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From Dalian to Changchun: The Aesthetics and Politics of Art in Manchukuo

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory and Criticism

by

Gina Kim

Committee in charge:

Professor Kuiyi Shen, Chair
Professor Grant Kester
Professor Wendy Matsumura
Professor Daisuke Miyao
Professor Jordan Rose

2023

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2023

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

From Dalian to Changchun: The Aesthetics and Politics of Art in Manchukuo

by

Gina Kim

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, Theory and Criticism

University of California San Diego, 2023

Professor Kuiyi Shen, Chair

This dissertation focuses on the formation of multiethnic Pan-Asianism in modern art in Manchuria under the Japanese occupation in the first half of the twentieth century. Responding to the rapidly changing political conditions from the era of the informal empire (1906–1932) to the Manchukuo period (1932–1945), artists of settler and local communities sought to transform artistic practice by bringing their colonial and native identities into the state-endorsed visual productions. Rather than viewing the art of Manchukuo as a dark valley of wartime stagnation or as a confrontation/assimilation between the colonized and the colonizer, my approach is to recover the historical moment when the notion of transnational modernity in art was shaped,

contested, and reappropriated not only by state actors but by unstable, multi-dimensional social relations. I pay special attention to the state art exhibitions in Manchukuo as the last piece of Japan's intra-imperial salon network involving colonial Korea and Taiwan, which exposed and reproduced the subjugation and dynamics of intersectional identities: race, ethnicity, genealogy, gender, and class.

Case studies throughout four chapters demonstrate how the field of power in the art scene shifted from “cosmopolitan” Dalian to “ultra-modern” Changchun after the birth of Manchukuo in 1932, and how artists selectively claimed their Asiatic traditional and modern identities amid the political shift. The first chapter examines the development of metropolitan art productions in Dalian shaped by settler communities under powerful railway imperialism and local government by appropriating visual spectacles of Chinese labor and ethnic culture. The second chapter explores the deployment of the state art exhibition in Changchun and the anti-state exhibition in Fengtian, which revealed multifaceted interactions between the Japanese and Chinese. The third chapter provides a case study of settler artist Kai Mihachirō (1903–1979) and his research on Manchurian folklore and folk arts in demonstrating how Manchukuo's local characters were appropriated by Japanese settlers and the state in classifying, collecting, and curating races. In the fourth chapter, I address Manchukuo's *machine aesthetics*, featured in the state art exhibitions, as an embodiment of Pan-Asian modernity and Japanese imperialism engendered by advanced technology and science, which became mobilized as wartime rhetoric.

NOTE TO THE READER

1. Japanese words are Romanized according to the Hepburn system. For Chinese pronunciations, the *pinyin* system without tone marks is used. For Korean, I used both McCune-Reischauer and revised Romanization systems to ensure convenient reading.
2. For the footnotes, I followed the traditional Asiatic order of placing surnames first when referring to historical figures from Japan, China, and Korea. However, when referring to authors, I used the order of placing given names first. In the main text, authors were expected to use the traditional Asiatic order unless they specified a different order in their publication.
3. The majority of Manchurian places are written using the Wade-Giles system. Others are rendered in the old Romanization system if that is easier to recognize, such as Mukden, Kwantung, and Manchukuo.
4. All translations of Japanese quotes are mine except for a few that are specified.

INTRODUCTION

Puyi and the Icon of the Manchukuo Visual Culture

About a half year after the Manchurian Incident on September 18, 1931, Japanese authorities in collaboration with the Kwantung Army declared the foundation of Manchukuo as an “independent” state, designated Changchun as the new capital, and the former Qing emperor Puyi (1906–1967) as the Chief Executive of Manchukuo. On March 8, Puyi arrived at Changchun railway station to begin serving the state and announced his declaration through the mouth of Prime Minister Zheng Xiaoxu (1860–1938).

The human race must emphasize virtue. But if there is racial prejudice and one race suppresses others and glorifies itself, virtue will decline. [...] I am founding a new state based on virtue and benevolence. We want to do away with racial bias and conflicts among nations. The Kingly Way and Paradise on Earth will then be realized. I hope all my countrymen will try to understand.¹

Puyi’s declaration designates Manchukuo’s state slogans, namely “Racial Harmony (*Minzoku-kyōwa*)” and “Kingly Way Paradise (*Ōdōrakudo*),” which became the major components for the principle of the all-encompassing “State Foundation Spirit (*Kenkoku Seishin*)” proclaimed by the Japanese state builders. Thereafter, the Director of the South Manchuria Railway Company presented the “message of felicitation,” and Puyi’s old tutor Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940) read the response. In his memoir, Puyi reminisced about the emotional moment when he witnessed the mixture of Manchu officials, the Japanese Army and administrators, and Chinese and Mongolian people in traditional dress celebrating what he understood as the restoration of the “Great Qing

¹ Pu Yi and Paul Kramer, *The Last Manchu: The Autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2010), 163-164.

dynasty.”² In 1934, he was ascended to the throne of Manchukuo as the Kangde Emperor, a constitutional monarchy.

Throughout the span of Manchukuo, Puyi’s images went viral as the de facto emblem of the state. Manchukuo’s visual culture burgeoned with the production of commemorative postcards, stamps, posters, newsreels, and graphic magazines. These productions often depicted Puyi in fashionable clothing, including imperial military uniforms and tailored suits, with well-groomed hair and glasses, surrounded by dragon and phoenix decorations and the “Five Races Under One Union” flag of Manchukuo (Figure. i). These images were utilized to promote national slogans and commemorate significant occasions. Similar to how Japanese Emperors transformed from divine beings into visible figures since the Meiji era, Puyi also emerged as a public figure representing the multiethnic utopian state in northeast China, transitioning from his previous role as a dragon sanctified in the Forbidden City.³

Nonetheless, Manchukuo (1932–1945) lasted only 14 years with little international recognition as a legitimate state. Puyi’s portrait (Figure. ii), painted by American artist Jerry Farnsworth (1895–1983) for the cover of the March 1934 edition of *Time*, embodies a sense of taunting or unease shared by Western nations, drawing upon the contrasting voice of Manchukuo propaganda; in this softly colored gouache painting, Puyi appeared as a mythical and even comical character with an odd mixture of archaic Asiatic garments and headgear, holding a jade immortal mushroom scepter, which suggests both orientalist imaginations and the anachronism

² Ibid., 165.

³ For example, Japanese photographer Uchida Kuichi’s (1844-1875) first formal portrait of the Meiji emperor, produced in 1873, has been repeatedly reproduced in various popular media in Japan to claim his presence as a constitutional monarch and his divine imperial lineage. See Yuki Morishima, “Political and Ritual Usages of Portraits of Japanese Emperors in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” Ph.D. diss., (University of Pittsburgh, 2013); Gyewon Kim, “Tracing the Emperor: Photography, Famous Places, and the Imperial Progresses in Prewar Japan,” *Representations* 120, no. 1 (2012): 115-50; Mikiko Hirayama, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: Japanese Visuality and Imperial Portrait Photography,” *History of Photography*, vol. 33, no.2 (2009): 165-84.

of the former Qing emperor's enthronement in Manchukuo.⁴ Indeed, it is hard to say that Manchukuo was a sovereign state and Puyi's leadership was self-directed. Over the course of early 1932, the endorsement for the establishment of Manchukuo, the designation of new capital and state flag, and the assignment of the cabinet were executed between Puyi and Shigeru Honjō, the then commander of the Kwantung Army. Several Kwantung Army officers, including Yoshioka Yasunori, chaperoned Puyi as political advisors throughout his reign. Until Japan's withdrawal and his capture by Soviet troops and later imprisonment in the People's Republic of China, Puyi's dream of the sovereignty of Manchukuo was always conjoined with the colonial matrix of power under the imperial administration and militarism. As Puyi was authorized to be an attaché to the Imperial Household of Japan in 1935, China's lost imperial tradition was revived and reinterpreted under the authority of the imperial institution of Japan. Unlike the Japanese emperors, whose media visibility showcased the absolute sovereignty of the modern nation-state, Puyi's celebrity undulates between a sovereign state leader and a broker of the Japanese sub-empire, which may exemplify a perfect rhetoric of Manchukuo's unstable identity.

Yet, the roles of Puyi and the Manchu-Chinese officials did not remain just symbolic in Japan's Manchukuo project, nor was Puyi a mere puppet leader. Recent critics have transcended the default notion of a "puppet state" and discoursed the complexities of the colonial and sovereign identities of Manchukuo and the ambitious and autonomous political and cultural appearances of Manchu *yimin* ("leftover subjects"), including Puyi.⁵ During the early stage of Manchukuo before the breakout of the Pacific Wars, the identity-making of Manchukuo—within

⁴ Time magazine donated Farnsworth's original painting of Puyi to the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in 1978.

⁵ For example, Jianda Yuan, "Top Secrets Revealed: The Political Ambitions of China's Last Emperor, 1933–1937." *Twentieth-Century China*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2022):133-53; Norman Smith and Annika A. Culver, *Manchukuo Perspectives: Transnational Approaches to Literary Production* (Hong Kong University Press, 2020); Chia-Ling Yang and Roderick Whitfield, *Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu, Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Modern Chinese Culture* (Saffron Books, 2012).

its regionalism, Asianism, and Sinicization, and not only assimilatory programs into Japan—was practiced as a prime tool for the “State Foundation Spirit.”⁶ Puyi, Manchu officials, and local Chinese elites were in collaboration with Japan’s Manchukuo campaign, where they empowered themselves through cultural authenticities and knowledge. For example, Puyi and the Manchu officials’ roles as experts in Chinese paintings, epigraphy, and calligraphy bolstered not only the new monarchy system and their own positions of power in Manchuria but also Japan’s pan-Asianist cultural cartography:

Yoshioka [Yasunori] loved to paint pictures in ink. Once he painted a bamboo scene and asked Cheng Hsiao-hsu [Zheng Xiaoxu] to write a poem on it and then asked me [Manchukuo Emperor] put on some writing in my own hand. Later he took this ink picture to Japan and presented it to the Japanese Empress Dowager. The Japanese press published the picture and praised Yoshioka as being a soldier with a colorful pen.⁷

Throughout the Manchukuo campaigns, Chinese and Manchurian cultural identities were redefined and reproduced by these transnational interactions of state actors. Such collaborations within the imbalance of political powers created national and transnational imaginations of Manchukuo enterprises notwithstanding, these narratives remain incomplete without interrogating the social relations and complexities of colonial and (trans-)national participants *within* Manchukuo. Recent vigorous research on Sino-Japanese cultural and artistic exchanges between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have developed transnational understandings of Asia, especially through the discovery of network nebulae among individual

⁶ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 21-22; Suk-Jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932-1937,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 12 no. 2 (2004): 457-78.

⁷ The anecdote written by Puyi in his memoir described Puyi’s official visit to Hirohito Emperor and became an attaché of Japan’s Imperial Household in 1935. During this visit, Puyi left his poem, calligraphy, and assessments of the bounty of the Japanese imperial collection of Chinese classical art. Yoshioka Yasunori (1890-1947), Kwantung Army Officer, appointed as an advisor of Puyi in 1935, chaperoned him until Puyi’s arrestment to the Soviet Army in 1945. Pu Yi and Paul Kramer, 189.

artists and cultural figures in relation to the changing political dynamics in China and Japan, while many questions regarding Manchukuo's counterparts have remained unanswered.⁸

Postcolonial studies have examined primary determinants of social relations that varied beyond the binary of colonizer and colonized, and thus demonstrating colonial social space was not a mere reproduction of the metropole.⁹

This study seeks to consider the political and aesthetic biosphere of Manchukuo's visual productions and practices that constructed the vision of modernity, multiethnicity, and racialization of cultures of the new continental state in response to the Pan-Asian campaign of the Japanese Empire. Contrary to popular belief regarding Manchukuo, due to its shared epoch with Japan's aggressive march toward the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, Manchukuo experienced a rich and uniquely progressive visual culture that imagined mobility, locality, sovereignty, and conformity of diasporic communities subsumed as citizens of the new state while it reiterated the unequal and uneven reality of colonial control and hierarchy based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class. I trace the East Asian diaspora and its expressions in visual productions and practices in Manchukuo, specifically through state exhibitions, local art circles, print media, ethnographic studies, and folk arts, which remain largely unknown in the current scholarship. Through a comparative analysis of different media, I will explore the intersections of visual culture, modernity, and politics in Manchukuo.

⁸ Such as Kuiyi Shen, "The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field: A Case Study of Teng Gu and Fu Baoshi"; Julia Andrews, "Japanese Oil Paintings in the First Chinese National Fine Arts Exhibition of 1929 and the Development of Asian Modernism"; Walter B. Davis, "Welcoming the Japanese Art World: Wang Yiting's Social and Artistic Exchanges with Japanese Sinophiles and Artists"; Shana J. Brown, "Modern Antiquarianism and Sino-Japanese Rivalry: Yang Shoujing in Meiji Japan" in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. by Joshua Fogel (University of California Press, 2012).

⁹ Such as Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994), 86; Frantz Fanon, "Chapter 3. The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1968).

My research examines how the state ideologies of Manchukuo, such as the promotion of a new “state-building spirit,” “racial harmony,” and the Confucian-based “kingly way,” were both imbricated to and challenged by the goals and desires of various artistic communities within significant urban centers such as Dalian, Fengtian, and Changchun. Migrant arts production and patronage that became imbricated within the Manchukuo project transcended national boundaries and fixed identities and produced a peculiar module of modern visual culture in response to Japan’s Pan-Asianist campaign. I observe the establishment of Manchukuo and the construction of a new capital city in Changchun as a political, ideological, and cultural center of the new state as a significant turning point in the history and visual culture of Manchuria during the Japanese intervention. Competitions between imperialist and nationalist groups weren’t just between the Japanese and Chinese but also existed within Japanese settler communities, who developed their own identities and localized themselves in the colonial cities. By exploring migrant artists and artworks produced in Manchukuo, this study analyzes Manchukuo’s popular, national, and transnational imaginations to consider the interconnectedness of Asia and to reveal that modernism and colonial modernity in Manchukuo emerged as regional and transnational inflections of a global dynamic, which challenges the linear notion of modernism shaped by geopolitical disproportion in art history.

Manchukuo Overview

The importance of Manchukuo in Japan’s pan-Asiatic expansions against the West was often stressed as Japan’s “lifeline” and “bid for autarky.”¹⁰ Built upon the historically contested region called Manchuria, a geographically conceptual term with unsettled boundaries, which

¹⁰ Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1991), 112.

encompasses the three Chinese provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang (and, also part of Hebei) today, Manchukuo marks the climax of Japan's political, militaristic, and economic expansion amidst the era of the New Order and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.¹¹ Originally a complex territory of three different ethnic groups, Han Chinese, Tungusic, and Mongolian peoples, also considered a sacred land of the Manchus after the birth of the Qing dynasty, Manchuria, under Japanese dominance, became a melting pot of Asian migration.¹² For the impoverished Chinese and Korean migrants, Manchukuo was a place to achieve their dream of economic abundance and ownership of agricultural properties.¹³ Under Japanese domination, Manchukuo evolved into a central hub of Asian migration and rapidly progressed into a modern state with advanced cities, industrial facilities, and modern welfare, transportation, and educational systems. Despite being viewed by many recent studies as Japan's "laboratory of modernity," Manchukuo's legacy remains a subject of controversy.¹⁴

¹¹ For example, Owen Lattimore referred to Manchuria as "the Cradle of Conflict" in his book title: Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria, Cradle of Conflict* (The Macmillan Company, 1932). Mariko Tamanoi observes Manchukuo as the effect of geopolitical imaginaries rather than a geopolitical term. Mariko Tamanoi, "Introduction," in *Crossed Histories: Manchuria in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2005), 2. Regarding Japan's New Order and Co-Prosperity Sphere campaigns, see Janis, Mimura, *Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats and the Japanese Wartime State* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

¹² Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-Lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928: China, Japan, and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford University Press, 1977), 2-3.

¹³ On Korean farmers who migrated to Manchuria both under the Chinese Republican Government and the Kwantung Army regime, see Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); On Chinese migrants, see Thomas R. Gottschang and Diana Lary, *Swallows and Settlers: the Great Migration from North China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2000); Kungtu C. Sun, *The Economic Development of Manchuria in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University; distributed by Harvard University Press, 1969).

¹⁴ Duara, 2003; Suk-jung Han, *Manjuguk kon'guk ui chae haesok: koeroeguk ui kukka hyokwa, 1932-1936* [Reinterpretation of the State-building of Manchukuo: State Effect of Puppet state] (Pusan: Tonga University Press, 2007); Aaron Stephen Moore, *Constructing East Asia: Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan's Wartime Era, 1931-1945* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013); Bill Sewell, *Constructing Empire: The Japanese in Changchun, 1905-45* (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2019); Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren. *Ultra-Modernism: Architecture and Modernity in Manchuria* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017).

Japan's imperial formations in the region should be traced to the late 19th century.¹⁵ The victory in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) enabled Japan to take a stake in continental expansion at the Liaodong Peninsula through the railway network along with its acquisition of Taiwan. Although the actual prize for the victory of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and the Portsmouth Peace Treaty (1905) was the control over the Korean peninsula, Japan's additional prize— a Kwantung Army territory lease for 25 years in Liaoning, including the Russian-influenced port cities Dalian and Lüshun (Port Arthur) and the transfer of the Russian-built China Eastern Railways (CER) into the Japan-owned South Manchuria Railway Company— established a bridgehead for the establishment of the continental sub-empire. Japan's colonial development of Manchuria after this victory over a Western nation thus transcends the “geopolitical monopoly of modernity,”¹⁶ borrowing the words of historian Harry Harootunian, and laid out a peculiar module of modernity and mobilized transnational migration by the railway enterprise and urban planning. Manchurian cities that were connected by the central line of the railway network, Dalian, Fengtian, Changchun, and Harbin, grew rapidly with migrants and settlers from China, Japan, Russia, and Korea.¹⁷

As Ann Stoler reasons, “[i]mperial formations are defined by racialized relations of allocations and appropriations.”¹⁸ For Japan, not only the multiethnic but multinational nature of

¹⁵ According to Ann Stoler's analysis of “imperial formations,” the concept refers to the relations of force that involve “ongoing processes of decimation, displacement, and reclamation,” rather than just the empire *per se*. Ann Laura Stoler, “Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23 no. 2 (2008):194.

¹⁶ Harry D. Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 63.

¹⁷ Settlers are often referred to as “imperial” settlers who moved to colonies to reside permanently, while migrants more broadly describe any people who left their original places to settle in different areas. Although the two terms are also used interchangeably, “settlers,” according to Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson, have advantageous status. In my study, often Manchu officials and local elites, including wealthy Chinese merchants and politicians who moved to Manchukuo, are often categorized as settlers along with Japanese imperial settlers. See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016).

¹⁸ Stoler, 194.

Manchuria suggested the prospect of creating a Pan-Asian empire making while leaving a need for different colonial policies from those practice in Taiwan and Korea. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Japanese imperial builders, specifically the SMRC and the Kwantung Army, played a significant role in extending their power through competition and cooperation with local ruling elites and businessmen.¹⁹ Many historical studies on Manchuria, including those by Louise Young, Gavan McCormack, and Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, have deliberated the shared economic, militaristic, and political missions between the Japanese and the Chinese, which organized temporary peace agreements to safeguard Manchuria amidst the Chinese Nationalist campaigns and communist threats.²⁰ Despite facing diplomatic and military conflicts, these relations continued until the early 1930s and then underwent significant changes throughout the 1930s and early 1940s.

The Manchurian Incident of September 1931, an atrocious event that occurred when several Kwantung Army officers bombed the SMRC line in Fengtian and accused Chinese rebels of responsibility, led to Japan's full-fledged seizure of Manchuria, justified by Japan's self-defense and peacekeeping in the region. After the birth of Manchukuo and the unsatisfying result of the Lytton Committee's visit to Manchukuo in 1932, Japan withdrew its membership from the League of Nations in 1933.²¹ In the face of its diplomatic ostracization, Japan's growing desire

¹⁹ See Young, 1998; Gavan McCormack, 1977; Ramon Myers, "Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria: The South Manchuria Railway Company, 1906-1933," in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, edit by Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 101-112; Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²⁰ See Young 1998, 30; McCormack 1977; Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 312-348.

²¹ The League of Nations dispatched the Lytton Commission in September 1932 to investigate the Manchuria Incident. The commission concluded that Manchukuo existed as the result of Japan's illegal militaristic seizure of China's national territory as Manchuria was annexed as a part of China in 1644 by the Manchu conquerors. Matsuoka Yōsuke, a Japanese diplomat and later in service of Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1940-1941, insisted Pre-1911 Chinese dynasties were different from post-1911 China as it lacked "nationalism." Duara, 117-118.

for reinforced Pan-Asian political, economic, and cultural networks against the West was solidified by its imperial hegemony in China through the building of Manchukuo. Manchukuo's only sanctioned political party, the Concordia Association (Kyōwakai), was established to promote campaigns of "racial harmony" and anti-communism within village units and became the most powerful civilian institution in Manchukuo that instigated the totalitarian state's cultural policies.²²

Manchukuo operated as a nation-state that implemented political and cultural systems to express "governmentality" and "sovereignty," according to the historical criticism of Prasenjit Duara and Suk-Jung Han.²³ The Manchukuo planners adopted multiracialism as a state ideology that "represent[ed] the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence," in the words of Louis Althusser, which had "material existence [...] in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices."²⁴ The system was propelled by combining industrial modernization and cultural authentication processes at the local, national, and popular levels. Each major city and region in Manchukuo developed with its distinct local characteristics, seen through development reports, photographic records, tourist information, popular print media, art, and films. Such diversity can be seen in Dalian's railway headquarters and harbor trading, Fengtian's Chinese commerce, Fushun and Anshan's coal mining and steel industry, Changchun's administrative and highly modern city, and Northern Manchuria's minority agriculture and forestry. Manchukuo aimed to create unified "Manchukuo citizens (Manchukuoans)" through the Manchukuo Nationality Law while also promoting the localization movement through language and history education and investment in regional culture and art to

²² Shin'ichi Yamamuro, and Joshua A. Fogel, *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 138-41.

²³ Duara, 129; Han "The Problem of Sovereignty," 473.

²⁴ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 108-112.

foster self-government or an “imagined community” in Anderson’s analysis of the formations of nation and nationalism.²⁵ In the initial stage of Manchukuo, Chinese was endorsed as the state’s official language, unlike Taiwan and Korea, where Japanese was the official language. It was not simply analogous to the colonial aspects of what postcolonial scholars like Partha Chatterjee deem the “rule of difference” between the foreign ruling people and indigenous “Others.”²⁶ For the sake of people’s welfare and racial harmony, benefits provided to Japanese imperial settlers were sometimes limited, resulting in disputes within Japanese communities.²⁷

However, the Nationality Law of Manchukuo was never completed, nor did it create racial equality. The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War revealed the disillusionment of Manchukuo’s ideals of racial harmony and proved the empire’s true intentions. Between 1937 and 1941, the growth of industry and the arrival of Japanese technocrats and business leaders led to the development of a war machine in Manchukuo. Assimilatory policies and Japanization took priority over Manchukuo’s utopian vision of races and culture by transferring the imperial subjects to the mass for the war. Manchukuo has come to represent the modern history of Japan’s brutal control and exploitation of natural and human resources in northeast China, which ended up causing tens of thousands of victims during wartime. The historical violence and loss are not disputable; however, new Manchukuo studies have been conducted within local, transnational, and global contexts.

Revision of the Manchukuo Studies and Manchukuo Visual Culture

²⁵ Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 41-45.

²⁶ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

²⁷ Han, 57.

Scholarship on Manchukuo and East Asian relations has recently adopted different approaches, which involve re-examining the binary concepts of collaboration and resistance, as well as colonizer and colonized, in order to illuminate the transnational complexities of the region. My study of the visual culture of Manchukuo evolved from these pioneering interdisciplinary studies. As briefly addressed in the previous section, scholars including Duara, Han, Matsusaka, and Louis Young established the most significant dialogues on Manchukuo's sovereign and colonial identity problems as well as its economic, political, and cultural aspects. In particular, Duara and Han's studies provide an understanding of Manchukuo's state form and rationale within its domestic territory rather than Japan's discourse about Manchukuo. In his discussion, Duara explores the Confucian state theory, nativist movements, nativist literature, the role of females, and ethnographic research of indigenous communities to clarify the importance of "sovereignty" and "authenticity" as the fundamental components of a nation-state. His study explains how Manchukuo's uniquely modern form was the result of "a regional mediation of a global circulation of practices and discourse of the modern" by re-institutionalizing a nation's own "tradition with modernity."²⁸

Scholars, including Norman Smith, Annika Culver, Jeremy Taylor, and Jianda Yuan, further question the preexisting dichotomy between "resistance" and "collaboration/treason" and examine the ambiguous aspects of nationalism.²⁹ Referred to as "Manchukuo perspectives," according to Culver, these viewpoints reveal "choices made by writers [...] shaped by more inclusive multivalent aims," which is seemingly related to Japanese former leftists' conversion to

²⁸ Duara, 4; 147.

²⁹ According to Norman Smith, Manchukuo literature had been the object of condemnation and tabooed in China. Unlike in Japan, Chinese scholarship had not been active until recent enthusiasm. Norman Smith and Annika A. Culver(eds.), *Manchukuo Perspectives* (Hong Kong University Press, 2020); Jeremy E. Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation: Visual Cultures in Wang Jingwei's China, 1939-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021); Jianda Yuan, *Chinese Government Leaders in Manchukuo, 1931-1937: Intertwined National Ideals* (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2023).

fascist campaigns.³⁰ Similarly, for Smith, Manchukuo's Chinese writers' works determine "the complex nexus of Japanese colonial rule, personal ambition, and social ideals structuring Chinese lives."³¹ Jeremy Taylor explores political leaders and gendered archetypes mobilized in Japan's propaganda posters produced for the Wang Jingwei regime in Nanjing (1940–1945), which not only provided normative messages about gender roles in collaboration with the Japanese-occupied regime but demonstrated an outlet of interest for "various individuals, groups, and institutions."³² Jianda Yuan's recent study also provides a new perspective on Manchu officials and Puyi's ambitious and active roles in the Manchukuo project rather than as puppet leaders.

A growing body of ground-breaking studies on Manchukuo further analyzes spatial discussions and social relations based on Manchukuo's city planning, urban development, railway tourism, and diaspora. In his analysis, Bill Sewell explores the importance of urban development in Xinjing (Changchun), which was based on the Soviet Union's five-year plan. He examines how the city became a hub for railways, politics, and capital, as well as imperial and modernist ideologies, by considering the contributions and diverse motivations of civilians to the imperial project in Manchukuo.³³ In his exploration of Dalian, Christian Hess delves into the significant transformations that the city has undergone throughout history, from Japanese intervention to socialist China.³⁴ Kate McDonald analyzes Japan's network of tourism linking to Manchukuo and Korea that interwove the history, culture, and people of the imperial

³⁰ Culver, *Manchukuo Perspectives*, 3.

³¹ Smith, "Manchukuo Melancholy: The Writings of Ke Ju and Zhu Ti," in *Manchukuo Perspectives*, 132.

³² Taylor, 88-89.

³³ William S. Sewell, *Japanese Imperialism and Civic Construction in Manchuria: Changchun, 1905–1945* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada = Bibliothèque nationale du Canada: 2001).

³⁴ Hess, Christian A. "From Colonial Jewel to Socialist Metropolis: Dalian 1895-1955," PhD diss., (University of California, San Diego, 2006).

“interior(*naichi*)” and “exterior (*gaichi*)” territories, in which the individual experiences in tourism served as a means for imperial agents on a larger scale.³⁵

The main logic of my study is indebted to recent studies that have advanced perspectives on migrants and the diaspora, including the studies of Hyun-ok Park and Emer O’Dwyer. Park’s work delves into the migration of Korean peasants to Manchuria and how they navigated complex national identities situated in and influenced by interwoven capitalist, Japanese imperialist, and Chinese nationalist drives. Park uses the metaphor of “osmosis” to describe the territorial and capitalist politics involved in the primary motivations of Korean migrants instrumentalized as a tool for Japanese territorial expansion into Manchurian farmland.³⁶ This concept can also be applied to Chinese and Japanese migrants who had precarious social status and capitalist goals that went beyond their national origins. O’Dwyer’s study draws on the “political aspirations and actions” of the Japanese civilian settler community in Dalian “shaped by process of competition and conflict with those forces perceived as threatening to South Manchuria’s primacy of place in Japan’s imperial portfolio.”³⁷ The study shows important aspects regarding the formation of “imperial settlers” in a colonial city that was empowered throughout the era of Japan’s railway imperialism and municipal self-governance and later disenfranchised in the shift of Manchukuo’s political landscape into the Kwantung Army’s totalitarian regime. The study also highlights the settler community’s conflicting desire to both distinguish themselves from and connect with their counterparts in metropole Japan.

³⁵ Kate McDonald, *Placing empire: travel and the social imagination in imperial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

³⁶ Park, 24.

³⁷ Emer Sinéad O’Dwyer, *Significant Soil: Settler Colonialism and Japan’s Urban Empire in Manchuria* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 4-5.

I locate my project in the current academic effort to reconstruct Manchuria's multi-dimensionalities as Japan's diasporic territory amid ideas of modernity, complicating and reconsidering what has been referred to as simply "wartime art." In my project, I conduct a thorough examination of the visual culture of Manchukuo, including looking at art exhibitions, paintings, and print media through the lens of migrant and diaspora experiences. I explore how these cultural expressions are related to imperial politics in Manchuria and Japan. While the significance of Manchukuo has been noticed for transnational historical narratives, art historical studies on Manchuria did not begin until recent years. There are also difficulties in reconstructing its art world because of the lack of surviving original artworks and archival records due to historical turmoil and political havoc in China. Thus, Manchuria has remained a missing piece towards the completion of modern art history studies in East Asia. However, there are several ground-breaking studies that examine propaganda posters, photography, and expositions in Manchukuo.

Scholars in Japan like Egawa Yoshihide, Iino Masahito, and Choi Jaehyuk have done informational and chronological research on art exhibitions held in Manchukuo. Egawa Yoshihide, who pioneered this field of study, discovered the forgotten Japanese artists who participated in a Dalian-based avant-garde art group and the Manchukuo Art Exhibitions.³⁸ Similarly, Iino and Choi's studies focused on the exhibition system and analysis of works presented in the Manchukuo Art Exhibitions (1938–1945).³⁹ In Choi's discussion, he reveals that Manchukuo's utopian vision expressed through the institutionalization of the state-sponsored

³⁸ Yoshihide Egawa, "Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte [About the Manchukuo Art Exhibition]," in *Showaki Bijutsu Tenrankaino Kenkyū senzen* [Research on the Showa Period Art Exhibitions, Prewar] (Tokyo: Research Institute for Cultural Properties).

³⁹ Masahito Iino, "Manshubijutsuni tsuite [On the Art of Manchukuo]," in *Kashima Bijutsuzaidan Nenpō* (Kashimashi: Kashima bijutsuzaidan, 1997), 498-523; Jaehyuk Choi, "Manshūbijutsu kenkyū—kōsasuru manshūimējino kenshō [Research on 'Art of Manchukuo'— Verifying Intertwined imageries of Manchuria]," PhD diss., (Tokyo University of the Arts, 2013).

stage of art turned out to be the emblem of dystopian Manchuria. Kishi Toshihiko's book on Manchukuo's propaganda posters, postcards, and other commodity media introduces unarchived and underrepresented collections, including Ita Yusei Collection in Tottori Prefecture. In English-speaking academia, Kari Shepherdson-Scott examines various examples of Japanese visual media from the Manchukuo period; these include graphic magazines, photography, exposition spaces, and urban planning. By analyzing these productions, she aims to shed light on how the Japanese imperial campaign utilized visual strategies to reveal the tensions and similarities between different groups involved in the creation of a new continental nation.⁴⁰

To understand the intersection between politics and aesthetics in the art of Manchukuo, I focus on the significance of the *Kanten*, literally the “official salon,” containing Japan's peculiar intra-imperial network system of art. While European official salon systems, such as the Académie des Beaux-Arts system and the Royal Academies in France and England, had already declined and lost their validity as a public showcase for the most advanced art by the late nineteenth century, Meiji Japan installed an official salon in 1907 to nurture and propagate artistic modernity, and therefore to claim Japan as a modern nation-state.⁴¹ Later, Japan implemented state-sponsored art exhibition systems in its official colonies and Manchukuo: the Joseon Art Exhibition in 1922, the Government-General of Taiwan Art Exhibition in 1927, and the Manchukuo Art Exhibition in 1938. The intra-imperial salon systems became very successful in generating public interest in art and colonial discourse on artistic modernity and national identity. Rich scholarships of *Kanten* in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan have made significant outcomes

⁴⁰ Kari Shepherdson-Scott, “Utopia/dystopia: Japan's image of the Manchurian ideal,” PhD diss., (University of Michigan: ProQuest, 2012).

⁴¹ Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1994); Satō Dōshin, “Kindai nihonni okeru kanten no sēritsuto tenkai [Establishment and development of Official Salon in Modern Japan],” *Journal of Korean Modern & Contemporary Art History* 15 (2005): 25-35.

related to the cultural initiatives of the colonial era that aimed to promote Japan's imperial management while also highlighting unique local and regional features that inspired colonial nationalism.⁴²

Reexamining the *kanten* is a significant component in enhancing our transnational understandings of modernity and modernism(s) adopted, hybridized, and inhabited in East Asia. Although there has been some scholarly work done on Manchuria's academic art scene, many questions about it remain unanswered. My research project aims to fill in these gaps by analyzing visual cultural practices and art exhibitions that took place in Manchuria between the late 1920s and 1945. Manchukuo's *kanten* involved migrant artists from various regions of Manchukuo, as well as important figures such as Puyi, Manchu elites, Kwantung Army officers, and Japanese elites, which led to a transnational dialogue between these individuals, who were involved in organizing and carrying out the operations. Throughout this research, my particular interest is to uncover the tension between the new, imperial organization of the arts, which culminated as the Manchukuo Art Exhibition with its operational center in the new capital of Changchun, and the existing system of art production and patronage located in Dalian after 1932. This event not only

⁴² My study is built upon numerous works on the *kanten* including Hyun-jeong Ahn, *Geundae ui siseon, Joseon misul Jeonlamhoe* [Gaze of Modernity: A study on the Joseon National Art Exhibition] (Seoul: Ihaksa, 2012); Ho-jin Jeong, "A Research on the Joseon Art Exhibition: Focusing on the Oriental Section," PhD diss., (Sungshin Women's University, 1999); Hyun-sook Kim, "Joseon misul jeonlamhoe ui gwanjeon yangsik: dongyangwhabu leul jungsim euro" [Joseon Art Exhibition: the Oriental Painting section], *Journal of Korean Association of Art History* 15 (2005); Youngna Kim, "Artistic Trends in Korean Painting During the 1930s," in *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Hsiu-hsiung Wang, "The Development of Official Art Exhibitions in Taiwan During the Japanese Occupation," in *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960*; Kida Emiko, "Chōsen Bijutsu Tenrankai to Chōsen ni okeru 'bijutsu' juyō [Joseon Art Exhibition and Reception of Korean Art]," in *'Teikoku' to bijutsu: 1930nendai Nihon no taigai bijutsu kenryaku* [Empire and Art: Japan's external strategy of arts in the 1930s] (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2010); Shaoli Lu, *Zhan shi Taiwan : quan li, kong jian yu zhi min tong zhi de xing xiang biao shu* (Taipei Shi: Mai tian chu ban, 2005); Yuri Takayama, *Kindai Nippon yōgashi saikō: "kanten akademizumu" no seiritsu to tenkai* [Reconsidering the History of Modern Japanese Western-style Painting: Formation and Development of "Kanten Academism"] (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2021); The National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties, *Shōwaki bijutsu tenrankai no kenkyū. Senzen hen* [Research on Showa period art exhibitions. Prewar edition] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2009).

opened up new artistic opportunities for the vision of the state, but also produced unique modernist styles that combined global and metropolitan trends, Asiatic artistic traditions, and nativist themes.

About “From Dalian to Changchun:” Dynamics of Settlement

Manchukuo “cannot be seen primarily as a settler’s colony,” according to Duara, despite its association with and the effect of settler colonialism.⁴³ On the one hand, Manchukuo can be compared to European settlements in other continents, as they aimed to create communities based on shared ethnicity and faith in what they considered to be the *terra nullius* (no men’s land) or virgin land.⁴⁴ Yet, on the other, the logic of elimination and assimilation of indigenous people and their land, labor, and culture by European imperial settlers was not the same as the rationals and formations of Manchukuo colonialism. Elkins and Pederson stated that Manchuria has a “low level of settler incorporation into governance” and a “low institutionalization of settler privilege.”⁴⁵ Moreover, the indigenous peoples’ territories and culture were first restricted during the Chinese nationalist regime and by settlers from both China and Japan.⁴⁶

After the birth of Manchukuo in 1932, Manchukuo rebranded Changchun as the state’s new capital, “Xinjing,” and started a massive, high-modern city plan. During this process, various social, economic, and political sectors collided, including migrant artistic communities in Manchukuo. In the course of the state-building campaign in the 1930s, the political and cultural dominance of the “cosmopolitan” city of Dalian was gradually relocated to “ultra-modern”

⁴³ Prasenjit Duara, “Between Empire and Nation: Settler Colonialism in Manchukuo,” in *Settler colonialism in the twentieth century: projects, practices, legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 59.

⁴⁴ Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, “Introduction,” *ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁶ Duara, “Between Empire and Nation,” 75.

Changchun, which mobilized new types of institutional systems and practices in Manchukuo's art scene. To this, this project draws into unsettled diasporic and nationalistic experiences of both Japanese and non-Japanese artists who migrated into major Manchurian cities.

Recent studies examine increasing settler regionalism among the major urban areas in Manchuria during this time. Introduced in the previous section, O'Dwyer suggested the development of popular politics and self-governance of "Japanese residents of the Kwantung Leasehold and South Manchuria Railway Zone" in Dalian who "defined their political identities around the protection of their corner of the empire, which they consistently preferred to view through a domestic rather than colonial frame of reference."⁴⁷ This generated "a new intrainperial antithesis" commonly known as the sentimentality of what is referred to as the "Dalian era" versus the "Xinjing era."⁴⁸ Okada Hideki examines popular discourse in the Manchukuo Japanese literature scene in the context of this antithesis as Japanese migrant writers desired to create a diasporic genre that is independent of the metropole Japan yet still indicates their Japanese origins.⁴⁹ He explained that the shift from the Dalian Ideology to the Xinjing Ideology involved a change from embracing diversity to promoting uniformity, from valuing individualism and liberalism to advocating for totalitarianism, and from prioritizing literature to politics.⁵⁰ In Uchida Jun's study of the Japanese non-governmental settlers in colonial Korea, dubbed as "brokers of empire," their in-between position did not always match the goals of the state, and they often expressed their disadvantageous status in comparison to their metropole counterparts. Japanese settler communities shaped during the pre-1932 period later went through

⁴⁷ O'Dwyer, 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁴⁹ Okada Hideki, *Bungakuni miru manshūkoku no isō* [That Status of Manchukuo Seeing from Literature] (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2000).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

similar and more intricate tensions against metropole Japanese and Changchun-based migrants amid multiethnic policies.⁵¹

What led Manchukuo artists to develop diasporic characteristics during this transformation? Migration usually represents many kinds of mobility that “create connections beyond the local,” according to Sunil Amrith, regardless of whether it results from long- or short-term settlement, including military service, foreign trading, study abroad, or pilgrimages.⁵² Diasporas emerge from interactions between “new and old migrations, or between migrants and the descendants of migrants” while maintaining “connections with their homelands and with others of shared origin.”⁵³ Although scholars like Lorenzo Veracini differentiate settlers from migrants as the former are “beneficiaries” and the latter are “targeted by assimilatory processes,” my research views imperial settlers as occupying an interstitial status and therefore use the terms interchangeably.⁵⁴ It’s important to note that a significant number of Manchu-Chinese living in urban areas are actually migrants who moved from China proper during population influxes, rather than being indigenous to the area. The cities and farmlands of Manchuria became a popular destination for people who lacked economic infrastructure and social benefits. Due to imperial politics, many migrants came to the area, leading to the formation of diasporic communities. Diasporic art communities in Manchuria were born and grew throughout the 1930s accordingly, and they collided and negotiated with one another and with native communities while also navigating state policies. Settler artists redefined their urban modernity and shaped collective settler identities by being an observer and collectors of ethnic others. The ways in

⁵¹ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

⁵² Sunil S. Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* (Cambridge: New York, 2011), 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁵⁴ Lorenzo Veracini, “Settlers Are Not Migrants” in *The Settler Colonial Present* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 32-33.

which they resisted the imperial hierarchy were deeply bounded and attuned to the imperial hegemonic campaign of race and ethnicity.

This project will address the aforementioned issues through case studies divided into four chapters. Chapter One explores the artistic works and methods that emerged in Dalian during the “Dalian era.” In this chapter, I will delve into the local art circles and practices in Dalian and nearby cities, which are not widely known, where Manchu-Chinese local artists continued the classical ink painting tradition that was once considered outdated and not aligned with the mainstream pursuit of artistic modernity in Japan or Republican China. In the latter half of this chapter, I will explore two case studies of “China beauty” posters created by Japanese artists who migrated to Dalian as SMRC promotional artists. Chapter Two explores Manchuria’s academic art scene in the process of institutionalizing the Manchukuo Art Exhibition and the experimental oriental-style paintings field. This chapter discusses the intersection of politics and aesthetics during the “Xinjing era.” The last two chapters analyze the two major aesthetics found in both the academic art scene and popular visual media: ‘racialization’ and ‘rationalization’ of art. Chapter Three provides a case study that discusses the formation of Manchukuo nativist art or so-called “local color art” movements that revalued regional folk arts and invigorated ethnographic studies. I trace Dalian migrant artists Kai Mihachirō and his artistic journey by observing and collecting racial “Others.” Chapter Four analyzes the development of machine aesthetics, which was unique to the Manchukuo Art Exhibition and not mainstream in contemporary salon exhibitions in Japan and other colonies. Specifically, I examine how realistic depictions of machines and implements arranged within themes such as labor, architecture, and science were transferred to *nihonga* and other forms of mass media, including posters, postcards, and magazines, in Manchukuo.

CHAPTER ONE. Artists in Dalian and Liaodong: Making Manchurian Modernism along with Railway Imperialism

*He was relieved when he saw two real acacia trees.
Because he thought fake acacia trees were far more beautiful.*
—Kiyō'oka Takahashi, 1965¹

Dalian was the gateway to and the center of imperial imagination in northeast China. Located at the southern tip of the Liaodong peninsula, the port city of Dalian was where Japan's colonial enterprise took off. During Russian ownership of the China Eastern Railway (CER), the windfall earned after the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, Dalian transformed from a small fishing village to a planned modern city for international commerce by order of Nikolai II in 1899.² The first designer of Dalian's city plan was the CER's Russian engineer Vasily V. Sakharov (1860–1904), who envisioned a refined functional city by implementing a zoning system that divided the administrative, European, and Chinese districts.³ Aiming for the “Paris of East Asia,” Sakharov's Dalian city plan was modeled after St. Petersburg's French canon for urban planning, incorporating a concentric scheme with diagonal grand boulevards and neo-Renaissance architecture (Figure 1.1).⁴ After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Russian power in the peninsula was withdrawn for Japan's military and colonial control in the Kwantung Leased Territory. Backed by robust railway imperialism by the South Manchuria Railway

¹ *Akashiya no Dairen* [Dalian of Acacia Flowers] is a novel written by a Dalian-born writer Takayuki Kiyooka (1922–2006) published in 1969, which granted him a prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1970. There is an episode in this autobiographical novel where Kiyooka recalls his memory during his middle school days when he learned that the bounty acacia trees in Dalian were actually “false acacia” and there were only two “legit” acacia trees in the city. He found the trees and felt relieved as he thought “false acacia” were more beautiful than the real ones. The episode expresses the ambiguous identity formation among Japanese settlers in the era of the Manchurian immigration boom. Takayuki Kiyooka, *Akashiya no Dairen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1988), 115.

² Yang Liu et al., “Dalian's Unique Planning History and Its Contested Heritage in Urban Regeneration.” *Planning Perspectives* 35 no.5 (2020): 873–94; Christian A Hess, “From Colonial Jewel to Socialist Metropolis: Dalian 1895–1955,” PhD diss., (University of California, San Diego, 2006), 23.

³ Hyong-a Jung, “Geundaedosi gonsolgwa gukjjjongchie yonghyang jungguk daeryonsireul jungsimeuro [The Influence of Modern City Construction and International Politics - Focusing on Dalian City, China], *Jungguk kkeunhyondaesayongu* [Modern Chinese History Studies] no. 45 (2010): 56.

⁴ Hess, “From Colonial Jewel to Socialist Metropolis,” 24–25.

Company (SMRC) and the local government, within the colonial fantasy of *terra nullius*, Dalian became a new continental boomtown for Japanese middle-class settlers and Chinese migrants. It was also the de facto capital of the Kwantung government of Manchuria until the birth of Manchukuo. Japanese politicians continued the urban management, mainly the first director of the SMRC, Gotō Shinpei (1857–1929), who was the former Head of Civilian Affairs of Taiwan and later became the seventh mayor of Tokyo. Japanese migration experienced breakneck growth, reaching 131,223 by 1935 from only 40,000 in 1904. The Chinese influx was even more remarkable: by 1935, the city’s total population had reached 514,956, and over 60% of it was Chinese.⁵

The colonial campaign of the SMRC was significant to the early institutionalization of art and other cultural disciplines in Dalian. The SMRC was an all-inclusive corporation and semi-bureaucracy that functioned as a colonial policy institution of field research, education, culture, and even welfare, for not only its employees but for all residents who lived in the SMRC’s territory. Starting in 1921, the SMRC hired mid-career artists in Tokyo to produce visual products for tourism, including posters, postcards, and miscellaneous illustrations. Japanese art circles in Dalian began being galvanized in conjunction with the first immigration boom throughout the 1920s, and the development of commercial art, publications, and public shows sponsored by the SMRC’s full-fledged tourist promotion campaigns.⁶ By the early 1930s, Dalian had become the haven for many young modern and avant-garde Japanese artists who dreamed of

⁵ *Kantō kyoku kannai genjū jinkō tōi* [Population Statistics of Those Living in the Jurisdiction of the Kwantung Bureau] In *Laioning sheng dangan pan 1590* [Liaoning Provincial Archives] (Dalian: n.p., 1936), 1-7. Quoted in Robert John Perrins, “Great Connections: the Creation of a City, Dalian, 1905-1931: China and Japan on the Liaodong Peninsula,” Ph.D. Diss., (York University, 1996), 43.

⁶ According to Shōwa Annual Report on Manchuria in 1936, there were about 300 Japanese artists in Dalian and about 70 different art exhibitions were placed per year *Manshū nenkan: Shōwa 8-nen nen* [Annual Report of Manchuria] (Dairen: Manshū Bunka Kyōkai, 1933), 564-565.

the “continental Paris.” By 1933, there were over 300 registered Japanese artists, and an average of 70 art exhibitions were held every year in Dalian; among them, *yōga* and avant-garde styles thrived.⁷

This chapter investigates the early artistic productions and practices in Dalian in pre-1937 Manchuria, a period often referred to as the “Dalian era” (*Dairen jidai*) in literature studies or “Japan’s informal empire” in historical studies.⁸ I demonstrate how the Japanese colonial flagship in this phase, through railway and settler expansionism, generated a Japanese monopoly in the art world and disenfranchised Chinese and native cultures while manipulating racial and cultural “Others” as the source of creation. The city’s re-modernization and Westernization process, as well as its tourist campaigns, were the logic for and effect of artistic colonial subjugation. In this chapter, I first survey the underrepresented Chinese local art circles and practices in Dalian and adjacent cities, where artists continued the lineage of classical ink paintings that were perceived as obsolete and as no longer belonging to the mainstream of either Japanese or republican Chinese pursuit of artistic modernity. Second, I delve into the case studies of China beauty posters produced by two artists who were among the earliest employees who contributed to the SMRC’s tourist promotions: *yōga* (Western-style painting) artist Mayama Kōji (1884–1981) and *nihonga* (traditional-style painting) artist Itō Junzō (1890–1936).⁹ I explore how these two artists invented iconographies of Manchuria tourism and bring new artistic standards and visions to the Leased Territory by visualizing China as a feminine and archaic

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The concept of “informal empire,” according to Peter Duus, stemmed from scholarships of British imperialism by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, who observed economic hegemony established through unequal treaties as a sign of the informal empire. Peter Duus et al., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), xii-xiii.

⁹ While I use “*yōga*” and “*nihonga*” in lowercase letters in referring to the general taxonomy of the painting genres, “*Yōga*” and “*Nihonga*” in uppercase letters are specified to indicate the title of exhibition sections, academic department, etc.

beauty. Lastly, I examine the semi-state exhibitions, often labeled as “Manten” (Manchuria Art Exhibition), sponsored by the SMRC and subsidiary associations under the Kwantung Administration, and the migrated modernist and avant-garde art movements in Dalian and their connections with the metropole art scene. The implementation of the series of exhibitions reflects changed ideas and visual inventions about Manchuria across the tumultuous transitional era from informal imperialism to the dawn of the state-building of Manchukuo. Through the analysis of visual productions and practices during the phase of rising tension between the Kwantung Army and the Chinese local regime, I explain how the aspirations of the early imperial actors—the railway company and the local government—and the settlers’ community laid the foundations for the subsequent military control and conflict in the Asiatic state building of Manchukuo.

The Chinese Artistic Community in the Leased Territory

The ancient history of art in Liaoning Province dates to the neolithic Hongshan jade culture, the bronze culture of the Zhou Dynasty, and the advanced calligraphy, painting, and Buddhist culture of the Liao Dynasty. After the region was incorporated into the centralizing rule during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, adopting Han Chinese cultural, political, and legal systems, the literati and Zen artistic traditions flourished in Liaoning. The Qing, the new unifier of China from 1636 to 1911, accelerated the fusion of Manchu and Han cultures to consolidate people under Manchu rule. Liaoning calligraphy and painting circles cultivated refined regional styles based on Yuan, Ming, and Qing literati and academic styles, accumulating the canons of the Four Masters (Ni Zan, Wang Meng, Wu Shen, and Huang Gongwang), the Orthodox School (Dong Qichang), the Zhejiang School, and, later, the four Wang (Wang Jian, Wang Shimin,

Wang Yuanqi, and Wang Hui) styles.¹⁰ For example, the Finger Painting School championed by Manchu officer-artist Gao Qifei (1660–1734), who incorporated dry and expressive finger brushwork and hand strokes and washes, succeeded in the region.¹¹ Folk craftsmanship led by native female community members, including embroidery, papercuts, masks, and clay toys for Taoist festivals, was also developed throughout the local history.¹² Among the most prosperous forms of elite culture were calligraphy (*shufa*) and epigraphy (*jinshi*) in the later period of the feudal era. Native scholar-officer art practices were significantly developed and recognized in Shenyang-Liaoyang, the most populated and historic Manchurian city with strong local *baqi* (Eight Banner) leadership and tribute trading; many forayed into the central art scenes. During the late Qing era, the influx of scholars and artists from all over China, especially from Shandong, Hebei, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu provinces, expanded the diversity of Shenyang art communities. Yet, unlike Shanghai School styles that were inclined to incorporate Western influences transmitted largely by Japanese publications into traditional ink paintings, Shenyang artists tended to value conservatism based on old masters' styles from the glorified past.¹³

¹⁰ Guangjie Shen, *Minguo Liao Shen jin shi shu hua shi: 1911-1949* [Paintings of Liaoning and Shenyang, Republic of China 1911-1949] (Shenyang: Shenyang chu ban she, 2016), 7.

¹¹ Yu Li, *Dongbei yi shu shi* [Art History of Northeast China] (Shenyang: Chun feng wen yi chu ban she, 1992), 233-235.

¹² For example, Zhanghe County Chronicles introduces folk craft as an important female culture. About studies of native folk cultures, see Xiujuan Han, “liaoxiu yishude chuancheng yanjiu [A Study on the Inheritance of the Art of Liao Embroidery],” PhD diss. (Harbin Normal University, 2016); Tian Miao and Zhengwei Sun, “qian xi liao ning jian zhi yi shu yu shi chang ying xiao ji zhi [On the Art of Paper Cutting and Marketing in Liaoning Province],” *Meishuda guan*, No. 5 (2014): 80; Dou Xuelin, “Inheritance and Development of Paper-cut Art of Ethnic Minorities in Liaoning,” *Anshan shi fan xue yuan xue bao* [Journal of Anshan Teachers College] 21, no. 6 (2019): 82–86.

¹³ During the late Qing's political and military decline after the Opium war, many artists migrated to Shanghai, the center of international treaty ports and commerce. From the 1860s, Shanghai-based elite businessmen who aimed to challenge the traditional hierarchy of art provided patronage of paintings with strong individual characters and expressive visual effects. Japanese economic and cultural investment also benefitted the revitalization of the Shanghai art scene. Among renowned Shanghai School artists, are Ren Xiong, Ren Yi, and Wu Changshi. See Julia Andrews Julia and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 3-25; Kuiyi Shen, “The Shanghai-Japan Connection in the Late Nineteenth and Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in *Turmoil, representation, and trends, Modern Chinese painting, 1796-1949, International conference papers* (Taipei: Cai tuan fa ren hong xi yi shu wen jiao ji jin hui, 2008), 233-258.

While not comparable to the scale and history of Shenyang art communities, there were also Chinese migrant and native art circles along the coastal cities in the Liaodong Peninsula. Chinese migration to the peninsula occurred in two phases: the first came after the Qing court lifted the migration ban to Manchuria in 1881, and the second was the Japanese settler rush to the Kwantung Leased Territory. Throughout these migration periods, often recorded as one of the largest in the history of mass migration, Chinese settler artists with or without Manchu ethnic backgrounds shaped their markets in relation to Japanese commercial investment. While there was only a scarce number of professional artists and the quality of the paintings in the region was often perceived as not very advanced, the framework shows its confinement within the colonial formation of art history and the linear notion of modernism and art institutions shaped by geopolitical disproportion.¹⁴ Despite the difficulty of recounting the development of the local Chinese art circles in the region, this section aims to understand how the local Chinese artistic tradition was shaped, altered, and marginalized during the colonial process, which reveals that there were plural modernisms on the way in Manchuria—also from the verge of the colonized communities.

Encroached upon by both Russian and Japanese imperial expansion, Chinese local art circles in the Leased Territory were often disregarded and forgotten. Despite their historical influence in terms of the exchange of ideas and visual forms with the central scene, histories of regional art scenes were also largely marginalized during postcolonial nation-building in China. Despite the lack of surviving records, Russian influence in the region might have reached the Chinese painting communities. Even during Japan's ownership, some Russian artists and

¹⁴ The lack of professional artists and artistic advancement was discussed by Japanese artist in the 1930s, and such perspective has been continued in post-colonial discussions. *Zhuanghe xian zhi*[the Chronicles of Zhuanghe County] (Xin hua chu ban she, 1996), 938.

architects were still staying in the Russian district of Dalian, although Harbin is known as the biggest city for Russian diasporic artists.¹⁵ Yet, oil paintings were less likely to be the central interest for many Chinese artists until the education reform of the Republican and Shenyang governments and the boom of studying abroad at art schools in Japan and Europe. According to the *Chronicles of Zhuanghe County*, the introduction of watercolor and oil painting in the Zhuanghe art scene can be traced back to the 1930s, when art classes were added to public education curricula during the Manchukuo era.¹⁶ During Japan's urban development and the influx of settlers, Chinese antiquities shops opened in Dalian and suburban cities such as Yingkuou, Zhuanghe, and Port Arthur (Lüshun). While traditional ink paintings in the Ming and Qing styles were perceived as obsolete and anachronistic within both the perspectives of Chinese Republicans and Japanese imperialists on artistic modernity, Liaodong local artists attempted to bring new life and dignity to its tradition in the local context.

Scholar-artist Wang Guansan (1874–1948) was a leading figure in the Zhuanghe art scene.¹⁷ Born in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, he was the son of Confucian scholar-doctor Wang Banglai and grew up in Zhuanghe, on the east coast of the Liaoning peninsula, as a child prodigy with versatile talents in medicine, calligraphy, poetry, and painting. After passing a civil service examination, he was assigned as an educator at the Xi'an Normal School for Chinese classics in 1903 and returned to his hometown in Zhuanghe during the Qing-Republican transition.¹⁸ After losing his vision as a civic officer, he found a new place to make use of his knowledge and aesthetics for the rebuilding of the nation while teaching at a local school in his hometown for

¹⁵ For example, Fedorovsky Petr Fedorovich (1864–1944), who shortly lived in Dalian by 1926 and moved to Harbin and lived there until his death, and Yastrebova Lidiya Aleksandrova (1922–2004) who was born in Harbin and moved to Dalian in the 1930s.

¹⁶ *Zhuanghe xian hi*, 1996, 939.

¹⁷ Although Shen Guangjie's survey marks his birth year as 1874, I am following the record at the Dalian Modern Museum.

¹⁸ Guangjie Shen, 123-124.

twenty years. He contributed to publishing books about regional history and epigraphy and produced many poems, works of calligraphy, and paintings, which were beloved by local dignitaries. In the *Chronicles of Zhuanghe County* (1922), which recorded the culture and history of the county, Wang and his colleagues wrote about the local heroes who died during the First Sino-Japanese War.¹⁹ In the chronicle, Wang also wrote a verse after visiting a local Buddhist cave, Xianrendong, with his students: “[...] may the sleeping lions wake up the motherland and be willing to teach northern people to go to the dreamland.” Using a metaphor to describe China’s backwardness and disempowerment as a “sleeping lion,” Wang was concerned about foreign interventions and wished to revive his nation’s glorious past.

His *Fish in the Spring River* (Figure 1.2) is a river landscape on a scroll, evoking a sense of tranquility by emptying out the middle ground in a diagonal composition with willow trees in the foreground and a man in a small boat extending his fishing rod. His inscription at the top of the composition indicates that he painted it in December 1918 while appreciating the Zhuanghe River. The brushwork and the use of a slightly purplish-black ink wash may refer to the paintings of Huang Gongwang in the late Yuan dynasty. His 1922 work *Pine and Hawk* (Figure 1.3) is a monochrome ink painting that illustrates a hawk sitting on an old pine tree about to spread its wings to fly. The cautious facial expression of the hawk is, unlike many other traditional pine and hawk paintings, directed toward her chick, which is sitting on the grass and opening its beak to call its mother. This suggests Wang Guansan’s role as an educator, motivated by Cai Yuanpei’s reform campaign. He produced many literati-style landscapes and flower-and-animal and bamboo paintings. By revaluing the traditional themes and visual codes of the lofty past,

¹⁹ “Zhuanghe xian zhi [the Chronicles of Zhuanghe County]” in *Zhongguo di fang zhi ji cheng: Liaoning fu xian zhi ji* [China Local Chronicles Integration: Liaoning County Chronicles Collection] (Nanjing: Feng huang chu ban she, 2006), 637.

Wang Guansan seemingly expresses his fidelity to Chinese masterpieces and his hometown pride. In the Land Reform ordered by the Chinese Communist Party in 1948, however, he was implicated due to his son's engagement with the Nationalist Party and executed.

Lama monk painters in Zhuanghe fanned out their artistic lineage from the late Qing era through the Republican era. Monk Xichan (1881–1953), who migrated to Zhuanghe in 1890 due to a flood in his Shandong hometown, became an apprentice monk at the age of fourteen.²⁰ Xichan learned ink painting from his older colleague, the monk Wu San (date unknown), who introduced him to the local literati painting circle and their workshops.²¹ After traveling for many years, he returned to Zhuanghe in 1927 and expanded his career as a painter-monk who had expertise in monochrome bamboo paintings. As an anti-Japanese nationalist sympathizer, after the Manchuria Incident in 1931, Xichan sold many of his paintings to Japanese officials who were enthusiastic about collecting Chinese traditional style paintings in order to support Chinese people in need. For example, a Japanese officer named Kuwahara Masaharu requested Xichan's popular bamboo paintings in exchange for releasing two Chinese farmers arrested for nationalist activism. During this time, Xichan painted over 20,000 pieces that were sold in northeast China, Japan, and Korea.²² His bamboo painting produced in 1934 (Figure 1.4) demonstrates his sophisticated, accomplished brush control with strong and speedy strokes, as well as a varied tonal effect on bamboo stems that releases dynamic energy. The cutout composition that removed the top and bottom parts of the bamboo trees emphasizes the tonality and shape of the leaves, which also follows classical painting traditions. Conceivably due to frustration with

²⁰ Yanfei Yu, "liaonan hua sengxichan qiren qihua— Dalian bowuguan cangxi chanmo zhutu shangxi [Painter-monk Xi Chan in Southern Liaoning—Dalian Museum's Collection of Xi Chan's Ink Bamboo Paintings]," *Dalian chengshi lishi wenhua yanjiu* [Study on the Urban History and Culture of Dalian] no.0 (2018): 231.

²¹ *Zhuanghe xian zhi*, 1996, 1104.

²² Guangjie Shen, 319.

living under aggravated militarism in Manchukuo, he spent his later life addicted to opium and died in 1953.²³

Xichan's pupil Zhang Guoan (1906–1995), a native Zhuanghe man with a humble family background, earned a great reputation with his bamboo ink paintings.²⁴ As a farmer's son, Zhang Guoan was a self-taught artist who sold his fish paintings and copies of Xichan's paintings in the local art market; later, he entered Xichan's studio and became associated with other young artists. As the demand for Xichan's paintings went up for Japanese collectors, Zhang Guoan produced ink paintings on behalf of his teacher.²⁵ Zhang Guoan and other pupils of Xichan continued the lineage of four gentlemen ink paintings (*si junzi*) in Zhuanghe until the 1950s.

Yingkou was another town near Dalian and close to Shenyang, where small-sized art circles were growing from the late Qing period. Yingkou native Zhang Lezhou (1864–1941) learned *danqing* (pigmented painting) from local master Wang Yunfang and became famous for his figure paintings with hybrid styles.²⁶ Right before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, Zhang Lezhou painted *Dou Yanshan and His Five Sons* (Figure 1.5), one of the most popular themes in Qing didactic figure paintings, depicting a story of a model family education from Southern Song texts, the *Three Character Classic* (*San Zi Jing*). The multiple perspectives applied to architecture direct the audience to navigate starting from the gate to the garden, depicting Yanshan and his five sons studying around a table and Yanshan's wife and daughter staying in the living quarters. According to Zhang's inscription in the top right corner, he followed the Yangzhou School painter Hua Qiuyue (Hua Yan, 1682–1756). His eccentric painting *Immortal*

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Object label for *Fenglidilongsuntu* [Wind and Thunder Dragon] at Dalian Modern Museum permanent collection, 2019.

²⁵ Guangjie Shen, 320.

²⁶ Object label for *Yuwend shifutu* [Blessed Fisher Man] at Dalian Modern Museum permanent collection, 2019.

Li Tieguai (Figure 1.6) in 1917, in which one of eight immortals appears as a disabled beggar with an iron crutch and a gourd, and his many other figure paintings show the influences of key Ming personalities such as Chen Hongshou (1598–1652). He also proved his versatility by hybridizing Ming and Qing landscapes, such as the styles of Daofu (1483–1544) and Huang Gongwang. Zhang Lezhou earned the recognition of Fengtian warlord Zhang Zoulin (1875–1928) and received commissions for his villa, but upon Zhang’s death and the withdrawal of Zhang’s troops from Manchuria, he returned to Yingkou and sold his paintings there until his death in 1941.²⁷

During the pre-Manchukuo era, a number of antiquities shops, old bookstores, and art supply shops were opened in the Naniwa-machi Japanese shopping district in Dalian (Figure 1.7), where Chinese classical paintings and calligraphy, antiquities, and contemporary Chinese paintings were sold. Some of them were run by ambitious Japanese businessmen, while others were run by Chinese dealers who were much more knowledgeable about Chinese history, literature, and art. For instance, the owner of the China Bookstore in Shanghai, Jin Songqing (1878–1941), moved to Dalian and opened an antiquities store there, which was later sold to the most famed antiquary-officer, Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940), in 1930.²⁸

Scholarship rich in transnational perspectives has explored Luo Zhenyu’s publications, successful dealerships, and cultural exchanges with Japanese Sinophile circles in the Kansai region between 1911 and 1919.²⁹ However, little research has examined the rest of his life in

²⁷ Rian Zhang and Yingchun Qi, *Zhang Zuolin lang ji Liaonan* (Liaoning: Minzu chubanshe, 1986), 39.

²⁸ Guangjie Shen, 45.

²⁹ Cheng-hua Wang, “Luo Zhenyu and the formation of Qiwu and Qiwuxue in the First Decade of the Republican Era;” Robert Culp, “New Literati and the Reproduction of Antiquity: Contextualizing Luo Zhenyu and Wang Guowei;” Ziixin Hong, “Newly Marketable ‘Leftover;’ Luo Zhenyu’s Scholarship and Art Business in Kyoto(1911-1919);” Tamaki Maeda “Luo Zhenyu and the ‘Legacy of the Southern School;” and Chia-Ling Yang, “Deciphering Antiquity into Modernity: The Cultural Identity of Luo Zhenyu and the Qing Loyalistst in Manzhouguo,” in

Manchuria.³⁰ Luo was one of those who claimed their political character as a Qing loyalist (*yimin*) and later collaborated with the Manchukuo government, which was given the label of a traitor (*hanjian*) in the postcolonial Chinese historical narrative.³¹ Luo left for Tianjin in 1919, where he helped Puyi escape from the Forbidden City to his exile in the Japanese concession in Tianjin in 1924. Called upon by Puyi, Luo became involved in Puyi's study as a scholar and political supporter. In the winter of 1928, Luo moved to Lüshun, the naval port neighboring Dalian, and built residence and library buildings—the Dayun Library—to store the vast number of antiquities and publications from his collection.³² He continued shaping an academic sphere in the Kwantung Leased Territory for miscellaneous forms of classical learning, including epigraphic studies and archeology. For example, he established the Dalian Cultural Association in 1929 and the Manchu-Japanese Cultural Association in 1933 for Sino (Manchurian)–Japanese joint art exhibitions. Luo's influence was also significant in boosting the market for the works of local and native artists and for the boom of local history and epigraphy studies.

During his stay in Lüshun, Luo's reputation and knowledge in antiquities and the art market experience he had accumulated in Japan allowed him to play an important role in creating new cultural exchanges between the Chinese and the Japanese and laying a cornerstone for the cultural politics of Manchukuo later on. Shanghai dealer Jin Songqing's Mo Yuan Tang

Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Modern Chinese Culture, edit. Yang Chia-Ling Roderick Whitfield (London United Kingdom: Saffron Books, 2012); Shana Brown, *Pastimes: From Art and Antiquarianism to Modern Chinese Historiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Yongfeng Shi, "Ra Shin'gyoku to Naitō Konan no shogakukōryū higaku kenkyūto ō gishi ken'kyūo rēto shite [Luo Zhenyu and Naitō Konan's Exchange of Opinions on the Study of Calligraphy Study: Their Perspectives on Stele and Wang XizhiStudies]." *Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies Kansai University* no. 55 (2022-7): 187-210; Chiaki Kanno, "Luo Zhenyu and the Late Meiji Tokyo," *The Kambun-Gakkai-kaiho* no 74 (2016): 80-92; Zhang Yajin, "Luo Zhenyu's Calligraphy Collection Published in Japan: Focusing on Shoen Magazine," *Journal of the Graduate School of East Asian Cultures* no. 11 (2021): 143-152.

³⁰ Chia-Ling Yang, "Deciphering Antiquity into Modernity," Shen Guangjie, 145-153.

³¹ Chia-Ling Yang, 172.

³² The majority of his collections in the mansion were moved to Lüshun Museum, Dalian library, Liaoning Provincial Museum, and the Palace Museum in Beijing.

bookshop in Dalian became popular with Japanese people purchasing stationary, but perhaps due to his lack of knowledge of market demand toward the Japanese, he was unable to handle many old books and antiquities and thus earned unsatisfactory profits.³³ Luo took over Mo Yuan Tang in 1930; under the management of Luo's fourth and fifth sons, the bookshop became more than a business locus. Luo installed a private publication company with the same name as the bookstore and published his collections and manuscripts in collotype. According to Shen Gwangjie, due to Luo's high standard of printing quality, Mo Yuan Tang's publication business did not leave him with good profits; however, the bookstore did become a gathering place for Qing loyalists and Kwantung Army officers in preparation for the new state.³⁴ Luo's activities after 1932 as a politician and a state administrator will be discussed in the next chapter.

Despite the fact that the colonial metaphor of "empty land" in the Leased Territory was utilized for the justification of Russian and Japanese imperialism, cities in the Liaodong Peninsula have had a long local history and have also been shaped through reform and modernization endeavors within revivalist perspectives. During the era when Japanese and local warlords established an unstable alliance, many local artists supported their nationalist governments but sold paintings and books to Japanese customers in order to make a living. Ironically, the nationalist revivalism and conservatism in their painting practices achieved commercial success by marketing to Japanese buyers during this period, which may be indebted to the earlier cultural exchanges between Japanese and Shanghainese men, though this trend did not continue after 1932. The local art community was not only colonized by foreign imperial powers but also rendered invisible by newly encroached "brokers" who attempted to dub "legitimate" Chinese art and culture in the region in service of Manchukuo. Future case studies

³³ Chia-ling Yang, 188-189; Guangjie Shen, 149.

³⁴ Guangjie Shen, 149.

on local artists and early Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges in the Liaodong Peninsula are expected.

Antiquating Manchuria with *Sina Bijin* (Chinese Beauty): Mayama Kōji (1884–1981) and Itō Junzō (1890–1936)

The provenance of artists and their works and practices during the early SMRC's railway imperialism has remained underexplored in research on Manchuria's art and visual culture. After its first opening in 1907, the SMRC invested all its efforts into constructing infrastructure and was not able to fully promote railway tourism until 1918, when the first SMRC Korea-Manchuria Tourist Office was installed in Tokyo. Imbricating the global imperialist turns at the end of WWI to nationalism and Japan's colonial experiment in Korea shifting from military rule (*budan seiji*) to cultural rule (*bunka seiji*), growing interest in tourism to Japan's remote regions and colonial territories provided a new type of national and imperial experience.³⁵ According to the accounts of historian Kate McDonald, interwar Japanese imperial tourism to Korea and Manchuria appeared as an act of space-time placing that reordered and maintained the territories, people, and narratives that belonged to them; it thus imposed ownership without officially acquiring the territory as a colony.³⁶ Likewise, historian Ken Ruoff posits that Japan's imperial tourism was located within the "conflicting tendency to demand both assimilation and yet maintenance of differences," and this civilian-guise industry assisted colonial authorities in exploiting the police force.³⁷ With its nature as a capitalist corporation monopoly and a semi-

³⁵ On post-WWI global order on imperialism and nationalism, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*; Balibar Étienne, and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (Verso, 1991); Louise Young, *Total Empire*; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cornell University Press, 1983); Anthony. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Polity Press, 1985); Roger WM. Louis and Ronald Robinson "The Imperialism of Decolonization." *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22, no. 3 (1994): 462-511.

³⁶ Kate McDonalds, *Placing Empire*, 5-8.

³⁷ Kenneth Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Cornell University Press; 2010), 107.

bureaucracy, the SMRC's tourist products distributed individualized but controlled colonial experiences to visitors and people in the local terrain.

The imperial gaze produced a bounty of visual products of native subjects and their cultures and infiltrated Japan's colonial projects in Manchuria. Posters, postcards, leaflets, and ticket designs fulfilled the most accessible and modern form of providing tourist information in the early twentieth century.³⁸ As an effective medium of modern advertisement, posters materialized and reproduced public discourses, as Roland Marchand's study on American advertisement in the 1920s to 1940s reflects, "through repetition, bold display, and ingenuity, advertisements infused their images and slogans" into a nation/community's "common discourse," determining its self-image.³⁹ Along with its full-fledged turn to the imperial campaign through tourism, the SMRC started hiring artists from the homeland in the early 1920s. By engaging with forms of mass media for wide public display, the tourism visual productions played a role as propaganda or "image weapons" that bolstered Japan's informal colonial rule in Manchuria.⁴⁰ Aiming not only at tourists from Japanese metropolises but also foreign travelers, the SMRC promoted Japan's modern, global, and industrial advancement as well as the exotic

³⁸ On imperial tourist visual products, see Kenneth Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith*; Paul D Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire: Japan's Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border," 1874-1945* (University of California Press, 2018); Kari Shepherdson-Scott, "Race Behind the Walls: Contact and Containment in Japanese Images of Urban Manchuria," in *The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race in East Asian Empire*. Edited by Christopher P. Hanscom and Dennis Washburn (University of Hawaii Press; 2016); Song-un Cho, *Kwangwang ui modonijum: singminji Choson ui kundae kwangwang kwa suhak yohaeng* [Modernity of Tourism: Modern Tourism and School Trip of Colonial Korea] (Minsogwon, 2019), Takeshi Soyama, "School Excursions and Militarism: Continuities in Touristic Shūgaku Ryokō from the Meiji Period to the Postwar," *Japan Review* no. 33 (2019): 29-56; Yajun Mo. "Between Empire and Nation-State: Tourism and Travel in Manchuria and Taiwan, 1912-1949," in *Touring China* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

³⁹ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), xx.

⁴⁰ Scholarships have articulated how visual representations, especially cameras, became the weapon of imperialism and war in visual history. Such as, John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 2008); Charlotte Klouk et al., *Terror: When Images Become Weapons* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020); Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Watching Babylon: The War in Iraq and Global Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2005).

attractions of northeast China. With these tourist advertisements, they introduced an ethnographic mode of imaginaries about the acquired territories and redefined “Chineseness.”

The first SMRC-commissioned artist, Mayama Kōji (1884–1981), born in Iwate Prefecture in the Tōhoku region, was a relatively established *yōga* painter who learned to paint under Okada Saburōsuke (1869–1939) and Nagahara Kōtarō (1864–1930), as a member of the White Horse Society (*Hakuba-kai*).⁴¹ Founded in 1896 by Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924), the pioneer of *yōga* and the first director of the *Yōga* department of the Tokyo Fine Art School, the White Horse Society was a gathering for like-minded painters who aimed to achieve the technical equivalent of European standards of modernity and were indeed internalized with those standards. Academically, the society was in rivalry with the then Barbizon school styles of the bureaucratic Meiji Art Society (Meiji bunkakai).⁴² Although versatile Mayama’s goal was to enter the *Nihonga* program at the Tokyo Fine Art School when he moved to Tokyo, he found a position at the White Horse Society as a steward and expanded his career in *yōga*.⁴³ Immersed in the French impressionism that became the center of Japanese academic art, Mayama started submitting to the Bunten (the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition) in 1908 and was awarded third place at the 1909 Bunten exhibition with his landscape painting, *Evening in the Depth of a Mountain* (Figure 1.8). His *Close to the Equinox* (*Higanni chikaku*, Figure 1.9) created in 1914, displaying a reclining Japanese countrywoman in the grass, exemplifies how his early works demonstrate the hybrid influences of the Taishō era’s Parisienne mannerism and academic

⁴¹ *Manshū geijutsudan no hitobito* [People in Manchuria’s Arts Scene], (Dalian: kōhisha shuppan’bu, 1929), 58.

⁴² John Clark, “10. Impressionism in Japan: the Indirectness of Reception,” in *Modernities of Japanese Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 150-154; Erin Schoneveld, *Shirakaba and Japanese Modernism: Art Magazines, Artistic Collectives, and the Early Avant-Garde* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 6-11; Jennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1905-1931* (University of California Press, 2002), 15-16.

⁴³ En Ko, “Senkyūhyakuni jūnen’daini okeru man’tetsuno kan’kōsen’den’ shokutakugaka mayama kōjino katsudōo chūshin’ni [Tourism Promotion by The South Manchuria Railway Company in the 1920s: Focusing on the Activities of Commissioned Painter, Koji Mayama],” *Journal of Global Media Studies* Vol. 17·18 (2016): 173.

impressionistic brushwork and the bright colorization promoted by Kuroda, as well as his junction with the thematic boom at the time of women in traditional dress, championed by his teacher Okada Saburōsuke.⁴⁴

In October 1921, Mayama was hired by the SMRC's Transportation Department as the first SMRC residential painter in Dalian. Although he worked at the SMRC headquarters in a prestigious position for ten years, he did not intend to migrate, as other high-profile Japanese administrators. Before he was officially hired as a residential painter at the SMRC in 1918, Mayama was commissioned for a poster, *South Manchuria Railway: Most important link between the far East and Europe* (Figure 1.10), which illustrates a Manchu mother and son in front of the monumental gate of Fuling Mausoleum in Shenyang. In the poster, the mausoleum, once a sacred and inaccessible site symbolizing the heart of the Manchu imperial family, is introduced as a historic site for modern imperial tourism. Yet the archaic-looking mother and son in traditional attire deliberately misinterpret the time and space, doubling the exotic experience. The absence of fatherhood, with a nostalgic view of the collapsed Qing dynasty, suggests a symbolic disempowerment of Chinese patriarchy, which ties to the imperial process and practice of gender construction through public images to justify Japan's parental roles.⁴⁵ Given that the text on the poster is only in English, it was likely produced for wider foreign audiences. Combining a Eurocentric visual code with Asiatic antiquity, Mayama's early poster shadowed the Orientalists' oil paintings.

⁴⁴ Art historian Kojima Kaoru observes Okada as the creator who invented the painting genre called kimono-clad women (*wafuku no onna*), which provided archetypes of Mitsukoshi's beauty poster series. See, Kaoru Kojima, "The Changing Representation of Women in Modern Japanese Paintings," in *Refracted Modernity* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

⁴⁵ Studies on imperial gender practices publicized images of absence or effeminate colonial males, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester University Press, 1995).

The SMRC administrators were in close contact with elite artists in Japan for the best investment in their tourist propaganda. Considering the outstanding number of Tokyo Imperial University alumni in the SMRC cadre, the early search for the promotion campaign was likely conservative and elite-oriented.⁴⁶ Also, Kuroda's introduction of lithograph posters from the Paris Exposition in 1900, which were exhibited in the White Horse Exhibition a year later, became a great inspiration for young *yōga* artists turning to graphic design.⁴⁷ Mayama's teacher Nagahara painted an SMRC poster (Figure 1.11) in 1921, which depicts a homosocial bond between Manchu and Japanese through images of two boys with mature faces walking together on yellow earth, completed with sophisticated and softened brushwork and coloration. The 1917 SMRC poster (Figure 1.12) was commissioned to the top-notch graphic designer Sugiura Hisui (1876–1965), an elite artist within Kuroda Seiki's circle who was best known for the Tokyo Subway and Mitsukoshi Department Store poster series. His nouveau-inspired poster design for the railway company illustrates a goddess holding a torch, probably Artemis, yet orientalized with Asiatic clothing and hairstyle, which may be intended to evoke the goddesses Amaterasu in Japanese mythology. She steps on a winged wheel, symbolizing her sacred patronship of Japan's railway enterprise. Incorporating pan-Asiatic narratives while borrowing European artistic techniques, the visual rhetoric of the two posters bolsters Japan's imperial tourism and territorial expansion through railway networks.

After settling in Dalian, Mayama took charge of poster design and editorial work for the SMRC's first tourist quarterly magazine *Heigen (Plains)* in 1922. He also produced a number of oil paintings that were reproduced as tourist postcards. Mayama's oil painting series incorporated

⁴⁶ JETRO Institute of Developing Economies, "Mantetsu chōsakankēshajin mēroku [List of the SMRC Research Personnel]," *Mantetsuchōsabū kan'kēshano shōgen* [Mantetsu Research Department: Testimonies (Tokyo: JETRO, 1996), 715-814.

⁴⁷ *Nihon no posutā-shi* [Posters Japan, 1800's-1980's] (Nagoya: Nagoya Ginkō; 1989), 112.

his European modernist techniques and mindset, conveying ethnic exoticism and sentimental elements of the bygone dynastic past of Manchurian China. During his residency, Mayama primarily engaged with the subject matters of female figures in traditional dress, Qing historical sites and ruins, landscapes of Manchurian plains, and the modernized city of Dalian.

Mayama's 1921 poster (Figure 1.13) depicts a woman in a Qing imperial consort's attire and crown sitting on a red background with the Chinese character *shou* (longevity). While the portrait's symmetric and decorative flatness and forward-facing posture evoke imperial ancestor portraits, the Fauvist-like facial coloration and the mixed assemblage of the sitter's attire and headgear suggest that she is likely an actress of Chinese opera or a staged model with props rather than a royal consort. The poster bears a map of the Korea-Manchuria railway route and ocean liner connections to Qingdao and Shanghai, where Japan's concessions were installed during World War I, at the bottom. The figure serves as an embodiment of the archaic cultural reference of China that is trivialized and commercialized for the Japanese mission of modernity and imperialism.

In the same year, Mayama created more paintings of women in Manchu dress; his *Guibing* (Maiden; Figure 1.14) illustrates a profile view of a young woman in "Chinese dress (*sina fuku*)" appreciating flowers in a pot. Another anachronistic sense is found here; her dress is not a modernized *cheongsam* or *qipao* but rather an archetypical Qing court dress, while she is located in a Westernized interior space. By exploiting the archaic sense of the title "*Guibing*" referring to the hidden beauty in the women's quarter and Chinese dynastic refinement as a modern vintage fashion, the painting draws a parallel with Fujishima Takeji's watershed work

Hōkei (Figure 1.15), produced in 1926, or *Tōyōburi* (Orientalism), produced in 1923, which portray artists' models performing an "ambiguous ethnicity" in Manchu dress.⁴⁸

The theme of "women in Chinese dress" (*Sinahuku no onna*) became increasingly popular in the Japanese cultural sphere in the 1920s and 1930s, in search of novel bodily representations of women that have been the long-standing tradition of visual consumption.⁴⁹ First, Mayama's paintings of women in China dress act as an embodiment of *bijin* ("beautiful women" in Japanese)—the borderline female beauty oscillating between inner and outer domains for nationalist aesthetic consumption—what Japanese popular graphic magazine *Bijin Gahō* (Beauty Pictorial) described as: "[i]f wives are flowers of domesticity, then geisha are the flowers of society."⁵⁰ As a meta figure embodying Japan's national identity and universal modernity, conceiving a relation to Asiatic and Western others, the *bijin* transcended a corporeal concept of femininity.⁵¹ Coinciding with Japan's rising international competence and imperial expansion to Asia since the late Meiji era, *bijinga* indicated less a generic genre than a shapeshifting index of Japan's imperial formations, recognized in both government-sponsored art venues and the capitalist material world.⁵² As one of the key vectors of *nihonga*'s development in representing Japan's authentic national beauty, the Bunten even allotted a special display room

⁴⁸ Shinobu Ikeda, "Imperial Desire and Female Subjectivity: Umehara Ryūzaburō's Kunyan Series," *Ars Orientalis* 47, no. 20220203 (2017): 244.

⁴⁹ On surveys of female figure paintings in China dress, see Shinobu Ikeda, "The Allure of a 'Woman in Chinese Dress': Representation of the Other in Imperial Japan," in *Performing Nation* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008) and "Imperial Desire and Female Subjectivity: Umehara Ryūzaburō's Kunyan Series," *Ars Orientalis* 47, no. 20220203 (2017):240–65; Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Creating Oriental Beauty: Chinese Passages to Imperial Yōga," in *Maximum Embodiment* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2012); Kojima Kaoru, "Japanese Images of Asian Women in 'Traditional' Clothes in the Age of Empire," in *Visualizing Beauty: Gender and Ideology in Modern East Asia* (Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ "Geigi to kifujin," *Bijin gahō* 2, no. 6 (1911): 72 as cited in Miya Lippit, 105.

⁵¹ Miya E. Mizuta Lippit, *Aesthetic Life: Beauty and Art in Modern Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2019), 17.

⁵² According to Yasumura Toshinobu, the term *bijinga*, although *yujoga* existed to refer to Edo-print of courtesans, was coined while forming categories in Japanese art history in Meiji as a counterpart of Western art history. Before Meiji, "bijin" was applied to both males and females. Toshinobu Yasumura, *Bijingano Nihon bijinga issennenshi* [two thousand years history of Japanese beauty painting] (Jinrui Bunkasha, 2002), 198.

for *bijinga* in the *Nihonga* section of the 1915 exhibition.⁵³ In the Taishō era, *bijinga* specialists who worked as illustrators progressively contributed to crafting popular images of women in the highly commercialized sphere.⁵⁴ While paintings of *meiren* (“beautiful women” in Chinese) had existed since the ancient pictorial tradition of China, with varying meanings from the didactic to the sexual, popular visual productions of imperial tourism embedded the ideals of *bijin* into the same Chinese characters and female bodies in China dress.⁵⁵

Female bodies in *yōga*, as Norman Bryson observes through Meiji paintings of European women and female nudes, served as “a medium of intramale exchanges” in Japan’s imperial process, where the Japanese desired to be equal to Westerners; manipulating female bodies—the gendered and sexual “Other”—in European academic painting traditions enabled them to overcome the cultural distance.⁵⁶ Incorporating Japan’s *bijinga* (paintings of beautiful women) tradition rooted in *ukiyo-e* designs, *yōga* artists attempted to “Japanize” oil paintings by exploiting the nostalgic and exotic gendered imageries of their Orient. Expressing the supremacy and ownership of males over females and the gendered imageries of nations through *yōga* represented a practice of modernity, national identity, and imperialism, which later coalesced with militarism.

The Japanese imagination of China was not analogous to that of Korea or Taiwan. Although, for the Japanese in the 1920s, China had failed in its modern history, the symbols of the Qing court still served as a contact point with the lofty Chinese dynastic past.⁵⁷ As art

⁵³ Miya Lippit, 196.

⁵⁴ Kendall H. Brown and Sharon Minichiello, *Taishō Chic: Japanese Modernity, Nostalgia, and Deco* (Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2001), 18.

⁵⁵ On Chinese traditional beauty paintings, see James Cahill and Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, *Beauty Revealed: Images of Women in Qing Dynasty Chinese Painting* (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 2013).

⁵⁶ Norman Bryson, “Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji Yōga,” in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 98-107.

⁵⁷ John Clark, “Artists and the State: The Image of China,” in *Modernities of Japanese Art*, 204-216.

historian Ikeda Shinobu points out, “women in Chinese dress” do not merely embody the Japanese counterpart of European orientalism over colonized female bodies; for example, Fujishima’s *Hōkei* and *Tōyōburi*, which depicted Japanese women in Manchu dress, indicate the “hybrid cultural identity” of the West (the method of painting), China (the dress), and Japan (the female body) and thus Japan’s legitimate role in performing the Renaissance of Asia.⁵⁸ In comparison, the earlier paintings of Korean women in traditional dress that Fujishima produced in the mid-1910s after the annexation of Korea recalled the archaic aestheticism of Japan’s own ancient culture, such as “Heian.” In Winther-Tamaki’s words, his gaze on “the culture of colonized Korea as an unchanging, static field” worked to “fossilize the Orient in the past while aggrandizing modern European subject positions.”⁵⁹ Such a sense of backwardness is also found in Mayama’s 1924 painting *Spring Thoughts* (*shunsi*, Figure 1.16), published in *Heigen*, which portrays a *hanbok*-clad Korean *gisaeng* (female entertainer-courtesan). With the post-impressionistic reduction of the basic shape, the female sitter’s facial expression is static and even sluggish. Such a sense of primitiveness of Korean dressed woman draws a distance from portraits of Japanese women in China dress that delineate a theatrical rendition to manifest the ideals of Japan’s Asiatic modernity by reactivating the meaning of China for Japan’s imperial benefit.

Mayama’s two female portraits in profile view, created around 1924, also reproduced in *Heigen*, depict women in a kimono and in a Manchu dress (Figures 1.17 and 1.18). They demonstrate a clear juxtaposition of the allegories of traditional clothes in conjunction with Japan’s territorial expansion. While his portrait of a kimono-clad woman is surrounded by the modernized Japanese sector of the Leased Territory, the woman in China dress is situated in a

⁵⁸ Shinobu Ikeda, “The Allure of a ‘Woman in Chinese Dress,’” 352-354.

⁵⁹ Winther-Tamaki, “Creating Oriental Beauty,” 105.

desolate field with old mausoleums. While conveying one of the most favored subject matters of the metropole academic art scene in Dalian, Mayama's production of female figure paintings for the SMRC demonstrates that women are a marker of place and race(nation). As the first residential SMRC artist, he led the initiation of Dalian *yōga* art exhibitions and art circles by bringing together the metropole's academic trends with his background in Hakuba-kai and the Bunten. Mayama enjoyed a prestigious life in Dalian, in close contact with executive members of the SMRC and high-profile visitors including Yosano Akiko, Torii Ryūzō, Fujishima, Kishida Ryūsei, and Tsuruta Gorō, in the mid-1920s until he resigned in 1931 to achieve his long-term dream of studying in Paris.

Another esteemed SMRC artist who took over the golden era of tourist posters after Mayama and introduced new cultural and aesthetic codes in Manchuria was Itō Junzō, who moved to Manchuria in 1923 after the Kanto earthquake and joined the SMRC in 1924. Born as the third son of a fabric merchant in Tokyo, Itō was a child painting prodigy and won a prize from a local art exhibition at the age of five; he later learned *nihonga* under Murata Tanryō (1872–1940), who is best known for historic *yamato-e* paintings of Japan's imperial court.⁶⁰ Itō also shaped his cross-genre versatility by joining the White Horse Society for two years. After graduating from the *Nihonga* program at the Tokyo Fine Art School in 1914, he was hired to the design team at the Mitsukoshi Department in 1916. The Taishō era witnessed massive demands for commercial designs (*shōgyō bijutsu*) that attracted many modernist and avant-garde artists who were eager to express their new pictorial techniques, and commercial design came to be considered a valid artistic career.⁶¹ Sugiura Hisui, who worked on the same team at the

⁶⁰ About Itō's biography, see *Manshū geijutsudan no hitobito*, 3. On the history and deployment of *Yamato-e* paintings since Meiji period, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁶¹ Genniefer Weisenfeld, 83-91.

Mitsukoshi Department as a chief designer from 1908 to 1934, was evidently a source of inspiration and artistic exchange for Itō.

Unfortunately, few of Itō's works produced in the pre-Manchuria days have remained; however, his name is found in multiple design exhibitions and anti-Bunten avant-gardist movements, including the Futurist Art Association (*Mirai-ha Bijutsu Kyokai*) and the Eight Flame Society (*Hakka-sha*). Itō's senior colleague Otake Chikuha (1878–1936), once associated with elitist *nihonga* art circles, including the Japan Art Academy installed by Okakura Kakuzō, chose anti-mainstream styles later, launching the Eight Flame Society with Itō and Hagiwara Tokutarō in 1919. Those members were invited to join the Futurist Art Association in 1920 by Fumon Gyō (1896–1972).⁶² During these days, Itō enjoyed a broader artistic network by associating with artists who belonged to the so-called Ochiai Artier Village or Ikebukuro Montparnasse, artists' colonies located in the northeast of Tokyo, known for being the haven of Taishō-Shōwa leftist modernists and avant-gardists.⁶³

Although Itō produced copious SMRC posters, fewer than ten pieces have survived in total.⁶⁴ One of his earliest posters, *Changchun Station* (Figure 1.19), dated 1924, depicts bustling

⁶² Yumiko Yamanaka, "Nihon' gaka otake chikuha no gagyōni tsuite jojō gaka fukiya kōjio rikaisuru tameni [About the art of Japanese painter Otake Chikuha: To understand lyricist Kōji Fukiya," *Core Ethics* vol.5 (2009): 361–70; Gennifer Weisenfield, "Mavo," 46-48.

⁶³ Since the late 1910s, young artists and writers who left their hometown for the Tokyo cultural scene started settling in the Shinjuku, Ochiai, and Ikebukuro areas in search of affordable studios rather than Ueno or central Tokyo. The biggest artists' colonies formed along the Nagasaki Street of Ikebukuro, later nicknamed "Ikebukuro Montparnasse" by *yōga* artist Oguma Hideo in 1938. In the shimo-Ochiai area, Mavo's Yanase Masamu and many Futurist and Surrealist artists gathered. See Kei'ichi Nakamura, *Shinjuku Ochiai bun'kashio aruku* [Walking through Shinjuku and Ochiai Cultural History], (Tokyo: K1 Press, 2020); Naohito Ozaki, *Ikebukuro Montparnasse sozoroaruki: ikebukuro mon'parunasuno sakkatachi nihongahen* [Walking through Ikebukuro Montparnasse: Writers of Ikebukuro Montparnasse Nihonga], (Tokyo: Okutābu, 2010); Otaru City Museum, *Oguma Hideo to Ikebukuro Moparunasuten: jiyūo motometa shijin'to gakatachi* [Hideo Oguma and Ikebukuro Montparnasse Exhibition: Poets and Painters Seeking Freedom] (Otaru: Otaru bungakusha, 1995).

⁶⁴ While collector Nakamura Shunichirō's research records that only seven posters have survived, two more posters were exhibited in "Visit Japan: Tourist Promotion in the 1920s and 1930s," at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in 2016. See "Manshūfūzokuo egaita maboroshino gaka itō jun'zōto man'tetsuposutā [Ito Junzo, an artist who painted Manchuria customs and Mantetsu posters]," in *Ekkyōsuru Nihonjin: kōgeika ga yumemita Ajia 1910s-1945*

cosmopolitan modernity at the newly renovated Changchun Station. The stunning vistas of the poster show multiethnic crowds and chic fashion as a marker that visualizes different races: while tall and fashionable Russian bodies are decorated with fur coats, mufflers, and fancy hats in the forefront, plump Chinese bodies in traditional winter garments with oriental flower patterns suggest a wealthy but outmoded character. In the far middle ground, a Japanese middle-class couple and their child, observing the exotic cosmopolitan world at the railway station, are featured in Westernized but modest winter fashion. Exhibiting proto-deco style modernism, Itō's poster reflects the influence of Mitsukoshi posters by Sugiura and Parisienne-inspired Tokyo commercial designs. Itō's interest in ethnography, folk culture, and women in fashion, often translated into Taishō chic and a decorative sense of *nihonga*, continued throughout the rest of his life in Manchuria. His folkloric (*fūzoku*) tourist posters including *Mask Dancer* and *Gaoqiao* (stilt dancing, Figure 1.20 & 21) depict the local folk culture celebrated at seasonal festivals in Liaoning Province, featuring Manchurian folk textile patterns and colors as an enduring source of his deco graphic design, which inspired many settler artists and collectors discussed in Chapter 3.

Like Mayama's work, yet more aestheticized with decorative patterns and colors, *bijinga* posters of Chinese-Manchurian women formed the core of Itō's career at the SMRC. Despite Itō's anti-mainstream engagement in the Tokyo art scene, his dedication to *bijinga* at the SMRC put him back at the two interconnected mainstream genres of *nihonga* and commercial beauty prints. His "Chinese beauty" poster series became the annual must-buy item for Japanese residents in the railway territories; for example, Okumura Yoshinobu, the director of the

[Japanese crossing borders: Asia as dreamed by craftspeople, 1910s-1945](Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 115; Takuya Kida, *Yōkoso Nihon e : 1920-30-nendai no tsūrizumu to dezain* [Welcome to Japan: 1920-30s Tourism and Design] (Tokyo: Tokyo Modern Museum of Art, 2016).

Manchuria Information Center, in his essay “Chinese Beauty (*sina bijin*) Posters,” wrote that he always hangs newly published SMRC posters by the side of the fireplace in his home.⁶⁵ After the color printing technology of Huebner-Bleistein Patents Co. was introduced from the U.S., the SMRC’s mass production of color posters became surprisingly affordable, around two dollars (in today’s value) per piece.⁶⁶

Itō’s surviving “Chinese beauty” posters, produced from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, portray a female dancer (Figure 1.22) and a lady in a red garment (Figure 1. 23), which respectively suggest a Han beauty and a Manchu beauty.⁶⁷ The poster of Han beauty illustrates a female dancer with a sophisticatedly elongated body wearing a soft-colored, wide-sleeved silk robe with a white skirt. Her pose is demure but inviting, with a tilted face that is not shy about making eye contact with spectators; this traces the Meiji *bijinga* practice of depicting geisha imageries. Unlike other SMRC posters, the Han beauty print was produced on a scroll frame, hybridizing the visual forms of mass communication and Asiatic traditional paintings. In contrast, Itō’s Manchu beauty, produced in 1934, portrays an image of a modern woman in a Manchu formal dress in red, sumptuously adorned with crane and peony embroidery—the symbols of longevity and prosperity; it is seemingly a traditional wedding garment. While the Manchu dress represents the cultural past of the bygone era, the woman’s sensual pose, revealing her underarms, and her confrontational glance that attracts viewers’ attention echo symbols of

⁶⁵ Yoshinobu Okumura, “Sinabijin poster,” *Shintenchi*, January 1929. Although Lei Yang’s research marks *Manmō* as the reference, it was likely due to confusion between Okumura’s two essays published in January 1929. His essay on Chinese beauty posters was published only through *Shintenchi*.

⁶⁶ According to Okumura, SMRC posters were about 17 *sen* and 8 *rin*. He expressed his mixed feelings about the introduction of the HB patent’s color printing machines, which enabled fast and cheaper printing yet brought about the dwindling of artistic qualities. *Ibid*.

⁶⁷ Although the label from the 2014 exhibition at the Museum of Modern art, Tokyo assumed the date of the Han beauty poster in the 1930s, scholar Lei Yang’s survey suggests it was produced around 1928. See Lei Yang, “Shinabijin kara manshūfujin e Itō Junzōni yoru maiginusōno josē o tegakarini [From “Chinese beauty” to “Manchu beauty”: “Woman in Dancing Clothes” by Junzo Ito], *Chisēto Sōzō: nichūgakushano shikō* [Intelligence and Creation: Japan-China Scholarships] no.12 (2021): 57.

sexuality found in European modernist paintings of courtesans. The paradoxical coding between bride and courtesan, or inner and outer domains of femininity, creates a new type of Chinese female icon for tourist promotion.

For the Chinese general public, the thematic and stylistic codes of female beauty that Itō executed for his SMRC posters sing a different tune from those for the Japanese audience. For example, *A Woman Riding a Horse* (Figure 1.24) depicts a medieval court lady on a horse surrounded by cherry blossoms and five doves. On the bottom right, Itō's name is Romanized in Chinese pronunciation as "Iteng Shunshan." The much-simplified rendition of a woman's body and garment, the relatively excessive background, and the blank face and ambiguous gaze emulate Chinese folk painting styles, suggesting that the image underscores quasi-folkloric rhetoric rather than the ideals of *bijinga*. These different visual approaches that depend on the audience—Japanese/European and Chinese-Manchurian tourists—may highlight the conscious strategies made in diplomatic and cultural propaganda during the pre-Manchukuo and transition periods.

The popularity of Itō's posters prompted both intellectual and popular discourse on the archetypes of female beauty and gender roles in Manchuria. While Okumura celebrated the SMRC's beauty posters as a joyful production for Japanese consumers, he also criticized the superficiality of depicting Chinese women. He pointed out that the poster—presumably Itō's Han beauty—is "too pale" and "described a Chinese court lady inaccurately," and he further problematized the lack of research on the authentic lives of Chinese women in Manchuria.⁶⁸ He concluded that "it is indeed necessary to establish a research agency for studying things about China before they are produced by the hands of painters." This underlines how the Japanese

⁶⁸ Okumura, "Sinabijin poster."

imperial administrators of the SMRC increasingly desired information about local and native people, culture, and customs in the tumultuous time after the death of Zhang Zuolin and Japan's growing military control beyond the Railway Zones.

Troubled and complexly converging notions and interests about women in China were found in the transnational patriarchal discourse of the SMRC's intellectual circle. In January 1929, through the journal *Manmō* (Manchuria-China, published between 1923 and 1943), for which the SMRC was the patron, a special edition named "Chinese women" (*sina no onna*) included essays by over twenty-five different Japanese and Chinese authors, dedicating the entire edition of 200 pages to Itō's illustrations of "Manchurian Women Sketches" (*Manshū fujin suketchi*, Figure 1.25) and discussing the life and ideals of Sino-Manchurian women.

Intriguingly, the cover image, a female terracotta tomb figurine from the Tang dynasty (Figure 1.26), which had already been published in the previous edition of December 1928 with the title "Dancing girl" (*odoriko*), was renamed as "a dressed-up woman" (*sēsōseru fujin*).⁶⁹ Evoking Itō's Chinese *bijin* posters and Okumura's criticism, the relabeling of the early medieval antiquity from a girl to a woman and the shifting symbolism from public availability to domicile femininity echo problematic orientalizing and obsolescing imagery of Chinese women and reveal colonial desires and gender hierarchy through the rebranding of the racialized and gendered "Other."

Agreeing on the unequal and oppressed status of Chinese women, the discourse from both Chinese and Japanese authors supports the women's liberation movement, whereas their attitudes and proposed approaches reveal equivocation. The Japanese authors' proposals for modernizing Chinese women tend to challenge Chinese patriarchy and attempt to dislocate

⁶⁹ Lei Yang, "Shinabijin kara manshūfujin e," 62.

women from it. For example, semi-anonymous author Tachibana reevaluates the May Fourth Movement in 1919 as not only an anti-imperial campaign refusing the Japanese but also as the kickoff for the anti-feudal revolution that called for female emancipation from the old form of femininity limiting women to the role of child-bearer and domestic laborer.⁷⁰ Another contributor, Nakajima Katsuji, in his “The Status of Ancient Chinese Women,” reevaluates the higher social and political status and independence of early medieval Chinese women who had full custody of their children and ownership of properties and family ceremonies.⁷¹ This reiterates imperial men’s colonial desire to dismantle and reconstitute patriarchy in the occupied territory under the benevolent guise of authority, echoing Gayatri Spivak’s account that “white men are saving brown women from brown men.”⁷² The Chinese authors, in contrast, emphasized educational reforms for women to be professional, to be good mothers and wives, and to be carriers of national identity, as expressed in essays such as Liang Weizhan’s “Advocating Women’s Vocational Education” and Zhao Xinbo’s “My Family Life.”⁷³ This reflects the consequence of the pan-Asiatic patriarchal notion of “good wife and wise mother” that Japan provided China, as a gender ideology suitable for a modern nation.⁷⁴ Chinese writers within the colonial environment, between nationalism and the internalization of Japanese modernity, agreed with the Japanese assessment of women’s liberation in order to empower colonized men through the invention of the New Women archetype. The political turmoil of the time destabilized ideas

⁷⁰ Tachibana, “Shinafujin no kankyō oyobi mondai [Environment and Problems of Chinese Women],” *Manmō*, January 1929, 2-3.

⁷¹ Nakajima Katsuji, “Chūgoku kodai fujin’no chii[the status of an ancient Chinese woman]” *Manmō*, January 1929, 33-34.

⁷² Gayatri Spivak, “Can Subaltern Speak?,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: a Reader*, Edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Columbia University Press, 1994), 93.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 94-97.

⁷⁴ Duara, “Embodying civilization: women and the figure of tradition within modernity,” in *Sovereignty and authenticity*, 147.

about women, and the Japanese had mixed and often contradictory visions of Chinese historical times and thus selectively molded them in colonial rhetoric.

In this edition, Itō's five "Manchurian Women Sketches" provided a categorization of popular imaginations of women in Manchuria, echoing the unconsolidated sense of the discourse. The first four sketches portray feudal Chinese women—a maiden, a Han wife, a Manchu court lady, and a dancer—and the last one depicts a modern Chinese woman with short, permed hair wearing a *qipao*. Except for the sketch of the court lady, who has a dignified but somewhat hostile facial expression, the images depict the women's vulnerability and geniality through three-quarter or profile views; the dancer even suggests "a beauty looking back" (*mikaeri bijin*), the iconic metaphor of erotic femininity found in *ukiyo-e* and commercial images. The sketches juxtapose imaginations of women between the feudal and the modern, as well as the domestic and public spheres; at the same time, they reveal the loose and interchangeable notion of "Manchurian women" as a shapeshifter of timeless, modern, and both pure and erotic romance, as imagined by Japanese men. In conjunction with the clay figurine cover image's change from a dancer to a fully dressed woman, Itō and Japanese administrators during railway colonialism externalized and reinvented the ethnic and gendered "Other" as a collaborative project between Japanese and Chinese men toward different goals.

Images of women in Chinese dress coded as *bijin* were repeatedly produced as the most popular visual production of imperial tourism, which transported Japan's cultural and artistic standards in Manchuria. Mayama and Itō reflect two different modes of modernity, depicted in paintings through images of women as a mediator of tradition and modernity. While Mayama's *yōga* paintings of women in Manchu dress exhibit the *yōga* painter's internalization of European modernist paintings of women performing in oriental dress by making ambiguous the national

body of the model but stressing the cultural identity of the Manchu costume, Itō's deco-style *nihonga* of colonial pin-ups indicates overflowing meanings for the Chinese-Manchurian female bodies, from the classical *bijin* to the New Woman, superimposing “anxieties associated with modernity and the modern nation” in Japan's imperial quest vis-à-vis Chinese nationalism.⁷⁵ In Japan, another female archetype called the “Modern Girl” appeared as an advocator of female subjectivity and as a transgressor of societal expectations in the early 1920s; according to Miriam Silverberg, this archetype was already perceived as a threat to the nation and to the patriarchy.⁷⁶ Similar discourse and political conflict surrounded modern girls in mainland China in the 1920s. In the late 1920s, Japan, mainland China, and Manchuria each negotiated and reshaped ideological womanhood within the “cult of domesticity” and the education and family system in order to claim the validity of the regime.⁷⁷ The patriarchal cult of domesticity and the colonial desire for the gendered “Other” went hand in hand with the consumption of tourists' visual productions.

In fact, Dalian was developed as an odd and imbalanced urban space where the light and shade of modernity coexisted—for example, it was famous for dancehalls, bars, and café night culture, and it was simultaneously notorious for opium addiction, prostitution, and sexual disease for its residents and visitors.⁷⁸ While dancehalls and bars were served by Japanese waitresses (*jokyū*) and geisha, the local pleasure quarter, *ping kang li* (*heikōri*), was run by Chinese-

⁷⁵ Sarah E. Stevens, “Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China.” *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2003): 82.

⁷⁶ Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant: (Movement on the Streets),” in *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (University of California Press, 2006), 51-72.

⁷⁷ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 153.

⁷⁸ See Yoko Hayashi, “Man'shūnipponi miru odoru on'na man'shūkoku ken'kokuto modan'gāru [‘Dancing Woman’ as seen in the Manchuria Daily, Foundation of Manchukuo and Modern Girls],” in *Onnatachi no Manshū: taminzoku kūkan o ikite* [Women live in Manchuria—Multiethnic space], Edited by Michiko Ikuta (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 2015); Norman Smith, *Intoxicating Manchuria Alcohol, Opium, and Culture in China's Northeast* (Vancouver : UBC Press, 2012).

Manchurian prostitutes. In the popular media of Manchuria, such as newspaper and magazine illustrations, waitresses tended to be portrayed as intoxicated modern girls (Figure 1.27), and Chinese prostitutes were often depicted as an inhumane, barbaric, and unhygienic sexual spectacle (Figure 1.28). Despite the rather low female population in Manchuria, especially “ordinary” women in the Leased Territory, the SMRC’s tourist promotion disseminated this vision to project Manchuria as a space of encountering exotic beauties—yet they revealed the false imaginations that were out of touch with reality by antiquating and domesticating the image of China-Manchuria.

By the late 1920s, artists’ travel reportage throughout Manchuria had not been popularized, given the risk of safety due to battles between local warlord troops and the Japanese military, as well as bandit attacks. For example, visiting artist Nakazawa Hiromitsu, who went on a field sketch trip with Mayama, recalled the year 1929: “even visiting Xiongyue town in Yingkou for an SMRC-related painting excursion was not available without the Chinese local regime during the time when Zhang Xueliang’s power was still valid.”⁷⁹ Okumura’s criticism about the lack of authenticity in researching local lives from Itō’s poster series may reflect the difficult political circumstances in Manchuria. In the 1930s, until his sudden death in 1937 in Dalian, Itō collected a significant number of folk crafts, and his SMRC posters started incorporating indigenous themes in Manchuria with more deco and design aesthetics. For example, *Buryat Women Holding a Lamb* (1937, Figure 1.29) shows a forefront symmetric view of a young Mongolian tribal woman in formal attire, which became an iconic poster hung in tourist offices in Japan, as seen in the SMRC’s documentary film (Figure 1.30).

⁷⁹ Nakazawa Hiromitsu, “Shinryokuno omoide [recollection of fresh green],” *Kankō tōa* [Tourist Asia], September 1942, 42-42 as cited in En Ko, “Tourism Promotion by The South Manchuria Railway Company in the 1920s,” 177-178.

Imagining female archetypes and icons of occupied territories facilitated a compromise between the nationalism of the colonized and the imperialism of the colonizers that was mediated with female beauty, which was assisted by the idea of imperial high art and popular culture and the development of printing technology for mass production.⁸⁰ By commissioning two residential artists from Tokyo in the early phase of continental tourism, the SMRC introduced new aesthetics, productions, and practices of art in the Kwantung Province and the Railway Zone. As an essential vehicle of the SMRC's administrative policy, posters and magazine images propelled the stereotypical gendering of Manchuria as feminine and with an oriental backwardness, with modernity granted by the Japanese. Despite its superficiality, the early poster series suggest the ways in which railway imperialism maintained the acquired territories and people with a limited jurisdiction while pacifying the military turmoil for a peaceful, exotic, and beautiful land that appeals to both imperial tourists and occupied people. Within Edward Said's proposed term "imagined geographies," what was imagined about the racial and cultural others does not mean a false reality but is rather based on the socially constructed perception of space by colonial or imperial agencies.⁸¹ Discourse and imagination constructed through printed media for imperial tourist propaganda patronized and problematized Manchuria.

Manchuria Art Exhibitions (Manten), Dalian

As a home of frontiers to Manchuria, the SMRC sponsored various cultural and welfare events, including public art exhibitions in Dalian, as a part of municipal and institutional management in the Kwantung Leased Territory and the Railway Zone. While it is difficult to reconstruct the

⁸⁰ On the complexity of female images in occupied China, see Jeremy E. Taylor, *Iconographies of Occupation: Visual Cultures in Wang Jingwei's China, 1939-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021).

⁸¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Verso, 1978), 55.

deployment of art exhibitions in Dalian due to the scarcity of historical documents, some vestiges of small and mid-sized art exhibitions claimed as “the Manchuria Art Exhibition” (*Manshū bijutsu tenrankai*; “Manten”) are found in the SMRC’s bulletins, newspapers, and artists’ retrospectives in the 1920s and early 1930s.⁸² Proudly named the “Manten,” these attempts to establish a state-level art exhibition in Manchuria reveal how the diasporic art community was set to rise in conjunction with the colonial campaign.

The term “Manten” usually refers to the Manchukuo Art Exhibition (*Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai*; “Manten” or “Kokuten”) held between 1937 and 1944 in Changchun (Xinjing), as the official division of the intra-imperial salon system.⁸³ Although there is little information, the earlier counterpart that was also called the Manten was placed in Dalian during a time when the SMRC enjoyed matchless bureaucratic and economic power and played a role in shaping Dalian as the capital of art in Manchuria before the Kwantung Army’s dominance in 1934. According to historian Emer O’Dwyer, Dalian evolved as a modern polity “equipped with a set of laws and civil procedures” that is comparable to the global standard of metropolitan cities, backed by the SMRC and the Dalian municipal government’s civilian commitments.⁸⁴ However, only Japanese residents and limited Chinese groups took advantage of civil governance in Dalian and the leasehold region; native art communities in the adjacent cities, which were already marginalized during and after the Qing dynasty, were endangered and some were even absorbed into the Fengtian Chinese art communities.⁸⁵

The Mantetsu Art Exhibition, 1922–1924

⁸² My study of Dalian’s art exhibitions is greatly indebted to Egawa Yoshihide, the chief curator of the Tokushima Modern Museum of Art. See Yoshihide Egawa, “kyūkanōshūni okeru tenrankai sēdo [Exhibition systems in the former Kwantung Leased Territory],” *Bulletin of Toyota Municipal Museum of Art* no.3 (2020):33-53.

⁸³ On the discussion of the Manchukuo Art Exhibition, see Chapter 2.

⁸⁴ O’Dwyer, 16, 127.

⁸⁵ On the working-class Chinese migrants or “Coolies” in Dalian, see Chapter 3.

In Itō Junzō's review of the First Manchurian Art Exhibition in Dalian in 1931, he briefly recalled that the first central exhibition sponsored by the SMRC—the Mantetsu Art Exhibition, also called the Manchuria Art Exhibition—was held in 1921, although there is no surviving archival evidence to verify the details.⁸⁶ This might be due to his own confusion, considering that he migrated to Manchuria in 1923 and started participating in the exhibition in the same year. According to art historian Egawa Yoshihide's chronological outline of art exhibitions in the Leased Territory, the SMRC's Social Affairs Division hosted a total of three art exhibitions in Dalian between 1923 and 1924.⁸⁷ The exhibition started with four sections: *Tōyōga* (oriental-style painting), *Yōga*, Sculpture, and Decorative Art and Antiques; later, the sections were reduced to only *Tōyōga* and *Yōga*. This section system is modeled after the metropole salon system, then referred to as the Teiten; yet, by adding antiques, the exhibition demonstrated Japanese interest in Chinese private collections of antiquity that were popular in the aesthetic consumption of the metropole middle class from the early 1920s.

One of the first-generation settler artists, *yōga* painter Mitsui Ryōtarō (1890–1937), initiated and managed the exhibition. He was, like Mayama Kōji, a former member of the White Horse Society and a student of Kuroda Seiki. In 1916, at the age of twenty-six, Mitsui migrated to Dalian and rented a studio at a Russian artist's residence, where he established the Dalian *Yōga* Study Society (*Dairen yōga kenkyūkai*) with four to five students; there, he continued a meager life as a freelance artist and teacher.⁸⁸ A year after Mayama's employment, Mitsui also joined the SMRC as a commissioned artist to teach *yōga* to interested Japanese residents. Organizing the SMRC-sponsored art exhibition might have been his first responsibility.

⁸⁶ Itō Junzō, "The Past and Future of Manten," *Mannō*, September 1931, 153.

⁸⁷ Yoshihide Egawa, "kyū kantōshūni okeru tenrankai sēdo."

⁸⁸ Yukata Fukui, *Manshūno yōgaka Mitsui Ryōtarō (1890-1937) nenpu* (Tokyo: Fukui Yukata, 2004), 5.

The first exhibition in February 1923, held at the Manchuria-Mongolia Cultural Association (*Manmō bunka kyōkai*) office, was screened by four jurors, including Mitsui and Mayama.⁸⁹ Among the total of 170 painting submissions across the Kwantung leasehold and Railway Zone cities, thirty-two *tōyōga* and fifty-three *yōga* were selected, and five sculptures and fifty-seven crafts and pieces of antiquity were exhibited.⁹⁰ For *nihonga* entries, the section name *Tōyōga* was applied, possibly out of awareness of the Joseon Art Exhibition started in 1922, the first colonial intra-imperial salon, which introduced the *Tōyōga* section. With the second exhibition in November 1923, the exhibitions toured in Fengtian at the local SMRC office and included Fengtian-based *yōga* artist Kawanami Hiroshi as a board member and juror. According to the list of awardees published in *Manchuria Daily*, female artists' participation stood out; the first prize from the *Tōyōga* section was granted to Andong-based unknown artist Adachi Yoshika's *Breeze* (*soyokaze*). Itō's *Tōyōga* submission was selected for the third prize. Interestingly, metropole painter Yorozu Tetsugorō (1885–1927) submitted his *yōga* painting for the exhibition, possibly as a friendly gesture for his White Horse friends Mayama and Itō.⁹¹ Although there were some issues during the preparation for the second exhibition, including the aftermath of the Kantō Earthquake and the conflict between Mitsui and the Dalian-based art group Meigensha, allegedly about the screening measurement, the exhibition achieved fair

⁸⁹ The Manchuria-Mongolia Cultural Association was established in Dalian City Hall in 1920 with former members of the Manchuria-Mongolia Study Society initiated in Lüshun in 1913. The association received a subsidiary from the Kwantung Government-General and the SMRC within the mission of Japanese development of Manchuria and reached a thousand members by 1920. By the 1920s, the association's influence proliferated with expanded membership: 1737 Japanese and 789 Chinese members in 1922 and a total of over 3000 in 1923. In 1926, the association changed its name to Sino-Japan Cultural Association (*chūnichi bunka kyōkai*) led by Luo Zhenyu. Until its disbanding in 1946, the association was dedicated to publication projects, local research, and workshops. See Hongmei Gao, *Tōhokubun kageppō to man'mō bunkakyōkai chūgokujin'no tainichininshikino shikakukara miru* [The Tohoku Cultural Monthly Report and the Manmō Cultural Association: Viewed from the perspective of Chinese perception of Japan], (Tokyo:Fuji Xerox Kobayashi Setaro Memorial Fund, 2008).

⁹⁰ "Hanani sakigakeshite man'shūde hajimeteno bijutsutenran [Manchuria's first art exhibition in full bloom]," *Manchuria Daily* Feb.23, 1923, as cited in Egawa "Kyū kantōshūni okeru tenrankai sēdo," 35.

⁹¹ Testugorō Yorozu, "Kikuzaka kenkyūshono omoide [memories on Kikuzaka group]," *Mizue* no.247 September 1925, 46, as cited in Egawa, 34.

success as a central salon in Japanese-Manchuria.⁹² One of the regional exhibitions, the Fushun Art Exhibition, designated “without screening” (*mukansa*) privilege to works that were prized in the Manten.

Perhaps due to arguments from the previous year about the eligibility of jurors, for the third exhibition in June 1924, the committee board attempted to invite the venerated metropole masters Fujishima Takeji and Komuro Suiun (1874–1945) to screen the *Yōga* and *Tōyōga* sections; they were on their way after traveling in Korea for jury service in the third Joseon Art Exhibition.⁹³ However, due to an unrevealed conflict with the organizers (presumably Mitsui and the Director of the SMRC’s Social Affairs Division), Komuro resigned from the position shortly after his arrival in Dalian. Also, due to a personal reason, Nagahara Kōtarō replaced Fujishima.⁹⁴ The SMRC’s elite researcher Nakao Manzō (1882–1936) became the chair of the screening board, and seven *yōga* and four *nihonga* artists, including Mitsui, Mayama, and Itō, as well as two critics joined the jury.⁹⁵ A total of around 30 *Tōyōga* and 130 *Yōga* submissions were received. Andong resident Adachi’s *nihonga* was again designated with the first prize (the Mantetsu Prize), yet no record or visual evidence remains to survey her work. For the *Yōga* section, Dalian resident Yamamichi Eisuke (1901–1977), a self-taught artist and an elementary school teacher who later joined the Independence Art Association (*Dokuritsu bijutsu kyōkai*), received the same prize for his *Spring in Suburban* (*kōgaino haru*).⁹⁶

Few visual records of these exhibitions survived. One exception, Mayama Kōji’s Third Exhibition poster (Figure 1.31), illustrates a semi-nude Greek goddess under grapevines, evoking

⁹² Egawa Yoshihide, “Kyū kantōshūni okeru tenrankai sēdo,” 34-35.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “Komuro Suiun'shini atau [Regarding Mr. Suiun Komuro],” *Manchuria Daily*, June 8, 1924.

⁹⁵ “Manten iinkaobureiinchōniwa Nakao Manzō [Manzō Nakao is the chairman of the exhibition committee],” *Manchuria Daily*, May 8, 1924.

⁹⁶ *Manshū geidanno hitobito*, 56.

the metropole's nouveau and deco advertisement designs and modern mural paintings popularized in the 1920s and 1930s. While the poster's employment of a Greco-Roman antiquity motif has nothing to do with any popular imaginations of Manchuria—it presumably depicts Ariadne, who is often interpreted as the mother of grapes—it might be associated with meanings of abundance and festivity. Signifying an imaginary connection between two remote continents within the mixed ideas of antiquity and modern chic, Mayama's poster reflects the attempt of the imperial frontier to construct the cosmopolitan settler's identity, the railway company, and the art circles in the onset of the New World (*shin tenchi*).

There were only three such exhibitions. Although the exhibitions initiated the first central salon that received entries from the Kwantung leasehold and the Railway Zone cities and shaped the art communities in Manchuria, the range of operation was limited only to Japanese settlers. The suspension of the SMRC's annual exhibitions may be attributed to imperial agencies' all-out investments and efforts to prepare for the Dalian Industrial Exposition in 1925, an art pavilion plan that significantly underscored Japanese and Chinese cultural friendship and Japanese buying opportunities for Chinese antiquities through a joint exhibition of both classical and contemporary ceramics, calligraphy, and paintings.⁹⁷ Commemorating the tenth anniversary of the enforcement of Dalian's municipal administration, and within an effort to encourage Chinese investment that had shrunk with the anti-Japanese sentiment after the May Thirteenth Incident in Shanghai, the 1925 exposition was displayed in all prefectures and many industrial corporations of Japan and exhibition halls in Taiwan and Korea, succeeding with over 700,000 paid visitors.

⁹⁷ Antique ceramics were significantly highlighted in the art pavilion by the involvement of Dalian Japanese businessmen and high-profile figures including Ōmura Seigai (1868–1927) and Prince Gong Aisin-gioro Puwei (1880–1936). See Yi-xuan Guo, “1920nendaino nichūbijutsukōryūno ichimen dairen' kanyō hakurankaino chūgokubijutsutenjio meguru [A Scene of 1920s' Sino-Japanese Art Exchanges: Chinese art displaying in Dalian Industry Exposition], *Iroha: Asian Modern Art Research Bulletin*, no.3 (2018):30-35.

The Manchuria Artist Association Exhibition, 1929

The year 1929 marks a momentous occasion in academic art scenes, both in Republican China and for the Kwantung government in Manchuria. The first National Fine Art Exhibition of China was held in Shanghai in April 1929, and the first Manchuria Artist Association Exhibition (*Manshū Bijutsuga Kyōkai Tenrankai*) in Dalian followed a month later as the first state-wide art exhibition that called for submissions from all cities and towns in Manchuria. For both events, Japanese artists and administrators played a significant role in implementing the Japanese institutional model of modern art in different contexts regarding mainland China and Manchuria.

The Manchuria Artist Association Exhibition, also referred to as the Manchuria Art Exhibition (“Manten”), was initiated to boost “the unification of all Manchurian artists” and also aimed “to be equivalent to Jeseon and Taiwan’s art exhibitions.”⁹⁸ The exhibition is an intriguing juxtaposition against its counterparts in Shanghai and the intra-imperial salons. The first exhibition was held for five days at the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Dalian, with the same three categories as the Teiten system: *Nihonga*, *Yōga*, and Sculpture. Replacing the section name *Tōyōga* that was used in the 1923 and 1924 SMRC exhibitions, *Nihonga* was set again as the term for traditional-style paintings in Japanese-Manchuria. Given that there were only a little over one hundred total submissions, the exhibition might have been prepared within a short amount of time.

The exhibition featured both middle-career academic modernists and young avant-garde artists. Artist and critic Asaeda Jirō (1888–1967), in a review of *Yōga* at the first exhibition, provided the names of representative participants, including Mayama Kōji, Kawanami Hiroshi,

⁹⁸ “Manshū bijutsuga kyōkaino dai ikkai tenrankai kuru nijūyonka mitsukoshinite [The first exhibition of the Manchuria Artists Association is coming in Mitsukoshi on the 24th],” *Manchuria Daily*, May 18, 1929; “Manshū bijutsu tenrankai [Manchuria Art Exhibition],” *Manchuria Daily*, May 23, 1929.

Hirashima Makoto (1879–1956), Sakaino Kazuyuki (1900–1989), Kawaguchi Shirō (1908–1992), Yamashiro Takeji, Ōkubo Masaru, Satō Isao, Ichimura Tsutao, and Taniyama Kiyoshi. Considering Taniyama Kiyosei’s *Still Life with Goldfish* (Figure 1.32), selected from the exhibition, it can be assumed that Cézannist and Matissien modernist academic styles were favorably practiced in Manchuria. While the black and white newspaper print hardly conveys the details of the image, some pictorial elements allow us to recognize the style of painting: flattened forms, busy focal points, bold and choppy brushwork, and roughly rendered outlines for the objects. Although images are not provided, the titles of other selectees, such as *Still life with Russian Dolls* (Satō), *A Snowy Day* (Ōkubo), *A Russian Girl* (Mayama), and *Forest and a Doll* (Kawanami), also conjure up exotic romanticism and European inspiration as the overview of the exhibition.

Asaeda Jirō, who later moved to Xinjing and served state art projects in Manchukuo, was one of the most active and influential critics in Manchuria’s art scene.⁹⁹ His exhibition reviews and essays provide important evidence for how Dalian art circles grew rapidly and facilitated a liberal environment that was friendly to the avant-garde. He was one of the artists who left Tokyo after the earthquake to pursue a “pure” and “spiritual” form of art. Based on their involvement in the leftist avant-garde art movement in Tokyo, Itō Junzō and Asaeda migrated to Dalian at the same time and were closely associated until Itō’s death; a photograph taken on New Year’s Day in 1930 with two artists at the Dalian Shinto Shrine displays the life of the Japanese

⁹⁹ Before he relocated to Manchuria, Asaeda started his career as an art critic in Tokyo by writing for magazines including *Gendai no Yōga* (Graphic Oil Painting Now) and *Mizue* (Watercolor Painting) from 1913 and closely associated with avant-garde artists Yanase Masamu, Maruyama Tomoyoshi, and Kitayama Seitarō. Art historian Omuka Toshiharu’s research suggests that Asaeda left for Dalian in the midst of the political turmoil after the Great Kanto Earthquake, possibly as he had a friendly association with anarchist Ōsugi Sakae who is known for being murdered by Amakasu Masahiko. See Toshiharu Omuka, “Art Magazine Readers and their Network with Yanase Masamu [*bijutsuzasshi dokusha nettowākuno nakano Yanase Masamu*],” in *Kan’shūno sēritsu* [The Establishment of the Public] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2008), 205-207.

community in Dalian (Figure 1.33). Regarding Japanese avant-garde group Mavo's 1923 exhibition, he left an unfavorable review of the photomontage and assemblage of ready-mades as lacking "meanings" and "emotions."¹⁰⁰ As one of the leading critics of the reformation of Japanese art (*isshin geijutsu undō*), he envisioned expression and spirit rather than formalist avant-garde aestheticism. While witnessing the rapid development of the Dalian art sphere, he was concerned about how the exhibition leaned on ordinary academism and encouraged artists' modernist like-mindedness.¹⁰¹ Regarding the outcome of the 1929 exhibition, he stated: "since several years ago, the buds of art in Manchuria have bloomed through some exhibitions. Compared to them, this exhibition is not necessarily superior; nonetheless, I found that there is an overall change, which is the expanded desire to study and an effort to pursue cerebral expressions rather than mere conceptual formality [...]."¹⁰² Asaeda further underscored the development of the future state exhibition system and encouraged young artists and middle-career artists to immerse themselves in expressions of Manchurian local character.

The second exhibition was held in May 1930 at the Dalian Chamber of Commerce Hall, which was the last exhibition. There is little evidence left to explain why this exhibition ended after the second show, but the municipal administration likely decided to reorganize and rebrand the central art exhibition amid the political conflict between the Japanese and Chinese regimes in Manchuria. After the bomb attack that killed Zhang Zuolin in June 1928, known as the Huanggutun Incident, Manchuria's political geography was changed in favor of Japanese militarism. Although Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001) succeeded the Fengtian clique after his father, at the end of the same year, he announced that he was replacing his banner of the Beiyang

¹⁰⁰ Jirō Asaeda, "Mavo tenrankai o hyōsu," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 2, 1923.

¹⁰¹ "Manten no seigahyo," *Manchuria Daily*, May 27, 1929

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Government with the flag of the Kuomintang, which marked the end of the Northern Expedition period and the reunification of the Republic of China. This three-year period between the unification of Republican China and the Manchuria Incident in 1931 witnessed both militaristic tension and anxiety in international diplomacy and cordial cultural exchanges between the Chinese and the Japanese in cultural and business sectors. The 1929 National Fine Art Exhibition in Shanghai and a series of China–Japan joint exhibitions for traditional and modern paintings throughout the 1920s were the result of mutual interests.

The 1929 National Fine Art Exhibition of China provides an excellent example of the imbrication of Japan’s precautious cultural diplomacy vis-à-vis China and China’s fervor for cultural management by employing the Japanese in provisioning the exhibition for the nation’s modernization project.¹⁰³ In this exhibition, despite the years-long foundational efforts of *nihonga* artists in building acquaintances with Chinese artists and elites in the 1920s, only Japanese *yōga* submissions from the national institution and mainstream private art societies were featured, whereas *nihonga* was excluded.¹⁰⁴ Japanese oil paintings were carefully selected by the Chinese organizers as a “reference” role, providing an opportunity to learn from masterpieces and up-to-date works that embody Asiatic modernism; according to art historian Julia Andrews, the two nations’ mutual respect in this process challenges our conventional historical knowledge about antagonism amid Sino-Japanese militaristic confrontations.¹⁰⁵ This might be seen as an example of Japan’s skillful diplomatic strategy and cultural sensitivity,

¹⁰³ See Julia Andrews, “Japanese Oil Paintings in the First Chinese National Fine Arts Exhibition of 1929 and the Development of Asian Modernism,” in *Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ Along with the Imperial Art Academy (Teikoku bijutsuin), the Second Division Society (Nikakai), the Spring Sun Society (Shun’yōkai), and the National Painting Society (Kokugakai) were emphasized; *ibid.*, 191-192.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

playing with the notion of authenticity in traditional Asiatic art and demonstrating Japan's role as a leader of artistic modernity through oil paintings.¹⁰⁶

In comparison with the 1929 Shanghai exhibition, Dalian's Manten in the same year demonstrates a confident Japanese voice claiming the colonial ownership and cosmopolitan development of Dalian and southern Manchuria. Although the exhibition aimed to be a colonial exhibition *par excellence*, rivaling those of Korea or Taiwan, the exhibition category system emulated the metropole's imperial exhibition model and designated *Nihonga* rather than *Tōyōga*. The participation of local Chinese artists and audiences were neglected. It is also notable that female nude and Chinese historical-themed paintings—the most prominent academic painting genre—emphasized in Japanese *yōga* selections in the 1929 Shanghai exhibition were not found as much in the Manchurian counterpart.

Equipping a state-sponsored art exhibition came to be considered as a yardstick of a nation's level of modernity. For example, a critic evaluating the Chinese art scene of 1928 proudly stated in the *Shenbao* (*Shanghai News*) that “unlike the era of warlords, the Republican government has started paying more attention to the arts.”¹⁰⁷ As the Northeast branch of the Kuomintang was founded in 1929 by Zhang Xueliang, who proceeded with the anti-Japanese movement in the region, the Japanese side desired to install a more organized state-level art exhibition system as part of its imperial campaigns.

The Manchuria Art Exhibition, 1931–1932

About a month after the Manchurian Incident, the Manchuria Art Exhibition (*Manshū bijutsu tenrankai*), also referred to as the “Manten,” was held at the Dalian Chamber of

¹⁰⁶ Yongchul Kim, “Mingukki jungguge jongungmisuljolramhwe solchiwa ilbon [Installation of the National Art Exhibition of Republican China and role of Japan], *Journal of Korean modern and contemporary art history*, no.23 (2013):301.

¹⁰⁷ *Shenbao*, January 25, 1929, 5.

Commerce Hall under the joint auspices of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association (*Chūnichi bunka kyōkai*), formerly the Manchuria-Mongolia Cultural Association, and the SMRC's local department. Launched as an annual autumn salon, the exhibition accepted entries from all over Manchuria and also encouraged Chinese submissions, with the mission of discovering young artists and hidden masters and of raising the reputation of the Manchurian art scene as part of the intra-imperial salons.¹⁰⁸ During the five-day event, the exhibition achieved about 4,000 visitors, a considerably great success compared to the previous exhibitions.¹⁰⁹ The exhibition adopted three sections, *Nihonga*, *Yōga*, and Chinese paintings (*Chūgokuga*); the entries were sent from Dalian, Lüshun, Fengtian, Anshan, Fushun, Changchun, Harbin, and Andong, with a total of 85 *nihonga*, 242 *yōga*, and 15 Chinese paintings.¹¹⁰ Two photographs that capture the *Nihonga* and *Yōga* gallery spaces provide a glimpse into how the exhibition plan was created. While multiple dividers were installed in the *Nihonga* gallery (Figure 1.34) for many larger scroll paintings, the *Yōga* gallery (Figure 1.35) used a salon-style display for the majority of the smaller paintings.

The board members and the screening process became more organized. Ten Special Advisory Committees with the “without screening” privilege were selected out of thirty-four board members; except for five artists from Fengtian, Changchun, Andong, and Harbin, all the board members were from Dalian-Lüshun. Adopting the metropole salon system, the exhibition promised artists who won the Special Selections (*tokusen*) the “without screening” benefit for the following year. The exhibition seemed to put greater emphasis on *yōga* than *nihonga*, as only two *nihonga* received the Special Selections from the first exhibition. Also, the unsatisfactory number of Chinese entries reveals the lack of communication throughout the formation of

¹⁰⁸ *Manshū nenkan* [Annual Report of Manchuria] (Dalian: Manchuria Daily Publish, 1931), 472.

¹⁰⁹ Nakiamizo-sei, “Manten no owaride [after the Manten],” *Manmō*, December 1931, 159.

¹¹⁰ While Manchuria Daily counted the submission as 89, 243, and 42, Nakamizo introduced the number as 41, 165, and 15. I follow the record from the Annual Report of Manchuria. See *Manshū nenkan*, 1931, 472-473.

Japanese art exhibitions in Dalian with local Chinese art communities, as well as the alleged antagonism from the Manchurian Incident.

The SMRC's bulletin magazine *Manmō* reproduced a total of twenty-six selected *nihonga* and *yōga* works from the exhibition and covered critiques, exhibition reviews, and artists' statements. Members of the Dalian art world enthusiastically corresponded with one another. Among them, the overall evaluation of the *Nihonga* section was punitive. Dalian-based *nihonga* artist Kōno Seito criticized the deficiency of Manchurian's local character, stylistic mannerism, decorativeness, and compositional inefficiency across the *nihonga* selections.¹¹¹ Sinophile art enthusiast and collector Nagahara Oriji (1893–1979) also provided a detailed but unfavorable critique of the *nihonga* submissions. He pointed out the general lack of aesthetic spirit and “state of feeling” (*kokoromochi*) and denounced artists' mere pursuit of demonstrating technical skills.¹¹² Critical reviews were given to some of the Special Advisory Committees' works; for example, for Itō Junzō's *Child and a Horse* (Figure 1.34), a metaphor for Japan's imperial campaign of Manchuria-Mongolia through illustrating a Mongolian maiden's attending a Manchu child's horse-riding, Nagahara attacked it as his repetitive affinity in “decorative art” (*sōshokuhin*).¹¹³ He criticized Kuwayama Tessū's (1904–1991) *Blast* (Figure 1.37), with its seemingly militaristic rhetoric of *kamikaze* in portraying a Manchurian wild horse within a dynamic cut-out composition, for being academic “exhibition-hall art” (*kaijō geijutsu*).¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Kōno Seito, “Kenkyuteki ni mite,” *Manmō*, December 1931, 159-160.

¹¹² *Manmō*, December 1931, 145-149.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹¹⁴ In the course of the 1920s and 30s in Japan, in both *nihonga* and *yōga* art scene, the notion of the panoramic “exhibition-hall art (*kaijō geijutsu*)” and small and intimate “tabletop art (*takushō geijutsu*)” countered each other. In the *nihonga* field, Kawabata Ryūshi's Blue Dragon Society pursued a big scaled, panoramic and propagandistic *nihonga* for public exhibitions became acclaimed as Japan's war footing became immense in the late 1930s, while the style was largely attacked by many artists. On Kawabata's manifestation of “exhibition-hall art (*kaijō geijutsu*),” see Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, “Japanese War Paint: Kawabata Ryūshi and the Emptying of the Modern,” *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 76-90; *Ibid.*, 147.

Regarding the two Special Selection *nihonga* paintings, a landscape painting *Chinese Village* (Figure 1.38) by Ishida Shigeru and *Midsummer* (Figure 1.39) by a female artist Kimoto Yae, Nagahara described the paintings as having “no vitality and depth” and a “lack of inner beauty,” and he stated that “the painting should have been drawn with the artist’s inner eyes.”¹¹⁵ For Kimoto’s *bijinga*, Nagahara suggested studying Kobayashi Kokei’s (1883–1957) *Hair* (1931, Figure 1.40) as a reference, which was exhibited in the Japan Art Institution Exhibition (*Nihon Bijutsuin tenrankai*) in April of the same year. Considered the an example of *shin-nihonga* (literally meaning new *nihonga*) *par excellence*, Kobayashi’s painting of two women in a toilette scene combines the thematic tradition of Gu Kaizi’s (ca. 345–406) *Admonitions Scroll* with the Impressionists’ semi-nude toilette scenes, and it also provides a plastic aesthetics reconciling *yamato-e* and *ukiyo-e*.¹¹⁶ Nagahara further acclaimed Qing painter and calligrapher Jin Nong (Jin Dongxi, 1687–1764), who had a reputation for his nonconformist styles based on amateur-scholarly brushwork, as an example that *nihonga* painters in Manchuria should learn from in order to cultivate the mind rather than mere decorative beauty.¹¹⁷

The Special Advisory Committees, in contrast, validated the meaning of the exhibition and their colleagues’ works. For instance, Kuwayama Tessū paid homage to Itō’s *Child and Horse*, which contributed to the development of Manchuria’s unique painting practice of decorative art.¹¹⁸ Fukuda Yoshinosuke (1890–1959), a multiple-time selectee from the metropole salon *Bunten* and *Teiten* and the founder of the Manchuria *Yōga* Research Society in Dalian established in 1930, publicized his pride as a founding committee of the exhibition, especially in

¹¹⁵ *Manmō*, December 1931, 145-147.

¹¹⁶ Shane McCausland, “Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi: A Japanese Copy of a Chinese Painting in the British Museum,” *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 4 (2005): 688-713; 707.

¹¹⁷ See James Cahill, *Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China* (Columbia University Press, 1995).

¹¹⁸ Tessū Kuwayama, “shokan no ichibu,” *Manmō*, December 1931, 156.

the peculiar political circumstance.¹¹⁹ He also praised Itō's *Child and Horse* for its polished decorative quality, Kuwayama's powerful brushwork on the horse, and Special Selectee Ishida's *Chinese Village* as "saturated in local color (*rōkaru karā*)."¹²⁰ Meanwhile, Itō celebrated the exhibition's cordial invitation for Chinese artists despite the aggravated Sino-Japanese relationship, stating that "in the perspective that there is no border in art, we connect our warm heart to heart for Sino-Japanese friendship through art as artistic ambassadors [...]."¹²¹

Despite Itō's statement, the exhibition was, especially in the *nihonga* selections, tied to the impulse of imperial assimilation, featuring the Japan-centric world in Manchuria. Although Chinese paintings received the "without screening" benefit due to the limited number of submissions, no single entry was introduced in the *Manmō*'s special edition or elsewhere. The division of the two traditional painting genres based on national identity, *nihonga* and *chūgokuga*, implies how national, cultural, and ethnic differences were highlighted during the political turmoil when Japanese forces were taking control of the warlord regimes. Along with the rich imperial rhetoric seen in the paintings of Itō and Kuwayama, Kimoto's work inherited the conventional kimono-clad *bijin* yet signified a problematic locus of colonial capitalism and gender, reminiscent of Kyoto female *nihonga* master Uemura Shōen's (1875–1949) *bijin* as the index of imperial perfection. The young woman's refined *furisode* kimono in Kimoto's work indicates she is a daughter of a Japanese landowner in Manchuria, and the *kaoliang* (sorghum) crops in the background represent one of the four principal agricultural industries of Manchuria (soybeans, sorghum, millet, and corn). While the painting represents middle-class Japanese

¹¹⁹ Yoshinosuke Fukuda, "shokan oyobi yōgabuni aete [On my impression and the Yōga section]," *Manmō*, Dec. 1931, 151-152.

¹²⁰ For the discussion of "local color," see Chapter Three.

¹²¹ Junzō Itō, "Manten no kakoto shōrai [The Past and Present of the Manten]," *Manmō*, December 1931, 153.

resident identity in Manchuria, the language of colonial encroachment is diluted by docile female beauty.

In the *Yōga* section, cosmopolitan and Parisian imaginations were projected by young artists who were influenced by the metropole's modernist art societies, including the Nika-kai (the Second Section Society). Fukuda Yoshinosuke's *Ruined Castle in Southern Europe* (Figure 1.41) illustrates a landscape of southern France, which he visited in 1929, in a post-impressionistic style. Fujiyama Kazuo's (1889–1975) *Memories of Jerusalem* (Figure 1.42) portrays a holy family in a grassland beyond the walled city.¹²² Both artists assigned to the Special Advisory Committee at the 1931 *Manten* expressed their close contact with Europe in their themes and styles. By acclaiming Fukuda's *yōga* as the “international *nanga*” (literary painting) that courageously incorporated oriental paintings' brushwork and ink wash techniques into oil painting, Fujiyama juxtaposed the beauty of European neo-classicism and impressionism with Japanese aesthetics:

The ideology of our time made the modern European art scene a monster's nest. While visiting the Salon d'Automne in Paris last year, I could not but realize this more than anything. I was finally able to enjoy the true power of art by encountering a small piece of Corot that was still shining in the Louvre. The beauty of warships or locomotives is inherited only in proportion to the needs. [...] That's why Byōdō-in temple in Uji is by no means inferior to skyscrapers that symbolize New York, such as the Empire State Building.¹²³

¹²² Fujiyama Kazuo, often considered the father of postwar national museum system in East Asia, was born in Yamaguchi prefecture and graduated Tokyo University. After spending several years in Dalian, he moved to Changchun and became a vice president of the Manchukuo National Museum. While his career was turning to the state administrator of art and culture, he expressed his identity as an artist by actively participating in “*Manten*” exhibitions. See Yasuhiro Inuzuka, *Fujiyama Kazuo no hakubutsukan' gējutsu manshūkoku kokuritsu chūōhakubutsukan fukukanchōno yume* [Kazuo Fujiyama's Museum Aesthetics: Dream of Deputy Director of Manchuria National Museum] (Tokyo: Kyōdō bunkasha, 2016).

¹²³ Fujimaya Kazuo, “Watashino kotoba [My comment],” *Manmō*, December 1931, 157.

Similarly, the internalization of bohemian enthusiasm for exploring suburban leisure is observed in Kurushima Yū's Special Selection work *Hoshigaura* (Figure 1.43), depicting the famous beach town where SMRC's Yamato Hotel Hoshigaura Resort (opened in 1909) was located. The SMRC's tourist postcard featuring Yamato Hotel Hoshigaura (Figure 1.44) is an amalgamation of Japanese imaginations regarding this suburban town in Dalian, with the timeless residue and nostalgic fantasy of the Qing dynasty, Chinese coolies, and the Victorian red bricks of the hotel with the Japanese flag waving in the air. In *Hoshigaura*, the subtle dilution of Japanese national identity and a sense of generic European sentiment are expressed by removing the Japanese flag from the top and focusing on the architecture nestled in the bucolic landscape. This composition draws an interesting comparison to the metropole master Kishida Ryūsei's (1891–1929) *Dalian Hoshigaura* (1929, Figure 1.45), which he finished during his journey to Korea and Manchuria only several months before his death, with the sponsorship of the SMRC. The imperial traveler's impression of a resort town in Dalian is nothing more than a barren and underdeveloped countryside. Kishida's other surviving work, *The Garden in the SMRC Presidents' Villa* (1929, Figure 1.46), might suggest a metropole artist's privileged position, with close access to high-profile colonial administrators. A distinctive response to colonial social space and unequal imperial hegemony was shared among settler communities that differed from that of metropole visitors.

On his return to Japan, Asaeda Jirō provided a nuanced critique of the *Yōga* section. While professing that he would no longer belong to Manchuria's art circle when the review was published, Asaeda pointed out his personal dissatisfaction and problems with the exhibition and the Dalian art scene. He criticized Manchurian art circles' dependence on landscapes and still life paintings rather than engaging with portraits and the study of human figures, which he

considered to be essential for reaching the higher stage of art, likely based on the hierarchy of painting genres in European salon; he criticized the lack of professional models and study infrastructure in Manchuria.¹²⁴ He suggested that the exhibition should accept submissions from metropole artists, especially those who once traveled in Manchuria, noting that he could come up with multiple eligible friends currently staying in France and Tokyo who could elevate the Dalian art scene with the most up-to-date European trends.¹²⁵ In addition to underscoring the globalism in art, Asaeda concluded his assessment:

It is foolish to look for French-like subjects in Manchuria and create paintings emulating them. It can be tempting for young artists to paint following what they admire, but it is regrettable that they often overlook the subject that is truly related to their environment. A painter once told me that the natural features of the Liaodong Peninsula are as abundant as those of southern France. Compared to the pitiful scenery for painters in the metropole's art scene, who are surrounded by barrack-style architecture and kimonos, painters living in Manchuria could brag about how privileged they are to enjoy tranquil Chinese houses and beautiful Chinese clothes, suitable for oil paintings.¹²⁶

Asaeda's statement demonstrates paradoxical ideas about artistic modernity and settler identity that were negotiated by settlers in the conquered territory. He criticized the mere imitation of European themes and subjects that were prevalent in the Dalian *yōga* scene. Yet, his suggestion of inviting Japanese metropole artists with European experience and taking advantage of local Chinese customs as a source of novel creation for *yōga* corresponded to his internalization of European modernists' sense of superiority in seeking the romantic premodern, inferior, and exotic spectacle. For Asaeda, who decided to return to Tokyo in 1931 (although he came back and settled in Xinjing around 1934), the Dalian art scene looked immature, and he found his artistic identity in connection with the metropole. The troubled ideas of Chinese "local

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Jirō Asaeda, "Yōgabū man'pyō [criticism on the Yōga section]," *Manmō*, December 1931, 153-4.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

color” (see chapter 3) and Westernization intersected and were inconsistently defined in dealing with colonized subjects and their territories by Dalian’s imperial frontiers.

The Second Manten was held in October and November 1932. The newly organized Manchukuo Ministry of Education (*Bunkyoibu*) sponsored the exhibitions, held in the three cities of Dalian, Fengtian, and Xinjing. While the details and visual records of the second exhibition have not remained, it achieved 314 *Yōga* and 89 *Tōyōga* submissions.¹²⁷ An article about the exhibition written in *Manmō* reveals another revision of the name of the painting category from *Nihonga* to *Tōyōga*. Also, rather than referring to “Chinese painting,” it mentions that five *Manshūga* (Manchurian paintings) were received, likely being conscious about the establishment of the state of Manchukuo in March 1932. This transient and arbitrary nomenclature system in organizing art exhibitions, which echoes Japan’s development of the academic discipline of art history concerning the nation, national identity, and Asia in relation to the West and Japan’s outer territories ever since the Meiji period, continued in Japan’s new imperial state-making project in Manchuria.¹²⁸ How the discourse of *tōyo* (orient) and *tōyōga* was constructed and consciously applied in Manchuria will be discussed in the following chapters.

The Manten in Dalian ceased after the second exhibition. As the sponsor, the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association, was reorganized as the Japan-Manchukuo Cultural Association (*Nichiman bunka kyōkai*) and relocated to Xinjing, the third exhibition was canceled and replaced by the Manchuria Art Coterie Exhibition (*Manchū bijutsu dōjinkai tenrankai*) held in Xinjing in October 1933.¹²⁹ There was acute resistance from Dalian artists against the state’s

¹²⁷ “Kyōkaikiji dai nikai manshū bijutsu tenrankai [Association Article on the second Manchuria Art Exhibition],” *Manmō*, December 1932, 176.

¹²⁸ Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: the Politics of Beauty* (Getty Research Institute, 2011), 67;154-157;176-180.

¹²⁹ “Akashini megumu akino saron dairen bijutsu tenrankai bijutsu aikōkani yori raigetsumatsuni kaisaisaru [Autumn Salon Dalian Art Exhibition to be held at the end of next month by art lovers],” *Manchuria Daily*, October 13, 1933.

plan to transfer the central power and market privileges of Dalian to the new capital. Soon after, the Dalian Art Coterie (*Dairen bijutsu dōjinkai*) was organized in response to the alleged estrangement of the Dalian art community in favor of the new capital city. The Dalian Art Exhibition (*Dairen bijutsu tenrankai*) was held in November 1933 in strong solidarity with Dalian-based art circles, including the Five-Fruit Society (*Gokakai*), the Yellow Dust Society (*Kōjinsha*), the White Rainbow Society (*Hakkōkai*), and the Association of Commercial Art (*Shōgyō bijutsu kyōkai*); it received a total of 30 *tōyōga* and 175 *yōga* submissions.¹³⁰ Art journalist Kōno Sō, who later organized the Dalian Avant-Garde Artist Club in 1937, reviewed the exhibition in the *Manchuria Daily*, extolling the intersection of two aesthetics between an academic style based on classical paintings and an anti-academic modernity as matured in the exhibition.¹³¹ Although this exhibition was replaced again by other mid-sized local exhibitions throughout Manchukuo, such as the Manchuria Artists Association Exhibitions between 1934 and 1936 and the Manchuria Artists Federation Exhibition between 1936 and 1937, with multiple initiations and disbandings, Dalian never restored its former leadership as an organizer of state-sized art exhibitions.

The 1932 Diplomatic Record from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan reveals the unpleasant relationship between the Dalian settler community and the Kwantung Army.¹³² Not long after the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, there was a discussion on the opening of a new official state salon exhibition using the existing experience and infrastructure in Dalian. However, the Kwantung Army annulled the plan, attributing it as a premature time for holding

¹³⁰ “Dairen bijutsuten nijūsannichiwa shōtaibi nijūyokkakara ippan kōkai [The Dalian Art Exhibition will be open to the public from the 24th of the invitation date],” *Manchuria Daily*, November 22, 1933.

¹³¹ Sō Kōno, “Dairen bijutsu tenrankai ba-zu ai [Bird Eye view on Dalian Art Exhibition],” *Manchuria Daily*, November 26, 1933.

¹³² Diplomatic Record Office, “Round Table Conference of Manchurian cultural project by Persons Concerned to Japan and Manchukuo, November 1932,” Ref. B05015212100, 243-234.

such an important cultural event that might disturb Chinese sentiments. In the following year, the Kwantung Army quickly agreed to initiate the Manchukuo Art Coterie Academy in Xinjing toward the Manchuria-Japanese Joint Art Exhibition in 1934. This gives a glimpse into how Dalian's art community became disenfranchised.

The *Manten* in Dalian was deployed along with different imperial aspirations on the side of settler communities during the era of the Kwantung leasehold and the Railway Zone leadership: imperialism, nationalism, and provincialism. Artists who worked for the SMRC's tourist publications and research projects, such as Itō, Kuwayama, and Yamashiro, further engaged in constructing imaginations of Manchuria through art exhibitions. The strong imperial nationalistic rhetoric in many *nihonga* works, which also became the object of criticism, demonstrates how the SMRC played a role as a cultural institution and provided social sites for settler artists during this time. In contrast, *yōga* artists were more inclined to maintain their cosmopolitan ambiguity and artistic autonomy through practices of romantic escapism that impersonated European modernists and anti-mainstream training. Artists in Dalian tended to engage with the metropole's painting tradition and networks and depended on educational lineage for the sake of their social status in the settlers' community. The solidarity shaped through the hardships of Dalian and the SMRC also emphasized provincial identities within the consciousness of imperial citizens among the artists. The superficial representations of Manchurian local character and the negligence of non-Japanese participation in the *Manten* may demonstrate Japanese exclusivity and the hierarchal colonial development of the Liaodong Peninsula under railway imperialism.

In sum, there was no single impulse for the artists who orchestrated the colonial art sphere in Dalian and the Liaodong peninsula. Dalian grew as the center of Japan's continental

cultural policy in Manchuria during informal imperialism by rivaling the Fengtian Government and seeking economic advantages from cultural business with the Chinese. According to historian Robert Perrins, Chinese merchants and elites had strong competition with foreigners before 1931, and Japan's expansion campaign was never in a one-way direction.¹³³ Mark Peattie described Japanese settlers in Manchuria as "seeking greater social and economic opportunities [...] as members of an ambitious, profit-seeking, and generally privileged class."¹³⁴ Artists residing in Manchuria's earliest urban city played the role of colonial broker for Japan's imperialism and at the same time created a unique settler identity. Artistic and social ambitions and imaginations toward the "Asiatic Paris" aligned with the expansionist goals of the SMRC through its massive investment for tourist propaganda and cultural events, as well as economic growth in the era of competition with the Chinese and other foreign powers. While artists showed a level of dependency on the metropole's advanced artistic modernity and reputation to provide authority to their salon system as a legitimate counterpart of colonial exhibitions, there was a growing desire for self-differentiation from the metropole through the artistic manipulation of the space and imaginations of the conquered territories. While tourist posters introduced a popular imagination of Manchuria as racialized, antiquated, and gendered, the art exhibition demonstrated settler artists' self-location and boundary-making in addition to reflecting the shifting colonial politics concerning China. In total, Japanese settlers' efforts in contributing to tourist productions and the salon system in Manchuria were laid on intersecting yet colliding

¹³³ See Robert Perrin, *'Great Connections': The Creation of a City. Dalian. 1905- 1931. China and Japan on the Liaodong Peninsula*, (Toronto: York University, 1997).

¹³⁴ Mark Peattie, "The Japanese Treaty Port Settlements in China, 1895–1937," in *The Japanese Informal Empire*, edited by Duus, Myers, and Peattie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 172.

ideas of inclusion and exclusion during the era of Japan's leasehold colonialism as an unofficial empire in Manchuria.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ While Robert Perrin describes the political geography of Manchuria pre-1931 as "leasehold colonialism," many refer to it as Japan's unofficial empire or informal empire in order to differentiate from Manchukuo. Duus, "The Japanese Informal Empire in China." xi-ssviii.

CHAPTER TWO. The Manten: (Un)Making Manchukuo through Art

The blood won't be muddy. We Japanese will be superior forever. [...] When we realize that we are the people of Manchukuo, we must separate ourselves from Japan in a sense, be the best Japanese at the same time, and make efforts to explore new principles here; thus, we are required to live a new life in every direction.

—Kitamura Kenjirō, *Certain Circumstances*, 1939¹

In May 1938, the First Manchukuo Art Exhibition (hereafter the Manten, Figure 2.1) was held in Xinjing under the auspices of the Manchukuo Ministry of Social Welfare (*Minseibu*). The Minister Sun Qichang (1885–1954) wrote the preface in Chinese, emphasizing “the harmony of Japan-Manchukuo,” “the people,” and “making Manchukuo’s artistic tradition” as the values underlying the state-sponsored art exhibition.² The chair of the jury was designated to Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940), and metropole masters Maeda Seison (1885–1977) and Fujishima Takeji (1867–1943) were invited as advisory jurors. In April, the exhibition board started receiving entries from residents of Manchukuo and the Kwantung Leased Territory.

The process, however, did not run smoothly. In April 1938, the Manchuria Daily reported a boycott announced by the Fengtian-based South Manchuria Art Association (*Nanman bijutsu kyōkai*) against the First Manten that was approaching in only a month.³ Over 450 Fengtian-based Japanese artists refused to submit to the exhibition in response to the disgraceful rejection of the association’s request demanding more deserving roles for established Manchukuo resident

¹ Kitamura’s novel *Certain Circumstances* (*Aru Kankyō*) depicts a Japanese setter writer’s life in Dalian. The protagonist Zūichi is a man of utopian dreams but struggles with the bitter reality of Manchukuo. Of the leading novelist for the genre called Manchurian Romanticism (*Manshū roman*), the genre transplanted from Japanese Romanticist literature, Kitamura Kenjiro drew on Japanese identity issues and struggles in Manchuria. He was known to be the only professional novelist who published a literature periodical, “Manchuria Romantica (*Manshū roman*),” soon after he moved to Xinjing in 1937. Kenjiro Kitamura, *Aru Kankyō* [Certain Circumstances], *Manshū roman* [Manchuria Romance] No.3 (1939): 106-107.

² *Manshūkoku Bijutsu Tenrankai Zuroku Dai ikkai* [Catalogue of the First Manchukuo Art Exhibition], 1938.

³ *Manchuria Daily*, April 1, 1938.

artists in the decision-making process for the Manten. They complained about the current screening system that invited only metropole masters as jurors. Artists in other cities, such as Dalian, who already distrusted the Xinjing-based art administration's unfavorable treatment of Dalian artists, joined the boycott.⁴ This became a scandalous event that caused emotional reactions and distress among artists and administrative officers in different cities. The newspapers in the host city Xinjing continued creating sarcastic accounts of those artists as "acting like politicians" and even holding a grudge by stating, "if you stop painting from this matter, it will be even better."⁵ As a result, contrary to the 1937 Imperial Edict Exhibition (*Hōnichi senshō bijutsuten*, hereafter referred to as the Senshōten), known for a "beta testing" exhibition for the Manten, the number of entries decreased and never fully recovered throughout the span of the Manten.

Amid contests within Manchukuo's art sphere, top-notch Japanese metropole artists were in fervor for the mission to Manchuria. Venerable artists Maeda and Fujishima, each appointed for the *Tōyōga* and the *Yōga* screenings as members of the Advisory Committee of the First Manten, had responsibilities throughout the trip that stretched from visiting newly conquered territories in mainland China to meeting artists in service by invitation from Japan's Ministry of the Army.⁶ Tokyo Asahi Newspaper courteously reported those artists as the vanguard of the "Serving for the Nation with Paintbrushes (*saikan hōkoku*)," the ultra-nationalist campaign in art increasingly promulgated after the China Incident.⁷ Yet, for many metropole artists, a trip to Manchukuo promised lucrative opportunities in its local art market that evened out their assigned

⁴ "Kokuten gapyōkai dai nibu [National Exhibition (Part 2)]," *Dai Shinkyō Nippō* [Grater Xinjing Daily], May 13, 1938.

⁵ "Kokuten o zokuru shūsō apparena sējikamen [Why do political artists continue ugly conflict across the national exhibition?]" *Manchuria Daily*, April 13, 1938.

⁶ *Manchuria Daily*, April 13, 1938.

⁷ *Tokyo Asahi Newspaper*, May 15, 1938.

obligations. For Manchukuo residents, putting their admiration for metropole artists aside, the Manten's dependence on screening, leniency for metropole masters, and their taking advantage of the local market competition came to be a disturbance.

The Manten represents an important milestone in the locus where settler colonialism and imperial subjugation collided throughout the second half of the Manchukuo period. The installation of the Manten had two primary objectives: the first was to promote Manchukuo as an “independent” state by rearranging infrastructure based in the newly opened capital Xinjing; the second was to claim the state's Pan-Asiatic membership under Japan by completing an intra-imperial art network through the *kanten* (official salon) system in tandem with the Buntan (started in 1907), Korea's Senten (began in 1922), and Taiwan's Taiten (started in 1927). Thus, Manchukuo's claim to sovereignty clashed with the Japanese imperial assimilatory campaign within the same framework of colonial rules. The formation and deployment of the Manten determined by the Manchukuo government's state-building impulse were, in fact, shaped by incessant contests and dynamics with different colonial agents. The Manten witnessed tension between the new Xinjing-based administrative power and Dalian-and-Fengtian-based early settler communities, often referred to as Xinjing ideology and Dalian ideology in the discourse on Manchukuo literature.⁸ At the same time, Manchukuo settler artists competed with the metropole's encroachment on their zone. This formed the unstable characteristics of the Manchukuo art scene.

This chapter explores the formation of the Manten in light of how the Xinjing-based “state” art scene was conditioned by the dynamics of different colonial players—the state actors, settler artists, and metropole masters. In particular, I pay special attention to the status and

⁸ Hideki Okada, *Bungakuni miru manshūkoku no isō* [The phase of Manchuria in literature] (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2000), 8-24.

identities of settler artists in their ambiguous community (and national) membership and colonial practice. Japanese settler consciousness, according to historian Uchida Jun, can be explained in terms of “liminality” or “in-between-ness”—their marginal status that was not only based on emotion but legal, economic, and political differences.⁹ While they lived in the ill-space of the militarist colony and performed their role as colonizers by subjugating Chinese and other ethnic subjects, they shared the victim’s mind to state actors including the Kwantung Army and metropole elites. However, based on settler artists’ profit-oriented activities, the artists as “imperial brokers” transplanted the Japanese aesthetic ideology and hierarchy to the colonial art scenes.¹⁰

The institution and practice of art with peculiar visual codes of Manchukuo served as a vehicle for stabilizing and destabilizing the community membership and boundaries. While colonial exploitation remained valid in my view, to see this within the idea of binary conflicts between the Japanese and Chinese is too myopic to provide the full of complexity of “inner workings” or socio-politico-cultural power relations in Manchukuo.¹¹ As Prasenjit Duara’s reflection on Manchukuo’s sovereignty as a “becoming” or “effect” of a modern nation-state asserts, Manchukuo was “the site of Sino-Japanese interactions and discursive convergence,” where vigorous “cultural representations and identity building projects” were galvanized.¹² Such a form of sovereignty, ironic as it may sound, is not incompatible with imperial and colonial institutions of which one would typically think, as opposing enthusiasms are often intertwined.¹³

⁹ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*, 25, 29, 367.

¹⁰ The term “imperial brokers” is also from Uchida’s study. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹¹ Suk-Jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932-1937,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 12, no. 2 (2004): 457-478.

¹² Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 2.

¹³ Christopher Hanscom, and Dennis Washburn. “Introduction,” in *The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race in East Asian Empire* ed. Christopher Hanscom, and Dennis Washburn (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016), 4.

Yet, since 1937, Manchuria's sovereignty crisis and imperial suppression corresponded to Japan's entry into the total war, which overlapped the installation and duration of the Manten. From the beginning, the Manten was officially a state art exhibition, not a colonial art exhibition, yet certainly in the spectrum of the latter. Through what process was modern art in Manchukuo reorganized in Xinjing? How did settler artists, metropole artists, and Chinese artists view this change? What was the new set of elements in the practice of the Manten, or how was the Manten similar to and different from other intra-imperial salon exhibitions?

To answer these questions, first, it is essential to look back to the prototype of the state-sponsored art exhibitions in Xinjing before the Manten to comprehend how the Dalian metropolitan art scene was disenfranchised in favor of the centralizing force of Manchukuo based in the new capital. I will examine the structure and key features of the 1934 and 1937 exhibitions. Then, I will continue to provide an overview of the deployment of and conflicts encompassing the Manten along with its institutional structure, significance and effect, and style, as well as a comparison with the Senten and the Taiten. I will also consider how the metropole's artistic infringement became extremely visible amid the Greater Co-property Sphere and the breakout of the Pacific Wars.

The Japan-Manchuria Joint Art Exhibition, 1934

The Japan-Manchuria Joint Art Exhibition (*Man'nichi rengō bijutsu tenrankai*; hereafter, Rengōten) held in Xinjing in September 1934 exemplifies how the "state" art of Manchukuo was prompted by transnational negotiations concerning Manchukuo's state ideology, Japanese imperial nationalism, and capitalist impulses among individuals. During the propagation of the "Kingly way" government, pro-Japanese Manchu officers desired to elevate themselves and

Manchu nationalism by aligning with the cultural and symbolic power of Puyi. The joint exhibition's juxtaposition of modern Japanese and Chinese literati paintings might have given anachronistic Qing loyalists the imagined revival of the glorious past of Qing, as observed by Étienne Balibar's theory of nationalism as a self-construction based on the shared past and present.¹⁴ In the meantime, the exhibition revealed the unstable "friendly" relationship between the Japanese and Chinese by implanting the imperial artistic hierarchy into the system. Artists from the metropole mediated this process for their social elevation and economic benefits.

The Rengōten was organized by multiple joint auspices: Manchukuo Emperor Puyi and the State Council (*Kokumuin*), the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Gaimushō*), the SMRC, the Japan-Manchukuo Cultural Association (*Nichiman bunka kyōkai*) or the Manchukuo Art Coterie (*Manshūkoku bijutsu dōninin*), and the East Asian Painting Association (*Tōho kaiga kyōkai*) from Japan. Although *yōga* has already been considered to represent Japanese national art, the exhibition presented only traditional Manchurian and Japanese style paintings: 116 Japanese *nihonga* and 200 Manchurian *guoha* entries.¹⁵ Twenty selected *nihonga* paintings from the most revered masters, including Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958), Komuro Suiun (1874–1945), Maeda Seison, Araki Jippo (1872–1944), and Watanabe Shinpō (1867–1938), who had built a cordial cultural diplomatic connection with Puyi in earlier years during his exile in Tianjin, were gifted to Puyi as a *kennōga* (imperial gift painting) in order to celebrate his

¹⁴ Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), 78–9.

¹⁵ Komuro Suiun, *Tōei*, September 1934, 38; The term "*guoha*" or "*zongguohua*" (literally meaning Chinese painting), according to Julia Andrews' study, is problematic and implies China's changing cultural politics throughout the 20th century in its national formation. Traditionally, the term was not necessary as all paintings from Chinese hands were Chinese paintings; instead, the category was landscape, bird-and-flower, and figures painting. "*guoha*" was a Chinese counterpart of Japanese nomenclature "*nihonga*" to embody something represent tradition against the Western. The term became prevalent in the People's Republic of China. See Julia F. Andrews, "Traditional Painting in New China: Guohua and the Anti-Rightist Campaign," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (1990): 555–77.

coronation held in spring 1934. To commemorate the exhibition, Puyi devoted his calligraphy “Qiánkun Zhèngqì (Universal Righteousness, Figure 2.2)” to be hung in front of the exhibition hall.

What makes the Rengōten different from other previous Japan-China joint exhibitions that were held before the inauguration of Manchukuo was, based on art historian Zian Xiaomei’s observation, the role of the Manchukuo Art Coterie.¹⁶ The Manchukuo Art Coterie was a subsidiary office under the Manchukuo Ministry of Education and consisted of Manchu officials led by Luo Zhenyu. The joint exhibition was first initiated not by the Japanese side but by members of the Manchukuo Art Coterie to obtain the know-how for annual salon exhibitions. Their contact was through the East Asian Painting Association, the group led by the Tokyo School of Art chair Masaki Naohiko (1862–1940) that succeeded four joint exhibitions in Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin.¹⁷ The cultural exchanges and interest relationship between Qing loyalists and Japanese artists were shaped during Puyi’s exile in Tianjin.

The leader of the Manchukuo Art Coterie Luo Zhenyu is a pivotal figure for understanding the birth of Manchukuo art exhibitions and the unstable tug-of-war between Manchu and Japanese elites until the end of the 1930s. Luo’s yearlong friendly and business relationship with Japanese intellectuals and collectors during his exile to Kansai Japan has been well discussed by the current scholarship.¹⁸ He brought more than thirty thousand Chinese antiquities to Japan and gained fame as an expert in Chinese antiquities; he is also known for

¹⁶ Xiaomei Zhan, “Watanabe Zippoto nichiman rengōbijutsu tenrankai [Japanese-Manchurian Joint Art Exhibition, and Watanabe Zippo],” in *1930nendai Higashiajiano Bunkakōryū* [Cultural exchange in East Asia in the 1930s] (Tokyo: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2013), 162.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

¹⁸ Tamaki Maeda, *Tomioka Tessai’s Narrative Landscape: Rethinking Sino-Japanese Traditions* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 2005); Shana Brown, *Pastimes*; Chia-Ling Yang, and Roderick Whitfield *Lost Generation*.

promoting the Japanese boom of Chinese antiquities studies and literati painting in the 1910s.¹⁹ After his return to China in 1919, his further cultural and social activities continued in Tianjin and later Lushun and Dalian, and by then he had no rivals in the field. Luo Zhenyu's active role in installing the state salon through the joint exhibition perhaps came from his confidence in transferring timeless Chinese artistic value to the modern stage as *nihonga* did in Japan.

Yet the Rengōten did not go as envisioned by the Manchu side. Observing from the report that over 600 Manchu-Chinese entries were received, and 200 works were selected for the display, there was a great expectation from Chinese resident artists for the exhibition, including the Fengtian art community that boasted a long history of local painting tradition.²⁰ The highlight of the exhibition was, however, the Japanese imperial gift to Puyi from the twenty top-notch *nihonga* artists and another one hundred *nihonga* selections; most of the decision-making of the exhibition was commanded by Masaki; and the exhibition catalogue omitted the entire “Manchukuo paintings,” bar the Japanese submissions. While Manchukuo newspapers reported the details of the exhibition based on the *nihonga* commentaries, no single article left a review of the Manchukuo paintings. Chinese agency turned out to be suppressed.

The exhibition catalogue with full coverage of the *nihonga* was published in April 1935 by the East Asian Painting Association.²¹ The members of the association were mostly from the Imperial Art Academy (*Teikoku bijutsuin*) and the Japan Art Academy (*Nihon bijutsuin*), the two giant institutions of *nihonga*. The prefaces of the catalogue were written by the honored politician Okabe Nagakage (1884–1970) who served as Vice Chair for both the East Asian

¹⁹ Tamaki Maeda, “(Re-)Canonizing Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: The Kyoto Circle,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, edited by Joshua Fogel (Berkeley: Global, Area, and International Archive/University of California Press, 2012), 220-223.

²⁰ *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, September 19, 1934.

²¹ There is no record about the catalogue for Manchurian paintings, and the likelihood of it being published is very low.

Painting Association and the Japanese-Manchuria Cultural Association, and Masaki Naohiko.

Okabe wrote:

The establishment of the Empire of Manchukuo is the key to the peace of East Asia. In celebration of the enthronement of the Emperor of Manchukuo, we placed this event. From us, the East Asian Painting Association was formed in the hope of the development of East Asian art, and with the most joyful worship and celebration for the enthronement, our 20 representative painters from Japan devoted their masterpieces.²²

There are some noteworthy aspects regarding Japanese vantage points. First is the direct involvement of the Japanese government, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the financier, which was relocated from mainland China to Manchuria; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' support for the Sino-Japanese joint exhibitions was halted from the Manchuria Incident onward.²³ With the embellished rhetoric promoting the peace and development of East Asia, Okabe's words clearly indicated that art is a political vehicle for stabilizing Japanese hegemony in Manchuria.

This exhibition's focus indicates that *nihonga* became the norm of *traditional style paintings* that represent Manchukuo. This shows a considerable difference in Japan's strategy of cultural diplomacy from the 1929 First National Exhibition in Republican China, where Japan only sent *yōga* masterpieces as reference works.²⁴ While it was considered Japanese artistic pride to master Western modernity, Japanese delicacy in handling China's lost leadership in East Asia is observed in the Japanese shunning *nihonga*'s intrinsic "politically inflammatory possibility,"

²² My translation. *Nichiman rengo bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku*, 1935, preface.

²³ Although the Sino-Japanese Joint Exhibitions were stopped in mainland China, Sino-Japanese cultural connections and interests continued among private cultural circles.

²⁴ Julia Andrews, "Japanese Oil Paintings," 188.

to borrow art historian Julia Andrews' term.²⁵ However, after Japan acquired Manchuria, diplomatic delicacy was replaced by the message of cultural superiority.

The Rengōten expressed the Japanese confidence that resonated from the chosen subject matters which raised Japanese nationalistic pride such as historical figures, samurai, kimono-clad beauty, and Japanese landscapes. For example, Yokoyama Taikan and Maeda Seison chose *Mt. Fuji* (Figure 2.3) and *Samurai Playing Biwa* (Figure 2.4) as commemorative gifts to Puyi. Unenaka Chokusai's (1885–1977) *Offering Sake (Tamamono toyozake)*, Figure 2.5), a scene from the Manyōshū (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), depicted Ōtomo no Tabihito (665–731), a military leader who suppressed the Hayato Rebellion in the 8th century. Given that Unenaka's painting was already recognized in the 13th Teiten in 1931, the painting must have been selected very deliberately by Japanese organizers. Again, this insinuates the expiration of the pre-Manchukuo era's cautious diplomatic strategy concerning Chinese national sentiments and artistic pride and the showcasing of what was recommended as the new model of Manchukuo's state art. What was offered to the Emperor of Manchukuo and exhibited to the Manchukuo public through this state-sponsored art exhibition is a politically nuanced message, regardless of the artists' original inclination or style.

There is no visual record or list of the submissions from the Chinese side that survived. Yet, in Fengtian, the most populated city of Manchuria that was once the center of Zhang Zuolin's regime, there were significant art movements and institutions run by Chinese residents. Art historian Shen Guangjie's survey of the Fengtian Art School leaves a glimpse of Chinese *guohua* painters who tried to adopt the new government system, although the author's discussion is primarily based on the framework of artists' anti-Japanese resistance.²⁶ One of the Fengtian

²⁵ Ibid., 207.

²⁶ Guangjie Shen, *Minguo Liao Shen jin shi shu hua shi* vol. 2, 19-28.

Art School painters, Ding Yunan (1917–1994), who learned painting from *nanga*-style master Komuro Suiun, moved to Xinjing for a job appointment at the Manchukuo Ministry of Education, where he submitted his painting to the Rengōten.²⁷ His submission to the First Fengtian Art Exhibition in 1935, *Tiger* (Figure 2.6), shows the hybrid between Qing-style painting and *nihonga*. Ding continued participating in the 1937 exhibition and the Manten.

Another important fact encompassing the Rengōten was intertwined economic benefits. *Nihonga*, excluding the twenty gift paintings and other exceptions, were on sale to Manchukoan collectors. A diplomatic record on the Rengōten reveals the prices for each Japanese work.²⁸ Works of artists like Kawai Gyokudo (1873–1957), Yokoyama Taikan, Watanabe Shinpo, Kikuchi Keiketsu (1879–1955), and Matsubayashi Keigetsu (1876–1963), all first-tier masters, were not on sale. One exception was Noda Kyūho (1879–1971), whose work *Monk Myōe* (Figure 2.7) was priced at the highest at 1,000 yen, while the average price of other artists' works was around 500 yen. The profit-driven were not only Japanese artists, but Manchukuo's collectors. For example, a Chinese civic officer and art collector named Bai Jian visited Japan and discussed the possibilities of this joint exhibition with Japanese civic officers.²⁹ Like Luo Zhenyu, Bai Jian had experience in art business with his bounty antiquities collection in Japan; on the Manchu-Chinese end, the joint exhibition was expected to be an opportunity to sell their collections to Japanese masters and visiting elites. However, the direction of the Rengōten seemingly betrayed many Chinese collectors.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁸ Diplomatic Record Office, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Nichiman rengōbijutsu tenrankai kaisaini kansuru kenfu manshūkokukōtēe kenjōhinni kansuru ken shōwa kyūnen shigatsu [Matters concerning the holding of the Japan-Man Union Art Exhibition: Matters concerning the presentation to the Emperor of Manchuria],” 1934, Ref. B05016021400, 264-269.

²⁹ Xiaomei Zhan, 163.

A disturbance was also caused among Dalian artists and administrators. After its opening in Xinjing, the Rengōten toured in major Manchukuo cities such as Fengtian, Harbin, and Dalian until November. However, the decision to include Dalian in this exhibition tour as the last destination in November was not made until the last moment.³⁰ Although Japanese commissioners and artists including Watanabe Sinpo supported the accommodation of Dalian, the process revealed complications.³¹ While exhibitions in Xinjing, Fengtian, and Harbin were organized under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education of Manchukuo, the exhibition in Dalian was financed by the Dalian-based Manchuria Cultural Association.³² According to the document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Manchuria Cultural Association asked for funding to hold this exhibition in Dalian, but the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs tossed this issue to the Ministry of Education of Manchukuo without promising any aid to them.³³ Later, the SMRC Dalian office sponsored the exhibition and covered the expenses for it. Japanese-resident *nihonga* masters did not belong to any category between Manchuria and Japan. The jurors of Dalian-based exhibitions introduced in the previous chapter including Itō Junzō and Kuwayama Tessū were not invited. As the former metropolitan center, Dalian was allegedly disenfranchised in the process of the state-building project.

In Japan, gift paintings called *kennōga* boomed among top-tier artists. The Japanese press continuously introduced the paintings given to Puyi, and *kennōga* became the symbol of success.³⁴ Maeda Seison's *Looking at Pictures* (*kanga*, Figure 2.8), portraying Puyi's family members visiting the Rengōten based on the real event published in the news as a photograph

³⁰ Diplomatic Record Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Holding Japan-China United Art Exhibition and presenting Emperor of Manchukuo with related gifts, April 1934, Part 1" Ref.B0501621400, 226-228.

³¹ Xiaomei Zhan, 165.

³² Xiaomei Zhan, 166; Ref.B0501621400, 351.

³³ Ref.B0501621400, 235-243.

³⁴ Such as Tokyo Asahi Shinbun published between August and September 1934 reported multiple articles about the gift paintings to Puyi.

(Figure 2.9), epitomized the era. Maeda returned to Manchukuo as the juror of the First Manten in 1938.

The Commemorative Art Exhibition for Puyi's Imperial Visit, 1937

In April 1935, Puyi made a first visit to Japan and met Hirohito, the Showa Emperor, proclaiming Japan's fraternal role towards Manchukuo by recognizing Puyi as a member of Japan's Imperial Household.³⁵ On May 2, Puyi announced "the Admonitory Rescript to the People on the Occasion of the Emperor's Return" by stating "one heart and one mind with the Shōwa Emperor."³⁶ *Nihonga* magazine *Tōei*'s report indicates how much the Japanese art world desired Puyi's symbolic significance.³⁷ Japanese organizers selected tens of Chinese paintings from the Ueno Imperial Museum that were hardly seen in China or Manchuria but highly appreciated in Japan and brought them to the Akasaka Palace to listen to Puyi's appreciation of each item.³⁸ The activity was conceivably more than mere protocol for an imperial guest: by receiving Puyi's recognition of the Chinese antique paintings stored in Japan, Japan attempted to reconfigure the orthodoxy of Chinese masterpieces in their collection. This context allows us to conjecture how the ideals of Pan-Asian friendship through art exchanges came to be hegemonized by Japan's imperial expansion into Manchukuo.

³⁵ Later, Puyi stated, "I reached the pinnacle of authority and the nadir of my misconceptions after the first of my two state visits to Japan, in April 1935. The Kwangtung Army had made all the arrangements for this trip which was undertaken to demonstrate my gratitude to the Japanese Emperor for sending his brother, Prince Chichibu, to congratulate me on my ascension to the throne as well as to show my personal interest in promoting friendly relations between Japan and Manchukuo." Colonial Korea's royal family was also transferred to the Japanese Imperial Household in accordance with the Consent of Annexation in 1910. Puyi, and Paul Kramer, *The Last Manchu*, 179.

³⁶ Regarding the title of Puyi's statement, "the Admonitory Rescript to the People on the Occasion of the Emperor's Return," I followed the translation of 回鑾訓民詔書 from Yanlong Guo, "Negotiating Colonial Visuality: Gao Chengxian's Reminiscence of the Manchukuo Arts Exhibitions," MCLC Resource Center Publication (Copyright January 2020), accessed Oct 22, 2020, <https://u.osu.edu/mclc/online-series/yanlong-guo/>

³⁷ "Manshūkoku kōtēni hihōtairano aogu [To ask the Emperor of Manchuria for a tour of the treasures]," *Tōei*, March 1935, 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Likely due to the administrative difficulties of the Rengōten and the metropole salon's scandalous conflicts over Matsuda's reorganization of the Teiten system in 1935, no further state-sponsored exhibitions were placed in Manchukuo until 1937.³⁹ Meanwhile, in Dalian, the Manchurian Art Association Exhibitions continued its third exhibition until 1936 by proclaiming itself "the all-star cast, the only grand exhibition in Manchuria."⁴⁰ While many metropole artists, mainly from the Nikka-kai and the Independent Art Association, visited Dalian for their group or individual shows with the substantial sponsorship of Japanese corporations, more art associations were formed in major Manchukuo cities such as Fengtian, Harbin, and Xinjing.

After Puyi's imperial visit, the state-building project in Manchukuo was accelerated in the cultural realm: May 2 was designated as the state memorial day, and the Commemorative Art Exhibition for Puyi's Imperial Visit to Tokyo in 1935 (Senshōten) was placed in Xinjing from May 2 to 11 in 1937, which was allegedly a beta-version of the Manten starting in the following year of 1938.⁴¹ The Senshōten turned out to be a great success: 484 *Tōyōga*, 361 *Yōga*, 19 Sculptures (*Chōkoku*), and 296 Calligraphies (*Hōsho*) made up a total of 1,266 submissions, which marked the most significant number of works in the history of the Manten; the Senshōten also achieved 35,000 visitors.⁴² The Current State of Manchukuo 1938 assesses the exhibition as

³⁹ In order to centralize the control of the art scene by the state, the Minister of Education Matsuda Genji (1876–1936) submitted a reform to reorganize the Teiten by persuading non-governmental (*zaiya*) institutions and unions. Led by politically outspoken *nihonga* master's like Yokoyama Taikan, the idea of creating *nihonga* rooted in the tradition of Asian spirit against the West was adopted by Matsuda. Such a new move was often understood as Japan's propagandizing effort of art for sake of state's interest after the Manchuria Incident. However, this stirred emotions among existing board members and without-screening (*mukansa*) artists who already obtained the privilege to exhibit their works, which caused about three years of chaos until the Shin-Bunten (New Ministry of Education Art Exhibition) started in 1937. Ukiko Ito, "Nihonno kansetsuten bijutsu tenrankaini tsuite [on Japan's Official Art Exhibitions,]" *Kanten ni miru Kindai* [Modernity by Kanten] (Fukuoka Art Museum, 2014), 200.

⁴⁰ *Manshū nenkan* [Annual Report of Manchuria] (1935), 566.

⁴¹ In Manchukuo, the exhibition was often called *Kokuten* (national exhibition), but Korea's *Senten* and Japan's *Shin Bunten* were also referred to as *Kokuten* within each nation. In Japan, Manchukuo Art Exhibition was referred to as *Manshu kokuten* or *Manten* to differentiate its own national exhibition.

⁴² *Manshūkoku gensei* [The Current State of Manchukuo], 1938, 411-412.

the turning point for the Manchukuo art scene to reify its genre and style with a creative motivation for establishing the state's art.⁴³

The Manchukuo News Agency (established in 1932) published a full coverage catalogue in Japanese for the Senshōten which provided the complete list and images of the entries and the exhibition reviews for the first time.⁴⁴ Like Rengōten, the Manchuria-Japan Cultural Association (formerly Japan-Manchuria Cultural Association) was in charge of organizing the exhibition. Manchu politician Luo Zhenyu served as the chair of the jury in aid of Okabe and Masaki for making the protocol modeled after the Senten.⁴⁵ Luo contributed to his *li shu* (clerical script) style calligraphy for the exhibition title (Figure 2.10). The committee board was designated to Manchukuo state actors, including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education, the Chair of the Government of Inspection, the Kwantung Army Director, and the Education Board Chair of the Concordia Association. Three metropole masters from the Imperial Art Academy, *nihonga* painter Matsubayashi Keigetsu, and *yōga* painters Fujishima Takeji and Yasui Sōtarō (1888–1955), were appointed as the Advisory Committee or jurors who counseled throughout the screening process. Along with metropole masters, eleven “Regional Art Representatives (*Chihō bijutsu daihyō*)” were appointed from four major cities—Dalian, Fengtian, Xinjing, and Harbin—to assist the exhibition process. From Dalian, Itō Junzō, Hirajima Makoto, and Yamashiro Takeji were appointed.

The Senshōten was labeled as “*kokuten* (state exhibition),” as an equivalent to the metropole's “*kokuten* (national exhibition, a.k.a. *kanten*).” While the character “*oku* (nation)”

⁴³ Ibid., 494.

⁴⁴ *Hōnichi senshō kinen bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku, 1937, Manshūkoku genseisha.*

⁴⁵ Chizuko Yoshida, *Tokyo bijutsugakkōno gaikokunin sēto* [Students in Tokyo University of Fine Arts] (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Fine Arts Publisher, 1998), 40; Jae-hyuk Choi, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū [Research on Manchukuo Art Exhibition]” *Kindaigasetsu: Mieji Bijustu Gakkai* no.16 (2007): 63.

became increasingly imperative in Japan's ultra-nationalist turn in the 1930s by merging with political discourse such as "*kokutai* (national body)" or "*kokushi* (national history)," Manchukuo's use of "*kokuten*" draws an interesting paradox between its sovereignty and coloniality.⁴⁶ The structure of the Senshōten was modeled after the Senten, the colonial state art exhibition of Korea, not the imperial Teiten. First, it included the *Tōyōga* Section instead of *nihonga*. On the one hand, this can be seen as the institutionalization of Chinese paintings into the state art system, but on the other, *Tōyōga* indicates the section's colonial subjugation and Japan's *orientalism* toward non-Japanese Asian art. *Tōyōga*, which loosely refers to East Asian traditional art practice originally derived from Chinese painterly culture with ink and mineral pigments, became Japanese intra-imperial metalanguage to categorize Asiatic paintings as a counterpart to the generic Western style of oil paintings.⁴⁷ Compared to the Rengōten, where *nihonga* and *chūgokuga* (Chinese paintings) were placed in the separated category, the notion of *tōyōga* sanctioned the integration of all traditional style paintings in Manchukuo into the institutional category, while the terminology *guohua* (Chinese national painting) was disseminated in Republican China.⁴⁸ The discussion of *tōyōga* and *tōyō* will be further extended in Chapter 3.

Among the 142 entries in the *Tōyōga*, 32 Chinese-style paintings were selected. The Senshōten allowed an affirmative policy for Chinese entries. One of the exhibition board members Rong Hou (1874–?) admitted that he did not limit the number of submissions per

⁴⁶ About the discussion on "Koku," see Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 221, 247, 258.

⁴⁷ When Meiji Japan reconstructs *nihonga*, *tōyōga* was also coined as a hypernym in order to reconnect Japan's modernized *nihonga* to generic East Asian traditional paintings. Doshin Sato, *Mējikokkato kin'daibi sekijutsu* [Meiji State and modern art of beauty] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hirofumika, 1999), 145-149.

⁴⁸ Due to the term *tōyōga*'s complexity, I differentiated *Tōyōga* as the name of the category in the exhibition from *tōyōga* as a generic term to referred to the traditional style paintings in Manchukuo, Korea, and Taiwan.

individual in case of a shortage of Manchurian entries.⁴⁹ The Manchuria-Japan Cultural Association also conducted pre-research on contemporary Chinese paintings and books published in Manchuria for the Tōyōga and the Calligraphy sections.⁵⁰ Except for one Xinjing-based artist, Ueno Kodō, all Chinese-style paintings were done by “*Man-kei* (Manchurian-Chinese)” artists. Generous awards were granted to *Man-kei* paintings: two Special Selections (*tokusen*) and eleven Honorable Mentions. Most of them are landscapes that followed the tradition of Qing Southern School styles with mixed orthodox styles of Song, Yuan, and Ming. For example, a Special Selectee Xie Yousheng’s *Shangri-la (Shiwaitaoyuan)*, Figure 2.11) echoes Yuan Dynasty landscape painting, and another Special Selectee Yu Lianke’s *Listening to the Spring (tingquantu)*, Figure 2.12) conjures up Shen Zhou (1427–1509)’s style.

The fact that *Tōyōga* and calligraphy submissions outnumbered *yōga* submissions may reflect the great expectations among many underrepresented “regional” *nihonga* and Chinese traditional artists toward the opportunity to exhibit their work. Reflecting on the *Tōyōga* section, however, juror Matsubayashi wrote a pungent critique:

Manchukuo’s *tōyōga* lacks true artistic meanings and consciousness. Despite the long tradition in this unadulterated region, no foundational works have been done yet here. On top of the lack of enthusiasm for shasei [life sketches], it was just nothing but mimicking. [...] Since art should reflect the national spirit, I hope that works saturated with local color will be created soon, and by establishing the taste of Asian characters, I hope that this trial won’t be merely following works in the Teiten.⁵¹

Meanwhile, Fujishima and Yasui had quite an encouraging voice for *yōga* submissions:

The exhibition this year epitomizes the new beginning of art in Manchukuo. While we could not predict what kinds of paintings would be shown, we felt relieved after checking the collected submissions. [...] Overall, due to the

⁴⁹ Egawa Yoshihide, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte [About the Manchukuo Art Exhibition],” in *Showaki Bijutsu Tenrankaino Kenkyū senzen* [Research on the Showa Period Art Exhibitions, Prewar] (Tokyo: Research Institute for Cultural Properties, 2006), 187.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ My translation. *Hōnichi senshō kinen bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku* (Manshūkoku genseisha, 1937), 121.

relatively low number of professionally trained artists, techniques of many works remain at an infantile level; yet, we expect future development. [...] Submissions of Manchurian artists are also more than we expected. Although some looked a bit childish, they are unique in colorations without showing any crudeness, which makes us further anticipate that good works will be born in the future.⁵²

To what extent was such a hypercritical review given to the *Tōyōga* and a generous comment to the *Yōga*? The target of Matsubayashi's criticism is somewhat vague as the *Tōyōga* consisted of Chinese paintings and *nihonga*. His demand of Asiatic values and local color from Manchukuo insinuates the imperial metropole's the imperial metropole's inconsistent, imagined colony. On the contrary, the generous review of *yōga* by Fujishima and Yasui brought forward another question related to the *yōga* art circle in Dalian, which I will further discuss in my analysis of the *Manten*.

Although the Senshōten claimed to broadly recruit entries from all over Manchukuo regardless of ethnicity in the mission of “bringing solidarity of all Manchukuo artists for the development of the art of Manchukuo,” the screening result shows a subtle nuance in distributing selectees' demography based on each region and race.⁵³ Among 142 *Tōyōga* entries, only 12 were selected from Dalian, and no Special Selection prize was given, whereas 19 *nihonga* were designated from Xinjing, including one Special Selection and four Honorable Mentions (*kasaku*), and 11 *nihonga* were nominated from Fengtian with one Special Selection and three Honorable Mentions. This ratio turned out to be even more unfavorable to Dalian *yōga* submissions: only twenty-two out of the total 285 *yōga* entries were selected from Dalian despite being the Manchurian center for modernism and the avant-garde.

⁵² Ibid. 122.

⁵³ “Bijutsu tenrankai keika,” in *Hōnichi senshō kinen bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku*.

The builders of Manchukuo deemed liberal and avant-garde tendencies formed in the Taishō and early Shōwa dangerous to Manchukuo's social reform.⁵⁴ Among plenty of submissions from Dalian artists, only a couple of works from members of the Five Fruits Group—Dalian's most active avant-garde group—were selected for the exhibition: Takahashi Tsutomu (1910–2014)'s *Harmony* (Figure 2.13) and Hamano Nagamasa's academic still-life *Assemblage* (Figure 2.14). *Harmony*, illustrating women in quasi-Chinese dresses holding doves, is tied closely with the state's propagandizing ideology of "Harmony of Race." While the painting employs surrealist elements with a hysteric dream image, creating an odd space with the juxtaposition of depersonalized empty faces, geometric bodies, a statue-like female object, and linear architecture, Takahashi applied more readable visual language by diluting his dense surrealist orientation. It is not revealed precisely how many Dalian modernist and avant-garde artists submitted their works to the exhibition. Yet expressionist, cubist, abstract, and surrealist tendencies seemingly failed to meet the new state exhibition's criteria and preferences. Most of the *yōga* selections followed impressionist or realist techniques. These tendencies continued throughout the Manten, which caused shared community sentiments in major cities and reinforced their interest in the self-governance of art that confronted the statism of Manchukuo.

⁵⁴ Jae-Hyuk Choi, "Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū," 75.

The Manchukuo Art Exhibition, 1938–1945

Table 1.1. Manchukuo Art Exhibitions

Title	Date	Sections	Advisory Committee	Number of works (selected)
The Commemorative Art Exhibition for Imperial Visit (Senshōten)	1937 5/2–11	<i>Tōyōga</i>	Matsubayashi Keigetsu	484 (142)
		<i>Yōga</i>	Fujishima Takeji	361 (285)
		Sculpture	Yasui Sōtarō	19 (13)
		Calligraphy		296 (76)
The First Manchukuo Art Exhibition	1938 5/2–9	<i>Tōyōga</i>	Maeda Seison	256 (66)
		<i>Yōga</i>	Fujishima Takeji	349 (163)
		Sculpture/Craft		71 (48)
		Calligraphy		129 (73)
The Second Manchukuo Art Exhibition	1939 8/1–10	"	Noda Kyūho	246 (59)
			Umehara Ryūzaburō	533 (148)
				70
				180
The Third Manchukuo Art Exhibition	1940 8/3–8	"	Aoyama Yoshio	204 (62)
			Matsumoto Ichiyō	497 (116)
				(42)
				(94)
The Fourth Manchukuo Art Exhibition	1941 8/1–10	"	Ishii Hakutei	152 (22)
			Kobayashi Kokei	427 (112)
				36 (22)
				135 (63)
Manchukuo Art • Craft • Calligraphy Exhibition (5 th)	1942 8/12–28 8/31–9/12 9/21–9/31	Painting/Sculpture	Fujita Tsuguharu	n.a.
		Craft	Suda Kunitarō	
		Calligraphy	Fukuda Heihachirō	
Manchukuo Art • Craft • Calligraphy Exhibition (6 th)	1943 9/1–9 9/21–30	"	Yamaguchi Hōshun	74 (28)
			Yasui Sōtarō	n.a.
			Shinkai Katerou	n.a.
Manchukuo Art • Craft • Calligraphy Exhibition (7 th)	1944 9/9–24	"	Yamaguchi Hōshun	46 (19)
			Yasui Sōtarō	256 (27)
			Shinkai Katerou	19 (10)
				n.a.
Manchukuo Art • Craft • Calligraphy Exhibition (8 th)	1945 8/10–9/19 (Planned)	"	No record	

During the time between Puyi's visiting Hirohito and the Sino-Japanese War, the prime state ideology "Kingly Way" was gradually replaced by the slogan "state foundation spirit

(*kenkoku seishin*).”⁵⁵ The sovereign prospect of the state builders of Manchukuo perpetuated volatile coexistence with intensifying metropole imperialism. Throughout the sovereign exercise of the Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo government, a treaty that abolished the extraterritorial right of Japanese residents was signed in 1936; state-run cultural businesses, including the Manchuria Film Association (*Manshu Eiga Kyōkkai*, a.k.a. Manei) were installed in 1937; the Kenkoku (State Foundation) University as the top university in Manchukuo opened in 1938; and numerous public projects were named with the term *kenkoku* as well.

The institutionalization of the official art exhibition was an important part of the *kenkoku* campaigns. The ideology of “*kenkoku*” in aid of Japanese imperialism was exercised, negotiated, and reappropriated throughout the span of the Manten, which shaped an uneasy transnational social space. It exposed how the imperial conquests were expanded not only by the political and ideological dynamics of state actors and military powers but by individuals of interest through colonial cultural and economic competitions.

The First Manten was proposed right after the Senshōten, along with Manchu State Councilor Rong Hou’s announcement in September 1937 of the government’s total operation of cultural events and activities to soothe the Manchukuo people’s sentiments and to make their lives better.⁵⁶ While the organizer of the Manten was transferred to the Ministry of Social Welfare, the same Manchu elites from the Manchuria-Japan Cultural Association, including Luo Zhenyu, Rong Hou, Shen Ruilin (1874–1945), and Bao Xi (1868–1942) continued being in charge of the operation.⁵⁷ Luo Zhenyu was designated as the Chair of the Jury, and the three other members took custody of the screening for the *Tōyōga*, *Yōga*, Sculpture, and Calligraphy

⁵⁵ Suk-Jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932-1937,” 472.

⁵⁶ Yūchi Iwano, *Odōrakudono kōkyōgaku man'shū shirarezaru on'gakushi* [Symphony of Kingly way Utopia: Unknown Music History] (Tokyo: Ongakunotomoha, 1999), 168-169.

⁵⁷ Jae-Hyuk Choi, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū,” 63.

sections. The exhibition preface was written by the Minister of Social Welfare Sun Qichang (1885–1954) in Chinese, emphasizing Manten’s utopian mission in the state’s founding project of establishing the “academic art of the newborn state.”⁵⁸ Xinjing-based bureaucrats and the Chief of the Kwantung Army Tōjō Hideki (1884–1948) served on the Auditory Committee (*komon*), yet they were not directly involved in the screening process. Within the title of the Advisory Committee (*sōdanyaku*), metropole masters Maeda Seison and Fujishima Takeji were appointed to screen the *Tōyōga* and the *Yōga* sections for the First Manten. However, the regional committee system of the Senshōten was no longer adopted in the First Manten, which stirred up disputes among many settler artists who had established careers and reputations in Manchukuo.

Interestingly, the ideological term *kenkoku*’s totalitarian gist was appropriated not only by the Manchukuo state to centralize the power of the cultural scene in Xinjing but also by “regional” artists to criticize the unfair operation of the state-run art programs. After the birth of Manchukuo, the alleged ostracism of Dalian-based artists caused conflict between Xinjing and non-Xinjing settler communities. For example, Xinjing-based painter and ardent arbiter of the Manchukuo state, Ikebe Sadayoshi (1905–1994)’s reflection on the Senshōten in *The Current Status of Manchukuo* criticized the Dalian art sphere as selfish and not genuine:

The art of Manchuria used to be centered on Dalian. For the time being, after the Manchuria Incident, painters were not yet socially and collectively organized and dependent on the metropole art world, seemingly making Dalian the center of art. This resulted from artists’ attitudes formed by the colonial lifestyle without any social or personal reflection on art production. [...] [What we need to follow is] not a narrow-minded *local color*, nor was it a mimicking of the trendy Japanese art scene, but a creative desire to generate a state’s art based on the uplifting of national consciousness and reflection on the artistic

⁵⁸ *Manshūkoku Bijutsu Tenrankai Zuroku* [The First Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalogue], 1938.

consciousness as a collective entity. It must be how we guide the masses of Manchuria who lack cultural refinement.⁵⁹

In response, artists in Dalian and Fengtian questioned the righteousness of the Senshōten for its lack of Manchukuoan originality and the mistreatment of the Regional Art Representatives throughout the exhibition process; they asked for the “state foundation spirit” and “racial harmony” from the state organizers to fix the problems.⁶⁰ After the Senshōten, a round table was held to negotiate the screening process, where artists argued that “ideally, all art produced in Manchuria must be handled by the “Manchurians” alone.”⁶¹ To this, Shen Ruilin announced that “Manchuria, not only in art but in all aspects of culture, is far behind Japan. Thus, for the time being, it is inevitable that it will be examined by Japanese judges.”⁶² As a result, artists boycotted or passed the exhibition as introduced at the beginning of this chapter.

In the Second Manten in 1939, the regional committee system was restored as “the Art Committee (*Bijutsu iin*).” However, the conflict never ended. Their duty was loosely assigned as “offering suggestions to jurors, if necessary,” and privilege was limited and unfavorable; for example, artists in the Art Committee were excluded from the nomination to the minister’s award.⁶³ An artist with the pseudonym of Yoshirō argued, “We want to have juror selected within the state. If anyone observes that it is premature to appoint domestic jurors, I think that is an extreme insult to Manchukuo residents.”⁶⁴ Soon after the opening of the Second Menten,

⁵⁹ *Manshūkoku gensei*, 1937, 494.

⁶⁰ *Manshūkoku gensei*, 1939, 169-471.

⁶¹ “Honsha shusaibijutsu zadankai senshōbijutsuten no sēdono kakuritsu [Discussion Meeting for Art sponsored by the head office-Establishment of the system of the Imperial Art Exhibition], *Dai Shinkyō Nippō*, October 1, 1937, as quoted in Egawa, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte,” 191.

⁶² Shen Ruilin, “Kokuten’no chihōkaisai tōkyokushano kōryoo motomeru [Asking for Consideration of Local Organizers toward the National Exhibition], *Dai Shinkyō Nippō*, May 8, 1938, as quoted in Egawa, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte,” 191.

⁶³ *Kankō Tōa* [Travel East Asia], August 1939, 79.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Dalian artists wrote a public letter to the Ministry of Social Welfare requesting fair treatment and clarification of the scoring criteria of the screening.⁶⁵ They even considered the possibility of initiating an anti-Manten exhibition, depending on the answer from the ministry.⁶⁶ Japanese settler artists based in Dalian and Fengtian had two major issues: one was the exhibition's jury system that perpetuated a superior position for metropole artists, and another was the favorable treatment of Chinese entries, which was thought unfair by Japanese settlers. The review of the Second Manten written by Noda Kyūho, who served as a juror for the *Tōyōga* section, reflects this conflict. He noted that he was asked to be more lenient with *Mankei* (Manchu-Chinese) artists and added twenty more selections from their submissions.⁶⁷ From the Third Manten, however, the number of Chinese painting selections decreased noticeably. Around this time, the Manchuria-Japanese Cultural Association was taking its hands off exhibition management due to members' deaths and illnesses such as that of Luo Zhenyu, who stepped down and died in 1940.

In response to the New Order announced by the Konoe Cabinet, the Manchukuo government appointed Mutō Tomio (1904–1998), often called the Joseph Goebbels of Manchukuo for his active management of cultural propaganda, as a director of the Manchukuo Public Information Office (*kōhōsho*) and delegated the authority of cultural policy to him.⁶⁸ As the Summary of Guidelines to Art and Literature (*gēbun shidōyōkō*) was announced in 1941 by the Manchukuo Public Information Office that reorganized all cultural associations and unions in favor of the state's top priorities, art, literature, film, music, and theater were unified into the

⁶⁵ “Anun tēmē kokutene giwaku sējito bunkasēsakuno sai bijutsukagawani hankokutenno kiun [Dark clouds, Suspicion of the National Exhibition, Discriminations in Political and Cultural Policies, Momentum for Anti-national Exhibitions on the Part of Artists]” *Manchuria Daily*, August 5, 1939. As quoted in Egawa, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte,” 191.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Noda Kyūho, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai,” *Binokuni*, October 1939, 50-51.

⁶⁸ Shūkichi Hirayama, “Manshūkokuno gebberusu Mutō Tomioga Manei rijichōni amakasu masahikoo mukaeru [Muto Tomio, "Goebbels of Manchuria," welcomes Amakasu Masahiko as Chairman of Manei],” in *Manshūkoku Gurando Hoteru* [Manchuria Grand Hotel] (Tokyo: Gējutsu shinbunsha, 2022).

state-endorsed federations, where artists and writers were assigned in and mobilized to create propaganda.⁶⁹ Accordingly, the operation of the Manten was transferred to the charge of the Public Information Office, and the exhibition system was reorganized.⁷⁰

From the Fourth Manten in 1941, the Advisory Committee was abolished, and metropole masters were elevated to the jury exclusively; the Art Committee system was completely ended from the Fifth Manten. The number of submissions decreased noticeably, especially since the number of entries in the *Tōyōga* was only half the size of the previous years. From the Fifth Manten, the exhibition title was changed to Manchukuo Art, Craft, Calligraphy Exhibition (*Manshūkoku Bijutsu kōgē shodōten*), where the *Tōyōga* and the *Yōga* sections were integrated into a single division.⁷¹ In 1942, the construction project of a state art museum was completed in Datung Park, Xinjing, where the Sixth Manten and the Seventh Manten were held.⁷² The Sixth and the Seventh Manten invited the same metropole jurors: Yamaguchi Hōshun (1893–1971), Yasui Sōtarō (1888–1955), and Shinkai Takezō (1897–1968). Although the Annual Report of Manchuria reviewed the exhibition as “unprecedentedly, carefully selected,” this is likely a euphemism for the already dwindling venture of the Manten.⁷³ In fact, only 46 *tōyōga* and 256 *yōga* were submitted to the Seventh Manten; the number of *tōyōga* submissions turned out to be only a tenth of the Senshōten.⁷⁴ The Eighth Manten was planned and received submissions in early August 1945. However, the last exhibition was never held due to the Soviet Invasion of Manchukuo beginning on August 9 and Japan’s surrender on August 15.

⁶⁹ Fushi Li, *Manjuguk Chosōnin yōn’gūk* [Manchukuo Korean Theater], (Seoul: Chisik kwa Kyoyang, 2018), 38; *Manshūkoku Gensei*, 1942, 50.

⁷⁰ Iino Masahito, “Manshu bijutsuni tsuite [About Manchukuo Art Exhibition],” in “*Teikoku*” to *bijutsu: 1930-nendai Nihon no taigai bijutsu senryaku*, edit by Omuka Toshiharu (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2010), 592.

⁷¹ Although the official title was changed, the exhibition was still conveniently called by the former title.

⁷² *Manchuria Daily*, August 7, 1944; *Manshū Nenkan* [Annual Report of Manchuria] (1945), 433.

⁷³ *Manshū Nenkan* (1944), 38.

⁷⁴ *Manshū Nenkan* (1945), 433.

Compared to the Senten and the Taiten, the Manten represents an exceptional type of intra-imperial exhibition practice as oscillating between an independent state and a Japanese colony. As a product of Japanese imperial expansion, many scholars observed that the Senten and the Taiten were political apparatuses designed to assimilate colonial subjects into the imperial system, whereas recent scholarship placed more emphasis on how colonial modernity was shaped, perceived, and contested through the practice of modern exhibitions in Korea and Taiwan.⁷⁵ The institutional structure of the Senten and the Taiten within the same intra-imperial network, such as the introduction of the *Tōyōga* and the *Yōga* modeled after the Japanese national painting taxonomy, the screening by Japanese jurors, and the type of awards and installation operation, draws some parallels with and diversions from the Manten.

It is noteworthy to compare the jury members in the Senten and the Taiten. In the Senten, the appointment of the jury was determined by Masaki Naohiko: he designated top-tier artists from the Tokyo Art School and the Bunten and the Teiten jurors to the Senten; for the First Senten, Kawai Gyokudō (1873–1957) and Okada Saburōsuke (1869–1939) were appointed.⁷⁶ Although Korean artist Yi Do-young (1884–1933) from the Literati Association (*Sōwha Hyōppe*), the native Korean literati painting group founded by a former Yi dynasty court painter

⁷⁵ Hye-shin Kim's survey of female figure images displayed in the Senten focuses on colonial subjugation and disciplinary practice. Hye-shin Kim, "Images of Women in the National Art Exhibitions during Korean Colonial Period," in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, edited by Norman Bryson, et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003). Hyun-jeong Ahn's study explores the institutional history, style, and significations of the Senten and suggests the exhibition as the space of colonial modernity. Hyun-jeong Ahn, *Geundae ui siseon, Joseon misul Jeonlamhoe* [Gaze of Modernity: A study on Joseon National Art Exhibition] (Seoul: Ihaksa, 2012). On the Taiten, Hsiu-hsiung Wang overviews the institutional history based on Japanese colonial policy. "The Development of Official Art Exhibitions in Taiwan During the Japanese Occupation," in *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960*, edited by Marlene J. Mayo, et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); also see, Youngna Kim, "Artistic Trends in Korean Painting During the 1930s," in *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960*, edited by Marlene J. Mayo, et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Chuanying Yen, "The Art Movement in the 1930s in Taiwan," in *Modernity in Asian Art*, edited by John Clark (Australia: Wild Peony, 1993); Jung-hee Yi, "*Joseon misul jeonlamhoe changseol e daehayeo*" [On Foundation of Joseon Art Exhibition], *Association of Korean Modern and Contemporary Art History* 3 (1996): 144-145.

⁷⁶ Jung-sun Kim, "Singminji gwanjone silhyon [The Realization of Colonial State Art Exhibition], *Seokdang nonchong* no. 58 (2014): 242.

An Jung-sik (1868–1919), was appointed, it was regarded as a consolatory appointment to disenfranchise the native Korean group, and Yi Do-young’s role in the exhibition was known to be limited.⁷⁷ Unlike the case of Korea, the structure of the Taiten was organized by settler artists who had art training backgrounds in Japan. The Taiten started only with the Japanese settler jurors: Kinoshita Seigai (1887–1988) and Gōhara Kōto (1892–1962) for the *Tōyōga* division, Ishikawa Kinichirō (1871–1945) and Shiozuki Tōho (1885–1954) for the *Yōga* division. For both exhibitions, however, more metropole artists were assigned in the screening process from the mid-1930s.

While the Senten and the Taiten included colonial native artists and settler artists sporadically in the board committee of the jury, the Manten continuously eschewed and downplayed settler artists as a regional committee with passive roles in the screening.⁷⁸ To conciliate the frustrated art circles so that they would enter the central scene, the regional committee system was operated only between the Second and the Fifth Manten but was abolished entirely in 1943. While this indicates Manten’s colonial dependency on the overarching imperial impact, unlike the Senten and the Taiten, Manchu statesmen were granted the title of the jury by the Fourth Manten. Also, compared to the Senten and the Taiten, both were never referred to as “*gukjôn*” or “*guózhān*,” which are the same Chinese characters as “*kokuten*”; the Manten was always called “*kokuten*” within Manchukuo (in Japan, it was dubbed as “Manten” or “Manshūkokuten”). On top of this, the term *tōyōga* was never stabilized to indicate the genre but only remained as the exhibition section in Manchukuo. In colonial Korea, Korea’s native painting practices lost their institutional foundation in favor of creating modern

⁷⁷ Ibid., 251-251.

⁷⁸ Such as in Taiten female *nihonga* artists Chen Jin and *yōga* artist Yen Suirong and Liao Jichun became jurors from 1932 to 1934; in the Senten Yi Do-young continued being in the board until 1927, and starting from 1937, *tōyōga* artists Kim Eunho, Yi Sang-bum, and *yōga* artist Sim Hyung-gu served the jury.

paintings endorsed by the Senten, and the term *tōyōga* triumphed in all traditional-style paintings done by Korean artists until the new terminology “*hangukwha* (Korean painting)” was invented later in the postcolonial reorganization of national art, and “*Joseonwpha* (Joseon painting)” in North Korea.⁷⁹ Likewise, Taiwan renamed *tōyōga* as “*guohua*” during the early phase of the liberation.⁸⁰ In the Manten, however, in conjunction with Chinese-Manchu nationalism and Japanese colonial differentiation, “*chūgokuga*” was preferred to classify traditional paintings by Chinese artists. Japanese artists’ traditional-style paintings were also referred to as *nihonga*. At least until around 1941, different nationalisms coexisted in the transnational environment.

The installation and reform of the Calligraphy section demonstrate how the Manten’s transnational landscape was formed and changed after 1941. Before the Senshōten adopted Calligraphy as the fourth division, the section was applied only in the Senten system as the *Sō/Sagunja* (calligraphy and literati paintings of four gentlemen: plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo) between 1922 and 1931. According to art historian Jung-sun Kim’s survey on the Senten, the Calligraphy section was introduced as a consolatory device to encourage submissions from the former Korean ruling class or gentries to the central system during the era of Cultural Rules in the 1920s.⁸¹ It also functioned to give opportunities for pro-Japanese Korean politicians to participate in and screen the exhibition. When the Senten’s Calligraphy section was replaced by the Craft in 1932 by the requests of Korean and Japanese resident painters demanding the reorganization of the system based on the idea of modernity, calligraphy was no longer

⁷⁹ Sun-pyo Hong, “Haebangnihu hangukyondaemisure jongae gwangbok osimnyon hangukwai iwongujowa galteung [Development of Korean Contemporary Art after Liberation - 50 Years of Independence, Dual Structure and Conflict of Korean Painting], *Misulssa yon’gu* [The Journal of Art History] no.12(1995):315-322.

⁸⁰ Hsiu-hsiung Wang, “The Development of Official Art Exhibitions in Taiwan During the Japanese Occupation,” 113.

⁸¹ Jung-sun Kim, “Study on Historic and Institutional System on the Calligraphy Section of the Joseon Arts Exhibition,” *Journal of Korean Modern & Contemporary Art History* no.41 (2021):37-60.

considered a legitimate modern art form by Koreans.⁸² Later, the tradition of calligraphy in the Senten was passed on to Manchukuo and was never abolished. The Calligraphy section, *hoshō* or *fashu*, literally meaning “official writing,” indicated Manchukuo’s first official language: Chinese. During the era of sovereign formation between 1932 and 1937, the Manchukuo state designated Chinese as the official language, and Japanese officers had to learn Chinese to write and read official documents.⁸³ Compared to the Senten’s adoption of calligraphy as a classical form of leisure, Manten’s *hoshō* embodied the *kenkoku* ideology. When the Manten changed its official name to the Manchukuo Art, Craft, Calligraphy Exhibition, however, the term *hoshō* was replaced by “*shōdo*,” removing its special cachet. In fact, unlike Manchukuo’s initial campaign, Japanese as *kokka-go* (national language) dominated the actual uses of official, institutional, legal, and military languages.⁸⁴

Unfortunately, the Manchuria-Japan Cultural Association published only the first three exhibition catalogues. There are some assumptions as to why Manten stopped publishing exhibition catalogues after all the institutional efforts to establish the state-run art exhibition. However, it has been roughly assumed that due to Manchukuo’s impending war footing and the national saving campaigns, the Shin-Bunten, Senten, and Taiten (later Futen) all produced exhibition catalogs until 1943 and 1944. In my view, the cessation of catalogue publishing was related to the relocation of the exhibition organizer to the Public Information Office, where Mutō’s administrative focus on the propaganda machine for the Co-Prosperity Sphere likely cut the budget for the publication of catalogues.

⁸² “Mijōn gaehyuk undong [Reform movement for the Art Exhibition],” *Dong-a Ilbo*, June 7, 1931.

⁸³ Suk-jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty,” 463.

⁸⁴ Yeounsuk Lee, “The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan,” in *Manchukuo and the State Language* (University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 188.

Despite the scarce visual record, the *Manten* shows ample experimentations that tested the new paradigm of art and a new set of modes and attitudes to artistic modernity in northeast China. One of the foremost forms of newness was bringing a social discipline that involved cultivating public viewership through the state-driven showcase for modern art. Compared to Dalian art exhibitions, mostly located in the department store galleries, the SMRC hall, or the Chamber of Commerce building, the state exhibitions in Xinjing were placed in public schools near Xinjing station and later the state art museum. Opened in 1942, the Datung Park Art Museum in Xinjing was known to be designed after the Imperial Art Museum in Ueno Park.⁸⁵ Also, the exhibition released photography of Manchu court members and state men viewing the exhibition to publicize the authority of the event and encourage public participation. It was a familiar ritual in Japan for imperial family members to attend the *kanten* exhibitions; the photograph in *Asahi News* shows Empress Teimei (Figure 2.15) entering the Teiten in 1922. In the picture taken during the Second *Manten* (Figure 2.16), Prime Minister Zhang Jinghui (1871–1959) appreciates Okada Renseki’s (1904–1995) *Monkeys (saru)*, (Figure 2.17) that received the Honorable Mention. Okada’s *nihonga* work, following the code of Kyoto-school tradition of animal paintings with sophisticated *kegaki* (fine lines to draw hair) techniques in depicting a mother and a child monkey, may symbolize the repositioned artistic hierarchy between Japan and China-Manchuria. Such photographs of viewing the *Manten* were carefully chosen for a political message. In another photograph of the audience (Figure 2.18) from the Second *Manten*, people watch Shirasaki Kaiki’s *yōga* painting *Women at a Festival (matsurino onna)*, (Figure 2.19) that portrays Manchurian women and children holding paper flowers, evoking a sense of welcoming and gendered exoticism. Shirasaki’s work received the Ministry of Social Welfare prize (the first

⁸⁵ “Shinkyō bijutsuin sōsetsu [Establishment of Xinjing Art Academy],” *Tōei*, July 1940, 68.

prize). Visiting the Manten was becoming a new social practice for the masses in response to the state's propagation of what good art of Manchukuo was.

In response to the state's slogan of “*kenkoku*” epitomized by the Xinjing ideology, paintings that glorified the past and the present of the new capital were largely selected. Xinjing-based Ikebe Sadayoshi's (1905–1994) *Landscape (fūkei)*, Figure 2.20), which granted him a Special Selection (*tokusen*) from the First Manten, illustrates the vivid contrast between the barren land and developed cityscape of Xinjing over the horizon. Another Xinjing-based artist Fujii Jumu's *yōga Merry-go-round (kaiten mokuba)*, Figure 2.21) celebrates urban modernity by depicting an amusement park and received the Special Selection (*tokusen*) from the Second Manten. The number of Xinjing selectees both from the *Tōyōga* and the *Yōga* throughout the Manten was remarkable. According to Jaehyuk Choi's survey, the number of *tōyōga* awardees from Xinjing, Dalian, and Fengtian in the First Manten was respectively twenty-nine, two, and thirteen, while the number of *yōga* awardees was sixty-seven, seventeen, and sixteen.⁸⁶ Although, after the boycott, the Second Manten became somewhat lenient to entries from Dalian, the number of selectees and awardees from Dalian remarkably diminished in the Third Manten; no single *yōga* from Dalian received an award in that year. This affords us to reason that the exhibition's Xinjing-centrism deliberately discriminated against non-Xinjing entries.

As visiting metropole masters played a significant role in deciding what good art for Manchukuo was, their decision-making and critical comments played a vital role in maneuvering the style and subject matter that Manchukuo artists would choose. Many selected works demonstrated their references to and artistic background in the Japanese art scene such as the Japan Art Academy (the Inten), the Teiten, and the Second Section Society (the Nikka), about

⁸⁶ Jae-Hyuk Choi, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū [Research on Manchukuo Art Exhibition],” *Kindai gasetu* 16 (2007): 77.

which Noda Kyūho, who screened the *Tōyōga* section at the Second Manten, expressed an unease. He complained that “the works of the Japanese settlers were keeping pace with the course of the central art scene of Japan.”⁸⁷ In the exhibition review, Noda pointed out that Kondō Seiji’s *The Stone Buddha of Datung* (Figure 2.22) somewhat simulated Maeda Seison’s same theme exhibited in the 25th Inten exhibition (Figure 2.23), especially in the composition and placing of a man in a blue garment at the bottom corner.⁸⁸ However, he counted Kondō’s execution of unadulterated outline and coloration and realistic expression as the reason that he granted him a Special Selection. After returning to Manchukuo, Noda wrote a highly charged, imperial-nationalistic statement:

Although some say Sino-Japanese or Manchuria-Japanese Cooperation throughout cultural events, this is not the way we need to adopt. Culturally, Japan is far ahead. Of course, in terms of the old cultural heritages, Japan should go together with old masters, but as a culture that lives today, northeast China is still in its sleep. They are like a frog in the well that does not know of the ocean. They don’t recognize Japanese cultural superiority, still captured in their pride as an old country. [...] Giving them an equal position as Committee or Board Members will worsen what they are and interfere with Sino-Manchurian cultural development. This is not yet that time. Japan should push them with a domineering attitude.⁸⁹

Critiques of the *Yōga* section sounded more benign yet condescending. Umehara Ryūzaburō, who screened the Second Manten, wrote, “If you find one good thing about this beginner’s level exhibition, there is no such thing as old-fashioned or avant-garde here; it retains moderation (*chōyō*).”⁹⁰ In his review, he praised the coloration of Kubo Kuniichi’s *Winter in Harbin* (*harubinno fuyu*, Figure 2.24), which depicts Russian residents in Gauguin-like style, and the naturalism of Li Penghe’s *Bean Paste* (*Doufujiang*, Figure 2.25) that illustrates a street food

⁸⁷ Noda Kyūho, “Tōyōgani tsuite [on Tōyōga],” *Manchuria Daily*, August 9, 1939.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Noda Kyūho, *Binokuni*, August 1939, 39.

⁹⁰ Umehara Ryūzaburō, “kokuteno shijiseyo/ zenman bijutsukani nozomu [Expect the National Exhibition/ Ask for Manchurian Artists],” *Manchuria Daily*, August 5, 1939.

stand. Ishii Hakutei's comment after his screening of the Fourth Manten echoes Umehara by emphasizing "stick to the bass through drawing practice" for Manchukuo artists.⁹¹ Umehara added another subtle account that "many [Manten] boycotters are rather submitting works at the National Exhibition [Shin-Bunten], but due to that, the authority of the National Exhibition itself, especially the authority of the screening, is damaged." He was not happy about the settler artists' reversed foray into their homeland.

The metropole masters' accounts reveal that imperial involvement was powerful and made a great impact on the emergence of Manchukuo's modern art as a form of colonial discipline. This imperial hegemony was accompanied from the beginning by the installation of the intra-imperial art exhibition network, which ratified the Asiatic artistic hierarchy set by Japanese standards and leadership. Their criteria for the Manten roughly illustrated by the term "not old-fashioned or avant-garde, but moderation" and based on "drawing practices" had two intertwined impulses. According to the observation of Choi, the organizers of the Manten repulsed avant-garde movements such as surrealism and abstract paintings for the sake of the state's control of art production, and jurors like Umehara, who served to advocate the stance of both Japan and Manchukuo in the context of the imperial expansion of *yōga*, communicated this intention.⁹² In their vision of Manchukuo as a moderator of the empire, the proper art of Manchukuo was placed between the paradoxical ideals of "Manchurian local color" and the moderate "intra-imperial academic order." Both Manchukuo authorities and metropole jurors echoed each other's similar oxymoronic vision through the Manten.

Another impulse encompassed the inclusion and exclusion strategy of the Manten, which consisted of dynamics other than political and ideological bases. Power dynamics between settler

⁹¹ The comment was made during the round table with Mutō Tomio. *Manchuria Daily*, July 31, 1941.

⁹² Jae-Hyuk Choi, "Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū," 69-70.

residents and metropole visitors were frequently observed. While artists who migrated to Manchuria had attempted to demonstrate their diasporic and local identity and tried to distinguish themselves from metropole visitors, they had mixed feelings vis-à-vis the critics and tendencies in the central art scene in Tokyo and were still reliant on their reception for career success. Settler artists were enthusiastic about building a network with popular metropole artists traveling in Manchukuo, but the market competition was another story.

After 1932, the number of metropole artists who traveled to Manchukuo increased dramatically. Art magazine *Binokuni* (Nation of Beauty)'s editorial essay in 1937 expressed the shared enthusiasm: "if you leave Haneda this morning, the development of transportation allows you to step in the souvenir shop in Xinjing in the evening. But what it truly makes apparent is artists' increasing interest in the lifeline (*seimeisen*) of Manchuria and the Northern Zone. It's not mere admiration for exoticism."⁹³ To scrutinize this boom, Ikebe downplayed the idea that "it is due to the difficulties of living conditions for painters in Japan, and no wonder their works are not necessarily outstanding." He also observed that it is comparable to "selling irresponsible goods by taking advantage of excessive publicity."⁹⁴ The majority of settler artists could not afford to practice art as a full-time job but held concurrent positions through the SMRC, schools, universities, and state-subsidiary companies. For them, metropole artists' business trips posed a major threat to their local market. Art critic Toyota Yukata's essay reveals the details of how metropole artworks were preferred in Manchukuo, especially in Dalian, which resulted in huge inflation in imported art prices. He wrote:

Paintings were desired for newly constructed Japanese houses in Manchuria and China. Why do art dealers go to Dalian these days? In Manchukuo, *nihonga* has been so popular

⁹³ *Binokuni*, August 1937, 72.

⁹⁴ Ikebe Sayayoshi, *Manshūkoku gensei*, 1937, 494.

in recent years. Besides, *nihonga* has a more stable market value than any other type of artwork. It's like public bonds or shares of first-class companies. If you hold on to them firmly, the price of established artists and young artists' works will increase ten to twenty times in a year or two. Prices for Okumura Tokgyū, Sugiyama Yasushi, Tokuoka Shinsen, and Yamaguchi Kayo increased by literally ten to twenty times in the last couple of years. Also, recently, Kanashima Keika and Ōta Chōu are outperforming so much that they are about to leap forward to join the artists above.⁹⁵

Clearly, artworks were consumed as a commodity among growing middle-class residents in Manchukuo, and the relatively smaller-sized *nihonga* market, compared to the increasing significance of *nihonga* as the aesthetic ideology of Manchukuo, was easily exposed to the impact of the metropole artists' aggressive art trading. In Japan, a satirical joke referenced this phenomenon as "art dumping in Manchuria."⁹⁶

In the meantime, metropole *yōga* artists' advance into Manchukuo's art market was also noticeable and deemed problematic. According to surveys by Annika Culver and Choi, the artists of the Independent Art Association (*dokuritsu bijutsu kyōkai*), Fukuzawa Ichirō (1898–1992), Shimizu Toshi (1887–1945), and Suzuki Yasunori (1891–1974), best known for surrealist and fauvist styles that were considered as some of most avant-garde in the mid-1930s, enjoyed artistic inspiration and lucrative opportunities in Dalian, Xinjing, and Harbin through their service to both the imperial and the Manchukuo state's vision.⁹⁷ Another Independence Art Association member Nakayama Takashi (1883–1978), who later traveled to Manchukuo in 1937 and 1939, noted that "it was impossible to sell avant-garde paintings in Japan, but in Northeast China, I was told that they are very successfully sold."⁹⁸ Although such opportunistic tendencies

⁹⁵ Yukata Toyota, "Osaka Kyoto yōshungadan'fu [Osaka-Kyoto Spring Art Scene], *Tōei*, May 1938, 38-39.

⁹⁶ In the art magazine *Binokuni*'s humor section, a joke entitled "Man-buy (Manchuria buy)" illustrated the mass trading of Japanese artworks in Manchukuo. *Binokuni*, May 1938, 72.

⁹⁷ Annika A. Culver, "Surrealism in Service of the State," *Glorify the Empire: Japanese Avant-garde Propaganda in Manchukuo* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); Jae-Hyuk Choi, "Yūtopiato disutopiano hazama nihon'jin'gakano manshū hyōgeno megutte [Between Utopia and dystopia: Over the Japanese painter's expression of Manchuria]," *Fuji Xerox Kobayashi Setsutarō Kinen Kikin*, April 2013.

⁹⁸ *Binokuni* January 1939, as quoted in Jae-Hyuk Choi, "Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyū,"⁷⁵.

were harshly criticized both in Japan and Manchukuo, metropole artists' impulses for economic benefits could not halt until the end of Manchukuo. Essayist Furunaga Toshiaki reported in 1943 that "this year, there are especially so many paintings rushed from Japan [...], and each artist returned with an income from 3,000 to 7000 yen. Recently, paintings have not sold well in Japan, and people are saying, 'hey, let's do this in Manchuria. They will sell well.'"⁹⁹

From the late 1930s, the Japanese avant-garde scene became a target of suppression, and the tension culminated around the time when Fukuzawa Ichirō and art critic Shuzo Takiguchi were arrested and imprisoned for the violation of the Peace Preservation Law in 1941. Due to the overall depressed metropole art market, Japanese artists might have shifted their attention to Manchukuo's market. Experimental styles like Surrealism, Fauvism, and Cubism were, according to Egawa Yoshihide's survey, robustly practiced in Dalian including by the members of the Five Fruits Society, and some of them competed with metropole artists in the Tokyo-based exhibitions.¹⁰⁰ They were double charged as avant-garde artists, especially for surrealism, which was considered the most ill-spirited art form on account of the wartime state, and as Dalian art community members who were often targeted with the criticism that they were "liberal" and "selfish." In conjunction with the metropole jurors' screening stance that emphasized "not too old, but not avant-garde," Dalian settlers were burdened by Manten's exclusion scheme as well as by the metropole's encroachment on their art market.

In Xinjing, the metropole artists' domination of the Manchukuo art scene was not an ideal situation either. In order to curtail the impact of the metropole visitor artists, in 1943 the Manchuria Art Association formed by the order of Mutō, the group in charge of public art events, dispatching war report painters, and distributing art supplies in Manchukuo, banned art

⁹⁹ Furunaga Toshiaki, "Bijutsu [Art]," *Manshū gēbuntsūshin*, July 1943, 15-16.

¹⁰⁰ Egawa, "Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte," 191.

suppliers from selling items to visiting metropole artists.¹⁰¹ Yet it is doubtful whether the policy was effective.

Observing Manchukuo's challenge to build an "independent" state through the centralization of art and culture exposes the complexity and ambiguity of coloniality. Considering Shen Rulin's nuanced statement about the superiority of Japanese art and culture, the Manchukuo government desired to borrow the power of modernity and institutional authority from the Japanese imperial art system. Under the magic slogan "*kenkoku*," the state organized a Xinjing-centered order of art with the cooperation of the metropole's top-notch painters. However, this entailed unstoppable imperial brokers usurping the institutional system and the market of Manchukuo.

Contested Identities

Another new set of social relations encompassing the Manten was growing localism and cosmopolitan nationalism based in major cities, which coexisted with Manchukuo's totalitarian state ideology. Since the development of Manchuria was underway by the SMRC's railway city expansion and the Chinese warlords' regime during the era of informal empire (1905–1931), strong local governance and commerce were formed, based in the cities of Dalian, Fengtian, and Harbin.¹⁰² After the birth of Manchukuo, these cities were reorganized to function for Japan's interest in the continent. By the time Xinjing ideology was activated, Manchukuo's urban settler communities competed with one another for limited opportunities distributed by the predominant

¹⁰¹ "Bijutsushizaini kansuru hōkoku [report on art materials]," *Manshū gēbuntsūshin*, November 1943, 44.

¹⁰² Regarding the local governance in Dalian, see Emer O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil*; on Fengtian, see Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 21.

power of the Kwantung Army. Rivalries developed through the state-sponsored art exhibition and art market competition took place in this context.

Fengtian had a strong sense of settler community membership, in which context the art sphere became rearranged by both official policy and unofficial impulses. As the most populated and historic center of Manchuria, the Fengtian art scene rapidly developed throughout the 1920s and 30s. As Fengtian has been regarded as the most important city for the Manchu-Chinese as the cradle of the Manchu dynasty, the former Zhang clique's turf, and the key tourist and cultural destination, the strategy of the Manchukuo government for Fengtian was to reconstitute art institutions by empowering Japanese settlers. In Fengtian, a combination of political and economic stimuli put the Chinese art scene under Japanese colonial encroachment.

The Fengtian Chinese art circles and educational institutions were vastly invigorated during the Zhang clique's modernization campaign through education reform, including the establishment of the Dongbei University with an art curriculum in 1923 and the Fengtian Academy of Fine Arts (*Fengtian meishu zhuanke xuexiao*) in 1924.¹⁰³ During the era of budding Chinese nationalism in Fengtian under Warlordism, introducing art education in modernizing traditional Chinese style and studying Western paintings was regarded as a gauge of the nation's advancement. The academy's first principal was the Korean-Chinese Han Leran (1898–1947), best known for his Communist Party activism and Dunhuang research.¹⁰⁴ As a graduate of the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Han created a modern art education curriculum by introducing Western painting, Chinese painting, Sculpture, and Art Education majors; he also invited his

¹⁰³ Guangzie Shen, *Min guo liao shen jin shi shu hua: 1911-1949* vol.2, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Haiping Ma, “Hanleran jian biao [Brief Table on Han Leran]” *Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao* (meishu yu sheji ban) [Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts (Art and Design Edition)] no. 6 (2018): 199–205; Cao Yu, “Hanleran yu fengtian meishu zhuanmen xuexiao guanxi kao [A survey of the relationship between Han Leran and Fengtian Art College],” *Mei shu da guan* no. 2(2020): 91-92.

Shanghai colleagues Lu Shaofei (1903–1995) and Wang Pingling (1898–1964) as professors.¹⁰⁵

In 1925, despite the tremendous success of the curriculum within a year, Han suddenly disappeared, and the academy was reorganized by local board members consisting of teachers, students, and elites in Fengtian.¹⁰⁶ After the Manchuria Incident, the academy closed shortly until the alumnus Xu Yannian (1905–1982) became the principal and reformed the school in 1933, while the number of registered students rapidly increased by 1935.¹⁰⁷ However, the newly issued Fengtian Government Bylaw in 1936 ordered the abolishment of all private schools and the assimilation of the education system in Manchukuo into the public system. The academy was forced to disband and be reorganized into the Japanese system.¹⁰⁸ Between 1935 and 1942, six annual winter Manchurian-Chinese salon exhibitions named the Fengtian Art Association Exhibition (*Fengtian meishu xiehui*) were held under the sponsorship of the Fengtian local government, and censorship was introduced by Japanese administrative officers on behalf of the Kwantung Army.¹⁰⁹ Some leading Fengtian local artists, including Xu Yannian, fled to Nanjing to promote anti-Japanese propaganda after 1936, and others became revolutionary artists after 1945.¹¹⁰

Although not many records about Fengtian Japanese settlers survived, the Fengtian Yōga Association started holding small private salon exhibitions in 1921. In 1938, when Fengtian artists boycotted the Mantien, the group held the 18th annual exhibition at the art gallery in the Manmo Keori Department store with seventy selections out of 352 submissions.¹¹¹ The group lasted at least until 1941 with the 21st annual exhibition. Kawanami Hiroshi, who had contributed

¹⁰⁵ Cao Yu, 92.

¹⁰⁶ According to Cao Yu's survey, Han moved to Soviet and studied at an art school with pseudonym. Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Guangzie Shen, 18.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ *Atelier*, December 1938, 103.

to Dalian art exhibitions since the late 1920s as a representative of Fengtian, formed the South Manchuria Art Association in 1936, and the number of members reached 450 by 1938.¹¹² Most members of the Fengtian Yōga Association had cross-membership with the South Manchuria Art Association.¹¹³

Amidst vocal complaints about the unfair treatment of leading Manchurian-resident artists, Fengtian artists decided to organize the Fengtian Prefecture Art Exhibition (*Hōtenshōten*, Figure 2.26) as their annual *Salon d'Automne* starting in 1938. The Fengtian Exhibition was developed to the point that it threatened the prestige of the Manten. The two exhibitions were held during the same autumn season, and the Fengtian Exhibition adopted the same sectional system of Tōyōga, Yōga, Craft, and Calligraphy and later added Epigraphy (*j.kinseki*; *c.Jinshi*).¹¹⁴ The number of submissions for each section was successful enough to compete with the Manten, which was an unprecedented scale for a non-state art exhibition. For example, the submission for the fourth exhibition marked a total of 583 works (223 *tōyōga*, 277 *yōga*, 30 craft, 53 calligraphy); *tōyōga* submissions outnumbered the Manten (152).¹¹⁵ The *Tōyōga* submission *Asia Co-Prosperity (kōa*, Figure 2.27) by a *nihonga* artist surnamed Abe portraying a soldier on *maki-e* (scroll) form, was sold to the Consul of the German Embassy. The audience number for the fifth exhibition was record-breaking as 4,000 visitors dashed in on Sunday.¹¹⁶ Chinese traditional-style painters Qian Lianke and Sun Yuquan, who received Special Selections in the first Manten, participated as screening jurors with Japanese artists.¹¹⁷ By allowing more

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ For example, *yōga* painter Noda Taketarō held the chair position in the Fengtian *yōga* Association and the board committee in South Manchuria Art Association at the same time.

¹¹⁴ *Manchuria Daily*, July 29, 1941.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Manchuria Daily*, Aug 2, 1941.

¹¹⁷ *Tōei*, July 1941, 71-72 as quoted in Iino Masahito, “<Manshū bijutsu>nenpyō [Chronological table of Manchuria Art]” in *Teikoku to bijutsu*, 793.

traditional forms of art, such as *Kinseki*, and inviting Manchu-Chinese artists to be part of the screening jury, the organizers of the Fengtian exhibitions attempted to absorb local Manchu-Chinese elites in their rivalry against the totalitarian pressure of the Manten. According to the *Annual Report of Manchukuo*, the Fengtian Prefecture Art Exhibition was canceled between 1943 and 1944 after seven exhibitions.

The Fengtian Prefecture Art Exhibition provides the substance to question the popular understanding of settler colonialism as a singular, centralized power. This understanding disregards the peculiar nature of Manchukuo colonialism that proceeded with a strong city character and cosmopolitan nationalism. Unlike the continued unsympathetic treatment of the Dalian art scene, the central government of Xinjing tried to entice the Fengtian art circle into the unified salon system. The Third Manten traveled to Fengtian; *Manchuria Daily* reported that the travel exhibition in Fengtian gained special attention from audiences as many Fengtian submissions were selected that year, and they thought that it elevated the pride of their hometown.¹¹⁸ Later, the Fengtian Exhibition made a travel show in Xinjing in response.¹¹⁹ It is interesting that the Fengtian Exhibition used the term *Kokuga* (national painting) for the *Tōyōga* section from the sixth exhibition. This may reveal the settlers' nationalism in Fengtian formed by strong local colonial identities, whereas it further threw local Manchu-Chinese identities into question.

Throughout the history of the Manten and the Fengtian Art Exhibitions, one of the most troubled nomenclatures might be “*Man-kei* (Manchu-origin)” or “*Manjin* (Manchurian).” The Japanese suffix “*kei* (origin)” indicates different racial identities of Manchurians such as “*Nit-kei* (Japanese),” “*Sen-kei* (Korean),” “*Hak-kei* (White Russian),” and “*Mōko-kei* (Mongolian).” For

¹¹⁸ *Manchuria Daily*, August 20, 1940.

¹¹⁹ Egawa, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte,” 191.

the Republican Chinese, the national identity of “Manchurian” was more strictly applied to the Manchu people to rule out the rivalry regime in the continent. For the Japanese side, after the birth of Manchukuo, the linguistic subversion took place in the change from Chinese to Manchurian along with Manchukuo’s state identity formation. The former Chinese things (people, culture, etc.) were switched to indicate Manchurian things, although both words were used interchangeably. While Chinese coolies that migrated from China were not considered “Manchurian,” but “foreigners,” Han Chinese and other minorities belonging to the former Republican Chinese regime registered in Manchukuo territory were loosely categorized as “Manchurian” or “*Man-kei*.” Chinese cultural heritage was, in historian Mariko Tamanoi’s account, “once denied and reconstructed [as][sic] pan-Asian and anticommunist campaign tools.”¹²⁰

In the field of art, the *man-kei* was even more ambiguous and arbitrary. Going back to the round table held between regional artists and the Manten (Senshōten) organizers in 1937, artists who were frustrated by the great impact of the metropole masters serving as jurors argued that “all art produced in Manchuria must be handled by the ‘Manchurians’ alone.”¹²¹ Japanese settler artists in the press often referred to themselves as Manchurians (*manshūjin*) or the people of Manchukuo (*manshūkoku no hito*) when it came to the conflict vis-à-vis the metropole people. Except for this kind of specific situation, settler artists clearly separated themselves as *nit-kei* from *man-kei*, which broadly indicated that non-Japanese people were a metaphor for inferiority. This metaphor was built on Japan’s social construction of the “Other,” as Edward Said observed

¹²⁰ Mariko Tamanoi, *Crossed Histories: Manchuria in the Age of Empire* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 11.

¹²¹ “*Honsha shusaibijutsu zadankai senshōbijutsuten no sēdono kakuritsu* [Discussion Meeting for Art sponsored by the head office-Establishment of the system of the Imperial Art Exhibition], *Dai Shinkyō Nippō*, October 1, 1937, as quoted in Egawa, “*Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankaio megutte*,” 191.

in the Western representation of the “Orient” in art and literature, which created an imaginative geography of backwardness in order to assist the colonizer’s identity formation.¹²²

Despite the visible and vigorous campaign of “Harmony of Five-Race” proliferating through the practice of the *Manten*, Chinese-Manchurian artists often remained in their own league, and the voices of artists loosely categorized as “*Man-kei*” were muffled in the discursive arena. While the first two *Manten* exhibitions provided selection benefits to *man-kei* submissions and thus caused complaints from Japanese artists, the *man-kei* works were displayed in a separate gallery during the Third *Manten*.¹²³ The Xinjing-based critic Ikebe Aori mentioned that “it is generally agreed that works of *man-kei* artists lack aesthetic sense.”¹²⁴ Hired as an advisory committee member for the Second *Manten*, metropole *nihonga* master Noda Kyūho left an unfavorable review on *man-kei tōyōga* in a Japanese art magazine:

Man-kei artists are still obsessed with the late Qing styles. They [artists in the exhibition] do not follow up on the prosperity and new trends of the Japanese art scene; maybe they need to sleep less and keep up the training. Overall [art practice in] Manchukuo is far behind. There are not many full-time artists here. It is also apparent that *man-kei* rarely consider painting as their profession but only take it as a lofty pastime.¹²⁵

Among the multiple pungent commentaries that he left after the Second *Manten*, where he set *nihonga* as the new hegemony of *tōyōga*, his criticism of the *man-kei* may reveal Manchukuo’s uneven de-Sinicizing and re-Sinicizing identity formations of the Chinese people. Qing-style paintings, both in Republican China and Manchukuo, often indicated negativity in different contexts. In Manchukuo, in its special political composition with the last Qing emperor Puyi and Manchu statemen giving legitimacy to the state, the expulsion of the Qing dynasty was

¹²² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3, 7, 49.

¹²³ Ikebe Aori, “Dai sankai kokuten no miru [Observing the third national exhibition],” *Kankō Tōa* [Travel East Asia] (October 1941), 86.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ My translation. Noda Kyūho, “Manshukoku bijutsuden,” *Bi no Kuni*, October 1939.

not so direct; for Japan, detaching Manchuria both from Republican China and Qing became a sensitive issue oscillating between re-Sinicizing and Japanizing Manchukuo. Perhaps what made the imperialist Noda truly uncomfortable was the remnant of the Qing dynasty that signified pre-modern feudalism as well as the former leadership of East Asia.

In the *Tōyōga* Section, there was also conflict and conversion of identities among *man-kei* artists. For example, the artist Gao Chengxian complained that “the juries marginalized Chinese traditional paintings but only favored *nihonga*. Chinese paintings of high quality failed to be selected.”¹²⁶ There was a different perception of the notion and value of traditional *oriental* art between Japanese artists’ imperialism and the Chinese nationalist consciousness. The submissions from Chinese artists were largely based on ink paintings using traditional techniques such as Mi-dots that naturally embraced amateurism rather than perfect outlining and compositional coordination, whereas Japanese *nihonga* submissions incorporated colors, perspectives, tones, and panoramic compositions. Yu Yuanshou, who was already an established traditional-style painter in Fengtian, was awarded the Special Selection in the first Manten in 1938 for his *Spring on the Border* portraying the landscape of the Great Wall (Figure 2.28).¹²⁷ Compared to other Chinese entries that employed literati or Japanese *nanga* style, the painting exploited the composition and coloration of *nihonga* landscapes. Literati style paintings by Chinese participators were largely selected in the First Manten, but the number of selectees in those styles had profoundly dwindled and *nihonga* styles started taking up a major part of the section.

There were also some Chinese artists selected in the *Yōga* Section who were classified as *man-kei*. Among them, Xinjing-based Liu Lungfeng (1892–?) proved his versatility by

¹²⁶ Jae-Hyuk Choi, “Manshukoku bijutsu tenrankai kenkyu,” 72.

¹²⁷ Fengtian (Mukden) made another important art venue for Chinese professional painters.

submitting two paintings each to the *Tōyōga* and *Yōga* sections. In the First Manten, his two-panel screen *nihonga Waterside Village* (Figure 2.29) and realistic *yōga Welfare during the War* (Figure 2.30) were selected in each section. His *yōga* portrays benevolent Japanese soldiers volunteering to supply daily goods to Chinese children, one of the rare war paintings in the Manten, suggesting his willingness to conform to the post-1937 propaganda. He was also promoted to an Art Committee from the Second Manten onwards and submitted entries without screening. Although Liu was born to a Japanese Military School professor father who was a naturalized Japanese, and was also raised in Japan as Japanese citizen, his assigned category remained *man-kei* artist. Another celebrated Chinese artist was Xinjing-based Lee Pinghe, who participated in the Manten every year and became a member of the Art Committee from the Third exhibition, making a series of paintings portraying Chinese folk life for the exhibitions. He was born to a Chinese father and Japanese mother and was raised in Japan during his youth. The most successful and celebrated “*man-kei*” artists in the Manten had Japanese nationality.

The notion of Manchukuo citizenry or so-called Manchukoan was an empty signifier. In order to activate the notion of racial harmony and complete state sovereignty, the legislation of the Manchukuo Nationality Law had been discussed multiple times since 1932, yet there were complications concerning dual citizenship for Japanese and Koreans that thwarted the Manchukuo state’s independence, and the treatment of former Republican Chinese citizens and coolie immigrants.¹²⁸ The law was never officially legislated, and the question of who was true Manchurian was never solved. Most Japanese resident communities hoped to maintain Japanese nationality for colonial privileges, and their settler identity remained fluid.

¹²⁸ See Masataka Endō, *Kindai Nihon no shōkuminchi tōchi ni okeru kokuseki to koseki: Manshū, Chōsen, Taiwan* [The nationality and family registration issues in modern Japan’s colonization: Manchuria, Joseon and Taiwan] (Tokyo: Asahi shoten, 2010), 278-279.

The attempt to construct Manchukuoan sovereignty through an installation of the state-sponsored art exhibition in Xinjing ended up deconstructing its sovereignty by accommodating the intertwined imperial power, nationalism, and its brokers. Japanese settlers made claims to their local characteristics in relation to the central state and the metropole visitors propelled the colonial subjugation of the *man-kei*. Throughout the history of the Manten, the hopeful propaganda of the *kenkoku* and racial harmony proceeded in the direction that reconfirmed colonial inequality. Nihei Tōkan's realistic *yōga Concordia* (Figure 2.31) featured in the Third Manten, which illustrates a public park scene of Manchurians and Japanese mingling around an erhu player, visualizing a never realized utopian Manchukuo.

After 1942, many *tōyōga* works in the Manten communicated wartime propaganda more directly. In the Fifth Manten, Yoshitake Takashi's *Under the Glare of the Sun* (*genyōno shitani*, Figure 2.32), a Special Selection *nihonga* work, depicts Japanese soldiers conducting a topographic survey with an optical level device. Xie Yousheng's work *Final Victory* (Figure 2.33) which received a Special Selection in the Sixth Manten, engages with the concept of the home front by illustrating a peaceful landscape of a rural village with working civilians in the style inspired by the Yuan dynasty landscape paintings. In that year, *nihonga* master Matsubayashi Keigetsu, who screened the Senshōten, revisited Xinjing and celebrated Japan's completion of empire building in Manchukuo:

[Manchukuo's] development was remarkably fast, and I could not help but stare at it with wonder. Looking at the large-scale design of the government roads, we cannot help but just be amazed at the greatness of the military and political power of the Japanese Empire. In its steamy weather, I was filled with joy in gaining light on the future of Great Japan, the leader of East Asia.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Matsubayashi Keigetsu, "*manshūkoku ni tsukaishite*[In Manchukuo]," *Kokka*, January 1943, 18.

Conclusion

The Manten started in 1937 (including Senshōten) and held a total of eight exhibitions by the end of Manchukuo's existence. The practice of the Manten as an official salon was intrinsically political. The Manchukuo state, under the supervision of the Kwantung Army, borrowed metropole artistic hegemony to centralize the art system and propagandized for the state ideology. Political Xinjing-centrism went hand in hand with cultural and artistic centrism in the new capital. The series of state-sponsored art exhibitions in Manchukuo since 1934 played a significant role in relocating the heart of Manchukuo from Dalian to Xinjing. Manchukuo's process of institutionalizing art echoes the shifted sovereignty from early Manchukuo (before 1937)'s transnationalism, represented by the "kingly way" to the empty rhetoric of "state formation spirit" that was actually operated by the Co-Prosperity Sphere and more powerful imperial control in wartime.

The effect of the Manchukuo sovereign exercise often went in unexpected directions and was not always beneficial to the settlers' communities. As the power scene in art was relocated to Xinjing, uncomfortable dynamics among Japanese settler communities and the metropole visitors were spawned. The center-periphery hierarchy and metropole encroachment on the Manchukuo art market troubled settler artists, who had expanded economic and cultural dominance over local Chinese-Manchurian and non-Japanese diasporas/ethnic groups. The tension eventually led to imperial-colonial competition among the Japanese. While settlers shaped strong localism based on the notion of self-government and mercantilism, their cultural and nationalistic identity was not completely detached from the imperial metropole, which made their identities unstable. The Manten promised the transnational nationalism of multiracial

members, different localities, pan-Asiatic integrity, modernity, and succession of oriental timelessness yet, in reality, reiterated the unequal and uneven experience of colonial hierarchy.

**CHAPTER THREE. Racializing Modernism of “Other” Spaces:
Kai Mihachirō (1903–1979) and Manchukuo Local Color**

*Utopias are sites with no real place.
They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of
society.*
—Michel Foucault, 1967¹

*There is a hell-like coal mine.
There are thousands of poor coolies who never cease to work.*
—Jia Xiao, 1930²

For young, low-profile artists, Manchuria was a land of new opportunities. By the mid-1930s, the migration rush of Japanese artists to a less competitive and more profitable Manchurian art market shaped settler art communities in major cities. The South Manchuria Railway Company (SMRC), the headquarters of Japan’s continental imperialism, created bounty job opportunities and subsidized art practices for settler artists who often experienced financial distress in their home country. In Dalian, the cosmopolitan city often referred to as the “Shanghai of Manchuria,” over 300 Japanese artists were registered, and an average of 70 art exhibitions were placed a year by 1933.³ As discussed in the previous chapter, settler artists shaped strong localism and claimed ownership of “continental identity” through art productions and practices, by competing to Manchu-Chinese artists, other Japanese communities in rival Manchukuo cities, and visiting artists from the home country.

¹ The notion of *heterotopia* (literally meaning “other place”) has been discussed to shape multi-layered colonial experiences in postcolonial discourses about Manchuria. Although often regarded as a source of confusion and incomplete, Michel Foucault’s *heterotopia* in *Of Other Spaces* addresses how space is articulated not only by geography but by political, social, cultural, and undoubtedly artistic human activities and relations. “Of Other Spaces: Michel Foucault.” In *Theatre and Performance Design* (Routledge, 2010), 97-104.

² Nationalist poet Jia Xiao expressed feelings of loss and grief for native residents in Liaodong province, who lost their agricultural lands and became wage laborers through the industrialization process led by Japanese railway imperialism in Manchuria. Jia Xiao, “Feelings After a Farewell,” *Taidong Ribao* [Taitung Daily], August 24, 1930. Quoted in Yumao Zhang *Dongbei xian dai wen xue da xi, 1919-1949* [Northeast Modern Literature Series, 1919-1949] (Shenyang chu ban she, 1996), 130.

³ *Manshū nenkan: Shōwa 8-nen* (Dairen: Manshū Bunka Kyōkai, 1933), 564-565.

This chapter examines Japanese *nihonga* (Japanese traditional-style painting) artist Kai Mihachirō (1903–1979), who started as a low-profile man in Japan and became a leading figure in the Manchurian art scene through his profound local-themed art and folklore research. Despite his active career in Manchukuo, however, his name has been nearly forgotten in the narratives of modern Japanese art history. While Japanese settler artists have been insufficiently studied due to their ambiguous community memberships and distance from the metropole art scene, their artistic practices and networks provide vital evidence to understand the complexities of colonial and sovereign practice and thus “inner workings” of Manchukuo.

The Japanese imperialism in Manchukuo produced not only privileges for Japanese settlers but also the uncertainty and instability of their dual identity vis-à-vis their homeland counterparts.⁴ Settler artists like Mihachirō redefined their urban modernity and shaped collective settler identities by being an observer and collector of the ethnic others. By examining a settler artist’s footprint on researching, collecting, and curating Manchurian folk arts and culture, this chapter intends to show how imperialism and localism are hybridized to shape unique and multivocal settler identities.

This case study thus articulates how Japanese settler artists and cultural enthusiasts negotiated their cultural autonomy and social leverage by claiming ownership of the Manchurian “locality” amid the shifting political landscape. My discussion begins by exploring Mihachirō’s art training background in Japan, which instilled methodologies and tastes in his future art production. The discussion continued to examine how Mihachirō shaped his artistic and social identity as an affiliate of the SMRC and Dalian settlers’ communities by reviewing his early coolie drawings published through *Kyōwa* magazine. He and his new entourage, after the mid-

⁴ Suk-jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty,” 463.

1930s, actively produced the notion of “local color” through researching, collecting, and reproducing Manchuria’s folk items. His fascination with ethnological research on multiethnic customs and material culture later shared the domain with the militarist state’s enactment of racial harmony through regional studies. I also observe Mihachirō’s career success culminating in the *Manten*, where he created *nihonga* within the local color aesthetics; While this embodied the locus where sovereignty and authenticity met, it only reflected the empire and imperial ideology. I shed light on how the ethnographic gaze in the colonial stage partook in the practice of racial hierarchy and intrinsic colonial violence, coinciding with the state’s groundwork for racial construction for coercive socioeconomic integration and facilitating wartime propaganda.

In Search of Modern Nihonga amid the Taishō and Shōwa Transition

Mihachirō was born on January 24, 1903, in Kumamoto Prefecture on the island of Kyushu. Kumamoto is perhaps best known for its historic daimyo castle, unique bamboo, ceramic crafts, and folk toys, and strong regionalism shaped in the samurai eras. Mihachirō was the first son of his father Fukuzō, a well-off fisherman, and his mother Chie, who was from a wealthy, local agricultural family. Fukuzō’s non-professional passion for carving and wood crafting naturally inclined Mihachirō’s early development of his talent and interest in art. Folk-craft productions, including pottery, toys, and other handcraft souvenir items, were not uncommon sidelines among farming communities for making extra income, but Fukuzō’s case was likelier leisure as a regional farmer-fisherman. After his father lost his fortune in rice-futures trading, Mihachirō entered Arita Technical High School in 1918 and studied design. In 1922, he obtained admission to the prestigious Kyoto Municipal Specialized School for Painting (*Kyoto*

Shiritsu Kaiga Senmon Gakkō) where he practiced *nihonga* for five years under renowned painters Fukuda Heihachirō (1892–1974) and Kikuchi Keigetsu (1879–1955).⁵

Despite distances to the centers of art scenes in Tokyo and Kyoto, Kyushu artists started standing out in the late Taishō and Shōwa periods for their distinctive modernist and avant-garde styles. Mihachirō’s adviser, Fukuda Heihachirō, was one of Kyushu-born *nihonga* artists and designers who achieved great success via Japanese-state art exhibitions then called the Teiten. Many of Heihachirō’s awarded works feature an exquisite combination of Song and Yuan academic flower-and-bird painting and a Western sense of realism, contributing to the “*Shin(new)-nihonga*” that flourished in the Kyoto art scene in the 1920s.⁶ Heihachirō’s originality also came from his versatility of hybridizing Japanese traditional designs, such as Rinpa School styles, with art deco and early abstract modernism; for example, his two-panel painting *Ripples* (*Sazanami*, Figure 3.1) in 1932 induces a sense of meditational quality with an abstract and decorative scheme. Heihachirō and his works significantly influenced Mihachirō’s artistic career.

The trends in Taishō *nihonga* academism evolved and challenged Mihachirō’s early style. Mihachirō’s art school days were probably difficult due to his family’s destitution and the economic recession after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. He managed to study by getting a job with a boarding option at a local brewing company in Kyoto. During this time, he completed *Bamboo Forest* (*chikurin*, Figure 3.2), a monumental-sized (362 x152 centimeters) two-panel painting that suggests his avowed interest in the late Ming incorporated into the regimen of the

⁵ Fukuoka City Museum of Art, *Kaimihachirōten: gendaini ikiru atarashī suibokugano sekai* [Kai Mihachirō Exhibition: The World of Contemporary New Ink-painting] (Fukuoka: Fukuoka City Museum of Art, 1982), 74.

⁶ John Szostak, *Painting Circles: Tsuchida Bakusen and Nihonga Collectives in Early Twentieth Century Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2013),157.

Kyoto-style *nihonga* training.⁷ The practice painting (*shita-e*) of Mihachirō's diploma project *Snowy Lake Biwa* in 1927 (Figure 3.3), a landscape of the historic lake often featured in Japanese ancient stories and verses, proves his interest and contribution to *nihonga*'s Asiatic provenance with ink brushwork conjuring up *nanga* or literati-style painting's traditional values, which also encounters impressionist and post-impressionist fervor among Taishō *nihonga* artists.⁸

Borrowing the words of art historian John Szostak, there is an implicit and contextual agreement about post-impressionism and *nanga* among Japanese artists and critics as “culturally distinct yet analogous modes of painting in matters of intention as well as style.”⁹ The mixed modernist aesthetics thrived via the language of *nihonga*, including (post-)impressionism, cubism, dadaism, expressionism, and constructivism, and expanded the capacity of the field by merging the dichotomy between *nihonga* and *yōga*; it simultaneously revealed the genre's perpetual volatility of identity.¹⁰ Such identity anxiety was innate to the formation, hiatus, and recession of *nihonga*, from Meiji *mōrōtai* (hazy style) attempted by Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) and his Japan Art Institute (*Nihon bijutsuin*) colleagues and critics' condemnation as a “simultaneous collapse of both *nihonga* and *yōga*.”¹¹ In the short memoir of Mihachirō's son and *nihonga* artist Kai Daisaku (1937–2017), Fukuda Heihachirō often advised Mihachirō that the direction he was

⁷ *Kyūshū no kao* [Faces of Kyushu] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1973), 142.

⁸ Art historian Alicia Volk examines Impressionism as a mutual influence between European and Japan. As much as Japonisme's impact on the formation of Impressionism, Impressionist works significantly influenced the formation of the Japanese modern art world. Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yoroze Testugotō and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 16-17.

⁹ John Szostak, *Painting Circles*, 52.

¹⁰ *Nihonga*' flexible or ambiguous identity has been highlighted by many scholars. See Chelsea Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness? The Ends of *Nihonga*, Then and Now,” *ARTMargins* (Cambridge, Mass.) 4, no. 1 (2015): 27-60; Sato Doshin, *'Nihon bijutsu' tanjo: Kindai Nihon no 'kotoba' to senryaku* [The Birth of *Nihonga*: The language and strategies of Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), 88-90; Ellen P. Conant, Steven D. Owyong, and J. Thomas Rimer, *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968* (Saint Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995).

¹¹ Shigemi Inaga and Kevin Singleton, “Okakura Kakuzō and India: The Trajectory of Modern National Consciousness and Pan-Asian Ideology Across Borders,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, Vol. 24 (2012): 49.

pursuing was “very complicated to achieve,” and often criticized then-current Kyoto painting styles as “paintings filled with lined patterns without any impression.”¹² Despite scarce resources about his art school days in Kyoto, it is assumable that Mihachirō was striving for his artistic originality beyond formalistic mannerism.

In the fever of the Taishō *nihonga* world in seeking novel styles and subject matter to break the intrinsic limit of the genre and prove the genre’s given nationalistic mission, Mihachirō was no exception. Among Mihachirō’s interests during this time were sketching Buddhist sculptures in Nara and reading Marxist materialism and Upanishad teachings; this affected his early career.¹³ In 1927, he went to China as a member of a team, led by photographer Sakurai Ichirō (1893–1928) to research rock-cut Buddhist caves at Yungang Grottoes in Shanxi, where he spent two months sketching, rubbing, and photographing.¹⁴ Around the founding and throughout the span of Manchukuo, Japanese artists’ travel to Yungang Grottoes, a superb example of the early sinicization of Central Asian Buddhism in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534), became extremely popular and further propagandized for the Japanese imperial march beyond the Great Wall. Sakurai’s photography (Figure 3.4) made one the earliest example of comprehensive academic research on the site before the production of tourist images became highly commoditized.¹⁵ This might leave a great impact on Mihachirō’s later enthusiasm for adventure photojournalism.

¹² Kai Daisaku, “Kai Mihachirō,” *Kaimihachirōten*, 70.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Joining SMRC in 1923 he started researching and photographing Manchuria and Northeast China, and published preorder photography periodicals for the Japanese audience. After his early death after the research trip to Shanxi province in 1928, the famous Fuchikami Hakuyo (1889-1960) continued developing the Japanese photography scene in Manchuria.

¹⁵ Shō Takeba, *Ikyōno modanizumu= The Development of Japanese Modern Photography in Manchukuo* (Tokyo: kokushokan kōkai, 2017), 8-9.

Mihachirō's early days as an art student in Kyoto were laid upon the increasing influence of Marxism and public concerns in Japan as an "organic response" to "the political, economic, and social difficulties plaguing Japan during Taishō and early Shōwa."¹⁶ Among young and intellectual Japanese, Marxism became commonplace; for instance, completed works of Marx and Engels were mass-produced as a dollar book (*en'pon*) in the Japanese book market.¹⁷ After Mihachirō's return from China, he became an art teacher in a high school in Fukuoka, Kyushu, where he was dedicated to an afterschool book club. Due to his leftist interests in socialist studies through the club, which came to be an object of political oppression in the late 1920s, he could not continue his teaching job.¹⁸ In early 1930, he departed for Dalian, the central city of Japanese commerce and colonial railway expansion in Manchuria, where he started making a living off drawing murals and posters for cafés. There, he shaped his new identity as a professional artist and a member of the Japanese settler community.

Artistic Flourishing along with Coolie Sketches

Japanese artist circles in Dalian were propelled by the SMRC's robust cultural research and public promotion campaigns. The company's copious and well-paid positions attracted youngsters fresh out of national top colleges, and many were so-called "Marx boys," who were largely influenced by liberal and mainly anticolonial left-wing culture in their college life and frustrated amid budding political anxiety and a surge of unemployment.¹⁹ In the 1920s and

¹⁶ Germaine A. Hoston, "Marxism and National Socialism in Taishō Japan: The Thought of Takabatake Motoyuki." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (1984): 44.

¹⁷ Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 53-54.

¹⁸ *Kaimihachirōten*, 74.

¹⁹ Former SMRC researcher Itō Takeō's memoir describes his experience working for the research department of SMRC from recruitment to the closure of the company in 1945. Takeo Ito and Joshua A Fogel. *Life Along the South Manchurian Railroad* (Taylor and Francis, 2016), x-xv.

1930s, job opportunities with the SMRC were a decent countermeasure for young painters, designers, and photographers escaping from the saturated Japanese job market, and many cut a fine appearance in the stage of Manchuria in the 1930s and early 1940s. The colonial boomtown of Dalian is often memorized as a *heterotopia*—a multidimensional space of dissonance that generates uncertainty— where Japanese, European, and Chinese cultural modes are fused in colonial modernity, shaping the space of novel subject matters and encounters.²⁰ Manchurian cities were set out somewhere between Japanese urban modernity, the nostalgia of timeless Asia, and quasi-Paris, traversing from ghetto villages and brothels to dancehalls and department stores. The lure of exotic peripherals of imperial territories attracted modern Japanese men who had already internalized European eyes of imperial romanticism in observing the racial and gendered “other” as their wellsprings of creativity.²¹

Around the end of 1930, Mihachirō obtained a part-time job as a magazine illustrator for *Manmō*. His first cover illustration created in the December edition portrays a snowy winter scene of the continent with a Chinese man pulling a horse wagon (Figure 3.5). Employing a cartoon-like brush drawing, the cover image resonates with the romantic sentiments of the new settler encountering a harsh continental winter, as Mihachirō described that “feeling like being Raskolnikov [of *Crime and Punishment*].”²² He further participated in covers and a series of illustrations depicting lively scenes of Chinese villages and customs through *Manmō*.

After a year of freelance living in Dalian, Mihachirō was appointed in 1931 to the Editorial Department of the SMRC Employee Association (*Mantetsu shainkai hōdōbu*) where he

²⁰ Yoann Bazin and Philippe Naccache, “The Emergence of Heterotopia as a Heuristic Concept to Study Organization,” *European Management Review* 13 no.3 (2016): 226; Eun-hee Kwak, “Manchuria: Heterotopia Located in between the Interstice,” *Inmun yeongu* no. 70 (2014): 86.

²¹ Shinobu, Ikeda. “The Allure of a ‘Woman in Chinese Dress’: Representation of the Other in Imperial Japan.” In *Croissant, Doris, Catherine Vance Yeh, and Joshua S. Mostow. Performing “Nation”: Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 348.

²² Kai Daisaku, “Kai Mihachirō,” *Kaimihachirōten*, 71.

created illustrated reports for the employees' magazine *Kyōwa*, meaning harmony. The SMRC Employee Association initiated in 1926 with 18,300 members was regarded as the heart of Japanese settler society and the symbol of extended Taishō democracy in Dalian.²³ Due to the in-between status of the SMRC oscillating between bureaucracy and a for-profit company, the association propagated as a hybrid unit that bolstered both the Japanese Empire and the self-governance of “the kingdom of the SMRC (*mantetsu no ōkoku*).”²⁴ The editorial department was a subsidiary team consisting of staff on a contract basis and regular SMRC employees who supervised them, and the treatment of full-time editorial staff was never equal to full-time SMRC employees.²⁵ According to Itō Takeo (1895–1984), an elite member of the Research Department and secretary-general of the association, who supervised *Kyōwa* in 1933 and 1934, recalled that Mihachirō provided the finest visual weapons for the employees' solidarity through his editorial service.²⁶

In modern society, magazines have been the embodiment of “networks” and intellectual connectivity as much as railways and other traditional courier systems did.²⁷ The railway company's magazine was thus rooted in the physical, mental, and cultural connection of the Japanese settler group by creating an imagined community shaped by printed media in Benedict Anderson's account.²⁸ Published from 1927 to 1944, *Kyōwa* started as a weekly bulletin for employees of the company and later expanded to be a bi-monthly, comprehensive magazine with

²³ O'Dwyer, 201.

²⁴ Ibid., 209-210.

²⁵ Takeo Itō, “Kai-sanno eto watashi [Kai's Paintings and I],” *Kaimihachirōten*, 64.

²⁶ Ibid., On Itō Takeo's activities in the SMRC, see Takeo Itō and Joshua Fogel, *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway*.

²⁷ Eric Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (Columbia University Press, 2017), 33-34.

²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

all-inclusive content comprised of news, miscellaneous articles, novels, art, and cartoons.²⁹ With an average of 20,000 copies per edition in circulation, the magazine had a strong cultural influence and provided a sense of connection among dispersed SMRC employees across Manchuria back to their headquarters city of Dalian.³⁰ By March 1935, the number of copies became doubled to 40,000 and reached 85,000 by October 1938.³¹ Unlike many cultural magazines published in Manchuria that had short lifespans due to financial instability and the political power shift to the Kwantung Army, *Kyōwa*'s unwavering management enabled many talented artists to gain public attention, later with *Manshū gurafu* (Graphic Manchuria, 1933–1944). The second chief editor who hired Mihachirō, childhood educator Uemura Testuya (1893–1978), was greatly involved in shaping the character of the magazine to be more public friendly. Around this time, multiple illustrators were hired to the *Kyōwa* editing team including Itō Junzō, Yamakoshi Takeji, and Kunii Makoto.

Mihachirō, engaged in Bohemian like-minded activities with new entourages and expanded new interests. During this time, Mihachirō's place became a hangout for young and newly migrated artists and writers, going by the alias of “Mount Liang,” allegedly named after the location where a group of 108 heroes gathered in the Chinese classical novel *Water Margin*.³² They often strolled along the hustling Dalian harbor and coolies' residential areas to seek sources of recreation and inspiration. Perhaps due to the influence of lively interactions with other ambitious youngsters, Mihachirō took great interest in the works of Berlin Dadaist George Grosz

²⁹ From March 1942, due to the paper supply shortage and continuing need for public promotion, *Kyōwa* became a tabloid type of bulletin, published three times a month.

³⁰ Wei He, “*Manshū dōwa sakka ishimori nobuono tōjō man'tetsushain'kai kikan'shi kyōwani okeru sōsakukatsudō tegakarini shite* [Nobuo Ishimori, the Author of Children's Stories in Manchuria and his Creative Activities throughout the Magazine *Kyowa*],” *Border crossings: the journal of Japanese-language literature studies* 1 (2014): 125.

³¹ Tsutomu Hirayama, *Mantetsu keieishi: kabushiki-gaisha to shite no kakusei* [Manetsu Management History: Awakening as a Stock Company] (Nagoya-shi: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2019), 66-67.

³² *Kaimihachirōten*, 74.

(1893–1959) that attracted many ardent practitioners of leftist avant-garde movements, including Mavo from the early 1920s. In art historian Gennifer Weisenfeld’s study, Mavo leaders Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901–1977) and Yanase Masamu (1900–1945) received Grosz as a “paradigm of the artist-social critic” with his outspoken social satire that directly challenged political issues.³³ For artists such as Yanase along with many leftist intellectuals, the late 1920s involved the uneasy coexistence of robust Marxist culture, capitalist mass culture, and nationalistic political agitation, where “flee to Manchuria” became a mixed cultural and ideological phrase in search of social resolution by departing from dilemmatized Japanese modernity.³⁴

Yanase and Murayama visited Manchuria several times. In 1930, Mihachirō made Yanase’s acquaintance in Dalian. Both men in their late twenties in the continental new world productively influenced each other, which was especially favorable for Mihachirō’s growing career with *Kyōwa*. A photograph taken with Yanase during his revisit to Manchuria in 1940 shows that Mihachirō’s acquaintance with Yanase lasted throughout his days in Manchuria (Figure 3.6). Mihachirō recollected his first meeting with Yanase:

Grosz’s work became a great study for me. I was fortunate to become acquainted with Yanase Masamu, the introducer of Grosz to Japan when he visited Manchuria. We had very beneficial conversations. [Grosz’s] lines are very *high collar* [meaning “European sophistication”] [...] He clearly shows his affection for meager commoners.³⁵

Self-taught artist Yanase’s satirical cartoons and agitprops may have been a mediator for Mihachirō’s exploration of Grosz’s works, which have often been misunderstood by Japanese artists; for example, popular cartoonist Okamoto Ippei (1886–1948) disapproved of Grosz as “a

³³ Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 139.

³⁴ Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 3-5.

³⁵ “Kyushu no kao Kai Mihachirō: Nekkarano “jiyūnin” no gakyō [The face of Kyushu, Kai Mihachirō: A Man of Free Heart],” *Fukunichi Newspaper*, June 9, 1971.

pervert eroticist rather than a communist.”³⁶ In Yanase’s satirical cut, *Look at This Person!* (*kono hito o miyo!* 1925; Figure 3.7), which caricatures Ippei and Grosz confronting each other under the inscription “Ecco Homo,” the title of Grosz’s 1923 publication, shows his reverence to Grosz’s motifs and style.³⁷ In 1929, a year before his trip to Manchuria, Yanase published Grosz’s *Ecco Homo* in Japan, and assumably, he brought this new publication as part of his portfolio into Dalian.

Mihachirō’s illustration series in *Kyōwa* display his fervor to study the life of coolies—racialized manual workers, mostly immigrated, from mainland China who represent a particular type of colonial subjects who live in the “other” side of urban space.³⁸ His 1930 work *Tenement at 4 pm* (*Hekizansō gogoyoji*, Figure 3.8) illustrates coolies coming out of their communal settlement for an afternoon shift, which may have been inspired by Grosz’s 1921 lithograph *Ants from in the Shadows* (Figure 3.9) with the theme of workers’ march, yet translated in much diluted tones. The rough and expressive outline, déformé of bodies, and flat perspective of Grosz’s works seemingly align with Mihachirō’s artistic background in *nihonga* and emphasis on literati-style brushwork. The jarring and shaky outline in his *Carmel* (*Rakuta* Figure 3.10) sketched in 1975 shows his continuing integration of European pen drawings into classical calligraphy’s expressionist quality. Compared to Grosz’s personalized human physiognomy, grotesqueness, and evocative proletariat language criticizing moral decay in capitalist Germany,

³⁶ Yanase criticized Ippei’s sheer understanding of Grosz as “rather a pervert artist than communist” through the magazine AS in 1925. Yanase Masamu, “Kono hitoyo miyo!,” *Geijustu ichiba*, Vol.1 no. 2. (Dec. 1925), 3.

³⁷ Ishida Keiko, “The Reception of George Grosz in Japan During the 1920s and 1930s,” In *Transcultural Intertwinements in East Asian Art and Culture, 1920s–1950s*, edited by Lee-Kalisch, Jeong-hee, and Annegret Bergmann (Kromsdorf: VDG, Imprint von Arts + Science Weimar GmbH, 2018), 15.

³⁸ Coolie is a generic term indicating indentured laborers transported overseas under imperialist capitalism, within “a territorial aspect” including Indian, Chinese, and the Pacific Asian unskilled labor of global circulation. Michael Zeuske, “Coolies – Asiáticos and Chinos: Global Dimensions of Second Slavery,” in *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th-21st Century)* edited by Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf, Ulrike Lindner, Gesine Müller, Oliver Tappe and Michael Zeuske, 35-58 (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016), 35-36.

the characters in Mihachirō's early coolie series are reduced to synchronized and depersonalized patterns with witty facial expressions and little political sentiment. The bodies of coolies look chunky mostly hiding their hands under the sleeve, which may indicate the winter scene on the one hand, yet on the other hand such expression diluted their agency.

Between 1930 and 1931, Mihachirō continued working on an extensive number of coolie series with his short essays for *Kyōwa*. Coolies provided the symbol of colonial reality and the burgeoning colonial capitalism exploiting human labor in Manchuria. Loading a massive amount of soybean blocks on their shoulders, coolies in Dalian harbor were the must-see attraction as a living icon of Manchuria's vitality and industrialization; this was massively photographed and reproduced for postcards and tourist guides (Figure 3.11). It turned out to be one of the most attractive spectacles for Japanese visiting artists in the later period after the founding of Manchukuo.³⁹

Although the Japanese population in Dalian was much smaller than the Chinese migrant population, Japanese settlers congregated in urban areas, and Dalian was divided disproportionately. While Japanese settlers predominantly seized modern urban life, the coolie as the service producer buttressing cosmopolitan urbanity remained as the symbol of premodern life. In contrast with the zoological experience presented in tourism photography, Mihachirō conveyed a vivid sense of contact, even with a feeling of intimacy and sympathy, by approaching closer to coolies' lives. His *Hekizansō Emaki* (Narrative Illustration for Tenement, Figure 3.12) suggests an intense gaze and description of surprising visual details of coolies.

He portrayed:

They know they are just commodities. A coolie is a man who survives the most monolithic form of human life. Sleeping on top of each other where even a cat cannot cut

³⁹ For example, members of Independent Art Association including Fukuzawa Ichirō, Shimizu Toshi, and Suzuki Yasunori actively engaged images of coolies in their drawings and paintings. See Anika Culver, *Glorifying Empire*.

in is like an internal organ or a rag [...] Like a dog or a cat, their eyes appeal to fatigue and hunger after hard work. They were the capital belonging to the head of coolies, and 50 to 80 people were packed into this tenement. [...] From November to April, the foods for coolies are only wheat flour and radish. The radish, buried in the ground for months, is chopped into shredded pieces and seasoned with oil and salt. It seems impossible to carry over 112 kilograms of soybean blocks all day long with this diet, even if one was originally a farmer from Shandong. Some people think that power is just skill, but if you have only radishes, at least your sexual desire will be less.⁴⁰

In another illustrated essay in the same *emaki*, he also introduced coolies' after-work leisure:

It is a poor hut selling feces whiskey where you can buy anything, including storytelling, *erhu* playing, and singing. If you pay 45 cents, you can spend two or three hours. [...] A sternly swallowed-face storyteller keeps shouting, 'hao hao!' There must be something special coming out of their vulgar laughter and shouting, 'hao.' [...] Opium may be the best religion that evokes a desire to be enchanted in their empty reality. However, some say that only about 45 out of 10,000 foreigners tend to deviate their lives from it. I wanted to get high for minutes too when I was packed with these mellow eyes in and out of reality amid white smoke.⁴¹

His description primarily suggests abject poverty and unsanitary, out-of-modernity conditions with words such as “internal organ,” “rag,” and “feces whiskey (a fermented drink made of human or animal waste),” expressing both shock and sympathy for their miserable living conditions. He also carves out a mysterious space of resilience, exotic culture, and harmless primitiveness with his written descriptions and comical illustrations. Seemingly, visiting coolies' tenements appealed to modern Japanese men like Mihachirō as an ethnic theme park experience in the divided colonial city, as a double-layered “the other” space, or a space that Baudrillard considered “simulacra” of reality.⁴² In his impression on coolies' smoking opium, while not generalizing all coolies as drug-addicted but seeing the behavior as mere leisure, his understanding was relatively neutral. By early 1930, Dalian's narcotics market handling

⁴⁰ Kai Mihachirō, *Kyowa*, March 1931.

⁴¹ Kai Mihachirō, *Kyowa*, April 1931.

⁴² Jean Baudrillard and Sheila Faria Glaser, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

morphine, cocaine, heroin, and other “modern” drugs became exploded, and the type of consumption that determined whether “drug-users” or “addicted” was contingent on nationality.⁴³ Coolies who smoke opium were considered “drug-addicted” and “a primitive fashion” due to their embodiment of the failed Qing dynasty from moral collapse.⁴⁴ Mihachirō’s eyes saw coolies, even with their meager diet and drug consumption, as a productive and benign labor force with mythical and primitive energy.

It is interesting to note how the attitude toward coolies from the writings of earlier metropole Japanese visitors had been transformed, for example, the most recognized novelist Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916)’s travelogue in 1909. After visiting Manchuria and Korea from the invitation of the SMRC, he wrote for the Asahi newspaper:

Many people were standing in the port of Dalian. Most are Chinese coolies. They look dirty when you look at them one by one, but they even look dirtier when the two get together. It’s even more unbearable to see them all gather. I stood on the deck and looked down at this group and thought, “I’ve come to a bizarre place.”⁴⁵

Such impressions of abhor and degeneracy are also related to another high-profile novelist Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927)’s description of Chinese people as “dirty,” “savage,” and “suspicious” upon his arrival in Shanghai in 1921.⁴⁶ Similar tenor is also found in one of the earliest imaginaries of Japanese Manchuria exhibited in the 1911 Buntan exhibition; *Yōga* artist Aoyama Kumaji (1886–1932)’s *Rice Wine* (*Houchiu*, Figure 3.13), which depicts drunken coolies on a dirty, slum-sided street in Dalian; it evokes a sense of barbaric, lazy, hedonistic, and unhygienic “other” much prevalent from nineteenth-century European Orientalist works, such as

⁴³ Miriam Kingsberg, *Moral Nation: Modern Japan and Narcotics in Global History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 30, 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 38, 83–87; Norman Smith, *Intoxicating Manchuria: Alcohol, Opium, and Culture in China’s Northeast* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 18.

⁴⁵ Natsume Sōseki, *Sōseki zen’shū dai hachikan* [Complete Collection of Sōseki vol.8] (Tokyo: Iwanami Bookstore, 1966), 160.

⁴⁶ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, *Akutagawa ryūnosuke kikōbun’shū* [Complete Collection of Ryūnosuke] (Tokyo: Iwanami Bookstore, 2017), 12–18.

that of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps (1803–1860), and William Holman Hunt (1827–1910).

During the era of early encounters with China after Japan's Meiji modernization, “the element of power embedded in fear, anxiety, and vulnerability”⁴⁷ were often vanquished by and recreated as visual-verbal shock and sympathy. While an early gaze in art and literature in this early phase, China and Manchuria are seemingly undifferentiated and represented within identical racial characteristics. Shared disappointment toward China's plummet and Japanese-reversed superiority as the successor of European modernization and the new leader of Asia were shaped with hegemonic racial ideologies.⁴⁸

It is worth comparing Mihachirō's Coolie series, *Shandong Sketch* (1931, Figure 3.14), with *Hekizansō Emaki*. Since his full-time recruitment at the Employee Association, he was often dispatched to other parts of Manchuria and China for reportage. His first destination was the Shandong port, known for being the gateway of coolie trading from Yantai to Dalian, which reserved over half of the Chinese migrant population to Manchukuo.⁴⁹ In this sketch series, we find an increased sense of sympathy in terms of *mise-en-scène* and expressions of bodies. Coolies are portrayed as cluster organisms without or with much-reduced facial expressions. The wobbly and disoriented outlines also reveal what he learned from Yanase's style to accentuate the vulnerability of the proletariats. The prominently displayed miserableness of migrant foreigners features socially conscious sentiments. Then, a subtle nuance is found here. In 1922, the Japanese leasehold on Shandong was returned to Chinese sovereignty, yet the Japanese

⁴⁷Ann Stoller, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), xiv.

⁴⁸Mariko Tamanoi, “Knowledge, Power, and Racial Classifications: The ‘Japanese’ in ‘Manchuria.’” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 2 (2000): 249.

⁴⁹Paul H. Kratoska, *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (Florence: Routledge, 2005), 33.

military still maintained power in the region and faced growing international tension after the death of Zhang Zuolin in 1928 and the Manchuria Incident. While provinces of North China were considered poor, wretched, and overcrowded, Manchuria was often propagandized as a land of opportunities sparsely populated and prosperous for immigrants.⁵⁰ In this sense, *Hekizansō Emaki* alleged a positive voice on the lives of coolies who already settled and worked in Dalian, which contrasts the total misery shadowing over *Shandong Sketch*.

What were the contributions and incentives for Mihachirō's fascination with coolies as an artist and the SMRC's employee? During Mihachirō's coolie series on *Kyōwa*, the SMRC was facing financial trouble amid the global impact of the Great Depression, and at the dawn of the Manchuria Incident, the informal colony of Manchuria was ready to be converted into the state of Manchukuo.⁵¹ Mihachirō's series can be seen as suggestive of his anchoring in Dalian settler society as a voice of the strong civilian leadership of the Employee Association. In the account of historian Emer O'Dwyer, the SMRC Employee Association played a significant role in empowering employees with a sense of ownership of the company and encouraging them to partake in the political rally and economic recovery projects until the Kwantung Army's dominance over the SMRC in the mid-1930s.⁵² Itō Takeo recalled that Mihachirō had great loyalty to the association and highly acclaimed that his work through *Kyōwa* contributed to unifying the 40,000 employees and leading the public opinion during the 1933 SMRC crisis—the Kwantung Army's attempt to reorganize the company.⁵³ Mihachirō's enthusiasm for both the company and his individual interests in the ethnographical study might be reciprocal. Around the

⁵⁰ Thomas R. Gottschang, and Diana Lary. "Introduction." In *Swallows and Settlers: The Great Migration from North China to Manchuria*, 1–12. (University of Michigan Press, 2000), 2.

⁵¹ Itō Takeo, *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway*, 122.

⁵² O'Dwyer, 200-201, 334.

⁵³ Takeo Itō, "Kai-sanno eto watashi [Kai's Paintings and I]," *Kaimihachirōten*, 64.

time, large numbers of cheap labor and effective management of them were increasingly significant for running the SMRC's development plan and harbor trading in Dalian. Coolies were managed not directly by the Japanese but by Chinese middle managers called "*batou*," and understanding coolies and their inner system was important to manage Japanese-run industries.⁵⁴ It also corresponded to the ethnological research boom on imperial peripheries to gain colonial knowledge within the territorial expansion of Japan. The coolie series is also visual evidence to demonstrate settler artists' cultural voyeurism toward immigrants of other races. Unlike much superficial observation of racial/cultural "others" by visiting artists from the metropole art world, Mihachirō's migrated status as a self-claimed "insider" of Manchuria afforded him a preoccupation with novel subject matters via closer, longer, and participatory research. In the middle of Manchuria's transition time, Mihachirō's coolie images were not intentional propaganda but furnished the framework for later cultural propaganda called 'Manchukuo local color.' In 1937, Mihachirō's returned to the subject matter in a new context, which is discussed in the following section.

It is important to consider Mihachirō's disadvantageous position as a *nihonga* painter in Dalian during this time. Despite the prominence of *nihonga* as the aesthetic national identity of Japan endorsed since Meiji, among the continental settlers, *yōga* was much favored as a means of their modern identity statement as "cosmopolitan" pioneers, as I detailed in chapter one. As an illustrator who worked for the railway company, Mihachirō fell into the "no-category" artist in settlers' academic scene and attempted avant-garde styles as a possible breakthrough to be recognized in the commercial art world. By creating detailed visual information of racialized

⁵⁴ Regarding Manchukuo's coolie system, see Kratoska, "Chapter 3. Labor Policy and the Construction Industry in Manchukuo," *Asian Labor*.

labor, Mihachirō empowered himself through ethnologically engaged pictorial and literal surprise, sympathy, and intimacy for coolies.

Mihachirō's coolie works thus indicate an interesting but problematic locus where migration, class, labor, and modernity were overtly racialized in the imperial stratification of Manchuria in its impending militarism toward Manchukuo. Indicating only Chinese migrant labor, not Korean or Japanese workers, coolies are a specific racial group, which differs from the *rōdōsha* (worker) as an individual worker.⁵⁵ Yet, not all Chinese in Manchuria were coolies; in Dalian, there were a good number of wealthy elite immigrants from mainland China after the fall of the Qing dynasty. While such bourgeoisie and middle-class Chinese in commerce took the role of mediators for Japanese settlers eager for Sinology and Chinese classical learnings and collecting art, coolies as the lowest social strata, signified human byproducts of stagnant and corrupted China in the bygone dynasty. Mihachirō's work allegedly provided a visual difference between legit Chinese being lawful Manchukuoan and coolies as the borderline members of Manchukuo. Mihachirō's work was also an example of ethnological research on marginalized local communities and local culture that had already become a hot topic that had ventured internationally and was later state-sanctioned in Japan, which Mihachirō reserved during the entirety of his career in Manchuria.

Making Manchukuo Local Color

Illustrator Yamagoshi Oto recalls his days associating with Mihachirō in Dalian:

Amid such dark wars, Kai [Mihachirō] immersed himself in the joy of painting, the happiness of living on the continent, and the constant inspiration of his burning passion. Not only me but also my colleagues, who gathered around Kai, scattered all over the continent in Xinjing, Fengtian, and Beijing for their works. It is a matter of course that we gathered in Dalian, despite the distance whenever it became possible, and that was at

⁵⁵Kratoska, *Asian Labor*, 32.

Kai's place. There were poets, painters, *kyōdo* (folk, literally “local”) historians and collectors. Everyone talked keenly regardless of age.⁵⁶

In 1932, upon the establishment of Manchukuo, led by former futurist Itō Junzō, Mihachirō and his entourage from various fields, including underrepresented furniture, craft, commercial painting, and woodcut print, formed an art coterie named the Yellow Dust Group (*Kōjinsha*).⁵⁷ In May, the group held the first exhibition at Mitsukoshi Department Store in Dalian, where Mihachirō exhibited his painting *Coolie* (1932). Unfortunately, no catalog or visual record of this exhibition, including Mihachirō's submission, has survived; yet the list of members and a brief introduction of the group in the *Annual Report of Manchuria* allow us to imagine the exhibition's keen interest in local cultural themes and constellating various art forms that are mostly marginalized from the conventional academic scene. A brief introduction of their activities in the 1935 *Annual Report of Manchuria* starts with Mihachirō's name, stating that “among the artists based on folk art (*Kyōdo geijutsu*, literally “local art”) with rich local color, Kai Mihachirō mainly surveys the lower classes of Manchuria and gives a quick and clear visual grasp of them.”⁵⁸ The description further continues by introducing members, including Itō Junzō for folk sketches, Kōno Hihashi for researching Manchurian people's lifestyles, and Ogura Enpei for his creation of Manchurian folk dolls. Mihachirō's *Coolie at Dalian Hekizansō* (Figure 3. 15), a *sum-e* style drawing created in 1936, portrays a close-up shot of a coolie smoking a pipe with a deformed face, exhibiting both comical and grotesque senses.

Art, literature, research, and collecting related to Manchuria's local culture became very popular among Japanese settlers from the late 1920s onward. As an all-round term, “*kyōdo* (local or native),” was often interchangeably used with *minzoku* (folklore), *dozoku* (native customs),

⁵⁶ Yamagoe Oto, “Wakaki hino kaisan [Mr. Kai in our young days,]” *Kaimihachirōten*, 66.

⁵⁷ *Manshū nankan* (1933), 538.

⁵⁸ *Manshū nankan* (1935), 565.

and *fūbutsu* (local scenery and customs).⁵⁹ Although it was not a new field of learning and largely indebted to Japan's early imperial ethnological research, Mihachirō and his circle gathered all scattered, local color ideas and hobbies (*kyōdo shumi*) into a collective “local color arts (*kyōdoshoku geijutsu*)” movement in Manchukuo. Metropole artist Suyama Keiichi (1905–1975), in his critical review of Manchukuo's art scene, extolled Mihachirō, stating that “there are not many fellow painters who can reach out to the level of Asian folk painter Jacovleff [Alexandre Jacovleff, 1887–1938], but our only solace is on Dalian painter Mihachirō, who relentlessly creates local scenery and customs paintings on Manchuria's four seasons.”⁶⁰

Arriving in Dalian as an unknown painter, Mihachirō became quickly recognized because of his coolie sketches and other contributions to *Kyōwa* and *Manmō* and his active associations with local color artists and hobbyists. Despite his lack of experience in the metropole's academic art scene, he quickly made a successful debut as an Inspector (*Kansain*) for the *Tōyōga* section of the Second Manchuria Art Exhibition held in Dalian in 1933. The number of *tōyōga* selections for the exhibition was less than one-fourth of the *yōga* selections at that time, and it was not until the 1937 Sino-Japanese War onwards that the prestige of *tōyōga* became elevated as a national art form that represents the aesthetic identity of Manchukuo.⁶¹ There, Mihachirō, who served as a Committee (*Bijutsu iin*) several times, achieved a Prime Minister's Award from the Fifth Manten

⁵⁹ Such cross-utility of terms was from Japanese translation and the institutional construction of Folklore Studies and Volkskunde as *minzokugaku* established in 1912. Japanese leading folklorists Yanagita Kunio launched a journal named *Kyōdo Kenkyū* (Local Community Research) in 1912, and other anthropology-ethnographical periodicals inaugurated as *Dozoku to Densetsu* (Local Customs and Legends), *Minzoku* (Folklore) and *Minzokugaku* (Folkloristics). Shimamura Takanori, “What is Minzoku? An Introduction to Japanese Folkloristics,” *Kwansei Gakuin Repository* 128 (2018): 85-97.

⁶⁰ Suyama Keiichi, “Egakarezaru Manshū [Envisioned Manchuria],” *Atlier*, September 1940, 69.

⁶¹ After the birth of Manchukuo, Manchuria's salon exhibitions started embracing the category of *Tōyōga* instead of *Nihonga*, where Chinese paintings and Japanese *Nihonga* are included in the same Asiatic painting category. When Meiji Japan reconstructs *nihonga*, *tōyōga* was also coined as a hypernym in order to reconnect Japan's modernized *nihonga* to generic East Asian traditional paintings. Doshin Sato, *Mējikokkato kin'daibi sekijutsu* [Meiji State and modern art of beauty] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hirofumika, 1999), 145-149.

in 1942 for his folk-themed painting *Mongolian(mōkojin)*. It was more than a coincidence that local color art and *tōyōga* tied and grew together in the Manchukuo era.

It is important to recognize that the emergence of the *Tōyōga* section in art and the term *tōyō* (“the Orient” or “the East”) produced peculiar utility and implication in the Manchukuo context, which is closely imbricated with the formation of local color movement. *Tōyō* is the mode of seeing, consuming, preserving, and controlling Asia and was embedded in Japanese imperialism from the beginning. According to historian Stefan Tanaka, Japanese discourse on the Orient began as an academic discipline of history, and *tōyōshi*, emerged within Meiji Japan’s effort to “establish modern Japan’s equivalence—as the most advanced nation of Asia—with Europe,” and this conceptual space of *tōyō* had been transformed by Japan’s imperial vision over time.⁶² In the Taishō era, the phrase “return to the Orient (*tōyō he no kaiki*)” became popularized among cosmopolitan Japanese intellectuals. Art historian Kikuchi Yūko described it as “Oriental Orientalism,” which is Japan’s adaptation of Western eyes to see non-Western culture, ironically amid Japan’s increasing antagonism against the West.⁶³ In that period, this concept was tied with the middle class’s discovery and promotion of Japanese aestheticism in folk crafts (*minshūteki kōgei*) against the elite’s dilettantism of colonial dynastic antiquities, which Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889–1961) evolved as to “*Mingei* (folk craft) movement.” As a cultural response to social abstraction caused by capitalist modernity and international trade competition against the Western world, Japanese intellectuals, such as Yanagi, attempted to retrieve the concrete beauty of daily life by promoting folk craft, that is, anti-machine industrial, anti-bourgeoise, pure, free-minded, and foremost, Asian (*tōyō*) spirited.⁶⁴

⁶² Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 12.

⁶³ Yūko Kikuchi. “Hybridity and the Oriental Orientalism of Mingei Theory.” *Journal of design history* 10, no. 4 (1997): 343-354.

⁶⁴ Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 10, 48.

In the dawn of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere following Japan's full-fledged seizure of Manchuria, the *mingei* projects expanded to North China and Manchuria to research, collect, and exhibit continental folk crafts. Manchukuo's slogan of "racial harmony" was received to preserve the diverse regional beauty of *tōyō* as the unified empire, and following that, the concept of *mingei* folk craft was primarily regionalized as *kyōdo*. While *mingei* remains a taxonomy of art that was institutionalized and controlled by the intellectuals of metropole Japan, *kyōdo* indicates regionalism for loosely grouped landscape, material culture, and human subjects of peripheral or outer territories (*gaichi*) shaped by the "local" agents.

As an origin of Yanagi's *mingei* activism, often metaphorized as the "sorrowful beauty (*hiaibi*)," colonial Korea was the space of *tōyō*, where the most active colonial discourse on local color (*kyōdoshoku*) took place from the late 1920s.⁶⁵ The concept of local color was boosted in the late 1920s, when Japanese imperialism shifted its focus to the value of regional-cultural differences, departing from the Japanization of territories.⁶⁶ The term 'local color,' known as a Japanese translation of *Heimatkunst*, a German art and literature movement rooted in homeland awareness against French cultural encroachment, was imported to the Japanese literature scene around 1906.⁶⁷ It was perhaps because of the growing Japanese national pride after the victory of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 that its own cultural tradition in the rural area by metropole intellectuals was discovered.

⁶⁵While Kim Brandt's conceptualization of *mingei* centers on Japanese intellectuals and their networks, Kikuchi Yuko develops *mingei*'s hybridity by surveying transnational discourses including colonial receptions. Yūko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

⁶⁶Kate McDonald, "Local Color," in *Placing Empire*, 103-106.

⁶⁷About the German reception on *Heimatkunst* see Harry Kessler, and Laird McLeod Easton. *Journey to the Abyss: the Diaries of Count Harry Kessler, 1880-1918* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 337; Regarding Japanese importation of german term see Hee-jeong Kim "1930 *nyeondae joseongwa yanagi muneyoshiui tminye* [Yanagi Muneyoshi in the 1930 And Korean Folk]," *The Japanese Language Literature Association of Korea* 32 (2016): 215-42.

Later, the agency of local color converted writers and artists from imperial peripheries and colonies to indicate their non-metropole or colonial identities. As literature scholar Hee-jeong Kim pointed out, the local color movement emerged among Korean intellectuals in literature and art, who internalized the eyes of the colonizer to define the aesthetic identity of Korea borrowing from *mingei* ideology.⁶⁸ For example, Korean artist and art critic Yum Sangseop in 1929 wrote an article for Dong-a Newspaper, in which he emphasized finding Korean-ness while constructing the “art of pan-Asia.”⁶⁹ Hence, in colonial Korea, the discourse of local color in the academic scene was fueled predominantly by Koreans as a means of colonial men’s empowerment. Local color themes including pastoral landscape, courtesan, traditional religion, and premodern customs, were exceedingly popularized among Korean artists and gained favorable reception by Japanese judges at the Senten in the 1930s. As art historian Young-na Kim observes, Korean enthusiasm for local color also turned out to be self-orientalization accommodating the Japanese legitimacy of the Cultural Rule (*Bunka seiji*)⁷⁰ Also, local color as a blanket term that put together a wide range of art genres into “Korean color (character)” reveals ethnized artistic modernity constructed by both the colonizer and the colonized who internalized the colonizer’s mode of seeing. This ascribes double-layered self-exoticizing, or what Ray Chow calls “Oriental’s Orientalism.”⁷¹

Manchukuo’s local color movement was, however, not spurred by the colonized subject but by dynamics among Japanese settlers and Manchukuo authorities, to whom they called the “local” people of Manchukuo had a complex context based on sociopolitical relations. It is

⁶⁸ Hee-jeong Kim, 458.

⁶⁹ Young-na Kim, 109.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 121.

⁷¹ Sharing an analogy with Homi Bhabha’s colonial mimicry, Ray Chow posits hybridity of colonial culture as “Oriental’s Orientalism” that is colonial subjects’ voluntarily staging their identity as “other.” Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1995).

important to acknowledge that there were different sets of local-color movements shaped by the ruptures between the so-called “Dalian era (*Dairen jidai*)” and the Xinjing era (*Shinkyō jidai*),” the urban-based political and social-power reconfiguration of Manchuria after 1931. In pre-Manchukuo days, known as the “Dalian era,” Japanese and international tourism to the SMRC Zone propelled local color products. Historian Kate McDonald described how a tourist’s experience of local color in Manchuria introduced an “ethnographic mode of territorial incorporation, advertising the observation of colonized subjects as a fundamental component of the experience of regional difference.”⁷² Ethnic people were thus bound to the SMRC Zone as an embodiment of “the place” of consumption and as tourist commodities, produced by imperial settlers targeting both metropole and international tourist markets. For example, a diorama-like curation of the vast continent, including coolies in Dalian, Korean settlers in Anshan and Dandong, and Mongolians in Mengjiang, provided compressed knowledge about the space that is racialized/ethnized. Manchukuo’s peculiar physical labor, multiple ethnic groups and their lifestyles, landscapes, and non-Japanese females as the most visible exotic subject matters consisting of local color tourism fostered the rising eminence of local color art and literature among Japanese settler communities.

After the Kwantung Army seized power, however, the idea of local color became politicized to legitimate Manchukuo’s sovereignty, both from Republican China and Japan.⁷³ Upon the rise of Manchukuo, local color was rebranded as two different modes. The first was resistance from Japanese settlers preemptively growing in Dalian and along the SMRC Zone against the Kwantung Army’s power takeover, where civilian local colorists claimed their own “Manchurian locality” formed by cosmopolitan urban modernity during the Dalian era. Another

⁷² McDonald, *Placing Empire*, 105.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 106.

was to serve the state's new sovereignty notion and social reform ideology of "Harmony of Five-Race," escorted by the Manchukuo Government and the Kwantung Army, and reformed SMRC authorities to deconstruct the formal place-ethnic connection and to make a unified state of Manchukuo. Such an idea was later utilized for Japan's totalitarian imperial management of Asia known as fascism. However, the two impulses were never separated; settlers' desires appeared in a much-mixed sense of expression by calibrating with the imperial norm and pursuing their economic and sociocultural status. As much as Manchukuo's obscure and unstable state identity between being sovereign and colonial, social members' interactions were also plural and ambiguous to demarcate.

The Manchurian local color was, hence, interwoven with the Japanese settlers' unstable and obscure positions as *in-between* members. The provenance of Manchukuo's local color movement, *Kyōwa*, assisted in disseminating its testimony across the occupied territories. In the second issue of *Kyōwa* in 1928, the editor's note said: "The local color is not just a study of Chinese customs... [It is for us] to live here and make this place a hometown."⁷⁴

Unlike the cases of Korea and Taiwan, there was a shared Japanese imagination of Manchuria as "empty land without an owner," with only remnants of a corrupted former dynasty to be filled via Japanese and multiethnic diaspora. This notion was gainfully employed by immigrant Japanese artists to generate a visual manifestation of their residential identities that differed from metropole travelers; at the same time, it was an imperial practice of racial hierarchy as a "master race." Imperial patriotism and the desire for local autonomy went hand in hand. Dalian's civilian elites and employees of the SMRC had shaped the exquisite landscape of jurisdiction and self-governance along with the power of this far-more-than-railway company.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Kyōwa*, May 1928.

⁷⁵ O'Dwyer, 4.

O'Dwyer suggested that strong localism or provincialism rubbed against the Kwantung Army's "projects of reforming capitalism, rejecting liberalism, and installing a totalitarian social order."

⁷⁶ Such a mindset shared by pre-Manchukuo settlers was later depreciated to indicate spoiled Taishō liberal, individual, and capitalist elites to be reformed.

Cultural scholar Koizumi Kyomi argued that among Dalian's intellectual circles, the movement to reflect the region's unique local color was impelled by the rivalry against metropole Japan and later against Xinjing-centrism, the political-power shift to the new capital.⁷⁷ Upon the Official Announcement of the Inauguration of Manchukuo on 1, March 1932, the SMRC Employee Association undertook a "Manchuria localization movement (*Manshū kyōdoka undo*)" by construing the state's new slogan "Kingly Way" as to them taking the lead to "make an ideal place to live."⁷⁸

Exploring local color through adjacent Asiatic cultures probably gave them a vicarious or alternative experience of "hometown (*furusato*)" that Japanese settlers felt had become lost. Unlike anticolonial nationalism in the Korean local color movement, Manchukuo's local color movement reveals diasporic experiences bound by two different nationalisms—for the host state and the homeland. Also, it was based on settler colonialists' desires to occupy the territory and the ethnic lives within it. The deployment of local color was conjoined with the schizophrenic sense of dominance and loss shared by Japanese residents.

Folklore and local color went through a shift via state actors' efforts to reform Manchukuo. The vice president of the National Museum of Manchukuo Fujiyama Kazuo's

⁷⁶ Ibid., 316.

⁷⁷ Kyomi Koizumi, "*Kokyōsōshitsuno kisetsu man'shū kyōdokaun'dōto man'shūsajiki*[Season of Home Loss: The Complexity of the Manchurian Local Color Movement]," *Fjin' daigaku nihon'gobun'gakukēken' uchikai nisen'jūsan'* [Fujin University of Japanese Language and Literature] (2013): 6.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7.

(1889-1975) vision as a statesman of Manchukuo may well represent the renewal of local colorism to reconfigure the broader cultural territories of Manchukuo as a place of productivity and unity. As a cultural reformer who shared pan-Asian propagandism with Amakasu Masahiko (1891–1945), a Japanese Imperial Army officer and a president of the Manchuria Film Association, perhaps best known for the murder of socialist-anarchist Ōsugi Sakae, Fujiyama, directed a plan for the permanent folk exhibition hall (*minzokukan*) at the headquarters of the National Museum of Manchukuo.⁷⁹ Regarding Fujiyama’s exhibition-based folk research, scholar Oide Shoko postulated that Fujiyama’s vision was built upon the enlightenment movement to educate Japanese mass agricultural settlers who migrated in the mid-1930s under the imperial migration campaign for their adaptation of life in northern Manchuria by learning from local life experiences.⁸⁰ Agriculture along with heavy industry is claimed to be the scientific foundation of the Manchukuo economy since 1933, and racial harmony was utilized as an ideological device that facilitate Japanese mass agricultural migration and their state-sanctioned land possessions in Manchuria.⁸¹ Showcasing folklore as a nod for scientific knowledge for the imperial migration campaign, Fujiyama’s local museum philosophy was based on Japan’s “Labor Science (*rōdō kagaku*).” In this way, the Japanese early settlers’ local color movement, with its research, collecting, and reproduction efforts, entered the state’s propagandistic chapter for public education via the curation and exhibition of folk lives.

Manchuria Local Color as Settlers’ Modernism

⁷⁹ Shoko Oide, “Fujiyama Kazuo's design for folk exhibition space and reclamation policy of Manchukuo,” *Cultural resources studies* 6 (2007); “Creation of “Manchurian Characteristics” in the Exhibition at the National Museum of Manchukuo Based on the Archaeological Surveys of the Koguryo Bohai and Liao Dynasties,” *Nairiku Asia-shi Kenkyūkai* 25 (2013).

⁸⁰ Shoko Oide, “Fujiyama Kazuo's design for folk exhibition space and reclamation policy of Manchukuo,” 43-44.

⁸¹ Hyun-Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 150.

Mihachirō had been zealous in promoting himself as a specialist in the local-color movement, in which he proved his artistic aptitude by experimenting with varied aesthetics and styles. Over the course of a year, beginning in February 1935, Mihachirō's series on *Kyōwa* started using the title "*Manshū Kyōdo Gaho* (Manchuria Local Color Pictorial)," continuing from the 32nd episode of this prolonged ethnological editorial report of Manchuria's local culture. Mihachirō's series continued until October 1941, with a total of 187 episodes, which became the longest-running series of a single artist in *Kyōwa*. Each illustration, with his written description, bears a title with the name of the city and region he visited. He had to deal with a relentless work schedule to travel across Manchuria and mainland China, research local culture and create paintings. While coping with the harsh winter weather of the northern regions, including Inner Mongolia and Russian border towns, he consumed too much alcohol, which caused a chronic illness that troubled him for the rest of his life.⁸² The photography done on his trip to an Inner Mongolian ethnic town (Figure 3.16) suggests his identity as a modern man and researcher. Mihachirō was in the middle of the transitional period, and prudently imbricated the call for the new age with his artistic ambitions via his indexical ethnographic research on Manchukuo's regional customs.

In his earnest development of local color art, Mihachirō started making new approaches by withdrawing Grosz's and Yanase's influences on his earlier cartoonish drawings. For example, his *Zhengjiatun* (Figure 3.17) and *Xinmintun* (Figure 3.18)—the illustrated reports of local towns in Jilin and Liaoning provinces—show his revisiting the expressive potential of classical ink wash and dry brush practice, which became his signature style after returning to Japan in 1947. Strolling around the commercial district of Zhengjiatun, he describes the place as

⁸² *Kaimihachirōten*, 75.

“Liao dynasty’s soil,” where buildings are decorated with gaudy and colorful signs and protruding sculptures of mythical creatures, and such aesthetic taste “does not fit Japanese modest sophistication,” he described.⁸³ Then, he concludes that the place conjures up the “Japan’s *Sengoku* (Warring States) period.” He romantically identified the ethnic space in the present time with the archaic past of the Chinese dynasty and Japanese historical time known for samurai heroism, which may be paralleled with Japanese modern man’s ventureship. His place in Dalian was called “Mount Laing” from the Chinese classical novel *Water Margin*, and, interestingly, he illustrated for Itō Junzō’s the *Retelling of Water Margin* (*kurining-gu suikoden*), which was serialized from 1933 to 1934 on *Kyōwa*. To the crude and zesty space of Manchurian folk town recreated with mythical, poetic, and perhaps theatrical imaginaries, he produced visual literature of classical antiquity by returning to an ink-painting style.

In *Zhengjiatun*, Mihachirō’s boneless-technique brushwork resonating Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506)’s *haboku* (splashed-ink) technique creates an abstract simplification of the form; a more recent reference would be Tomioka Tessai (1837–1924)’s instillation of *nanga* into *nihonga*’s realm, making a Manchurian town a conceptual landscape. Yosa Buson’s (1716–1784) Kyoto landscape paintings, such as *Evening Snowfall*, may have been Mihachirō’s inspiration for his illustration of *Xinmintun*, which demonstrates his concoction of bold ink outlines and ink wash. Compared to his early trademark signature, which looks like an eye (Figure 3.19), he started incorporating calligraphy into the lower-left corner during this period (Figure 3.20).

This may be related to the burgeoning of antiquity and Sinology studies reshaped by Japan’s imperial modern enterprises in the stage of Manchukuo. Calligraphy and Song, Yuan,

⁸³ *Kyōwa*, February 1934.

and Ming-style paintings were sanctioned to impart Manchukuo's value as the new legitimate *tōyō*. Emperor Puyi and Qing loyalists, including Luo Zhenyu, played an important role in endorsing classical style arts in the early art exhibitions of Manchukuo. According to art historian Aida Yuen Wong's survey on *yōga* master Nakamura Fusetsu (1866–1943), Japanese artists' attempts to turn calligraphy—a minority position in the Japanese academic art scene—into expressive modern art were already made in the late Meiji and Taishō periods, resulting from the Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges of antiquarian knowledge.⁸⁴ Mihachirō's new calligraphic style, hence, is not a novel approach but showcases how Japanese *tōyō* ideology was reshaped as a mode of modernity in art and rebranded in the Manchukuo setting. Mihachirō's attempt to find local color was an artistic response to the encroaching West and dominant Japanese metropole, but what he tried to overcome was informed by modernist and avant-garde styles recognized in the metropole and the West.

The more modernist and cross-genre visual techniques he attempted were found in a later series in *Kyōwa*, including a photomontage pictorial series shown throughout 1935–1936. His photomontage *Mongolian Village* (Figure 3.21) displays a quasi-academic visual report of ethnic life in Inner Mongolia with a vibrant compositional aspect: a diagonal layout of photographed images of vast grassland, a mother and a boy, a traditional *ger* dwelling, and in the middle, his drawing is meticulously marked with names of interior objects. Until the last episode of the “Manchuria Local Color Pictorial,” photomontage was employed with growing frequency. In the September 1936 issue of *Kyōwa*, he returned to his old favorite theme Hekizansō (Figure 3. 22), which combined a strip of photographed images with a pen drawing, floor plan with

⁸⁴Aida Yuen Wong, “Reforming Calligraphy in Modern Japan- The Six Dynasties School and Nakamura Fusetsu's Chinese “Stele” Style,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, edited by Joshua A. Fogel. (Berkeley: Global, Area, and International Archive/University of California Press, 2012).

measurements, and essay, exhibiting an encyclopedic knowledge that he had gained through years of field research.

Photography and photojournalism had already become indispensable tools in the art of Manchukuo. After the establishment of Manchukuo, the utopian visual code in photomontage that attracted middle-class consumers was effortlessly overwritten by the vocabulary of political propaganda for the masses. Fuchikami Hakuyō's *Manshū gurafu* published directly by the SMRC's Public Relations Division, which ran 11 out of the 14-year span of Manchukuo, is a great example of how Japanese modernist photographers employed Soviet-inspired photomontage techniques for the visual construction of the utopian state, which I will further discuss in chapter 4.

As SMRC employees and magazine editorial artists, Fuchikami and Mihachirō were associated with each other. The first SMRC photographer and the pioneer of Manchuria photography Sakurai Ichirō, who took Mihachirō for the Yungang Grottoes research team in 1927 and passed away in Dalian in 1928, instilled the productiveness of photography as not only an artistic potential but research method in Mihachirō. When *Manshū gurafu* decided to increase the number of pages and entertaining sections from the August issue in 1939, perhaps due to the order of the reorganized SMRC administrators implementing propaganda productions, Fuchikami hired Mihachirō for another local color pictorial series.⁸⁵ Mihachirō wrote descriptive essays and pen drawings on Manchurian toys, façades of Manchurian architecture, coolies, and various Manchurian people and customs for *Manshū gurafu*, which continued by 1940.

Mihachirō's research methodology for local color pictorials was inherited from Japanese modern ethnography that inspired many metropolitan intellectuals to travel, record, and collect in

⁸⁵ Hakuyo Fuchikami, "Henshūkōki," [Editor's note], *Manshū gurafu*, August 1939.

provinces during the 1920s. In the issue of January 1933, Mihachirō endeavored a humorous composition of drawings and essays on chairs under the title of *Modernology of Chairs (Isuno kōgengaku)*, which unquestionably reiterated his attention to Kon Wajirō's (1888–1973) urban ethnography of material culture known as modernology (*kōgengaku*). The discipline was indebted to Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962)'s folklore studies which provided non-material elements of rural culture that were vanishing—such as folktale, language, custom, and religion—to define Japan's timeless national character.⁸⁶ After Yanagita's pioneering works, various branches of ethnographical projects that focused more on material culture emerged, including Kon's rural architecture and later urban lifestyles as well as Yanagi Muneyoshi's *mingei*. According to Harootunian, interwar ethnologists including Yanagita, Yanagi, and Kon, utilized the discipline to challenge metropolitan capitalism that eliminated Japanese authenticity and caused social inequality, by filling the present time with the place-bound identity rather than temporality or history.⁸⁷ While observing the “new” craft, interior design, architecture, and fashion of Japanese urban people, Kon documented illustrated details of material culture (Figure 3.23) to decipher the aesthetics of modernity not decided by the elite's value system he thought had ruptured from ordinary people's everyday life and thus lost its full meaning.⁸⁸ Capturing the fleeting moment in the place of Westernized (Americanized) consumerist modernity, Kon and Japanese interwar ethnographers illustrated “how this consumer culture revealed class cleavage.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Louise Young, *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan* (University of California Press, 2013), 166, 198.

⁸⁷ Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 311-317.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-101; Louise Young, *Beyond the Metropolis*, 171.

⁸⁹ Miriam Silverberg, “Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity.” *The Journal of Asian studies* 51, no. 1 (1992):32.

In Mihachirō's version, 10 chairs were illustrated under seven hierarchical categories, starting from the president's leather-finished chair, a reception chair for executives, to a humble stool "that is hardly called a chair," as Mihachirō described (Figure 3.24). Satirical statements are also composed, such as "one for the receptionist's use, with squeaking legs and was perhaps purchased from the Shotoru market (local Manchurian market known for selling stolen goods)," and "I want to sit and sleep on this [president's] chair as if being a president, even just for a day."⁹⁰

His visual record of specific furniture at the SMRC is certainly based on an influence and twist from interwar Japanese social and intellectual practices of modernity. In art historian Kikuchi Yūko's theoretical survey on *mingei*, "chairs were important objects for the modern 'culture life' (*bunka seikatsu*)" that signify "a peculiar hybrid style" between Occidental and Japanese modernity.⁹¹ There is also a nuanced satire about the analogy between chairs and social ranks within the bureaucratic landscape of the imperial railway company. As a voice of the Employee Association, Mihachirō was able to produce satires that even criticized the company he belonged, which alludes to the relatively liberal environment of media production before the Kwantung Army's intervention.

In January 1935, some magazines received censorship by the Kwantung Army and had to remove some sections, and in March 1936, *Kyōwa* editor grieved their loss of free speech and the magazine's conversion into like a state-sanctioned textbook.⁹² As of early 1935, the new order of power between Dalian and the Kwantung Army had been constructed, where complaints against the press censorship on the SMRC-based publications surfaced.⁹³ Fortunately, Mihachirō more

⁹⁰ *Kyōwa*, January 1933.

⁹¹ Kikuchi Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism*, 15.

⁹² O'Dwyer, 343-344.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

than survived; in fact, his ongoing local color works obtained the official title Manchuria Local Color Pictorial in 1935. Around this time, Mihachirō became the most popular illustrator in *Kyōwa*, and from 1937 to 1941 his works monopolized nearly all illustrated pages.

Mihachirō's photomontage *Shadow Puppetry* (Figure 3.25) in the April 1935 issue of *Kyōwa* combines his graphic illustration and photographed images of puppets. His essay is somewhat nuanced though, which suggests the transitional period of Mihachirō facing political shift:

Since the foundation of Manchukuo, local scenery and customs (*kyōd-teki fūbutsu*) in all parts of the country laid under shadows, but it is a relief that shadow puppetry is still played against now prevailing “neon sign culture” all around the year. [...] Shadow puppetry is also comparable to Japanese literary music. [...] The atmosphere with the sound of the squeezing throat and the timbre of instruments, which makes the shadow-play dance, makes me feel like I lived one or two thousand years ago, completely isolated from this world.⁹⁴

The early Manchuria local color movement was impelled by the SMRC Employee Association and vocalized through *Kyōwa*, which often expressed psychological distress coming from a sense of loss among Dalian settlers caused by the militaristic oppression of civilian autonomy.⁹⁵ Mihachirō's sense of loss expressed by “laid under shadows” and “prevailing neon sign culture” after the foundation of Manchukuo may have steered him to capture fading traditional customs and material culture in Manchuria. What became the center of his new ambition was to research and collect folk objects—mainly toys and dolls, which was fostered by his new contacts toward the collective movement not only shared by Manchukuo settlers but connected to the pan-Asiatic folk collections network.

The Yellow Dust Group, led by Itō Junzō, fizzled out after two exhibitions in Dalian. This may have been due to Junzō's busy workload on new poster projects at the SMRC, or the

⁹⁴ *Kyōwa*, April 1935.

⁹⁵ Koizumi, 5-22.

new social networks and interests that Mihachirō and other leading members converted to. In 1936, piloted by Mihachirō, *yōga* painter Inaba Teiji and local color poet Furukawa Ken'ichirō (1903–1955), the Manchuria Local Color Research Association (*Manshū kyōdoshoku kenkyūkai*) was launched for the research and collection of folk toys and dolls (*dozoku gangu/nin'gyō*). Soon after, new members, including folk collector Suchi Zen'ichi (1897–1980) and young *nihonga* painter Akaba Suekichi (1910–1990), joined this group.⁹⁶ The first exhibition was held in Xinjing, the new capital of Manchukuo, in 1937. Compared to the earlier group's interest in creative painting and crafts on local themes, Mihachirō's new group focused more on researching and collecting folk toys and daily-life objects. While the group continued vigorous publication projects, Mihachirō and other artists including Akaba Suekichi, Ichimaru Hisashi, Kunii Makoto, Nakajima Arato, and Ymagoshi Oto established the Pamputao (*c.banbudao or budaowa*) Group, a painterly coterie named after Manchurian round-bottomed folk dolls.

In September 1937, a couple of months after the breakout of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, 10 members of the Manchuria Local Color Research Association participated in publishing *Coolie Drawings (kūrī sobyō)* (Figure 3.26), led by Mihachirō, based on his early series on *Kyōwa* but implementing new methodologies. Published by the SMRC Employee Association, this collaborative project, consisting of illustrations and essays of over 32 pages, was sold across Manchuria at the price of 60 Sen (approximately US \$10 values today). Based on Mihachirō's major contribution to longer essays and sketches, Furukawa, Suchi, and other writers created a couple of essays, and Akaba and Ichimaru Hisashi added pen illustrations. More than half of the book is about Mihachirō's ethnographic record of coolies' daily objects,

⁹⁶ Kazumi Nishihara, *Furukawa Ken'ichirō zen' shishū* [Complete Collection of Furukawa Kenichirō] (Tokyo: min'sha, 1997), 369.

including fashion, musical instruments, recreational items, and kitchen utensils. While Mihachirō's early coolie sketches via *Kyōwa* between 1931 and 1933 were based on his humorous renditions of an expressionist caricature of coolies' activities, his new descriptions of coolies via the local color movement were more rooted in quasi-academic research.

Local color research was not a scattered individualism but a collective movement that linked Manchukuo enterprises in different sectors. Mihachirō's local color group emerged as a coterie of his friends and colleagues with mutual development toward modern creativity; it then likely expanded to a nebulous network of interests and people, including state actors. The group members' goals and desires were plural and complicatedly intersected, as was Mihachirō's fluctuating identity formation and expression.

Among these group members was entrepreneur-collector Suchi Zen'ichi, a central figure who financed the group's research projects. He patronized Mihachirō's local color art by purchasing over 100 pieces of Mihachirō's works.⁹⁷ Born of a wealthy trader family in Kyoto, Suchi moved to Dalian in 1926 and made a great fortune from the soybean trade across Manchuria. After the Manchurian Incident, he traveled across Manchuria to collect folk objects, and his Manchurian folk toy collection was exhibited at the Grand Dalian Exposition in 1933, which made him a rising local collector.

In 1934, Sūchi became an acquaintance with Fengtian-based potter and chief designer for the Oriental Tobacco Company Ogura Enpei (1887–1949), who produced replicas of Manchurian folk dolls and rebranded them as “Enpei dolls (*Enpei ningyō*)” for souvenir

⁹⁷ My discussion on Suchi Zen'ichi in this paper is greatly indebted to Kazutoyo Shido's publication. See *Man'shūo kakenuketa otoko Suchi Zen'ichi* [Suchi Zenichi, the Man who dashed across Manchuria] (Tokyo: Muromachi shobō, 2010), 41.

purposes.⁹⁸ While it is unknown when Suchi officially joined Mihachirō's Manchuria Local Color Research Association, they must have clicked with each other instantly when Suchi submitted his series "SMRC's Folk Toys Guide" from August 1936 to March 1937 in *Kyōwa*. Suchi commissioned Mihachirō for his New Year's card designs in 1937, which continued until 1944 (Figure 3.27). Assumably, Mihachirō enjoyed more than a stable income around that time. Mihachirō called Suchi brother and followed his collecting trips across Manchuria. Mihachirō produced painted illustrations of Suchi's collected folk objects.

Suchi was a fascinating and complex figure who made a dexterous partnership between capitalist and militaristic enterprises. In Matsuhara Kazue's memoir *Nights of Dalian Dancehall* (*Dairen no dansuhōru no yoru*, 1994), Suchi is described as a benevolent collector and patron who sponsored many cultural events and artists in Dalian.⁹⁹ He is also portrayed as an opportunistic figure who had a wide social and economic network across the SMRC and, later, Kwantung administrators and militia members, including Ishiwara Kanji and Amakasu Masahiko.¹⁰⁰ In her memory, Suchi was also a huge supporter and collector for the writings of Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), best known for *Snow Country* (1937); she noted that Kawabata's books and original manuscripts were conspicuously decorated on Suchi's bookshelves.¹⁰¹ Suchi later met Kawabata during his visit to Manchuria in 1941 at the joint invitation of the Kwantung Army and the Manchuria Daily and introduced him to Mihachirō during a gathering in his villa. Around this time, Kawabata edited a collaborative literary project,

⁹⁸ Tenri University Sankokan Museum, "Enpei Ningyō 'kamikuzuhirōi'," Accessed December 22, 2021. https://www.sankokan.jp/selection/life_and_culture/kamikuzu.html

⁹⁹ Kazue Matsubara, *Dairen dansu hōru no yoru* [Night of Dancehall in Dalian], (Tōkyō: Arechi Shuppansha, 1994), 170-196.

¹⁰⁰ Kazutoyo Shido, *Man'shūo kakenuketa otoko Suchi Zen'ichi*, 32.; Naruhito Nakao, "Manshūni katsuyakushita ishokugangu korekutā suchi zen'ichi sūkina shōgaito sono isan [A unique toy collector who was active in Manchuria: The mysterious life of Suchi Zenichi and his legacy]," *Ajia yūgaku* no.146 (2011): 204.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

the *Selected Works of Multi-Ethnic Groups in Manchuria* (1942), and he chose Mihachirō's cover design for the first edition of the book.¹⁰² When Mihachirō shortly visited in Japan to get some art supplies in May 1942, Kawabata provided an accommodation for him in Kyoto.¹⁰³ Kawabata became part of Suchi and Mihachirō's network nebula.

By 1941, Suchi had collected over 50,000 pieces of Manchurian folk toys.¹⁰⁴ According to historian Shido Kazutoyo, Amakasu Masahiko introduced Suchi to Nakaoka Kon'ich (1903–1980), who was released only 13 years after he received a life sentence for his assassination of Prime Minister Hara Takashi in 1921 and appointed via the Harbin branch of the Manchukuo Imperial Army in 1934; Nakaoka helped with Suchi's trading business and folk toy collection across northern Manchuria.¹⁰⁵ Collecting folk toys in remote villages was a dangerous job due to the frequent appearance of bandits. In Manchuria at that time, it was already difficult to obtain local toys for a collective purpose, as factory-produced toys made of tin and celluloid had replaced traditional toys, like in Japan and elsewhere. Suchi, Mihachirō, and other members toured “Temple Fairs (Miào huì)” to collect massive numbers of toys produced as offerings to deities (Figure 3.28). Mihachirō recalled, “brother Suchi rummaged one after another and finally bought over a carriage amount.”¹⁰⁶

During this period, Mihachirō had the most productive time. Throughout his local color coterie's activities with stable support from Suchi, Mihachirō was commissioned for more magazine projects for introducing folk culture and toys, including *Manshū gurafu, Kaizō* (Reform), *Manshū Kankō* (Travel Manchuria, Figure 3.29), *Kankō Tōa* (Tourist East Asia),

¹⁰² Kawabata Yasunari, *Manshūkoku kaku minzoku sōsaku senshū* (Tokyo: sōgen'sha, 1942).; Masaki Yamanaka, “Manshūkoku no Kawabata Yasunori,” *Soka University Repository* March (2019): 6-7.

¹⁰³ *Kaimihachirōten*, 75.

¹⁰⁴ Naruhito Nakao, “Manshūni katsuyakushita ishokugangu korekutā suchi zen'ichi sūkina shōgaito sono isan,” 205.

¹⁰⁵ Kazutoyo Shido, *Man'shūo kakenuketa otoko Suchi Zen'ichi*, 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ Mihachirō Kai and Daisaku Kai, *Ajia Kairō* [Asian Corridor] (Fukuoka: Sekifūsha, 1996), 214.

Kodomo no Manshū (Children’s Manchuria), and *Josei Manshū* (Female Manchuria). The team often made collaborative projects. Based on Suchi’s massive collection, poet Furukawa Ken’ichirō wrote essays, and Mihachirō produced ink-and-color illustrations in scroll or album leaf format. His Pamputao Group exhibitions were recognized not only in Manchukuo but in their homeland. The group had a total of six annual exhibitions. Metropole art periodical *Mizue* often followed up the news of the group’s exhibition as a “saturated local color” with an exclamatory voice.¹⁰⁷ Mihachirō also held his solo exhibitions in Ginza Shiseido gallery in 1939 and 1941.

Led by Mihachirō, the group members published another collaborative work, *Manchuria Folk Toys* (*Manshū dozoku gangu*) in 1940. Along with nine association members, the wives of Suchi and Mihachirō joined the production; Mihachirō’s wife Yoshiko’s bird and flower design was selected for the cover image (Figure 3.30). Compared to their previous collaborative booklet *Coolie Sketch* which consisted of 32 pages and was heavily based on Mihachirō’s solo exposure, *Manchuria Folk Toys* is a total of 113 pages comprised of in-depth research reports contributed by other members and illustrations by Mihachirō and Yoshiko. This may suggest that the group and its projects gained more confidence from the SMRC Employee Association, the publisher, and possibly due to the acceptance of the Manchukuo authorities amid the state’s local color movement.

The group’s youngster, Akaba Suekichi, took Mihachirō’s lead and produced watercolor drawings of Manchurian dolls. Suekichi was a new migrant who entered Manchuria after the founding of Manchukuo.¹⁰⁸ Born as the fourth son of Aoda Kotarō in the Kanda district of

¹⁰⁷ *Mizue*, June 1938, 47; June 1940, 122.

¹⁰⁸ Shigeno Akaba, “Sūhono shiroiuma [White Horse of Suho],” *Ehon gaka Akaba Suekichi ten: Sūho no shiroi uma wa kōshite umareta* [Catalogue of Akaba Suekichi Exhibition: how Suho's White Horse was born] (Shizuoka: Shizuoka Art Museum, 2020), 4.

Tokyo in 1910, Suekichi spent his childhood in *shitamachi* (usually translated as a downtown or low-city) neighborhood known for being full of Edo folk customs, borrowing from Miriam Silberberg's description, the "region of self-employed craftsmen and tenement slums," where the culture of the masses was rapidly growing after the Kantō earthquake.¹⁰⁹ In 1923, he was adopted by the Akaba family and entered high school, where he found his interest in painting, photography, film, and theater. Akaba was a nearly self-taught artist, except for one year of *nihonga* studio lessons, as he later stated that he did not like his teacher's methodology. He later hung out in Tsukiji theaters, known as havens of leftist avant-garde artists, where he found *nihonga* painter and illustrator Yashima Tarō (1908–1994) and learned painting from him; however, after three months, he left for Manchuria.

In 1932, at the age of 22, taking his adopted family members with him, Suekichi settled first in Dalian and later in Xinjing via a job appointment with the Manchurian Telephone & Telegraph Company.¹¹⁰ As a Xinjing-based company worker, it was unclear through what channel he obtained close acquaintances with Suchi and Mihachirō in Dalian; yet, he was quickly fascinated by the charm of Manchurian folk toys and shadow puppetry and started taking photography and producing drawings of the themes. Suekichi's self-photography was taken in his Xinjing home in 1940 (see Figure 3.31), showing his doll collection behind him mixed with the Japanese Spring Festival (*Hinamatsuri*) dolls and Manchurian folk dolls.

Regarding his membership in the Manchuria Local Color Research Association and Pamputao Group in 1937, he actively collaborated with Mihachirō in folk doll paintings. Like Mihachirō, Akaba made a series of achievements from the *Tōyōga* section in the Manten, and later became a leading founder of the Xinjing-based local color art coterie called Yellow Dust

¹⁰⁹ Miriam Silberberg, "Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity," 22.

¹¹⁰ Shigeno Akaba, "Sūhono shiroiuma," 4.

Art Association (*ōdoha bijutsu Kyōkai*) and expanded his influence in the Xinjing area. Looking back at his dramatic accomplishment in the art scene, coming from nobody and feeling frustrated with what he left behind in Manchukuo, Suekichi left many reproductions of his past folk drawings and Manten submissions after he returned to Japan in 1947. Suekichi's 5.3-meter-long scroll painting of Manchurian folk dolls (Figure 3.32) produced in 1947 demonstrates his and the Manchuria Local Color Research Association's primary interests in folk toy and doll research and collection. Among the 85 folk toys illustrated in the scroll, 35 are *pamputao* round-bottomed folk dolls. In this scroll, Suekichi likely appropriated Mihachirō's style from their collaborative book project *Manchuria Folk Toys* (Figure 3.33).

The popularization of Manchukuo folk dolls should be understood within the lexicon of the political shift after the birth of Manchukuo. The SMRC-centered local color movement propagated through *Kyōwa* lost its voice and was replaced by the state formation program. While Dalian local color movement asserted Manchuria as Japanese settlers' home, the local color movement adopted by the state was a means of totalitarian control that placed all different "others" under a homogenized government, phrased as "racial harmony." This echoes Japan's *kyōdo undō* (local-hometown movement) appropriated in the mid-1930s as a vehicle to promote community attachment and loyalty within a national frame. Amid the propaganda of "*kenkoku*," there was escalating utopian energy to build Manchukuo as a home country that is not a province of Japan; Xinjing became their new Tokyo and other cities and regions were rearranged.¹¹¹ It propelled the aspiration to acquire and curate the knowledge of regions within the framework of imagined, universal Manchuria and Pan-Asiatic characteristics at the same time, which reveals the irony and uncertainty of Manchukuo's sovereignty and coloniality.

¹¹¹ Koizumi Kyomi, "*Kokyōsōshitsuno kisetsu man'shū kyōdokaun'dōto man'shūsaijiki*," 8-9.

Why did studying and collecting folk dolls become increasingly significant among other folk material cultures? In the realm of ethnology and folklore research, such as Yanagita's studies, dolls are the embodiment of historical narratives from the Stone Age to the present.¹¹² In the practices of Manchuria Local Color Research, Mihachirō and other members often discovered surprising similarities between Manchurian and Japanese folk dolls; for example, *budaowa* (*pamputao*) and *daruma* dolls of Yamanashi prefecture. National attention to folk dolls thus created the embodied image of unitary Asia, as an antithesis to the "West," which draws history long discourse on Japanese cultural nationalism from Okakura Tenshin to *mingei*'s imperialist expansion to East Asia in the late 1930s.¹¹³ Because of its innate irony and imperial violence of appropriating colonial culture, historian Kim Brandt suggests that *mingei* flowed into the idea of "fascist harmony and unity" and was used for "a larger, state-sanctioned campaign" for the total war.¹¹⁴

This is also related to the physical and mental aspects of dolls in universal human history. Puppet theaters and paper storytelling (*kamishibai*) were mobilized for propaganda purposes in Japanese imperial territories and newly occupied posts in Southeast Asia.¹¹⁵ Not only were they produced as regional souvenirs but were utilized for ambassadorial and civilian diplomatic exchanges. In 1927, starting from the doll exchanges between Japan and the U.S., such events became popularized in Korea, Manchuria, and later in European countries, including France and

¹¹² Fanny Hagin Mayer, and Yanagita Kunio. "Yanagita Kunio: Japanese Folk Tales." *Folklore Studies* 11, no. 1 (1952): 1-97; Kim Brandt, 81.

¹¹³ John Clark, "Okakura Tenshin and Aesthetic Nationalism," in *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, edited by J. Thomas Rimer (University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 215; Kim Brandt, 173.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Inge C. Orr, "Puppet Theatre in Asia." *Asian Folklore Studies* 33, no. 1 (1974): 76.; Emily Horner, "'Kamishibai' as Propaganda in Wartime Japan." *Storytelling, Self, Society* 2, no. 1 (2005): 21-31.

Germany.¹¹⁶ Between 1936 and 1945, Japanese productions of various dolls increased greatly, and these dolls were sent out to the battlefields as *imon* (comfort) goods.¹¹⁷

To Japan's colonies, the cultural science of folk-art research, along with broader colonial ethnography and anthropology, was deeply engrained in the appropriation of local culture propelled by imperial urban consumers and colonial cheap labor. For example, Korea's ritualistic village guardian posts, called Jangseung, became trivialized and miniaturized for Japanese consumers, rebranded as a "local toy (*kyōdo gangu*) set" (Figure 3.34), and these object-productions much increased during Manchuria's travel boom via Korea after 1931.¹¹⁸ Similarly, *budaowa*, made in rural Manchuria to wish for the birth of a boy, by firing the clay mold after the incensare ceremony at the shrine and creating another one for the deity after achieving the wish, became a collectible object and mass-produced for local colorists and the Japanese imperial hobby market. Unlike *mingei's* original philosophy or intention to preserve local diversity, applying *mingei* in the 1930s fell into commercialization, and turned out to be a homogenized idea of exotic design modernism serving the imperial consumeristic desires of the "new middle class."¹¹⁹

For Japanese settlers such as Mihachirō, Suchi, and Suekichi, Manchurian folk toy research was not just a colonial branch of the Japanese art world, although they drew a parallel trajectory with the Japanese *mingei* movement. By insisting on the ownership of Manchuria local color and folk toy research buttressed by the Manchukuo state project, settler artists like Mihachirō gained powerful networks, which granted him lucrative opportunities and cultural

¹¹⁶ Hee Ju Kwon, "Chekuk ilponūi inhyōng kyolyuwa sikminchi chosōnūi inhyōnghwanyōnghoe [Doll Exchanges of Japanese Empire and the Welcome Reception of Dolls in Colonial Korea]," *Sachong* 83 (2014):301, 312.

¹¹⁷Ellen Schattschneider, "The Bloodstained Doll: Violence and the Gift in Wartime Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 2 (2005): 329-31.

¹¹⁸ Hyukhui Kwon, "A Study of "Joseon Folk Dolls" and Visual Reproduction of Koreans during the Period of Japanese Imperialism," *Folk Studies* vol.21 (2017):5-29.

¹¹⁹ Brandt, 91.

power both in Dalian and later Xinjing. The ethnographical methodology to study colonized subjects and their culture not only contributed to his artistic potential but enhanced his status as a colonial expert. Suchi as a mass collector can be seen as a hobbyist (*shumisha*), a frivolous consumerist among the rising middle-class who simulated habits of established elites, criticized by reform intellectuals like Yanagita.¹²⁰ Ita Yusei (1889–1956) in Tottori Prefecture, who owned the largest Manchurian folk objects, posters, and other forms of material culture collections, had several brokers' contacts from Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan.¹²¹ Those collectors visited and wrote to each other and updated their new collections for sale. Suchi was nearly monopolizing folk toy supplies from Dalian to Japan.¹²² Unlike other colonial contacts for folk toy supplies, scholar Suzuki Fumio differentiated Suchi's activities; He was an enthusiastic promoter of Manchurian local culture by penning a series of essays in magazines and publications.¹²³ Suchi indeed had a powerful sense of ownership in local color objects in Manchuria, and through which he attempted to elevate himself not only as a wealth trader but cultural specialist.

Mihachirō was also a very versatile and flexible man with much artistic curiosity, and it is interesting that his former leftist sentimentality and the Dalian settler pride effortlessly converted into the agent of Manchukuo's totalitarian cultural enterprises. In 1940, when Wang Jingwei's puppet regime in Nanjing was sanctioned by the Sino-Japanese Treaty, which marked Japan's expansion further into the Chinese mainland, Mihachirō's multiple book projects including *Beijing Sketches* (*peking sobyō*) came out in the same year. While expanding his networks, Mihachirō further developed his career throughout the Manten.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 78-80.

¹²¹ Fumiko Suzuki, "Ganguto teikoku syumika syudanno tsusin nettowaku to syokuminchi [Networks of Imperial Hobbyists of Toys and Colonies]," *Bungaku buronsyu* 93 (2009): 3.

¹²² Saburo Itō, "Man'shūkyōdogan'gu kyūman'shūkēyude shūshūsareta sakuhin' no mon'daiten' itō saburō chūgoku min'kan'gan'gukorekushon' ni tsuite[Problems with Manchurian Local Toys (works collected via former Manchuria) – "Saburō Itō, Chinese Private Toy Collection"]," *Nihon' nin'gyōgan'gugakkai* 21 (2010):212.

¹²³ Suzuki, 15.

Mihachirō and the Manchukuo State Art Exhibitions

As detailed in the previous chapter, the Manten deserves a title of a colonial apparatus to complete Japan's assimilatory imperial project as a means of official art exhibitions. It concurrently exposes Manchukuo's cultural inner workings amid the incessant negotiation for the state's sovereignty. The deployment of the exhibitions draws out a cultural and artistic embodiment of the Co-Prosperity Sphere toward the ultimate objective of establishing aesthetic *tōyō*. The sociopolitical dynamics among different urban-settler communities were found to be the colonial power collision amidst Xinjing-centrism. Questionable eliminations of Dalian-based submissions and emotional boycotts by non-Xinjing residents' artists are a significant part of the exhibitions' history.

Mihachirō's submission was selected from the *Senshōten* in 1937. Mihachirō's two-panel painting, *Mongolia* (Figure 3.35), portrays three Mongolian boys in traditional outfits. The boys, with passive postures, flaccid arms, and mask-like, expressionless faces, look like traditional dolls. The nearly empty background with a vast pasture evokes a sense of surrealism. It is curious how he implemented his exhibition art styles in the *Tōyōga* category.

As a senior colleague from the SMRC team and a former coterie peer, Itō Junzō seemingly left a great influence on Mihachirō's return to the academic painting. Itō's *A Child and a Horse* (see Figure 1.12), exhibited at the 1931 Manchuria Art Exhibition in Dalian, shows similarities with Mihachirō's work in terms of the subject matter, *mise-en-scène*, and facial and body rendition. Metropole *nihonga* artist Nonagase Banka's (1889–1964) *Children of the Spanish Countryside* (Figure 3.36), exhibited in the Kokuga Society Exhibition in 1924, may also be a potential source for Mihachirō, which he likely saw during his days as a student in Kyoto. In search of *nihonga*'s modernist quality, which crosses over genres, Banka's Kokuga

Society had already laid a major cornerstone for the 1930s *neo-Japanese* styles that employ vivid pigment, flat and geometrical composition, and plasticity in *nihonga*. Borrowing from Szostak's description of Banka's work, his experiment on Japanese mineral pigments is "possibly with the idea of replicating the pigment-infused plaster of fresco painting," creating "the artist's intentional artlessness and naïve style."¹²⁴ In Kyoto *nihonga* artists' fervor for post-impressionism, Henry Rousseau's works, mostly known for primitivist or naïve art, became objects of admiration and importation to and collection in Japan.¹²⁵ While it is unclear if Mihachirō met Banka during his visit to Manchuria in 1936, it is not difficult to make analogies between Banka's nostalgic sensibility in depicting Spanish country girls in an archaic manner and Mihachirō's version of Mongolian boys.

Known as a keen follower of Mihachirō's local color art research, Suekichi also took a fast track via the *Manten*. Coming from a non-affiliated art institution, Suekichi's style shows a great deal of influence from Mihachirō's paintings. In the Second *Manten* in 1939, Mihachirō's *Beijing* (Figure 3.37) and Suekichi's *Temple Fairs* (*Miào huì*, Figure 3.38) were selected. In this exhibition, Mihachirō was appointed to an "Art Committee" that assisted metropole judges Noda Kyūho and Umehara Ryuzaburo in that year, and Mihachirō's work was automatically selected with the Without-Screening (*mukansa*) privilege. Although we can appreciate them only from the black-and-white reproduced image on the exhibition catalogs, it features the integration of the Cezannian rendition of color blocks and *sumi* techniques, expressing an abstract quality. Both works feature a parallel approach to expressing the doll-like human face and body. Suekichi's

¹²⁴ Szostak, 209-210.

¹²⁵ Nobuji Wadaka, *Nonagase Banka* (Wakayama: Shadan Hōjin Chikano Shinkōkai, 1975), 140. Quoted in Szostak, 192, 196.

other local color theme, *Shadow Puppetry* (Figure 3.39), achieved a Special Selection the following year.

At the Fifth Manten in August 1942, Mutō Tomio announced the list of awardees; this year, Mihachirō finally succeeded in winning the Prime Minister's Prize (first prize) for his single-panel painting *Mongolians*. According to the new rules applied in the 1942 reform of the Manten, the Manchukuo Government acquired the painting, although the collection has been lost or destroyed. Fortunately, a photograph taken at the exhibition site (Figure 3.40), where Mihachirō stood in front of his painting, gives us a fair overview of its size, composition, and style. Given that photographs, paintings, and other collectible items were prohibited in the belongings of Japanese repatriates and strictly screened, this photograph must have been carefully hidden by Mihachirō during his return in 1947. Based on a naturalistic rendition, the painting portrays two Mongolian women in traditional garments placed in an empty space with a somewhat cramped composition, which blurs the location of indigenous people and created a taxidermic sense. Mihachirō's interview with the Manchuria Daily also helps to understand the details of the painting:

The painting depicts daughters of lively Mongolians wearing red and green robes at the famous *obo* festival, which I drew when I entered Mongolia about 190 kilometers from Manchu-ri in June and lived with Mongolian people for about two weeks. The size of the painting is 4×5 *shaku* [133 × 166 cm].¹²⁶

Compared to his 1937 painting with the same Mongolian theme, in his 1942 work, he chose a female subject he had not much focused on before. The nearly life-sized Mongolian women portrayed in a more detailed and realistic manner illustrates that he altered his standard practice of naïve or primitive styles to meet the new expectations of the Manten. Mihachirō's retrospective work, *Mongolian*, produced in 1950 (Figure 3.41), gives us a glimpse of what

¹²⁶ *Manchuria Daily*, August 6, 1942.

colors and brushwork he executed for his multiple attempts to portray Inner Mongolia's people. By conveying the ethnological idea of local color, he shaped a kind of modernism that represents settler's *orientalism*.

The importance of Mongolia had burgeoned not only as a prominent theme for artistic interest in local color but also in political propaganda after Japan's growing hostilities against communism and defeat by the alliance of the Soviet and Mongolian Army in the Battle of Khalkhin Gol in 1939. In tandem with ongoing combat in mainland China, the economic, geopolitical, and cultural significance of Inner Mongolia was emphasized. In 1942, Japanese anthropologist Nishimura Shinji stressed Inner Mongolia as one of the most important parts of the Co-Prosperity Sphere by assessing its rich natural resources. Many Japanese artists and writers also visited Inner Mongolia for the source of their creativity and patriotism; for example, female ultra-nationalist artist Hasegawa Haruko (1895–1967) visited North China, Manchuria, and Mongolia, where she left voluminous sketches and essays.¹²⁷ Fujishima Takeji, who screened the *First Mante*, visited Inner Mongolia and wrote, “the rising sun seen on the horizon at the Inner Mongolian border beyond Manchuria conjuring up a deeper symbol of *Hinomaru*.”¹²⁸ Akaba, like Mihachirō, also took multiple trips to Inner Mongolia, where he made photographs and sketches (Figure 3.42) based on ethnographic research, with which he was already familiar. Rather than gazing at Mongolian females as exotic beauties, what attracted Akaba was the names and uses of their traditional attire.

Although the power takeover of the new capital disenfranchised most Dalian-based artists, Mihachirō survived and successfully built the highest recognition throughout the state art

¹²⁷ James Boyd, *Japanese-Mongolian Relations, 1873-1945 Faith, Race and Strategy* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2011), 166-170.

¹²⁸ *Tōei*, September 1937, 2.

exhibition scene. In the middle of the Pacific Wars, Manchukuo's sovereignty became distressed by Japan's imperial militarism, wherein cultural dependence on metropolises intensified. The person who decided Mihachirō as the winner of the 1942 exhibition was his former adviser Fukuda Heihachirō at the Kyoto Municipal Specialized School for Painting who was appointed as the juror of the exhibition along with *yōga* masters Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968) and Suda Kunitarō (1891–1961). In the *Manchuria Daily*, the jury's review of the exhibition was positive, such as "we are pleased to see the emergence of a new sense in the art, which is a healthy, bright, and rich local color befitting to our ally Manchukuo."¹²⁹ Mihachirō's work, combining female figure images with a local color theme in a neutral space, was able to appeal to both Manchukuo's racial ideology and Japanese imperial nationalism. Also, only allegedly, favoritism that troubled young metropole artists in the bumpy history of *kanten* screening practice, which had never been resolved, might have transplanted in the *Manten* through the reunion of the old master and his pupil.

Soon after the Fifth *Manten*, Mihachirō and Akaba joined the group mural painting project for the Mausoleum of Genghis Khan in Hinggan Inner Mongolia planned by the Manchukuo Government, which opened in 1944. The commissioned group members include Kenkoku University's Asian history professor Yamamoto Mori, Xinjing-based *yōga* painters and members of the Yellow Dust Art Association Sekiai Masaki (1912-2004) and Shirasaki Kaiki (1903-1967), and sculptor Nagahama Torao (1902-1979).¹³⁰ Mihachirō's photograph taken before his mural sketch at the Mausoleum only provides a glimpse of the project incorporating a pan-Asiatic historical landscape (Figure. 3.43). They made multiple research trips to Inner Mongolia, Beijing, and Datung for visual references and completed the first part of the three

¹²⁹ *Manchuria Daily*, August 6, 1942.

¹³⁰ Shizuoka Art Museum, Sūhono shiroiuma *Ehon gaka Akaba Suekichi ten*, 86

sections. Yet, the rest were never finished due to Japan's surrender in the middle of the undertaking.¹³¹ Nonetheless, the project determines a compelling example of the wartime application of the Manchukuo local color movement and its lockstep with Pan-Asian expansionism. In Japan's old myth shared by ordinary people, Minamoto no Yoshitsune (c.1159–1189), the military commander who died during the Genpei War, was believed to sail to the continent and become Genghis Khan. It created a symbiotic relationship between Japan's imperial history and folk tales, which expanded to the fantasy of shared Asiatic history as a means of justifying Japan's occupation and the war against the West. By recreating the historical site in the middle of Inner Mongolia, the false history was about to obtain the material truth.

In 1942, Japan's *mingei* movement activists, who had already implanted the Japanese ideology of folk crafts in mainland China, ended up being involved in Manchukuo by negotiating the possibility of establishing the Manchukuo *mingei* museum.¹³² Yet, the reform effort of the metropole's *mingei* movement was effective to a lesser degree in Manchuria, despite its significant impact in other colonies throughout the 1930s.¹³³ I suggest this was heavily due to Japanese settlers' stronghold in Manchukuo's local color movement protected by their practice of research, collecting, and educating as a cultural manifestation of the settler identity, despite their sociocultural dependence on the metropole authorities and political oppression. Mihachirō and his fellows had shaped this cultural field by the dynamics of the SMRC's railway imperialism, settlers' autonomy, Manchukuo's sovereignty game, and later imbricated with wartime interests.

¹³¹ *Kaimihachirōten*, 75; Naruhito Nakao, 211.

¹³² Brandt, 193.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 186.

When Japan's imperial power in Manchukuo collapsed in 1945, many Japanese civilian settlers were killed or went through life-threatening years as refugees before they were sent back to their homeland by 1947. Former settlers in Manchuria who lived or were born and raised there made another massive migration to Japan and were labeled as “repatriates (*hikiagesha*),” including Mihachirō, Akaba, Suchi, and their other colleagues (if they survived). Thus, their project of making a new home (*kyōdo*) was terminated only after ten years of adventure. Although Mihachirō and his local color groups produced a remarkable body of folk art, writings, and collections in Manchukuo, the Japanese imperial history of folk art tends to rely on the metropole institution of *mingei* and its impact on its colonies and occupied territories. From the postwar *mingei* boom in the mid-1950s to the 100th Anniversary of *Mingei* Exhibition at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, which recalled the history of folk art movements in Japan and collections from Korea, Taiwan, and China: yet, Manchuria was not examined.¹³⁴

Mihachirō had settled in his original hometown of Kyushu; others also returned to their hometown. He participated in the Inten exhibitions and traveled to Central Asia and Yungang Grotto with his son, *nihonga* artist Daisaku (1937–2019). Akaba rebranded his specialty as an illustrator of Children's books and enjoyed a fair success. Between 1945 and 1947, Suchi used his rich connections to save a significant number of his collections and even buy many distress-sale items in Dalian, which were protected by the Soviet military.¹³⁵ Later, he had to give up his collections to Chinese officers before repatriation. The brotherhood between Suchi and Mihachirō was wrecked; when Suchi appeared to Mihachirō in Fukuoka and coaxed him to join

¹³⁴ Exhibition “100 Years of Mingei: The Folk Crafts Movement,” at the National Museum of Art, Tokyo, October 26, 2021–February 13, 2022.

¹³⁵ Kazutoyo Shido, 64.

his new project with the military police, Mihachirō was outraged and yelled that “I can’t stand it anymore. Wake up!”¹³⁶

Manchuria was a Japan-centric world heavily inscribed by the racialized composition of politics, culture, and modernity. For young artists, such as Mihachirō, Dalian was more than a “secondary Tokyo” but a place where they could negotiate their new social statuses and identities. Mihachirō’s artistic trajectory demonstrates how Japanese settler communities were becoming diasporic, although unstable and fluid, by calibrating cultural authenticity that differed from that of metropole people. Local color art was one such approach, illustrating the diasporic desires of settlers by exploiting racial hegemony. In the middle of the geopolitical shift to Manchukuo as the new state, Mihachirō’s intimacy with and sympathy for other races, from coolies to Mongolians, was the wellspring of his modernist development in tandem with a larger collective enterprise and colonial ethnology toward the greater imperial march. Thus, what he produced for his modernist adventure was not unrelated to a vehicle for state-building projects and imperial propaganda. The multiethnic cultural pluralism under the united Pan-Asian empire was not just an empty utopian slogan but reveals the symbiosis and cacophony of social relations in Manchukuo.

¹³⁶ Naruhito Nakao, 207.

**CHAPTER FOUR. Rationalizing *Nihonga*:
The 1940 Manten and the Visualization of Machine, Technology, and Labor**

“The reality of our century is technology: the invention, construction, and maintenance of machines. To be a user of machines is to be of the spirit of this century.”
—László Moholy-Nagy, 1922¹

*To our joyous voices in song— Shine, oh golden clouds of the wasteland!
It’s morning, it’s morning! Our song of construction is bursting forth across the continent!*
—Saijō Yaso, “Song of Construction,” from *Vow in the Desert*, 1940 ²

In the previous chapter, I explored the development of the Manchurian local color movement in *nihonga*, folk studies, and the practice of collecting as a reactionary measure that reinstated an endangered Asiatic artistic tradition and handcrafts culture that faded in the process of Western dominance and capitalistic mass-production. Such attention became provided a new account of the aesthetics and identity of Manchukuo acclaimed in the Manten exhibitions and other popular visual cultures as well as a part of the global phenomenon of the return to folk art.

This chapter highlights another significant visual code embodying Manchukuo’s utopian state-building ideology and totalitarian reality detailed by rational modernity, advanced technology, and productivism that simultaneously served the wartime Imperial campaign of Japan: *Machine aesthetic*. The term, in film historian Naoki Yamamoto’s estimation, stands less for the mere articulation of the beauty of machineries than for an embodiment of modernity and the sociopolitical condition of the twentieth century, which helped generate the locus where the

¹ László Moholy-Nagy, “Constructivism and the Proletariat,” *Moholy-Nagy: Experiment in Totality*, edit. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T., 1969), 19.

² Toho film product film starred by Hasegawa Kazuo and Ri Kōran (Li Xianglan), Cited in Aaron Stephen Moore, *Constructing East Asia : Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan’s Wartime Era, 1931-1945* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 103.

universal rhetoric encounters Japan's local discourse.³ Terms such as *mekanizumu* (mechanism), *kikaishugi* (machine-ism), and *kikai bigaku* (machine aesthetics) became increasingly visible in the early Shōwa period.⁴ These concepts propelled Manchukuo's machine age between the new capital development plan in 1933 and the announcement of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in 1940, providing efficient colonial management. Like the rise of folk arts and crafts, the forms and subjects that were linked with international artistic trends were accustomed to the Japanese pursuit of creating pure, non-elite, Asian-minded, and utopian art while celebrating machine beauty and industrial productivism. Certainly, machine aesthetics was more than an antonym of folk art; by establishing links between the nation's past and present, not only Mingei in Japan but also American and European folk craftsmanship evolved to embrace industrial designs based on mechanical productions that displayed national accounts of modernity.

My core consideration in this chapter is the *machine-ist* beauty that emerged in *nihonga* productions exhibited in the *Tōyōga* Section of the Manten (Manchukuo Art Exhibition), which I will analyze based on the genre's own historical context and its shared visual code with other interrelated media, including film, photography, graphic magazines, posters, and postcards. The movement of machine aesthetics in *nihonga* formed dynamic bridges on a global level between the revival of realism and all kinds of retrospective modernist references in the global machine age of the first half of the twentieth century.⁵ The movement was also situated within the complexity that industrial nations went through from the interwar period to wartime in the

³ Naoki Yamamoto, *Dialectics Without Synthesis: Japanese Film Theory and Realism in a Global Frame* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2020), 54-55.

⁴ Chinghsin Wu, "Transcending the Boundaries of the 'isms': Pursuing Modernity through the Machine in 1920's and 1930's Japanese Avant-Garde Art," in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, edited by Roy Starrs (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 339.

⁵ The machine age is a generic term to indicate the era that emerged with technological development, usually from the 19th century to the mid-twentieth century. However, in this chapter, my definition of the machine age is its culmination of the two world wars.

upsurge of nationalism and popular cultural life for the masses.⁶ Such imagery in artistic productions communicates the socio-political situation and “collective consciousness” in different local contexts. Thinkers such as Émile Durkheim and Louis Althusser discerned the concept as “the totality of beliefs and sentiments” determined by material relations and the division of labor, which can be elements of a democratic society,⁷ while having the potential to proliferate ruling institutional hegemony by means of ideological state apparatuses.⁸ Manchukuo, after 1937, was turning into a stark “disciplinary society” that regulated individuals into the communal bodies in the Foucauldian account exemplifies how the power was exercised in visual media to reproduce and internalize the state’s norms.⁹ To what extent did the art of the machine age merge into the aesthetic vision of the Manchukuo campaign? According to what methods and rationales did later settler artists correspond to the ideals of the colonial destination? Through this study that investigates visual manifestations of Manchukuo, I attempt to answer enduring questions concerning the ambiguous cultural identities in the later period of the state, referred to as the era of Xinjing Ideology.

In addressing the preceding questions, I will discuss the rich but ambiguous machine aesthetics featured in the Tōyōga section of the Manten, based on not only the form and content that conformed to the state propaganda but also the genre’s historical significance as a barometer

⁶ The active negotiation in the social life by ordinary people between the interwar modern culture and the wartime state mobilization is best exemplified by Silverberg’s explanation of this transition as “code-switching.” For example, the tragicomedy of mechanized humanity featured as the original metaphor in Chaplin’s *Modern Time* is tied with the epoch of the machine age and diffused into the positive popular images of technology in wartime Japan. Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 4, 257-8.

⁷ Emile Durkheim, *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings*. Edited by Anthony Giddens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

⁸ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses Notes Toward an Investigation,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 143.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 193, 209, 216.

of the political era.¹⁰ As originally *nihonga* in medium and technique, it links with the more extensive discussions of Japanese artistic modernity and authenticity and their implantation in the Manchukuo context amid the shifting political dynamics after 1937. Starting from a careful observation of the synthesis of realism and design modernism articulated via machinist vocabulary, mainly appearing in the 1940 *Manten*, I attempt to raise a critical understanding of the ambiguous interlocking array of techno-utopian modernist and Imperial militarist visual codes promoted throughout the state art exhibitions and other interrelated media.

The way in which machine aesthetics was implemented throughout the visual culture is intertwined with the broader rubrics of traditional knowledge and art practices. I will detail the historical context of the self-crisis and challenges that the *nihonga* world faced over the interwar era with modernist and nationalist impulses by exploring the impact of Japanese *neo-classicism* (*shin-kotenshugi*) in the *shin*(new)-*nihonga* scene. My survey will then expand to the international avant-garde in the machine age in conjunction with its implication in the Japanese art world. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss in what ways global machine aesthetics and *nihonga* came to merge and reflect the climax of the political era by exploring popular visual images that embody Manchukuo's state ideals and the Co-Prosperity Sphere. I hope that this discussion can provide insight into how migrated ideology and imagination get appropriated in the colonial setting that is "almost the same but not quite" as that of the Imperial metropole.¹¹

Kuriyama Hiroshi (1909–1952) and the Third *Manten*

¹⁰ On *nihonga*'s political nature and its historical process, see Dōsin Satō, "*Nihon bijutsu*" *tanjō: kindai Nihon no "kotoba" to senryaku* [The Birth of Japanese Art: the language and strategies of Modern Japan], (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996); Chelsea Foxwell, "The Painting of Sadness? The Ends of *Nihonga*, Then and Now," *ARTMargins* (Cambridge, Mass.) 4 no.1(2015): 27-60; Ellen Conant, et al., *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968*. (St. Louis, Mo: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995).

¹¹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 122.

On August 1, 1940, the Third Manchukuo Art Exhibition was held at Shikishima Girls' High School near Xinjing Station. That year, the First Prize, the Ministry of Public Welfare Prize from the Tōyōga Section, was again awarded to Japanese *nihonga* painter Kuriyama Hiroshi (1909–1952) for *Training* (*Kunren*; Figure 4.1). It was a year after he had received the same prize from the Second Manten for *Workshop* (*Sagyō*; Figure 4.3), which made him the one and only artist who garnered the highest award twice in sequence in the short-lived Manten. Metropole *nihonga* artist Matsumoto Ichiyō (1893–1952), from his review on the Third Manten, extolled *Training*, stating that painting is “with a great execution of line and has the sense of lively freshness, which is not insufficient to the level of works from the Shin-Bunten.”¹² His works were still succeeding by the end of Manten in 1944. He also participated in the Exhibition of Kwantung Army Report Sketches held in Xinjing in 1942 and the Exhibition of Three Manchukuo Resident Artists with other Manten *nihonga* artists Okada Renseki and Itō Akira in Ginza in 1943.¹³ Japanese metropole art magazines responded to the exhibition as “residents’ vision that sees Manchuria as their home country.”¹⁴

Kuriyama’s awarded paintings incorporate masculine bodies of male workers partaking in various industrial settings by utilizing the medium and methods of *nihonga*, while retaining photographic stillness. The world described in his paintings is highly representation oriented. *Workshop* depicts a scene of the civic construction of Xinjing. Featuring the new building for the Justice Department in the background, the scene depicts the construction of the Datung Boulevard that crisscrossed eight ministry buildings of Manchukuo. *Training* illustrates a young voluntary army wearing the Concordia Association Uniform (*Kyōwa-huku*) operating an

¹² Matsumoto Ichiyō, “Manshūkoku bijutsu tenrankai,” *Tōei*, October 1940, 43.

¹³ *Manshū geibun tsushin* [Manchurian Arts and Literature News] December 1943, 37.

¹⁴ Kinbara Seigo, “Zaiman genchisakkaten [Exhibition of Manchukuo Resident Artists],” *Nihon bijutsu*, May 1943, 66; Kinbara Seigo, *Kokka*, June 1943, 27.

agricultural tractor to plow the vast grassland of Northern Manchuria. Although the third piece, *Resource (Sigen)*, was selected for the fourth Manten in 1941, no visual reproduction survived to describe the painting.¹⁵ Nonetheless, it can easily be assumed that the trilogy was produced within a cohesive pictorial language of utopian state propaganda for the Manchukuo enterprise.

Surprisingly little information about Kuriyama has been recorded.¹⁶ Born and raised in Hakui, a small town in Ishikawa prefecture, he studied under the revered *shin-nihonga* masters Yamaguchi Hōshun (1893–1971) and Kawasaki Shōko (1886–1977) as well as Sinologist art historian Kinbara Seigo (1888–1958) at the Imperial Art Academy. During his art study in Tokyo, Kuriyama received an Honorable Mention at the sixth exhibition of the Nihonga Association (*Nihonga-kai*) in 1931.¹⁷ As a *haiku* (Japanese poetry with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern) artist, he also participated in a local *haiku* society, *Haigai-ginsha*, with renowned Hakui-born poet Kurabe Tōun (1892–1957). Kuriyama is known to have emigrated to Xinjing with his family sometime after his graduation in 1935 and made an artistic turning point by debuting in the Manten.¹⁸ Arriving in Manchukuo as an unknown artist, he enjoyed brief but solid recognition and disappeared from the *nihonga* scene after repatriating to his hometown in late

¹⁵ Due to Japan's war footing in Manchukuo, the exhibition stopped publishing catalogues from the fourth exhibition.

¹⁶ After many years of tracing Kuriyama, I found his hometown in Hakui, Ishikawa prefecture, in 2022. Due to the remoteness of the region as well as the nature of the Tokyo/Kyoto dominant art history, records on artists and cultural figures from small cities and towns tend to be stored in regional archives only, which is hardly found in primary library searches. I thank the former vice-chair of Ishikawa Prefecture History Museum, Kita Haruchiyo, who helped me contact regional museums, and the curator of Hakui Museum of History and Folk Arts, Yamada Junko, who provided me with crucial information about Kuriyama and the provenance of his post-war sketches.

¹⁷ The group was founded in 1923 by Araki Jippo and former Bunten artists with the aim of producing innovative *nihonga*, which became a gateway to the Teiten submissions. I thank Shioya Jun, a researcher at the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, provided me with the related reference.

¹⁸ Although Manchuria Daily introduced Kuriyama as an alumnus of 1936, a list of Students and Graduates of the Imperial School of Art (Teikoku Bijutsu Gakko) provided by Musashino University of Arts marked Kuriyama's commencement year as 1935.

1946 and his unexpected death in 1952 at the age of 43.¹⁹ In an interview with *Manchuria Daily* in 1940, likely representing the only media statement that Kuriyama ever left, he explained that *Workshop* and *Training* were the first two parts of his “Constructing Manchuria” trilogy project planned for the annual submissions to the Manten.²⁰

For an unknown artist, it might have taken strong motivation and inspiration to make Kuriyama relinquish his former academic landscape and still life *nihonga* training for the Manten submissions. Despite insufficient visual records, an essay written by Kinbara entitled “An Essay on Japanese Art” (*Nihon Bijutsuron*, 1939) provides a glimpse of a social event in which Kuriyama participated; Kinbara states that “Kuriyama Hiroshi painted Narcissus, and that was more than enough to make people much delighted in the gathering. [...] I did not hesitate to overlap my *haiku* to it.”²¹ In addition to his former membership in the Nihonga Association, Kurimaya could be easily assumed to have been an ardent practitioner of mainstream classical *nihonga* aiming at the Teiten exhibitions before he decided to move to Manchukuo. His calligraphic illustration and poem *In Longjing* (Figure 4.4) inserted in the magazine *Monthly Manchuria* (*Gekkan Manshū*) in 1939 also alludes to his primary *nanga*-based practice.²² Considering the scarcity of his commercial work, unlike many other Manchukuo settler artists, he seemed to drive his career as a full-time artist who was primarily dedicated to official salon exhibitions.

¹⁹ There is a brief record that Kuriyama was repatriated from Manchukuo to Ishikawa prefecture with his family on November 24, 1946. See *Shinshū hakuishishi kingendai shiryōhen* [Modern and Contemporary Archives of Hakui] DVD (Hakui: Ishikawa Prefecture, 2012).

²⁰ “Kokutenei no nyūsensha [Awardees from the National Art Exhibition],” *Manchuria Daily*, July 16, 1940.

²¹ Kinbara Seigo, artist, philosopher, and educator, is best known as a founder of the Imperial Art School (today Musashino Art University) in 1929; Kinbara Seigo, *Nihon Bijutsuron* [Theory of Japanese Art] (Tokyo: Wawade Shobō, 1939), 29.

²² Kuriyama Hiroshi, “Longjiangde,” *Gekkan Manshū*, May 1939, 170-171.

Indeed, the implication of Kuriyama's Manten-awarded paintings transcends the individual painter's career turning point. One may read his paintings as a quintessential example of wartime fascist paintings mobilized as the official aesthetics of the Japanese Empire amid WWII. From the mid-1930s, the Japanese art world certainly underwent an era of state surveillance. Along with stringent censorship on arts and publications, nationalistic propagandism was aimed at instilling the notion of "art for the nation's sake" in leading artists.²³ Soon after the Army Art Association was organized in 1938, state-scaled exhibitions for war efforts began to expand; the Holy War Art Exhibitions started in 1939 and toured throughout the Imperial territories, including Manchuria.²⁴ The militaristic resonance found in Kuriyama's painting through the featuring of an army may be responsive to Japan's wartime campaign, which dispatched many patriotic young people to Manchuria for the mission of backing up self-defense capacity and increasing food production in Japanese settler villages. In fact, Xinjing-based artist and art critic Ikebe Aori, in his critical review of the Third Manten, denounced Kuriyama's painting and described the painter as "just a follower of the current wave of war paintings."²⁵

This is not, however, the only interpretation encompassing Kuriyama's iconic paintings. Although we can only survey the paintings from the black and white reproduction in the exhibition catalogues, the highly concentrated images of mechanical equipment placed in the center of the compositions raise the paintings' uniqueness and uncertainty, which are reminiscent of a sense of photography, Futurism, Constructivism, and even Dada. *Workshop* provides a strong juxtaposition between heavy construction machines and the angular-shaped "human

²³ Hisao Tanaka, *Nihon no sensōga: sono keifu to tokushitsu* [Japanese War Painting: its genealogy and characteristics] (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1985), 108-181.

²⁴ *Manshūkoku Gensei*, 1940, 508.

²⁵ Ikebe Aori, "Dai sankai kokuten o miru [Reviwing the Third Manten]," *Kankō tōa*, October 1940, 83-84.

machines” that no longer represent Chinese coolies—the living spectacle of Dalian; rather, *Workshop* produces the reinvented symbol of Xinjing mobilized for the Five-Year Development Plan, the metaphor of new colonial subjects represented as “the masses” or “the forced labor.”²⁶ In *Training*, the rational and scientific illustration of a tractor composed in the cropped frame fills the forefront of pictorial space, as if the painting were a portrayal of the machine itself. An eerie and a surrealistic anxiety is also generated in the odd mixture of hard-edged realism and the abstract background as well as the inorganic human figure. The paintings might have produced a duality of the viewing experience in the exhibition that was associated with the specific stakes for the state-sponsored visual enterprise. While these paintings may have created mass propaganda for the larger public, the overrunning representation of materiality and realism within the traditional format portray a more uncertain, questionable encounter with *nihonga*’s modernist experiment.

The militaristic appropriation in this painting is undisputable yet seems to incorporate a more complex context than in metropole practices; for example, *Final Attack on Hong Kong Island* (Figure 4.5) by Yamaguchi Hōshun, Kuriyama’s Imperial Art School mentor served as one of the rare seven *nihonga* official war paintings (*sensōga*) at the Great East Asia War Art Exhibition in 1942.²⁷ Manchukuo’s state identity was highly militarized by the overarching authority of the Kwantung Army and the extended state police system. However, before the 1941 Summary of Guidelines to Art and Literature (*gēbun shidōyōkō*), which aimed to centralize all cultural and artistic activities under austere state control, the supervision and censorship of

²⁶ According to Driscoll, Japan’s capitalist enterprise in Manchukuo during the late imperialism is tied with “necropolitics” with examples including mass mobilization of manual labor, soldier, and sex workers eventually to death. Driscoll, 227-262.

²⁷ Bert Winther-Tamaki. “Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting During the Fifteen-Year War.” *Monumenta nipponica* 52, no. 2 (1997):156.

cultural areas remained obscure and thus allowed artists and writers to play on the nebulous boundaries.²⁸ According to scholar Fushi Li's timeline of cultural politics in Manchukuo, 1932–1937 (regionalization), 1937–1941 (totalization), and 1941–1945 (wartime mobilization), discourses on constructing the autonomous culture of Manchukuo were rather outstretched during the second phase (1937–1941).²⁹ The state's cultural projects were actively discussed and produced based in Xinjing, which led to the peak of cultural propaganda embodying the slogan of the “state-building spirit (*kenkoku seishin*)” and Japanese leadership of East Asia.³⁰ It was not until 1942 that the Manchuria Artists Association (*Manshū bijutsuga kyōkai*) was formed and held its first exhibition as the state-approved art group officially serving the national defense, war footing, and East Asia Co-Prosperity. Summarizing the Manchukuo art scene in 1939, *yōga* artist and critic Ikebe Sadayoshi noted regretfully that “in Manchukuo, so-called war paintings are hardly seen.”³¹ Such demand for these paintings and dissatisfaction with their absence continued even until the climax of the war when the 1944 Annual Report of Manchuria questioned that “why we don't see the vibe of the decisive battle in paintings here?”³² While Manchukuo was under the control of the Kwantung Army since its inauguration, the directions for cultural policies were not always perfectly overlapped with the metropole's wartime undertakings. There were subtle conflicts among different mediators between Manchukuo's

²⁸ For example, Louise Young discerns that Manchukuo exemplifies one of the most fascinating cases of “uneven application of political censorship” in the 1930s. By examining post-1941 Manchukuo literature, Kyoungsun Jeon argues that after the operation of the Summary of Guidelines to Art and Literature art and literature works were utilized to a vehicle of war propaganda. See Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 279; Kyoungsun Jeon “Literature and Art Policy of Manchukuo at the End of Pacific War - A Focus on the Yemoon Magazine,” *Manchuria Studies* no. 21(2016):35-65.

²⁹ Fushi Li, 66-69; Fushi Li, “Manjuguge munhwatongchijongchaekkkwa yongueuk hwalttonge byonhwa yangsang junggugin yongeujeul jungsimeuro [The Changing Patterns of Cultural Governance Policy and Theater Activities in Manchukuo - Focusing on Chinese Theater]” *Gukje haninmunhangn yongu* [International Study of Korean Humanities] 18 (2016): 5-38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 68

³¹ *Manshūkoku Gensei*, 1939.

³² *Manshū Nenkan* (1944), 422.

claimed sovereign and destined colonial identity until the outbreak of the Pacific Wars at the end of 1941, when Manchukuo was entirely mobilized as a base for war supplies.³³

Questions also existed within *nihonga*; in the 1930s the *nihonga* field had faced self-criticism of the genre's limited suitability regarding the increasing demands of the service for war paintings due to its reluctance to draw on contemporary events and the different notions and availability for realism. A series of discussions took place in *nihonga* magazine *Tōei* (Shadow of Tower); for example, in 1938 critic Kuroda Tomonobu (1885–1967) wrote pungently, “in the future, if you are asked why war paintings in the Shōwa era are *yōga* only, it would be such a great shame to *nihonga* artists.”³⁴ Such a struggle coming from the imminent political moment went hand in hand with Taishō and Shōwa *nihonga*'s ongoing modernizing quest to demonstrate the thematic reality and representational realism, which will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter. While war record paintings, offering paintings (*kennoga*), or other commemorating paintings (*kinenga*) are the main categories of the painting practice serving the wartime Imperial state, it is important to trace how *nihonga* played a role in the rally of state propaganda, ambiguously composed out of the above category, and how to differentiate the genre's authenticity from its dexterity vis-à-vis *yōga*.³⁵

To this, recent scholarships on wartime *nihonga*—yet the field has been comparatively understudied—surveyed how wartime *nihonga* deliberately related figures in Japan's warring state history, saga, and religion to the allegory of the then-current militarist ideology and

³³ Shinichi Yamamuro, *Kimera: Manshūkoku no shōzō* [The Portrait of Manchukuo] (Tokyo: Chūōkōron shinsha, 2004), 248.

³⁴ Kuroda Tomonobu, “War and Nihonga,” *Toei*, March 1938, 8.

³⁵ Bert Winther-Tamaki. “Embodiment/Disembodiment,” 147.

events.³⁶ For example, Kawabata Ryūshi's *Genghis Khan* (1938; Figure 4.6) utilized the portrait of Minamoto no Yoshitsune with camels sitting around him, who was believed to have survived and resurfaced as Genghis Khan in an old myth, as an allegory of the Japanese military victory in China-Mongolia.³⁷ Art historian Ikeda Asato's groundbreaking survey revisited the wartime metaphor of *bijinga* (literally "beauty paintings" originated in *ukiyo-e*, but widely refers to female figure paintings in *nihonga*) of modern girls (*mōga*), the gendered body representing Japan's modernity, intertwined with what she refers to as 'machine-ist (*kikaushugi*)' aesthetics during Japan's fascist turn.³⁸ Having discovered machine aesthetics in *nihonga* in the mid-1930s, she discerns that it embodies the artistic "amalgamation of East and West," which later becomes "increasingly appropriated by militarists who believed that industrial materials were an essential component of the fight against the West."³⁹ Such studies allow us multiple frameworks through which to interpret the wartime disciplinary practice of *nihonga* in reflecting the sensitive political nature and Japanese aesthetic identity vis-à-vis the Western influences by co-playing with traditional and modern elements as well as the modernist and so-called 'reactionary modernist' methods concurrently.

The uncertainty in Kuriyama's paintings indicates that *machine-ist* aesthetics was situated in the unstable landscape of Manchukuo's cultural politics between 1937 and 1941 in

³⁶ See Hisao Tanaka, *Nihon no sensōga*; Ichirō Hariu, *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945* [War and Art, 1937-1945] (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2007); Mimi Yiengpruksawan. "Japanese War Paint: Kawabata Ryūshi and the Emptying of the Modern." *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 76-90.

Asato Ikeda, "The Japanese Art of Fascist Modernism: Yasuda Yukihiko's the Arrival of Yoshitsune/Camp at Kisegawa (1940-41)," *Modernism/modernity Print Plus* 1, no. 2 (2016); Mitsuo Nezaki. "Sensō hasande Shōwa nihongawa dō kawattaka?[How nihonga shifted over the course of wartime Shōwa?]," *Gējutsu Shincho* 44, no.10 (1993): 76-81; Winther-Tamaki. "Embodiment/Disembodiment."

³⁷ Yiengpruksawan, 84-85.

³⁸ Asato Ikeda, "Modern Girls and Militarism: Japanese-Style Machine-ist Paintings, 1935-1940," in *Art and War in Japan and Its Empire, 1931-1960* edited by Asato Ikeda, Aya Louisa McDonald, and Ming Tiampo (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 94.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 96.

militarizing modernity. While adhering to *nihonga*'s conventional medium based on mineral pigment, ink, and *washi* paper and brush technique, Kuriyama's paintings seem to transcend any given category in the *kanten* system. Continuing from my Chapter 3 discussion, this raises more questions about the imposition and malleability of *Tōyōga* (and *nihonga*) as an ideological device that reflects the Japanese command of Asianness. As "a highly charged metaphor of social incorporation," according to Bert Winter-Tamaki, the invention of *Tōyōga* was beset with Imperial contradictions vis-à-vis the colonial state art to be local but assimilative.⁴⁰ The paintings may suggest the "maximum embodiment" of the uncertainty of the colonial management of art and the socio-political metaphors of entering the Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁴¹

What is more noticeable is that many other *Tōyōga* Section submissions awarded in the Third Manten paralleled the pictorial language of Kuriyama, including extremely ordered space, sharply defined static and architectural forms, synchronized human actions, rigid trisect compositions, geometric patterns, and an odd mixture of solid artificiality and lethargic naturalism. Hidaka Kenzō's *Spring Day of Oil Company* (*Shunjitsu aburabō*; Figure 4.7), which received an Honorable Mention, for example, realistically depicts oil press machinery in a symmetrical composition corresponding to thematic and stylistic consistencies seen in Kuriyama's works. Another example is Matsumoto Kusura's *Mining* (*Kōnai sagyō*; Figure 4.8), which portrays two miners drilling on the rock in synchronous motion, producing design abstractness that twisted the traditional techniques of landscape painting for texturing rocks. Despite the absence of a machine subject, similar static and rational senses are also found in Okada Renseki's *Tropical Fish* (*Nettaigyō*; Figure 4.9) and Itō Sōtani's *Kunming Lake*

⁴⁰ Bert Winter-Tamaki, *Maximum Embodiment*, 103-104, 127.

⁴¹ My use of the term "maximum embodiment" referring to Kuriyama's paintings is borrowed by Winter-Tamaki's fourth register from his theory of embodiment in *yōga* in four forms, as "rhetorical metaphors of political and social incorporation." *Ibid.*, 14-21.

(*Konmēko*; Figure 4.10) with the tri-sect compositions and decorative realism. Okada, one of the most renowned full-time careered *nihonga* artists in Manchukuo, likely chose to make stylistic changes for the Third Manten, similar to what Kuriyama did, from his submissions for the first two Manten exhibitions, including *Monkey* (1938; Figure 2.17) and *School of Fish* (1939) that shadowed Kyoto-style animal paintings, conjuring up Hashimoto Kansetsu (1883–1945) and Takeuchi Seihō.⁴²

Given that the presence of female figures—the most prosperous theme in modern Japanese paintings thriving in Japan’s Imperial and colonial art exhibitions—was remarkably diminished in Manchukuo, the application of machine imagery, including the masculine-gendered bodies in the Manten, expands our view on how new artistic ideals and practices were prompted by art administrators and the mutual interest and inspirations of later settler artists. The static and linear manner is reminiscent of the modernist nexus of the *nihonga* world in the 1930s, or avant-garde *machine-ist* enthusiasm observable from Dada, Constructivism, Purism, Cubo-futurist works, New Objectivity, and even Socialist Realism. This gives us crucial visual evidence by which to elucidate how Japanese modernist approaches within traditional painting format were fanned out in Manchukuo as *Tōyōga*.

Although it is hard to refer to as “a collective movement” or “-ism” due to its limited extent of appearance in the short span of the Manten, such fervor for analytical plasticity, which suddenly appeared altogether and succeeded in receiving the highest reception in the same year of 1940, is suggestive of a rather radical movement in comparison to the contemporaneous metropole *nihonga* trend in Japan. While artworks themed with machine technology, industrial workshop, science, and militaristic resonance started appearing throughout metropole and

⁴² The word full-time career artist is a translation of the Japanese term *senjyōgaka* proudly refers to painters who do not engage with other side jobs to make ends meet but only dedicate their painting projects.

colonial *kanten* toward the mid to late 1930s, entries with those themes were yet to be granted significant awards in *kanten* academism. One exception is *A Pair of Figures: Rhyme and Research* (Figure 4.11) by Korean painter Yi Yu-tae, first prized in the *Tōyōga* Section of the 1943 Senten. The painting portrays a female scientist sitting in a lab with a microscope, which is reminiscent of the gender dynamics seen in Japanese *machine-ist bijinga* such as in Ōta Chōu's portrait of a female doctor from *Vaccination* (*Shutō*, 1932; Figure 4.12).⁴³ In the *Tōyōga* section of the Senten and the Taiten or the *Nihonga* section in the Teiten, until the last years of the Imperial era, such themes were yet scarcely seen and highly acknowledged. What accounts for this new tendency that recalls *machine-ism* as having been cherry-picked to be the face of the Manten?

The answers may be found in both internal and external factors. The first consideration is the systematic change in the screening system of the Manten. As discussed in Chapter 2, what made the identity and autonomy of the Manten different from the cases of Taiwan and Korea is that Manchu politicians and Japanese bureaucrats were designated as the main jury of discretion and announcement, although opinions of Japanese metropole masters as an advisory board were heavily reflected. Moreover, in the 1940 Manten, which was held several months after the death of Luo Zhenyou, the ratio of *nihonga* selections to Chinese paintings increased steeply in comparison to the first two exhibitions. Moreover, the “provincial committee” system introduced in the Third Manten, after the boycott from artists in Dalian and Fengtian in the previous years,

⁴³ The images of modern female figures in the scientific settings became prevalent during wartime in Japan and Korea. Scholarly works have discussed that such female icons were mobilized with hybridized meanings between modern girls and New Women, encompassing colliding dialogues of nationalism, wartime imperialism, and patriarchal conflicts. Gina Kim, “Visualizing Colonial Beauty: Female Figure Paintings of Yi Yu-Tae, 1943-1944,” MA thesis (University of Oregon, 2014); Joan Kee, “Modern Art in Late Colonial Korea: A Research Experiment,” *Modernism/modernity* (Baltimore, Md.) 25.2 (2018): 215-243; Kevin Michael Smith, “The New Woman Arrives Again: A Review of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea’s Exhibition on ‘Sin Yōsōng,’” *Cross-Currents* (Honolulu, Hawaii), no. 33 (2020): 211-31.

invited resident artists from major cities in Manchukuo to assist the main jury and advisory board. Given that the metropole advisory members appointed for the Third Manten were Kyoto-based *nihonga* painter Matsumoto Ichiyō (1893–1952) and *yōga* painter Aoyama Yoshio (1894–1996), who were relatively less dominant artists in Japanese academism than the previous years' invitees such as Maeda Seison, Fujishima Takeji, Noda Kyūho, and Umehara Ryūzaburo, the politicians/bureaucrats and Manchukuo regional committee were allegedly able to take a more active part in the decision-making in that year.

The second case in point is a socio-political index. Artists of the later migration boom who settled in Xinjing were on the lookout for different modernist approaches that would enable them to succeed in Manchukuo. Experiencing the rise of militarists and crashing leftism in Japan might have been challenging for those artists with uncertain political orientations to create art that was both politically suitable and innovative. Having limited job opportunities, Japanese newcomers to Xinjing were more agile to respond to the state projects and were, simultaneously, eager to bring non-mainstream and experimental artistic trends from Tokyo to Xinjing. This circumstance likely led to the orchestration of a reform in terms of style, genre, and theme curated in the exhibition and facilitated the rebranding of *shin-nihonga* as the representative of Manchukuo-style *Tōyōga*.

Investigating the historical context of how modernity had stimulated and challenged many young *nihonga* painters during interwar Shōwa is indispensable to understanding the colonial productions of modern art. It is also generally agreed that the pursuit of optical and social realism accumulated in the 1920s and 1930s and became the infrastructure of war painting

productions in the 1940s.⁴⁴ The 1920s and 1930s witnessed the robust creation of modernist and avant-garde art in Japan through the emergence of art circles that shaped diverse, colliding but not incompatible rendezvous in the *shin-nihonga* scene, which had a significant influence on the young *nihonga* artists who decided to migrate to Manchukuo. While it is challenging to fully recreate the lives and activities of artists in the later settler generation in Xinjing, surveying tendencies and meanings of new Tokyo art circles (*gadan*) evolved in the 1920s and 1930s that Manten artists were likely associated with either directly or indirectly during their education period in Japan may further explain how young migrants actualized both their artistic goals and the state aesthetics before the swift conversion to a war footing in 1941.

Shōwa *shin-Nihonga* in Search of Japan’s Modernist and Nationalist Realism

Over the 1920s and mid-1930s, the *nihonga* world achieved unprecedented richness and confidence in its history, while also experiencing fundamental questions and conflicts concerning the genre’s irreplaceable traditional identity and modern tasks.⁴⁵ Hybridizing *yōga*’s realistic elements into *nihonga* had no longer been a new methodology since Taishō *shin-nihonga*, which elicited *nihonga*’s potential invalidity.⁴⁶ Throughout the interwar period, art periodicals accommodated a substantial series of such discourses. In 1933, the February issue of the monthly *nihonga* magazine *Tōei* (Shadow of Tower) allotted a large section to the discussion of *nihonga*’s

⁴⁴ Toshiyuki Ōkuma, “Riarizumuno shosō 1920s-1930nendaino tenkai [Various Aspects of Realism, the 1920s-30s]” In *Nihon’no Riarizumu: Jidaino katachi manazashino kiseki 1920-1950s* [Japanese Realism: The Shape of the Times and the Trajectory of the Vision, 1920s-50s] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Modern Art Museum, 1992), 6.

⁴⁵ J. Thomas Rimer, ““Teiten” and After, 1919-1935,” in *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968* edited by Ellen Conant et al., (St. Louis, Mo: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995), 40.

⁴⁶ John Szostak, *Painting Circles*, 2. Regarding intellectual questions about *nihonga*’s validity as “Japanese traditional style painting” protected by the specific category, see Noriaki Kitazawa, *‘Nihonga’ no teni* [Dislocation of “Nihonga”] (Tokyo: Buryukke, 2003), 80-81, 96-99; Chelsea Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness?”; Ryō Furuta, *Nihonga to wa nan datta no ka : kindai nihonga shiron* [What Was *Nihonga*?: The History of Modern *Nihonga*] (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Kadokawa, 2018), 344-359.

lack of reflection on social reality and contemporality concerning *yōga* and European modernism. In addressing the paintings of Henri Rousseau, Pablo Picasso, and Van Gogh, *nihonga* artist Fukuda Heihachirō stated, “what is newness is laid in nature, not in the old tradition. So is in painting *nihonga*; keeping the same old format is not the only way for us to pursue.”⁴⁷ Meanwhile, in a round table that took place for the August edition, left-wing art critic Toyota Yukata and top-notch *nihonga* painters Kawasaki Shoko and Yazawa Gengestu (1886–1952) discussed *nihonga*’s ongoing controversy of simulating Western-style paintings; they agreed that the internationalization of Japanese language by accepting foreign words such as those of English and French was causing a shift in *nihonga* through the expansion of identity boundaries.⁴⁸

The embracement of modernity in a highly Japanese timeless past was buttressed by the rising notion of *shin-kotenshugi* (literally meaning neo-classicism), which was favorably practiced in the *nihonga* world even before the rise of the ultra-nationalistic slogan of “return to Japan (*Nihonhe no kaigi*)” in the mid-1930s.⁴⁹ In line with the fall of Qing, canonic works of ancient Chinese paintings became highly accessible in Japan, especially among Kansai-based intellectuals and artists, and the reappraisal of Chinese literati paintings, antiquities, and other ancient classical learning boomed throughout the 1920s.⁵⁰ In Tokyo, the benevolent support of wealthy collectors and patrons such as Hara Tomitarō (as known as Sankei, 1868–1939) allowed the Japan Art Academy (*Nihon Bijutsuin*) artists to access not only Japan’s classical paintings but

⁴⁷ *Tōei*, February 1933, 17-19.

⁴⁸ *Tōei*, August 1933, 22

⁴⁹ The “Return to Japan” was the powerful slogan that mobilized Japanese society into the war phase, mainly emphasized in *Kokutai no hongī/ Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937. See Asato Ikeda, “The Japanese Art of Fascist Modernism.”

⁵⁰ Shane McCausland, “Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi: A Japanese Copy of a Chinese Painting in the British Museum,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (2005): 691.

also the bird-and-flower paintings of Song and Yuan China in his villa.⁵¹ In *nihonga*, *shin-kotenshugi* there coalesced an “aesthetic nationalism,” which is not unrelated to Japan’s Pan-Asian *Orientalism*.⁵² As detailed in the previous chapter, Japan’s Imperial consciousness in the Orient had been ubiquitous in social and cultural life since the early 1920s, which was also closely related to the consumerist tastes of the new middle class, represented as *tōyō shumi* (oriental taste).⁵³

Scholars in Japanese art history tend to broadly use *shin-kotenshugi* to refer to shared phenomena both in *yōga* and *nihonga*, influenced by the range from European Neo-Classicism that induced the boom of antiquities and cultural imagination of the classical world, to modernist experiments by artists like Picasso and André Derain in their embracement of realism during the era of “return to order (*retour à l'ordre*)” departing from progressive avant-garde tendencies including cubism and fauvism after WWI.⁵⁴ This borrowed concept from the West has not only been stimulated in *yōga* but has also been deep-rooted in Japanese *nihonga* from its genesis when Fenollosa and Okakura rediscovered Asiatic beauty from Buddhism, literati paintings, and traditional schools such as Kano and *rinpa*, which coincided with the entering into the emergency era (*hijōji*) as a “shared imagination (*kyōdō gensō*)” of aesthetic Japan.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Kusanagi Natsuko, “1920-30 nendai nihongao kenshōsuru [Observing Nihonga in the 1920-30s],” in *Nihonni shinkotenshugi kaigawa attaka: 1920-30nendai nihongao kenshōsuru* [Was there ever Neo-Classicism existing in Japan?](Tokyo: Yamatane Art Museum, 1993), 14-15.

⁵² John Clark, “Okakura Tenshin and Aesthetic Nationalism,” in *Since Meiji* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 212-56.

⁵³ Art historian Yunjeong Oh discerns the connection between Japanese consumerist taste for the Orient and imperialism commodified in department store’s art galleries. See Younjung Oh, “Oriental Taste in Imperial Japan: The Exhibition and Sale of Asian Art and Artifacts by Japanese Department Stores from the 1920s through the Early 1940s,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78 no.1 (2019).

⁵⁴ Linda Nochlin “Return to Order,” *Art in America* (1939) 69 (1981): 82-83; Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps: the Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 197.

⁵⁵ Ōkuma Toshiyuki, Quoted from the penal discussion script in *Nihonni shinkotenshugi kaigawa attaka*, 51.

After the establishment of Manchukuo, books and editorials that preached Japanese spirituality and “Japanism (*nihonshugi*)” were on the rise.⁵⁶ The massive publications released from the Institute of National Culture and Spirit (*kokumin sēshin bunka kenkyūsho*) established in 1932 frequently incorporated the words “spirituality,” “Japanism,” and “Neo-Japanism.”⁵⁷ Although interchangeably used, terms such as the “orient (*tōyō*)” and “orientalism (*tōyōshugi*)” were overshadowed by Japan’s reiterated nationalism after 1934.⁵⁸ In the mid-1930s, the doctrine of *shin-nihonshugi* was appropriated by the members of the Independence Art Association (*Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyokai*), such as Umehara Ryūzaburo, Yasui Sōtarō, and Kojima Zenzaburō (1893-1962), best known for fauvist style *yōga*. For example, Kojima in his essay on *Atelier* in 1935 underscored the responsibility of artists to promote the essence of their ethnicity in paintings.⁵⁹ Although the group’s activities were not directly related to the Imperial campaigns, the fundamental shift in art from individualism to nationalism is noticeable.⁶⁰ Although it was executed by the *yōga* circle, the doctrine of *shin-nihonshugi* also corresponded to *nihonga*’s encountering of the ultra-nationalist turn.

The Tokyo-school *nihonga* scene epitomized the features and ideas that were bent on reviving styles of more native traditions, and that were, in some cases, of Chinese origin. One of the significant Tokyo *shin-nihonga* movements from the early 1920s to wartime appeared to revalue *yamato-e* tradition that was originally developed by Tosa and Sumiyoshi schools until

⁵⁶ Matsuo Michiya, “Shōwa senzenki niryūshino nihon shugikapurosesu: Osaka nichinichi shinpo wo rēni [Surveying Japanism in Prewar Shōwa Second-rate Press: an Example from Osaka Daily],” *Mass communication Studies* 94 (2019): 113-30.

⁵⁷ Jae-hyuk Choi, “A Study on Shinnihonshugi in Western style Painting Group of Japan in the 1930s,” *Journal of Korean Modern & Contemporary Art History* 0 no.14 (2005): 172-172.

⁵⁸ Mikiko Hirayama, “From Art Without Borders to Art for the Nation: Japanist Painting by Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyōkai During the 1930s,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 65 no.2 (2010): 371.

⁵⁹ Zenzaburō Kojima, “Shin Nihonshuginitsuite[On *Shin-Nihonshugi*],” *Atelier*, May 1935.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 172; Asato Ikeda, “Modern Girls and Militarism,” 96.

the last years of feudal Edo and became widespread around the Meiji Restoration.⁶¹ This renewed fascination with classical aesthetics is referred to as *fukko* (reactionist) *yamato-e* traced back to, allegedly Japanese “Renaissance,” Heian and Kamakura courtly *emakimono* (scroll) or *byōbu* (folding screen) paintings characterized by formalistic interior schematization, even outlines, the static and stylized composition of figures, and saturated color decorations on the flat space, embracing Japan’s classical literature and historical narratives.⁶² There were leading masters in two different circles practicing new *yamato-e*: the reorganized Nihon Bijutsuin’s Kobayashi Kokei, Yasuda Yasuhiko, Imamura Shiko, Hayami Gyoshu, and Maeda Seison, and Bunten/Teiten-oriented Matsuoka Eikyu, Yamaguchi Hoshun, and Kawasaki Shōko.⁶³ These masters became the leaders of intra-Imperial academic *nihonga* and impacted colonial art exhibitions, and most of the listed members eventually served the Manten at least once.

The shared interest in paintings of historic tales and myths as well as landscapes by the artists of the Nihon Bijutsuin, often introduced as an institutionally matured “Inten-style,” appeared largely within the linear space of thin and soft-colored outline (often done using calligraphic techniques), empty or reduced background, and lightly customized colors. Maeda Seison’s series of Kamakura-Muromachi samurai portraits preserves *yamato-e* style decorativeness while revealing modernized facial expressions rather than *hikime-kagibana* (slit eyes and hooked nose), and some of his paintings of this style were presented as a *kennōga* (offering painting, Figure 2.23) to Puyi throughout the span of Manchukuo. Overall, the Nihon

⁶¹ Kuniko Aoyama, “Kindaino Yamatoe to nandattanoka [What was modern Yamato-e],” in *Kindaino Yamatoe kotenbino saihakken* [Rediscovery of the Beauty in Modern Yamato-e] (Gifu: Gifu Prefectural Museum of Art, 1998), 10.

⁶² Alexander C. Soper, “The Rise of Yamato-E,” *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) no.24 (1942): 368.

⁶³ The re-establishment of the institute was done in 1914 after the group disbanded in 1913 following Okakura’s death. Its reorganization in Tokyo made Inten grow as one of the two *nihonga* giants (the original location institute was in Ibaraki).

Bijutsuin's concentration on historical paintings, which elevated Japan's preservation of spiritual values of the East, became the canon of wartime *nihonga*.⁶⁴

Compared to Inten-style, *yamato-e* broadly ranges from Muromachi, Rinpa, Shizo, and Kano schools to various Chinese academic styles; however, *kanten*-oriented *yamato-e* artists emphasized a stricter “Japanese-ness” that was shaped prior to the Muromachi era, before Chinese influences became robust.⁶⁵ If the Inten-style was based more on religious and philosophic idealism, *kanten*-oriented styles largely brought out formative expressions hybridizing between realism and decorativeness.⁶⁶ It is generally agreed that the *fukko yamato-e* artist who championed the battle of schools and pedigrees throughout *kanten* was Matsuoka Eikyū (1881–1938), who taught at the Tokyo Art School and succeeded in sending a significant number of his young pupils to the Teiten and the Shin-Bunten.⁶⁷ He was the first artist to be referred to as a master of *shin-kotenshugi* as mentioned by Kaburagi Kiyotaka in his memorial statement on Eikyū's death in 1938 when acclaiming Eikyū's Bunten winning work *Murogimi* (1916, Figure 4.13) as the foremost example.⁶⁸

Although Eikyū himself was known as a conservative painter whose focus was to extend his teaching post at Tokyo Art School and Bunten-Teiten exhibitions, his role in the 1930s *shin-nihonga* movement among young artists who were fresh out of art school was more than

⁶⁴ Asato Ikeda, “The Japanese Art of Fascist Modernism.”

⁶⁵ Akie Yamada, “Matsuoka sensei dampen,” *Atelier*, July 1927.

⁶⁶ Despite the Nihon Bijutsuin's public esteem as a national level yet anti-governmental counterpart of *kanten*, the “Inten-style” was not necessarily antagonistic to it and rather shared many aspects in common with the traditionalist penchants highlighted in the Bunten-Teiten.

⁶⁷ Eikyū's older brother and folklorist Yanagita Kunio, who was originally born as the fifth son of Matsuoka family, might leave a huge influence on him by introducing him to Hokusai Manga and Japan's ancient poetry anthologies *Man'yōshū*, as well as to one of the last Kano school masters Hashimoto Gaho (1935-1908) for studying *nihonga*. Eikyū, belonged to the cohort group with many Nihon Bijutsuin artists including Kokei, Seison, and Imamura Shiko as a graduate of the Tokyo Art School, began his research group activity on “historic genre painting (*rekishi fūzokuga*)” as early as in 1908. See *Matsuoka Gokyōdai* (Himeji Himeji bungakukan), 111.

⁶⁸ Natsuko Kusanagi, “1920-30 nendai nihongao kenshōsuru,” 14.

symbolic. With his former students Yamaguchi Hōshun and Kawasaki Shōko (who later became Kuriyama's teachers), Eikyū organized the Shinkō Yamato-e Association in 1921.⁶⁹ The intertwined ideals of *shin-nihonshugi* and *shin-kotenshugi* can be observed in the paintings of heroic figures placed in linear composition with static and unadulterated coloration in architectural space, which became a trademark of Eikyū and his followers. Eikyū's *Minister of the Right Sanetomo* (1932, Figure 4.14) and Shōko's *Accession to the Throne* (1930, Figure 4.15), which respectively depict the last shogun of Kamakura and the coronation of the Meiji emperor, were rendered by the hybridized European and Asiatic techniques and reinterpreted Japanese history of Imperial splendor.

Arguably more oriented to large-scale exhibitions and privileged in the bureaucratic center than Kyoto-school artists, Tokyo-based *yamato-e* artists dexterously complied with the desired criteria for exhibition-style paintings and studied how to create modern pictorial space in the traditional art form. Art historian Noji Kōichirō discerns that the development of linear form, simplified motifs, and rational perspectives in *shinkō yamato-e* has something to do with the pursuit of intuitive visuality befitting the modern exhibition space.⁷⁰ The Buntententen's onsite sale policy for exhibited paintings is one of the significant motivations behind the preference of these artists for creating public-oriented, easily decipherable, often realistic and colorful works.⁷¹ Among their works, Inten-style *yamato-e* works by those such as Maeda Seison, Yokoyama Taikan, Yuki Somei (1875 –1957), Kobayashi Kōkei, and Yasuda Yukihiko were offered to Puyi

⁶⁹ Interestingly, both Yamaguchi Hōshun and Kawasaki Shōko studied yōga at the top-notch artists' ateliers; Hōshun was an official yōga major student at Tokyo Art School and Shōko learned from Fujishima Takeji and Wada Eisaku. Later, both Hōshun and Shōko taught nihonga at the Imperial Art School and their private ateliers.

⁷⁰ Koichiro Noji, "Nihon kaigano kotenbi yamatoe saisēno toppurannā [The Top Runner of Japan's Classical aesthetics in yamato-e]," *Matsuoka Ekyūten: Sētan hyakusan ūnen* [Matsuoka Eikyū Exhibition: the 100th anniversary of his birth] (Kobe: kobe shinbunsha, 2011), 9-10.

⁷¹ Ryō Furuta, "The Propensity of Works in Japanese Art Exhibition: Focusing on Japanese Style Painting During the Imperial Period," *Association of Korean Modern & Contemporary Art History*, no.15(2005):115-154.

as memorial gifts, whereas Eikyū's *shinko yamato-e* lineage with blended optical realism and aesthetic nationalism engendered the vocabularies of modernist and avant-garde *nihonga* from the mid-1930s as well as the Manten's *Tōyōga* artists.

***Nihonga* between Modernism and Avant-garde**

Overlooked in the pre-war history of Japanese art but particularly noteworthy to examine in the new ramification of *nihonga* is the rise of art research groups and unions, such as the Blue Dragon Society, Yamaki-sha, Meirō Art Federation, and Rusoga-sha, formed by young *nihonga* painters.⁷² Trend-oriented, optically motivated, socially conscious, yet emotionally restrained, these artists were highly aware of current practices in a world that had been deeply troubled and feted by social, political, and economic transitions. While attempting to reflect their social surroundings in realistic ways, these artists desired to demonstrate contemporality with global art scenes beyond *nihonga* by hybridizing various modernist and avant-garde techniques gleaned from Western paintings. With the vision of social reality and artistic realism, like-minded *nihonga* artists who studied under prominent *fukko yamato-e* masters in Tokyo desired to form the most up-to-date *nihonga* possible by hybridizing rational aesthetics from the *yamato-e* tradition and modern life. Artists who graduated from the Tokyo Art School and Imperial Art School in the early to mid-1930s were significantly impacted by their teachers, including Eikyū, Hōshun, Shōko, and Somei. Another significant influencer of the young *nihonga* movement was Kawabata Ryūshi, founder of the Blue Dragon Society, who called himself “a duckling that has been turned into a chicken” after withdrawing from the Inten in 1928.⁷³

⁷² Yoshio Kikuya, “Shōwashiki shin'nihon'gaun'dōni tsuiteno ichishiron,” [A History of Shōwa Shin Nihonga Movement]” in *Nihonga shōwano netsuki* [Japanese Painting—The Fever of Shōwa] (Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, 1987), 73.

⁷³ Yoshio Kikuya, “Shōwashiki shinnihonga undōni tsuiteno ichishiron,” 75.

No single principle was held in common by these groups, yet many artists in this trend were active in communicating through landscapes with factories, machinery, buildings, trains and railways, harbor and iron bridges, and human labor and the masses not only as material spectacles but as symptoms of urban modernism. Some more willingly reflected militarizing aspects of Japanese society, and others remained ambiguous boundaries. Politically ambiguous but revealing bipolar modern experiences of technology, labor, and Imperial imagination, the languages that young *nihonga* groups tended to utilize coincided with the experimental paintings of Kuriyama and his Manten colleagues. Scholars have found two major ruptures in discourses of Japanese modern art history: one is between the post-Kanto earthquake and the early 1930s avant-garde scene in Japan, and the other lies between the mid-1930s and postwar scenes.⁷⁴ Surveying the *nihonga* groups of the mid-1930s compared to those of Manchukuo may provide some plausible answers as to what was in fact rich within the gap.

Among these new groups who championed the *nihonga*'s modernist and avant-garde turns may be the Blue Dragon Society since its first exhibition in 1929. Critic Toyota Yukata humorously termed the group "another blacklisted" in the Japanese art scene by conveying his impression from the group's sixth exhibition, whose saturated Fauvist tendencies can be seen as the *nihonga*'s equivalent to the Independence Art Association.⁷⁵ Also notoriously introduced as the best exemplar of wartime "exhibition hall" paintings, the Blue Dragon Society's works yet communicate more than fascist and wartime language that can perhaps be understood as a

⁷⁴ Yoshio Kikuya, "Shōwashiki shinnihonga undōni tsuiteno ichishiron," 73; Shōgo Ōtani, *Gekidōki no avangarudo: shururearisumu to Nihon no kaiga, 1928-1953* [Avant-garde in the Turbulent Era: Surrealism and Japanese Paintings] (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2016), Mitsuo Nezaki. "Sensō hasande Shōwa nihongawa dō kawattaka?"; Toshiharu Omuka, "mekanizumu to modanizumu: taishōki shinkōbijutsuundōkara shōwashokino modanizumue [Mechanism and Modernism : Modernism from Taisho to the early Showa]," *Bulletin of the study on philosophy and history of art in University of Tsukuba* no.10 (1993): 117–40.

⁷⁵ Yukata Toyota, "Seiryūsha kaibogaku [Anatomy of Blue Dragon Society]," *Binokuni*, October 1934.

prototype of post-modernist aspects with ideas of ambiguity and contradiction.⁷⁶ Unlike many other groups whose stance on *kanten* was not completely antagonistic, the Blue Dragon Society also maintained its non-mainstream identity; for example, Fukuda Toyoshirō (1904–1970), one of the leading members of the group, was expelled in the midst of the conflict over his submission to the Teiten exhibition.

The charismatic founder Kawabata Ryūshi, during his visit to the U.S. in 1913 to study Western paintings, was deeply motivated by the Japanese antique paintings displayed at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and decided to turn his painting career into *nihonga*.⁷⁷ Incorporating Fauvist, German Expressionist, and Cubist characteristics into *nihonga* materials on multi panels, an important case in point painted by Ryūshi, *Domination of the Ocean (kaiyō sēsuru mono*, Figure 4.16) in 1936 draws parallels with Kuriyama’s *Workshop* in terms of theme and style. As the last part of his Pacific tetralogy project started in 1933, this three-panel painting illustrates three male marine technicians assembling a naval vessel surrounded by geometric settings, including scaffoldings, platforms, and cranes. A man in the forefront drilling on the metal panel has a deity-like facial expression with his hair blowing and a flame rising behind his body. The rough calligraphic brushwork executed on the outlines elevates the vigor of masculinity. This work is believed to symbolize Japan’s increasing efforts to build warships after its withdrawal from the London Naval Treaty in 1935.⁷⁸

Even before Ryūshi opened the Xinjing Art Academy in October 1940, he visited Manchukuo four times between 1937 and 1940 at the invitation of the Manchukuo military and

⁷⁶ Yiengpruksawan, 88.

⁷⁷ Takuya Kimuta, “Kawabata Ryūshi sono shōgaito gagyō [Introduction of Kawabata Ryūshi and His Artistic Trajectory],” *Ryūshi: Ōtakuritsu Ryūshi Kinenkan Shozōsakuhinshū* [Ryūshi: Ota City Ryūshi Memorial Hall Collection] (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 2019), 147.

⁷⁸ Takuya Kimuta, *Ryūshi*, 40.

brought over 400 drawings back to Japan.⁷⁹ He was involved in various projects in Manchukuo, including his offering painting *Water Dragon* to Puyi, conducting multiple report trips and meeting with political leaders and administrators to discuss “creating new Manchuria’s artistic identity” in Xinjing.⁸⁰ Although his direct connection with the Manten participants has not been identified, the years-long negotiation between Xinjing city administrators and Ryūshi as well as the influence of the Blue Dragon Society might have been well recognized by young Manchukuo settlers. As a general parameter of wartime series paintings supporting the national campaign, Ryūshi’s work was likely Kuriyama’s inspiration for his trilogy project. The annual summer Blue Dragon Society exhibitions held in Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (formerly Ueno Park Art Museum, Figure 4.17) quickly gained great the admiration of young artists. The fifth and sixth exhibitions of early summer in 1933 and 1934, for example, the years when Kuriyama was still studying at the Imperial Art School, particularly boasted various experimental landscape and still life paintings such as Fukuda Toyoshirō’s famous *Blast Furnace (Yōkōro)*, Figure 4.18), Shimada Yōsuke’s *Construction Site (Kōjijō)*, Figure 4.19), Ochiai Rōfū’s *Interior Still Life B (Shitsunai sēbutsu)*, Figure 4.20), and Itō Seichi’s *Crane (Kijūki)*, Figure 4.21) with rational and realistic representations of modern equipment, conjuring up the Third Manten works such as those of Kurimaya and Hidaka.

Compared to the esteemed Blue Dragon Society, along with Ryūshi’s extreme success in the 1930s, the works and life of other prominent painters who actively associated with the group have been largely overshadowed. One is Ochiai Rōfū (1896–1937), who withdrew his membership from the Blue Dragon Society and introduced his own innovatory *nihonga* group,

⁷⁹ I thank Itakura Masaaki, who delivered this information to me after his conversation with a curator at the Ōta City Ryūshi Memorial Hall. The whereabouts or visual record of Ryūshi’s offering paintings to Puyi is missing, and we can only assume from his mass sketches.

⁸⁰ Masahito Iino, “Manshū bijutsu nenpyō [A Chronological table of Manchurian Art],” in *Teikoku” to bijutsu*, 665.

the Meirō (meaning bright and open-minded) Art Federation, in 1934 with another former Blue Dragon member Kawaguchi Shunpa (1899–1972).⁸¹ Despite the Meirō Art Federation’s short span of four years due to conflicts among its members and Ochiai’s unexpected death from pleurisy in 1937, the *nihonga* works exhibited throughout the five exhibitions demonstrated the most visually tangible but symbolic and unviable senses of modern objects. The group’s employment of abundant painting mechanisms such as Cubism, Neoplasticism, Constructivism, and Surrealism was considered the most up-to-date *nihonga* fashion.⁸² Higuchi Hideo’s *Midday in the City* (*Tokaino mahiru*, Figure 4.22) in 1935 shows the rejection of traditional subject matter and emotion of *nihonga* and focuses on reflecting the empirical and material life of the modern world that is somewhat ominous and apathetic, displaying the vast shift from the preexisting conception of *nihonga*. The group’s perusing of plastic beauty and constructivist composition also coincided with the German New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) paintings that emerged in the 1920s. The federation’s effective business model for sales by listing the preset price for each work in the exhibition pamphlet, in line with the group’s rising recognition for broadening *nihonga*’s up-to-date crossover capability, also attracted the participation of esteemed *yōga* artists, including Fujita Tsuguharu and Tōgō Seiji (1897–1978).⁸³

⁸¹ Born in Tokyo, Ochiai studied at the Kawabata Art School and Komura Taiun’s (1883 – 1938) atelier in Kyoto shortly. His early career was highly promised. After debuting in the Bunten and Teiten as well as the Inten, he also received the Blue Dragon Award from the third exhibition in 1931 for his famous *Avatamsa Buddha*, a panoramic-scale painting with laboriously delineated Buddhist sculptures at Nara Shin-Yakuji Temple sitting in unusual profile views, which Ryūshi celebrated as the masterpiece of the exhibition. Ryūshi, “S.R.S sanken [Review of Blue Dragon Exhibition,” in *Kindai Nihon Ato Katarogu Korekushon* [Modern Japanese Art Catalogue Collection] 83 (Tokyo: Yumani shobō, 2007), 140; *Nihon Bijutsu Nenkan* [Annual Report of Japanese Art] Shōwa 13 (Tokyo: Bijutsu Kenkyusho, 1977), 127.

⁸² Toyota reviewed the exhibition and mentioned the “-isms” that the group exhibition shows great positivity. Toyota “Inten Seiryuten Meirōten no shinjin wo pikuappusuru [Picking up Newbies from the Inten, Seiryuten, and Meiten],” *Binokuni*, October 1935.

⁸³ Yoshio Kikuya, “Shōwashiki shinnihonga undōni tsuiteno ichishiron,” 79.

Another former Blue Dragon radical *nihonga* group that had a close connection with Northeast China-Manchukuo, like their teacher Ryūshi, was the Yamaki-sha (the Mountain and Trees Society) founded in 1934 by Yoshioka Genji, Fukuda Toyoshiro, and Komatsu Hitoshi (1902–1989) and later rebranded as the Shinkō Art Society after Komatsu left.⁸⁴ The group allowed all aspects of modernist styles and techniques and was not afraid to incorporate *yōga* references. Kubota Zentarō’s *Drawbridge (Hanebashi)*, Figure 4.23) selected for the second exhibition in 1935, is another example that represents the association’s interest in industrial, urban, and mechanical themes. Around this time, Fukuda was deeply engaged with the idea of mechanical and scientific beauty. In 1936 he expressed his frustration with creating new modern *nihonga* by commenting, “*nihonga* has been stalled in its formality, [...] as the scientific study in painting is neglected. Painters must diagnose what is happening on the screen like doctors and carry out hard like a worker.”⁸⁵ He believed that the essence of *nihonga* was based on spirituality and that the spirit was not from metaphysical truth but from something that invented automobiles, airplanes, and the era of molecular science.⁸⁶ He continued incorporating Fauvist, Futurist, and Cubist interests into his industrial landscape paintings.

⁸⁴ For those ambitious and somewhat desperate young artists, being practical in securing many venues to exhibit and sell their art was more important than anchoring on a specific membership identity and exclusiveness as their teachers stubbornly maintained. Young artists’ cross-membership and participation in different (and often antagonistic) exhibitions disturbed their teachers; for example, Komatsu was warned to keep his fidelity as an Inten member by Yokoyama Taikan, and Fukuda and Yoshioka announced their resignation to Ryūshi for other exhibition opportunities. See Mitsuru Hoizumi, “Toyoshirōto Komatsu Hitoshi, Yamakisha kesseimade [Upon the Formation of Yamaki-sha, Toyoshiro and Komatsu Hitoshi],” *Fukuda Toyoshirō ten’ Zuroku: sētan pennyon waga utawa furusatono uta* [Fukuda Toyoshirō Exhibition Catalogue: 100 Years of Birth: My Song is Home Song] (Akita: Akita Museum of Art, 2004), 6.

⁸⁵ Fukuda Toyoshirō, “Atarashii nihonga,” *Bijutsu hyōron*, November 1936.

⁸⁶ Fukuda wrote “when I think about the spirit of *nihonga*, I immediately associate it with airplanes and modern weapons. When we think of airplanes as the most representative form of modern beauty, we feel that while they arise from the highest need for practical use, their uniformity and simplified form are approaching our own sense of beauty. [...] I feel that the intuition of these excellent painters and the spirit of modern science must be used in a new spirit of *nihonga*. Sotatsu, Kōrin, [Kano] Sanraku, and Eitoku. The greatness of their art is simplified and closely represented, but it follows nature itself to the point where it cannot be deduced from its truth.” Shoji Junichi, “Modanisutono kikyō—Fukuda Toyoshirō no kaigashisōto furusato,” *Fukuda Toyoshirō ten Zuroku*, 10.

Unlike many other young *nihonga* artists who struggled with the avoided conscription, Fukuda and Yoshioka were as ambitious as Ryūshi. In 1938 they volunteered to travel to China and Manchuria as war service painters. Their itinerary started in Dalian, Fengtian, Xinjing, and Harbin and moved to Beijing, Nanjing, and further south.⁸⁷ Through the Chambers of Commerce in Dalian and Xinjing, their recent works were exhibited under the title of “*Shin-nihonga* Exhibition” and sold to Japanese resident collectors.⁸⁸ A photograph taken in Dalian with Kai Mihachirō (Figure 4. 24) may allude to their active contact with Manchukuo resident artists, including Xinjing-based new settlers.⁸⁹ After returning to Japan, Fukuda and Yoshioka enthusiastically participated in war recording paintings at exhibitions including the Holy War Art Exhibition, the Aviation Art Exhibition, the Great East Asia War Art Exhibition, and the Army Art Exhibition.

In the mid-1930s, the *nihonga* graduates of Tokyo Art School were greatly motivated by the urban landscape. Their works echoed similar visual codes: realist style, full composition without empty background, thin and even outline, use of greyish, down-tone colors, reduced or removed human presence, a sense of tranquility, and meticulous detail regarding architecture and structural objects in geometric forms. Although overlooked, the practices of Rusoga-sha (The Stylish Society) may provide an additional visual trace that connects Manchukuo artists and later postwar *nihonga* scenes. Formed in 1935 and proliferated by former elite students under Matsuoka Eikyū such as Yamamoto Kyūjin (1900–1989) and Sugiyama Yasushi (1909–1993) from the Tokyo Art School, the Rusoga-sha members were mostly pre-*kanten*-stage youngsters.

⁸⁷ *Yoshioka Kenjiten: Shin-nihonga no paionia tokubetsuten* [Yoshioka Kenji Exhibition: The Pioneer of Shin-Nihonga Special Exhibition] (Tokyo: Yamatane bijutsukan, 1988).

⁸⁸ *Akita*, November 1938, 64.

⁸⁹ Although the photo is marked taken around 1940 by Mihachirō, it must be taken between 1938 and 1939 when Yoshioka and Fukuda went to Manchuria.

They faced frustration regarding the then-current *shin-Kotenshugi* approaches that became another dogmatic trend in the *shin-nihonga* scene.⁹⁰ They hybridized the reality of the present moment based on Eikyū's teaching of Japanese classics by pursuing a sophisticated and modern sense in themes and composition.⁹¹ Compared to the styles of Fukuda and Yoshioka, which utilized Cubism and Expressionism, many works of the Rusoga-sha emphasized technical perfection, pictorial logic, and the urban man's modern consciousness.⁹² For instance, Yamaguchi Kichisaburō (1913–1994)'s *Shibaura* (Figure 4.25) depicts the harbor where Shibaura Industry (today, Toshiba Corporation) lay, with the metal structure of a harbor bridge dividing the composition between a traditional wooden boat and a white-coated modern vessel, communicating the fascination and sentiment that were at odds with new technology.

Some parallels and crossover can be drawn between the works of the Rusoga-sha and those of the Third Manten. Often criticized as “too elegant,” “elitist,” and “conformable to the current system,” many Rusoga-sha members were politically indefinite and did not directly engage with the state military projects such as the war report sketches or Holy War Art Exhibitions.⁹³ Rather, they preferred rebounding into state-supported acknowledgment and successfully debuted in the Shin-Bunten between the late 1930s and early 1940s. These painters were flexible enough to shift their fascination with urban surroundings and the beauty of modern inventions, including architecture, transportation, and the machine, to their original background in *shinkō yamato-e*. Just as these painters returned to conform to the conventional standards of the metropole *kanten*, it can be understood that the Manten painters, including Kuriyama,

⁹⁰ Koichirō Noji, *Rushogasha to Iseisha Gakatachi: Gendai Nihon gakano sēshungunzō* [Painters of Rushogasha and Iseisha: A group of contemporary Japanese painters] (Tokyo: Yamatane Art Museum, 1996), 8.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹³ Koichirō Noji, *Rushogasha to Iseisha Gakatachi*, 14-15.

Hidaka, and others, chose a new colonial stage in Manchukuo where they could contribute to creating the new criteria for state-driven painting productions.

Hidaka Kenzō's days at the Tokyo Art School from 1922 to 1927 coincided with important senior members of Rusoga-sha, such as Sugiyama and Yamamoto, although not much information about Hidaka has survived. In any case, Hidaka continued communicating with the alumni newsletter even after graduating by announcing his multiple job placements, including teaching positions in Miyazaki and then his hometown in Nagasaki and Yanji, Jiandao Prefecture of Manchukuo where he moved in December 1936.⁹⁴ By receiving an Honorable Mention with *Spring Light* (*Shunkō*, Figure 4.26), a tranquil landscape of Manchukuo town juxtaposing the roof of a Shinto shrine right next to an administrative building in a Japanese Imperial Crown style with a raised tower in the center of the composition, he debuted in the First Manten in 1938. Following the shared visual interests of his Tokyo Art School colleagues, his precisionist-like indoor landscape painting *Spring Day of Oil Company* earned him another Honorable Mention in 1940 and corresponded to the themes and styles with which the young metropole *nihonga* artists had been experimenting.

When this new trend was about to thrive in the Manten, more and more small modernist and avant-garde *nihonga* groups emerged in Tokyo and shaped network nebulae with one another and with *yōga* groups. Art historian and curator Yamano Hidetsugu marks the era between 1938 and 1949 as the introduction of “the Avant-Garde” *nihonga*.⁹⁵ It is thought-provoking that the avant-garde of *nihonga* thrived when the avant-garde of *yōga* was being crushed by severe state censorship. In 1940, essayist Taguchi Nobuyuki advocated the avant-

⁹⁴ Hidaka's name is found in the list of graduates and announcement sections between 1922 and 1937 from *Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko Ichiran* (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko).

⁹⁵ Hidetsugu Yamano, Yūki. Kawai, and Akio Nagai, “*Nihonga*” *no zen'ei, 1938-1949* (Kyōto: Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 2010).

garde trends of *nihonga* as “the spirit of a new age” in concocting new materials and techniques for expressing the new spirituality of Japan.⁹⁶ However, due to the general reduction in cultural capital and limited self-determinative nature characterizing the turbulent wartime social condition, their activities often lacked public attention. When the most experimental works in *nihonga* were produced in 1938, the National Mobilization Law was been passed. Another Tokyo Art School graduates’ union that was equipped with former proletarian consciousness was the Stratification Art Research Group (*Sēsō kaiga kenkyūshūdan*), formed several years later than Rusoga-sha in 1938.⁹⁷ Due to Japan’s full-scale invasion of mainland China, however, the group’s interest in social realism from the first exhibition seemed diluted by the so-called “color of current political affairs (*jikyokushoku*)” when they exposed slogans such as “co-prosperity sphere” and “ideological warfare” in their second periodical.⁹⁸ Themes often portrayed labor, and a group of working-class people shifted into more politically charged vigorous workforces and military recruits. According to art historian Kikuya Yoshio, the conflict between avant-gardism and traditionalism easily converges into nationalism, which he considers as the chronic problem inherent in the prewar avant-garde movements.⁹⁹

The evolution of the 1930s *Shin-nihonga* with its emphasis on realism, rational and ordered space, the materiality of objects, geometric forms, and the masculine and angular physicality of human figures is reflected the vocabulary for *machine-ism*. In *nihonga*, the word *mekanizumu* (*machine-ist*) emerged around the mid-1930s through the inheritance of machine

⁹⁶ Nobuyuki Taguchi, “Nihongano zenēni tsuite,” *Binokuni*, March 1940.

⁹⁷ Yoshio Kikuya, “Zeneishugito dentōshugino: Sēsō kaiga kenkyūshūdan [Between Avant-Garde and Traditionalism: the Stratification Art Research Group],” *Shōwaki Bijutsuten rankaino kenkyū: senzenhen* [Shōwa Art Exhibition Research: Prewar] (Tokyo: Tokyo Bunkazai Kenkyūsho, 2001), 295-327.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

aesthetics developed by *yōga* and early avant-garde artists and writers inspired by European and American art.¹⁰⁰

Machine Age Aesthetics

Machine aesthetics served as the most relevant adhesive for almost all types of cultural and social phenomena in the early Shōwa era. In newspapers and magazines between 1929 and the early 1930s, expressions like ‘machine (*kikai*)’ and ‘mechanism’ are frequently exposed.¹⁰¹ In line with growing capitalist expansion and proletarian movements since WWI and the Kanto Earthquake, the imbalance and uneven urban-based modernity within various sectors of society were overtly brought to the surface by the vast material experience run by modern machinery and industrialism.¹⁰² It may not be a total overstatement to comment that the ideas and imagination of machinery were the and nuts and bolts that connected “liberalism, Marxism, and fascism,” the three dominant intellectual currents in later Japanese imperialism, according to Kyoto-school intellectual Tosaka Jun (1900–1945).¹⁰³ The concept of machine coincided with the broader avant-garde programs of visual culture in light of both the fascination with and anxiety about the empire’s industrial present and future, which later amalgamated in favor of militarist campaigns. It was also conceived by the builders of Manchukuo as a way of defining

¹⁰⁰ Ikeda Asato referred to 1936 Miyako Shinbun's article entitled “Nihon-ga nimo mekanizumu (Machine-ist found in *nihonga*),” See her footnote “Modern Girls and Militarism,” 107.

¹⁰¹ Otani Shōgo, *Gekidoki no avangyarudo: Shururearisumu to nihon no kaiga senkyuhyakunijuhachi senkyuhyakugojusan* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2016), 46.

¹⁰² Japanese thinkers in wartime Shōwa discussed how “machine civilization” historically caused the problems of modernity and the reduction of Japanese spirituality. See Harry Harootunian, “Introduction,” and “Chapter 2. Overcoming Modernity.”

¹⁰³ Hiromi Mizuno, *Science for the Empire: Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009), 95.

the state's authenticity via modern identity through the generation of images of productivity, modernization, and scientific management to justify Japan's interference in the continent.¹⁰⁴

While it was the Italian Futurists who took the initiative to celebrate the arrival of machine age aesthetics with the first manifesto by Marinetti in 1909—translated in Japan by Mori Ōgai only three months after Marinetti's original publication—the explicit execution of machine art did not reach fruition until the breakout of WWI.¹⁰⁵ In Japan, “mechanical aesthetics (*kikai bigaku*),” a visual reflection of the social practice in modernization and rationalization as a consequence of the post-earthquake restoration and the introduction of mechanical science from the West, appears as a critical juncture between radical art movements in seeking artistic subjectivity in Taishō and early modernism in Shōwa.¹⁰⁶ Understanding the various languages surrounding machine ideology and aesthetics is key to explaining how colliding characteristics of Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Constructivism, and Realism were amalgamated into the Japanese art scene.

In Japan, the prototype of the machine aesthetic in art emerged in the mid-1920s; for example, Kawabe Masahisa (1900–1990)'s *Mechanism* (*Mekanizumu*, Figure 4.27) depicts a collage of a dissected human head and hand surrounded by the unordered, scattered fragments of machinery and other miscellaneous objects. The capital lettered “L'Esprit Nouveau” at the top of the composition indicates the influence of the magazine founded by Le Corbusier (1887–1965) and Amédée Ozenfant (1886–1966); they developed a new modernist style called Purism, which reinvented the aesthetics of machinery and simple forms.¹⁰⁷ Kawabe's painting also exposes an

¹⁰⁴ Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren, *Ultra-Modernism: Architecture and Modernity in Manchuria* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 65-66.

¹⁰⁵ Andreas Broeckmann, *Machine Art in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016), 11; Naoki Yamamoto, 56.

¹⁰⁶ Otani Shōgo, 38; Omuka, 122.

¹⁰⁷ Carol S Eliel et al., *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918-1925* (Los Angeles, Calif: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 12.

assemblage of Futurist and Cubists, likely motivated by Murayama Tomoyoshi and the Mavo. The European conceptual, cerebral, and technical references shaped new aesthetics to echo the Japanese Empire.

The artistic imagination of the machine in Japan was initially introduced by Murayama in his Italian Futurist, Constructivist, and Dadaist implications through the Mavo enterprises underscoring their anarchist, leftist, and avant-garde tenor.¹⁰⁸ The group's short-lived but strongly manifested activities between 1923 and 1925 were extended to a broader avant-garde cluster across various art institutions as well as commercialist, *yōga*, and even *nihonga* sectors.¹⁰⁹ As early as 1922, young Murayama Tomoyoshi and Nagano debuted in "The Great Futurist Exhibition" in Berlin.¹¹⁰ After retuning, their close involvement in typography, assemblage, collage, photomontage, Suprematism, and industrial design drew inspiration from Kandinsky, El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, and László Moholy-Nagy. The groups' frequent engagement with industrial objects and machine-made products metaphorizes the mass and commodity culture that was never separated from Marxist culture, as is well reflected in Miriam Silverberg's study on interwar modernity.¹¹¹

For Murayama, according to Harootunian, the constructivist program is the strategy of having art surface in the realm of society, in which the machine played a role by constituting "the concrete subject of everydayness because it was authorized by a social reality dominated by productivism."¹¹² Murayama's discussions of Constructivism were not monolithic, but they elusively evolved throughout the mid-1920s; firstly, according to Omuka, he defines "conscious

¹⁰⁸ Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 76.

¹⁰⁹ Weisenfeld, "The Expanding Arts of the Interwar Period," in *Since Meiji*, 76-77.

¹¹⁰ Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 34.

¹¹¹ Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 26.

¹¹² Harootunian, 101-103.

constructivism” as derived from Kandinsky’s writing that advocated the assemblage of objects and abstract quality in his 1923 manuscript.¹¹³ In a later essay in 1925, which was published after the Kanto earthquake, Murayama renewed his manifestation by emphasizing the beauty machine that gives collectivity and social character to art.¹¹⁴ After he started participating in the Proletarian Art Movement, his book *Study of Constructivism (Kōseiha kenkyū)* came out in 1926, where he juxtaposes Constructivism with Americanism when he writes, “what Constructivism respects is by no means everything about America, the worst country in the world, but it has two critical points to pay attention [to] on America: the optimism of the people and the robust machine civilization.”¹¹⁵ The statement echoes what Louis Lozowick (1892–1973) deliberated in his essay “The Americanization of Art” from the catalogue for the Machine-Age Exposition (Figure 4.28), which took place in 1927 in New York, where Constructivism was redefined and animated in the notion of American industrialism and standardization.¹¹⁶ Murayama’s idea of machines was putting an accent on the reflection of social conditions constructed by Western industry and technology, triumphant in the hands of capitalism, which altered Japanese life.

Mavo’s ideas and imaginations of machines through constructivism likely share the rubrics with New York Dada. An example is Hagiwara Kyōjirō’s untitled drawing (1925, Figure 4.29), a diagram of a mechanical device that schematizes periodicals, slogans, and ideas connecting avant-garde movements encompassing Mavo, conjuring up Francis Picabia’s machinist drawings.¹¹⁷ By the time Picabia and Duchamp visited America in 1915, the overwhelming industrial development of the continent—skyscrapers, automobiles, factory

¹¹³ Weisenfeld, *Mavo*, 42-43.

¹¹⁴ Cited by Omuka, “Mechanism and Modernism,” 132.

¹¹⁵ Tomoyoshi Murayama, *Kōsēha ken'kyū* (Tokyo: chūōbijutsusha, 1926), 43-45.

¹¹⁶ Louis Lozowick, “The Americanization of Art,” in *Machine-Age Exposition* (1927), 18-19.

¹¹⁷ The term machinist painting is stated by Picabia himself referring to his painting style set in 1913, but 1915 is largely considered as “vrais tableaux mécaniques.” See William A. Camfield, “The Machinist Style of Francis Picabia,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 48, Sept-Dec (1966): 309.

machines, and electronic devices—translated as “the modern” or “Americanism,” inspired many European artists, which opened the era for the art of the machine age.¹¹⁸ The machine age, the ubiquitous term characterized by the epoch of science and technology imposing on everyday life, is considered to have reached maturity in the second decade of the twentieth century and climaxed in the third decade.¹¹⁹ The two New York exhibitions on machine art held in 1927 and in 1934 (at MoMA) illustrate that the machine appeared as the core ideology and phenomenon in American industrialism across interwar and the Great Depression; the techno-utopian impulse and “American vigor and precision” are well reflected in, for example, Lozowick’s lithograph *Above the City* (1932, Figure 4.30).¹²⁰

Nourished by the omnipresent avant-garde precedents that propagated machine imagery, Japanese Surrealist and proletarian art movements, often interpreted as two antagonistic poles, expressed the mentality and social condition of the Japanese machine age.¹²¹ Soviet-style propaganda with the robust relationship between the worker and the machine factory are produced by the leftwing activism of Muramaya and Yanase Masamu through the Japanese Proletarian Artists’ Federation and their periodical *Senki* (Battle flag) from 1928 to 1931. One of the strong examples is the cover image produced by Yanase in the 1930 January edition (Figure 4.31), which portrays a male worker exposing masculine arms and a beaming face against the

¹¹⁸ Being abstract, ironic, and nonfunctional, the so-called mechanomorphic paintings by Picabia and Duchamp are often connected with sexual symbolism or an allegory of the relationship between machinery and humans.

¹¹⁹ Such as Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Essays by Rodchenko, Lozowick, etc. reprinted in *Machine-Age Exposition* (1927); *The Modern Eye: Stieglitz, MoMA, and the Art of the Exhibition, 1925–1934* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹²⁰ Gail Stavitsky, “Reordering Reality: Precisionist Directions in American Art, 1915–1941,” in *Precisionism in America* (The Montclair Art Museum, 1994), 19.

¹²¹ John Clark sees that formalist and proletarian avant-garde sectors were split around 1927. “The Mainstream of Modernity,” in *Modernities of Japanese Art*, 172.

backdrop of a factory, “the fortress of the proletariat,” in the words of leftist visual artist and critic Okamoto Tōki (1903–1986).¹²²

The shared interest in constructivism also found in the surrealistic implementation of Koga Harue’s Nikka exhibition work *Sea (Umi)*, Figure 4.32) in 1929 responds to a formal focus on machine anatomy such as an industrial plant and a submarine with the photo-montage style curation of different objects and modern women, imbuing a sense of irony and riddle. The rationality of machine and the irrational language of surrealism co-existed as formalist painting, assumably much inspired by the metaphysical paintings of Giorgio De Chirico. Art historian Nagata Ken’ichi suggests that the image of a generator plant on the top left corner of *Sea* draws a striking resemblance to the photographed illustration of a blast furnace from a popular German science magazine *Wissen und Fortschritt* (Knowledge and Progress) in 1927 (Figure 4.33).¹²³

Mechanistic and scientific imagery became increasingly popular in visual culture and literature and coincided with the upsurge of the Imperial campaigns around 1930 and onwards; in March 1930, the parade of modern designs, lightening and electronics, and machines at the Imperial Restoration Festival showcased the result of the seven-year restoration project in Tokyo after the earthquake, and the year of 1931 is marked by the breakout of the Manchuria Incident. Fritz Lang’s SF film *Metropolis* (1927) was released in Japan by the Shōchiku Film Company in 1929.¹²⁴ A year earlier, the first Japanese “robot” *Gakutensoku* (meaning “learning from universal rules”), the quasi-Buddhist deity machine was designed by marine biology professor Makoto Nishimura and exhibited in Kyoto.¹²⁵ Yokomitsu Ri’ichi (1898–1947)’s novel *Machine*

¹²² Tōki Okamoto, “Puroretaria riarizumono mondai,” *Atelier*, September 1930.

¹²³ Ken’ichi Nagata, “Koga Harue’s *Umi* (1929) and ‘Soluble Fish’: ‘Mechanism’ that Gyrate from Proletariat Art, Max Ernst to Bauhaus.” *Aesthetics* 57 (2) (2006): 251-253.

¹²⁴ “Metropolisu,” *Shochikuza News*, April 1929.

¹²⁵ Yulia Frumer, “Cognition and Emotions in Japanese Humanoid Robotics,” *History and Technology* 34 no.2 (2018): 163-164.

(1930) epitomized the so-called *machine-ist* literature (*kikaishugi bungaku*) as a new trend.¹²⁶ In 1931, the National Museum of Nature and Science opened in the northeast corner of Ueno Park, and scientific graphic magazines reached the peak of their popularity. On the political end, the industrial rationalization (*sangyō gōrika*) movement planned by the Hamaguchi cabinet (1929–1931) gained the prominence to overcome the foreshadowed Depression in Japan called the Shōwa financial crisis.¹²⁷ The word “technocracy” became prevalent and was translated into the nationalist nuance.¹²⁸ Like Fordism and Taylorism, Japan’s reinvented production management system run by Toyota introduced not only standardization and rationalization but also high-intensity and multi-functional work.¹²⁹ Against this backdrop, new social practices and disciplines were shaped by mechanism and industrialism.

From the late 1920s to the early 1930s, one who championed the theorization of machine aesthetics was art theorist Itagaki Takao (1894–1966), who taught at prestigious universities, including the Imperial Art School, the Tokyo Art School, and Keiō University. His series of essays and books on the relationship between *machine-ism* and art influenced the broader cultural world. *Exchanges between Machine and Art (Kikai to geijutsu to no kōryū*, Figure 4.34) in 1929 reveals how the avant-garde approaches during the Taishō-Shōwa transition were altered to become crystallized as a completed theory toward the early 1930s. Itagaki’s notion of *machine aesthetic*, which did not provide any novel approach notwithstanding, as Naoki Yamamoto points out, was innovative as he placed it as the embodiment of “the genuine phenomenon of the twentieth century” that helped Japan equate itself with the West in terms of “their mutual desire

¹²⁶ Yoshitaka Hibi, “Mechanism and Yokomitsu Riichi’s “Machine,”” *Nihongo to Nihonbungaku* 24 (1997):12-26.

¹²⁷ William M. Tsutsui, *Manufacturing Ideology: Scientific Management in Twentieth Century Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 59.

¹²⁸ Mizuno, *Science for the Empire*, 20

¹²⁹ Tatsuo Naruse, “Taylorism and Fordism in Japan,” *International Journal of Political Economy* 21, no. 3 (1991): 45.

to give shape to social, cultural, and perceptual changes in everyday life engendered by the saturation of modern technology.”¹³⁰ As a rebuttal to the then swelling “proletarian realism” that expressed shared political anxieties about humanity being overshadowed by machines, Itagaki asserted the concept of “machine reality” (*Kikai no riarizimu*) as an apolitical, aesthetic promotion of Japan’s co-existing realist and modernist elements in a camera art, which were regarded as an overall antithesis, to be both local and global forms of the latest avant-garde propelled by machine technology and science.¹³¹

Itagaki’s machine realism is thus considered a politically neutral “petit bourgeois-intelligentsia’s observation” of modernity, which advocated the new visuality of photography and film that had emerged through camera-machine eyes to be the primary method for art production.¹³² His fascination with the optical device, influenced by Bauhaus and constructivism, surfaced on the front cover of his first book and a photo essay in the magazine *Chūo Kōron* (Figure 4.35) that draw a close resemblance with Moholy-Nagy’s manuscript *Dynamic of the Metropolis* (1921–1922, Figure 4.36), including the grid lines and the word “tempo.” His montage of metallic urban structures, such as railways, a bridge, a ship, a wire tower, and a crane, celebrated mechanical beauty with a clear sense of practical purpose.¹³³ It is unclear why his theory was nearly forgotten around and after 1932 despite the flamboyant influence he had, but his ideas provided the source of further debates by wartime Kyoto School philosophers, including Tosaka Jun.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Naoki Yamamoto, 55, 64.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹³² Takane Suzuki. “Itagaki takahoto kikai kikaino riarizumu to puchi burujowa interigencha,” *Modern Japanese literary studies* 67 (2002): 121-122.

¹³³ Takane Suzuki, 120.

¹³⁴ Unno Hiroshi questioned why Itagaki was suddenly forgotten and assumed that his theory is merged into fascist aesthetics that celebrate the beauty of war weapons and wartime mechanics. Hiroshi Unno, *Kikaino etoroporisu: Modantoshi bungaku* 6 [the Machines Metropolis: Modern Urban Literature 6] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990), 476.

Although Itagaki's theory negated the verisimilitude or naturalism by artists' hands in favor of the role of machine eyes (camera), his ideas were dissolved in different art sectors that pursued realism in the modernist sense and were reformed as the broader and ambiguous *machine-ist* aesthetics. Although there is no written evidence to validate Itagaki's direct impact on *machine-ist nihonga*, Itagaki's various teaching positions in major universities in Tokyo, including Imperial Art School and Tokyo Art School, may support the assumption. In tandem with Itagaki, Tokyo Art School lecturer Mizutani Takehiko (1898–1969), who was the first Japanese student at the Bauhaus Dessau, also incorporated the concepts of Bauhaus and Kandinsky into his teaching.¹³⁵ *Nihonga* artist Yamaoka Ryōbun (1911–1970), who took Mizutani's class, was deeply impressed by the Bauhaus art movement and expanded his interest in László Moholy-Nagy's pictogram and introduced Moholy-Nagy's essay on "American Bauhaus" in his group Reikitei Art Association (*Reikitei bijutsu kyokai*) organized in 1938.¹³⁶

One of the most exquisite *machine-ist* paintings from the addressed young *nihonga* circles is Kusunogi Hakko's *Composition* (1937, Figure 4.37), which is exhibited in the Meirō Art Federation Exhibition. On one hand, the work echoes Kuriyama's *Training* in terms of the precisely portrayed metallic parts of the vehicle, such as clear outlines of linkage arms, nuts, bolts, and screws, and the execution of light colors flawlessly filled in outlines like photography. If a locomotive is a symbol of old imperialism, the Caterpillar tractor—the embodiment of American invention—implies "a new imperialism" without being a formal empire but an economic encroachment. The almost photographic quality of the crop composition and the static and orderly space on the other hand conjures up Charles Sheeler's iconic photography *Wheels*, which he also converted into the photorealistic painting *Rolling Power* (1939, Figure 4.38).

¹³⁵ Yamano Hidetsugu, "*Nihonga*" *no zen'ei*, 1938-1949, 12.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

Another significant and earlier case in point is Yamaoka Ryōbun's *Gasoline Scene* (1932, Figure 4.39) exhibited in the Fourth Blue Dragon Society Exhibition depicting a Shell gas station, assumably the one that existed in Kyoto, which he might have sketched before dropping out of the Kyoto School of Art in 1931. The almost symmetrically divided composition, flat and decorative quality, light coloration, and sense of static without the presence of a human figure run parallel to American Precisionist or German New-objectivist paintings; for instance, Carl Grossberg (1894–1940)'s *Berlin AVUS* (1929, Figure 4.40) echoes a similar pictorial impression. The sense of rational realism in Hidaka's *Spring Day of Oil Company*, highlighting the static space of machinery without human presence, can also be described with this frame of reference, which is featured more in Grossberg's machine paintings (Figure 4.41).

Precisionism is noteworthy due to its striking visual association with *nihonga's machine-ist* turn—linear accuracy, thin use of coloration, smoothly brushed geometric forms, and the synthesis of realistic depiction and decorative design, utilized for industry and technology as subject matter. Art historian Milton Brown regarded precisionist paintings as lifeless, colored photographs with aesthetics based on the machine by toying with the term “mechanist” paintings.¹³⁷ The style, indebted to Purism, Cubism, Bauhaus, and modern photography, began to gain a reputation as the Immaculate School due to the technical perfection and was later officially named Precisionist in 1927 by a group of young artists such as Sheeler, Georgia O’Keeffe, Charles Daniel, Charles Demuth, Joseph Stella, and Lozowick.¹³⁸ While the first director of MoMA, Alfred Barr, defined the group’s identity as the international context of the New Objectivity, others see it as America’s native art in the machine age or technocratic

¹³⁷ Gail Stavitsky, “Reordering reality: precisionist directions in American art, 1915-1941” in *Precisionism in America, 1915-1941*, 30-31.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-22.

landscape.¹³⁹ Many Precisionists, including Sheeler, had photography as their background; Stieglitz's urban photography became the source of inspiration.¹⁴⁰ The photorealistic landscape of Precisionists may indicate the reconciliation between the machine eye and the artist's machine-like technique. By going through the era of the Depression, the group was dispersed in different directions, such as Surrealism and Social Realism, but Sheeler maintained his precisionist practice.

Japanese art magazines often introduced modern photography that was associated with constructivist photography, New Objectivist, and Precisionist movements.¹⁴¹ The growing interest in the American art scene allowed the introduction of American modern painting and murals, such as Sheeler's *American Landscape* (1932) in 1938 in *Mizue* (Figure 4.42). Some *yōga* artists, including Kuniyoshi Yasuo (1889–1953), Shimizu Tōshi (1887–1945), and Ishigaki Eitarō (1893–1958), studied painting from members of “The Eight” group, best known for American urban life paintings done in a realistic manner.¹⁴² After returning to Japan, Shimizu introduced John Sloan's etchings through *Chūo Bijutsu* in 1928, and Kuniyoshi stayed in New York and socialized with Sheeler and Demuth at the Daniel Gallery, the home of the Precisionists.¹⁴³

Against the general belief that the machine aesthetics of the New Objectivist and Precisionist features did not fully mature in the Japanese art scene, many young *nihonga* groups introduced in the previous section, such as Blue Dragon, Meirō Art Association and Rusoga-sha,

¹³⁹ Ibid. 26, 32.

¹⁴⁰ Ellen Handy, “The Idea and the Fact: Painting, Photography, Film, Precisionists, and the Real World,” in *Precisionism in America, 1915-1941*, 40-41.

¹⁴¹ Such as Sheeler's River Rouge series was published in Japan. See Karen Lucic, *Charles Sheeler and the Cult of the Machine* (London: Reaktion, 1991), 97.

¹⁴² Ōkuma Toshiyuki, “Riarizumuno shosō 1920s-1930nendaino tenkai,” 9.

¹⁴³ Donald Parker and Warren Herendeen, “An Interview with Peter Blume, Part III,” *The Visionary Company* 1, Summer (1981): 64. Quoted in Gail Stavitsky, “Reordering reality,” 25.

took over the style and technique in the traditional format and technique, rather than *yōga* scene.¹⁴⁴ Like “Precisionism [that] is situated within the international context of classicizing, constructive, machine age call to order movements,”¹⁴⁵ *nihonga*’s *machine-ist* tendencies shared optic aesthetics and ideology that reflect the rationalized society and people’s lives, which may relate to forthcoming totalitarianism/fascism. Another possible logic is the dissolution of proletarian and avant-garde art groups by the severe censorship and military takeover around 1932. From the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War onwards, even many avant-garde *yōga* artists such as Fukuzawa Ichirō and Ai Mitsu had been arrested or conscripted to the battle post. The proletarian visual language of the mass and the vigorous machine-man relationship were dissolved into the national mobilization of labor and army force. *Nihonga* was relatively relieved from such repression and censorship, and the genre’s mindset of Asiatic identity was easily concomitant with the state’s political ideals.

Imagineering Manchukuo

The goal of the elites who flocked to Manchukuo was to build a “brand new empire,” to borrow the words of Louis Young, which draws a vocal parallel with the American slogan of “brave new world” during the era of the construction boom passing the Depression.¹⁴⁶ The Five-Year Capital Construction plan in Xinjing, marked as one of the most ambitious and modern urban plans modeled after the ideals of the Soviet’s Five-Year Plan (1928–32) and America’s City Beautiful Movement for design, started in 1933 and was completed in 1937. In Manchukuo, machines and technology were the premier symbol of the technocrats’ dream run by Xinjing

¹⁴⁴ For example, Ōkuma Toshiyuki believed such art movements were only developed within a minimal range in Japan.

¹⁴⁵ Gail Stavitsky, “Reordering reality,” 15.

¹⁴⁶ Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 242.

ideology, which produced massive imagery of utopia and heterotopia. Between 1932 and 1940, a substantial amount of capital and human resources was brought into Manchuria for the manufacturing of local infrastructure, industry, and technology, such as automobiles, machines, airplanes, and power plants. From 1935 to 1940, the number of factories doubled, and that of factory workers tripled.¹⁴⁷ Numerous middle-class elite technocrats flocked to Manchukuo, and their former anti-colonial sentiments against the Western power and leftist sympathy integrated into “colonial desire” for the new opportunities in the state-building enterprise.¹⁴⁸ Skilled technicians and mechanics chose Manchukuo, for they were paid almost twice as much as those in Japan.¹⁴⁹ Naoki Rintarō (1876–1943), the elite civil engineer and urban planning bureaucrat who participated in the Tokyo Restoration Project chaired by Gotō Shinpei, wrote, “I decided to devote my life to technology, and I am departing to Manchuria to engage in *creation* (*sōsaku*).”¹⁵⁰ It was 1933 when he departed for Manchukuo and settled in Xinjing for the state road construction program. Between 1937 and 1939, the Konoe Cabinet sent a more significant number of technocrats to Manchukuo for the first Five-Year Economic Development Plan amid the activation of the New Order.¹⁵¹ The robust state-building went hand in hand with the colonial economic squeeze and wartime enterprises.

The visual culture of Manchukuo reflects the colonial social and economic space during the imbrication of the machine age and wartime. The propagandistic images that circulated through the mass media communicated the popular imagination and redistributed it to everyday

¹⁴⁷ Manshūrōdokyokkai, *Manshū Kōjōkōzan Rōdōchōsasho* [Report of Factory and Mine Labor in Manchuria] (September 1940), 21.

¹⁴⁸ Mizuno, *Science for the Empire*, 43.

¹⁴⁹ Young, 259.

¹⁵⁰ Rintarō Naoki, “Sōsani manshūhe[To Manchuria for Investigation],” *Kōjin*, January 1934, 3.

¹⁵¹ New Order or Tōa shin chitsujo was first announced by Konoe Fumimaro in November 1938 and issued a restatement under the name of Great New Order or Dai Tōa shin chitsujo in August 1940. Kenneth Colegrove, “The New Order in East Asia,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1941): 5-24.

life as a cognitive process toward a collective Manchukuo experience. The urban landscape of the grand-opened Xinjing in 1937 was mass produced as colonial propaganda and tourist commodities such as postcards and stamps. A colorized photo postcard leaf (*e-hagaki*) for the landscape of Xinjing (Figure 4.43), usually published as an album of the Sixteen or Thirty-two Views series after popular Japanese compositions in *ukiyo-e* such as the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, portrays Datung Boulevard with the newly opened civic office buildings in Imperial-Crown style and brand-new automobiles on the street. The road across the civic center is divided into three sections where three city buses are spaced evenly, portraying a sense of hygiene and streamlined order. The image provides a saturated visual experience of high modernity based on the space of reality through the process of “imagineering,” the visual engineering that actualizes colonial imagination without visible violence.¹⁵² The rationality and perfectness of the capital city’s image may suggest the systematic state control, regulation, and surveillance of the society.

Photography in Manchukuo was the artistic, cultural, and educational capital that primarily served to promote state propaganda. A photo postcard of a construction scene for Suihō Dam in the Yalu River, the building of which started in 1937, portrays the structure of the dam (Figure 4.44). Supplying electricity to the cities was crucial to running the state’s industry, and damming was likely a highly attractive project for top-notch engineers. The massive concrete structures without human presence invoked the colossal ancient sculptures, expressing the sublimity and pride of the technology that transcended the power of continental nature. The visual language is also reminiscent of Margaret Bourke-White’s *Fort Peck Dam, Montana* published on the cover of *LIFE* magazine in 1936 (Figure 4.45), a symbol of the American

¹⁵² The term is coined by Aaron Moore as “a blending of creative imagination and technical expertise in the formulation of wartime and colonial policies.” Aaron Stephen Moore, *Constructing East Asia*, 3.

victory over the Depression. The photo features two men standing at the massive structure that is lined up orderly like chess pins, which adds a sense of humor. Not only Manchukuo but the damming and hydropower system construction was also the major national development project both in the U.S. and Soviet Russia. In fact, a head engineer of Fengman dam on Sungari River took on a three-month trip to the U.S. and studied construction machinery technology in 1937.¹⁵³ The photograph of the then-world fastest Suihō hydropower turbine completed in 1940 (Figure 4.46) also comes close to American machine age photography and Sheeler's painting (Figure 4.47), juxtaposing the visual practices of two industrial states. On the rise of new American art, Sheeler saw that factories and machines had become "substitutes for religious expression."¹⁵⁴ Likewise, Bourke-White found "[t]he beauty of industry" that "lies within its truth and simplicity: every line is essential and therefore beautiful."¹⁵⁵ In both Manchukuo and American visual works, the iconic beauty of colossal ultramodern monuments is expressed by the contrast of human figures. While Sheeler's and Bourke-White's works express the object as "not only functional structure but also as great visitor experiences,"¹⁵⁶ Manchukuo's photography leans toward sterner public glorification.

Although ambitious Japanese entrepreneurs had a dream of turning Manchukuo into a new America, it was never completely fulfilled. Nissan founder Aikawa Yoshisuke (1880–1967), for example, experienced the life of a low-wage factory worker in the U.S. and brought the latest technology and labor management system to Manchuria.¹⁵⁷ He transferred the headquarters of

¹⁵³ Moore, 161.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Constance Rourke, *Charles Sheeler: Artist in the American Tradition* (New York: Kennedy Galleries, Inc., 1969), 130

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Richard Guy Wilson, *The Machine Age in America*, 30.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁵⁷ See Janis Mimura, *Planning for Empire*, 103-106; Haruo Iguchi, *Ayukawa Yoshisuke to keizaiteki kokusai shugi: Manshū mondai kara sengo Nichi-Bei kankei e* [Ayukawa Yoshisuke and Economic Internationalism: From Manchuria to postwar Japan-U.S. relations] (Nagoya-shi: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2012); Nissan Motor

Nissan to Manchukuo and renamed it the Manchurian Heavy Industries Company (*Manshū jūkōgyō kaihatsu kabushiki gaisha*; Mangyō) in 1937. Mangyō's photomontage advertisement (Figure 4.48) features the organic relationship of raw materials, heavy industry, labor, and transportation connected on the map of Manchukuo, claiming the state's physical territory that was secured by the new *zaibatsu* industry. Aikawa's goal was to obtain U.S. investment in the Manchukuo development.¹⁵⁸ However, the idea ran up against the Kwantung Army and reform bureaucrats, who sought to control the planned economy at the hand of the state.¹⁵⁹ While what was rooted in American machine age culture was liberal capitalism proliferated through factories and constructions as well as commercial products in daily life such as kitchen appliances and television, Manchukuo's machine age experience was heavily dependent upon the vision of the state.

The desire for America never terminated in Manchukuo; it appeared as an America-like, or more broadly Western, visual experience through propaganda, advertisements, and other media. In a New Year's postcard published around 1937 (Figure 4.49), Betty Boop and a Caucasian girl with a Japanese flag are welcoming the SMRC's Asia Express (Figure 4.50), demonstrating what Silverberg discussed about the popular fascination toward American culture that continued in wartime mass culture.¹⁶⁰ The streamlined, biomorphic designs of Ford and Chrysler automobiles are substituted by Fengtian-based Dōwa Automobile Company (*Dōwa Jidōsha Kōgyō Kabushikigaisha*)'s city shuttle (Figure 4.51), which offered 18 stops from Xinjing Railway Station. This colorized photograph shows an advertisement for Takarayama

Cooperation, "Learned in America," accessed January 12, 2022, https://www.nissan-global.com/JP/HERITAGE/LEGENDS/LEGEND_01/

¹⁵⁸ Haruo Iguchi, *Ayukawa Yoshisuke to keizaiteki kokusai shugi*, 5-7, 31-32.

¹⁵⁹ Mimura, 103-106.

¹⁶⁰ Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense*, 130.

(Baoshan) Department store in Xinjing, which opened in 1938 and was boasted the largest department store in Manchukuo as well as the highest building in Xinjing.

Along with the utopian images of locomotives and automobiles “the running machines,” images of airplanes as “machines for air,” were not a whole new game in the post-WWI modern world, yet they reached a new tempo and scope in Manchukuo. In the 1930s, Lufthansa, Aeroflot (Soviet), and American Airlines were expanding their routes to international cities. Launched in 1931 by the Kwantung Army, the Manchuria Aviation Company (*Manshū Kōkū Kabushiki Kaisha*, Mankō) joined the vision of Manchukuo state-building through speedy airway service and state-of-the-art aircraft.¹⁶¹ Mankō produced a massive number of advertisement posters and hired Li Xiangran for the travel promotion. One of the later posters advertises (Figure 4.52) a new passenger aircraft named Yunkas in *katakana*, which is likely a German-made aircraft Junkers model purchased by Mankō in 1939 and operated in the same year for a nonstop flight between Xinjing and Tokyo.¹⁶² Within the manner of Bauhaus and Deco, it incorporates an industrial design with a two-dimensional diagram and exposes the inside of the aircraft like a submarine and a plant in Kōga Harue’s *Sea*. By attaching the Manchukuo flag on each side of the tail wings, the airway service claimed it as the flag carrier of the state. Moreover, with a light and soft coloration filled with precise outlines, the smooth, flat, shiny flying machine provides a vision of elegant and clean luxury.

One of the most influential artists who corresponded to the “imagineering” of Manchukuo was photographer Fuchikami Hakuyō through his leadership of the graphic

¹⁶¹ Takanori Maema, *Manshū Kōkū no zenbō, 1932-1945: tairiku o kaketa sōbō no tsubasa* [Full view of Manchurian Airlines, 1932-1945: Wings that flew across the continent] (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2013), 9-22.

¹⁶² Shizuo Komori, *J-Bird: Shashin'to tōrokukigōde miru senzenno nihon minkankōkūki* [Prewar Japanese Civil Aircraft as Seen in Photographs and Registration Symbols] (Tokyo: Nihon kōkūkyōkai kōkūisan kēshōkikin, 2016), 319-320.

magazine *Manshū Gurafu* and the Manchuria Photographic Artists Association (*Manshū shashin sakka kyōkai*; MPAA) during his residence from 1928 to 1941. Fuchikami and work of MPAA artists demonstrate how Manchurian photography was deployed in reflecting the spectrum from colonial romanticism to disciplinary social practice through its “socially transformative potential.”¹⁶³ The notions of power and efficiency, rational management of labor, mass production, and technical accuracy became increasingly important themes in their later works, in tandem with the direction of Manchukuo enterprises envisioned by the Army and technocrats in the late 1930s.¹⁶⁴

Scholars have studied their works as “avant-garde” rather than modernist, not only because of the latest photojournalist and art photography techniques they employed but also because of the mixed feelings elicited from the images oscillating colonizers’ propaganda and commerciality and former left-wing sentimentality.¹⁶⁵ For example, one of Fuchikami’s early works in Manchuria presented in the Manchuria Photographic Annual in 1930, *The Sunset (Rakujitsu)*, Figure 4.53), portrays meager-looking coolies moving stones or earth in the dusk, attesting to his interest in a hazy-style pictorial technique that conjures up Alfred Stieglitz and European pictorialism and the subject of labor from Barbizon school or Gustave Courbet’s paintings. Perhaps, the smudge-like style used for his other landscape photography can be associated with ink wash techniques rooted in his native artistic culture. His gaze on the coolies’

¹⁶³ Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8 (3) (2000): 753.

¹⁶⁴ Mizuno, 44-60.

¹⁶⁵ Unlike Culver’s analysis refers to Fuchikami and many MPAA’s photographs as complex left-ist with colonial gaze, Shepherdson-Scott deems Fuchikami was less politically and ideologically outspoken through his photography than expressing his identity as an artist. Meanwhile Weisenfeld’s study shortly introduced Fuchikami within the radical photography and photojournalism circle in the 1930s. Culver, 101; Shepherdson-Scott, 148; Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues,” 752.

tragic life lingers with a certain level of sympathy, providing audiences with a romanticized colonial experience.

Fuchikami and the MPAA often mixed Constructivist motivation of geometric forms and the physical reality of materials with a sense of painterly romanticism. Their photojournalist practice through *Manshū Gurafu* heavily relied on Bauhaus and Russian photographic techniques and other avant-garde features for the design/layout of photo essays and even advertisements.¹⁶⁶ The bilingual graphic magazine *Manshū Gurafu*, considered a visual invitation for diplomatic and touristic purposes, shaped photographic aesthetics in Manchukuo. Although the primary audience for the magazine comprised Japanese SMRC staff and other residents across the railway cities, *Manshū Gurafu* paid attention to potential overseas readers and selectively planned and edited the topics and images.

The inspiration of Maholo-Nagy, El Lissitzky, and Alexander Rodchenko is apparent throughout the whole editions, especially by 1941, the last year of Fuchikami's term of office. *Manshū Gurafu* echoes the *U.S.S.R. in Construction* published between 1930 and 1941, best known for epitomizing the state-sanctioned aesthetics of Stalinist Soviet to promote the nation's modern and industrial power. The magazine's main purpose was to provide "virtual tourism" by displaying geography, history, and culture to both domestic and world audiences with multi-lingual editions.¹⁶⁷ With that, the practice of Constructivist techniques, extreme angles, innovative insert of letters, unique layout design with photomontage, and panoramic view with fold-out pages provided the ideal tools for Japanese photographers to construct the greater

¹⁶⁶ Photojournalism is a translation of the Japanese term *hōdō shashin* (literally, report photography), a type of journalism media that makes a story or essay by curating images. Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Touring Japan-as-Museum," 752.

¹⁶⁷ Timothy Nunan, "Soviet Nationalities Policy, Ussr in Construction, and Soviet Documentary Photography in Comparative Context, 1931–1937," *Ab Imperio* no. 2 (2010): 51.

narratives of national promotion and artistic creativity. A strong resonance is found between the cover image on the September issue of *Manshū Gurafu* in 1936 (Figure 4.54), the special issue extolling the emergence of the Manchuria Chemical Industry Company (*Manshū Kagaku Kōgyō Kabushikigaisha*; Manka), and the January 1934 issue of the *U.S.S.R. in Construction*, which was devoted to featuring the Bobriki Chemical Combinat (Figure 4.55) photographed by Max Vladimirovich Alpert (1899–1980).

After the Second Sino-Japanese war, *Manshū Gurafu*'s Constructivist photojournalism incorporated more militaristic images into the state-building propaganda. In line with Japan's mass migration campaign to Northern Manchurian farmlands, tractors were a favored spectacle that signified Japan's scientific agricultural advancement. In the photomontage from an article entitled "Young and Strong Power (*wakaku takumasiki chikara*, Figure 4.56)" in 1938, *Manshū Gurafu* portrays a volunteer army trainee on a Caterpillar tractor. There is a sense of cacophony between the machine that takes up the entire composition and the English subtitle "primary emphasis is laid on spiritual practice." The subtitle continues, "although much attention is being paid to the technical and vocational training of youthful Japanese settlers, spiritual training is of primary importance, and every effort is being exerted to develop them into patriotic citizens who will become the medium for harmonizing the relationship between Japan and Manchukuo." In the Japanese language, the article further introduced the details of their daily routine, such as chanting patriotic slogans and doing group gymnastics to raise the "Japanese spirit (*nihon seishin*)." The article reveals complex colonial contradictions between infringement and harmony and the conflict between Western technology and Asian spirituality. Compared to MPAA member Kawasaki Hoshiro's *Frontier (Kaitaku*, Figure 4.57), produced in early 1937 before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, which deliberates the romantic pictorialism of

Japanese immigrants, the 1938 version provides a metaphor for the changing political landscape of Manchukuo.

In this process of rationalization by science and machine technology, coolies—the racialized mass of manual labor from China—became mechanized and militarized. Fuchikami and MPAAAs nostalgic but romantic poverty, unsanitary, mysterious human spectacles transformed into organized workers, or even “machinic extensions of the Japanese Imperial Army.”¹⁶⁸ The images of unorganized, lazy, and feeble coolies were mobilized as workers in construction sites and factories. Although their misery hardly changed, coolies took on a new embodiment in aesthetic propaganda. Fuchikami’s photography for the cover of the October issue of *Manshū Gurafu* in 1939 (Figure 4.58) portrays a Fordist sense of streamlined workers at a railway construction, in which mushrooming militarism transformed a photographer’s Constructivist interest into a metaphor for wartime reportage.

Toward the end of the 1930s, the precision manufacturing that engaged meticulous human handling of small and micro metal parts of machines became in high demand to support the empire’s self-sufficiency and war. The two photographs under the article “The Precision Technology in Northeast China” in the 1942 January issue of the *Continental Pictorial (Daliu Huakan*, Figure 4.60), a Chinese-language graphic magazine that promoted the Japanese puppet government in Nanjing between the end of 1940 and 1944, exemplified such a circumstance. On the left, a skilled factory worker concentrates on looking through magnifying lenses and is likely calibrating a small part; a man on the right is seated in the gigantic wheels and is maintaining the machine part. An analogous geometric beauty and a contrast between man and machine wheel

¹⁶⁸ Prime minister from 1957 to 1960, also best known as Abe Shinzo’s maternal grandfather, Kishi Nobuske who carried out the Five-Year Plan as Manchuria Industrial Development Company mentioned the testimony in 1954. In Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque*, 266.

may also be found in Lewis W. Hine's famous *Heart of the Turbine* (1930, Figure 4.61), featuring a man measuring a hole. The article states, however, that "the structure of ultra-precise industrial machinery parts does not allow even micro decimal chance of error. The sharp eyes of the "industrial warrior (*sangyō senshi*)" are inspecting the rotating of this small bearing." Obviously, homogeneity, precision, and endurance, the byproducts of the machine age industry, had become fully mobilized in war engineering.

In the late 1930s, machine aesthetics appeared to embrace nationalist branches; utopian societies were visualized as nationalist Futurism and Neo-Realism in Fascist Italy, propaganda with heroic Realism in Nazi Germany, and Socialist Realism in Soviet Russia. The 1937 International Exhibition of Arts and Technology in Modern Life, Paris, notable for the spectacle celebration of electricity, aviation, and other technological development, also marked the global modernist turn and divided political regimes amid the tension in the dawn of WWII.¹⁶⁹ The machine age came to Manchukuo with the colonial apparatus of material and labor practices and planned development to justify Japanese Imperial rule over the Co-prosperity Sphere.

Over the course of *nihonga*'s search for its value and authenticity vis-à-vis *yōga*, the rise of Taishō and Shōwa realism was buttressed by the nationalist ideas of *neo-classicism* and *neo-Japanism*, which encouraged *nihonga* artists to conceive realism in their native culture and history. The new *yamato-e* movement succeeded over the course of the 1930s and also influenced young modernist and avant-garde *nihonga* artists to combine *yamato-e*'s clean-cut visuality with the latest artistic trends. The utopian notion of rationalization by virtue of science and technology contributed to the concept of *machine-ist nihonga* in the 1930s, yet the visual

¹⁶⁹ Robert H. Kargon et al., *World's Fairs on the Eve of War: Science, Technology, and Modernity, 1937–1942* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 5-6.

aesthetics were so malleable that they easily fused into militarist impulse. While *machine-ist nihonga* never won mainstream recognition in Japan, the Manten in 1939 and 1940 provided them with the highest reception. Between 1937 and 1940, Manchukuo was in its last pitch to make its state-building, whereas metropole Japanese intervention through migration policy, military campaigns, and economic exploitation left anxiety in tandem with increasing world political tensions. *Nihonga's* *heteroglossic* nature allowed multiple signifiers to coexist within a single piece of work.¹⁷⁰

Thus, *Tōyōga's* *machine-ist* style involves discursive frameworks. Kuriyama's tractor painting *Training*, sharing a lot in common with "Young and Strong Power" in *Manshu gurafu*, shows a complex interplay between Western dominance and Japanism, and between colonial modernity and militarism. The painting's surplus identities—as *Tōyōga* in institutional category, *nihonga* in medium, *yamato-e* in technical origin, *machine-ist* in aesthetic style, and pro-propaganda in production type—make the painting unstable. It can be seen in terms of the later settler artists' efforts to calibrate themselves to the erratic changes in artistic and socio-political practice between 1937 and 1940.

After the short-lived Manten and Japan's defeat in 1945, the Japanese intra-Imperial exhibition system was abolished and rebranded as the state exhibition called the Nitten (Japan Art Exhibition) in 1946. The *machinist*-inspired *nihonga*, such as that which Ryusoga-sha and Meirō practiced, shaped the so-called Nitten style based on new Tokyo urban views; their prewar works were reexamined accordingly.¹⁷¹ In the new stage for artists called Manchukuo, colonial *nihonga* was reinstated within *Tōyōga* as a vernacular genre, but artists took advantage of the

¹⁷⁰ The term heteroglossia was coined by Bahtin in the 1930s. Vyacheslav Ivanov, "Heteroglossia," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9, no. 1/2 (1999): 100.

¹⁷¹ Koichirō Noji, "Rushogasha," 19-20.

relative lack of censorship and only contingent demands for war art service which made their experiments available. Manchuria was not only a laboratory for the modern industrial nation-state but also for *nihonga*.

CODA **: Repatriation and Postcolonial Memory**

Japan's surrender at the end of the Second World War dissolved the Manchukuo government and the Kwantung Army in August 1945, which at the same time heralded the independence of Taiwan and Korea from the colonial states. Manchukuo territory was first seized by the Soviet Army and transferred to China in 1946. While many Japanese started repatriating to their homeland by 1947, also many were killed, drafted to prison, or trafficked (especially women).⁶²⁶ The majority of the Korean diaspora who had ambiguous nationality during the Manchukuo period became absorbed into China's "racial solidarity" program and became completely separated from Korean nationals. For the Chinese Manchukoan, many years were spent deciding and punishing "traitors;" for example, former Manchu princess Kawashima Yoshiko (born as Aisin Gioro Xianyu, 1907-1948), who was adopted by a Japanese man and educated in Japan at an early age, was sentenced to death.⁶²⁷ National identities were once again claimed, challenged, and negotiated in Manchuria.

Throughout the postwar and postcolonial nation restoration and building projects in Japan, China, and Korea, narratives and historical discourse on Manchukuo became complex. China's national historical narrative rejects the history of Manchuria as a state, and only downgrades its existence as Wei-Manzhouguo (false Manchukuo) and tabooed to examine. Such nationalist vantage points also exist in different sentiments in contemporary Korean and Japanese

⁶²⁶ For example, a Heilongjiang-born second-generation Japanese resident in Manchukuo, Yokoyama Noriko's memoir describes the violence and poverty that Japanese women faced after the Soviet conquer and the establishment of China. See Noriko Yokoyama, *Onnatachino tairikutōbōki* [Women's Continental Escape] (Nagoya: Fubaisha, 2015); Also, Lori Watt's study examines repatriation and decolonization of Manchukuo. Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 98-137.

⁶²⁷ Dan Shao, "Princess, Traitor, Soldier, Spy: Aisin Gioro Xianyu and the Dilemma of Manchu Identity," in *Crossed Histories* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017).

(and likely Russian) narratives; for instance, Korean history tends to claim the region as the lost territory of ancient Korea and popular imagination in “Manchu Western” genre films, and Japanese narratives often nostalgically reminisce the memories of continental Japan represented as “Phantasmagoric Manchukuo (*maboroshi manshū*).” According to Han Suk-Jung, yet, the legacy of Manchukuo still exists in the urban planning, museum systems, military, and politics of present-day East Asian institutions.⁶²⁸

While transnational studies that discover *heterotopic* characteristics of Manchuria are proceeding in many conferences and book projects, museums and art historical studies on Manchukuo are seeking a new approach.⁶²⁹ In 2014, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fuchu Art Museum, and Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art hosted a special exhibition tracing the history of state art exhibitions throughout the Japanese Empire and its former colonies.⁶³⁰ Entitled “Toward Modernity: Images of Self & Other in East Asian Art Competitions,” the exhibition proposed the first anthological retrospection on state art exhibitions, by juxtaposing over 130 works selected from *kanten* in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Manchukuo, with collaborative research and collections from Korea and Taiwan, and the trilingual catalog in Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese-Mandarin. Although the section for Manchukuo was filled mostly with photography, reproductions, and related works, it marks the first exhibition on *kanten* that included Manchukuo. The narratives of the exhibition engage with the notion of universality and individuality in East Asian nations represented through the formations of modern art shaped by Japan’s imperial and colonial ideology of modernity.

⁶²⁸ Suk-jung Han, *Manju modŏn: 60-yŏndae Han’guk kaebal ch’eje ūi kiwŏn* [Manchuria Modern: The Origin of the Development of Korea in the 60s] (Seoul: Munhak kwa Chisŏngsa, 2016), 68-70.

⁶²⁹ Such as Manchuria Studies Association (*Manju hakhoe*) has actively collected scholarly works not only in Korea but Japan, China, and the English-speaking world.

⁶³⁰ *Tōkyō Souru Taihoku Chōshun, kanten ni miru kindai bijutsu* = Toward the modernity: images of self & other in East Asian art competitions (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, 2014).

Many Japanese artists who actively participated in the Manchukuo art scene became silent about publicly sharing their experiences due to the U.S. occupation as well as the negative perception and the Japanese government's lack of recognition about repatriates.⁶³¹ So as Chinese artists who did not become revolutionary activists or participate in the art projects of the People's Republic of China. The majority of Japanese repatriated artists returned to their home prefectures and did not foray into the Tokyo scene, and some changed their professions. There are still many unanswered questions about both Japanese and non-Japanese artists in Manchuria, and more research is needed in the future. The inclusion of Manchukuo completes the map of East Asian modern art history while also serving as a space for discussions on postcolonial and transnational issues related to historical and cultural complexities and continuity.

⁶³¹ Akiko Hashimoto, "Japanese Narratives of Decolonization and Repatriation from Manchuria," in *The Cultural Trauma of Decolonization* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2019), 57-83.

IMAGES

Introduction



Figure. i (Left) Commemorative Poster “Long Live Great Manchukuo,” 1933
Manchukuo Propaganda Posters & Bills Collection, Kyoto University

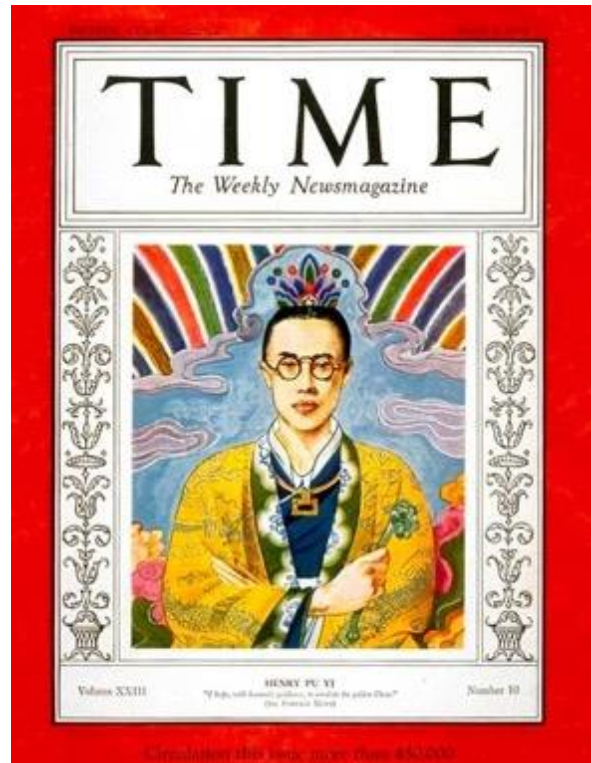


Figure. ii. (Right) *Henry Pu-Yi*, Jerry Farnsworth, Cover of the *Time*, March 5, 1934.
Courtesy of the Time Vault

Chapter One



Figure 1.1 *Big Central Square, Dalian*, Postcard (c. 1920s)



Figure 1.2 Wang Guansan, *Fish in Spring River* (1918)
Dalian Modern Museum



Figure 1.3 Wang Guansan, *Pine and Hawk* (1922)
Private collection; image from *Minguo Liao Shen jin shi shu hua shi*



Figure 1.4 (left) Xichan, *Bamboo* (1934)
Dalian Modern Museum

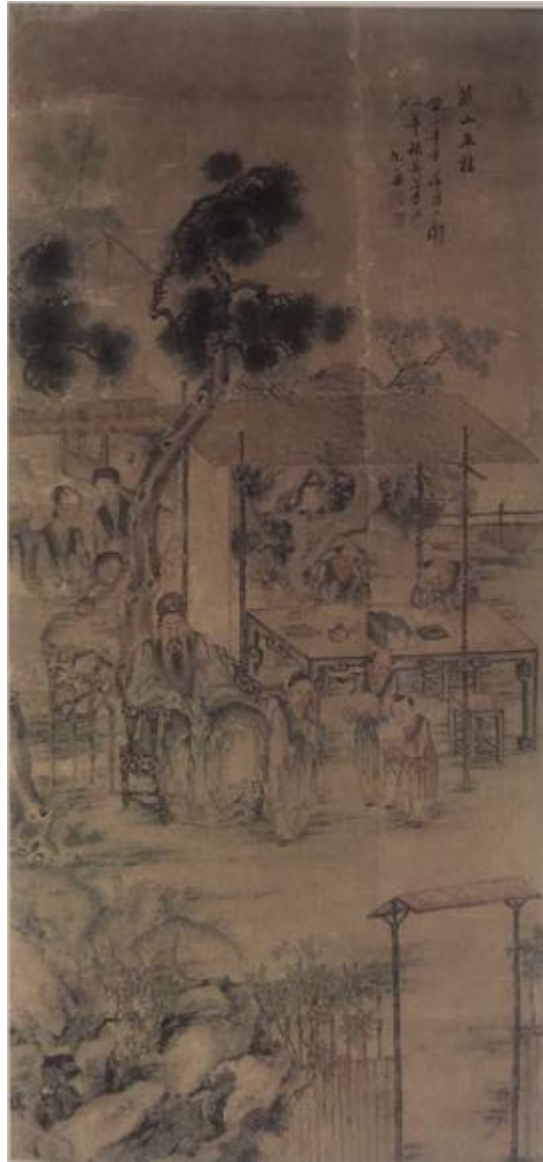


Figure 1.5 (right) Zhang Lezhou, *Dou Yanshan and His Five Sons* (1911)
Private collection; image from *Minguo Liao Shen jin shi shu hua shi*



Figure 1.6 Zhang Lezhou, *Immortal Li Tieguai* (1917)
Shenyang Palace Museum



Figure 1.7 Postcard: Naniwa-machi Japanese shopping district, Dalian (C. 1920s)

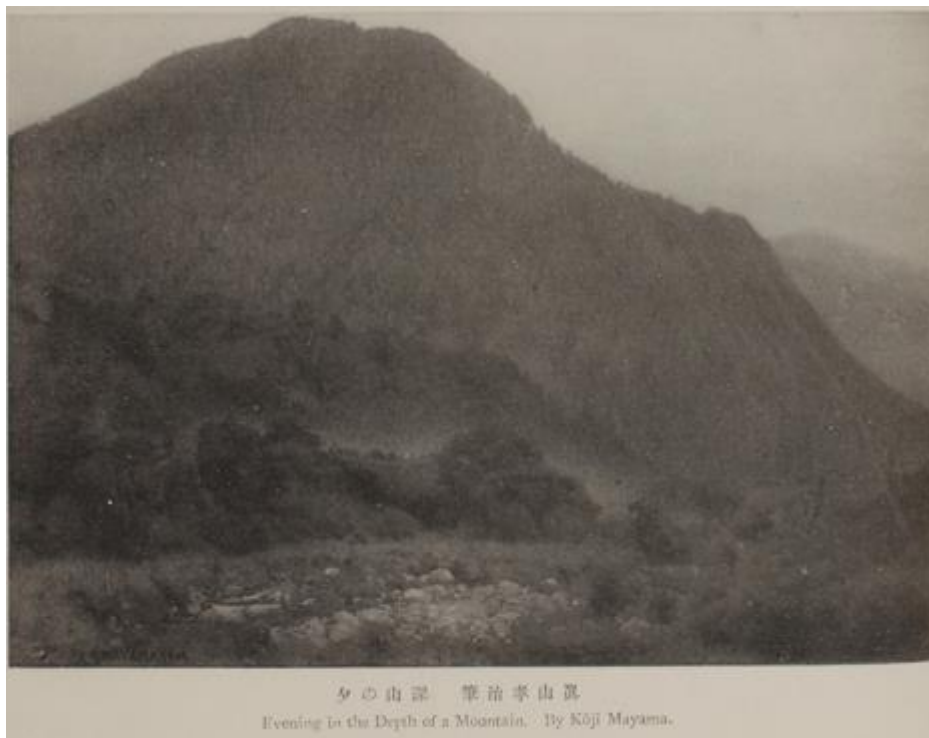


Figure1.8 Mayama Kōji, *Evening in the Depth of a Mountain* (1909)
Ministry of Education Art Exhibition Catalog (Bunten), 1909

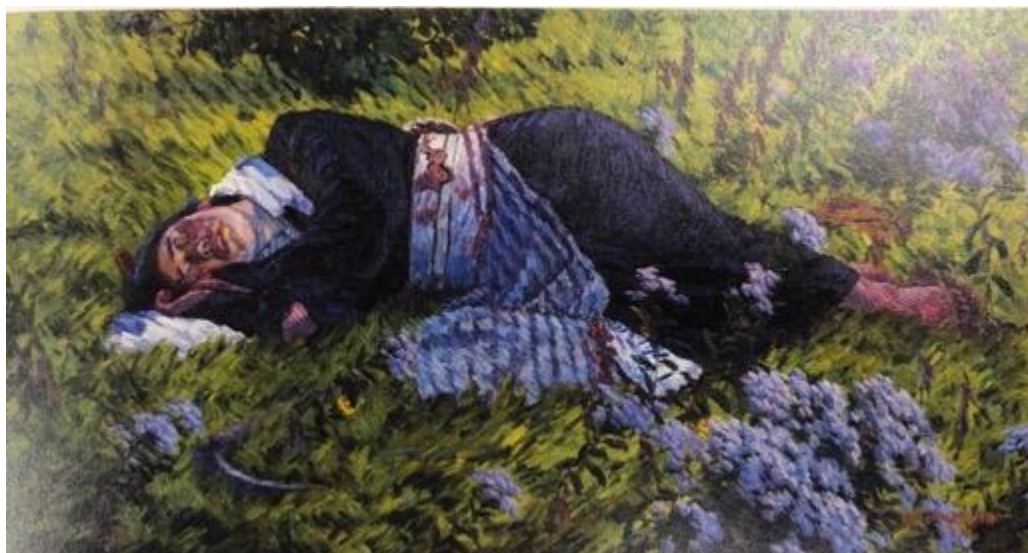


Figure1.9 Mayama Kōji, *Close to the equinox* (1914)
Miyagi Museum of Art

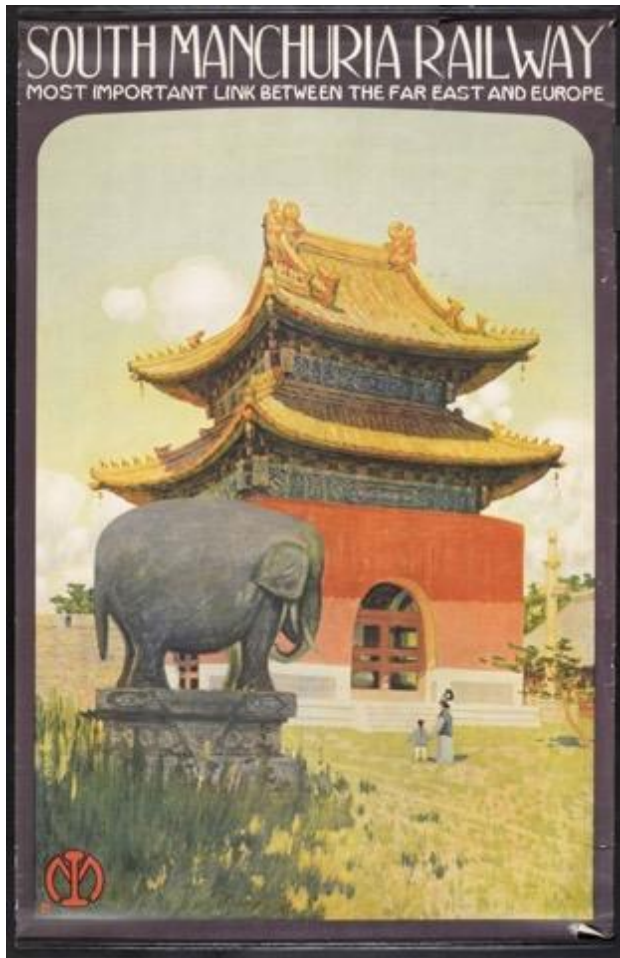


Figure 1.10 Mayama Kōji, *South Manchuria Railway: most important link between the far East and Europe* (1914)
USC Digital Library



Figure 1.11 (left) Nagahara Kotarō, *South Manchuria Railway Co.* (1921)
 Figure 1.12 (right) Sugiura Hisui, *South Manchuria Railway Co.*(1917)
 USC Digital Library



Figure 1.13 Mayama Kōji, *South Manchuria Railway Co.*(1921)
 Private Collection



Figure 1.14 Mayama Kōji, *Guibing, Heigen* (March 1921)



Figure 1.15 Fujishima Takeji, *Hōkei* (1923)
Private Collection; Image provided by Wikimedia Commons

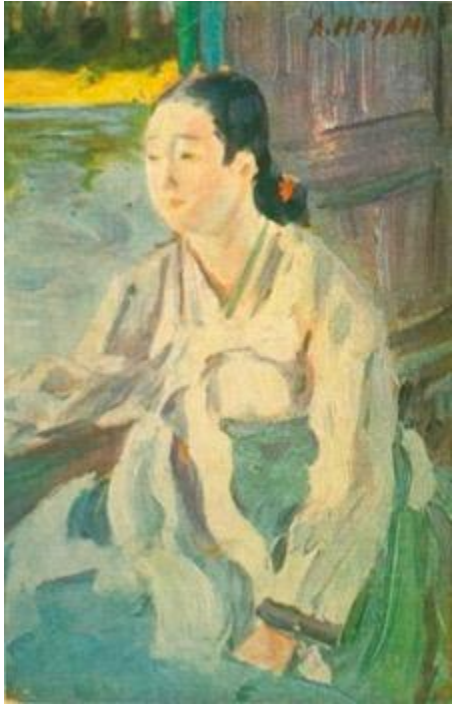


Figure 1.16 Mayama Kōji, *Spring Thoughts, Heigen* (June 1924)

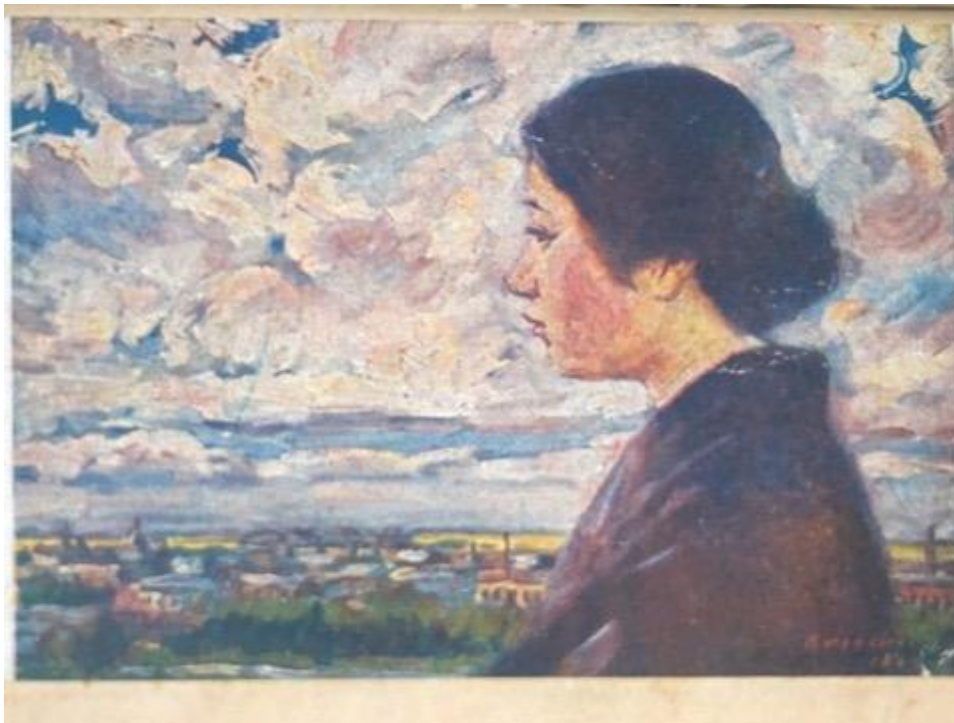


Figure 1.17 Mayama Kōji, *Heigen* (August 1924)



Figure 1.18 Mayama Kōji, *Heigen* (August 1924)



Figure 1.19 Itō Junzō, *South Manchuria Railway Co. (Changchun Station)* (1924)
In Visiting Japan: Tourism Promotion in the 1920s and 1930s



Figure 1.20 (left) Itō Junzō, *South Manchuria Railway Co. (Mask Dancer)* (1930-1937)
Figure 1.21 (right) Itō Junzō, *South Manchuria Railway Co. (Gaoqiao)* (c.1927)
The Kurita Collection, Nagoya City Museum



Figure 1.22 (left) Itō Junzō, South Manchuria Railway Co. (*Female Dancer*) (1929)
Figure 1.23 (right) Itō Junzō, South Manchuria Railway Co. (*Full-dressed Woman*) (1934)
In *Visiting Japan: Tourism Promotion in the 1920s and 1930s*

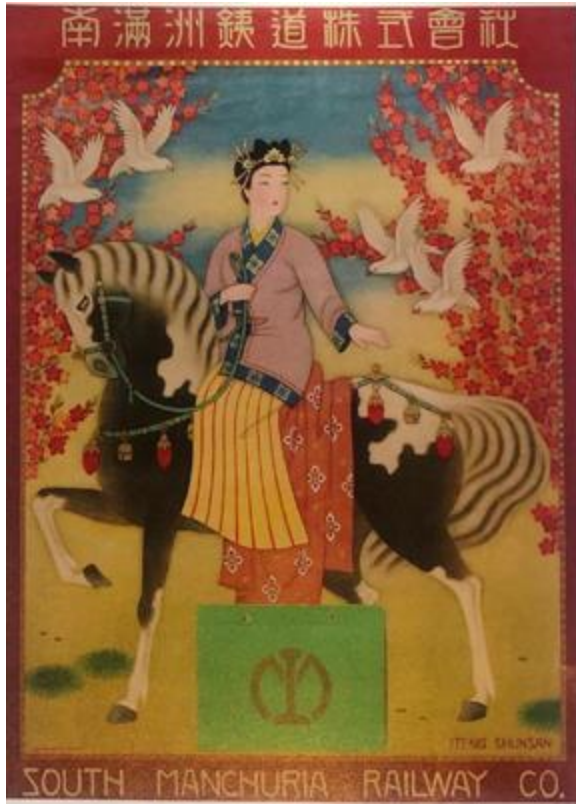


Figure 1.24 Itō Junzō, *South Manchuria Railway Co. (A Woman riding a horse)* (1930s)
In Visiting Japan: Tourism Promotion in the 1920s and 1930s



Figure 1.25 Itō Junzō, *Manchurian Women Sketches, Manmō* (January 1929)



Figure 1.26 Tang Dynasty Tomb Figurine
Manmō (January 1929)



Figure 1.27 (left) Kano Sōta, An illustration for “Bell of Tears” by Kurata Shio
Manchuria Daily, Oct. 9, 1931



Figure 1.28 (right) “Manchurian Hyperbola,” *Manchuria Daily*, Dec. 22, 1933



Figure 1.29 Itō Junzō, *South Manchuria Railway Co. (Buryat Women Holding a Lamb)*, 1937
The Kurita Collection, Nagoya City Museum



Figure 1.30 Still cut from *South Manchuria Railway Documentary*, 1937
In *Mantetsu kiroku eigashū 2 : Manshū no tabi* [naichi-hen] (Japan : Hatsubai Kamutekku : Hanbaimoto Konī Bideo, 2005).



Figure 1.31 Mayama Kōji, poster for the 1924 SMRC Art Exhibition
Courtesy of Egawa Yoshihide



Figure 1.32 Taniyama Kiyosei's *Still life with Gold Fish*, 1929
Manchuria Daily, May 23, 1929



Figure 1.33 Itō and Asaeda in front of Dalian Shrine, 1930
Omuka Toshiharu



Figure 1.34 The First Manchuria Art Exhibition, *Nihonga* Gallery, 1931
Manmō (Dec 1931)



Figure 1.35 The First Manchuria Art Exhibition, *Yōga* Gallery, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.36 Itō Junzō, *Child and Horse*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.37 Kuwayama Tessū, *Blast*, 1931

Figure 1.38 Ishida Shigeru, *Chinese Village*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.39 Kimoto Yae, *Midsummer*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)

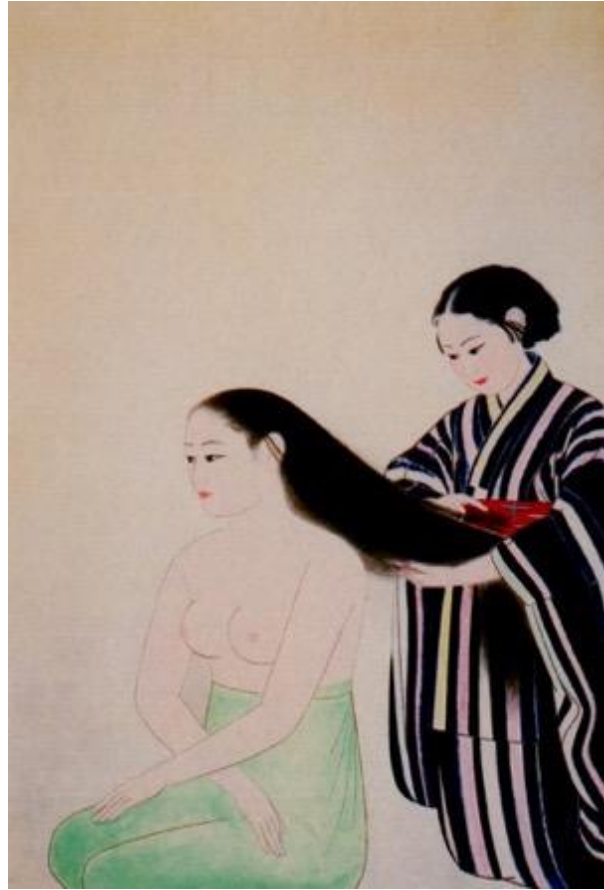


Figure 1.40 Kobayashi Kokei, *Hair*, 1931
Eisei-Bunko collection



Figure 1.41 Fukuda Yoshinosuke, *Ruined Castle in Southern Europe*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.42 Fujiyama Kazuo, *Memories of Jerusalem*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.43 Kurushima, *Hoshigaura*, 1931
Manmō (Dec. 1931)



Figure 1.42 SMRC postcard (Yamato Hotel), late 1920s
Private Collection



Figure 1.43 Kishida Ryūsei, *Dalian Hoshigaura*, 1929
The Pola Museum of Art



Figure 1.46 Kishida Ryūsei, *The Garden in the SMRC Presidents' Villa*, 1929
The Pola Museum of Art

Chapter Two



Figure 2.1 The First Manchukuo Art Exhibition Exhibition Hall, 1938
Manshūkoku gensei (1938)



Fig. 2.2 Puyi, “Qiankun Zhengqi (Universal Righteousness)”
Manchuria Daily, Nov.10, 1934



Figure 2.3 Yokoyama Taikan, Mt.Fuji, 1934
Nichiman rengo bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku



Figure 2.4 Meda Seison, *Samurai Playing Biwa*, 1934
Nichiman rengo bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku



Figure 2.5 Unenaka Chokusai, *Offering Sake*, 1931
Postcard of Imperial Art Institution Exhibition (*Teiten*), 1931



Figure 2.6 Ding Yunan, *Tiger*, 1934-5
Minguo Liao Shen jin shi shu hua shi

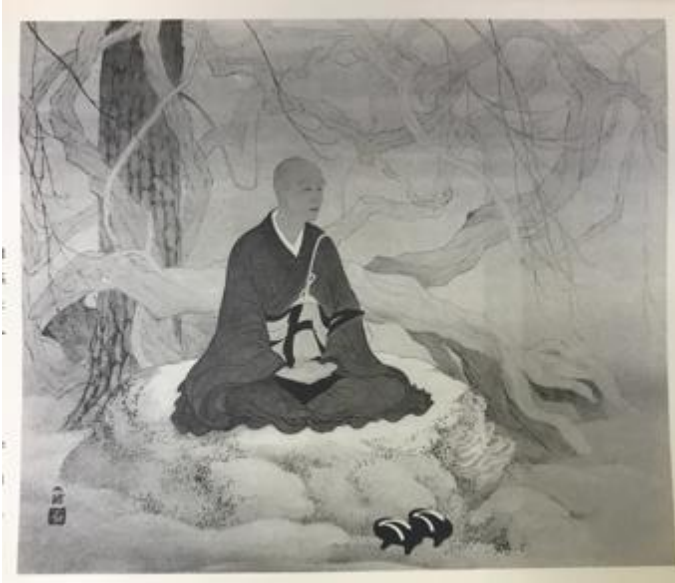


Figure 2.7 Noda Kyūho, *Monk Myōe*, 1934
Nichiman rengo bijutsu tenrankai Zuroku



Figure 2.8 Maeda Seison, *Looking at Pictures*, 1936
Kyōto Kyōsera Museum of Art



Figure 2.9 Puyi's family at the Rengōten, 1934
Xinjing Daily Sep. 28, 1934

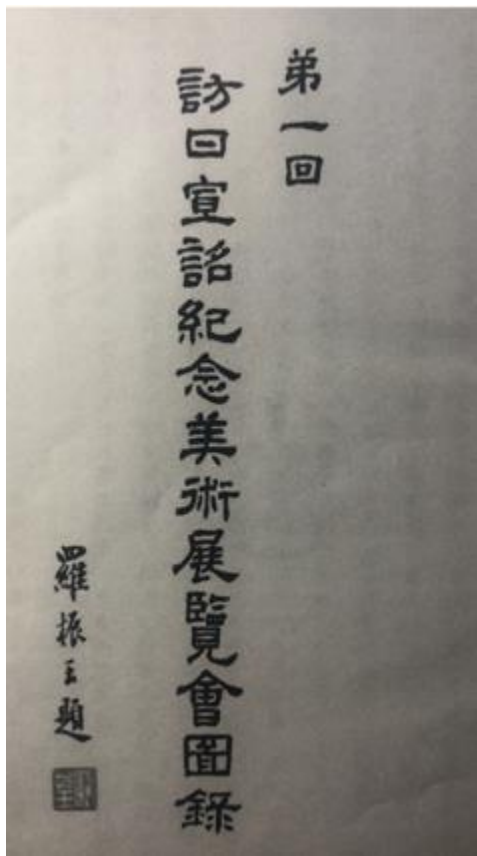


Figure 2.10 Luo Zhenyu, 1937
Imperial Edict Exhibition Catalog (*Senshōten*)



Figure 2.11 (Left) Xie Yousheng, *Shangri-la*, 1937



Figure 2.12 (Right) Yu Lianke, *Listening to the Spring*, 1937
Imperial Edict Exhibition Catalog (*Senshōten*)



Figure 2.13 Takahashi Tsutomu, *Harmony*, 1937
Imperial Edict Exhibition Catalog (Senshōten)



Figure 2.14 Hamano Nagamasa, *Assemblage*, 1937
Imperial Edict Exhibition Catalog (Senshōten)



Figure 2.15 The Empress Visiting the Imperial Exhibition
Asahi Shinbun, October 28, 1922
University of Michigan Digital Collections



Figure 2.16 Prim Minister Zhang Zinghui at the Second Mantan
Manshūkoku gensei (1939)



Figure 2.17 Okada Renseki, *Monkeys*, 1939
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Figure 2.18 *The Second Manten*, 1939
Manchuria Daily, Aug. 2, 1939



Figure 2.19 Shirasaki Kaiki, *Women at a Festival*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 2.20 Ikebe Sadayoshi, *Landscape*, 1938
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1938)



Figure 2.21 Fujī Jumu, *Merry-go-round*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 2.22 Kondō Seiji, *Stone Buddha of Datong*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 2.23 Maeda Seison, *Stone Buddha of Datong*, 1938
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Figure 2.24 Kubo Kuniichi, *Winter, Harbin*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 2.25 Li Penghe, *Bean Paste*, 1939
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Figure 2.26 The Fourth Fengtian Prefecture Art Exhibition, 1941
Manchuria Daily Aug.4. 1941



Figure 2.27 (Left) Abe, *Asia Co-prosperity* 1941
Manchuria Daily Aug.12, 1941



Figure 2.28 (Right) Tu Yuansu, *Spring on the Border*, 1938
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1938)

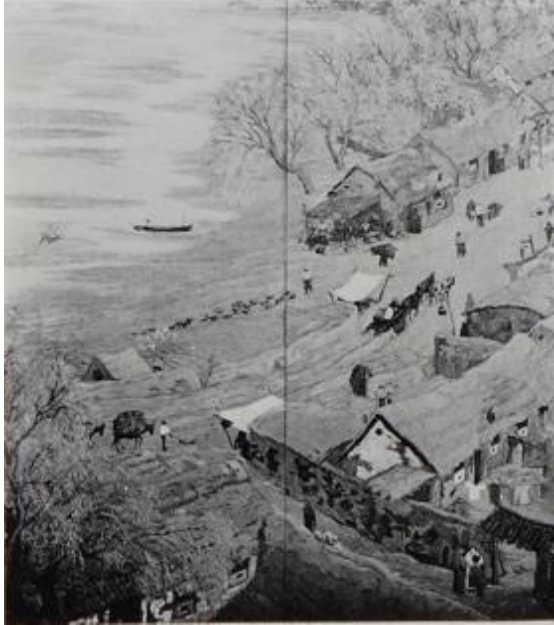


Figure 2.29 Liu Lungfeng, *Waterside Village*, 1938
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1938)



Figure 2.30 Liu Lungfeng, *Welfare during the War*, 1938
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1938)



Figure 2.31, Nihei Tōkan, *Concordia*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)



Figure 2.32, Yoshitake Takashi, *Under the Glare of the Sun*, 1942
Manchuria Daily Aug.18, 1942



Figure 2.33 Xie Yousheng, *the Final Victory*, 1943
Tairiku Gakan (Nov. 1943)

Chapter Three

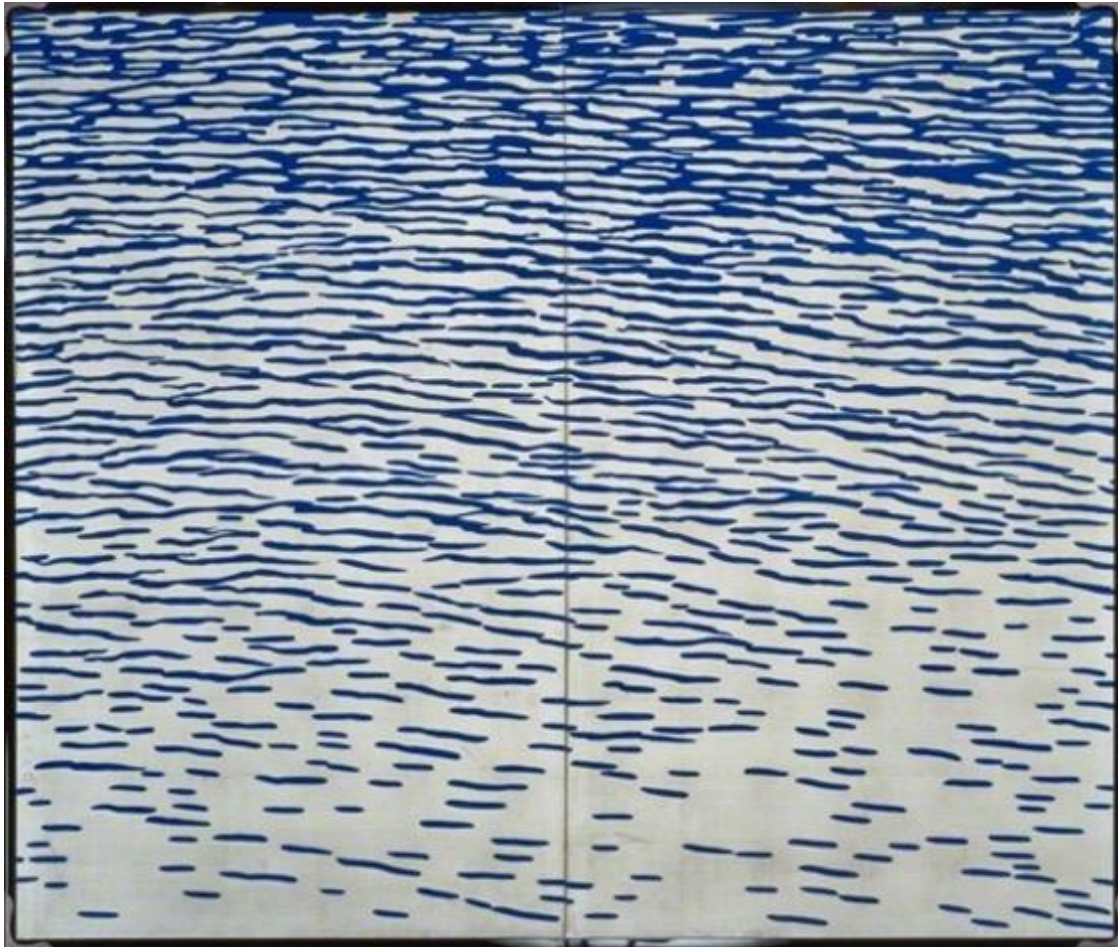


Figure 3.1 Fukuda Heihachirō, *Ripples*, 1932
National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto



Figure 3.2 Kai Mihachirō, *Bamboo Forest*, 1923
Kai Mihachirō-ten catalog

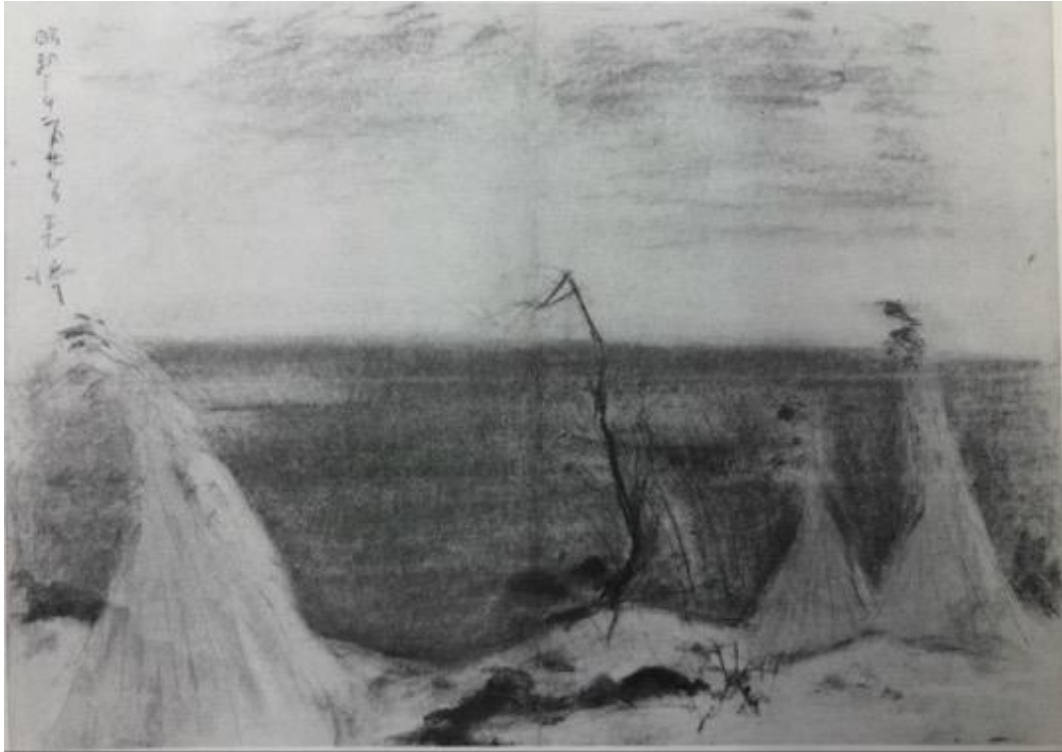


Figure 3.3 Kai Mihachirō, *Snowy Lake Biwa*, 1927
Kai Mihachirō-ten catalog



Figure 3.4 Sakurai Ichirō, *Overview of the West Caves (Yungang Grottoes)*, 1926
In *Ikyōno modanizumu*

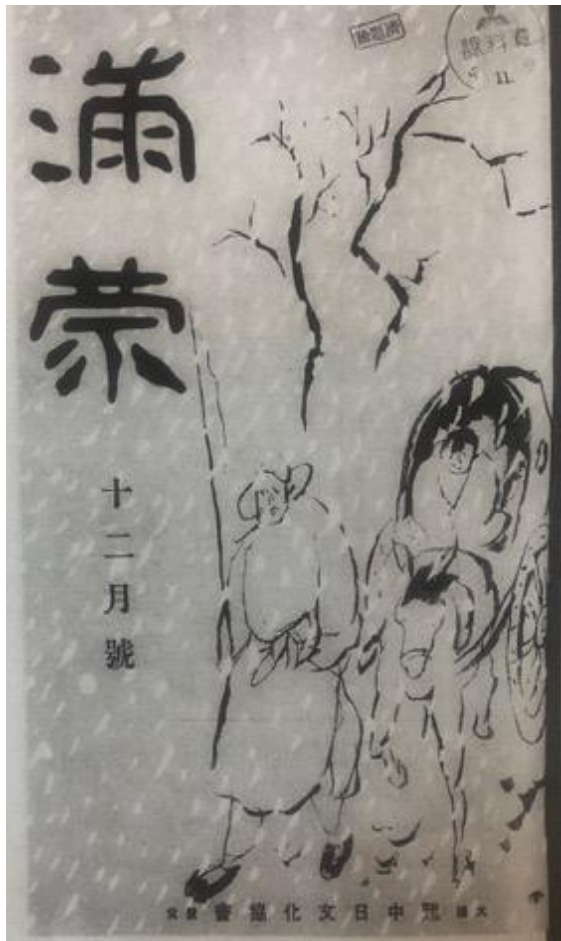


Figure 3.5 Kai Mihachirō, *Manmō* (Dec. 1930)



Figure 3.6 Kai Mihachirō (left) and Yanase Masamu (middle) in Manchuria, c. 1940
Kai Mihachirō-ten catalog



Figure 3.7 (Left) Yanase Masamu, *Look at This Person*, 1925
Yanase Masamu *zenshū*



Figure 3.8 (Right) Kai Mihachirō, *Tenement at 4 pm, Kyōwa* (Dec. 15, 1930)



Figure 3.9 George Grosz, *Ants from in the Shadows*, 1921
Museum of Modern Art

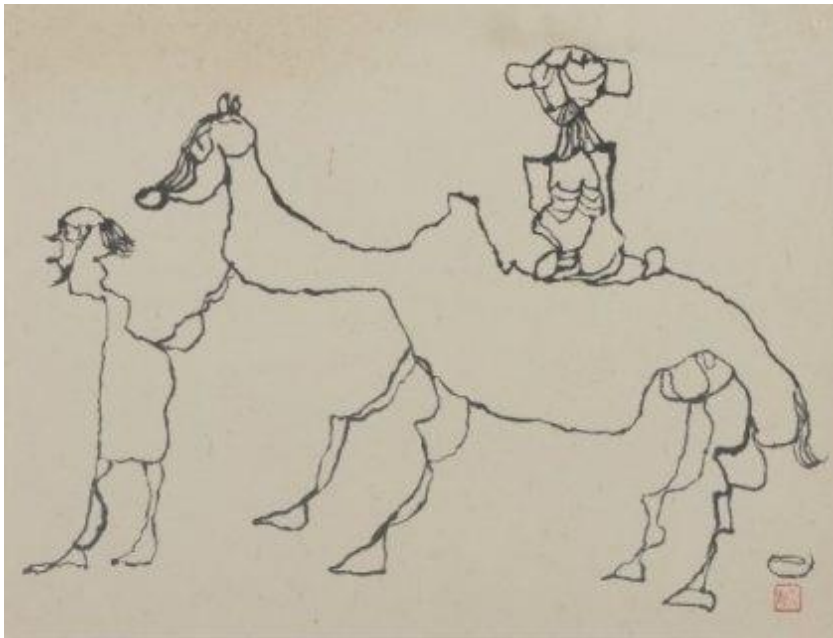


Figure 3.10 Kai Mihachirō, *Camel*, 1975
Kai Mihachito-ten Catalog

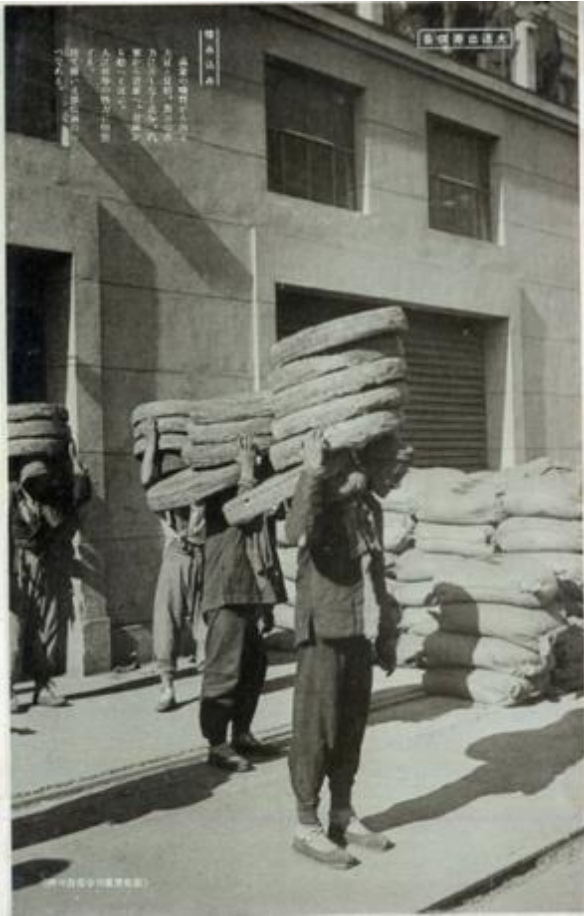


Figure 3.11 Coolies at the Dalian Harbor, c. 1930
Private Collection



Figure 3.12 Kai Mihachirō, Part of *Hekisanzō Emaki* (Narrative illustrations of tenement), 1931
Kyōwa (April. 1, 1931)



Figure 3. 13 Aoyama Kumaji, *Rice Wine*, 1911
Ministry of Education Art Exhibition Catalog



Figure 3. 14 Kai Mihachirō, Part of *Shandong Sketch*, *Kyōwa* (April. 15, 1931)



Figure 3. 15 Kai Mihachirō, *Coolie at Dalian Hekizansō*, 1936
Kai Mihachirō-ten Catalog



Figure 3. 16 Kai Mihachirō, *Mongolian Village*, 1935
Kai Mihachirō-ten Catalog

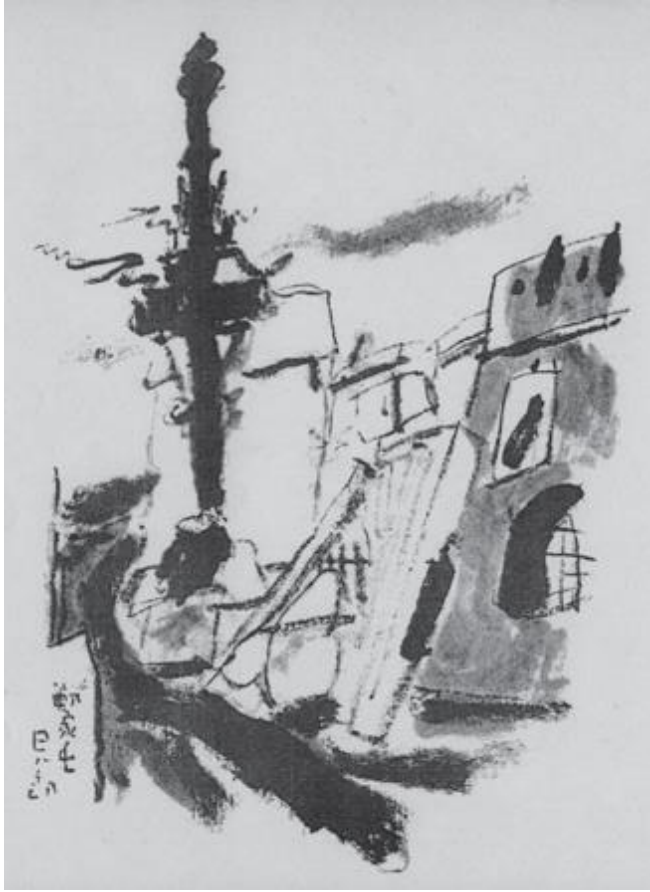


Figure 3. 17 Kai Mihachirō, *Zhengjiatun, Kyōwa* (Feb. 15, 1935)



Figure 3. 18 Kai Mihachirō, *Xinmintun, Kyōwa* (Apr. 15, 1935)

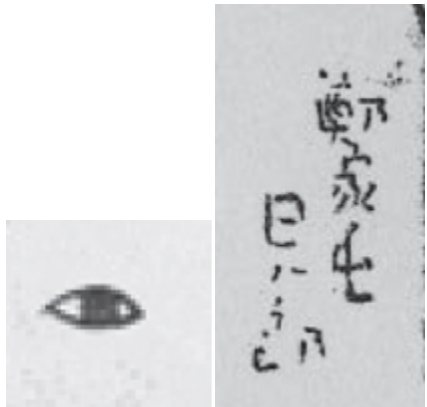


Figure 3. 19 Kai Mihachirō's signature
 Figure 3. 20 Kai Mihachirō's signature



Figure 3. 21 Kai Mihachirō, *Mongolian Village, Kyōwa* (June. 1, 1936)



Figure 3. 23 Kon Wajirō, *Index of Tokyo Ginza Custom, Modernology*, 1925

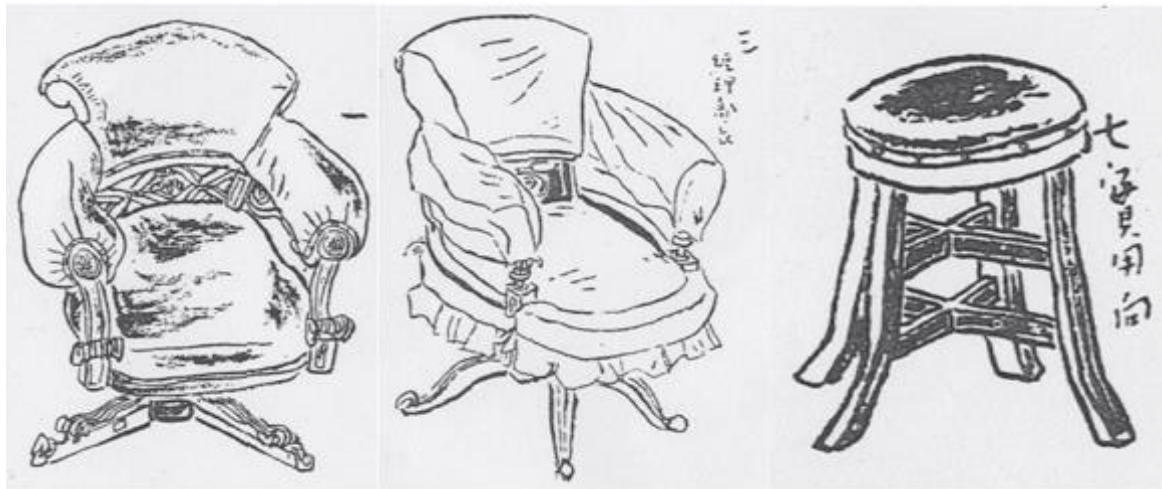


Figure 3. 24 Kai Mihachirō, *Modernology of Chairs, Kyōwa* (Jan. 1, 1933)



Figure 3. 25 Kai Mihachirō, *Shadow Puppetry, Kyōwa* (Apr. 15, 1935)



Figure 3. 26 Kai Mihachirō, *Coolie Sketch*, 1937



Figure 3. 27 Kai Mihachirō, New year's Card Designs for Suchi, the late 1930s Private Collection



Figure 3. 28 Toys sold at a Temple Fair, 1940
In *Manchuria Folk Toys*

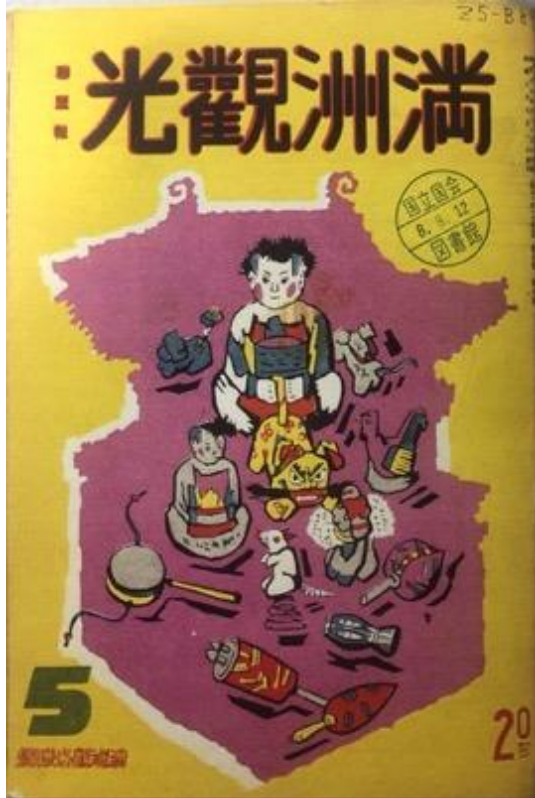


Figure 3. 29 Kai Mihachirō, Cover for *Travel Manchuria* (May 1941)



Figure 3.30 Kai Yoshiko, Cover for *Manchuria Folk Toys*, 1940



Figure 3.31 Akaba Suekichi, 1940
Akaba Suekichi Exhibition Catalog



Figure 3.32 Akaba Suekichi, Manchurian Dolls Scroll, 1947
Akaba Suekichi Exhibition Catalog



Figure 3.33 Kai Mihachirō, *Manchuria Folk Toys*, 1940
 In *Manchuria Folk Toys*



Figure 3.34 Korean Local Toy Set, 1930s
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Figure 3.35 Kai Mihachirō, *Mongolia*, 1937
Imperial Edict Exhibition Catalog (Senshōten)



Figure 3.36 Nonagase Banka, *Children of the Spanish Countryside*, 1924
In John Szostak, *Painting Circles*.



Figure 3.37 Kai Mihachirō, Beijing, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 3.38 Akaba Suekichi, *Miao Hui*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog(1939)



Figure 3.39 Akaba Suekichi, *Shadow Puppetry*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)



Figure 3.40 Kai Mihachirō, 1942
Kai Daisaku Private Collection



Figure 3.41 Kai Mihachirō, *Mongolian*, 1950
Fukuoka Asian Art Museum



Figure 3.42 Akaba Suekichi, *Mongolian Sketch*, c.1942-3
Akaba Suekichi Exhibition Catalog

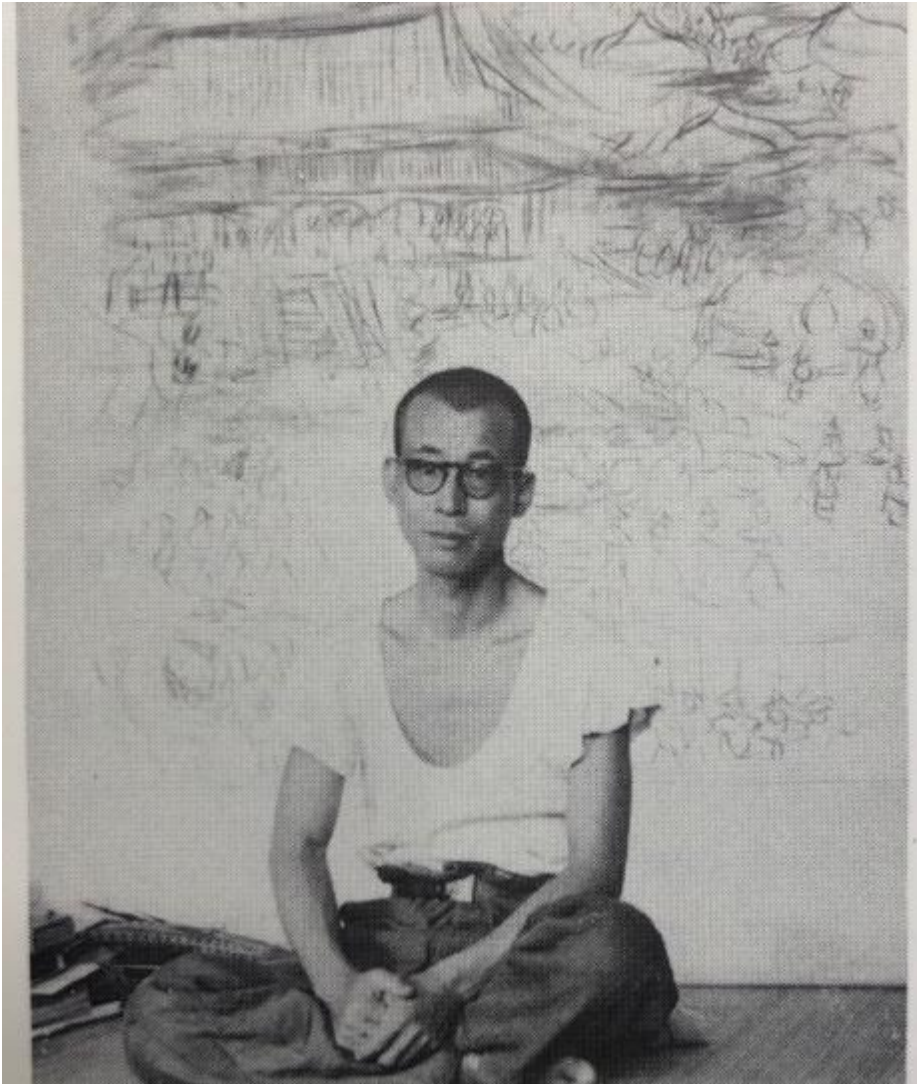


Figure 3.41 Kai Mihachirō, *at the Mausoleum of Genghis Khan*, 1943
Kai Mihachirō-ten Catalog

Chapter Four



Figure 4.1 Kuriyama Hiroshi, *Training*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)

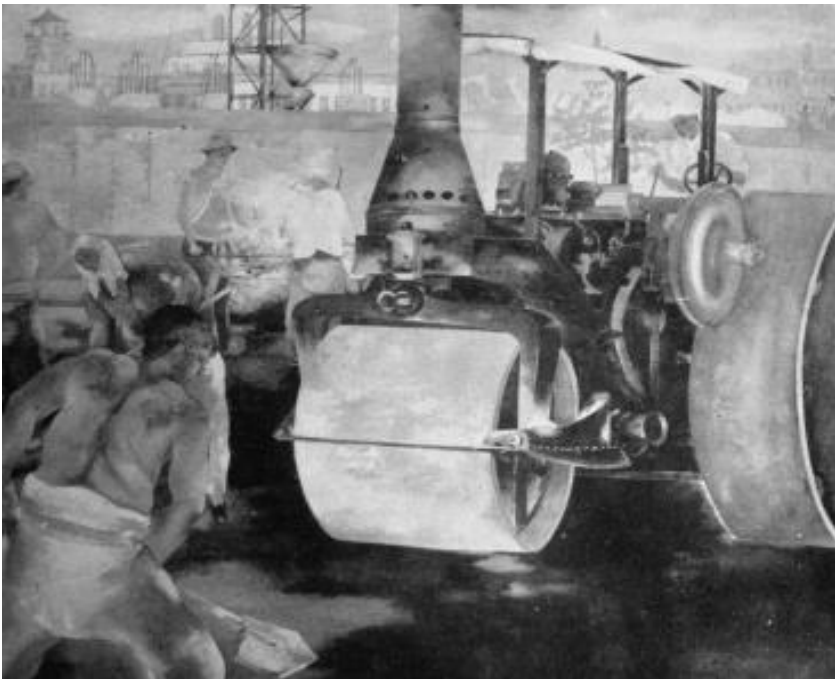


Figure 4.2 Kuriyama Hiroshi, *Workshop*, 1939
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1939)



Figure 4.3 Kuriyama Hiroshi, *In Longjiang*, 1939
Gekkan Manshū (May 1939)



Figure 4.4 Yamaguchi Hōshun, *Final Attack on Hong Kong Island*, 1942.
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo



Figure 4.5 Kawabata Ryūshi, *Genghis Khan*, 1938
Ryūshi Memorial Hall

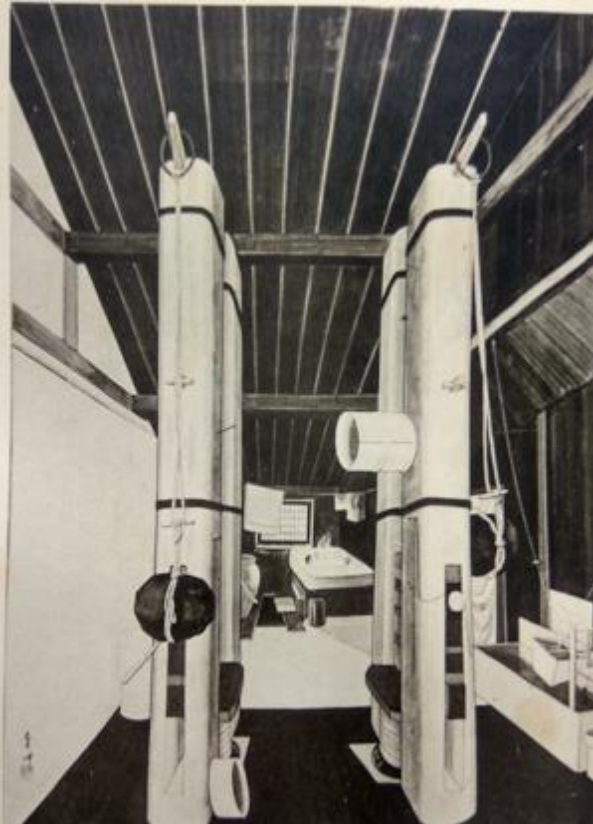


Figure 4.6 Hidaka Kenzō, *Spring Day of Oil Company*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)



Figure 4.7 Matsumoto Kusura, *Mining*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog(1940)

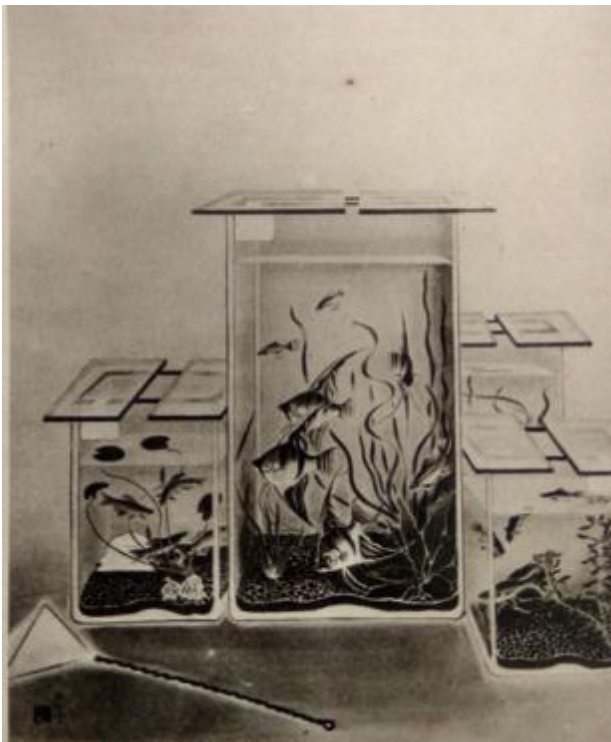


Figure 4.8 Okada Renseki, *Tropical Fish*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)



Figure 4. 9 Itō Sōtani, *Kunming Lake*, 1940
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1940)



Figure 4. 10 Yi Yu-tae, *Research*, 1943
Museum of Modern Art, Korea



Figure 4. 11 Ōta Chōu, *Vaccination*, 1932
National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto



Figure 4. 12 Matsuoka Eikyū, *Murogimi*, 1916
Kumamoto Prefectural Museum of Art



Figure 4. 13 Matsuoka Eikyū, *Minister of the Right Sanetomo*, 1932
Matsuoka Eikyū Exhibition



Figure 4. 14 Kawasaki Shōko, *Accession to the Throne*, 1930
Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery



Figure 4. 15 Kawabata Ryūshi, *Domination of the Ocean*, 1936
Ryūshi Memorial Hall



Figure 4. 16 The Third Blue Dragon Society exhibition (1933), Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum
Blue Dragon Society Catalog

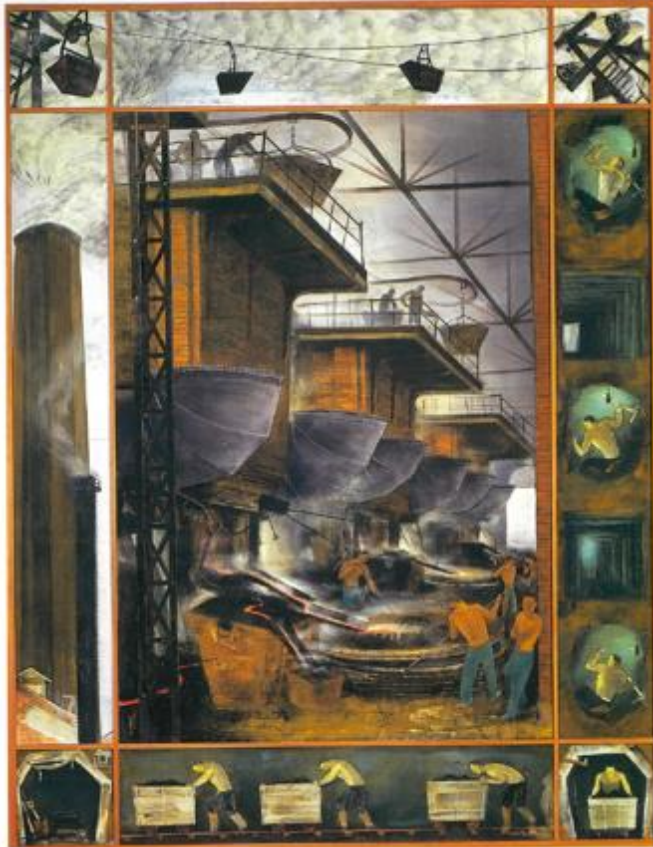


Figure 4. 17 Fukuda Toyoshirō, *Blast Furnace*, 1933
Akita Prefecture Museum of Art



Figure 4. 18 Shimada Yōsuke, *Construction Site*, 1933
Blue Dragon Society Catalog

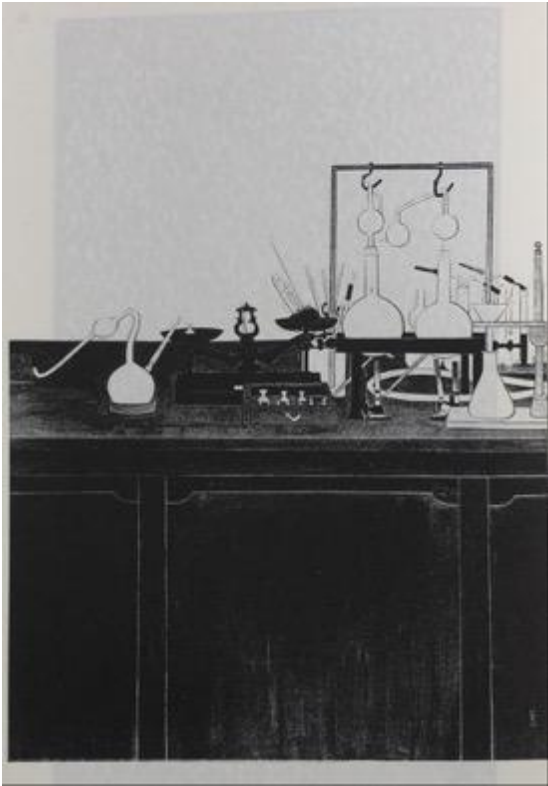


Figure 4. 19 Ochiai Rōfū, *Interior Still Life B*, 1933
Blue Dragon Society Catalog



Figure 4. 20 Itō Seichi, *Crane*, 1934
Blue Dragon Society Catalog

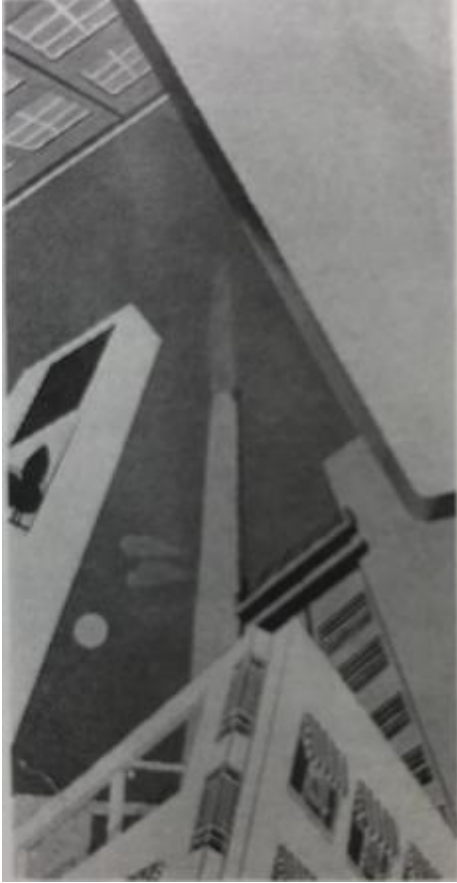


Figure 4.21 Higuchi Hideo, *Midday in the City*, 1935
Blue Dragon Society Catalog

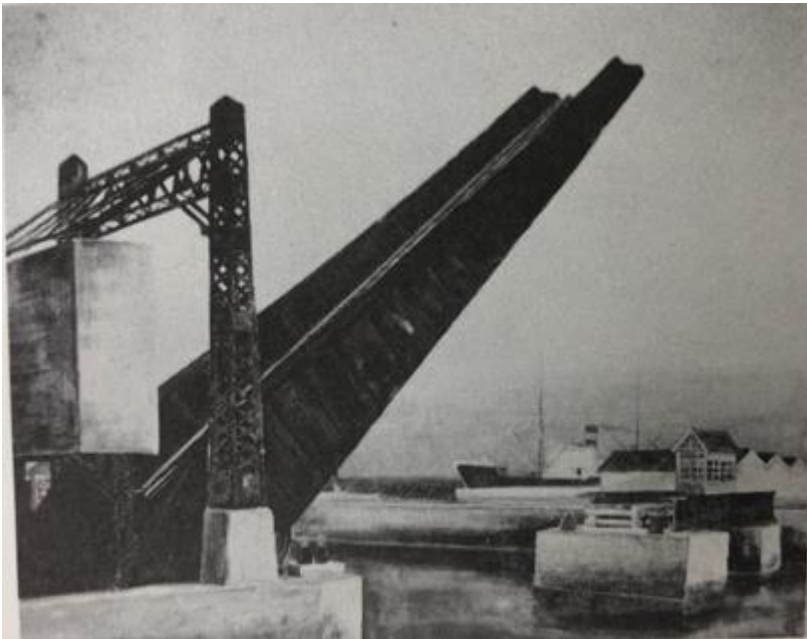


Figure 4.22 Kubota Zentarō, *Drawbridge*, 1935
Blue Dragon Society Catalog

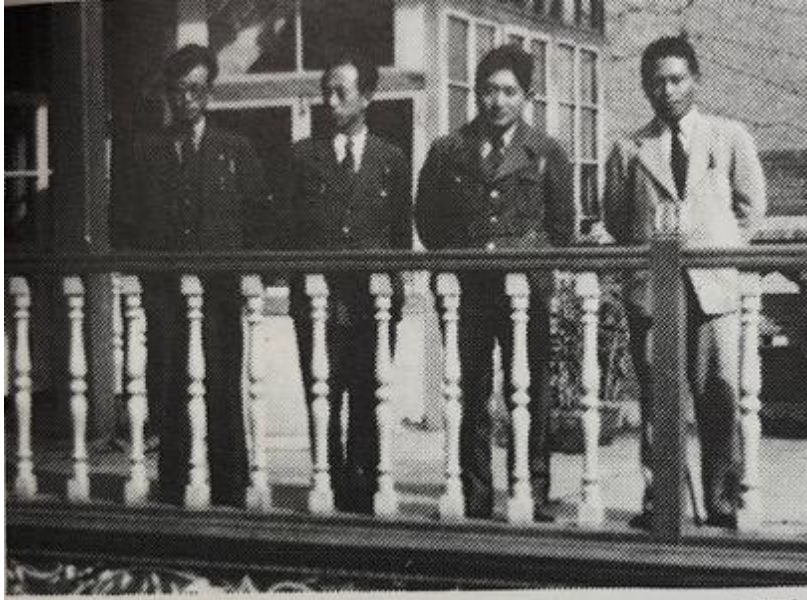


Figure 4. 23 Fukuda and Yoshioka Dalian with Kai Mihachirō (c. 1938-9)
Kai Mihachirō-ten Catalog

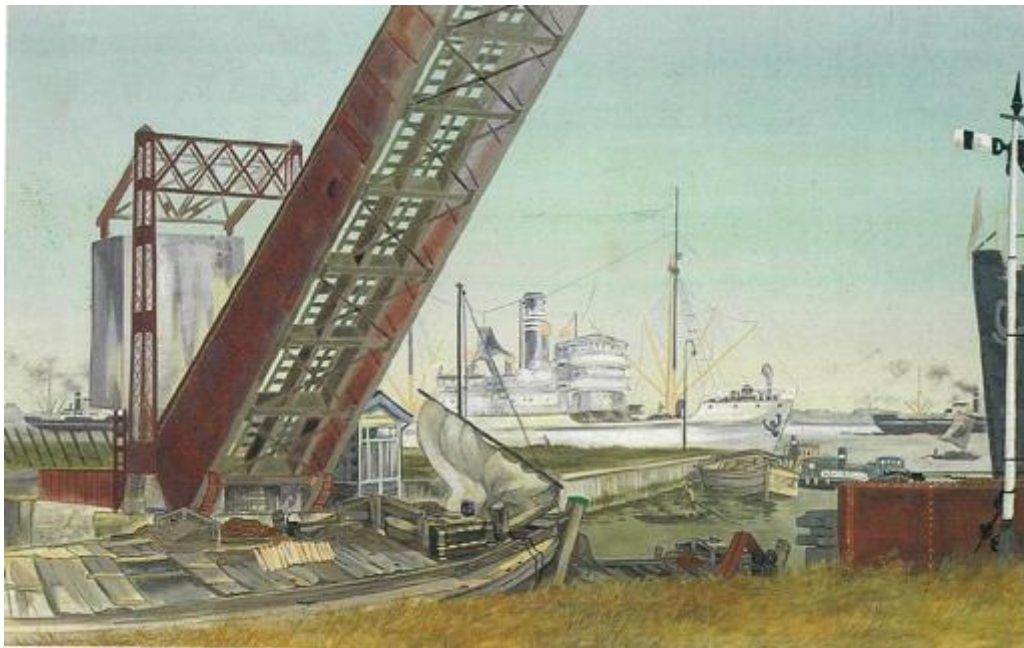


Figure 4. 24 Yamaguchi Kichisaburō, *Shibaura*, 1936
Yamatane Art Museum



Figure 4. 25 Hidaka Kenzo, *Spring Light*, 1938
Manchukuo Art Exhibition Catalog (1938)



Figure 4. 26 Kawabe Masahisa, *Mechanism*, 1927
Itabashi Art Museum



Figure 4. 27 Machine-Age Exposition, 1928
Machine-Age Exposition Catalog

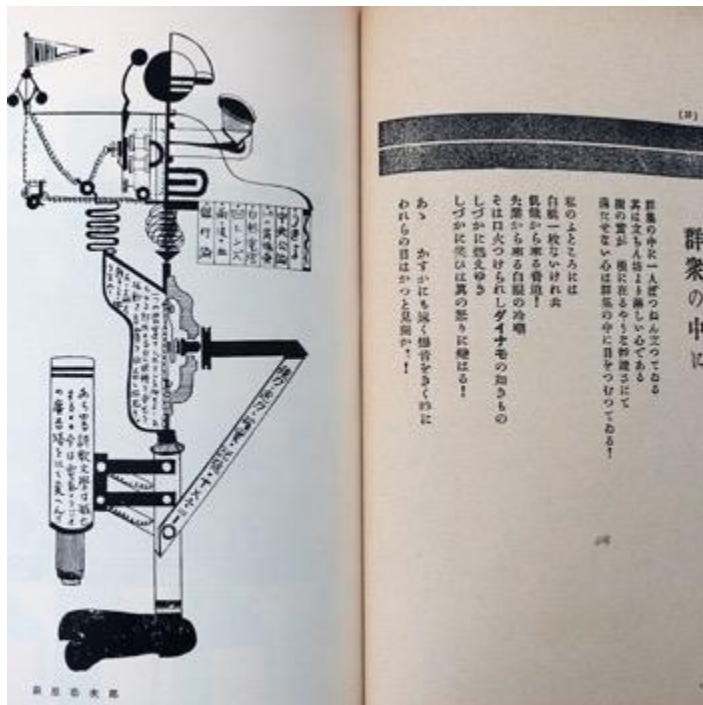


Figure 4. 28 Hagiwara Kyōjirō, untitled drawing in *Shikei Senkoku*, 1925



Figure 4. 29 Louis Lozowick, *Above the City*, 1932
Machine-Age Exposition Catalog



Figure 4. 30 Yanase Masamu, *Senki (Battle flag)*(Jan. 1930)
Yanase Masamu *zenshū*



Figure 4. 31 Koga Harue, *Sea*, 1929
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

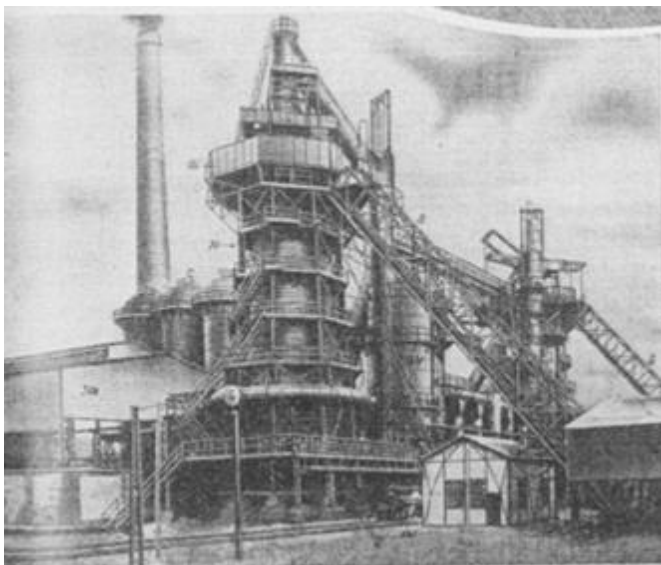


Figure 4. 32 Wissen und Fortschritt (Oct.1927)
Nagata Ken'ichi "Koga Harue's Sea (1929) and "Soluble Fish""



Figure 4. 33 Itagaki Takao, *Exchanges between Machine and Art*, 1929



Figure 4. 34 Itagaki Takao, *Chūo Kōron* (October 1931)



Figure 4. 35 Moholy-Nagy, manuscript *Dynamic of the Metropolis* (1921–1922)

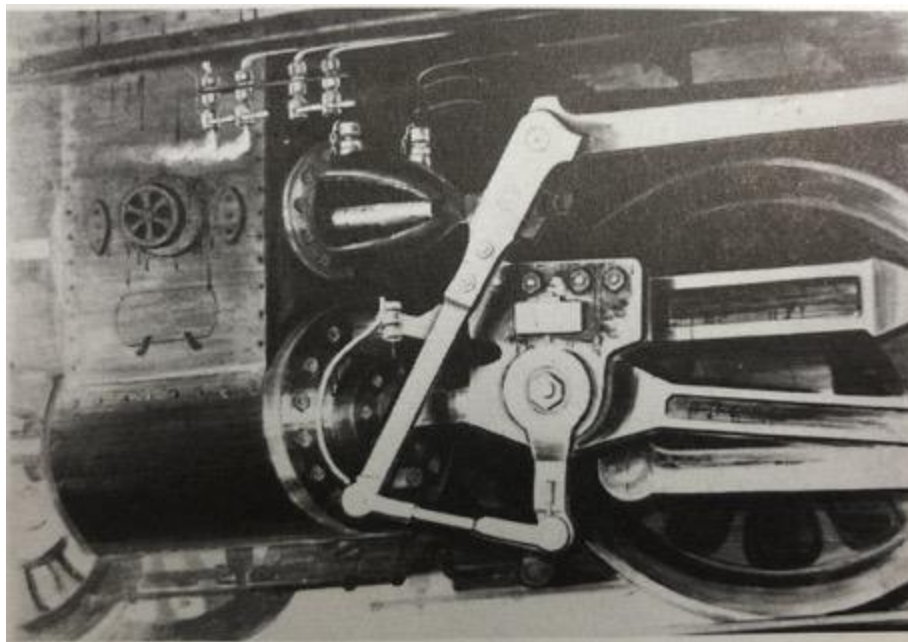


Figure 4. 36 Kusunogi Hakko, *Composition*, 1937
Blue Dragon Exhibition Catalog

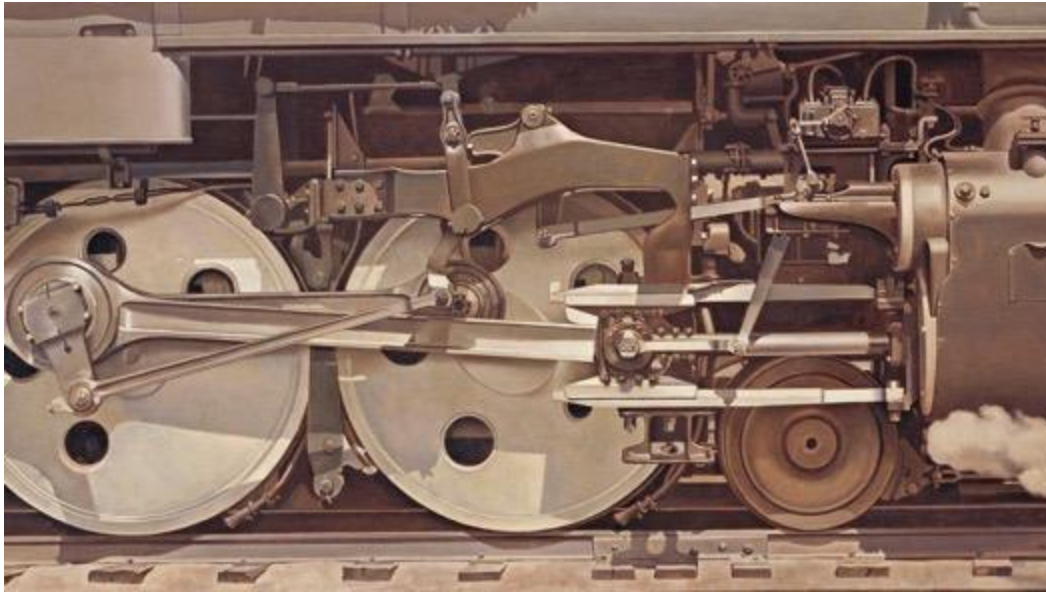


Figure 4. 37 Charles Sheeler, *Rolling Power*, 1939
Smith College Museum of Art



Figure 4. 38 Yamaoka Ryōbun, *Gasolin Scene*, 1932
Blue Dragon Exhibition Catalog



Figure 4. 39 Carl Grossberg, *Berlin AVUS*, 1929
Private Collection

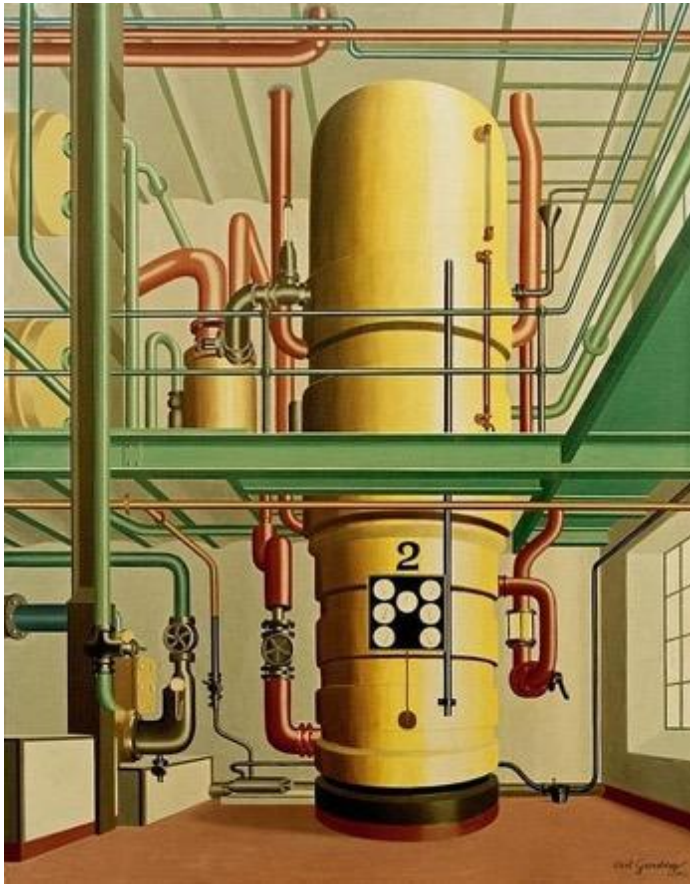


Figure 4. 40 Carl Grossberg, *Yellow Boiler*, 1933
Von der Heydt Museum



Figure 4. 41 *Mizue* (April 1938)



Figure 4. 42 Xinjing, colorized photo postcard leaf, c.1937
Private Collection



Figure 4. 43 Suihō Dam late 1930s
Private Collection

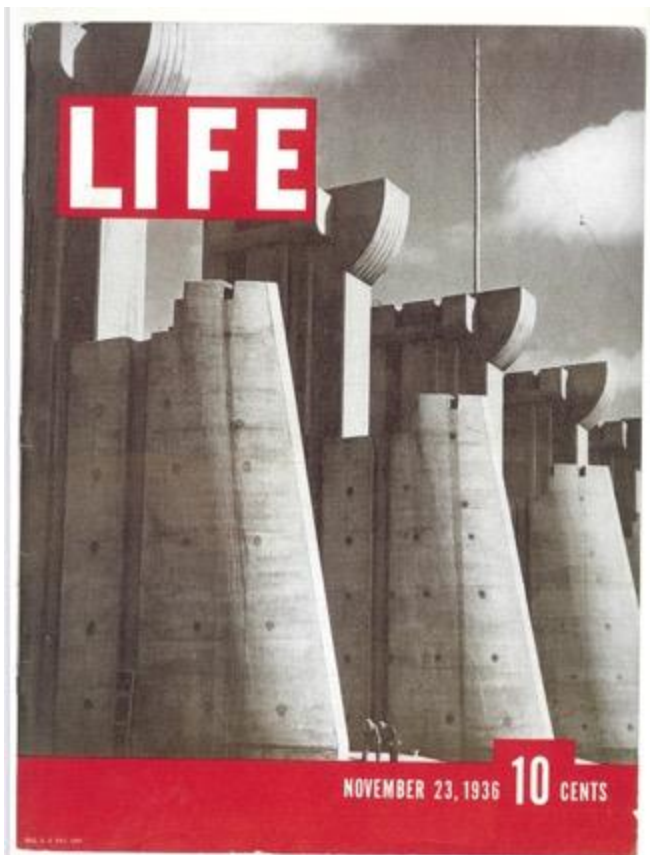


Figure 4. 44 Margaret Bourke-White's *Fort Peck Dam, Montana* (Nov. 1936)
Life Magazine



Figure 4. 45 Suihō hydropower turbine, 1940
Toshiba Mirai Kagakukan



Figure 4. 46 Charles Sheeler, *Splendid Power*, 1939
Dallas Museum of Art

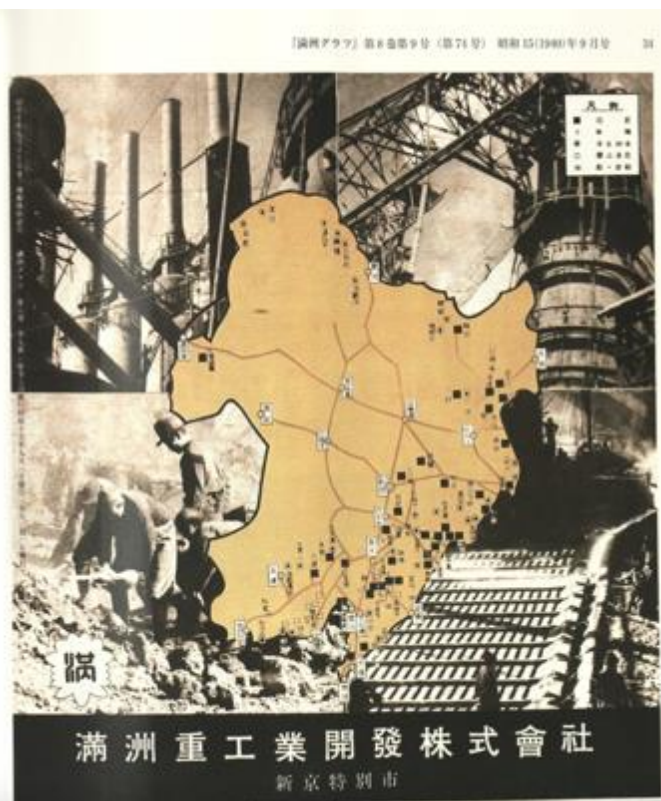


Figure 4. 47 Mangyō Advertisement, *Manshū grafu* (Sep.1940)



Figure 4. 48 New year's postcard with Betty Boop, c. 1937
Private Collection



Figure 4. 49 SMRC Asia Express poster, the mid-1930s
Kurita Collection, Nagoya



Figure 4. 50 Dōwa Automobile Company advertisement, 1938



Figure 4. 51 the Manchuria Aviation Company “Yunkas” c. 1939
Kurita Collection, Nagoya



Figure 4. 52 Fuchikami Hakuyo, *The Sunset*, 1930
Manshū Shashin Nennkan



Figure 4. 52 the Manchuria Chemical Industry Company, *Manshū Gurafu* (Sept. 1936)

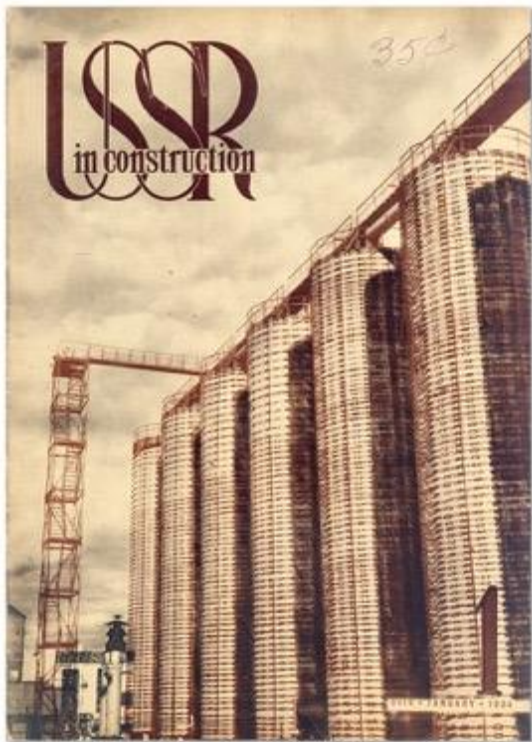


Figure 4. 54 U.S.S.R. in Construction (Jan. 1934)

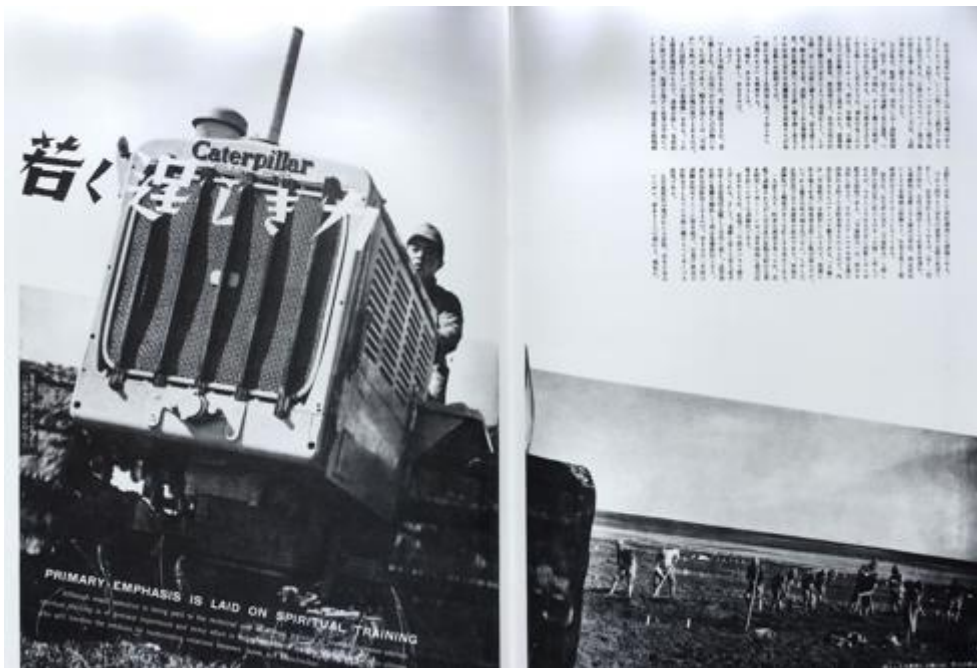


Figure 4. 55 “Young and Strong Power,” *Manshū gurafu* (June 1938)



Figure 4. 56 Kawasaki Hoshiro, *Frontier*, *Manshū gurafu* (June 1937)

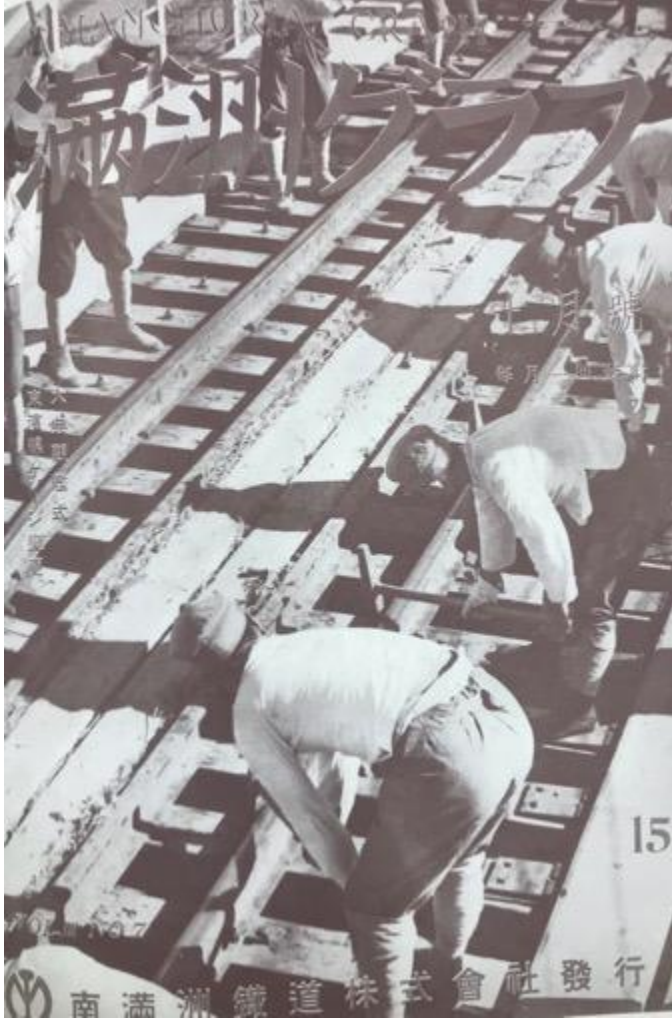


Figure 4. 57 Fuchikami Hakuyo, *Manshū gurafu* (Oct.1939)



Figure 4. 58 “Precision Technology in Northeast China,” *Tairiku Gakkan* (Jan. 1942)

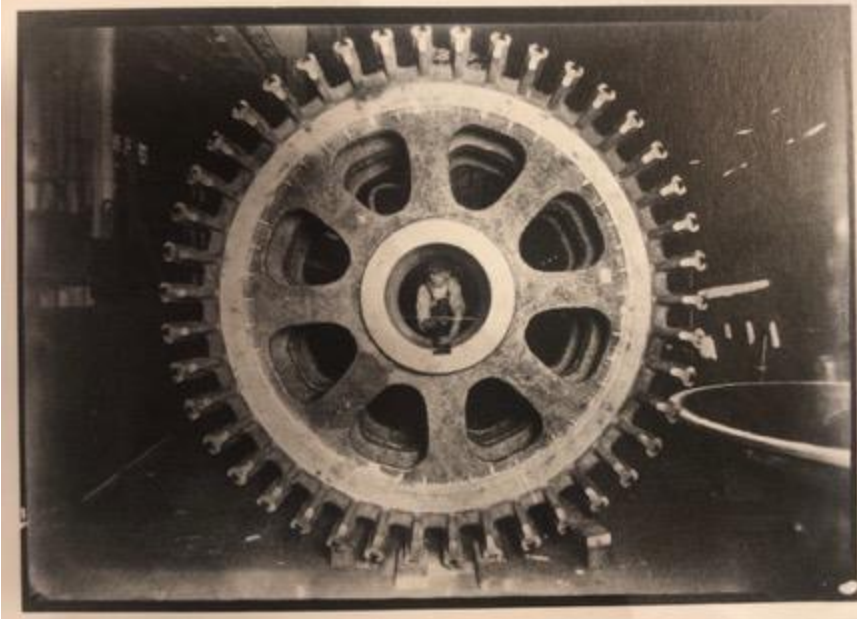


Figure 4. 59 Lewis W. Hine, *Heart of the Turbine*, 1930
Machine Art in the Twentieth Century

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