

Fujishima Takeji's Orientalism : An Elliptical View of China, the West, and the Great Kanto Earthquake

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1. Focus on *Orientalism*

Orientalism (Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation, fig. 1) by Fujishima Takeji (1867–1943), first shown in the 5th Imperial Arts Academy Exhibition (Teiten) of October 1924, has in previous research and criticism been positioned as one of the artist's most significant oil paintings of the 1920s, or of the Taisho Era (1912–1926). It is always featured in retrospectives and reproduced in nearly every book of Fujishima's work. Much has been written on it already, and it might seem there is little more about it to discuss. However, in this paper I would like to re-examine the significance of this work on the occasion of its being acquired by the Ishibashi Foundation in 2019 and displayed in a gallery of the Artizon Museum.

First, as to the picture itself: it is a half-length portrait in profile of a woman in Chinese costume. It is firmly grounded by the strong image of the woman's face seen from the side, her hair tied back behind her head. The woman's intelligent gaze is directed far outside the picture, and there is no gloom her expression, rather she seems to cheerfully celebrate health of the mind and body. She holds a fan in her hands. In the background on the left, four characters of a Chinese *duilian* couplet are fully or partially visible. Besides the poem's characters, the background is smoothly filled in with a deep maroon, and no other subjects are depicted.

The woman's clothing is clearly Chinese, but unlike what is known as a "China dress" in present-day Japan, the collar is centered and not standing. It has been pointed out that this is in line with the Han Chinese style, rather than that derived from the *qipao* of the Manchu people. While the lower half of her body is not visible, it is evident that she wears a loose one-piece garment that does not fit snugly around the waist. The garment's base color is dark blue, with a brilliantly colored pattern of large petals thought to be peony. Vermilion and white are applied to the petals effectively but without overstatement, and large, bold brushstrokes give the picture as a whole a rich, lively quality.

The fan in her hands is decorated with a painting of lotus and other summer flowers, which Itakura Masaaki has described as "a flower-and-vegetation painting of the Shanghai School (a literati group active in Shanghai at the end of the Qing dynasty [1636–1912])," carefully executed with thin brushstrokes. This delicate brushwork contrasts with the energetic and unhesitant rendering of the clothing pattern, reminiscent of the Nihonga (modern Japanese-style painting) Fujishima was producing around this time. The model holds the dark brown handle of

the fan in both hands, but the right wrist is placed lower than the left, a position that would not be possible in reality. It seems the artist was determined to depict the back of her right hand: Fujishima's enthusiasm for painting the hands of female figures is consistent from his early work onward. The ring on the pinky of her right hand appears to have been carved from seashell, with a pearly luster softly reflecting her skin tone. Her fingers and palms are painted with a high degree of finish and no visible marks of the brush.

Let us examine the entire outline of the woman's figure, starting at the bottom. The clothed abdomen and chest are boldly rendered, with traces of contour positioning left visible. This can be said to correspond to the brushwork of the clothing's pattern. By contrast, the lines of the exposed body starting at the nape of the neck are extremely delicate. From the throat to the chin, nostrils, bridge of the nose, eyelids, and forehead, the most complex shapes in this painting are depicted with confident and definite linear strokes that do not show the remnants of painterly struggle. The head, with the skull's form clearly visible due to the hair being tied neatly back, is modeled with moderate grayish highlights on the hair and is designed to blend in with the picture as a whole. The hair is not pitch black, as can be seen by comparison with the black that borders the poem in the background. Examination of the collar reveals that despite the sumptuous pattern, the Chinese garment is thin and almost insubstantial. This means that the contours of the clothed body blend smoothly, and almost without interruption or curves, into the contours of the flesh from the nape of the neck upward.

The neck and face are finished with the utmost care. Light from the right, outside the picture, causes the model's facial expression to glow, while there are faint shadows under the chin and around the ears. However, the approach Fujishima used to render these shadows is almost imperceptible to the naked eye: the difficulty he must have incurred in applying the final polish is completely concealed. Nonetheless, the flesh is not flattened but has a sufficient sense of volume and presence, and the figure gives the impression of actual physical presence.

The deep maroon background is applied with careful smoothness, but I can see irregular undulations around the top of the forehead, roughly the same size as the brushstrokes in the clothing's pattern of petals. Here I will just note that future optical research may bring new discoveries. Gold paint is used only for the signature on the upper right and the characters of the poem, creating a Chinese or Oriental feel. The black border of the poem runs along the left edge of the picture, and this

black has the effect of dramatically tightening the picture as a whole.

In an interview in an art magazine six years later, in 1930, Fujishima made the following statement about this painting. It is well known and invariably quoted in discussions of the work.

I showed *Orientalism* and *Amazon* in the 5th [Teiten] Exhibition. *Orientalism* shows a woman in profile wearing Chinese costume, and for me this was a bit of a breakthrough. In the Italian Renaissance era there were many portrayals of women in profile. When I saw the paintings of Piero della Francesca, Leonardo da Vinci and others at the museum in Milan, they seemed imbued with a tranquil Oriental spirit, and I never tired of gazing at them. I took particular interest in Francesca's profiles with their simplified brushwork. Chinese costume is well suited to such depictions, and around that time I was actively collecting Chinese women's clothing, accumulating up to fifty or sixty garments. However, even if these ingredients are prepared, the trickiest thing is finding a Japanese woman with a beautiful profile. They may look just fine from the front, but when turned to the side, their beauty is diminished by half. So, when I did find a suitable model, I was brimming with enthusiasm to paint.

I was not necessarily motivated by a desire to paint a Chinese model, rather, I wanted to produce an image of classical Oriental beauty with a Japanese woman as a model. The desire to create an Oriental version of those Renaissance profiles — this is enough to explain my motivation. I sought to make full use of Western painting materials to create something with an entirely non-Western flavor. I am thoroughly indifferent to customs and furnishings of historical periods: modern painting does not require such validation. At the same time, it has been my long-standing assertion that concepts such as Oriental or Occidental can be dispensed with. My goal was to work with a readily available Japanese model and simplify the picture to the greatest possible extent, with the most economical use of line and color. Inconsistent attempts to give paintings historical or regional authenticity are just a mark of poor workmanship. I always strive to devote myself purely to pictorial effects that transcend time and place.²

This is an exceptionally thorough explanation from Fujishima, who rarely spoke in depth about his own work. It also contains information that only the artist could have provided, such as the fact that he collected 50 to 60 articles of Chinese clothing for a model to wear. While modest, the phrase "a bit of a breakthrough" evinces firm and determined confidence.

Viewers at the time of the work's first exhibition noted its fusion of Italian Renaissance style and Chinese flavor. For example, Osumi Tamezo (1881–1961), who studied at the Sorbonne University Department of Archeology, wrote that "Fujishima's *Orientalism* can be seen as a Renaissance woman dressed in Chinese costume. Herein, perhaps, lies the significance of the artist, who is from the Orient himself, giving it the title *Orientalism*."³ In the same exhibition Fujishima also showed *Amazon* (Iwasaki Museum of Art), a female figure in a swimsuit on horseback on a beach, and the thematic and

stylistic disparities between these two works are striking. All of the critiques at the time focused primarily on one of the two works, hinting at critics' befuddlement at the artist's versatility.

A year and a half later, in May 1926, Fujishima exhibited *The Orchid* (fig. 2), portraying a woman in profile in Chinese costume, at the 1st Prince Shotoku Memorial Art Exhibition. In October of the following year, he showed his third variation on the same theme, *Profile of a Girl*, at the 8th Teiten. The three half-length portraits in profile of women in Chinese costume, which he unveiled one after the other between 1924 and 1927, represented the culmination of his work of the 1920s, and have been regarded as a milestone he reached before taking his next step as a landscape painter in the 1930s.

Based on the artist's recollections quoted above of the first of these works, *Orientalism*, and the results of studies of Orientalism and postcolonialism since the 1980s, this group of portrayals of women has been loosely critiqued as follows: they clearly represent a form of Japanese Orientalism expressed by Fujishima, who returned to Japan after spending the second half of the 20th century's first decade in Europe and then traveled to the Korean Peninsula and deepened his interest in East Asia, in which an exoticized Western vision of the Orient intersects with Chinese cultural traditions that strongly permeated Japan since pre-modern times, and the political and cultural relations between Italy and France, whose status had been reversed since modern times, are superimposed on those of China and Japan. I have almost no objection to this easily understandable schema built on the discussions accrued thus far. However, I suspect that to cleave too closely to the meaning of what the artist himself described as "a bit of a breakthrough" is to lose sight of certain things that do not fit into the simplified interpretation above.

From here on, this paper will take a deliberately aggressive approach to expanding interpretation with multiple perspectives, and endeavor to provide glimpses into the mental and spiritual landscape of Japanese creative figures in the 1910s and 1920s. The writer Tanizaki Junichiro (1886–1965) will be a central element of this discussion. I will briefly outline how the two creators, while they were 19 years apart in age and developed their styles at different times, both consistently embraced aesthetic refinement, and while actively incorporating Western influences, at times showed a pronounced taste for things Chinese. Furthermore, when they developed and indulged in this *chinoiserie*, they were actually living in close proximity. Tanizaki moved many times throughout his life, but from March to December 1918 he lived in 10 Komagome-Akebocho-cho, Hongo-ku, Tokyo, which is today in 2-chome, Hon-Komagome, Bunkyo-ku. Fujishima moved in 1904 from Nishikata-machi, Hongo-ku to 12 Akebono-cho, Komagome, and in September 1910 after coming back from Europe, built a studio near this residence in 15 Akebono-cho. Kobori Shiro (1902–1998) wrote that it was "60 or 70 meters away."⁴ Fujishima spent his time back and forth between 12 and 15 Akebono-cho every day, except the once or twice a week he taught at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and when teaching at Kawabata Painting Academy in Kasuga-cho or engaged with other public affairs, business trips and personal travel. There is no way these two men, such prominent figures on the artistic and literary scenes, could have not known each other's names

and styles. At this time Tanizaki, Sato Haruo (1892–1964) who lived in Komagome-Shinmei-cho (present-day Honkomagome 4-chome), and Akutagawa Ryunosuke (1892–1927), residing at 435 Tabata, Takinogawa-machi (present-day 1-20 Tabata, Bunkyo-ku), frequented one another's houses on foot. Hereafter I will refer to this time as Tanizaki's "Akebono-cho period."

Although it was only nine months, could Fujishima and Tanizaki have failed to cross paths? Empirically speaking, no evidence of contact between Fujishima and Tanizaki can be found. However, there were people in the vicinity who seem to have been connected to both, and indeed they had many mutual acquaintances in the art and literature worlds. While ascertaining these connections one by one, I will attempt to explore the mentality of Japanese artists from 1900 through the 1920s, with *Orientalism* representing just the tip of a greater iceberg. A planar curve surrounding two focal points (that never intersect on this plane), such that for all points on the curve the sum of the two distances to the focal points is a constant, is known as an ellipse. The elliptical curve with the two focal points of Fujishima and Tanizaki was complex and multi-layered, and from here on we will take a plunge into this world of many strata.

2. Fujishima Takeji and Kinoshita Mokutaro

Fujishima recalled that he "collect[ed] Chinese women's clothing, accumulating up to fifty or sixty garments." As far as is known from his exhibited works, his first portrayal of a woman in Chinese costume produced in the studio was *Perfume* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo), shown at the 9th Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (Bunten) in October 1915. The last was the 1928 *Profile of a Girl* mentioned above. The results of his Chinese clothing collecting were certainly put to effective use over 14 years of oil painting. It is thought that most of the purchases were made by Fujishima himself in Japan, such as in Yokohama Chinatown, but the facts are not clear. However, valuable information does exist. There are three letters from Fujishima requesting the purchase of Chinese women's clothing which were sent to Kinoshita Mokutaro (real name: Ota Masao, 1885–1945), a doctor and writer who lived in Mukden (present-day Shenyang) at the time. One of them is dated May 20, 1917.⁵ Near the top it reads "We have not met since then, and a long time has gone by," and one wonders what "since then" refers to, but it is clear that the two had not seen each other for a long time. After graduating from the Medical School of Tokyo Imperial University, Mokutaro was on the faculty of that school's Department of Dermatology, but in September 1916 he was dispatched to Mukden at the age of 31 to serve as Professor of Dermatology at the Medical College of South Manchuria and concurrently as head of the Dermatology Department at Mukden Hospital. To prevent Mokutaro from feeling overwhelmed by the sudden request in his letter, Fujishima, 18 years his senior, was very careful to list four specific things he was looking for. Interestingly, he also notes "I too am deeply interested in things Chinese and have wanted to visit China for many years."

1. Not very expensive
2. Clothing for younger women

3. Unlined overgarments (I have the feeling Manchurian garments tend to be long. I would be grateful if there was a shorter overgarment)
4. Not only old-fashioned clothes, but also modern clothes are acceptable. The point is for it to look good in a painting, to be neat and trim but also have an Oriental flavor

Mokutaro kept a diary for more than 40 years, but much of it has been lost or burned in earthquakes and wars. It is unfortunate that nothing remains from the time when he was interacting with Fujishima. However, it seems that after receiving the letter Mokutaro went out to second-hand clothing stores and so forth right away, and sent a reply to explain what he had found, illustrated with sketches, and confirm whether what he saw was to Fujishima's taste. Fujishima's second letter to Mokutaro is dated July 3, 1917.⁶ Fujishima detailed what he is seeking even more specifically here.

- The shape should be fairly simple and clear, the sleeves narrow so the skin tends to be exposed when the body moves
- Pattern should consist of embroiderey on the collar, cuffs, etc., but not be too opulent all over
- I would like to have two colors, dark and light. The dark one should be deep violet or deep green, the light one something like celadon or pale red

The two letters above were published in 1984, but Kojima Kaoru later found and published a third letter from Fujishima, dated November 3, 1917, among the Mokutaro-related materials in the collection of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature.⁷ It is a letter thanking Mokutaro for arranging to mail the Chinese clothing purchased in Mukden to an acquaintance in Tokyo who was to hand them over to Fujishima, who contacted him after hearing this from said acquaintance. Fujishima also wrote that he wanted to pay for the clothing purchase, and asked to be informed of the cost. He went on to write that if Mokutaro found more contemporary women's clothing, "the color like that of celadon or a bit lighter, and for summer," he hoped to purchase more.

A painting by Fujishima titled *Profile of a Girl* was reproduced as a color plate in the magazine *Chuo Bijutsu* vol. 4, no. 2 (February 1918) (fig. 3). The model wears a deep violet Chinese garment, which Kato Yosuke notes may be among the Chinese clothing Mokutaro was involved in purchasing.⁸ If Fujishima received the shipment in November and worked on the painting through December, it would have been finished in time for the February issue of the magazine. *Profile of a Girl* was his first half-length portrait in profile of a woman in Chinese clothing, at least among those surviving in image form, and this was six years before *Orientalism*. Unfortunately, the painting's whereabouts after its publication in the magazine are unknown, and it is not known whether it survives today. The outfit is sparsely decorated, showing a difference from the artist's taste in the mid-1920s.

Why was Fujishima able to make such an abrupt request, which might be troublesome for Mokutaro? And why did Mokutaro respond immediately and fulfill this request? In fact,

Fujishima appears several times in Mokutaro's diaries. These diaries are far from easy to read, being written in a mixture of German, French, Japanese, English, Japanese romanized with the Hepburn system and Japanese romanized with French pronunciation rules, and containing many memoranda listing people's names and vocabulary words. Fujishima first appears on February 7, 1910.⁹ On this day, an event called Pan no Kai (the Pan Society) was held at Sanshu-ya in Hyotan-jinmichi, Nihonbashi-odenma-cho.

Pan no Kai was a loosely organized roundtable of like-minded young creators — poets affiliated with the literary magazine *Subaru* such as Kitahara Hakushu (1885–1942), Kinoshita Mokutaro, Nagata Hideo (1885–1949), Yoshii Isamu (1886–1960), and artists running the art magazine *Hosun* such as Ishii Hakutei (1882–1958), Yamamoto Kanae (1882–1946), Morita Tsunetomo (1881–1933), and Kurata Hakuyo (1881–1933) — who gathered nearly every month. In addition to these two magazines, participants often included theatrical figures and literati associated with *Shirakaba*, *Mita Bungaku*, *Waseda Bungaku*, and *Shin-shicho*, and rather than espousing any particular movement or ideology, it was a place where young people in their twenties and thirties reveled over drinks. Personal connections made at these events proved useful in various situations thereafter. The first Pan no Kai was held on December 15, 1908 at the restaurant Daiichi Yamato at Yanokura-gashi on the right bank of the Sumida River. Mokutaro was in charge of securing this venue. He and his comrades were particular about places where they could satisfy their yearning for European culture to some extent and at the same time enjoy the local Edo atmosphere. Gatherings were subsequently held at Eitai-tei, Sanshu-ya, Matsumoto-ro in Hibiya Park and elsewhere, but the group eventually lost momentum, and its last gathering was evidently on February 10 at Sanshu-ya. The “great gathering” on November 20, 1910 at Sanshu-ya is remembered for the “black border incident” (in which a member drew a black border, symbolizing mourning, around a placard on the wall congratulating two members on enlistment in the army, thus drawing criticism as “un-Japanese”), but it was also where Tanizaki Junichiro first met one of his great heroes, Nagai Kafu (1879–1959), an event so thrilling and unforgettable that he repeatedly wrote of it in later years.

Fujishima attended one of these Pan no Kai events on the night of February 7, 1910. It is not clear why Fujishima, noticeably older than the rest at age 42, participated on this occasion. He had come back from Europe to Tokyo for the first time in four years on January 22, only 16 days before. The group Hakuba-kai also organized a homecoming party for Fujishima and Yuasa Ichiro at Miyagawa in Tsukiji, but it was one and a half months later on March 17. As far as I can ascertain, this was the only time that Fujishima took part in Pan no Kai, and on Fujishima's side, there is no surviving record of the context for this event. Meanwhile, Mokutaro's diary entry for that day relates that “Mr. Fujishima Takeji came to the gathering. *L'Expression des yeux* is *etwas Europaeisch*.” As he always wrote only people's family names in his diary, without honorifics, the styling of “Mr. Fujishima Takeji” conveys the respect Mokutaro, who was then becoming active as an art critic, must have had for Fujishima. The use of French and German, as well as the phrases' contents, indicate how the look in Fujishima's eyes immediately after

his return to Japan conveyed a European impression. Many people wrote of Fujishima's striking good looks, and they clearly made a strong impact on Mokutaro. His diary entry for February 8, looking back on the previous night, says, “This morning I *anschauen* the Pan Kwai last night. I spoke at great length with Fujishima, whom I met for the first time.” Apparently they hit it off right away. Mokutaro called Mori Ogai (1862–1922) the “*maitre* of Sendagi” and Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924) the “*maitre* of Hirakawa-cho,” and frequented their homes, indicating that he had no qualms about associating with respected elders. This is in contrast to Tanizaki's strong tendency to avoid associating with older people, with whom he would have to watch his words and behavior. Tanizaki deeply revered Nagai Kafu, but aside from their heartwarming interactions near the end of World War II, when they had both evacuated to Okayama Prefecture, they did not have a close personal relationship.

Fujishima appears again in Mokutaro's diary on April 2, 1911.¹⁰ On this day there was a dinner with Dr. Ueda Bin as the guest of honor at Ueno Seiyoken. Kitahara Hakushu, Yoshii Isamu, Morita Sohei (1881–1949), Takamura Kotaro (1883–1956) and others were present, and Mokutaro wrote that after the party ended at 9:30 PM, he “drank *café* at Aokido with Fujishima, Yosano, Hiraide, and Gure.” “Yosano” evidently refers to Yosano Hiroshi. Aokido is a *café* in Hongo that appears in the writings of many literary figures. There are hints of the psychological closeness of Fujishima and Mokutaro.

Subsequent diaries are missing from July 1911 to December 1915, and from September 1916 to January 1918. The third time Fujishima's name appears is on April 8, 1920, when Mokutaro was in Mukden. It is just a brief mention of a “Letter from Mr. Fujishima.”¹¹ This was quite probably a letter from Fujishima Takeji, who was not likely to send a mere seasonal greeting, and most likely there was some information he wanted to convey or obtain. One can imagine that after the three letters of 1917 mentioned above, an exchange of letters with substantial contents continued. Alternatively, it may have been a subsequent communication regarding the purchase of Chinese clothing.

In July 1920, Mokutaro resigned from the Medical College of South Manchuria and returned to Japan. Five months later, the Fujishima name appears for a fourth time in the entry for December 31. There is an abrupt note to the effect of “Meeting with Mr. Fujishima: evening.” However, below that it says “Ate dinner again at the Station Hotel and came home at eight o'clock,” so they do not appear to have met that evening. It is unclear whether it means he dropped in on Fujishima unannounced in the daytime but was unable to see him, or whether he planned to visit after the New Year and wrote this note so he would not forget to choose a night. However, Fujishima's name does not appear in surviving, published diaries thereafter. Here, let us note once again that Mokutaro and Fujishima did attempt to make contact while in Tokyo. The following year, in June 1921, Mokutaro departed from Tokyo to study abroad in Europe for three years. This meant he was in Paris at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, which will be discussed later.

3. Tanizaki Junichiro's Experiences of China

While they worked in different genres, Kinoshita Mokutaro and Tanizaki Junichiro were contemporaries who enrolled at the First Higher School and at Tokyo Imperial University at almost the same time. It is not clear when and how they got to know each other, but they certainly must have been well enough acquainted during the Pan no Kai era (December 1908–February 1912). *Subaru*, with which Mokutaro was affiliated, launched in January 1909, and *Shin-shicho* (second series), in which Tanizaki made his literary debut, was launched in September 1910. There would have been plenty of opportunities for these two literary advocates of anti-naturalism to interact. When Mokutaro was living in Mukden, Tanizaki stayed at his home. Mokutaro died in 1945, and the remembrance Tanizaki wrote the following year was called "Mokutaro in the Mukden Years."¹² Tanizaki wrote as follows:

In writing my memories of Kinoshita Mokutaro, what stands out most vividly in my mind are the ten days I spent at his home in Mukden in mid-November 1918... Of course, I was pretty familiar with Mokutaro's scholarship, character and conduct, but it was the first time I had been with him continually for ten days, and I discovered two or three new things about him during my stay. One of them was his gift for languages. I knew that he had studied German and French early on and could read their literature in the original, and I had heard that after arriving in Mukden he had begun studying classical Chinese literature with a Chinese teacher, and at the time was studying the writings of the Taoist master Zhuangzi. However, I had not imagined he would be so proficient in acquiring spoken language that he could converse with Chinese people as fluently as he did.

Tanizaki's stay in Mukden was part of his two-month first trip to China, for which he departed Tokyo on October 9, 1918 and returned on December 11. Tanizaki followed a typical route for a continental tour of the day. From Shimonoseki he took the Kan-Pu Ferryboat to the Korean Peninsula, visited Gyeongseong (present-day Seoul) and Pyongyang, and then arrived in Mukden. After staying at Mokutaro's home, he took the Beijing-Harbin Railway to Tianjin and then to Beijing. From Beijing, he took the Beijing-Hankou Railway to Hankou (present-day Wuhan) in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, then stopped at Mount Lu on the way down the Yangtze River to Nanjing. After visiting Suzhou and Hangzhou, he sailed from Shanghai across the East China Sea and disembarked in Kobe. This route, describing a great triangle, was a standard one developed and established by the tourist industry of the day. Thanks to trusted friends and supporters, Tanizaki enjoyed a series of experiences in various cities that could not be had traveling alone. There are criticisms to the effect that Tanizaki's experience in China only reaffirmed the illusionary image of the country as he wanted it to be, and one might say it satisfied Tanizaki's specific brand of Orientalism. However, even so, it seems there is much that cannot easily be dismissed if we look at the entirety of his work thereafter, including subsequent works that overflow with the taste for things Chinese, and elements that connect to the writing he later produced after

moving to the Kansai region.

Before he left for Mukden, Mokutaro kept up with the latest on Western literature and art, but had a powerful attachment to Edo atmosphere and a keen interest in pre-Edo Japanese culture. After arrival in Mukden, a new vector was added with his sudden immersion in Chinese culture. In particular, he developed a remarkable devotion to the Buddhist art of Datong and Longmen. As Tanizaki related, Mokutaro's proficiency with languages played a role in enabling such interests. Taken along with the fact that Mokutaro did not hesitate to interact with older people he was meeting for the first time, his language proficiency was evidently not simply a skill but also a reflection of his enjoyment and acceptance of new knowledge and insights.

Tanizaki published some fragmentary travelogues after returning to Japan, but they lack precise dates. The passage quoted above about "the ten days I spent at Mokutaro's home in Mukden in mid-November 1918" is obviously erroneous, although 28 years later this is surely unavoidable. Nishihara Daisuke has summarized Tanizaki's approximate itinerary by cross-referencing previous studies.¹³ On October 7, 1918, Tanizaki's farewell party organized by Sato Haruo and Kamiyama Sojin (1884–1954) was held at Maison Konosu, a Western-style restaurant that opened next to Yoroibashi Bridge in Koami-cho 2-chome in 1910. In October 1916 it moved to 12 Minami-Demma-cho 2-chome (present-day 2-8, Kyobashi 2-chome, Chuo-ku, and now the site of the Meidi-ya Kyobashi Store). Tanizaki had frequented the restaurant since it was located in Koami-cho near his family home. He left on an express train from Tokyo's Central Station to Shimonoseki on the October 9, arrived at Mukden around October 17, and stayed at Mokutaro's residence. Mokutaro's diary entry on the 18th says "Went to [Mukden] Castle with Tanizaki," and on the 19th it reads "Went to North Tomb with Tanizaki and Yamashita."¹⁴ It is estimated that Tanizaki left Mukden on or around the 21st. A stay of only four nights or so must have expanded in memory to "about ten days" because it was so exciting for Tanizaki. They went to the theater in Mukden and Tanizaki was evidently disappointed as it did not live up to his expectations, but Mokutaro recommended that he watch authentic Peking opera in Beijing, and when he went there later, he watched the Peking operas *The Monument of Li Ling* and *The Imperial Pavilion* starring Mei Lan-fang, Yu Feng-xiang, Shang Xiao-yun and others, and was powerfully affected. During their five days or so days together in Mukden, did Mokutaro speak to Tanizaki about Fujishima, for whom he had been procuring Chinese clothing from May to November of the previous year? Of course neither of them wrote of it and it cannot be confirmed either way.

Tanizaki traveled to Mukden in the north, Hankou in the west, and Hangzhou in the south, but he was most profoundly impressed by the scenery and cultural products of Jiangnan. It is no wonder that Tanizaki, who was born and raised on the banks of the river in the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo, was drawn to this waterside scenery. He saw and heard much in China, and after returning to Japan, he turned this material into short stories, novels, and plays about the country. Tanizaki felt mentally and physically liberated in China, but hectic times awaited him back in Japan. His wife and children had been staying at his parents' house in Kakigara-cho since June of the previous year,

but after his arrival back in Japan he was constantly in motion once more. Tanizaki attended a “*Shin-shicho Tate no Kai* [Home coming Party of *Shin-shicho*]” at Maison Konosu on January 11, 1919. The next day there was a farewell party for Kamiyama Sojin, an actor departing for the United States, also at Maison Konosu, of which Tanizaki and Sato Haruo were the organizers. Immediately afterward Tanizaki’s father Kuragoro collapsed with a cerebral hemorrhage. It appears that in the days that followed Tanizaki, who had covered his travel expenses with an advance on writing to be published, stayed busy writing in a room in his parents’ home next to the one where his father was laid up. The highly acclaimed short story “A Night in Qinhuai” was written around this time. Tanizaki also assisted Kamiyama Sojin and his wife, who were struggling to put together the funds to travel to the United States. Kuragoro died on February 24. As the eldest son, Tanizaki sold off his parents’ house, and in mid-March he finally settled in at a new house in 10 Komagome-Akebono-cho with his wife Chiyo, eldest daughter Ayuko, younger sister Ise, youngest brother Shuhei, and sister-in-law Seiko. This was the beginning of the nine-month Akebono-cho period.

Naturally, his writing from the Akebono-cho period is notable for frequent Chinese themes. And of course Tanizaki had published China-themed works before his trip. The following is a list of China-related writings, in chronological order:

- “Kirin,” *Shin-shicho* (second series), December 1910
- “Mermaid’s Grief,” *Chuo-koron*, January 1917
- “Xuanzang,” *Chuo-koron*, April 1917
- “The Gourmet Club,” *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, January 5 – February 3, 1919
- “Gabo-ki” (Pleasure Boat, later retitled “Record of Travels in Suzhou,” *Chuo-koron*, February 1919
- “A Night in Qinhuai,” *Chugai*, February 1919
- “Nanjing Kibogai” (sequel to “A Night in Qinhuai”), *Shin-shosetsu*, March 1919
- “Seiji-iro no onna” (later retitled “Seiko no tsuki [Moon on West Lake],” *Kaizo*, June 1919
- “Dreams of Velvet,” *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, November 26 – December 19, 1919
- “Kojin,” [Mermaid], *Chuo-koron*, January – October 1920
- “Su Dongpo, or The Poet on the Lake (A Play in Three Acts),” *Kaizo*, August 1920
- “Kakurei [Cry of the Crane],” *Chuo-koron*, July 1921

Of the above, the works from “The Gourmet Club” onward were written after he traveled to China, and those marked with a circle were completed, or started, in Akebono-cho.

Tanizaki’s first encounter with China was in childhood. Sasanuma Gen’nosuke was among his classmates when he entered Sakamoto Jinjo Elementary School (present-day Chuo-ku Sakamoto Elementary School). Sasanuma’s family ran Kairaku-en, an upscale Chinese restaurant located at 29 Kamejima-cho 1-chome (present-day Nihonbashi-Kayaba-cho 2-chome), and Gen’nosuke became a patron who supported Tanizaki both materially and psychologically throughout his life. Kairaku-en was the original source of the Chinese cuisine that frequently appears in Tanizaki’s work. Also, Inaba Seikichi was among his teachers for four years in higher primary school

(roughly equivalent to present-day late elementary and early junior high school). Inaba had ideas about “combining Wang Yangming School Confucianism and Zen Buddhism with the spiritual philosophy of Plato and Schopenhauer,” and evidently had no qualms about teaching things that “must have been over most of the students’ heads.” According to Tanizaki, he would sometimes write Wang Yangming’s poems on the classroom blackboard and explain them, and carried the Zen text *Shoho Genzo* (lit. “Treasury of the True Dharma Eye”) on his person. The precocious Tanizaki was already writing Chinese-style poetry in higher primary school. Although Tanizaki attended a series of prestigious schools — Tokyo First Junior High School, First Higher School, Tokyo Imperial University — he later praised Inaba, saying “In all my life, I have never had a greater teacher than him, nor one who influenced me so strongly.”¹⁵ Tanizaki had a relationship with China even as a child.

Common to all of the China-themed fiction of the Akebono-cho period are first of all the thick, almost crushing atmosphere; second, the wild carnival of vivid colors; and third, the writer’s endlessly deviant imagination taking flight. In this paper on visual art, let us focus on the colors. In “Seiji-iro no onna” (“A Woman the Color of Celadon”), which was later renamed “Seiko no tsuki” (Moon on West Lake), this celadon color could be called the hidden protagonist. The first-person narrator, who has been dispatched to Beijing as a correspondent for a Tokyo newspaper, finds time during a one-month business trip to Shanghai to visit Hangzhou for the first time for leisure. The first time he sees “the woman the color of celadon” is on a train.

*The profile of the ladylike young woman, sitting with her back to me in backward-facing chair about three meters in front of me, was beautiful and seized my attention right away... Her taste in clothing was also delightful. Amid all the garish, poisonously colored garments, only this woman wore a trim and stylish light overgarment of the color of celadon and white satin shoes, making her stand out like a single scarlet carp of rare hue in a pond full of goldfish. [Italics mine]*¹⁶

Note the mention of the profile of the young woman in a celadon-colored garment. When the narrator arrives at a hotel on the shores of West Lake in Hangzhou, it just so happens that this same young woman is staying in the room next to his, with her brother and brother’s wife. The description of the next morning is as follows.

The young lady’s face looked even more beautiful than when I had seen it on the train the day before. This was no doubt partly because of *the effect on her looks of the pale golden water of West Lake* beyond the railing, rippling with soft waves like glossed silk, and *the crisp air of the autumn morning outside*. *The celadon-colored overgarment and trousers she wore* were just perfectly suited to the scene, and I almost suspected that she had chosen this outfit from among many and put it on to make herself blend in with the scene of the lake. [Italics mine]¹⁷

The young lady, who is eighteen years of age, suffers from tuberculosis and has come to Hangzhou to enter a sanatorium, but she despairs of her future, and that night she swallows a

large quantity of opium and throws herself into West Lake while her brother and sister-in-law are not looking. The narrator, who by chance is alone on a pleasure boat enjoying the rippling waters of the lake, finds her floating on her back peacefully with her hands clasped under the full moon.

The contours of her body were too stiff, like a statue, but it had a human softness because it was soaking wet, and even her bluish, almost black-tinted blood had turned white and clear as if all impurities had been washed away. Now *the celadon color of her satin garment was robbed of its blueness by the bright moonlight, and it was shining silver like the scales of sea bass.* [Italics mine]¹⁸

In all the world's rainbow of colors, Tanizaki fixated in particular on the pale blue celadon of Chinese ceramics, which the Japanese have prized since the Muromachi Period (1336–1573). It may be a coincidence that Fujishima repeatedly wrote of “a color like that of celadon” in a letter to Mokutaro in 1917, but it also points to a sensibility that modern Japanese artists shared in common. Surveying Fujishima's works and visual materials, at least those that survive, we do not find any depictions of celadon-colored clothing, either in *Perfume* (1915) or in his portrayals of women from the 1920s. However, it may have been a color that symbolized a vision of China belonging to a certain era.

Tanizaki wrote from his vivid imagination, but in some cases flights of fancy seem to have roots in fact. “Dreams of Velvet” is a story he abandoned partway through, describing a series of episodes in a splendid mansion on the shores of West Lake, where a foreign couple brings boys and girls of various ethnicities, and keeps them captive as slaves and objects for their sadistic pleasure. When I read it for the first time, my impression was that while it was not uninteresting, it was remarkable that Tanizaki could come up with such absurd tales one after another, and I thought it was just his giving free rein to his imagination. However, Lin Qian-qian wrote that the source of inspiration was a real man named Silas Aaron Hardoon, a British Jew who married a woman of Chinese and French ancestry and had a magnificent villa on the shores of West Lake.¹⁹ This was quite a surprise to me, but Tanizaki has taught me that it is quite natural to turn a specific key from real life and open the doors of the imagination. While a significant number of his works are recognized as failures or substandard, the rich variety of keys that unlocked Tanizaki's imagination is nothing short of astounding.

4. Tanizaki Junichiro and Kon Toko

A discussion of Tanizaki's time in Akebono-cho cannot omit Kon Toko (1898–1977). Tanizaki disliked moving in literary circles and had no interest in being a mentor to younger writers. There is no one who could be called his protégé, but Toko alone can perhaps be called a writer who studied under Tanizaki. Toko was expelled first from Kwansei Gakuin Junior High School and then from Toyooka Junior High School, and arrived in Tokyo in 1915 still undecided as to whether he wanted to be a writer or an artist. He was able to meet Ishii Hakutei with the help of his father Buhei, the captain of a Nippon Yusen ship, and began

taking classes at the Taiheiyogakai Academy in Yanaka-Majima-cho. Toko's memoir *Hanayaka na ragyo* (The Glamorous Nude), serialized in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper in 1976, relates memories of those days. He was evidently dissatisfied from the start with the “academic style,” and after attending for a time, during which various troubles occurred, he abruptly quit after his teacher Nakamura Fusetsu (1866–1943) told him “The legs [on the women you paint] look like Nerima daikon radishes.” A surprised friend chased after him and later recalled that he said, “Yeah, I'll have a look at Okada Saburosuke's studio in Hongo and Fujishima Takeji's class [at Kawabata Painting School] in Kasuga-cho. I'll be like a river sprite and inhabit the place where the water suits me best.”²⁰ Toko did not write of this later, but Egawa Yoshihide found a roster for Kawabata Painting School and noted that he had been admitted on March 4, 1918.²¹ Kawabata Painting School was opened in September 1909 by the Nihonga painter Kawabata Gyokusho (1842–1913), under whom Fujishima had also studied. After Gyokusho's death on February 14, 1913, the name was changed to Kawabata Painting Academy, and a new Western-style painting department was established with Fujishima as instructor. Until then, Fujishima had taught in the Department of Western Painting at Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and also at the Hongo Yoga Academy with Okada Saburosuke (1869–1939). After Fujishima's move to Kawabata Painting Academy, the Hongo Yoga Academy was left in the charge of Okada. This was the context for Toko's parting remark: as preparatory schools for Tokyo School of Fine Arts, these two schools rivaled each other in popularity among painting students at the time. Fujishima is said to have appeared only occasionally, but Toko must have met him several times. From the 1900s through the 1920s, many tried their hands at both art and literature while struggling to decide between the two. Kinoshita Mokutaro, Sato Haruo, and Kon Toko are prime examples of those who eventually chose literature, although Sato had work selected for the Nika Exhibition multiple times.

Sato recalled that he first met Tanizaki in May or June of 1917 when he visited his home in Koishikawa-Hara-machi with Eguchi Kan (1887–1975) and others, requesting that he be one of the organizers of *Rashomon no Kai*, an event celebrating the publication of Akutagawa Ryunosuke's *Rashomon*.²² The event, known as Japan's first-ever book launch, was held on June 27 at Maison Konosu. On the day, Sato delivered a greeting on behalf of the organizers, as Komiya Toyotaka (1884–1966) and others refused to do so. It is known from a photograph taken at the venue that Akutagawa and Tanizaki sat facing each other in front of a long, narrow dining table, with all the attendees lined up behind them. As they had quietly been appreciating one another's work for some time already, Tanizaki and Sato rapidly grew close. Sato recalled:

I had recently parted ways with the first woman I lived with, and begun living with the second. At first we lived in Dozaka and then in Komagome-Shimmei-cho. Tanizaki moved to Akebono-cho. My place was just about halfway between Akutagawa's residence in Tabata and the temporary quarters Tanizaki had moved into. I think if you looked at a map, we would all have been right on the same latitude line. If anything, Tanizaki was closer by. Tanizaki and I got along surprisingly well, thanks in part to this proximity, and in less

than six months we were visiting one another at all hours. Sometimes the two of us visited Akutagawa together.

Various incidents later occurred and Tanizaki and Sato's relationship became complicated, but this Akebono-cho period was the time of their most carefree and enjoyable interaction. Toko first met Sato, and in the fall of 1918 he met Tanizaki for the first time at Sato's house in Komagome-Shinmei-cho. It seems that this was just before Tanizaki's aforementioned trip to China. Toko wrote of it as follows:

That day, on the second floor overlooking the cemetery, I did an impression of Mei Lan-fang that impressed Sato Haruo (or rather made him clutch his belly with laughter). Suddenly a short, stocky man wearing a black soft felt hat and a brown striped Yuki pongee kimono burst into the room. Right on his heels, a girl bounded in like a hind leg of an ewe, pulling up her hair, and sat next to Sato Haruo. I felt a bit ashamed and clammed up. I was introduced and learned that the man was Tanizaki Junichiro and the young woman was named Miss Seiko. Afterward, I learned that they were calling me "the Japanese Mei Lan-fang" around the Tanizaki house. While looking at the face of this famous Satanic master from the side, I felt I could paint any number of paintings based on the contours concealed inside his face...²³

Mei Lan-fang (1894–1961) was one of the most famous Peking opera performers of the 20th century, specializing in women's roles, and was devoted to modernizing the genre. As mentioned earlier, Tanizaki had seen Mei perform in Beijing in November, and enjoyed his performance at the Imperial Theater when Mei came to Japan in early May 1919. Seiko was the younger sister of Tanizaki's wife Chiyo, and later became the model for the titular character in *Naomi*.

Toko subsequently became a frequent visitor to the Tanizaki household, with the title of "part-time private secretary." He seems to have been responsible for fending off aspiring writers who came to meet Tanizaki with their own manuscripts in hand, and accepted these manuscripts in place of Tanizaki who would not have given them the time of day. During this period Toko was engaged in a remarkable range of activities, while also focusing deeply on certain things. He became acquainted with Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), who was a student at the First Higher School, and when Kawabata went on to university, Toko snuck into his classes at Tokyo Imperial University, punning on his own adopted name (applying the kanji characters for "stealer of lectures" rather than the usual "eastern light"). When the sixth series of *Shin-shicho* was launched in February 1921, he was added to the roster of members at Kawabata's strong recommendation. On the visual art side, he interacted with Uenoyama Kiyotsugu (1889–1960), Togo Seiji (1897–1978), Sekine Shoji (1899–1919) and others. He had not given up completely on becoming a Western-style painter, and it is said that he finally tossed aside his paintbrushes after failing to be accepted in the 6th Nika Exhibition in autumn 1919. He made a successful debut as a writer, but after arguing with Kikuchi Kan (1888–1948) of *Bungei-shunju*, he gradually moved away from the literary world and in 1930 became a monk of the Tendai sect at Kinryu-zan Senso-ji Temple Denbo-in.

He returned to writing after World War II. While continuing to engage in religious activities such as propagating Buddhism and serving as head priest of a temple, he vigorously pursued creative activities. Here, we should be particularly thankful for his vivid documentation of memories of the 1910s and 1920s in multiple autobiographical novels. The last of these was *Junikai hokai* (Collapse of the Twelve-storied Tower), which was serialized in 22 parts from the January 1975 to the July 1977 issue of the magazine *Umi*. The title implies that it was intended to continue up to September 1923 and the collapse of Ryounkaku in Asakusa due to the Great Kanto Earthquake, but due to his death (he was hospitalized in June 1977 and died on September 19), the story ends around 1922. After his death, only the already serialized parts were published in book form.

The introductory section of *Junikai hokai* describes Tanizaki at the beginning of the Akebono-cho period, relating that "When I went to assist Tanizaki Junichiro with his move from Koishikawa-Hara-machi to Akebono-cho, I was truly taken aback at how few belongings he had."²⁴ It is said that Tanizaki unhesitatingly sold off all his furniture each time he moved, bought brand-new furniture for his new house, and moved with little more than the clothes on his back. What surprised Toko, and surprises me as well, is that Tanizaki had no library whatsoever. Evidently there was not even a bookshelf or a dictionary in his home. The profound and extensive knowledge of things Eastern and Western, ancient and modern was all held in his mind. Toko also points out that with the possible exception of Sato Haruo, he had no one who could be called a close friend in literary circles.

Unfortunately Fujishima, whom Toko is likely to have come into direct contact with, is not mentioned in this memoir. But it may be quite possible that Toko spoke of Fujishima to Tanizaki. Interestingly from a visual art perspective, it is noted that Tanizaki showed a keen interest in Asakura Fumio (1883–1964) and Hada Teruo (1887–1945), and even possessed a bronze sculpture by Asakura. The following recollection is of the time after Tanizaki moved from Akebono-cho to Odawara.

Odawara was just starting to heat up, in terms of artistic atmosphere. Always ambitious, Tanizaki had Asakura Fumio teach him sculpting, and showed the eager curiosity of a boy about everything. A bronze female torso by Asakura sat on Tanizaki's desk, and as if competing with my own artistic spirit, he told me "When we have a little free time, let's get together and do life drawing from a model." I thought to myself, Tanizaki is the kind of genius who may or may not come along once in a hundred years.²⁵

Toko also happened to get to know Hada Teruo at a friend's solo exhibition when he was in Kobe, and after they had both moved to Tokyo, Toko visited Hada's apartment in Sugamo and they went together to the area around the Junikai building where he was gathering material for his work. Hada's depictions of women evidently had a strong impact on Toko, which he described to Tanizaki:

When I spoke to Tanizaki Junichiro about the painter Hada Teruo, he took a keen interest, and said, "That's a man I'd like to meet. Introduce me sometime." "Please have a look at his works, too."

"Of course I want to see them."

He was writing *Kojin* [Mermaid], a novel set in Asakusa, so when I told him what I knew about Hada Teruo, he took an even greater interest and said, "I'd like to see those lewd drawings of his. If I like them, I might buy some." I then searched for Hada Teruo's whereabouts for a while. First I went to his temporary lodgings near Sugamo Prison, but he had moved quite some time before, and even when I asked around the neighborhood, no one knew where he had gone. Then I met up with some painters, but while I managed to get in some questions about Hada, I could find neither hide nor hair of him.²⁶

No other artists appear in *Junikai hokai*, but the tales Toko told of art seem to indicate that his knowledge of it was quite extensive. Tanizaki welcomed these stories and apparently incorporating them into his work. For example, *Kojin*, which he started writing in Akebono-cho and began to be serialized in the January 1920 issue of *Chuo-koron*, is evidently a work that was interrupted at a turning point of its original narrative concept and set aside for some time, but near the end it suddenly mentions the birthplace of the heroine, the stage actress Hayashi Shinju, saying "Her childhood home was in Sarue in Fukagawa, or somewhere like that."²⁷ This seems to be a bit of foreshadowing by Tanizaki. The place name is likely related to an anecdote he heard about Sekine Shoji, who died at the age of 20 years and two months at his home in Fukagawa-higashi-machi on June 16, 1919, six months earlier. Toko, Kume Masao (1891–1952), and Arishima Ikuma (1882–1974) were present at a farewell ceremony held at the Jugan-ji Temple in Fukagawa-Sarue-cho on June 17. Tanizaki no doubt used similar bits of Toko's chat and small talk in his work. Naturally, Tanizaki was more knowledgeable about the literary world, and what he ambitiously sought out was fresh news and information about the world of visual art. This is most of all implied by the fact that Tanizaki had begun writing works with Western-style painters as main characters, narrators, or key characters right before he got to know Toko.

5. Western-Style Painters in Tanizaki Junichiro's Fiction

Tanizaki also associated with Nihonga painters such as Kaburaki Kiyotaka (1878–1972) and Yamamura Koka (1885–1942), but all the artists featured in his fiction are Western-style painters. In addition, many are graduates or current students of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts Department of Western Painting. He has these characters discuss and debate art theory at length, as they were spokespeople for his own ideas. Fiction by Tanizaki featuring Western-style painters were published in rapid succession starting the year before his time in Akebono-cho. These are listed below, with those marked with a circle being written or started during the Akebono-cho period.

"Ranru no hikari (The Light of Rags)," *Shu*, January 5, 9, and 12, 1918

"Zenkamonu," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 21 – March 19, 1918

"Gold and Silver," *Kuroshio*, May 1918, *Chuo-koron* Periodic

Supplement: "Secrets and Liberation" Issue (Original title "Futari no geijutsuka no hanashi" [A Tale of Two Artists]), July 1918

"The Incident at the Yanagi Bathhouse," *Chugai*, October 1918

○ "Fumiko's Feet," *Yuben*, June – July 1919

○ "Kojin," *Chuo-koron*, January, March-May, August – October 1920

As mentioned earlier, no matter how unfettered Tanizaki's imagination may have been, there was always an initial trigger for each flight of fancy he spun on the page. Toko was among the key providers of such raw material for fiction, but let us turn now to another such individual.

In 1917, the year before he began writing fiction featuring Western-style painters, Tanizaki published "Banshun nikki" (Late Spring Diary) in the July issue of *Kuroshio*. As usual, the dates are suspect, but it is believed to be a barely fictionalized account of events in late April and early May of that year. Of course, despite its being written in a literary style for the reader's benefit, it consists of a series of such episodes of idleness and frivolity it is hard to believe he published them. As his mother suffers from erysipelas (a bacterial skin rash) and his eldest daughter develops a swelling on her neck, Tanizaki goes back and forth between his parents' home and his own home in Koishikawa-Hara-machi, but in between finds plenty of time to play around just as if he were a single man. This is related in what is clearly an exaggeratedly confessional manner. Tanizaki gets up around noon on April 30, and a messenger from the Western-style painter "Mr. K of Shitaya" invites him to play cards. After he finishes eating and hurries over, he finds the regular participants already present and the game in progress. That evening he has a plan to watch Maurice E. Bandmann's musical comedy at the Imperial Theater, so Tanizaki bows out of the card game partway through and goes home, then heads back out to the theater where by chance he meets a group including Yamamura Koka, Takamura Kotaro (1883–1956), and Kinugawa Kujaku (1896–1982), an actress who had been Kamiyama Sojin's mistress. Mr. K, who is moved by the stories Tanizaki tells, gets out a sketchbook. During the intermission Tanizaki and Mr. K discuss summoning one of the chorus girls to a hotel, but Osanai Kaoru (1881–1928) and others put a stop to it. After the play ends, Mr. K wanders off, and Tanizaki dines alone in Ginza before heading home. In a card-playing scene on another day, Iwano Homei (1873–1920) and Takebayashi Musoan (1880–1962) appear and are called by their real names, and it is not clear why only Mr. K is anonymized with an initial. Tanizaki may have refrained from naming him because he was not part of literary circles.

"The Incident at the Yanagi Bathhouse," published a year and three months later, is a short story about Western-style painter Mr. K, who graduated from Tokyo School of Fine Arts and lives in Kurumazaka-cho, Shitaya-ku (present-day Higashi-Ueno 1-chome / 2-chome, Taito-ku), and commits a murder in a public bath while in an abnormal psychological state. Mr. K, who is also the narrator, interestingly describes the steamy room with its naked male bodies: "It was just like a painting by Carrière, and made me feel there were countless illusions floating before me."²⁸ Mr. K had always liked wet and slippery things, and was nicknamed an adherent of the "Slippery School"

in his school days. He seems to be a character crafted by Tanizaki out of the Mr. K in "Banshun nikki."

This Mr. K of "Banshun nikki" is undoubtedly Koito Gentaro (1887–1978). Tanizaki wrote in later years, "[Kamiyama] Sojin often went with me to play cards at Kairaku-en in Kamejima-cho, at Koito Gentaro's place Agedashi and so forth."²⁹ Koito's family ran Agedashi, a restaurant at 20 Ueno Moto-Kuromoncho, Shitaya-ku (present-day 2-13 Ueno, Taito-ku). Facing onto Shinobazu Pond, also known as "Little West Lake" in reference to West Lake in Hangzhou, China, the restaurant opened in Koito's great-grandfather's day, and was popular with male customers on their way back from the Yoshiwara red-light district as it opened early in the morning and also offered bathing. Its famous tofu dishes were well loved by such figures as Mori Ogai and Nagai Kafu. After graduating from Tokyo Junior High School, Koito aspired to become a Western-style painter after seeing Fujishima's *Butterflies* at the 9th Hakubakai Exhibition in autumn 1904.³⁰ The following spring he enrolled at the Hakubakai Institute in Komagome-Akebonocho, where Fujishima taught, to study drawing and prepare for entrance exams. This was half a year before Fujishima departed for Europe. The following year, 1906, Koito enrolled in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts Department of Metalworking. After graduating from this department in 1911, he re-enrolled in the Department of Western Painting. Three years later he took a leave of absence due to diabetes, and never returned to school. However, his oil painting was selected for the Bunten while he was still in the Department of Metalworking, and thereafter he steadily pursued a painting career, primarily showing in the Bunten and Kofukai Art Association exhibitions.

It seems to have been difficult for Koito to leave his parents' house, with its excellent location and free atmosphere in which all sorts of people came and went. Koito continued to spend a lot of time at Agedashi even after becoming economically independent. Mokutaro states in his diary that on September 4, 1918, having come back from Mukden temporarily, he dined at Agedashi with Tanizaki, Nagata Hideo (1885–1949), Kaburaki Kiyokata, and Koito.³¹ Nagata had been active alongside Mokutaro in the literary magazines *Myojo* and *Subaru* and in Pan no Kai. After this meal, Mokutaro stopped by Kiyokata's house, and one wonders what his interaction with the Nihonga painter were like. The meal must have been a meaningful occasion for Mokutaro, who was staying in Tokyo for only four days.

The following October (1919), Koito caused a disturbance. His painting *Mimeguri* was accepted for the 12th Bunten, and this was the seventh time Koito had work in the exhibition. However, at the October 14 invitation-only viewing of the exhibition, he for some reason told Wada Eisaku (1874–1959), one of the judges and his former teachers, that he would like to withdraw the work. Wada did not accept this. At 8:30 AM the following day, October 15, just 30 minutes before the exhibition opened to the public for its first day, Koito went to the venue with a knife and cut up his own work, which was hanging in Room 16. The head of the exhibition, Masaki Naohiko (1862–1940, then president of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts) and Fujishima, also one of the judges, were telephoned immediately. The work is withdrawn and Koito was ordered to repent his behavior until a disciplinary ruling was handed down. The next day's newspapers widely reported the "bizarre

occurrence on opening day." Such exhibition scandals were rare, with the exception of complaints about judgments and obscenity issues. Various newspapers quoted Koito, Masaki, and Fujishima. For example, Koito told *Yorozu Choho*:

Mimeguri, the work I submitted, was actually painted last year. I thought it was good until I submitted it, but on the invitation-only viewing day on the 14th I felt very negative about it. I felt like I had been thrown out onto a battlefield unarmored. I applied for to withdraw it, but because I was not allowed to, I destroyed it. I have no complaint about the review of works. I feel it is difficult for me to make a living as an artist in the future, so I decided to escape from the artist's life on October 15. If this had happened right after the review, people might have misunderstood that I was dissatisfied with the review and that was why I wanted to withdraw the work. That is why I gave up painting and ended up in this position.³²

Fujishima said the following:

I know of Mr. Koito's nature. He is a little emotional and tends to get obsessive about certain things. As is often the case with artists, when he thought he was doing a great job and producing his finest work, but then even minor shortcomings become apparent, he became obsessive, as I mentioned before, and lost his judgment, with these results. Mr. Koito made an irreparable mistake, but I have to sympathize with him on a personal level.³³

Various shades of meaning are evident here: the difficult of saying certain things as someone with responsibility for a public project, his feelings as a teacher who had known the younger artist for 14 years, things he did not want to say because he was an artist himself.

Many of the newspapers took a sympathetic tone toward Koito's "act of artistic conscience," but some criticized it as a publicity stunt. In the end, Koito's actions were deemed an objection to the final selection decision based on the judges' consensus. This incident seems to have been big news at the time. Koito subsequently continued producing work, but did not exhibit for some years. He reappeared on the art scene in May 1926 in the Prince Shotoku Memorial Art Exhibition. Koito never did speak clearly of the incident's context, at least did not make any attempt to set the record straight publicly.

Sixty years after the incident, shortly after Koito's death, Imaizumi Atsuo (1902–1984) told a story he had heard directly from Koito himself. "Koito Gentaro was told by his teacher, Fujishima Takeji, to refrain from showing for a while at the Bunten, which later became the Teiten, and he did not submit work for several years. I had a relatively close relationship with Koito, and decades after the incident, in a public dialogue at the Bridgestone Museum of Art, I frankly if somewhat insolently asked him what had really happened in that case."³⁴ This "public dialogue at the Bridgestone Museum of Art" is unmistakably the 417th Saturday lecture of April 28, 1962, "My Art (Dialogue) 6," Saturday Lecture (Lecturers: Koito Gentaro and Imaizumi Atsuo). Unfortunately, the museum has no record of its contents. Fortunately, Imaizumi wrote about it as follows:

Mr. Koito scrunched up his face and smiled bitterly, as he often did, but replied as follows, noting that until now he had always avoided giving any justifications for the incident: "That was the result of my stupid misunderstanding. On the first day of the exhibition, I was drinking tea at the museum cafeteria with Mr. Fujishima and a young painter, who had just returned from Europe and was also exhibiting at Bunten. Mr. Fujishima, looking in my direction, said there was no excuse for painting such a picture and submitting it to the exhibition. When I asked about it later, he told me he had been talking about the work of the other painter who had just come back from Europe, but at the time I took it as Mr. Fujishima criticizing my painting. That's why I did what I did to it, and I could not justify it even to myself, so since then I've refrained from saying anything that sounds like an excuse. But since you asked about it, I had to tell the truth."

Mr. Koito never revealed the identity of the other painter who had just come back from Europe. I did not want to ask, either.³⁵

It was Fujishima who caused Koito this distress, and it was Fujishima who directed him to "repent," which he did for eight years, and who lifted this directive. This speaks to how important Fujishima, who had originally pointed the way to Western-style painting, was to Koito. After he returned to the painting scene in the late 1920s, Koito exhibited a series of still lifes evoking Chinese Song and Yuan dynasty paintings, and subsequently produced vibrant landscape paintings characterized by bold brushwork, all of which seem to reflect the influence of his former teacher.

When the Bunten incident occurred, Tanizaki was on his way to China and just about to arrive in Mukden, where he would reunite with Kinoshita Mokutaro after they met at Agedashi on the 4th of the previous month. After returning to Japan, Tanizaki must have heard about this incident. An artist's bizarre act of cutting up the work that is in a way his own alter ego sounds like a classic Tanizaki plot, but he did not respond creatively to this. "The Incident at the Yanagi Bathhouse," published in October, the same month as the above-described incident, describes the Western-style painter "Mr. K" stabbing someone at a public bath, and was probably written in August or September. However, "Gold and Silver," a story featuring Western-style painters written shortly before that and published in sections in May and July, was actually a story in which an artist cuts through a painting. The Western-style painter Okawa, who graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and has come back from studying in Europe, attempts to murder another Western-style painter and classmate Aono in the latter's studio out of jealousy toward the acclaim for his talent, and cuts up his Aono's work scheduled for exhibition, *Bedchamber of Matangi*, which depicts the same subject and employs the same female model as Okawa's own work. Aono becomes something like the alter ego of Okawa. Tanizaki may have felt that his story had become a reality, albeit with the details slightly changed, in particular because Mr. K = Koito was involved. Incidentally, the story places Aono's studio west of Mejiro Station, which recalls Nakamura Tsune (1887–1924) and Yasui Sotaro (1888–1955). Tanizaki was certainly aware that the area around Shimo-ochiai was a locus of activity for many Western-style painters in the 1910s.

Eight years later, in 1926, Fujishima allowed Koito to return to the officially sanctioned world of painting. It is significant that the exhibition in question featured Fujishima's *The Orchid* (1926), as Koito received a study for *Profile of a Girl* (1927) (fig. 4), also a Chinese-style female figure in profile, directly from Fujishima in the last years of the latter's life. Now that the oil painting shown in the Teiten exhibiton is missing, the pastel and pencil drawings formerly belonging to Koito have often been presented at exhibitions as valuable examples of Fujishima's work. Later, Koito described the drawing as follows:

Profile of a Girl was from 1927, when he would have been around 60 years old. The same year he produced another oil painting of a woman in Chinese costume seen in profile, and even before that, his well-known *The Orchid* was exhibited in 1926. It seems that at the time he was deeply interested in Italian Renaissance painting, and it seems that he collected beautiful Chinese clothing and hair ornaments to create a series of similar works because East Asia and China in particular was especially suited to the theme.

He worked on *Profile of a Girl* as he wished using all sorts of materials – pencil, charcoal, watercolor, pastel – and we, his fellow artists, particularly value this work. The beauty of the pencil lines on the face is particularly wonderful. Mr. Fujishima also seemed very fond of it, and it was always hanging in his room. When I received this work, I was so happy that for a time I placed it next to my pillow when I slept. It was like when I was a child and could not let go of my favorite toys and picture books until I slept.³⁶

For the purposes of this paper, Tanizaki's most important work featuring a Western-style painter is "Kojin," as he started writing it during the Akebono-cho period and it features Chinese themes. As mentioned earlier, he abandoned it along the way, but results aside, it was an ambitious work that sought to incorporate everything Tanizaki had in mind at that time. It is said to be his work that most remarkably shows the influence of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850). Set in Asakusa, it features a series of episodes related to the actresses, actors, and other parties surrounding Goto Kanji and Fusako, as well as a theater company director and his wife modeled after Kamiyama Sojin and Yamakawa Uraji (1885–1947), who were in the United States at the time. The part that was serialized and published is of considerable volume, but it only describes what happened in the hours from early evening until around 2:00 AM on a Saturday at the end of April 1918. It is a novel that seems to have been abandoned after the groundwork was laid for the story about to unfold. The epigraph is a *wulu lushu* (poem with eight lines of five characters each) containing a reference to *jiaoren* (the Chinese word rendered in Japanese as *kojin*) by Cén Shēn (715–770), a poet of the golden age of the Tang dynasty. *Jiaoren* are merfolk of Chinese legend that weave on an underwater loom and shed pearls as tears. The text refers to "mermaid of this beloved opera, a product of modern Japan," which refers to actresses of the Asakusa opera and also more specifically to Hayashi Shinju (shinju means pearl), the stage name of a lead actress in the story who lives with a couple, Mr. and Ms. Goto. A bizarre anecdote is related, in which the Goto troupe was performing in Shanghai in May of the previous

year when an old Chinese man burst in and shouted that Shinju, then costumed as a beautiful young boy, was in fact his estranged son Lin Zhen-zhu, whose name was written with the same characters, and Shinju fainted, resulting in the cancellation of the play.

However, a more important episode for the purposes of this paper is the lengthy one near the beginning of the story, telling of the Western-style painter Hattori, who lives in Matsuba-cho (present-day Matsugaya 1-chome to 4-chome, Taito-ku) and assists with the creation of the Goto troupe's stage sets, and his friend Minami, another Western-style painter, who has just returned from a one-year stay in China with his father. The two Western-style painters have different ways of thinking, but their interactions are full of intimacy. This is an expression of Tanizaki's own contradictory tastes, transferred onto the characters' personae. In particular, the words of Minami, recently returned from China, strongly reflect the author's experiences in China a year earlier. Elements appearing in other works are scattered throughout, such as the feeling of wide open spaces in the Jiangnan region as seen from the train, and the way Minami recalled Hattori's home and life while walking in the Qinhuai section of Nanjing. Minami recalls his experience in China fondly and looks back on it as follows:

If I had been born in a place like that, how happy I would have been. How quickly my eyes would have opened to the natural world if I had been raised amid this majestic landscape. How deeply my art could have drawn from the well of nature... Minami could not help thinking such thoughts. He felt it was irreversible ill fortune that a person like himself, so devoted to Chinese thought, had not been born in China. And now, smelling the stink of cigar smoke emerging from Hattori's mouth, he felt compelled to wallow in this misfortune all over again. He had already come back from China. Parting from the beloved continent, the progenitor and source of Japan's past civilizations, he was stuck forever as a Japanese in Japan. In front of him was shallow, ugly Tokyo, and not peaceful, meditative Beijing. The difference between these two cities was as jarring as opening a book of dull Kodan, Japanese anecdotes after reading *Arabian Nights*. He did not want to abandon Orientalism in his art, as he was after all Oriental himself. Westernization — half-baked Westernization, at that — had descended like a curse on Japan, the land of his birth, and in modern-day Japan, pure natural was being so destroyed that he did not even know where to look for it anymore. In the scenery of this country, which was innately small and pitiful compared to China, where should he seek for the landscapes painted by Ni Zan and described in the poems of Wang Mojie?³⁷

Minami subsequently tells Hattori that he wants to give up Western-style painting and take up *nanga* (China-inspired Southern School or literati painting):

Hattori said, "You may think you've got to be in China, but I'm plenty happy here in Asakusa."
"It's China for me, it's got to be China. I'm thinking of asking my father to go to China again next year. But it kind of

bothers me that you even mention Asakusa in the same sentence."

"Ha ha ha!" Hattori laughed heartily, the way people do to conceal their embarrassment.

Minami said, "I'll tell you, I'm going to stop oil painting and take up *nanga* from now on. I made up my mind on my trip to China..."³⁸

The essence of the contrast between oil painting and *nanga*, and its metaphorical significance, is revealed as follows. This is a crucial point that reveals the depths of Tanizaki's psyche:

The novel was after all a new art form imported from the West, which did not exist in Japan before the Meiji era [1868–1912], and there were no Japanese novels worthy of the name. Of course there were plenty of second- and third-rate novels, but no true novels, no great novels that stand alongside Hugo, Balzac, Tolstoy and the like could grow except in Western soil. The reason (in his father's opinion) was that Oriental art differed from Western art not only in form, but also in its fundamental spirit.³⁹

For Tanizaki the form of the novel, the underlying framework itself, was an art imported from the West. Tanizaki, who absorbed Western literature and particularly 19th-century French novels, saw a similarity between his own work and that of Japanese painters from the Meiji era onward learning Western-style painting, i.e. oil painting. He unveils an analogy between Western painting, which modern Japanese learned from Europe, and the novel. This is why Tanizaki made Western-style painters rather than Nihonga painters into characters in his novels. Writing about China in the form of a novel meant intermingling East and West. *Nanga* painting is probably a metaphor for East Asian poetic forms such as Chinese poetry, tanka, and haiku. However, Tanizaki did not immerse himself in the world of verse, but stayed in the world of the novel. He never departed from the Western framework. His complex and unstable equilibrium of devotion and dread toward Chinese culture is revealed in his final China-themed story "Kakurei (Cry of the Crane)" (July 1921). His career is similar to the painting career of Fujishima, who occasionally painted and exhibited Nihonga, but remained focused on oil painting.

6. Fujishima Takeji in the late 1910s

The 5th Bunten of 1915 was an important opportunity for Fujishima to resuscitate his career. Fujishima had been drawn into the Bunten versus Nika Association split ongoing since the fall of 1913, and eventually chose to remain affiliated with the Bunten and not join the Nika Association, but refrained from exhibiting in the October 1914 Bunten. The works he presented to the world at the Bunten for the first time in two years were *Sky* (Iwasaki Museum of Art), which depicts clouds rolling up the slopes above Lake Yamanaka where his friend Akaboshi Tetsuma (1882–1951) had a vacation home, and *Perfume* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo), portraying a female figure in Chinese clothes sitting quietly with a snuff bottle on the table in front of her. These two subjects aptly embody his future path forward. Five years after returning from Europe,

Fujishima, a 48-year-old professor at Tokyo School of Fine Arts, was in a position both to draw attention and to fulfill his responsibilities as a central figure in the art world. The following is a list of his works shown in the Bunten and Teiten exhibitions from 1915 through 1924, when he presented *Orientalism*:

- October 1915 9th Bunten
 - Perfume* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) = half-length portrait of a woman in Chinese costume
 - Sky* (Iwasaki Museum of Art) = landscape beside Lake Yamanaka
- October 1916 10th Bunten
 - Tranquility* (Tokyo National Museum) = landscape of Lake Hamana
- October 1917 11th Bunten
 - (Did not submit work)
- October 1918 12th Bunten
 - Smell of the Grass* (private collection) = Italian landscape
- October 1919 1st Teiten
 - Around Campidoglio* (Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka) = Italian landscape
- October 1920 2nd Teiten
 - Morning* (whereabouts unknown)
- October 1921 3rd Teiten
 - Portrait of a Woman* (Woodone Museum of Art) = half-length portrait of a woman in Western clothing
- October 1922 4th Teiten
 - (Did not submit work)
- October 1923
 - (canceled due to the Great Kanto Earthquake)
- October 1924 5th Teiten
 - Orientalism* (Artizon Museum) = half-length portrait of a woman in Chinese costume
 - Amazon* (Iwasaki Museum of Art) = full-length portrait of a woman on horseback on a beach

What *Morning* (1920) looked like is unknown, but reading newspaper reviews of the time, it seems it was a landscape with the morning sun shining through clouds. All the others are imposing, substantial works typical of Fujishima during this period. If we survey this body of work alone, it seems he was steadily following a confident and dignified trajectory, but if we take a more expansive view in line with the gist of this paper, a few things need to be pointed out.

First, he did not exhibit in the Bunten of 1917, the time when he was requesting that Kinoshita Mokutaro purchase Chinese apparel. He must have had some work he was ready to exhibit, of course, but we do not know what it was or why he decided to withhold it. That year he exhibited the landscape *Inland Sea* at the 5th Kofukai Art Association Exhibition in February, which was highly acclaimed in newspaper reviews, many of which note a connection with *Tranquility*, his work featured in the previous year's Bunten exhibition work. His work for that autumn's Bunten was probably going to be another Japanese landscape.

We should note that the paintings exhibited in 1918 and 1919, a time when Tanizaki was focusing on both Western-style painters and Chinese themes in his fiction, were both Italian landscapes, *Smell of the Grass* (private collection) and

Around Campidoglio (Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka). Both are based on sketches made during his stay in Italy (December 1907 – November 1909) ten years earlier. While based on actual scenery, it can be said that both were intended as decorative paintings. While the oil version of *Smell of the Grass* is never exhibited, the watercolor study on which it was based is known. A grassy slope occupies three-quarters of the picture, and in the distance beyond this hill stands a two-story building with white walls and a red roof. Partway up the slope on the left is a tree with its trunk truncated by the edge of the paper, exerting a presence as if glaring at the entire work. What is most memorable here is the fullness of the slope that gradually curves upward from the foreground. Those familiar with *Land Tilled to the Mountaintops* (1938, Ohara Museum of Art), a work of his later years, will see the artist's innate qualities expressed in the volume of the ascending slope. There are no obviously Italian elements, but the scenery differs from that of Japan. Meanwhile, *Around Campidoglio* is a diptych of vertically elongated oil paintings. It is not clear how Fujishima intended them to be viewed, but the scene depicted is not continuous, and it seems to me that he envisioned them exhibited slightly apart. The scene of buildings in a historic quarter of Rome is appealing due to the robust vitality of its atmosphere. There is also a delightfully subtle balance between the sober colors of the stone architecture and the brilliant azure sky. A mother and child act as figures that anchor the scene while also asserting that the work does not merely depict the culture of the past, but the living landscape of today. The significance of Fujishima's ruminations on his Italian experience during this period cannot be overemphasized.

Meanwhile, with regard to his acquisition of Chinese women's clothing, Fujishima may have continued communicating with Kinoshita Mokutaro in Mukden from 1918 onward. If he was continuing to collect Chinese garments, it stands to reason that he would have been continuously producing related works. One known example, although he did not exhibit it, is *Girl in Chinese Dress* (Himeji City Museum of Art, fig. 5), painted in 1920. The female figure is not in profile, but facing forward with a somewhat relaxed posture. She wears a crimson garment with a centered collar, and with the exception of the pattern on the edges, its design and vividness of color can be seen to connect to the series of portrayals in profile that began with *Orientalism* in the mid-1920s. Its lineage obviously differs from that of *Profile of a Girl* (fig. 3) reproduced in a magazine in February 1918. We can see signs of Fujishima taking new steps forward in his depictions of women in Chinese costume.

From the mid-1910s through the early 1920s, it can be said that Fujishima addressed a very wide variety of subjects and showed a great deal of range in terms of color and brushstrokes. This relates to his preparations for the half-length portrayals of women in Chinese costume, which are the focus of this paper, in the mid-1920s. However, no matter how freely our imagination and creativity take flight, there are times when one must bow down before overwhelming force. The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 instantly swept up artists and writers alike in sudden and devastating destruction. In the next section, we will explore the ways in which this natural disaster became a turning point for Fujishima.

7. The Great Kanto Earthquake

The vibrations of the Taisho Kanto Earthquake began just before noon at 11:58 on Saturday, September 1, 1923, and it has been determined through 21st-century research that it had a total of five magnitude-7 (M7) class aftershocks over the course of two days. The main (first) earthquake struck at 11:58 on the first day, with a magnitude of 7.9 at the epicenter in northern Sagami Bay. The second quake hit at 12:01, at M7.2 in the northern part of Tokyo Bay, and the third at 12:03, measuring M7.3 at the epicenter in eastern Yamanashi Prefecture. The fourth: 12:48, epicenter in Tokyo Bay, M7.1. The fifth: 11:46 on Day 2, epicenter offshore from Futtsu in Chiba Prefecture, M7.6. And the sixth: 18:27 on Day 2, epicenter offshore from Kujukuri-hama, M7.1. The first quake caused fires to break out in many parts of Tokyo and Yokohama, and 90% of the estimated 105,000 victims died in the fires. In Tokyo two areas, around Senso-ji Temple and Kanda-izumi-cho and Sakuma-cho, survived like miraculous floating islands, while the fire swept all the way from Honjo-ku (present-day Sumida-ku) through Kyobashi-ku (present-day Chuo-ku). The disaster as a whole, including the devastation caused by fire, is known as the Great Kanto Earthquake.

Things occurred in many places that were so horrific the word “tragedy” seems to trivialize them: the corpses of thousands who perished at the Army Clothing Depot and Shin-Yoshiwara, widespread massacres of Korean residents of Japan, the extrajudicial killings known as the Amakasu Incident. Each individual experienced their own personal disaster. I lack the descriptive ability to do justice to the whole disaster, and there is insufficient space to do so here. In accordance with this paper’s objectives, I would like to make the following four points regarding art. First, an enormous number of artworks in private collections were lost in the burned-out areas. At the same time, we cannot forget that there were some precious works were miraculously salvaged through people’s devoted, self-sacrificing efforts. Second, the damage to the Imperial Household Museum and Takenodai Exhibition Hall was actually quite negligible, as the fire that swept across eastern Tokyo just barely stopped below the higher ground of Ueno. Agedashi at the foot of Ueno was burned. Third, because September 1 was the invitation-only viewing day of both the 10th Nika Exhibition and the 10th Inten (Institution Exhibition), there were many Japanese artists gathered in Ueno at the time of the initial quake. Some of them spent the night in the Exhibition Hall to escape the fire and chaos that lay between them and their homes. Meanwhile, the area around Ueno Park became an evacuation site for many survivors, and the artists must have seen the countless temporary relief facilities built, the low-lying, working-class area of Tokyo burned to the ground, and the collapsed and burnt remains of Ryouin-kaku (also known as Junikai, mentioned earlier), Japan’s first Western-style high-rise building. Fourth, the artists were at risk of losing their identity after witnessing the world collapse around it in a single day and night. Subsequently, various kinds of efforts were made to preserve their identity.

When the first earthquake struck, Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958), Kimura Buzan (1876–1942), Kondo Koichiro (1884–1962), Kawabata Ryushi (1885–1966), Maeda Seison (1885–1977) and others were at the Inten venue, where

Taikan’s *Metempsychosis* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) was being installed. Those at the Nika Exhibition venue included Tsuda Seifu (1880–1978), Yamashita Shintaro (1881–1966), Arishima Ikuma (1882–1974), Fujikawa Yuzo (1883–1935), Tanaka Kisaku (1885–1945), Kunieda Kinzo (1886–1943), Yokoi Reiichi (1886–1980), Koide Narashige (1887–1931), Kuroda Jutaro (1887–1970), Yasui Sotaro (1888–1955), Umehara Ryuzaburo (1888–1986), Nakagawa Kigen (1892–1972), and Koga Harue (1895–1933). Both exhibitions were immediately closed down, and the 5th Teiten scheduled for the following month was called off. All of these painters experienced the disaster in their own way. I have written in the past about Koide’s experience.⁴⁰ Koide spent the night at the Takenodai Exhibition Hall and then went to Yamashita Shintaro’s home in Shirokane-Sanko-cho on September 2. He was finally able to return to his own home in Osaka two weeks later. Koide subsequently made efforts to organize the Nika Exhibition, which had been canceled in Tokyo, in Kyoto and Osaka. The major change his work underwent can be grasped by viewing two portrayals of his first son Yasuhiro side by side. *Boy Standing* (Yamatane Museum of Art) was painted in February 1923, seven months before the earthquake, and *Boy with a Toy Trumpet* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) in December and January, three to four months after the quake. While they depict the same model, dressed the same and in the same posture, the two works are incredibly different considering they were made only 10 months apart. To put it briefly, we can see extraordinary progress in terms of selection and arrangement of subject matter. Perhaps no other example so easily understandable.

The main focus of this section is exploration of the impact of Fujishima’s earthquake experience on his work, but before that, for purposes of comparison, let us look at how Tanizaki reacted to the event. Sometimes branded a Satanist, often speaking and acting in a manner that showed little concern for his family, Tanizaki stepped into the role of bold and resolute patriarch after the earthquake, taking effective action in a manner that cannot help but surprise us. It seems to me that he never lacked practical skills for daily life, otherwise he would probably not have been able to maintain homes in both Kyoto and Atami after World War II, both staffed with servants, and spend a million yen per month to support his large extended family. Tanizaki, who had been staying at Kowakudani Hotel in Hakone with his family since August 2 to escape the summer heat, returned home to Yamate, Yokohama on August 27 in time for his daughter Ayuko’s second semester of school to begin. Two days later he headed back to Kowakudani on his own, bringing a manuscript in progress. On August 31 he went to the Hakone Hotel on the shores of Lake Ashinoko for a change of pace, but they did not have the kind of Western lodgings he was looking for, so at 11:30 on September 1 he got on a bus to return to Kowakudani Hotel. He was on the bus when the first earthquake struck. Tanizaki escaped harm thanks to the quick-witted bus driver’s actions, went the rest of the way to Kowakudani Hotel on foot. That night he slept outdoors with other guests. Interestingly, while Tanizaki believed that night that Tokyo and Yokohama had also been destroyed by the earthquake and fire, everyone else there thought the quake had only affected a limited area in Hakone. When people were stunned to see the red sky above Odawara, Tanizaki advised them that if they

climbed to the top of the mountain they would be able to Tokyo and Yokohama burning farther off, but no one made any move to do so. After confirming that transit to the east was blocked, Tanizaki headed west on the 4th. He took a train from Numazu and arrived in Osaka on the morning of the 5th. To obtain some funds immediately, he wrote some "Notes" for the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*. Tanizaki searched for a ship from Kobe to Tokyo, and on the 9th he boarded the *Shanghai-maru*, of which Kon Toko's father Buhei was captain. He landed in Yokohama on the 10th and was reunited with his family who had evacuated from Yokohama to Toko's house in Hongo-nishikata-machi. After staying at acquaintances' homes in Ogikubo and Omori, on the 20th he and his family sailed from Shinagawa to Kobe on the *Shanghai-maru*, accompanied by Osanai Kaoru and family. They moved into a rented house in Kyoto on the 27th.

Many artists temporarily evacuated to the Kansai region due to the earthquake, but as the situation in Tokyo and Yokohama returned to normal, they returned one by one. However, Tanizaki never went back. The earthquake, which he experienced at the age of 37, was a turning point in Tanizaki's life that acted as impetus for relocation to Kansai. Studies of Tanizaki conventionally divide his life into two phases, before and after the 1923 move to Kansai, and this certainly does seem to make sense. Compared to his writing with Chinese themes and featuring Western-style painters before the earthquake, such post-1924 works as *Naomi* (written from March 1924 to July 1925), *Manji* (March 1928 to April 1930), *Some Prefer Nettles* (December 1928 – June 1929), and *A Portrait of Shunkin* (June 1933) look to later readers like Tanizaki finding his true voice. It is often said that the encounter with the cultural depth of Kansai created a new Tanizaki, but this paper adopts the position that the change was brought about by the Great Kanto Earthquake so as to segue into a discussion of Tanizaki's relationship with Fujishima Takeji. Of course, this idea is not unique to me.

While post-World War I Europe saw the emergence of Dada and Surrealism, there was also a marked return to tradition and classicism. Faced with the reality of unprecedented carnage unlike humanity had ever experienced, European artists were in a position of peril and anxiety toward the threat of self-destruction. Vectors of acceptance of anxiety as an aspect of the human condition that generated new ideas gave rise to Dadaism and Surrealism. The latter took the path of preventing self-destruction by upholding fragile consciousness with solid, unwavering tradition. These two vectors were able to coexist within a single individual's character. In Japan, where no combat took place during World War I, it was the Great Kanto Earthquake that plunged everyone into a state of psychological crisis. In terms of merciless and instantaneous destructive power, the earthquake could be called even more devastating than war.

Naomi was the first thing Tanizaki wrote after relocating to Kansai. The story of Naomi, a girl who gradually comes to gain control over the main character, Joji, can be called the culmination of his early career, in which he refined the themes presented in his debut work *Tattoo*. Five years later, in *Some Prefer Nettles*, the protagonist Shiba Kaname finds in *ningyo-joruri* puppet theater and his father-in-law's concubine Ohisa a common image of the eternal feminine. Chiba Shunji believes that Tanizaki's "discovery of archetypes" during this period led to the interpretation of Platonism that Tanizaki had been

working on since the 1910s. Chiba focuses on *Aozuka-shi no hanashi* (*A Tale of Mr. Aozuka*), which was written between these two works and has not received much attention in the past, and emphasizes its importance in terms of formation of the "unending obsession with 'one woman.'"⁴¹ Drawing on his filmmaking experience as an advisor to the Taisho Katsuei film studio during his time in Yokohama, this short story takes the form of a suicide note from film director Nakata to his wife Yurako, an actress. The Aozuka of the title is a man who has never met Yurako but collects every image of her from film stills and studies her features in the most precise and subtle detail, then creates love dolls of her in various poses and indulges his lust for her at home. After he witnesses this, Nakata begins to deteriorate mentally and physically, and eventually takes his own life. Below are the words Aozuka speaks to Nakata at his home.

So, when it comes down to it, can't we say that Miss Yurako in the films is the real person, and your wife the shadow of it? What does your philosophy say about this? Your wife is getting older, but Miss Yurako on film is always young, beautiful, vivacious, glamorous, leaping and jumping for joy... You must realize that your beautiful young wife has fled into the films, and it is only her shell that is now by your side... And in the end, these films are not the creations of you the director and your wife the actress, but the dancing girls and charming tomboys inhabited the film from the beginning. Unlike your wife, she is the eternal woman. Your wife was only possessed by this eternal woman at one time and served as a vessel for her spirit.⁴²

Eventually, Nakata comes to see not only Yurako but also himself as only a "shadow."

That is as it may be, but I believed there was only one of my darling, adorable Yurako in the world, completely my own, and since that night, that belief has completely faded. Her body is scattered all over Japan, hoarded on the closet shelves in that old man's bedroom, you are only one of many Yurakos, or you are just a shadow... When that feeling arises, it seems that no matter how close I hold you to me, you will never be the one and only "you." And in the end, just as you are a shadow, I feel myself become a shadow as well.⁴³

After the Great Kanto Earthquake, many people must have experienced an existential crisis in which they could not see themselves as truly alive. As mentioned above, some took various new approaches to accept this crisis as it was and affirm it, while some bound themselves to comfortably solid tradition for support and shelter from uncertainty. It can be said that Fujishima chose the latter, and that was why the influence of the Italian Renaissance and Chinese culture appears in his work around this time.

It is unclear what Fujishima did immediately after the earthquake. As a researcher of art, I cannot help but envy the close documentation of Tanizaki's actions, which can be traced in detail day by day. It is not even known where Fujishima was on September 1. From the memoirs of Terada Torahiko (1878–1935), who lived nearby, that there was not much

damage to Akebono-cho. As with any artist, he must have gone around and surveyed the devastation. In place of the canceled 5th Teiten, the Japan Art Exhibition was held at the Second Industrial Pavilion in Okazaki Park, Kyoto starting on November 20. Fujishima exhibited *Part of Tokyo after the Great Earthquake* (Woodone Museum of Art, fig. 6). In my opinion this is an excellent work that depicts the scene honestly while showing emotional restraint, but it is also a somewhat odd painting. Although the title refers to “part of Tokyo,” there are no large buildings atop the undulating hills, and it does not look like the scenery of Tokyo. There is a building in the center that seems to have collapsed in the quake, but rather than having just fallen down a few days or weeks ago, it looks more like a ruin that had already collapsed centuries ago, like the Roman ruins in Italy. This impression is accentuated by the woman in the foreground, who seems to be engaged in rescue operations, but is not an ordinary nurse but appears to be involved with the Christian church. With its quelling of strong emotion, this painting stands out from other artists’ depictions of the earthquake. For example, *September 1, 1923* (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo) by Kanokogi Takeshiro (1874–1941) was completed one year later, but it shows a contrasting desire to superimpose a certain sense of the sublime, as if to convey the heat and smell of the raw reality immediately after the earthquake. This may be not because Fujishima had lost the youthful ability to respond vividly to the disaster, but because he was trying to store something up inside himself.

Fujishima wrote nothing about his experience of the earthquake. The first writing he published after the earthquake was “My Pseudonyms,” in April 1924.⁴⁴

Recently, when I paint Nihonga I go by the pseudonym “Ganto (Containing the Moon).” This is taken from *togan meigetsu* or *togan gento* (“cockscorn pearl mussel contains the bright moon”), in the chapter 90, Zhimen’s dialogue on the essence of Prajna, the Buddhist wisdom in *Hekiganroku* (Blue Cliff Record). I am quite taken with this beautiful notion that the light of the bright moon is reflected in a shell and has become a pearl.

He seems to intentionally avoid mentioning the disaster seven months earlier, even if this was in response to his editor’s wishes. I have written before about the significance of pearls and Buddhism to Fujishima before.⁴⁵ Here I would like to note that it was just months after the Great Kanto Earthquake that he changed his pseudonym from “Kocho” to “Ganto.”

Amid the crisis of impending self-destruction after the earthquake, Fujishima sought to seize on solid, established traditions. It is not necessary to repeat that the painting on which this paper focuses features a profile inspired by the Italian Renaissance, Chinese costume, and a fan reminiscent of the Qing dynasty paintings of flowers and vegetation. To this we can add the *duilian* couplet in the background. The three characters at the top are legible, and Miyazaki Noriko pointed out that it is from the second verse of *Nan tang wu shou* [Five Verses on the South Hall] by Su Shi (1037–1101), as Kojima Kaoru reported.⁴⁶ One can only be amazed at the erudition of Miyazaki, the scholar of Chinese art who identified this source with just three characters. Su Shi was revered as an ideal

personification of the literati, not only in China but also in Japan from the Muromachi Period (1336–1572) onward. Despite twice experiencing political defeat and disgrace, he accepted his destiny as motivation, strengthened himself with cheerful thought in the midst of adversity, and expressed it in poetry, calligraphy, and painting. His first exile was in 1080, at the age of 43, and he spent five years in Huangzhou due to controversy over something he had written. During this time, Su Shi studied Zen, took the layman’s name of Dongpo, and wrote *The Red Cliffs* and *Latter Odes on the Red Cliffs*. *Five Verses on the South Hall* is a work that shows fresh ambition to be active as a literati, thanks to the South Hall his supporters built to give him respite from the heat during this time in Huangzhou. The second verse reads:

I am old, but still have my eyesight
Suffered many illnesses, but my hair is not white yet
That is why I make a window for the light and write trivial characters
I open the windows wider and prepare the scarlet
(Italics mine, indicating the characters in Fujishima’s painting)

A *duilian* is a couplet, i.e. a set of two phrases. The line accompanying “That is why I make a window for the light, and write trivial characters” that Fujishima drew in the picture is “I open the windows wider and prepare the scarlet.” It refers to the actions of an artist opening the windows of a dark room and preparing red paint. Of the two lines he had in the studio, the second phrase was probably too obvious and Fujishima embarrassed to use it. However, we should consider the part of the *duilian* in the picture to also imply this phrase that does not appear. This couplet was just right to express Fujishima’s frame of mind as he sought to enter a new phase of development. Here, however, I would like to introduce another anecdote about Su Shi in Huangzhou.

Poem on the Cold Food Observance in Huangzhou in running script (National Palace Museum, Taipei) is one of the greatest works of calligraphy by Su Shi, also from his time in Huangzhou. He composed the poem himself, and it has a postscript by Huang Ting-jian (1045–1105). Ishikawa Kyuyo (b. 1945) gave it the highest praise: “If you are asked what calligraphy is, you can say nothing, and simply show this work. It is calligraphy that embodies calligraphy, ‘calligraphy among calligraphy.’”⁴⁷ During the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799) it was in the collection of the Qing dynasty court, and entered the private market in 1860 when the British-French Allied Forces set fire to Yuanmingyuan Park. The burn marks at the bottom are said to be from this time. It was shipped to Japan in 1922 and purchased by Kikuchi Seido (1867–1935). Seido was a businessman who succeeded the kimono shop Sanoya in Motohama-cho, Nihonbashi-ku (present-day Nihonbashi-Oodemma-cho, Chuo-ku) and also served as an executive of Tokai Bank Ltd. and Toppan Inc. He was also the grandson of Ohashi Totsuan (1816–1862), who excelled at composing Chinese-style poetry. His massive art collection was lost in the Great Kanto Earthquake, and only five pieces were salvaged. *Risai-bijtsuhin-mokuroku* (Catalogue of Artworks Lost by the Earthquake), which lists works of art in Tokyo that were lost in the quake, states:

Mr. Kikuchi was known far and wide as a great collector, but only five works could be salvaged: *Imaginary Tour through Xiao-xiang* by Li, *Poem on the Cold Food Observance in Huangzhou in running script* by Su Shi, *Yu Constructing A Gate* by Watanabe Kazan, *Stones and a White Cat* by Watanabe Kazan, and *Portrait of Huineng* by Takahashi Sohei. We can only sigh and mourn the loss of the many priceless treasures that were all burned to ash in storage in Motohama-cho and at his Shitaya-Take-cho villa. It is difficult to list the items in detail, so only an overview is given here.⁴⁸

Imaginary Tour through Xiao-xiang by Li is currently in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum. *Poem on the Cold Food Observance in Huangzhou in running script* was taken abroad after World War II and restored to the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei in 1987. Incidentally, I believe it possible that Fujishima was aware of the miraculous survival of Su Shi's calligraphy. No point of contact between this work and Fujishima has been found thus far, nor even any point of contact with Kikuchi Seido. However, the fact that Su Shi's poem from around the same time appears prominently in the background of *Orientalism* may have signified a tribute to the fact that Su Shi's masterpiece remained in the world and could be passed on to posterity. This seems to connect exactly to the true spirit of an artist who turned to the traditions of Chinese culture unwavering bedrock amid a crisis of self-destruction.

Incidentally, during the period when Tanizaki was writing a lot of China-themed fiction he published the three-act drama "Su Shi, or the Poet on the Lake" (*Kaizo*, August 1920) with Su Shi during the Hangzhou years as the protagonist.

8. *Orientalism* Thereafter

Unlike Tanizaki, Fujishima taught numerous pupils, at Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Hongo Yoga Academy, and Kawabata Painting Academy. Among them was Uchida Iwao (1900–1953). Uchida graduated from Fujishima's class in Tokyo School of Fine Arts Western Painting Department, then studied abroad in France. He returned to Japan in 1932, and after Teiten controversies such as the "Matsuda reorganization," in 1936 he joined eight comrades including Inokuma Gen'ichiro (1902–1993) and Koiso Ryohei (1903–1988) in forming Shinseisakuha Kyokai (New Creation Association). As a result of getting to know Maeta Kanji (1896–1930) while in art school and idolizing Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1796–1875) in France, he decided to pursue realism and produced a body of imposing portraits. Perhaps he took after his father Roan (1868–1929), a writer, in that he often produced social statements, and he also wrote a considerable amount as well as actively participating in social movements. In September 1944, late in World War II, he evacuated to Osakabe Town, Okayama Prefecture (present-day Osa, Niimi City), and in July 1945, Tanizaki moved from Tsuyama to the nearby Katsuyama Town (present-day Katsuyama, Maniwa City, Okayama Prefecture). In February 1946, Uchida learned that Tanizaki had continued to working on *The Makioka Sisters* even when its writing and sale were banned by the military authorities, and he offered to paint the portrait. Uchida's name appears in Tanizaki's "Winter Diary" entry for February 6, which was published later. "In the evening, Mr. Kiyotomo asked

me to look at dozens of sketches by Uchida Iwao. They were all of women in profile, but every one was interesting."⁴⁹ This indicates that Uchida intended from the beginning to portray Tanizaki in profile. Uchida visited Tanizaki for the first time on March 4, and work began on the 6th at Tanizaki's temporary abode. It seems that Uchida, a drinker, became intoxicated and stayed at an inn in Katsuyama on the day. The portrait was completed with Tanizaki modeling for just four days, after three more sessions on March 11, 12, and 13 (fig. 7).

It is a half-length portrait in profile of the 62-year-old Tanizaki in a kimono, against the backdrop of the snow-covered mountains of Katsuyama and a clear sky. It is recognized as "the pinnacle of Uchida's realism,"⁵⁰ but rather than depicting a literary figure in his everyday surroundings, it strikes one as a mysterious image of something out of a fairy tale despite being a portrayal of an aging man. The depiction of Tanizaki is obviously an adaptation of Piero della Francesca's *The Duke and Duchess of Urbino* (1472–74, Uffizi Gallery) and Fujishima's *The Orchid* (fig. 2). In this work Uchida recollects his former teacher, who had died three years earlier. Or perhaps it can be said that with this work, Uchida inherited the profile of a woman in Chinese dress that began with *Orientalism*. It is unclear whether Tanizaki remembered Fujishima when he saw the finished portrait.

I have written about *Orientalism* in a roundabout way, which I describe in the title as "elliptical," but my hope is that future studies of this work will go beyond the usual critique of *Orientalism* and it will once again be the subject of rich interpretations. In Tanizaki Junichiro studies, a reappraisal of the criticism of his Taisho Era *Orientalism* is already underway.⁵¹ I will be delighted if this paper contributes in some small way to such reappraisals.

Finally, I would like to cite an anecdote from 15 years before the production of *Orientalism*. After living in Italy for two years, Fujishima stopped back in Paris on his way back to Japan. His pupil Arishima Ikuma was waiting there. The following was written on a postcard dated November 19, 1909, from Arishima to Shiga Naoya (1883–1971) in Tokyo. It was about three weeks before Fujishima left Paris.

Mr. Fujishima arrived from Rome on the 14th, and I've been seeing him every day. We are having a marvelous time. When critiquing a painting, he often uses the phrase "it gives me a dreamlike feeling," but this is also the feeling I get when I see him and experience his inimitable personality.⁵²

Fujishima and Arishima viewed paintings at the Louvre and the Luxembourg Museum, and no doubt spoke of "a dreamlike feeling." There is no doubt that this kind of feeling is exactly what Fujishima Takeji sought to achieve in his work.

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(Translated by Christopher Stephens)

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List of Illustrations (pp. 54–75)

- fig. 1 — Fujishima Takeji, *Orientalism*, 1924, oil on canvas, Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation.
- fig. 2 — Fujishima Takeji, *The Orchid*, 1926, oil on canvas, private collection.
- fig. 3 — Fujishima Takeji, "Profile of a Girl," *Chuo Bijutsu*, vol. 4, no. 2, February 1918.
- fig. 4 — Fujishima Takeji, *Profile of a Girl*, 1927, pastel and pencil on paper, private collection.
- fig. 5 — Fujishima Takeji, *Girl in Chinese Dress*, 1920, oil on canvas, Himeji City Museum of Art.
- fig. 6 — Fujishima Takeji, *Part of Tokyo after the Great Earthquake*, 1923, oil on canvas, Woodone Museum of Art.
- fig. 7 — Uchida Iwao, *Portrait of Tanizaki Junichiro*, 1946, oil on canvas, Tanizaki Junichiro Memorial Museum of Literature, Ashiya.