ceaselessly promoted and continued literature and art, pushing these to sublimely beautiful reaches, accompanying our national essence of a single line for ten thousand generations, is [a situation] really without comparison in any country.²³

This is a position which only an ideologist for a 'new' state founding itself on the 'old' body of its presumed origins would wish to advance. It is the claim for a uniqueness that an ideologist more disposed, or constrained, to admit the historical relativity of his own position would not make.

Bi-culturality

The contradiction in Okakura's thought, as much as in his own personality, was that his own knowledge of Japanese art history was increasingly

²⁰ Okakura (unsigned), in *Kokka* 10 (1889). As in Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin) (unsigned), "Kokka" [Flower of the nation], *Kokka*, no.1 (October 1889), repr. in *Kokka ronkō seisen* [Essential selection from essays in *Kokka*], ed. *Kokkasha* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1989). Hereafter translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

²¹ Okakura in *Kokka*, 10.

²² Kuki Ryūichi in *Kokka*, 10. As in Kuki Ryūichi, "Kokka no hatsuda ni tsuite" [On the inception of *Kokka*], *Kokka*, no.1 (October 1889), repr. in *Kokka ronkō seisen*.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Kinoshita, *Bigakukai*, p.34, n.5.

²⁵ Oketani Hideaki 桶谷秀昭, "Okakura Tenshin to Eigo—Bi to Ajia Ninshiki" [Okakura Tenshin and English—Beauty and the perception of Asia] (1971), in *Okakura Tenshin, Hito to Shisō* [Okakura Tenshin, the man and the ideas], ed. Hashikawa Bunzō 橋川文蔵 編 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1982).

²⁶ Yasuko Horioka 堀岡保子, *The Life of Kakuzō, author of The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1963), p.24, translation from Okakura Kazuo 岡倉一夫 [son], *Chichi Okakura Tenshin* [My father, Okakura Tenshin] (Tokyo: Seibunkaku, 1940, reprinted Tokyo, 1971).

²⁷ Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzō," p.623, and following citation.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.625.

²⁹ Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *Zenshū* [Complete works], 8 vols., and Supplement (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1979–81), hereafter ZS. Other collections of Okakura's writings include Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *Okakura Tenshin Zenshū* (Tokyo: Rikugeisha, 1940, 5 vols.) (hereafter ZSR). Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *Tenshin Zenshū* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1945). Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin) *Okakura Tenshin Shū*, in the series *Meiji Bungaku Zenshū* [Complete works of Meiji literature], vol.38, ed. Kamei Shōichirō 亀井正一郎 and Miyagawa Torao 宮川寅雄, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968) (hereafter MBZ, vol.38).

In addition to the texts cited, other writings of Okakura consulted here are: Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Letters to Ernest F. Fenollosa of 1884 and 1888," in *CEW*, vol.3 (1984); Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Kangakai ni oite" [On the Painting Appreciation Society] in *Dai Nihon Bijutsu Shinpō* [Great Japan art news] no.50 (31st December 1887), (ZS, vol.3), translated as "A Lecture to the Painting Appreciation Society," in Michele Marra, *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999, pp.71–8); Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Notes on contemporary Japanese art," *The Studio*, 25/108, (March 1901, *CEW*, vol. 2, pp.49–55); also in *CEW*, vol.2, ZS, vol.2, pp.49–55; Okakura /OVER

formed by a system of Hegelian dialectics which was not Japanese in origin at all. Bosanquet's *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* (London, 1886) was by 1891 in the library of Tokyo School of Fine Arts, of which he was the director,²⁴ and whilst Japanese scholarship is unable to prove from the handwriting of the marginalia whether this was perused by him, there seems every likelihood that it was.

Moreover in his own personal history Okakura had been brought up fluent in English from childhood—although as we shall later see, several important qualifications should be made about his ability in English—and he showed a permanent interest in positioning himself before cultural others by the clothes he wore and his command of the foreign language.²⁵ There does indeed seem to be a crossover between cultural cross-dressing and self-empowerment. As Guth notes,

He believed even as he confirmed Western expectations of Japan, he could transcend them because his exceptional knowledge of English language and culture set him apart from other Japanese, allowing him to dictate the terms of his interactions with the West.²⁶

As he explained to his son Kazuo:

From my first trip to Europe, I wore kimono most of the time. I suggest you travel abroad in kimono if you think that your English is good enough. But never wear Japanese costume if you talk in broken English.²⁷

Indeed after 1904, when he worked off and on in Boston, Massachusetts, at the Museum of Fine Arts (which he did until his death in 1913), he joined the entourage of Isabella Stewart Gardner where, like some High Anglican priests, "Okakura in his robes attained the status and freedom of an individual who transcends gender divisions."²⁸ Whether or not his role developed in response to an aesthetic preference by Gardner for gender cross-dressers (as suggested by Guth) depends, I think, on projecting into late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century dress codes a gender specificity which may not always have been as marked as today, at least for cultural boundary riders. But Guth makes clear from many photographs, also found in the Japanese *Collected Works* of Okakura,²⁹ that in about 1882 he wore very elegant Western clothes in Japan with Americans, and a Fine Arts School uniform of his own pseudo-antique 'Chinese' design whilst horse riding in about 1891. In 1893 he travelled incognito in China, wearing an artificial queue. 'Daoist' clothes were made for him in India in 1901 and these he wore in Boston in 1904, and also in Beijing 北京 in 1906. Here, the original photograph taken of him shows him alongside two senior Daoist monks, the two Chinese figures at the left being omitted from Guth's reproduction, which appears to be of the image Okakura circulated to friends. He wore a fisherman's costume in Japan in 1907, when he would spend his days reading whilst out fishing,³⁰ a self-image which was turned into a sculpture portrait still kept at Izura 五

浦 where Okakura's remains are buried. He also wore a Japanese kimono in Boston variously between 1904 and 1913.

Taken together, the evidence reveals a personality who wanted to show mastery of 'their Western' discourse as well as representation of 'our Japanese' or more broadly 'our Asian' discourse at the same time. This indicates a desire for a double hermeneutic empowerment, as if the aesthetic contest with the 'West' was never transcended or translated to a higher plane, or, in Hegelian language, was never sublated into a universal, but was a continuous re-enactment of the contest with the 'West,' whether the domain of discourse was at home or abroad.

This hybridity was latently post-colonial. It required privileging the culturally interstitial in a way which was exclusively available to neither 'Western' hegemony nor presumed common 'Asian' values. Two anecdotes suggest why we should see Okakura as tragically bound to the double binary—mastery of the 'West' when in the 'East'; mastery of the 'East' when in the 'West'—rather than liberating himself into a relatively unbound or less restrictively bound third space.

When on a trip with the American Bigelow he went to a concert of classical music and is reported by Bigelow as having said after a Beethoven symphony, "Only in that music is the West superior to the East."³¹ When he went to see Swami Vivekananda immediately on his arrival in Calcutta in 1902 he is reported to have told Ms Macleod (who had accompanied him from Japan, and to whom he had had given the lectures in Tokyo which were written up as *The Ideals of the East*): "Vivekananda is ours. He is an Oriental. He is not yours."³²

The first anecdote indicates Okakura's deep-seated rivalry in opposing, or giving limited and begrudging recognition to, 'Western' cultural forms as against the 'Asiatic.' He found only very few of the former worthy of positive appraisal, rather than including them in a set including the 'Asian' which would have allowed the reappraisal of both. The latter anecdote points to a deep-seated prejudice that nothing allowed the 'Western' follower access to the 'Eastern' swami to the same extent as the 'Asian' values which were presumed to unite one Japanese—who had been in written contact with Vivekananda since before his arrival—with the common cultural ground of what was 'Asian.'

The Unitary Asia

Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* (1903) was probably the most widely read of his works during his lifetime, although his later *Book of Tea* has subsequently been as influential on artists, particularly with the rise, since World War II, of the interest in Zen Buddhism. *The Ideals of the East* has been

/Kakuzō (Tenshin), "The Bijutsu-In or the new old school of Japanese art," *Catalogue of Exhibition of Works of Yokoyama Taikan & Hisbida Shunsō* (New York: Century Associates, March 1904); also in *CEW*, vol.2, pp.56–9, *ZS*, vol.2. Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), English notes for *Japanese Temples and their Treasures* (Tokyo: Shimbi Shoin, 1910); also in *CEW*, vol.2, pp.257–436; *Okakura Tenshin, Taiō kōgeishi* [History of arts and crafts of East Asia, 1910] reprinted in *Nihon Bijutsushi* [Art history of Japan] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001, pp.263–99); also in *ZS*, vol.4; Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "The nature and value of Eastern connoisseurship," Lecture at Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 6 April 1911 (written two years before Okakura's death, in *CEW*, vol.2, pp.122–32); Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Religions in East Asiatic Art," Lecture at Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 13 April 1911, *CEW*, vol.2, pp.133–44; Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Nature in East Asiatic Painting," Lecture at Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 4 May 1911, *CEW*, vol.2, pp.145–54.

³⁰ See the 1922 reminiscence by Okakura Motoko 岡倉基子 (Okakura's wife), "Bannen no Nichijōseikatsu" [Daily life in his last years], in *Okakura Tenshin, Hito to Shisō* Library.

³¹ Hashikawa Bunzō, "Nijū no kikōbun ni tsuite" [On two travel essays], *ZS*, vol.5, p.483.

³² Pravrajika Prabhuddhaprana, *The Life of Josephine Macleod, Friend of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Sri Sarada Math, 1990), p.123. For an intellectual biography of Vivekananda, see ch.4 of Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth-century Bengal* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, [1988] 2002).

³³ F.G. Notehelfer, "On idealism and realism in the thought of Okakura Tenshin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16.2 (1990). In addition to texts cited here, other works on Okakura's thought include: *Okakura Tenshin, Hito to Shisō*, ed. Hashikawa Bunzō (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1982); Kamei Shōichirō 亀井勝一郎, "Okakura Tenshin to Nihonbijutsu" [Okakura Tenshin and Japanese art], in *MBZ*, vol.38, pp.399–403; Karatani Kōjin 柄谷港人, "Bijutsukan toshite no Nihon: Okakura Tenshin to Fuenrosa," *Hibyō Kūkan*, no.1, (1994) pp.68–75; "Japan as Art Museum: Okakura Tenshin and Fenollosa," in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, pp.43–52); Kawakita Michiaki 河北倫明, "Bijutsu shinkō no jōnetsu to kenshiki" [Passion and insight in art beliefs], in *ZS*, vol.3, pp.458–67; Kurata Bunzō 倉田文三, "Kokusaijin, Tenshin no menmoku" [Internationalist, a face of Tenshin], in *ZS*, vol.2, pp.487–98; Miyagawa Torao, "Meiji Nashonarizumu to Okakura Tenshin" [Meiji nationalism and Okakura Tenshin], in *MBZ*, vol.38, pp.410–15; Kevin Nute, "Frank Lloyd Wright and Okakura Tenshin: On the Social and Aesthetic 'Ideals of the East'" *Chanoyu Quarterly* 79 (1995), pp.29–52; Ōka Makoto 大岡実, "Yūshū no jimi: Okakura tenshin no shisō no tokushitsu" [A superior reticence: Okakura Tenshin's thought and its special characteristics], in *ZS*, vol.7, pp.397–408.

³⁴ Okakura Kakasū [sic], *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: John Murray, 1903), p.1. These were lectures given in Japan in August 1901; the texts were completed in India with the assistance of Sister Nivedita by May 1902 (see *ZS*, vol.1 and *CEW*), Okakura Kakuzō, *Eisakubunzenshū* [Okakura Kakuzō, *CEW*], 3 vols., (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984) vol.1, pp.3–132.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.230.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.244.

widely analysed in many languages, and probably the most comprehensive and thoughtful study in English has been that of Notehelfer in 1990.³³ The premises of this book, and the needs which led Okakura to proclaim them, include the following:

1. Asian culture is a unity, a continuum in large part only comprehensible or tangible to Asians, working on a longer time scale and of a greater richness and depth than that of the West.

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas.³⁴

Arab chivalry, Persian poetry, Chinese ethics, and Indian thought all speak of a single ancient Asiatic peace, in which there grew up a common life, bearing in different regions different characteristic blossoms, but nowhere capable of a hard and fast dividing line.³⁵

2. Japan has a special, historically conditioned role in preserving and manifesting this unitary character.

It has been, however, the great privilege of Japan to realize this unity-in-complexity with a special clearness.³⁶

The unique blessing of unbroken sovereignty, the proud self-reliance of an unconquered race, and the insular isolation which protected ancestral ideas and instincts at the cost of expansion made Japan the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture.³⁷

Thus Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization: and yet more than a museum because the singular genius of the race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past, in that spirit of living Advaitism [non-Dualism] which welcomes the new without losing the old.³⁸

3. Artistic advance is the result of cultural conflict, conceived in terms of war.

Technique is thus but the weapon of artistic warfare, scientific knowledge of anatomy and perspective the commissariat that sustains the army. These Japanese art may safely accept from the West without detracting from its own nature. Ideals, in turn, are the modes in which the artistic mind moves, a plan of campaign which the nature of the country imposes on war. Within and behind them lies always the sovereign-general, immovable and self-contained, nodding peace or destruction from his brow.³⁹

We await the flashing sword of the lightning that shall cleave the darkness. For the terrible hush must be broken, and the raindrops of a new vigour must refresh the earth before new flowers can spring up to cover it with their bloom. But it must be from Asia herself, along the ancient roadways of the race, that the great voice shall be heard.

Victory from within, or a mighty death without.⁴⁰

4. Asian cultural regeneration, with Japan's experience as its most concrete

model, and Japan as its cultural leader, must come through a revised consciousness of what is already there in the past as cultural essence.

[T]o clothe oneself in the web of one's own weaving is to house oneself in one's own house, to create from the spirit of its own sphere.⁴¹

To him [the Indian ascetic] a countryside does not consist of its natural features alone. It is a nexus of habits and associations, of human elements and traditions, suffused with the tenderness and friendship of one who has shared, if only for a moment, the joys and sorrows of its personal drama.⁴²

The task of Asia to-day, then, becomes that of protecting and restoring Asiatic modes. But to do this she must herself first recognise and develop consciousness of those modes. For the shadows of the past are the promise of the future.⁴³

It was some small degree of this self-recognition that re-made Japan, and enabled her to weather the storm under which so much of the Oriental world went down. And it must be a renewal of the same self-consciousness that shall build up Asia again in her ancient steadfastness and strength.⁴⁴

5. Asian culture comprises states of knowledge and artistic expression which are non-oppositional and not grasped by conflictual or individualist notions of cultural identity.

[T]he Tao, the great Mood, expresses Itself through different minds and ages and yet remains ever Itself.

[Or again,]

The art of living, whose secret lies not in antagonisms or criticisms, but in gliding into the interstices that exist everywhere.⁴⁵

Before examining these premises and their various implications, I should note two crucial issues in the generation of this text. The first is that Sister Nivedita wrote the introduction and edited the English manuscript. This manuscript had been written up from lectures given in Japan in 1899–1901 to two other followers of Vivekananda, including Josephine Macleod, who had put Okakura in touch with Vivekananda before his (Okakura's) visit. In a now culturally distant and unfamiliar manner, Vivekananda and Nivedita represent a peculiar cross-over between Hindu reformism and socialist politics (even quasi-revolutionary politics in Nivedita's case), whose rhetorical style is only fully to be grasped by reading their texts. Their very language mixes high religious appeal to Hindu ideals with a burning social concern and fierce hostility to colonialism. Nivedita, in particular, vigorously opposes the passivity which she sees as having infested Indian society and led to its domination by the British. She requires a far more 'Aggressive Hinduism,' the title of one of her pamphlets. The tone and the language of *The Ideals of the East* is permeated by precisely the evangelical intensity one would associate with a politically impassioned religious convert—so much so that

⁴¹ Ibid., p.237.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p.240.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.241.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.46.

⁴⁶ Thomas J. Rimer, "Hegel in Tokyo: Ernest Fenollosa and his 1882 Lecture on the Truth of Art," in *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002, pp.97–108). Thomas Rimer has also made an as yet unpublished translation of Fenollosa's "The True Theory of Art."

⁴⁷ Bernard Bosanquet [translation, notes, and prefatory essay], *The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co, 1886), p.xxxi.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15.

it is very difficult to think that this book would exist in its present form and style without Nivedita.

The second issue is that *The Ideals of the East* was edited and revised in India at the same time as Okakura was drafting *The Awakening of the East*, a text which was first published posthumously in 1939 in Japanese translation and then in English in 1940. The tone of this second text is even more extreme than *The Ideals of the East*, indeed even hysterical. It was apparently written by Okakura for his Indian friends and was the result of many conversations with them. *The Ideals of the East* tends intermittently towards extreme statements but stops short of actually delivering them with the full vigour of the collective ideology shared by Okakura and his Indian friends about Asian nationalism to be expressed in *The Awakening of the East*. This vigour was presumably among the reasons why the latter text had such appeal to Japanese ultranationalists in the 1930s. Its unbridled language may also have been the reason why it was not published in the English-speaking world in Okakura's lifetime, when Nivedita was under British police surveillance for political reasons.

Some of the five principles given above are contradictory, such as that between the notion of the character of Pacific Asians (5) and the notion of art progressing only through conflict (3). If the latter had not been present in Asian art, then would the pacificity which supposedly characterizes it have developed? And indeed if Asian culture had such a unity (1), why then should Japan in particular be endowed with such an historic role in preserving it (2, 4)? Part of the reason that Okakura was apparently relaxed about the co-presence of these contradictions was, as mentioned above, his dialectical method of thought absorbed via Fenollosa's original Hegelianism and his teachings on the social Darwinist Herbert Spencer in the late 1870s.⁴⁶

Parts of Okakura's texts emphasize the rebirth of Asia based on a renewed consciousness represented through its creation of art. They read like glosses on Bosanquet's prefatory essay and translation of the introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Fine Art*, which Okakura had almost certainly read by around 1891–2.

Spirit exists in the medium of consciousness, not in a peculiar kind of matter.⁴⁷

Art liberates the real import of appearances from the semblance and deception of this bad and fleeting world, and imparts to phenomenal semblances a higher reality, born of mind.⁴⁸

It is also clear that, for Hegel, the prominence given to art as the realization of an idea depends on a postulated inward spiritual state which by implication is the result of a broader cultural history.

[T]hat the level and excellency of art in attaining a realization adequate to its idea [or “as spirit and in spirit”], must depend upon the grade of inwardness and unity with which Idea and Shape display themselves as fused into one.⁴⁹

But Okakura’s art-historical method is more broadly informed than simply being a second or third-hand take on Hegel. Kinoshita notes that Okakura’s research method, found in his lectures on art history from the 1890s, is supported by four theories which were prevalent as the method of historical recording in nineteenth-century Europe.

1. Nationalism: the phenomena of art manifested through systematization by state units.
2. Democracy: reinforcement of realism by the viewpoint of the citizens and masses not centered on the court.
3. Individualism: the view that all works are in the last analysis the results of the efforts of individual artists.
4. A developmental historical view: a method for grasping phenomena and analysing them, where art phenomena are regarded as part of the causal relations of history.⁵⁰

Kinoshita also notes that Okakura must have learnt a lot from the historian Suematsu Kenshō 末松謙証 of the government’s Historical Bureau, who had himself absorbed these theories from Gustavus George Zerffi’s *The Science of History*.⁵¹

Kinoshita indicates various reasons for the phrase ‘Asia is one,’ so beloved of later ultranationalists. The *Gadō yōketsu* 画道要訣 [Secret Keys to the Way of Painting, 1680] by the Edo painter and theorist Kano Yasunobu 狩野安信 (1608–83)⁵² includes the phrase ‘*banbutsu wa hitotsu nari*’ (万物は一也 “the ten thousand things are one”), which borrows from Daoist thought. No doubt Okakura substituted *Ajia* for *banbutsu* as an elegant turn of phrase. For Fukunaga Akishi 福永光司, in Daoist thought the ‘many’ are comprised in the ‘one.’ The notion of ‘unitariness’ was thus probably adopted by Okakura as a kind of literary conceit in the same way as he dressed in a ‘Daoist’ manner.⁵³ *The Ideals of the East* should probably be read to mean ‘what describes art history as a whole are the various ideas where the art of Asia is seen as one.’⁵⁴

Kinoshita thinks ‘Asia is one’ makes sense when seen in a diagram of opposites, ‘Asia versus Europe,’ which comprised two possible developments. One was a direction which raised the ideal onto an external plane that transcended the domain of art history, while the other located ‘Asia is one’ on an internal plane within the domains of beauty and art and tried to derive an art history from that. This latter position might also be expected to extend to a critique of modern ideals such as the recording of art-historical facts as posited by the four historical theories habitually deployed in his time. For

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.138.

⁵⁰ Kinoshita, *Bigakukai*, p.32

⁵¹ That is, Gustavus George Zerffi, *The Science of History* [with an introductory letter by K. Suyematz, i.e., Suematsu Kenchō, Baron] (privately printed, London, 1879). This book is in the British Library. “The Science of History” was Zerffi’s inaugural address as chairman of the Royal Historical Society on 13th November 1879, and is printed in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* for 1879, Royal Historical Society, London, pp.1–20.

⁵² For a discussion of *Gadō yōketsu* in English, see Karen M. Gerhart, “Talent, Training and Power: the Kano Painting Workshop in the 17th Century,” in *Copying the Master and Stealing his Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. Brenda G. Jordan and Victoria Weston (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), pp.21–9.

⁵³ Fukunaga Akishi 福永明司, “Okakura Tenshin to Dōkyō,” [Okakura Tenshin and Daoism], in *ZS*, vol.8, pp.479–94.

⁵⁴ Kinoshita, *Bigakukai*, p.34.

⁵⁵ Kinoshita, *Bigagukai*, p.35.

⁵⁶ Kinoshita, "Shōwa zenki," p.330.

⁵⁷ See Kinoshita, "Shōwa zenki," p.334.

Kinoshita, Okakura's use of 'ideals'—not translated into the plural in Japanese, and left as 'ideal'—is an extremely Hegelian usage.⁵⁵ Through this usage Okakura does not speak of an 'ideal' as a purpose or desired state which must be attained; I would say he uses 'ideal' more as an evaluatory criterion of thought for positioning concepts, and by extension for historically and culturally classifying art objects that might be considered to embody those ideals in the world. Unlike other ultranationalists, Okakura was concerned in the 1889 extract from *Kokka* with trying to describe a Japanese art history as a whole, and he later considered this (by around 1900) to lie within an integrated domain called 'Asia,' and not just the particular isolated phenomena found in India, China, or Japan. This was the case however much he felt constrained to privilege Japan as the culmination and historical reservoir of tendencies passed to it from the first two cultural domains. Hotta Yojūrō 堀田與十郎, an ultranationalist, noted in 1937 that Okakura's comment that "the highest [state] in the art of the world was in India, China and Japan" meant that the influence which had hitherto been seen as coming from Greece to Asia should be re-written as 'influence towards Greece and Rome.' Okakura's view that "the spirit of Japan was to accumulate and protect the heritage of Asia over 1500 years" was an awakening of Japan from the position of Asia itself as manifesting a World Art, rather than from a "Western-centered position which had [hitherto] defined what World Art was."⁵⁶

Kinoshita notes in conclusion that the phrase 'Asia is one' records that the plural appearances of Asian cultures are one system, or the meshes of one web, and that the writing of an overall Asian art history is possible. Indeed the final page of handwritten notes on the draft manuscript which became *The Awakening of the East* includes the phrase "We are one," indicating that the book was intended for Indians in support of their anti-British activities. But it also indicates that Okakura thought there had been contact between Asians for as long as humanity had had a history, and that 'the one' in Okakura's formulation proves his belief in the length of that history.⁵⁷

Biographical Background to Thought

⁵⁸ See Kinoshita, "Okakura Tenshin to senjika no shisō," in Amadamu, no.40, March 1999, pp.4–16, according to which Aoki Shigeru 青木繁 has also found a text which gives Okakura Kakuzō's place of birth as Tokyo.

I have initially avoided introducing an important element of personal biography into the interpretation of Okakura's thought because this must be seen as having its own intellectual dynamic. However, there is no doubt that the intensity of his passionate attachment to an underlying Asian unity had, in addition to its intellectual basis in opposing the 'West,' a psychological origin as well. This seems to have been due to a need to return to a primordial unity after separation. His life was full of these separations and returns. His own father's separation from his clan to move to Yokohama 横浜, where he was born,⁵⁸ was followed by Okakura's own separation from his father, both physically and in culture through his having mastered English before studying

classical East Asian culture. I hardly think this can be taken to mean that his English was better than his Japanese, but simply that he was likely to have been good at it since childhood to the extent that he could master complex literary expressions with facility and a lack of personal embarrassment as he got older. Okakura acquired his knowledge of East Asian culture by mastering the textual decoding practice of turning *kanbun* 漢文 or classical Chinese into Japanese. This mastery was surely in conflict with his later avowed hatred for the constricting effect of Tokugawa rule on Japanese culture that had most developed and disseminated the use of *kanbun* among the samurai class. Okakura later wanted to return, as he saw it, to ideals of Japanese art which would equal or go beyond those of ancient Greece, so the notion of separation or of distance and return is basic to his thought.

Okakura also had a history of separating from and rejoining his wives. He left Japan and his first wife to visit Europe and America on an official mission, and on the boat on his return from America in 1888 was entrusted with the care of the pregnant Hatsu (or Hazuko) 波津 (波津子), wife of Kuki Ryūichi, then Minister at the Japanese Legation in Washington. An affair began between them which appears to have lasted until about 1898, and was the subject of a scurrilous letter circulated in that year which forced Okakura to resign both as Head of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (*Tōkyō bijutsu gakkō* 東京美術学校) and as Head of the Fine Art Section of the Imperial Household Museum (*Teishitsu baku butsukan* 帝室博物館). We should note for the moment that this latter post also carried with it responsibility for writing the first official art history of Japan, which was to be published in a French translation at the Paris World Exposition in 1900 and later the same year in the original Japanese.⁵⁹

Okakura's relationship with Hazuko may be glimpsed through the recollection of his visits by her son Kuki Shūzō, who lived with her around 1895–96 and often saw Tenshin at his mother's house in Negishi 根岸, which she may have taken to be near Okakura.⁶⁰ Kuki last saw Okakura at a house of his mother's in 1903–04, and last saw Okakura himself when, feigning ignorance, he passed him in a corridor whilst he was studying at Tokyo University, where Okakura gave his lectures in April–June 1910. Kuki's own personality was itself split between an intense eroticism and a religious spirituality,⁶¹ and this may be seen as derived from his idealization of Okakura.⁶² But the split or tension in Kuki also curiously resembles Okakura's own distancing between a longed-for cultural unity in the past and a tendency towards the abstract idealization of contemporary Meiji Japan, which stood as both the contemporary representative of the vestiges of that unity and its creative potential.

It would appear that Kuki Ryūichi refused Hatsu a divorce although they lived separately, but she was effectively abandoned by Okakura, lost her sanity and was confined to a mental hospital, where she died in 1931.

⁵⁹ *Honkō: Nihon Teikoku Bijutsu Ryakushi* [Main draft: The shorter art history of the Japanese empire], "Tōkyō teishitsu hakubutsukan gozōhan," [Editions of the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum] (Tōkyō: Nihon Bijutsusha, 1908, reprint ed. 1908). Professor A.L. Sadler's copy of the second edition of 1908 is in the University of Sydney Fisher Library East Asian Collection.

⁶⁰ Kuki Shūzō, "Negishi" (1934), in Kuki Shūzō, *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū*, [Complete works of Kuki Shūzō], vol.5, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981, pp.224–39). Among other texts relevant to Okakura's biography are: [Bigelow] W.S.B & [Lodge], J.E.L., "Okakura Kakuzo, 1862–1913" (Obituary), *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, no.14 (1913) pp.468–70, in *CEW*, vol.3, pp.227–32; Harada Minoru 原田実, *Okakura Tenshin* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bijutsu Sensho [1970] 1977; Horioka Yasuko 堀岡保子, *Okakura Tenshin: Ajia bunka sen'yō no senkusha* [Okakura Tenshin: the forerunner of the enhancement of Asian culture] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1974); Kawakami Tetsutarō 川上徹太郎, "Okakura Tenshin," *MBZ*, vol.38; Miyagawa Torao, *Okakura Tenshin* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1956); Okakura Kazuo (Okakura's son), *Chichi Tenshin wo meguru hitobito* [People around my father Tenshin] (Tokyo: Bunsendō, 1943; reprinted Tokyo, 1998); Saitō Ryūzō 齋藤隆三, *Okakura Tenshin* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1960), 1963; Surendranath Tagore, "Some Remembrances of Kakuzo Okakura," *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, vol.II, pt.II, August 1936 (in *CEW*, 1984, vol.3, pp.233–42).

⁶¹ See Pincus, *Authenticating Culture*.

⁶² For a psychoanalytical interpretation, see Sakebe Megumi 酒部恵み, "Tenshin no kage," in *Fuzai no uta: Kuki Shūzō no sekai* [Song of absence: The world of Kuki Shūzō] (Tokyo: TBS Buritanika, 1990) pp.5–44.

⁶³ For her letters to Okakura, see *CEW*, vol.3.

⁶⁴ See Sakebe, "Tenshin no kage."

Okakura had returned to his own wife Motoko in about 1898, having also fathered a second son, Saburō 三郎, in 1895 (with a different mother, Yasugi Nao 八杉直), who was brought up with the surname Wada 和田. Okakura left for India in 1901. He subsequently had many other platonic attractions to non-Japanese women, such as his older patron Isabella Stuart Gardner in Boston and his young poet correspondent in India, the widow Priyambada Devi Banerjee.⁶⁵ The relationships with Gardner, Devi, and Hazuko appear in Okakura's last work, the operatic text *The White Fox* written early in 1913.⁶⁴ Yet his ability to secure affection and love from his family despite his irregular, sometimes wild, behaviour and peripatetic foreign travels is testified to by the presence of his younger brother, wife, sister, daughter and first son Kazuo at his death, and by Kazuo's having later devoted himself to two volumes of a biography of his father.

Intellectual Tendencies

⁶⁵ See Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹内好, "Okakura Tenshin—Ajiakan ni tatsu bunmei hilhan," [Okakura Tenshin—Cultural critique erected as a view of Asia], *Asahi Jānaru*, 27 May 1963; reprinted in *Nihon to Ajia*, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), vol.3 of *Takeuchi Yoshimi Hyōronshū*, 1966, and in *Okakura Tenshin, Hito to Shisō*, ed. Hashikawa Bunzō (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1982, Okakura Tenshin Hito to Shisō; pp.178-92). Takeuchi Yoshimi, "Fukuzawa Yūkichi to Okakura Tenshin" [Fukuzawa Yūkichi and Okakura Tenshin] in *Kindai Nihon to Chūgoku* [China and Modern Japan], ed. Takeuchi Yoshimi and Hashikawa Bunzō, pt.1, (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1974, pp.17-35).

⁶⁶ Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *The Awakening of the East*, written in India between late December 1901 and early October 1902. According to reminiscences by Surendranath Tagore, the original title was possibly *The Awakening of Asia*. See *ZS*, vol.1, pp.480-4 for a full publishing history. The book was posthumously published in Japanese translation as *Risō no Saiken* [The reconstruction of ideals] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1938). Another Japanese translation was made by Asano Akira 浅野晃 as *Tōyō no kakusei* [The awakening of the East], in *ZSR* 1939. According to *ZW* (vol.1, p.484), the only version in which the original text /OVER

Okakura was a bureaucratic activist who wrote polemics and reports in his twenties but in his thirties, when separated from direct policy influence after 1898, wrote more considered if equally polemical texts, usually in English. Several Japanese scholars who have placed Okakura in the intellectual currents of his time see him as particularly important in the debate as to whether the identity of Japan required it to exit from Asia or be further drawn into it.⁶⁵

It was *The Awakening of the East* of 1938⁶⁶ (the book was completed in 1902 but remained unpublished in Okakura's lifetime) that was to embody most particularly the imbrication of his thought in contemporary intellectual currents. These saw Japan expanding into Asia as the representative of the restitution and reassertion of 'Asian' values. The major propositions of this work may be grouped as follows:

1. Asia achieves its contemporary identification in humiliation before the 'West' with which 'Asia' is in a zero-sum relation: what the 'West' gains in glory 'Asia' loses in shame.

Brothers and Sisters of Asia!

A vast suffering is on the land of our ancestors. The Oriental has become a synonym for the effeminate, the native an epithet for the slave. Our lauded gentleness is the irony which alien courtesy owes to cowardice. In the name of commerce we have welcomed the militant, in the name of civilization we have embraced the imperialistic, in the name of Christianity we have prostrated before the merciless.

The glory of Europe is the humiliation of Asia! The march of history is a record of the steps that led the West into inevitable antagonism to ourselves.⁶⁷

2. The subjugation is as much to an economic system which enables the vastly increased replication of material goods as it in the form of spiritual and intellectual enervation which has allowed this situation to come to pass.

Industrial conquest is awful, moral subjugation is intolerable. Our ancestral ideals, our family institutions, our ethics, our religions are daily fading away. Each succeeding generation loses moral stamina by contact with the Westerners.⁶⁸

We have bowed to their armaments, we have surrendered to their merchandise, why not be vanquished by their so-called culture?⁶⁹

Shame to our mothers that they bore a race of slaves! Shame to our daughters that they shall wed a race of cowards!⁷⁰

3. Asian countries are separated by a lack of external contacts and a concentration on internal problems. The European languages have inserted themselves together with the prestige of their knowledge systems. Thus, despite the underlying historical unity of Asian cultures, many structurally similar features of their societies, and sometimes direct commonalities of religion and other beliefs, there is a lack of mutual knowledge.

The mutual isolation of Asiatic countries prevents them from comprehending the appalling situation in its total significance. Engrossed in bewildering struggles of their own, they disregard the fact that the self-same misfortune has befallen their neighbours.⁷¹

It is wonderful how little we know each other. We blab in all the languages of Europe—which one of us has learned a single Oriental tongue besides his own?⁷²

The lack of a common literary vehicle for Eastern scholarship, a natural distaste for expression in a foreign tongue, the disdain of cheap notoriety by hasty generalization, the absence of communication and interchange among our thinkers is a standing barrier to the formulation of the fundamental principles of our common civilization.⁷³

The unity of Asiatic consciousness in spirit and form is most apparent in our art whose subtle refinement far transcends the amateur coarseness of Western creations.⁷⁴

4. In Asia there is a primordial sense of community and a cooperative order which has been subverted by Western industrial and political competitiveness. This provides no social order in the place of what it has overthrown to its own advantage.

But now the West comes as a perfect stranger, subverting the order which she is powerless to replace, imposing a scheme which we consider as utter ruin. Victory or Death?⁷⁵

The Chinese ideograph for a family represents three persons under a roof and in itself signifies the Eastern triad of father, mother, and child

/was published was *Seibunkaku*, 1940 (that is, before *CEW*, vol.1, 1984). The intellectual background to pan-Asianism in Japanese thought of the late Meiji period is found in Takeuchi Yoshimi, "Ajiashugi no tenbō" [The outlook for Asianism], in *Gendai Nihon Shisō Taikēi, 9 Ajiashugi* [Compendium of modern Japanese thought, 9, Asianism], ed. Takeuchi Yoshimi (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963, pp.7-63).

⁶⁷ *The Awakening of the East*, p.136.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.141.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.142.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.142-3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.144.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.149.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.151.

⁷⁸ See Takeuchi, "Okakura Tenshin—Ajjakan," p.409.

⁷⁹ Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, p.158.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.158.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.158.

⁸² Ibid., p.159.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.163–4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.164.

in contradistinction to the Western duet of man and wife. It involves at once the triple relations of paternal care, marital helpfulness, and filial obedience, bound together in indissoluble bonds of mutual loves and duties, which when widened into the social-ideal, flower into that Benevolence, Brotherhood, Loyalty, and Courtesy which constitute the beauty and fragrance of Asiatic life.⁷⁶

Truly we have not that crude notion of personal rights guarded by mutual assertions—that perpetual elbowing through the crowd—that constant snarling over the bones, which seems to be the glory of the Occident. Our conceptions of liberty are far higher than these.⁷⁷

5. The only way this humiliation may be overcome is by a revised consciousness of what it means to be 'Asian,' as is the case for all the other cultures gathered under this tutelary unity. Such a consciousness will only be attained by an outward assertiveness, including the use of military means if necessary. Some Japanese scholars like Takeuchi⁷⁸ suppose that Okakura thought military force was un-Asian or anti-Asian. The original English texts of *The Ideals of the East* and *The Awakening of Japan* do not support this supposition—that is, unless we are to allow that Okakura's romanticism led him to flagrantly manipulate English metaphors, the full import of which did not concern him.

Our recovery is Consciousness. Our remedy is—The Sword.⁷⁹

The West on the other hand through its incessant thirst for domination has developed the concrete notion of nationality in each of its limited territories.⁸⁰

But wondrous is the irony of fate! European imperialism has itself furnished the weapons by which it will be destroyed.⁸¹

Our constant contact with them has disclosed to us that the bully is a coward, that their power lies in undue prestige not in individual prowess. Our acquisition of scientific methods has taught us we can compete with them whenever there is fair play.⁸²

6. Japan has appeared on the horizon as the harbinger of a new *Pax Asiatica*. If the Japanese could accomplish so much, how much more could be done by the greater populations of China and India! They only require leadership of a kind which Japan's example—that is Japan itself—could provide.

[T]he brilliant resurrection of Japan is very instructive as an instance of Asiatic revival.⁸³

The sun has risen again in the East to dispel the night of despondency. ... Forty millions of self-sacrificing islanders have accomplished this, why should not four hundred millions of China, and the three hundred millions of India be armed to stay the further aggression of the predatory West?⁸⁴

And a mighty Asiatic peace shall come to clothe humanity with universal harmony. And Europe shall receive the blessing of Asia given with a freer if a firmer hand.⁸⁵ Ibid.

7. A great crisis now hangs over Asia, which has to choose to abandon the political tinkering introduced in response to 'Westernization' and effect an outspoken and uncontested return to 'Asian' values. Those who do not make this leap of faith will suffer a spiritual death.

The hour has come when the leaders shall cease to dream of constitutional measures or economic protests ... when the alien prestige shall be broken by mystery and the silent deluge of overwhelming millions shall flood the land in a single night.

The cowards shrink before the brilliant image of freedom. The cautions [*sic*, probably 'cautious'] pause on the threshold of a great revolution. Do they prefer Death in Life or Life in Death? A crisis has now arrived in our history that the dread ordeal has to be faced.⁸⁶

Categories of Art History

If Okakura was outwardly concerned to overcome 'Asian' passivity and to push back against the West, by military means if necessary, he was also aware that artistic creativity must be based on a forward-looking art history. This must deploy a more accurate, and in certain terms critical, knowledge in cultural interactions with different, historically conditioned, external environments in the past. Such a concern involved a new attitude to historical writing about art from ancient records as well as to rediscovered ancient art objects.

This attitude found articulation in the late 1880s according to Tanaka, when Miyake Yonekichi 三宅米吉, a historian active *circa* 1887–91, held that "history is the academic field of knowing the vestiges of the past."⁸⁷ Interestingly, Miyake tied the origin of the Banner of the Four Devarāja at Hōryū-ji 法隆寺 to Assyria, thus suggesting Japan's connection to an ancient Asian civilization that had predated European civilization. Developing an idea that also appears widely in Okakura's work, Miyake implied that Asia was not merely contiguous with both Japan and Europe, it was a part of Japan's past.⁸⁸ The problem for Japanese historians in the late-nineteenth century was that they could try to rewrite Japan into a previously unknown or ignored past in the historical terms of the European Enlightenment, for which Japan's past and present were synonymous. But their adoption of a Eurocentric developmental model would have meant a "virtual denial of Japan's past and acceptance of a perpetual state of inferiority." Japanese history would have been "an incomplete variation of, or an anomaly compared to, that of Europe."⁸⁹

Okakura through all his work tried to show Japanese art history as

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.168

⁸⁷ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993), p.50

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Kinoshita, "Amadamu, no.40, March 1999, pp.4-13"

⁹¹ Rimer, "Hegel in Tokyo," pp.38-48.

⁹² Satō Dōshin, *Meijiokkato Kindaibijutsu, Bi no Seijigaku* [Modern art and the Meiji state: The political science of beauty] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), pp.142-3.

⁹³ Satō Dōshin, "*Nihon Bijutsu*" no *Tanjō, Kindai Nihon no "kotoba" to senryaku* [The birth of "Japanese art": The diction of modern Japan and its strategy] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996), p.171.

endogenous, whatever links it may have had with continental Asian precursors. Kinoshita, in his excellent summaries which describe the generation of Okakura's art-historical thought and the way this was used by Japanese ultranationalism in the 1930s, clarifies the way Okakura's understanding of Japanese art history was first of all based on a thorough knowledge of art objects.⁹⁰ This was gained in 1882, 1884, and 1886 as a result of visits to old temples with his superior Kuki Ryūichi and Fenollosa. It meant that despite all his debts to Fenollosa's interpretations of Hegel via Spencer, he had had the opportunity to view old works himself and to form his own views. These have a freshness unattainable by a mere transposition of Hegelian theoretical categories. Here one must not overlook the fact that Hegel's own aesthetics was also based on very careful examination of particular art objects. Whether this model of examination passed to Okakura directly via Fenollosa, or possibly by a German teacher of Fenollosa's, is unclear because, as we have seen above, Hegel's main aesthetic ideas could not have been directly understood in Japan until the early 1890s when Bosanquet's translation of the German philosopher was available.⁹¹

By 1889 Okakura was Head of the Fine Art Section of the Imperial Household Museum as well as effective director of the Tokyo School of Fine Art, where in 1890-92 he gave the first systematic lectures on 'Japanese Art History' and 'Western Art History.' His lectures treated Japan as the main part of the East, but this position had changed by his 1910 lectures at Tokyo University which now tended to include China under the rubric of Japan.⁹² It is important also to remember that the late-Edo clan backgrounds of major participants in the Tokyo art world of the 1880s and 1890s were imbricated between policies for promoting trade, protecting ancient art, and establishing an art education system, as well as in the conflicts between several intra-élite groups contesting for variations in these policy fields.⁹³

In 1891 Okakura wrote an *Outline for a Compilation of Japanese Art History* and planned to publish *A History of Japanese Art* in two volumes, Volume One in 1891 and Volume Two in 1892. But these plans were put aside when in 1893 Okakura went for five months on his first visit to China to investigate Chinese art for the Imperial Household Museum. On 28 September 1897, a commission for a Japanese art history to be written for the 1900 Paris World Exposition was sent to him by the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade Temporary Expositions Bureau. But, on 17 March 1898, Okakura suddenly resigned from the Imperial Museum and his post as Director of the Tokyo School of Fine Art, and from the editorship of the *History of Japanese Art*. As mentioned earlier, a scurrilous letter was in circulation about his private life, and Kuki Ryūichi, with whose wife Okakura had been having an affair for nearly ten years, became President of the Imperial Museum and Okakura's superior on 16 March, the day before Okakura resigned. Despite the *frisson* of scandal, the resignation incident is seen by Kinoshita as being a result of a conflict between Okakura's 'Asianist' attitude in his search for

a cross-Asian origin to Japanese art forms, and the contemporary, imperial-institution-centred nationalist construction of Japanese art history. This was based on a notion of the Greater Japan Empire, an empire which had just defeated China in war. The gap between these two positions had already been apparent in the first issue of *Kokka*, ten years earlier. So this conflict about art history, whatever personal trajectories were involved, was also one about the political use of aesthetics to express a fictional national unity and grandeur, exactly as indicated by Redfield.⁹⁴

In fact, Okakura still had one foot left in the establishment, since he retained membership of the Committee for the Preservation of Shrines and Temples. As Satō has carefully established, the flavour of an intra-élite conflict based on former clan affiliation is very hard to dispel in understanding alliances and ruptures in the 1898 art-school crisis.⁹⁵ Those other teachers who resigned from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in sympathy with him were largely from clans loyal to the Tokugawa, and were thus opposed to the artists and officials from the Outer Clans who had become the intra-élite winners after the Meiji Restoration with their policies of opening up the country and of economic and educational development.

Japanese art history was constituted by four kinds of publication in the 1890s and 1910s:

1. The official *History of Japanese Art*.
2. The research journal *Kokka* from 1888.
3. Various illustrated collections of Japanese art published by the de luxe publisher Shinbi Shoin 審美書院, with official writers and official cooperation but nominally by non-official writers and principally edited by Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖, who had been in the first graduating group from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.
4. Various individually published art histories.⁹⁶

The editorship of the official *History of Japanese Art* passed to Fukuchi Mataichi 福地復一. His personal rivalry with Okakura, as well as the animosity felt towards the latter by many teachers at the art school, went back to 1893 when Fukuchi had stood in for Okakura at the Imperial Household Museum whilst he was away in China. Fukuchi's Japanese text and the French translation were passed to the Expositions Bureau in December 1899 and published as *Histoire de l'art du Japon* in April 1900 with 290 pages of main text and 322 illustrations. In 1901 the Japanese text was published as *Draft Short Art History of the Japanese Empire* (*Kōhon Nippon teikoku Bijitsu Ryūkushi* 稿本日本帝国美術略史). It is marked by the "complete disappearance of a sightline concerning relations with foreign countries and adjoining fields (such as literature and religion)," and "presents an 'art' of 'Japan' where Japanese art history continues an unbroken lineage through a single line of imperial descent over 10,000 ages." In particular, it drastically reduced the space devoted to the era of the Ashikaga shogunate 足利幕府 (1392–1568), at the inception

⁹⁴ See Redfield, *The Politics of Esthetics*.

⁹⁵ Satō, *Meijikokka to Kindaibijutsu*, pp.58–63.

⁹⁶ Satō, "Nihon Bijutsu" no Tanjō, pp.221–4.

⁹⁷ Kinoshita, *Art History Forum*.

⁹⁸ Satō, “*Nihon Bijutsu no Tanjō*,” p.200.

⁹⁹ Kinoshita, *Art History Forum*.

¹⁰⁰ Kinoshita, *Amadamu*.

of which the imperial house was split into two lines, and the era of Emperor Kanmu (781–806), during which the capital was moved from Nara 奈良 to Nagaoka 長岡 to Heian 平安. The preface interprets Japanese art as having advanced along an original path and having displayed characteristics which should be called ‘Japanese.’⁹⁷

In 1900 Okakura had written “Historiography of Japanese Art: Chapter One, The Six Dynasties” (published in *Nihon Bijutsu*, no.17), but in 1901–02 he travelled to India and in 1903 published *The Ideals of the East*. In the seventeen months after this chapter of “Historiography of Japanese Art” there is a subtle change of emphasis away from seeing Japan as the continuation of transfers from China, India, and Central Asia, and towards the art history of Japan becoming the history of Asiatic ideals in and of themselves. The other important difference from the official history is in the time-scale. Okakura’s earlier *Outline for a Compilation of Japanese Art History* (Nihon Bijutsushi Hensan Kōyō 日本美術史編纂綱要), begun in 1890 as an internal draft of the Imperial Museum, had included the Meiji period; that is, it had covered what was contemporary art at the time of writing (however conservatively positioned).

After 1901, Okakura’s writing in English, his visits to India, his sending to India of the painters Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観 and Hishida Shunsō 菱田春草 in 1903, and then his travels in America and Europe in 1904–05 and the sending of the painter Shimomura Kanzan 下村観山 to England in 1903–05 can all be seen as attempts to position Japanese art externally in Europe and Asia. So, even though Okakura was nominally in an anti-establishment position after 1898, he had a state-level vision for Japanese art. Perhaps Okakura himself was regarding Japan and Asia from the position of an internationalist, but one that still privileged Japan.⁹⁸

The art-historical implications of phrases such as “the important privileges of Japan” or “the special character of the Japanese people” found in *The Ideals of the East* position Japan as the leader of an Asian alliance. They also represent a tendency in Okakura’s thought which could not completely avoid compromise with the idea that “Japanese empire = an imperial family with a lineage of 10,000 generations.”⁹⁹ This complicity with the aggressive ideals of the Meiji state may account for the later widespread diffusion of Okakura’s ideas in the 1930s, when this aggressiveness was implemented in full. Kinoshita dates the advent of revisionist views of Okakura to a 1938 article by Asano Hikaru 朝野晃 in the second issue of *Shin Nihon* 新日本 about *The Awakening of Japan*.¹⁰⁰ This was the same year as the first publication in Japanese of *Risō no Saiken* 理想の再見 [The Reconstruction of Ideals], which was later republished as an edited version of the original English in 1942, titled *The Awakening of the East* (Tōyō no Kakusei 東洋の覚醒).

The way Okakura’s thought could posthumously be interpreted to support ultranationalism is most typically seen in an interview of 14 June 1942 with

the painter Yokoyama Taikan, who was then Secretary of the Association to Commemorate Okakura, and which dealt with the forthcoming raising of a commemorative stone to Okakura in November that year. The stone was to be a massive 5.4 metres, with a profile of Okakura in low relief by Niiumi Takezō 新海武造 and an inscription by Yokoyama of Okakura's famous phrase, "Asia is one": "it would face the Pacific" and would be "intended to show Okakura's indomitable guise and be full of the spirit of staring down America."¹⁰¹

Okakura's writing is complex and full of shifts. Despite the incantatory tenor of three of the texts in English, his art-historical position included two fresh approaches. The first is that art history was a physical, existential re-creation of the past. "People in the world regard history as edited records of the facts of the past, that is, as a dead thing. This is an important error. What is history exists in our bodies and is continually in activity."¹⁰²

Art history had also to be recomposed from the records, since its causes lay in a wide net of international cultural flows: "the causes for art of whatever country necessarily exist from the ancient past. [In Japanese art history,] that the Suiko court rapidly raised its level and attained to a state provided with a splendid literature and art undoubtedly came about through relations with foreign countries."¹⁰³ Art history should be proleptic in Redfield's sense; that is, it should define the future: "The key to art history does not stop at the recording of the past at all. It must necessarily also constitute the ground for making future art as well."¹⁰⁴

Okakura anticipated and agreed with the self-critical move away from earlier Japanese painting history as being a mere register of biographical anecdotes. This tendency had begun with *History of Japanese Painting* (1901) (Nihon kaigashi 日本絵画史) by Yokoi Jitō 横井時冬 and with *A History of Painting in Recent Times* (1903) (*Kinsei kaigashi* 近世絵画史) by Fujioka Sakutarō 藤岡朔太郎.¹⁰⁵ The same direction may also be found in later art-historical writing by Okakura, such as his English notes for *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures* (Tokyo: Shinbi Shoin, 1910):

Japan is no exception to the rule that island nations draw from the adjacent continents for inspiration and actual teaching.

And,

The wars and disruptions of China made our country a sanctuary for her exiles and repository of her art works, and we have deliberately sought her teachings by sending over our scholars from the very earliest times. Our harshest critics, however, can not say that we have been merely copyists, or that we have failed to assimilate what we have taken. There has never been any lack of lively national feeling, or ability to discriminate what suited our peculiarities and reject the dross.¹⁰⁶

Satō Dōshin notes that already by 1891 Fukuchi Mataichi had drafted the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Okakura Tenshin, *Nihon Bijutsushi* [An art history of Japan], reprinted with afterword by Kinoshita Nagahiro (Tokyo: Heibonsha 1900/2001) [ZS, vol.4], p.10.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁰⁵ Kinoshita, *Bigakukai*, p.31.

¹⁰⁶ *CEW*, vol.2, p.409.

¹⁰⁷ Ernest F. Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (New York: F.A. Stokes, 1911, and Dover reprint, 1963). On Fenollosa and his times, see also Van Wyck Brooks, *Fenollosa and His Circle: With Other Essays in Biography* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1962); Warren I. Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Kevin Nute, "Ernest Fenollosa and the Universal Implications of Japanese Art," *Japan Forum* 7.1 (April, 1995); Aida Yuen Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s" (DPhil diss., Columbia University, 1999).

¹⁰⁸ *CEW*, vol. 2, p.409.

¹⁰⁹ Satō, *Meijikokka to Kindaibijutsu*, p.147.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.148.

first chronology of Japanese art, and that even earlier Fenollosa had had Ariga Nagao prepare a chronology for China and Japan; this was perhaps the basis for his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, which was to be posthumously published in London in 1911.¹⁰⁷ Thus Fenollosa should perhaps be seen as the actual originator of 'Japanese Art History' and 'Eastern Art History.' What is not so visible in Fenollosa's book is the slippage in the usage of the term *Tōyōteki* 東洋的, 'Eastern' or 'Oriental,' into 'Japanese.'

It had been the late-Edo samurai painter Satake Shozan 佐竹曙山 (1748–85) who had first presented the distinction of 'Eastern morals, Western technique' (*Tōyō dōtoku, Seiyō geijutsu* 東洋道德, 西洋技術). Before Meiji, '*Tōyōteki*' was used to indicate both a civilizational world-view and a view of history, in addition to being used to denote a geographical space.¹⁰⁸ The changing place of Japan was indicated by Okakura in his 1892 art-school lectures on Western art, which had used the Altai Mountains as a dividing line between 'East' and 'West.' But he had extended the scope of the East by the time of his 1910 *History of Arts and Crafts in East Asia* so that its meaning encompassed Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. Victory in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95 had led to the notion of Japan as the 'leader of the alliance in the East' which would reorganize the 'history' of 'the East.' This attitude surfaced in Kuki Ryūichi's preface to the 1900 *Histoire de l'art du Japon*, which relegated the glories of Chinese and Indian art to the past and asserted that it was Japan which could now compile the 'History of Eastern Art.'¹⁰⁹ After the further victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05 the 'History of Eastern Art' turned towards the creation of an 'external self,' a stage in which Japan would leave or escape from Asia and become one of the Great Powers, preparing the rationalization for its domination over Asia.¹¹⁰

Categories of Art and its Practice

¹¹¹ Takeuchi, "Okakura Tenshin—Ajiakan ni tatsu bunmei hihan," p.398.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.403.

Takeuchi has pointed out that for Okakura beauty was opposed to science which is linked to war, it being the way of beauty to transcend this.¹¹¹ Nivedita's placing of Okakura as a kind of anti-establishment William Morris in her preface to *The Ideals of the East* in 1903 thus had its rationale. But Okakura in the 1880s and 1890s was concerned with the creation of a new national art and was not opposed to the learning of Western painting as such. He was concerned with what should be the foundation of learning, and for him this was 'spirit' (a word brought into Japanese from the French *esprit* and the German *Geist* and meaning 'the mind in the world'), which had to be the internal realization of the self.¹¹² He was thus particularly opposed to the formalization of education under the policies of civilizing and opening up the country since the Meiji Restoration, and to the increase of bureaucratic power which accompanied the reach of the new education system into all levels of Japanese life. This aversion had been fed by his first appointment

at the age of nineteen after leaving university. From August 1880 he began in the Ministry of Education as an assistant to Iizawa Shūji 飯沢修二, the first director of the Tokyo Music School (which had opened before the Fine Arts School in 1889). Iizawa was an ambitious bureaucrat who implemented a system of only 'Western' music education in Japanese schools, and reinforced this by also being one of the first standardizers of teacher training education in Japan.¹¹³ Thus behind Okakura's somewhat exaggerated attachment to 'Japanese Painting' during the 1880s was an opposition not so much to 'Western painting' as to bureaucratic ambition and standardization, as well as to the single-minded pursuit of Western pedagogic models in the cognate discipline of musical training.

A similar position to that of Iizawa might be seen in Okakura's *bête noire* in the painting world, Koyama Shōtarō 小山正太郎, who in 1882 published a text titled 'Sho wa bijutsu narazu' 書は美術ならず [Calligraphy is not an Art] in the May-June-July issue of the journal *Tōyō Gakugei Zasshi* 東洋学芸雑誌. This was followed by a response from Okakura in the August-September-October issue of the *Meiji Bunka Zenshū*.

Their debate cannot be seen outside the context of discussion over what was to be included under the category of 'art' or 'fine art.' This was an exhibition category for certain types of works, the Japanese word *bijutsu* 美術 having been created for the works shown at the Vienna Exposition in 1873.¹¹⁴ It was also a concept introduced into critical discourse by the philosopher Nishi Amane in his "Theories of Aesthetics," which were lectures for the Emperor Meiji presented between 1872 and 1877. Amane's lectures were thus roughly contemporary with the inception of the first Technical Art School (Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō 工部美術学校, closed in 1883), where 'art' clearly meant 'technique.' To some extent the issue of categories of work and types of concept for art overlaid each other in the speech "The True Theory of Art" (Bijutsu shiusesetsu 美術真説) presented by Fenollosa in May 1882. This was a rather straightforward introduction to some types of art works, along with Spencerian and Hegelian concepts of art and its development.¹¹⁵ Fenollosa was in search of an artistic criterion for the connoisseurship of art objects and their critique. It was the 'idea' which always created an absolute and unique sensation in preserving the internal relations to an object based on the separation of 'beauty' from 'utility.' Fenollosa's 'idea' was opposed to 'realism,' 'technique,' 'science' and 'industry.'¹¹⁶

In a debate which seemingly failed to distinguish between 'calligraphy' and 'writing,' Koyama came out against 'writing' being art since it was merely a sign used for language. For him, what people like in writing is not the writing itself but the phrases it is employed to write, the writer, and the historical period of the writing. Koyama also negatively compared writing to technique, and asked if what the wall painter or lantern decorator does is art. Okakura, in reply, thought that if calligraphy was studied and practised

¹¹³ Ibid., p.405.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ernest F. Fenollosa, "Bijutsu Shinsetsu" [The true theory of art]; only the transcription of the Japanese translation by Ōmori Ichū from lecture notes survives, *Meiji Bunka Zenshū* [Complete works of Meiji culture] (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1928), vol.12, pp.157-74. Also in *Fuenorosa Bijutsu Ronsō* [Fenollosa's essays on art], ed. Yamaguchi Seiichi 山口誠一 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1988, Fuenorosa Bijutsu Ronshu, pp.7-36); Aoki Shigeru 青木繁 and Sakai Tadayasu 酒井忠康, eds., *Bijutsu, Nihon Kindai Sbisō Taikei* [Art: compendium of modern Japanese thought] vol.13 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), pp.35-65. For an English interpretation, see Rimer, "Hegel in Tokyo."

¹¹⁶ Nakamura Giichi 中村義一, "Nihon Bijutsu no 'Seiyō' to 'Nihon': Sho wa bijutsu narazu ronsō" [The 'West' and 'Japan' of Japanese art: The debate about 'calligraphy' is not art] in his *Nihon Kindai Bijutsu Ronsōshi* [The history of modern Japanese art debates] (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1981), pp.8-9. On this period, see also Kinoshita Naoyuki 木下尚之, *Bijutsu to iu misemono* [Art as show] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1992); Kitazawa Noriaki 北沢憲明, *Meno Shinden* [In the palace of the gaze] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1989); Nakamura Giichi, "Nihon kindai kaiga no daiichi shudai—Nihonga/Seiyōga ronsō" [The first topic in modern Japanese painting—The debate over Nihonga and Western-style painting] in his *Zoku Nihon Kindai Bijutsu Ronsōshi* [The history of modern Japanese art debates, continuation] (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1982), pp.3-46.

¹¹⁷ Nakamura, “Nihon Bijutsu no ‘Seiyō’ to ‘Nihon,’” p.13.

¹¹⁸ Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), “Sho wa Bijutsu narazu’ no ron wo yomu,” [Reading the debate on ‘calligraphy is not an art’] *Tōyō Gakugei Zasshi*, nos.11–15 (August–December 1882, in *MBZ*, vol.38), p.295.

¹¹⁹ The irony is that, as a reader pointed out, in Kipling’s original poem the point is that they can and do meet—“when two brave men come face to face, though they come from the ends of the Earth.”

¹²⁰ Okakura, “Sho wa Bijutsu narazu’ no ron wo yomu,” p.293.

¹²¹ Kitazawa Noriaki 北沢憲明, “Nihonga’ gainen no keisei ni kansuru shiron” [Tentative theory on the formation of the concept of ‘Nihonga’] in *Meiji Nihonga Shiryō* [Materials on Meiji Nihonga], ed. Aoki Shigeru 青木繁 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1991), p.485. See also Rimer, “Hegel in Tokyo.”

¹²² I summarize his views as follows:

1870s: pro-Western opening and development policies see introduction of oil painting as technique.

1882–87: ultranationalism *à la* Fenollosa sees exclusion of Western-style painting from public exhibitions and use of the term *Nibonga* in speech but not print.

1887–97: journalistic acceptance of *Nibonga* becomes widespread, particularly in the debates from around 1889 on the “Future of Japanese Painting” such as the 1889 “Nihonga no Shōrai Ikaga” [What about the future of Japanese-style painting?] debate in the journal *Bijutsu-en* [The garden of art] which was reprinted from another teacher’s journal *Kyōiku Hōchi* [Education News] and indicated that the term ‘*Nibonga*’ was spoken parlance. In 1890, Toyama Masakazu’s address “Nihonkaiga no Mirai” [The future of Japanese painting] at the Meiji Art Society received severe critique from Hayashi Tadamasu 林忠正 and Mori Ōgai.

1896–97: *Nibonga* was generally accepted as part of a Western/Japanese binary with *Yōga* or Western style painting.

1907: the Ministry of Education Fine Arts Exhibition “*Bunten*,” begins with a division of *Nibonga* and *Seiyōga* 西洋画 [western paintings].

it had much that reached the domain of art. This was because (among the other arguments he advanced) the form of writing could be varied and thus gave pleasure to the eye, exactly as with other arts. Fenollosa had put calligraphy among the arts along with music, poetry, and sculpture. Okakura suggests that like Fenollosa’s notion of ‘idea,’ the “true domain of art is to express the artist’s internal thought.”¹¹⁷ He criticizes Koyama’s characterization of the ideals of art as ones which “should be adequately fulfilled by the functions of a photograph,” and counter-argues that they are thus “not in the true function of art.”¹¹⁸ Okakura’s own argument displays the circularity it will have later on in his English writings where, in Kiplingesque terms, the ‘East is East’ and ‘West is West,’¹¹⁹ and cultural difference becomes a self-defining property, not one defined by the contiguity with the culturally other: “Well, if the development of the East is quite different to that of the West, for those things which are prevalent due to people’s taste, like art, one cannot doubt that there will be a similar difference.”¹²⁰

Fenollosa’s 1882 speech was given in English with a Japanese translation, and only the the Japanese translation survives. It was to become the marker for an extensive debate, the terms of which were set by his use for the first time in translation from Fenollosa’s English into Japanese of the term ‘Japanese Painting’ which became *Nibonga* 日本画. Fenollosa’s argument in the 1882 *Bijutsu Shinsetsu* is summarized by Kitazawa as follows:

1. What makes ‘Art’ into ‘Fine Art’ is that “Fine Art possesses an ‘idea.’”
2. The work is an independent and unified world composed from the subject and the form of expression.
3. The ‘various fine arts’ may be divided into music, painting, and poetry according to the form of expression which manifests the idea, and each of these has their own, specific way of doing so.
4. The practice of painting will atrophy if it does not express a new idea and strike out in a new direction.
5. Painting does not have its principal aim in ‘copying,’ as does modern Western painting, but in ‘making’ something.¹²¹

Kitazawa further analyses at length the advent of the term for ‘Japanese-style painting’ over quite a long period.¹²² But the term *Nibonga* was never used in any of the categories for works at the Fine Arts Pavilions in the five Expositions for the Promotion of Domestic Manufactures (*Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai* 内国勸業博覧会) between 1877 and 1903. However, the term *Nibonga-shi* 日本画師, Japanese painter, is mentioned in the Japanese translation of Wagner’s report on the 1877 exposition as having been given by the court to the artist Ikeda Yōsai 池田養才. The third Exposition for the Promotion of Domestic Manufactures in 1890 removed detailed classification by material and technique and just had a category of ‘painting,’ thereby also removing that of ‘calligraphy and painting.’ This marked the successful separation of painting from the East Asian notion that ‘calligraphy and painting are identical.’ In 1890 Okakura was also assessor for the Exposition and

wrote the report which uses word *Nihonga*.

The categorizing of art practice was tied up with the need seen by the ultranationalists to integrate what had in the past been many different and highly socially stratified tendencies in painting. In 1886 Fenollosa gave a speech at the Kyoto Prefectural Painting School (*Kyōtofu Gagakkō* 京都府画学校) which indicated the urgent need to break down sects, i.e., schools of painting, with their old status system, as a means to push forward the formation of the nation. But in the mid-1880s there was still a tendency, particularly in Kyoto, to use the term *Tōyōga* for 'Eastern painting' in order to comprise both Chinese and Japanese pre-1850s painting in many styles and media. In 1888 at Kyoto Prefectural Painting School there were both *Seiyōga* ('Western style painting') and *Tōyōga* ('Eastern-style painting') sections.

Okakura's direct interest was in the categorization of tertiary pedagogy, and in effect he instituted such a change in around 1889 when the *Kaigaka* 絵画課 painting section was set up at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Here 'painting' meant a *Nihon-kaigaka* or 'Japanese-style painting section.' Simultaneously the term *Yōga* was adopted for 'Western-style painting' at the newly formed Meiji Art Society. The formal division at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts into a *Nihon-gaka* ('Japanese-style painting section') and a *Seiyō-gaka* ('Western-style painting section') came in 1896 when Kuroda Seiki was appointed first teacher of this latter practice two years before the crisis which was to see Okakura's resignation.¹²³ In Okakura's mind, until at least the mid-1890s, the bifurcation was of 'Japanese' with 'Western' practice, and the former comprised the 'Eastern,' not vice versa.

Conceptions of Cultural Continua

It may be useful to further categorize the notions of cultural continua which Okakura used to understand Japan, China, and India, and the relation of the latter two with the first. This must perforce be a somewhat schematic and condensed analysis.

The Idea of the 'East': 1. Japan

There is no doubt that in the 1880s and 1890s Okakura was associated with, and at times supported by, ultranationalists opposed to European expansion in Asia and supporters of an imperialist role for Japan itself in response. Okakura wrote in November 1889 in the ultranationalist journal *Nipponjin* 日本人 in support of former general and minister of Agriculture and Commerce Tani Tateki 谷たてき.¹²⁴ He also contributed his article "Shina no Bijutsu" 支那の美術 [The Arts of China] to the thirty-fifth issue of *Eastern Association*

¹²³ Kitazawa, "'Nihonga' gainen no keisei."

¹²⁴ Tsubouchi Takahiko 坪内隆彦, *Okakura Tenshin no Shisōteki Tanbō: meisōsuru Ajiashugi* [The intellectual approach of Okakura Tenshin: The sinuous twisting of Asianism] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998), p.37.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.46.

¹²⁶ Bhupendranath Datta, *Swami Vivekananda, Patriot-Prophet* (Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1954), p.117.

¹²⁷ Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *The Awakening of Japan* (London: John Murray & New York: The Century Co., 1905, also in *CEW*, vol.1, p.169–264). The book was written in Boston, December 1903 to July 1904. See *ZS*, vol.1, p.485; *CEW*, vol.1, p.18.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.95.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.198.

Report (Tōhōkyōkai hōkoku 東方協會報告), the journal of an association founded in 1891 to oppose the extension of the Russian Siberian railway (Okakura's name was given as a member).¹²⁵ His formation of the Japan Art Academy was widely supported by ultranationalists associated with the East Asia CommonScript Society (Tō-ADōbunkai 東亜同文会), an ultranationalist lobby group working on Asia policy. Indeed several of its more prominent members were present at the launch of the Japan Art Academy in November 1898. There is little doubt that Okakura's own romantic ultranationalism was supported from this quarter in his own lifetime.

Perhaps the historicizing importance given to the assertion of Japan as the temporally ordained Asian leader came mainly from Okakura's debt to Hegel via Fenollosa with the notion of one country, Japan, being the bearer of the world-historical spirit. By the 1890s it was time for this idea to come to a higher state through historical development. The strongest expression probably comes in *The Awakening of Japan* of 1905. Here one should note again the intervention of a foreign editor. Datta, a Bengali dissident in exile in the USA, states that *The Awakening of Japan* was corrected by a Miss Waldo of New York.¹²⁶ In this book the 'West' appears as the representative of a world-historical spirit to which the 'East' had by some process of historical inevitability to subject itself. Only the special historical circumstances of Japan left room to carry forward an 'Asian' reaction against this subjugation. "Bereft of the spirit of initiative, tired of impotent revolts, and deprived of legitimate ambitions, the Chinese and the Indian of to-day have come to prostrate themselves before the inevitable."¹²⁷

Such subjection could lead to a specifically Asian kind of internalized spiritual loss, due not only to the domination of Western barbarians from without, but also to a lack of healthy and creative models within the East, particularly China.

To most Eastern nations the advent of the West has been by no means an unmixed blessing. ... If the guilty conscience of some European nations has conjured up the specter of a Yellow Peril, may not the suffering soul of Asia wail over the realities of the White Disaster.¹²⁸

We no longer have the benefit of a living art in China to excite our rivalry and urge us to fresh endeavors. On the other hand, the unfortunately contemptuous attitude which the average Westerner assumes toward everything connected with Oriental civilization tends to destroy our self-confidence in regard to our canons of art.¹²⁹

The barbarity of Europe is said to be destructive of indigenous forms of order (the contradiction with the many statements of their autonomous collapse remarked on elsewhere in the book is not noted by Okakura). The conflict is seen as being not so much between civilizational ideals, or the dominant bearers of them, but between warring modalities of economic life which confuse the codes of social order as much as those of aesthetic taste.

The advance of Europe in Asia means not merely the imposition of social ideals which the East holds to be crude if not barbarous, but also the subversion of all existing law and authority.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.99.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.197.

¹³² Ibid., p.190.

¹³³ Ibid., p.70.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.195.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

The philistine nature of industrialism and the restlessness of material progress are inimical to Eastern art. The machinery of competition imposes the monotony of fashion instead of the variety of life. The cheap is worshiped in place of the beautiful, while the rush and struggle of modern existence give no opportunity for the leisure required for the crystallization of ideals. Patronage is no longer even the sign of individual bad taste. Music is criticized through the eye, a picture through the ear.¹³¹

Okakura tries to reposition Asia as an alternative and more inclusive bearer of the world-historical spirit, its relationship to which has been knocked off course by the historically contingent Western domination of his times. "It must be remembered that in spite of the seeming demarcation of the East and the West, all human development is fundamentally the same, and that in the vast range of Asiatic history there can be found almost every variety of social usage."¹³²

But he re-privileges the 'East' and Japan as its bearer by saying that its regeneration is not the product of external intervention, but comes from within. Here he is consciously, and therefore probably disingenuously, adopting a position where the endogenous is privileged against the exogenous, despite his own historical work which showed that in Japan's art-historical past the problem of interpretation was to understand how the exogenous interacted with, or was articulated through, the endogenous.

It seems to be the general impression among foreigners that it was the West who, with the touch of a magic wand, suddenly rouses us from the sleep of centuries. The real cause of our awakening, however, came from within.¹³³

All that is vital and representative in our contemporary art and literature is the revived expression of the national school, not imitation of European models.¹³⁴

Nowhere were the contradictions in Okakura's thought brought out more clearly than in his understanding of the geopolitical significance of the Korean peninsula for Japan. Here he adopts an ideological position which privileges Japanese restraint and has nothing whatsoever to say about the cultures of Korea and Manchuria which Japan, as the representative of the world-historical spirit in East Asia, will dominate. Taken together with *The Awakening of the East*, Okakura—chillingly, in 1902–05—clearly and specifically provided the ideological rationale for Japanese political domination on the Asian mainland thirty or so years later. Japan went to war because it saw the independence of Korea threatened by China in 1894 and Russia in 1904.¹³⁵

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.208.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.209.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.213.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.219.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.223.

Any hostile power in the occupation of the peninsula might easily throw an army into Japan, for Korea lies like a dagger pointed toward the heart of Japan. Moreover, the independence [from Russia] of Korea and Manchuria is economically necessary to the preservation of our race, for starvation awaits our ever-increasing population if it be deprived of its legitimate outlet in the sparsely cultivated areas of these two countries.¹³⁶

There were several occasions when we might have taken possession of Korea, but we forebore [*sic*], in the face of strong provocation, because our wishes were for peace.¹³⁷

The treaty of 1876 recognizing the independence of Korea was a heavy blow to China; “She deeply resented the action of Japan in placing that kingdom beyond the pale of her dominion.”¹³⁸ Okakura extends the underlying rationale for the wars fought by Japan to the whole of Asia. The Russo-Japanese war was fought “not only for our motherland, but for the ideals of the recent reformation, for the noble heritage of classic culture, and for those dreams of peace and harmony in which we saw a glorious rebirth for all Asia.”¹³⁹ He then refers to the awakening from the loss of self-consciousness by the ‘East,’ and rationalizes the lessons of imperial aggression by the fact that Europe still has to learn peace. Although it is unstated, we are left no doubt that this will be learnt from ‘Asia,’ with its superior civilizational foundations: “The night of the orient, which had hidden us in its fold, has been lifted, but we find the world still in the dusk of humanity. Europe has taught us war; when shall she learn the blessings of peace?”¹⁴⁰

The Idea of the ‘East’: 2. China

¹⁴¹ Joshua A. Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862–1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Of the many Japanese commentators on China in Meiji Japan, Okakura was among the few who had actually gone there, firstly on a mission for the Imperial Household Museum in 1893 and later in 1906 for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.¹⁴¹ His diaries from the first visit were the basis for lectures on Chinese art and were published in 1894 as *Shina no Bijutsu* and *Shina no Bijutsu wo tankyū suru tansho* 支那の美術を探究する端緒 [First steps in understanding the art of China]. These are more or less descriptive of his understanding of Chinese art in the context of Meiji art-historical writings based on works collected in Japan juxtaposed with what he then found in China. But unlike others who were willing to singularize or homogenize China, Okakura was struck by its diversity, and furthermore he draws a parallel between the cultural diversity of China and that of Europe.

What I have firstly felt about China is just that “There is no China in China.” The listener might think it ridiculous only to say “no China.” So I would put it another way and say “in China there is nothing in common.” When you consider the matter, in Europe there is nothing in common to Europe

either. This is equivalent to “there being nothing in common in China.” China certainly cannot be discussed under one concept.¹⁴²

His travelogue does not include suggestions of what is wrong with China or what should be done about it.¹⁴³ But his first visit certainly represents the intrinsic fascination of Meiji Japan with the cultural entity of China, an ideal space with which Japan had long been acquainted.¹⁴⁴ However, throughout Okakura’s thought and personal experience runs the notion that China is outside of time, that ‘contemporary China’ somehow does not exist. This was probably because for him the gap was so large between the idea of China as a provider of civilizational models communicated by Japan’s historically accumulated perceptions—and especially for Okakura by the genealogies of Japan’s own art objects—and the disparate and uncomfortable realities of the contemporary China which some Japanese (like himself) knew.

Confucian ideals, indeed, were pervasive enough to support the notion of cultural transference within an Asiatic culture This formulation thus showed development in *Tōyō*, culminating in Japan’s pre-eminence. But having re-historicized Japan’s past, *Shina* [China] was located as temporal inferior.¹⁴⁵

This attitude to China may be seen as exemplary of the generalized relations to the notion of *Tōyō* 東洋 (the ‘East’) described by Tanaka. If Asia was free of Western fragmentary pluralism, the notion of *tōyō* “enabled Japanese to construct a new past and to claim those characteristics which they argued were oriental, and thus timeless, [while] the alienness of this new past made it imperative they distinguish themselves from that same orient.”¹⁴⁶

As may be clearly seen from the above, by 1906 in the thought of Okakura, the ‘East’ conceptualized in Japan was already an internalized one with which “Japanese ‘interacted’ . . . only as the object of their own discourse—a relationship that would lead to tragic consequences.”¹⁴⁷ One of the few intellectual opponents of Japanese ultranationalist conceptions of China in the 1930s, Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, saw the historical narrative of Japan as dependent on neither China nor the West: “Is it not groundless to replace praise for the West with that for India and China? However, the reason for this is that they [the ultranationalists] see the cultures of China and India as inherent [*naizai* 内在] within [that of] Japan.”¹⁴⁸ In this book, Tsuda brilliantly and courageously indicated that the fact “that one posits the Orient in the sense of [something] containing both Japan and ‘China,’ and that one then preserves Oriental culture, or tries to form one, is perhaps inconceivable in the dreams [of Chinese and Indians].”¹⁴⁹

Idea of the ‘East’: 3. India

When Okakura arrived in Calcutta on 6 January 1902 he went straight away

¹⁴² Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin) “Shina no Bijutsu,” “Shina no Bijutsu wo tankyū suru tansho” [“Art of China,” “First steps to the study of the art of China”]; written-up lectures from Okakura’s 1893 visit to China given with slides and photographs. *Tō-kyō Kyōkai Hōkoku*, no.37, 1894 (*MBZ*, vol.38), pp.373 and 382.

¹⁴³ Fogel, *The Literature of Travel*, p.90.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹⁴⁵ Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient*, p.20.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.280, translating *Shina Shisō to Nihon* [Chinese thought and Japan], pp.184–5.

¹⁴⁹ *Shina Shisō to Nihon*, p.199, my translation and abridgement. See also John Clark, “Nihonkaiga ni okeru Chugokuzō—Meiji kōki kara haisen made,” [The image of China in Japanese painting—From late Meiji until defeat in war], *Nichibunken Ki-yō*, no.15 (December, 1996), pp.11–27. The English translation of the Japanese original can be found in John Clark, “Artist and the State: The Image of China in Japanese Painting, 1890s–1940s,” in *Society and the State in Interwar Japan*, ed. Elise Tipton (London: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁵⁰ Tsubouchi, *Okakura Tenshin no Shisōteki Tanbō*, p.4.

¹⁵¹ Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 5 vols., (Almora, India: Advaita Ashrama, 1947). See vol.V, p.139, interview with *The Hindu*, Madras, February 1897.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.140, interview with *The Hindu*, Madras, February 1897.

¹⁵³ Datta, *Swami Vivekananda, Patriot-Prophet*, pp.116–17.

to meet Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda himself much liked the expression 'Ideals of the East,' as for example in his speech of 24 February 1896 in New York where he had said that "The ideals of the East are as necessary for the progress of humanity as the ideals of the West."¹⁵⁰ Whether reformist Hindu nationalism in the line of Ramakrishna as followed by Vivekananda was the direct source of this strain in Okakura's thinking is a proposition which is difficult to test. But there is no doubt about Vivekananda's admiration for Japan. He had gone to America via the Far East in 1893 on his way to the World Parliament of Religions held at the Columbia Exposition in Chicago, and wrote a letter giving his impressions of Japan from Yokohama on 10 July 1893. In a later newspaper interview on his return to India, Vivekananda said: "The world has never seen such a patriotic and artistic race as the Japanese, and one special feature about them is this: that while in Europe and elsewhere Art generally goes with dirt, Japanese Art is Art plus absolute cleanliness."¹⁵¹ On being questioned about the reason for Japan's sudden greatness, he replied:

The faith of the Japanese in themselves and their love for their country. The Japanese are ready to sacrifice everything for their country and they have become a great people.

But India is not like Japan. Each nation has a theme and that of India is religion.¹⁵²

Certainly there must have been some influence from Vivekananda's speech at the World Parliament of Religions of 11 September 1893, which was communicated to Okakura by Ms Macleod (to whom, as we have seen above, he gave lectures in 1901 on the history of Japanese art). It was on these lectures that his *Ideals of the East* was based, just before his visit to India. Certainly Okakura was similar to Vivekananda in thinking that Asia's contribution to world civilization was distinctively religious. A later biographer of Vivekananda would think Okakura did not understand English well and that *The Ideals of the East*, which was significantly rewritten by Sister Nivedita, actually represented Vivekananda's thought.

Okakura did not know much of English but it seems that he had written a manuscript dealing with Pan-Asiatic cultural connections. It was re-written by the Sister, as she told the writer. It contained the stamp of Swamiji's ideology on Asia. The book was named, "The Ideals of the East."¹⁵³

Nivedita, who had been born Margaret Noble, was a protestant Northern Irish nationalist who had met Vivekananda in London in 1895 and had come to India in 1898, where she died in 1912. The extreme Indian nationalist position Nivedita adopted, which can be read in both *The Ideals of the East* and *The Awakening of the East*, led her to leave the Ramakrishna mission after the death of Vivekananda in 1902 and to become one of the five members of the Bengal Revolutionary Party executive formed by Aurobindo Ghose in

Calcutta in the same year.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, there are such enormous resonances between the ideas of Vivekananda and Nivedita on the one hand and the writings of Okakura on the other that one might think they sprang from the same mind, and they did actually develop in the same circle of Indian nationalist thinkers and activists in 1901.

There, in Japan you find a fine assimilation of knowledge, and not its indigestion as we have here. They have taken everything from the Europeans, but they remain Japanese all the same, and have not turned European: while in our country the terrible mania of becoming Westernized has seized upon us like a plague.

They are great as a nation because of their art. Don't you see they are Asiatics, as we are? And though we have lost almost everything, yet what we have is still wonderful. The very soul of the Asiatic is interwoven with art. The Asiatic never uses a thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a part of religion? How greatly is a lady admired among us, who can nicely paint the floors and walls, on auspicious occasions, with the paste of rice powder? How great an artist was Sri Ramakrishna himself!¹⁵⁵

The Westerner looks for utility in everything, whereas with us art is everywhere Now what we need is the combination of art and utility. Japan has done that very quickly, and so she has advanced by giant strides. Now, in their turn, the Japanese are going to teach the Westerners.¹⁵⁶

Dynamics of Projection

If Okakura was concerned with internal regeneration there is no doubt that he saw external recognition of this as reflexively reinforcing the place of his ideas within Japanese art-historical discourses. His analysis of the causation of crises facing Japanese art was more eloquent by 1904 in his address at the St Louis Exposition, "Modern Problems in Painting," but it also included concessions to the same problems being faced in the 'West.'

You should remember, however, that our wholesale adoption of your methods of life and culture was not purely a matter of choice but of necessity. The word "modernization" means the occidentalization of the world. The map of Asia will reveal the dismal fate of the ancient civilizations that have succumbed to the spell of industrialism, commercialism, imperialism, and what not, which the modern spirit has cast over them.¹⁵⁷

Disastrous as have been the consequences of the sweeping inundations of Western ideals, its [*sic*] ravages on Japanese painting might have been comparatively slight had it not been accompanied by modern industrialism.

¹⁵⁴ See Koizumi Shinya 小泉晋弥, "Tenshin (Okakura Kakuzo)'s View of Asia and the Position of *The Ideals of the East*," in *Asia in Transition, Representation and Identity* 流動するアジア—表象とアイデンティティ, ed. Furuichi Yasuko 古市保子 (Tokyo: Japan Foundation Asia Center, 2003, pp.005–007 and 089–092).

¹⁵⁵ Vivekananda, vol.V, p.288, undated conversation with a co-religionist, possibly around 1897.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.290. Among other texts relevant to this period in India are: Pravrajika Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1961); Shakti Das Gupta, *Tagore's Asian Outlook* (Calcutta: Nava Bharati, 1961); Priyambada Devi, Letters and notebooks in *CEW*; Sailendra Nath Dhar, *A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda* (Madras: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra, 1976); Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995); Stephen N. Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and his Critics in Japan, China, and India*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); G.D. Khanolkar, *The Lute and the Plough: A life of Rabindranath Tagore*, trans. T. Gay (Bombay: Book Centre Private, 1963); Sister Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1967, 1973), 4 vols., [see vol.III].

¹⁵⁷ Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), "Modern problems in Painting," speech of 24 September 1904 at St Louis Purchase Exposition [*CEW*, vol.2, pp.60–81; *ZS*, vol.2, pp.62–88]; also as "Modern Art from a Japanese Point of View," *Quarterly Review* 11.2 (July 1905.4). On the St Louis Exposition, see also Carol Ann Christ, "The Sole Guardians of the Art Inheritance of Asia: Japan at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair," *Positions: East Asian Cultures Critique* 8.3 (winter 2000).

¹⁵⁸ Okakura, "Modern Problems of Painting," p.80.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.80-1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.81.

¹⁶¹ Takeuchi Seihō 竹内栖鳳, "Okakura Kakuzō-shi no innen-banashi," (1928) [A story of affinity with Okakura Kakuzō] in *Okakura Tenshin, Hito to Shisō*, ed. Hashikawa Bunzō.

It may be that Western art is also suffering from the effects of industrialism, but to us its menace is more direful as we hear it beating against the bulwarks of our old economic life. To us it seems that industrialism is making a handmaiden of art, as religion and personal glorification have made of it in the past. Competition imposes the monotony of fashion instead of the variety of life.¹⁵⁸

But whatever the concessions made to changes in 'Western' understanding, the Japanese struggle operates in a field which compels its aggressive resistance to, and assertiveness against, forces from without. At the end of the speech Okakura does retreat slightly from the bleakness of his vision, but does not notice the national self-interest which drives it.

A grim pride animates us in facing the enormous odds which modern society has raised against us. At the present we feel ourselves to be the sole guardians of the art-inheritance of Asia. The battle must be one fought out to the last.¹⁵⁹

Perhaps it may have seemed to you that I have painted in too dark a colour the modern problems of art. There is a brighter side of the question. Western society itself is awakening to a better understanding of the problem.¹⁶⁰

I am reminded in passing of a conversation between the painter Takeuchi Seihō 竹内栖鳳 and Okakura, which took place in about 1891 in Kyoto according to Takeuchi's later reminiscences in 1928. Takeuchi was asked to go and see Okakura when he was in Kyoto with some teachers or administrators from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Okakura, inebriated, tried to browbeat Takeuchi into coming to Tokyo to join his art group, already conscious of its own strength at least seven years before its split from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Takeuchi is concerned for his family and two young children and declines Okakura's insistence that he come to Tokyo right away and bring his family later, but much later Takeuchi reminisces about how different his life might have been if he had accepted this offer.¹⁶¹

If by 1904 Okakura was prepared to make a grudging acceptance of other points of view, he still had a driving tendency to push for the submission of his audience, as with Takeuchi some ten years earlier in a more personal context. The question naturally arises as to how much his thought was generated by a romantically assertive personality, and how much it corresponded to a personality type, such as the bureaucrat or man of action turned thinker, of a kind which may particularly be thrown up after an era of radical reform and social change.

How much Okakura's residence for longer periods in the USA (apart from his many short-term visits earlier) changed his perceptions of what he should communicate to non-Japanese audiences remains unclear. But by 1905 there is a reluctant acknowledgment on his part of the need to write

more positively about Japanese aesthetic ideals, rather than just engaging in negative dialectics via his perceptions of the ‘West.’ This came in *The Book of Tea* (1906),¹⁶² where he immediately drew a contrast between the warlike Japanese code of the Samurai and ‘Teaism,’ “which represents so much our Art of Life. Fain would we remain barbarians, if our claim to civilization were to be based on the gruesome glory of war. Fain would we await the time when due respect shall be paid to our art and ideals.”¹⁶³ Okakura means, somewhat contortedly, that we [Japanese] can hardly call ourselves civilized based on samurai ideals and can hardly wait for others to respect our art and its [non-samurai] ideals.

Clearly by 1905–06, when the book was written, Okakura had become aware of the mirror of perceptions between both sides of his binary divide into ‘East and ‘West.’ He also began to play the knowing cosmopolitan, affecting an air of perspicacity about both sides of the mutual projection. In fact the tone of *The Book of Tea* is so different from his earlier published two that one suspects he has mellowed—or, perhaps, that he had always had multiple selves to show to the world, and that from this period on he mobilizes a rather different and ostensibly more tolerant one.

Why not amuse yourselves at our expense? Asia returns the compliment. There would be further food for merriment if you were to know all that we have imagined and written about you. All the glamour of the perspective is there, all the unconscious homage of wonder, all the silent resentment of the new and undefined. You have been loaded with virtues too refined to be envied, and accused of crimes too picturesque to be condemned.¹⁶⁴

At times he seems to be declaring that the ‘East-West’ culture wars of his earlier writings are over, whether from exhaustion or irrelevance. What has been lost is a sense of the value of life, lost in a whirl of mutual desire and contest between two civilizations.

Let us stop the continents from hurling epigrams at each other, and be sadder if not wiser by the mutual gain of half a hemisphere. We have developed along different lines, but there is no reason why one should not supplement the other. You have gained expansion at the cost of restlessness; we have created a harmony which is weak against aggression. Will you believe it?—the East is better off in some respects than the West!¹⁶⁵

The heaven of modern humanity is indeed shattered in the Cyclopean struggle for wealth and power. The world is groping in the shadow of egotism and vulgarity. Knowledge is bought through a bad conscience, benevolence practised for the sake of utility. The East and the West, like two dragons tossed in a sea of ferment, in vain strive to recover the jewel of life.¹⁶⁶

Okakura had long identified his thought with Daoism, and it is no

¹⁶² Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), *The Book of Tea, a Japanese Harmony of Art Culture and the Simple Life* (New York: Fox Duffield, 1906; Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1932) [*CEW*, vol.1, pp.265–326, ZS, vol.1, pp.261–99].

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, (1932), p.3.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.18.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.28.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.58.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.60.

surprise to see this emphasized so much in his most positive book on Japanese aesthetics.

The Taoist conception that immortality lay in the eternal change permeated all their modes of thought. It was the process, not the deed, which was interesting. It was the completing, not the completion, which was really vital. Man came thus at once face to face with nature. A new meaning grew into the art of life. The tea ceremony began to be not a poetical pastime, but one of the methods of self-realization.¹⁶⁷

Okakura turns tea into a Daoist empathy with life in the present world, rather than any metaphysical 'other side' and its flawed reflection in the world of attachment as in Buddhism.

It is in the Japanese tea-ceremony that we see the culmination of tea-ideals Tea with us became more than an idealization of the form of drinking; it is a religion of the art of life.¹⁶⁸

But the chief contribution of Taoism to Asiatic life has been in the realm of aesthetics. Chinese historians have always spoken of Taoism as the "art of being in the world," for it deals with the present—ourselves.¹⁶⁹

Two chapters of Okakura's book appeared in April 1905 in *The International Quarterly*, over a year before his second visit to China from late 1906 to early 1907, when he was to be photographed in Daoist costume with two Daoist priests. Either the broader humanism so evident in *The Book of Tea* was an alternative strain in his thought which only came to resolution during the seven last years of his life when he was travelling each year between Japan and Boston, or it did in fact mark a more radical and overall shift away from his earlier bellicosity.

Nothing is more hallowing than the meeting of kindred spirits in art. At the moment of meeting, the art lover transcends himself. At once he is and is not. He catches a glimpse of Infinity, but words cannot voice his delight, for the eye has no tongue. Freed from the fetters of matter, his spirit moves in the rhythm of things. It is thus that art becomes akin to religion and ennobles mankind.¹⁷⁰

He even enters a note of regret at the limitations of one's own culture in appreciating art because all humans are culturally restricted in the kinds of art they may value. Though it is a note of regret, it is made with a humanist realism which is far more sympathetic and probably more sincere than the earlier bombast.

Art is of value only to the extent that it speaks to us. It might be a universal language if we ourselves were universal in our sympathies. Our finite nature, the power of traditions and conventionality, as well as our hereditary instincts, restrict the scope of our capacity for artistic enjoyment.¹⁷¹

It is of course possible that Okakura was thinking about his own mortality

when *The Book of Tea* ends with mention of the suicide of Rikyū: “He only who has lived with the beautiful can die beautifully.”¹⁷²

One would have to conclude, like Tsubouchi, that while *The Awakening of Japan* seems to support military force to assert national pride, this is reversed in the *Book of Tea*, which more directly expresses Okakura’s position and ends with a dignified yet tragic defeat of aesthetic value before military power.¹⁷³ But, so far as I know, Okakura never retracted any of his earlier militant texts or expressed reservations about their rhetoric. We have to presume that their contradictions remained unresolved for Okakura, as they were for Japan on the eve of the forcible annexation of Korea in 1910 and the First World War, which began the year after his death in 1913.

Post-Colonial Modalities

What in general can be (very briefly and rather simply) said about how Okakura’s writing fits into our current understanding of the post-colonial? I think Japan before, say, 1905 or 1910 must be seen as in a latently post-colonial position; it was the first Asian power to escape from unequal treaties and foreign domination, which had continued for Japan from the 1850s to the 1890s. Okakura’s conflict was above all with Europe which, as he sees it, forced changes on Asia which were destructive of many earlier value systems. The unity of Asia he imputes to the distribution of these values over social systems and art objects that were non-European. Perhaps the problem for all post-colonial history is “a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become [reflexive] variations on a master narrative that could be called the ‘history of Europe’” or, in my terms, the ‘history of Euramerica.’¹⁷⁴

Okakura’s thought seems to be caught between promoting the nationalism which will end the colonial and the self-assertion of an autonomous aesthetics which can somehow stand outside the history that produced the need for that self-assertion—or indeed, its forced incorporation in this other, Euramerican history. Okakura was confronted with a situation which had radically changed the terms on which the past was constructed, including Japanese pasts. By the end of the Meiji era in 1912 this would also mean a change in the terms by which nostalgia for the loss of those reconstructed pasts could be felt. The terms would become reflexive, secondary, and deeply flawed by sentimentality. The nostalgia would not be, as it was for Okakura, directly about a lost past, but indirectly about a nostalgia which had already been historically experienced.

Okakura does not seem to have been aware of, or particularly concerned about, the fact that only in his time could such directness remain existential. Nor does he appear to face the difference between assertion against a colonial world order and self-assertion by Japan for its own inclusion in that order.

¹⁷² Ibid., p.81.

¹⁷³ See, in general, Tsubouchi, *Okakura Tenshin no Shisōteki Tanbō*, 1998.

¹⁷⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.27.

¹⁷⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p.80.

¹⁷⁶ Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997), p.52.

His thought implied an ideological and cultural leadership in Asia and his metaphors directly used notions of military conquest through, or in spite of, the other Asian cultures. In his terms, these had become internally passive and so had fallen before the European onslaught. Here one should not mince words: his thought directly sanctioned the annexation of Korea, and was one of the ideological bases for the China war of 1937–45 and its enormous sacrifices. Rabindranath Tagore was quite well aware of the perils of this direction and warned, “never think for a moment that the hurts you inflict upon other races will not infect you, or that the enmities you sow around your homes will be a wall of protection to you in time to come.”¹⁷⁵

Of course in his time it was not possible for Okakura actually to become post-colonial. Nearly a century later Arif Dirlik deliberately presented the partially facetious proposition that the post-colonial period begins “when Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe.”¹⁷⁶ Dirlik was well aware that this proposition begged the question of why the arrival of such Third World intellectuals and their concerns in the 1980s and 1990s had been accorded the respectability they had. Okakura had the ability to write fluently in English, even if what comes down to us has received native-speaker editing, and to engage with others’ anti-colonial struggles. He was able to be fêted in North American museum circles, and directly through his own writings and indirectly through those of Fenollosa to be a major intellectual reference for many kinds of art practice in Euramerica. If elements like these were taken together from a much later post-colonial position, they would indicate the latent possibility of someone such as him resembling a Third World intellectual who has at least become visible through the telescope of Euramerican historical narrative.

But Okakura’s views did not step outside the domain of curatorial and artistic practice. Cosmopolitan or Japanese nationalist by turns as he may have been, he could not enter the Euramerican academy. Despite some impact in artistic and museum circles, his views at that time did not receive the full attention—and criticism—they may have deserved in Euramerica. The political and economic system of colonialism was not dead. Nineteenth-century racial superiority and social Darwinist notions of the superiority of Euramerican social systems had not yet been transcended by the dynamics of knowledge. The full examination of these issues awaits another history, that of the end of Euramerican colonialism itself.

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