

The East, Nationalism, and Taishô Democracy: Naitô Konan's History of Chinese Painting¹

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In historical fact, while the diverse cultures of Asia are each to some degree multicultural (that is, the products of long cultural interactions), there was, until modern times, no consciousness among them of a shared Asian identity. Even as a defensive reaction to pressures from the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Pan-Asianism has mostly been adjunct to modern nationalism and instrumentally subservient to it, rather than constituting anything like an Asian people's cultural bedrock.

Wm. Theodore de Bary²

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the concept of "the East" as a geopolitical abstraction was a recurrent theme in discussions of national identity in Japan. "The East" (J. *Tôyô* 東洋), originally used by the Chinese to designate the Yellow Sea off China's east coast, came to mean in the modern Japanese context Asia or the non-Western world in general. As a geopolitical abstraction, it also became identified in Japan with nationalism. Several factors produced this phenomenon: the desire to anchor the nation to an enduring cultural entity, the tendency to subsume nation-building in the struggle to assert parity with the West, and the convergence of Japanese nationalist interests with imperialist aspirations in Asia.³ All these factors can be observed in the scholarship on art.

From the late-Meiji period Japanese scholars fashioned one of the great bodies of writing on Eastern art. Covering a broad array of subjects---Paleolithic artifacts, textiles, manuscripts, seals, sculpture, architecture, and painting---this body of writing broadened immeasurably the horizon of Japanese intellectual and cultural life.⁴ By 1930 the study

¹ This essay is taken from the author's dissertation, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s" (Columbia University, 1999). It was made possible partially by funding from the Japan Foundation and the C. V. Starr Foundation. The author would like to thank Professors Robert E. Harist, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Arthur Tiedemann for their comments on various drafts of this essay.

² Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

³ For a recent study of the rise of the concept of *Tôyô* in Japan, see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁴ See Aoki Tomitarô 青木富太郎, *Tôyôgaku no seiritsu to sono hatten* 東洋學の成立とその發展 (The Foundation and Development of Eastern Studies) (Tokyo: Keisetsu shoin, 1940), pp. 138-97.

of Eastern art history (*Tôyô bijutsu shi* 東洋美術史, commonly translated at the time as "Oriental Art History") had entered the curriculum of most major universities in Japan.⁵

In Japan, the study of Eastern art history began in the late nineteenth century, and during this formative period, Chinese art was mainly subsumed under the history of Japanese art. Exemplifying this trend was Okakura Tenshin's lectures on Japanese art given at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in the late 1880s (published as *Nihon bijutsu shi* 日本美術史 in 1890).⁶ These lectures repeatedly portrayed Chinese painting as a concomitant to Japanese painting. Okakura emphasized the importance of the Tang and Song, two dynasties whose artistic products were not only extensively emulated and revered in the Heian and Ashikaga periods, but were also amply represented by the collections of Chinese painting in Japan.⁷ For Okakura, Chinese art was a vital component of Japan's national essence.

He categorically condemned literati painting, a genre which rose to prominence in the Yuan and Ming, two periods he regarded as "mere shadows of the Tang and Song."⁸ Echoing his American mentor Ernest Fenollosa, Visiting Professor at Tokyo Imperial University,⁹ Okakura criticized literati painting's indifference to volume and colors as signs of formal weakness---a criticism based more on Western prejudice than a genuine understanding of Chinese aesthetic principles.¹⁰ An unstated but perhaps even more determining factor in Okakura's intolerance of Chinese literati painting was the paucity of representative works of this genre in Japanese collections. It became common for scholars in the Meiji period (1868-1912) to treat the history of Chinese painting as background to Japanese painting, and to make judgments upon its value based on age-old collections in Japan; ancient temple collections or collections of the feudal elites, including those of the old shogunal and aristocratic families, had immense value for the Japanese. Not only are they testimonies of a long and prosperous cultural relationship between China and Japan, they also constitute a visual archive upon which centuries of Japanese artists have drawn for formal, technical, aesthetic, and iconographic inspiration. This archive, in the era of the national essence movement, was revered in Japan as part of native history.

With the arrival of the Taishô period (1912-1926), approaches to writing the history of Chinese painting underwent notable changes. Not only did scholars begin to

⁵ *The Year Book of Japanese Art* (1930-1931) included a list of art history courses offered in the leading academies. Courses on different aspects of Oriental Art History were indicated as part of the curricula of Tokyo Imperial University, Tôhoku Imperial University, Seoul Imperial University, Waseda University, and the Tokyo School of Fine Arts; see National Committee of Japan on Intellectual Cooperation, *The Year Book of Japanese Art* (English edition) (July 1931): 129-31.

⁶ Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzô) 岡倉天心 (覺三), *Okakura Tenshin zenshû* 岡倉天心全集 (Complete Works of Okakura Tenshin) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1980-82), vol. 4.

⁷ For a discussion of Okakura's art history and nationalism, see Stefan Tanaka, "Imaging History: Inscribing Belief in the Nation," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.1 (February 1994): 24-44.

⁸ Okakura Tenshin, *Nihon bijutsu shi* (History of Japanese art), in *Okakura Tenshin zenshû*, 4:99.

⁹ For Fenollosa's life and work, see Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963).

¹⁰ For a general assessment of Okakura's Chinese art history, see He Jing 何菁, "Gangcang Tianxin dui Zhongguo meishu de renshi—guanyu Zhongguo meishu de tezhen" 岡倉天心對中國美術的認識, 關於中國美術的特征 (Okakura Tenshin's understanding of Chinese art and on the special character of Chinese art), *Meishu shilun* 美術史論 2 (1995): 76-87.

look beyond Japanese art collections; they also tried to see Chinese painting history as a field in its own right, and not merely an appendage to Japanese painting history. Representative of this development was Naitô Konan's 内藤湖南 (1866-1934) *Shina kaiga shi* 支那繪畫史 (History of Chinese Painting), a series of lectures given in the 1920s at Kyoto Imperial University.¹¹ In these lectures, Naitô shunned older collections in favor of what became known as the "new importation" (*shin hakusai* 新舶載), a fresh corpus of Chinese paintings that began to enter Japan in the Taishô period. Unlike the old collections, this body of works contained a large number of paintings attributed to the canonical masters valued most in China, many of whom were notable literati.

Naitô's departure from the Meiji discourse of Chinese art was probably perceived as irreverent or even scandalous by fellow Japanese art historians. Today some Japanese art historians still seem to be irritated by his approach. In a recent assessment of Naitô's *History of Chinese Painting*, Kohara Hironobu 古原宏伸 wrote: "In his efforts to give primacy to the newly imported Song and Yuan paintings, Naitô completely ignored the collections in Japan. None of the works that had previously entered Japan is illustrated in [his *History of Chinese Painting*]. In the end his attempt to revise tradition caused an imbalance in painting history. He had not the slightest understanding of the collecting preferences in Japan."¹²

Besides its exclusion of the old collections, *History of Chinese Painting* contains many paintings that are not considered genuine by today's connoisseurs. Kohara comments: "In our time, *History of Chinese Painting* has almost lost all its meaning. This author has not gone back to read Naitô's *History of Chinese Painting*. This book has not brought to posterity scholarly nutrients commensurate with the reputation of that great scholar. The reason is that the illustrations in *History of Chinese Painting* are a mixture of 'fish eyes and pearls'; half of them are fake. Although Naitô was an outstanding scholar of *Tôyôshi*, one can say that he was completely incompetent in detecting forgeries."¹³ Kohara is not the first person to be censorious of Naitô's selections. According to one of Naitô's biographers, Aoe Shunjirô 青江舜二郎, they have been compared by other critics to dumplings and fried rice, cheap items impalatable to the true connoisseur.¹⁴

The integrity of visual documents is undoubtedly a crucial measure of the value of a work of art history, but it is by no means the only measure. In Western art history, some texts that have long been judged as flawed in their visual and documentary contents remain objects of scholarly interest. For example, Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764) and Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters, and Sculptors* (1550; 1568), both replete with empirical inaccuracies and false claims,

¹¹ These lectures were later incorporated into *Naitô Konan zenshû* 内藤湖南全集 (The Complete Works of Naitô Konan), eds. Naitô Kenkichi 内藤乾吉 and Kanda Kiichirô 神田喜一郎 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1973), vol. 13.

¹² Kohara Hironobu, "Ribei de Zhongguo hua shoucang yu yanjiu" 日本の中國畫收藏與研究 (The collection and studies of Chinese painting in Japan), *Duoyun* 朵雲 40 (January 1994), p. 140.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁴ Aoe Shunjirô, *Ryû no seiza: Naitô Konan no Ajiateki shôgai* 竜の星座：内藤湖南のアジア的生涯 (The Dragon Constellation: Naitô Konan's Asian Career) (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1966), p. 326.

still captivate scholars as critical artifacts.¹⁵ To dismiss Naitô completely for something as subjective as connoisseurship preempts close examination of the social and cultural circumstances underlying his work. In either case, if one does “go back to read” his art history, it will be immediately apparent that Naitô was not unmindful of the risk in his decisions. After all, forgeries were common problems in Chinese art connoisseurship in Naitô’s time. Many Japanese scholars accepted forgeries as intrinsic to the Chinese painting tradition, a tradition where artists have for centuries put a premium on copying from old masters.¹⁶

Naitô Konan (figure 1) was a giant in Japanese sinology of the twentieth century. His eclectic and prolific scholarship has been the subject of immense study itself. But his art history has never been adequately examined by scholars. What caused him to take such a decidedly independent attitude in his choice of art works? Given the very different path Naitô took, how did his art history relate to Japanese nationalism? And most importantly, in what ways did the concept of the East fit into his vision of Chinese painting? It is the aim of this essay to offer some answers to these questions.

Naitô and Chinese Art

Before Naitô began teaching at Kyoto Imperial University in 1907, he had worked as a publicist for a number of newspapers and journals—among them, the *Ôsaka asahi shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞. Its editor, Takahashi Kenzô 高橋健三, together with Okakura Tenshin and Taki Seiichi 瀧精一 were the founders of the nationalist art journal *Kokka* 國華 (National Flower). Naitô’s first assignment at the *Ôsaka asahi* was to write several articles on the art and culture of Nara, capital of Japan in the eighth century.¹⁷ Nara is renowned for its stunning Buddhist art and architecture that owe a great deal to the legacy of Tang-dynasty China.

Working for Takahashi disposed Naitô to thinking seriously about Chinese art, and in 1902 he published an article on Tang-dynasty painting theory in *Kokka*. In this article, he listed some of the best-known books and treatises on painting that had appeared in China, and traced their provenance to different collectanea.¹⁸ This project was more of textual than visual significance. In the next decade Naitô was to write more image-oriented essays for a variety journals, but it was not until the middle of the 1910s

¹⁵ On Winckelmann and Vasari, see for example, Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

¹⁶ See Matsushita Shigeru 松下茂, “Min-Shin ga no gisaku ni tsuite” 明清畫の偽作に就いて (On forgeries in Ming and Qing paintings), *Shina bijutsu* 支那美術 1.7 (March 1923): 8-9; Takahashi Yoshisaku 高橋愛朔, “Shina koshoga kenkyû no konnan” 支那古書畫研究の困難 (The difficulties in studying ancient Chinese painting and calligraphy), *Shoga kottô zasshi* 書畫骨董雜誌 100 (November 1916): 32-34.

¹⁷ See Joshua Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitô Konan (1866-1934)* (Cambridge and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), p. 62.

¹⁸ Naitô Konan, “Tô izen no garon” 唐以前の畫論 (Pre-Tang painting theories), *Kokka* 141 (February 1902), reprinted in *Shina kaiga shi*, pp. 327-37.



Fig. 1 Naitô Konan (1866-1934), photograph; *Tôyô bijutsu* (May 1935), p 117.

that he began demonstrating a maturity in visual analysis. His range also broadened to cover architecture, jade, calligraphy, epigraphy, and bronzes.¹⁹

A major catalyst in Naitô's growth as an art historian was his extensive network of highly cultured friends. Naitô's close associate and professor of East Asian history at Kyoto Imperial University, Tomioka Kenzô 富岡謙三, was the son of the literati painter Tomioka Tessai 富岡鐵齋. Inukai Tsuyoshi 犬養毅, future prime minister of Japan and connoisseur of Chinese painting, was his good friend. Nakamura Fusetsu 中村不折, co-founder of Naitô's calligraphy club Shôfûkai, authored the first independent history of Chinese painting in Japan—*Shina kaiga shi* (1913)²⁰ (a different work from Naitô's). A famous antiquarian and diehard Qing loyalist, Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉, had close interaction with Naitô while in exile in Kyoto from 1911 to 1919.²¹ Luo had a vast collection of ancient bronzes, rare books, calligraphy, and paintings. This collection was an eye-opener for Naitô and many of his fellow sinophiles in the Kansai region.

¹⁹ The journals and newspapers that published Naitô's art writings included *Geibun* 藝文, *Ôsaka mainichi shinbun* 大阪毎日新聞, *Shirin* 史林, *Rekishi to chiri* 歴史と地理, *Shinagaku* 支那學, *Taiyô* 太陽, and *Bukkyô bijutsu* 佛教美術. For a list of Naitô's writings, including many of his art-related articles, see *Shinagaku* 7.3 (July 1934): 7-27; also, the bibliography in Joshua Fogel's *Politics and Sinology*.

²⁰ Nakamura Fusetsu 中村不折 and Kojika Seiun 小鹿青雲, *Shina kaiga shi* 支那繪畫史 (History of Chinese Painting) (Tokyo: Genôsha, 1913). This book traces the trajectory of Chinese painting from the time of the sage-kings to the Qing Dynasty. It adopts the three-fold scheme of Enlightenment historiography, dividing history into Ancient (*jôsei* 上世), Medieval (*chûsei* 中世), and Modern (*kinsei* 近世) periods. This scheme is an expression of the Enlightenment optimism in the ability of human beings to dictate their own destiny, and to make continuous strides towards an ever better, more progressive, future. This "progress view" has been criticized by some scholars today as inhospitable to certain significant forms of identity formation such as religion and class; see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). It projects a vision of a unified nation with an incremental history and a consistent goal through time and across space. For this reason, Nakamura's book even elicited positive responses from the Chinese. Chen Hengke 陳衡恪 (1876-1923) used it as the basis of his art history lectures at Beijing Art Academy; see Ma Hongzeng 馬鴻增, "Ershi shiji shangbanye Zhongguo hua zhushu pingyao" 二十世紀上半葉中國畫著書評要 (On major publications on Chinese painting from the first half of the twentieth century), *Meishu shilun* 306 (June 1993): 7; Pan Tianshou's 潘天授 *Zhongguo huihua shi* 中國繪畫史 (History of Chinese Painting) (1926), produced as part of an educational series for the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, is a translation almost verbatim of many parts of this book. *Zhongguo huihua shi* was Pan's major scholarly contribution to the institute. In his preface, he acknowledged his debts to Nakamura's book, but does not divulge the extent of these debts. The reception of Japanese art historical scholarship in China is itself a fascinating subject, one that merits a separate study.

²¹ Luo's attachment to the unfortunate house of Aisin Gioro 愛新覺羅 made him a likely target of revolutionary violence. When the revolution was brewing in August, Ôtani Kôzui, Naitô, and others repeatedly urged him to flee China, and offered him asylum in Kyoto. Luo accepted their offer and arrived in Kyoto in October 1911 with his family and his famous disciple, Wang Guowei 王國維. Luo did not speak Japanese, and except for meeting friends and attending occasional social gatherings, Luo devoted most of his time to scholarship, enjoying the seclusion in his new house located in the hilly and picturesque precinct of Jôdo 淨土 Temple. See Chen Bangzhi 陳邦直, *Luo Zhenyu zhuan* 羅振玉 (Biography of Luo Zhenyu) (Manchuria: Man-Ri wenhua xiehui, 1943): 31-33.

Luo was especially helpful to Naitô's development as a sinologist and connoisseur. He introduced Naitô in 1909 to manuscripts from Dunhuang 敦煌, a famous site of Buddhist cave-chambers on the border between China and Central Asia. It contained art and artifacts that dated from as early as the fourth century. The discovery of this site in the 1870s by a Spanish geographer and the subsequent explorations by Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot around the turn of the century had stunned the archaeological communities around the world. Naitô was among the first Japanese to view and document artifacts from Dunhuang, and his work stirred a "big whirlwind" in the field of East Asian history in Kyoto.²² Naitô's pioneer work catapulted the reputation of his department at Kyoto University to a new level, and assured his own place in academia. When the archaeological team of Ôtani Kôzui 大谷光瑞 (1876-1948) returned from Central Asia in 1910, Naitô and his department were entrusted with the task of interpreting and analyzing the finds.²³

Two years after Naitô started work on the Dunhuang materials, the 1911 Revolution erupted in China. The post-revolution turmoil put many former Qing officials and elites in financial straits, forcing them to sell their art collections. The result was the largest dispersal of private collections that China had ever seen, and many works found their way to Japan. At the time, people in Japan had limited exposure to works in China, and collectors were apprehensive about buying them. Naitô, having known Luo Zhenyu intimately, and having doubtless learned a great deal about Chinese art from him, suddenly found himself explaining the Chinese works to collectors in Japan. As many of the important sellers were part of Luo's milieu, Naitô became all the more indispensable in this new art-buying culture.

Besides collectors, Naitô also frequently gave advice to dealers, among them members of the Harada 原田 family. The Harada family owned the Hakubundô 博文堂 of Ôsaka, one of the largest bookshops in Japan at the time. It was well-known for its rich inventory of Chinese books. Besides books, the Hakubundô also sold fine stationery, art, and crafts. Its solid business reputation and clientele of sinophiles made the Hakubundô a natural choice for the Chinese who were selling their collections in Japan. In the course of the 1910s and 1920s, an enormous number of Chinese paintings would pass through the Harada family. No connoisseur himself, Mr. Harada often took these paintings to Naitô, who by the late 1910s had become quite adept at deciphering seals, colophons, and other connoisseurial matters.²⁴ The huge number of paintings he saw was to form the foundation of his art history.

²² Hibino Takeo 日比野丈夫, "Naitô Konan ga majiwatta gakusha bunjin tachi" 内藤湖南が交わった学者文人たち (Scholars and literati with whom Naitô Konan associated), *Shoron* 書論 13 (November 1978): 87.

²³ That was the third and last expedition made by Ôtani and his team to Central Asia. (The first two were made in 1902 and 1908). Besides Naitô, other notable participants in the studies of the Central Asian artifacts included Matsumoto Fumisaburô 松本文三郎, Kano Kôkichi 狩野亨吉, Tomioka Kenzô 富岡謙藏, Hamada Kôsaku 濱田耕作, Ogawa Takuji 小川琢治, Haneda Tôru 羽田亨, and Taki Seiichi. Except for Taki who was professor of art history at Tokyo Imperial University, all were scholars at Kyoto Imperial University. See Hibino, "Naitô Konan ga majiwatta gakusha bunjin tachi": 87.

²⁴ For more on the Harada family see, Tsuruta Takeyoshi 鶴田武良, "Harada Gorô shi kiki-gaki: Taishô-Shôwa shoki ni okeru Chûgoku ga korekushon no seiritsu" 原田梧郎氏聞書: 大正昭和初期における中国絵コレクションの成立 (Verbatim notes of Harada Gorô: The establishment of Chinese art collections during the Taishô and Shôwa periods), in *Chûgoku Min-*

Among the many collections formed under Naitô's guidance was the Abe Collection (now property of the Ôsaka Municipal Museum of Fine Art),²⁵ which contained mainly works purchased from contemporary Chinese collectors—the so-called “new importation.” The owner Abe Fusajirô 阿部房次郎 (1868–1937) was the President of Tôyô Bôseki 東洋紡績, a cotton manufacturing company. The collection comprised over two hundred works of painting and calligraphy. Among them was *Fusheng Presenting a Copy of Shujing to an Imperial Messenger* 伏生授經圖, a handscroll at the time believed to be by the Tang master Wang Wei (701–61)—it was also purported to be the same work that had once been in the Song-dynasty imperial collection. Works by Wang Wei and many other canonical masters were not available in Japan before the 1911 Revolution, and a large portion of these works was believed to be by well-known literati masters, including Wen Tong 文同 (1018–79) and Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107) of the Song Dynasty; Gong Kai 龔開 (1222–ca. 1307), Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322), Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–74), Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427–1509), Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559), Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), and Gong Xian 龔賢 (ca. 1599–1689) of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties; Zhu Da 朱耷 (c. 1626–after 1704), Gao Fenghan 高鳳翰 (1683–1749), Pu Hua 蒲華 (1834–1911), and Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844–1927) from the Qing and early Republican periods.²⁶

In the early twentieth century wealthy Japanese spent fortunes on art—fortunes many of them made in the modern industrial and commercial enterprises that had substantial investments in China. Abe Fusajirô's company Tôyô Bôseki, for example, was one of the largest Japanese cotton manufacturers with business in China at the time.²⁷ In this era Naitô emerged as an arbiter of taste for this newly affluent group. Some of the more important collectors that followed Naitô's guidance included Ueno Seiichi 上野精一 (vice-president, later turned president, of the *Tôkyô asahi shinbun* 東京朝日新聞), Yamamoto Teijirô 山本悌二郎 (president of a sugar company and banker), Ogawa Chikanosuke 小川睦之輔 (anatomist), and Fujii Zensuke 藤井善助 (manager of a fiber manufacturing company). A good number of the works in these collections were literati paintings. All his life Naitô took great satisfaction in the refinements of the literati. It was obvious to him that, from reading Chinese writings and by interacting with Chinese connoisseurs, literati painting was the predominant strain of the Chinese pictorial tradition. Naitô came to consider himself as an aesthete whose taste was fine-tuned to that of the Chinese gentleman-scholar.

Chinese paintings of the literati heritage had long been a neglected province in the collecting tradition of the Japanese aristocrats, shôguns, and Buddhist temples. By

Shin meiga ten: Chûgoku Tenshin shi geijutsu hakubutsukan hizô 中国明清名画展：中国天津市芸術博物館秘蔵 (Exhibition of Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the Ming and Qing Dynasties: Treasures from the Tianjin City Art Museum in China), exh. cat. (Tokyo: Nit-Chû yûkô kaikan, 1992).

²⁵ A catalogue of the collection was produced on the occasion of an exhibition at the museum two decades ago; it reproduces one hundred and sixty works; see *Chûgoku kaiga zuroku hen* 中国絵画図録篇 (Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Painting), exh. cat. (Tokyo, Osaka, Kita-kyûshû Nagoya: Asahi shinbunsha, 1975).

²⁶ See Mochizuki Shinjô 望月信成, “Abe korekushôn no naka kara” 阿部コレクションの中から (From the Abe Collection), *Hôshun* 萌春 112 (May 1963): 1–4.

²⁷ See Takamura Naosuke 高村直助, *Kindai Nihon bôgyô to Chûgoku* 近代日本紡業と中国 (China and the Modern Japanese Textile Industry) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1982).

acquiring these works, the new collectors were perhaps trying to set themselves apart from these old elites. Their collections of Chinese paintings symbolized a new social force that was beginning to challenge the power of Japan's feudal remnants. Now Chinese art was no longer a status symbol controlled only by the aristocrats, the shōguns, and the Buddhist establishment. The affluent industrialists and merchants were becoming the new elite.

In his lectures Naitō related a subtle narrative of the ascendancy of the newly wealthy sector. He copiously reproduced the "new importation" that had entered the hands of the wealthy collectors. Naitō's zeal for the "new importation" did not simply evolve passively with the greater availability of Chinese works on the market. He was instrumental in raising the Japanese collectors' awareness of these works and in educating them about their value. Therefore, the "new importation," to some extent, were reflections of his own cultural clout. And as we shall see, Naitō's enthusiasm for the "new importation" was also intimately tied to his political views.

The Lectures

Naitō delivered his lectures on Chinese painting history between 1922 and 1923 as part of the interdisciplinary program of sinology at Kyoto Imperial University. The written version of these lectures was published serially in the journal *Bukkyō bijutsu* 佛教美術 (Buddhist Art) three years later, and compiled posthumously into a single volume (1938). They presented chronologically what Naitō perceived to be the major works in Chinese painting from the pre-Han era to the Qing dynasty, a period of more than two thousand years. Most of the illustrations were taken from the "new importation." Among these, representing the Tang Dynasty master Wu Daozi 吳道子 (act. eighth century) was *Legend of Sakyamuni's Birth* (figure 2) from the collection of Yamamoto Teijirō. It is a work of "fine-line painting" (*baimiao* 白描), a form of pictorial art stressing ink outline rather than color or shade. This painting has the "orchid leaf" brushwork associated with Wu—the gently tapering lines that emphasize the pliancy of the brush. Naitō attributed this work to the Song dynasty, but accepted it as a



Fig. 2. Attri. Wu Daozi, *Legend of Sakyamuni's Birth*, detail; ink on paper. 35.7 x 33.38 cm. Ōsaka Municipal Museum of Fine Art. *Shina kaiga shi*, fig. 18.

good imitation of “the pictorial method” of the Tang-dynasty master. In those days, a number of paintings in Japanese temples were believed to be also by Wu, including the Kôtôin 高桐院 landscapes in Daitokuji 大徳寺, and the portrait of Sakyamuni in Tôfukuji 東福寺. Both, however, Naitô dismissed as later works bearing little relation to Wu’s art. He dated the Kôtôin landscapes to the Southern Song (which is in accord with the general opinion of scholars today)²⁸ and the Tôfukuji portrait to the Yuan dynasty. From this point onwards discrediting old Japanese collections became routine in Naitô’s narrative.

In the section on Wang Wei the discussion centered upon two newly imported works. The first is *Rivers and Mountains after Snow* 江山雪霽圖 (figure 3) in the

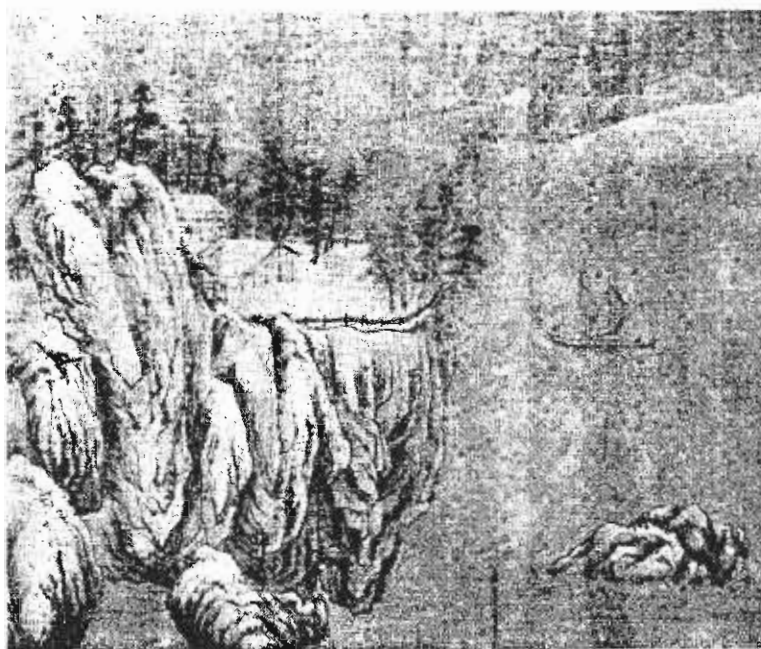


Fig. 3: Attri. Wang Wei (701-61), *Rivers and Mountains after Snow*, detail; ink on silk. 28.4 x 171.5 cm. Ogawa Family Collection. *Shina kaiga shi*, fig. 25.

Ogawa Collection, and the second is *Fusheng Presenting a Copy of Shujing to an Imperial Messenger* (figure 4) in the Abe Collection. *Rivers and Mountains* has the same title as a Wang Wei handscroll seen by Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) in the Ming Dynasty, and that connection made this otherwise dubious work historically significant. Reiterating views of the Qing-dynasty writer Sun Chengze 孫承澤, he questioned the work’s authenticity; he drew attention to the prevalence of over-painting as the tell-tale sign of a late date, but insisted that “in places where there is no over-painting, one can invariably see Wang Wei.”²⁹ In these lectures, he showed an unwavering faith in the “new importation”; even when they looked suspicious, he always seemed to be able to find some redeeming qualities in them.

²⁸ See Richard Barnhart, “Li Tang (c. 1050-c. 1130) and the Kôtôin Landscapes,” *The Burlington Magazine* 114 (May 1972): 305-14.

²⁹ Naitô, *Shina kaiga shi*, p. 68.



Fig. 4: Attri. Wang Wei, *Fusheng Presenting a Copy of the Shujing to an Imperial Messenger*, detail; color on silk. Ōsaka Municipal Museum of Fina Art. *Shina kaiga shi*, fig. 26.

Naitō devoted a paragraph describing the background of Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠, author of the Tang-dynasty survey *Lidai minghua ji* (847 C.E.), something he did not do for any other historians mentioned in these lectures. Naitō was mostly concerned with explaining Zhang's decision to record the history of Chinese painting: "It was no accident that Zhang wrote *Lidai minghua ji*. His ancestors had been important collectors whose collection did not survive to his time. Furthermore under Emperor Wuzong's prosecution of Buddhism in the Huichang 會昌 reign period [841-46 C.E.], mural paintings of the famous mountains were destroyed. Zhang wanted to record as best as he could all of these lost works; that was his motivation for writing [*Lidai*] *minghua ji*."³⁰ Naitō was not confronting the same sort of personal and cultural crises as Zhang, but he probably identified with the Tang-dynasty writer's sense of duty to record those works that he had the good fortune to know. This served as a reminder to his reader that an author's experiential horizon shapes the stories he tells.

The next period that Naitō regarded as particularly crucial was the Five Dynasties (907-60). According to him it was during this period that Chinese ink painting (especially, landscapes) reached its maturity. The artist Jing Hao 荆浩 (act. tenth century), he stated, surpassed Wang Wei in his ability to capture the likeness of real landscapes. While Wang tended to depict the mountains and rivers in schematic forms, Jing rendered the same subjects much more naturalistically.³¹ Furthermore, Five-Dynasties artists also attained freedom from the *baimiao* or fine-line painting method of the Tang, and this was, to Naitō, a watershed achievement.³² Naitō used *Auspicious Clouds and Autumn Mountains* 秋山瑞靄圖 (figure 5) in the Abe Collection—"the only Jing Hao painting [he] had seen outside of the two listed in the [early Qing] record, *Shigutang shuhua huikao* 式古堂書畫彙考"—to illustrate his point. However, this

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

³¹ Ibid., p. 90.

³² Ibid., pp. 94-95.

painting has nothing to do with Jing Hao and appears to be a work of the seventeenth century or later, perhaps based loosely on an old composition.



Fig. 5: Attri. Jing Hao (act. 10th century), *Auspicious Clouds and Autumn Mountains*. *Shina kaiga shi*, fig. 29.

Naitô named Jing's student Guan Tong 關同 as the other important landscape painter of the period. According to Dong Qichang's 董其昌 theory of the Northern and Southern Schools, both Jing and Guan were key figures of the Southern School. Naitô, however, claimed that Guan straddled the two Schools; he found Guan's wash techniques to be similar to those of the "Southern School" masters Dong Yuan 董源 (act. tenth century) and Ju Ran 巨然 (act. tenth century), and his trees to those found in the works of the "Northern School" masters Li Cheng 李成 (919-67) and Guo Xi 郭熙 (1023-ca. 1085).³³ In so doing, he challenged the presumption of polarity that had made the two schools meaningful for Dong Qichang.

Naitô explained that it was also during the Five Dynasties that regionalism began to play an important role in painting history. He identified three distinct artistic tendencies, corresponding to the regional character of the Central Plains, Southern Tang, and Shu. Paintings from the Southern Tang tended to follow the tradition of the Tang dynasty, paintings from Shu 蜀 also inherited the Tang tradition but retained a strong regional flavor, and paintings from Central Plains were predominantly professional. He credited Dong Yuan of the Southern Tang with pioneering the use of texture strokes to delineate the "bone" (structure) of mountains—"nothing like that had been attempted before him."³⁴ Naitô paid special homage to Li Cheng and Fan Kuan 范寬 (act. tenth-eleventh centuries) of the Central Plains, two canonical masters whose works were hardly known to the Japanese until the twentieth century.

Naitô disapproved of the professionals, whom he considered inferior to the literati, a bias that has a long tradition in Chinese art historiography. He argued that the general quality of portraiture declined in the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), and attributed this decline to the control of the genre by the professionals. Because of this assumption, the remarkable achievements in figure painting of the Five Dynasties were given short shrift in his lectures. He made no mention of such prominent professional portraitists as Zhou Wenju 周文矩 (act. tenth century) and Gu Hongzhong 顧闳中 (act. tenth century), and focused instead on the literati, such as the landscapists Wang Shen 王誥 (act. eleventh century), Zhao Lingrang 趙令穰 (act. eleventh-twelfth centuries), and the bamboo painter Wen Tong. Many bamboo pictures attributed to Wen have been in Japanese collections since the Higashiyama 東山 period (fifteenth century), but none of them, Naitô claimed, could be genuine. Naitô gave special praise to Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106), for the reason that his horses were "skillfully painted with the abbreviated brush method characteristic of the literati."³⁵

The only period in Chinese painting history for which Naitô found the old importation to have actual evidential value was the Southern Song. He conceded that many paintings from this period recorded in the fifteenth-century shogunal art catalogue *Kundaikan sayû chôki* 君台觀左右帳記 to be genuine works by canonical masters such as Liu Songnian 劉松年 (act. twelfth-thirteenth centuries), Ma Yuan 馬遠 (act. twelfth-thirteenth centuries), Xia Gui 夏圭 (act. twelfth-thirteenth centuries), Su Hanchen 蘇漢臣 (act. twelfth century), and Li Di 李迪 (act. twelfth-thirteenth centuries). He added that several monk- and recluse-painters such as Mu Qi 牧溪 (act. thirteenth century), Yu Jian 玉澗 (act. thirteenth century), and Yang Buzhi 楊補之 (1097-1169), whose paintings have survived in Japan, deserved more praise than had been given to

³³ Ibid., p. 90.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

them in China.³⁶ Yet, his sympathy for this body of Southern Song paintings does not negate his theory about the inferiority of paintings in old collections. Naitô considered the Southern Song generally as a period in decline; thus, he stated in his lectures:

Chinese painting attained excellence between the Five Dynasties and the reign of Emperor Shenzong, who preceded Emperor Huizong [the next to last emperor of the Northern Song]. Although significant achievements were made during [Emperor Huizong's] Xuanhe Academy and the number of professional artists climbed, the age of talents had already passed. Towards the end of the Southern Song the situation worsened.... In the Yuan and thereafter, several fresh methods were introduced to bring about a renaissance, but they resulted in no more than small strides. One may say that Chinese painting reached its zenith in the Northern Song. Unfortunately, the opportunity to view paintings from that period had eluded Japan from the beginning.³⁷

Naitô once again reminded his readers that the best Chinese paintings were not to be found in old Japanese collections, and although these collections might be the best Chinese paintings Japan had acquired in the past, they came from a period that was on the whole artistically inferior. Professional painters received here yet another battering from Naitô; he not only suggested that they lacked talent, but also held them responsible for what he perceived to be an irrevocable decline of Chinese painting.

Naitô's celebration of literati over professional painting continued in his treatment of the Yuan. He acknowledged two opposing trends in this period, one followed the tradition of Southern Song academic (court) painting, and the other harked back to before the Southern Song. As could be expected, he glossed over the first trend that included works by Sun Junze 孫君澤 (act. fourteenth centuries) and Yan Hui 顏輝 (act. thirteenth-fourteenth centuries), both well represented by old Japanese collections but "mostly unheard of in China."³⁸ The second trend, headed by Zhao Mengfu and the so-called Four Masters of the Late Yuan, was considered more significant by Naitô. He lauded the ability of Zhao and the Four Masters to capture "antique flavor" (*guyi* 古意) and at the same time retain some measure of individuality. In Zhao's paintings, he maintained, the brush and ink methods were derived from the Tang and the Song (here Naitô specified Northern Song), and yet they also carried the artist's "personal character" (*jiko no tokushoku* 自己の特色).³⁹

According to Naitô, the Four Masters of the Late Yuan (Huang Gongwang 黃公望 [1269-1354], Ni Zan 倪瓚 [d. 1385], and Wu Zhen 吳鎮 [1280-1354]) played a centripetal role in Chinese painting history; they revived the tradition of the Tang and the Five Dynasties (especially the styles of Wang Wei, Dong Yuan and Ju Ran) and established models that artists in the Ming and the Qing were to follow. The sense of continuity, of organic relationships between different periods, was a leitmotif in his narrative. He tried to create a history that would accord with the idea of a holistic culture. The works representing the Four Masters in the text were all "new importation" from the collections of such figures as Ueno Seiichi, Saitô Saizô 齋藤才三, and Nagao Uzan 長尾雨山 (prominent connoisseur and editor at the Shanghai Commercial Press). Naitô reserved his highest praise for the Four Masters, exalting their "extremely carefree

³⁶ Ibid., p. 160.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 171.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

and insouciant spirit" (*kiwamete kansan na tanpaku na kibun* 極めて閑散な淡泊な氣分), attributes that made them heroes under the repressive and autocratic regime of the Mongols.⁴⁰

His lectures concluded with the early Ming Dynasty, a period of revival for court painting. Because he was unable to explain the apparent literati style of such court artists as the bamboo specialists Wang Fu 王紱 (1362-1416) and Xia Chang 夏昞 (1388-1470), he simply played down their professional identity and focused instead on their styles, which he linked to the Four Masters and later literati such as Wen Zhengming. He also took this opportunity to introduce other works from new collections, which uncharacteristically included court paintings by Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (1399-1435) and Dai Jin 戴進 (1388-1462). But overall he preferred literati painting and considered such court paintings lacking in "untrammelled spirit" (*yiqi* 逸氣), one of the most elusive but desirable qualities associated with painting in the Chinese critical language.

History and Ideology

While Naitô's lectures may have rehashed an old Chinese prejudice that viewed the professionals as inferior to the literati, when read in conjunction with his *Shinaron* (On China, 1914),⁴¹ a book that Joshua A. Fogel called "the most influential work on Chinese history and culture of the twentieth century,"⁴² the old prejudice takes on a new layer of meaning. Before this meaning can be clarified, it is necessary to recapitulate some of the ideas in *Shinaron* 支那論 (On China).

In *Shinaron* Naitô propounded for the first time his famous thesis that the modern period (*kinsei* 近世) in China began about a thousand years ago, at the transition between the Tang and the Northern Song. As the Tang gave way to the Song, he argued, the great aristocratic families lost their strength, and officialdom was open to the commoner. This was accompanied by the rise of the military governors who, having gained the power to establish private armies, were able to make decisions independent of the imperial court. Naitô described these developments as "incipient republicanism," a trend that continued to have a steady influence on Chinese politics in subsequent dynasties. As Fogel tells us, Naitô wrote *Shinaron* for the purpose of proving that "autocracy would no longer play any role in China; [that] republicanism was the only form of government befitting China, and her history had age-old precedents for it."⁴³ This was a reaction to the kinds of arguments that Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 and his supporters embraced in the post-revolutionary period, arguments that favored the return to autocracy and the imperial system. Inspired by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-95), Naitô tried to show that the Chinese had long been moving towards a republican system that allowed popular participation, and that the collapse of the Qing dynasty had been inevitable.

Naitô's belief that republicanism was intrinsic and beneficial to Chinese society was consistent with his judgment regarding the relative merits of professional and literati painting. Although he did not deny the importance of both professional and literati painting in the history of Chinese art, and that the former even was superior in certain periods, throughout his lectures he repeatedly privileged the latter. Literati painting was

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 189.

⁴¹ Naitô, *Shinaron*, reprinted in *Naitô Konan zenshû*, vol. 5 (1972).

⁴² Fogel, *Politics and Sinology*, p. 165.

⁴³ Ibid.

traditionally associated with the scholar and the gentry who, through the channel of civil service examinations, were able to gain entry into government service. For Naitô, although this class of people staffed the imperial bureaucracy, their interests were not always identical to the state's. In his view the scholar-officials provided the backbone for republicanism. Conversely, paintings by professional artists, servants of the court, only represented the dynamics that contravened the full realization of republicanism. Hence they had to be rejected.

The importance of popular participation in government and curbing the evils of autocracy were recurrent themes in the political ideology of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Japan. Anyone should be able to gain power by hard work and education, and no one should be barred from achieving wealth and the pleasures that come with it. These meritocratic and democratic views had been steadily gaining acceptance in Japan since the abolition of "hereditary restrictions on occupation and residence" during the Meiji period (1868-1912).

Naitô grew up in this political atmosphere. In his youth he avidly consumed Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract*⁴⁴ and its argument that "hereditary aristocracy" is "the worst of all governments" and that all mechanisms leading to inequality should be minimized. Early on Naitô was convinced that class division and special privileges existed, but they should not impede social mobility. That he was able to attain the august position of Professor at Kyoto Imperial University without having completed "the course of graduating from Tokyo Imperial University"⁴⁵ was a personal triumph in meritocracy.

By 1900, Japan had witnessed "the formation of new elites in a rationalized bureaucracy and a skilled business management based on civil service examinations and systematic recruitment of university graduates."⁴⁶ Democratic currents gained even greater force in the Taishô period, which witnessed the enactment of universal manhood suffrage (1926), and the rise of such thinkers as Sôda Kiichirô 左右田喜一郎, advocate of "the ideology of the cultivated bourgeoisie," and Ishibashi Tanzan 石橋湛山, champion of representative government and freedom of expression.⁴⁷ Works of art collected by the new elites were signs of their cultural sophistication, wealth, and newfound social power. And by using these works as his primary visual resources, Naitô was not simply reflecting a changing taste made possible by capitalist consumerism or a desire to tell a story about cultural China. Naitô's art history strongly hints at his support of Taishô democracy.

Besides being an era of burgeoning democratic ideals, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also ushered in a new vision of Japan's role in the global setting. Instead of a nation struggling to realize its worth under the pressure of invading Western elements, Japan now considered itself an aspiring empire capable of competing with the West. Several military victories had given Japan new confidence; first in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, then the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, and in a battle with the Germans in 1914 which gave Japan control over a former German colony in Shandong. These victories fueled the Japanese sense of nationalism.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 35.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁶ Sharon Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905-1960* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1987), p. 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 173-84.

Naitô was a nationalist. Despite his reverence for Chinese history and culture, he endorsed passionately Japan's expansion into China and the occupation of Shandong. When the Chinese protested against the occupation during the explosive May Fourth Movement of 1919, Naitô was so chagrined that he remarked: "In a word, we [Japanese] no longer need to ask when China will collapse. It is already dead, only its corpse is wriggling."⁴⁸ He saw the fortunes of China and Japan as tightly intertwined and perceived the anti-Japanism of the May Fourth protests as a sign of political shortsightedness in China.

Naitô's morbid assessment sprang from his belief in Japan's rightful leadership in the East. He saw Chinese resistance to Japan's expanding power as a battle against history. According to him, the center of Chinese culture was historically unstable; through the ages it had shifted from the central region to the south and to the east. Naitô felt it would not be surprising that the next center should be Japan. His views were crystallized into a theory of "shifting center of Eastern culture," propounded in his famous essay *Shin shina ron* 新支那論 (On the New China) of 1924. Okamoto Shumpei summarizes this theory as follows:

According to Naitô, each of the nation states in East Asia—China, Japan, and Korea—had been established with its own basis for separate existence. From a broad viewpoint of the development of Oriental culture however, distinctions among these nation-states were inconsequential, since culture developed along a certain course that transcended national distinctions and boundaries. Moreover, the Chinese of the present day were not originally of one race; they consisted of at least two or three different ethnic groups. Racial distinctions disappeared as Chinese culture developed. Besides, the center of culture shifted as time passed. Until the Han dynasty, it was located in the Yellow River basin. Thereafter, it moved southward as well as eastward, and it was about to reach the Canton region. As culture developed with little regard for national distinctions, it would hardly be surprising if Japan, which had previously come under the influence of Chinese culture, should become the new cultural center of the Orient. If Japan and China, too, should "for some reason" develop into a single political entity, the Japanese could easily come to China and engage themselves in political and social activities. Hence, Naitô stressed that such matters as national differences were minor details in the total development of Oriental culture.⁴⁹

Naitô further argued that the shifting of the cultural center from China to Japan should be welcomed by the Chinese, who had historically benefited from the assimilation of foreign culture. He even felt that China was unable to advance on its own, and that it should relinquish its sovereignty to more capable hands, perhaps the Japanese. This feeling did not arise suddenly. As early as the 1890s while he was still a reporter, he had

⁴⁸ Naitô Konan 内藤湖南, "Santô mondai to hai-Nichi ron no kontei" 山東問題と排日論の根底 (The Shandong issue and the roots of anti-Japanism), *Taiyô* 太陽 (July 1919), quoted in Okamoto Shumpei, "Japanese Response to Chinese Nationalism: Naitô (Ko'nan) Torajirô's Image of China in the 1920s," in *China in the 1920s*, ed. Gilbert Chan and Thomas H. Etzold (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), p. 164.

⁴⁹ Okamoto Shumpei, "Japanese Response to Chinese Nationalism: Naitô (Ko'nan) Torajirô's Image of China in the 1920s," p. 164.

already implied in his essay "Japan's Mission and Scholars" that "the center of culture was about to or had already come to Japan."⁵⁰

The desire for Japanese leadership in the East heightened the sense of competition with the West. The growing interest in Chinese art among Western collectors and scholars was a source of anxiety for some Japanese, who felt that Westerners were getting ahead of them in attending to the Eastern patrimony. The following passage from a 1915 issue of *Bijutsu no Nihon* 美術の日本 described this sentiment:

The art of our country has historically depended on China in many respects. Eastern art (*Tôyô geijutsu* 東洋藝術) is the responsibility of both Japan and China. Now that we find Chinese works of art gradually passing into the hands of Europe and America, what should we do? It is all very well that the study of Chinese art is booming in Europe and America, but can we, the ones who should be most concerned, catch up with the progress being made in the West? In order to preserve national essence, methods to protect art works of our country and ways to prevent them from leaking overseas have been discussed, but now when our country has established a firm footing in the East, and has been working hard towards maintaining China's territoriality, it is no longer sufficient to simply preserve our cultural treasures. Rather, we should extend our efforts to our neighbor [China] and protect its cultural treasures as well. Realizing that Chinese culture is deeply connected to ours, we should do our best to keep Chinese artifacts in the East.⁵¹

The annexation of Shandong, Taiwan, and Korea was probably what Nakagawa was alluding to when he said Japan had "established a firm footing in the East." He recognized that political imperialism must be accompanied in some degree by cultural initiatives, so he proposed going one step beyond political domination to active engagement with the cultural life of Japan's imperialist targets, especially that of China. Having undergone several decades of nation-building through the preservation of traditional culture and works of art, including Chinese works of art in Japan, it was a natural extension for Japan to take seriously the protection of Chinese art treasures in China. There was a feeling that it was Japan's duty to compete with Western collectors for ownership of Chinese art—not only because it was intrinsically valuable, but as Nakagawa would contend, because it was part of the Eastern heritage, a heritage that belonged to Japan's expanding sphere of power.

The feeling that it was Japan's prerogative to keep Chinese art out of Westerners' hands was shared by Naitô. In the late 1920s the famous *Emperors* handscroll attributed to the Tang Dynasty master Yan Liben 閻立本 (seventh century) went to the Boston Museum after repeated failures to attract a buyer in Japan.⁵² Naitô was apparently so affected by the loss of that work to the Americans that he wept.⁵³

Naitô regarded Yan Liben to be one the three most important painters of the Tang Dynasty (the other two being Wang Wei and Wu Daozi). And in his lectures the

⁵⁰ See Fogel, *Politics and Sinology*, p. 70.

⁵¹ Nakagawa Tadayori 中川忠順, "Tôyô geijutsuhin no shûshû no keikô" 東洋藝術品の蒐集の傾向 (Trends in the collection of eastern art), *Bijutsu no Nihon*, 7.8 (April 1915): 6.

⁵² For a description of the difficulty of soliciting a buyer for the *Emperors* handscroll, see Sasaki Gôzô 佐々木剛三, "Shinchô hihô no Nihon ruten" 清朝秘宝の日本流転 (Transmission of Qing dynasty treasures to Japan), *Geijutsu shinchô* 芸術新潮 (September 1965): 132-40.

⁵³ Aoe Shunjiro, *Ryû no seiza*, p. 331.



Fig. 6: Attri. Yan Liben (7th century), *Emperors*, detail; ink and color on silk. 51.3 x 531 cm. (pictorial section). *Shina kaiga shi*, fig. 17. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

“Emperors” handscroll was accorded special significance. After examining the pigments and colophons and consulting such Qing-dynasty records as Sun Chengze’s *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 庚子銷夏記 and Wu Xiu’s 吳修 *Qingxiaguan hualun jueju* 青霞館畫論絕句, he concluded that the work was probably a Song copy, but a copy demonstrative of “the stylistic traits of early Tang dynasty portraiture.”⁵⁴ To support his theory, he compared the handscroll to the eighth-century portrait of Prince Shôtoku 聖德太子, a work formerly in the imperial treasury of Shôsôin 正倉院 in Nara; he believed the two paintings to have emanated from the same portraiture tradition, that of the Tang dynasty. “From this painting of the Emperors,” he wrote, “the transmission of Tang-style figural tradition into Japan can be grasped.” In his lectures, Naitô occasionally shunted from his Chinese materials to discussions of Japanese and Korean art. These may seem like digressions, but are important indications of Naitô’s belief in the interconnectedness of the art of different Eastern cultures.

Naitô’s enthusiasm for the “new importation” was clearly related to the desire to protect Chinese works of art from the West. He was inclined to think of Western culture as lacking in beauty and spirituality, and cautioned against the exportation of cultural treasures to the West from China, which he called “the greatest nation in East Asia.”⁵⁵ Therefore, when works of art started to flow out of China in large quantities, he argued that Japan should absorb them lest they all fall into Western hands. Taking the lead in maintaining the cultural heritage of China was to Naitô a part of Japan’s duty as a nation in the East.

Naitô felt a responsibility towards the Chinese and respected their scholarship. In his lectures he referred frequently to Chinese classics of painting history, as well as

⁵⁴ Naitô Konan, *Shina kaiga shi*, pp. 54-57.

⁵⁵ Fogel, *Politics and Sinology*, pp. 66-67.

painting catalogues, stelae, rubbings, bronze inscriptions, mirrors, and other items preserved in China. He introduced his first lecture with passages from the *Zhouli* 周禮, *Zuozhuan* 左傳, *Chuci* 楚辭, and *Shiji* 史記, ancient texts revered in China. In explaining paintings of the Han dynasty, he presented archaeological finds, such as carvings and paintings from Xiaotang Mountain 孝堂山, Wu Liang Shrine 武梁祠, and other sites in northeastern China where Japan had begun to have considerable economic and political influence.

Naitô systematically arranged material evidence into an organic and causally coherent narrative. He linked one period to another by mapping out continuities, influences, transformations, and discovering social, historical, and political contexts. In the West, this had been a common narrative strategy in art historical writing since the eighteenth century, but it was a novel one in early twentieth century Japan. The art historian Ise Sen'ichirô 伊勢専一郎 (1891-1948) wrote in the 1940s that Naitô's historicist method was so ground-breaking that he deserved the title "the founder of Chinese painting history."⁵⁶ Ise claimed that traditional narrative of Chinese art had been limited to biography (*retsudentai* 列傳體), a narrative form that could neither bring out "the organic relationships" (*yûki na kanren* 有機な關聯) between artists nor illuminate "the development of painting styles as a historical continuum" (*keika suru renmen taru gafû hatten no yôsô* 經過する連綿たる畫風發展の様相).⁵⁷ Because Naitô's art history in its organicist approach clearly broke with biography, it was, in Ise's view, "true" history.

Ise's claim that the biography had been the only form of art historical writing in China was a misunderstanding (Yu Shaosong 余紹宋 has identified at least eight others),⁵⁸ but it was a misunderstanding pervasive in the critical literature of both China and Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. Biography had come to symbolize the entire historiographical tradition of China, which had had a profound influence on Japanese history writing until the Meiji period. Stories of the rise and fall of kings and description of the paradigmatic lives of loyal or evil ministers were regarded as metaphors for the Chinese proclivity to privilege the imperium, a proclivity condemned as a bane to the development of a history for and of the people. Naitô's art history was itself an expression of this desire to wrest the history of China from its imperial past.

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⁵⁶ Ise Senichirô, "Shina kaiga shi no sôshisha, ko Naitô Konan hakushi no ichi igyô" 支那繪畫史の創始者、故内藤湖南博士の一遺業 (Founder of Chinese painting history, Dr. Naitô Konan and his legacy), parts 1-3, *Hôun* 寶雲 26 (July 1940): 15-28, 27 (July 1941): 91-111; 28 (December 1942): 85-117. Ise was a graduate of the Kyoto Imperial University and Naitô's student. In 1922, barely thirty years old, he wrote *Shina no kaiga* 支那の繪畫, a survey of Chinese painting that identified him as a promising scholar in the field. His reputation gradually grew thereafter, and when the Institute of Oriental Culture needed someone to write a history of Chinese landscape painting, it was Ise to whom they turned. The result was *Ko Gaishi yori Kei Kô ni itaru: Shina sansuiga shi* 顧愷之より荆浩に至る：支那山水畫史 (History of Chinese landscape painting from Gu Kaizhi to Jing Hao) (Kyoto: Tôhō bunka gakuin, 1934).

⁵⁷ Ibid., no. 27, p. 93.

⁵⁸ See Yu Shaosong, *Shuhua shulu jieti* (Annotated Bibliography of Writings on Painting and Calligraphy) (Beiping: Beiping National library, preface 1932). Besides works listed under *sanyi* 散佚 "lost texts," there are *zuofa* 作法, *lunshu* 論述, *pinzao* 品藻, *tizan* 題贊, *zhulu* 著錄, *zashi* 雜識, *congji* 叢輯, and *weituo* 僞託.

Naitô's *History of Chinese Painting* is historiographically interesting for several reasons. In this work Naitô displayed great adaptive power as a narrator and researcher. Even though he was Japanese, Naitô frequently arrived at viewpoints similar to those of Chinese scholars. But at the same time, he was not entirely encumbered by Chinese historiographical conventions and openly adopted Western methodology. Furthermore, his recurrent endorsement of the "new importation," especially literati painting, was consonant with the ideological trends of his time. Through his activities as a connoisseur and art historian, Naitô used China as a vehicle to express his democratic leanings and his support of nationalism.

Naitô's *History of Chinese Painting* was the product of a unique constellation of historical situations. His devotion to Chinese studies, his relationships with art dealers and collectors, and the social dynamics in Japan, each in a different way lent texture and substance to his arguments. The history of Chinese art history, a subject that is still largely unexplored, may help illuminate the political, social, and cultural conditions of early twentieth century Japan.