

Ishibashi Shojiro and Japanese Art Collectors
Between and After the Two World Wars

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I am grateful to Dr. Stephen Little and all the organizers for inviting me as keynote speaker of this symposium related to such a significant exhibition.

I would like to talk here mainly about the formation of Ishibashi Shojiro’s collection that became the Bridgestone Museum of Art in 1952. However, Ishibashi bought almost all the works of Western art in his collection within Japan, and so my topic will naturally extend to cover Japanese collectors from the first half of the 20th century as a whole. My point of view will be based largely on the analysis of economic and social facts during this period.

(Slide please)

(SI.1) The Bridgestone Museum of Art opened in January 1952 in downtown Tokyo. (SI.2) The museum’s founder, Ishibashi Shojiro, had also founded the Bridgestone Tire Company. For your information, ‘ishibashi’ means “stone bridge” in Japanese; the brand name Bridgestone was coined by Ishibashi when he established the company in 1931.

In 1945 Japan suffered a disastrous defeat in the Second World War, and was then occupied by the Allied Nations for seven years until 1952. We can therefore imagine how much the museum was acclaimed when it opened in 1952 as the first museum of Western Art in Japan, with the exception of the Ohara Museum which had opened in 1930.

(SI.3) Some of the art experts who were invited to the opening of the museum must have noticed that

all the 64 works of Western art exhibited had been brought into Japan before the Second World War. However, it was only Ishibashi himself who knew that almost all of them had been purchased by him within a period of only seven years after the end of World War II.

During, and just after, World War II many art collections collapsed and many new ones appeared all around the world. Among the new ones were the Assis Chateaubriand Collection—now in the Museum of San Paolo—and the Buhrlé Collection in Zurich. But it is astonishing that an art museum should open in a crushingly defeated country like Japan. Moreover, the collection was only started at the moment of defeat.

So then, what made it possible for an important collection of western art to emerge in Japan between 1945 and 1952? That is the principal theme of my speech today. And by way of answering this question, I will talk about three subjects: first, about the personal career of Ishibashi Shojiro, as well as his determination to create an art museum; secondly, about the Japanese collectors who bought hundreds of important artworks before the Second World War; and thirdly, about the circumstances after the War which obliged those collectors to part with their paintings and sculptures. These three comprise the conditions under which Ishibashi’s collection and museum were made possible.

The history of art collection is, much more than the history of art itself, related to political, economic, and social history. Especially in Japan, collectors were strongly influenced by the situations created by the two world wars.

Now let us begin with the first subject: the career of Ishibashi Shojiro. He was born in 1889 in Kurume city, a provincial town in Kyushu, 600 miles west of Tokyo. Between the two world wars the population of the city was a little less than one hundred thousand. (SI.4) This slide shows the view of the city around 1927. (SI.5) His father had a shop that manufactured and sold accessories for Japanese traditional clothes, especially *tabi*, a kind of sock. At the age of seventeen, after giving up the idea of entering university, Ishibashi succeeded to the shop together with his elder brother. Right away, he successfully modernized all the systems for manufacturing and sales. Also during the First World War, he was able to foresee economic trends perfectly and so develop his business further. (SI.6) In 1923, Ishibashi's invention of *jikatabi* became an enormous success that made him a fortune.

Jikatabi were a kind of sock made of thick cloth and with rubber sole attached. (SI.7) Then Japanese laborers working outdoors mostly wore *waraji*, or straw sandals. But *jikatabi* were much more durable, and because they fit snugly on the feet, they were suitable for labor under hard conditions. In the northern part of Kyushu, not far from Kurume, there were numerous coalmines and *jikatabi* first became popular there, but soon spread all over Japan. They were even exported to some Asian countries. Thus a small shop in a provincial town became an enterprise that dealt with the whole country.

In 1923, the same year when Ishibashi had his first great success, the Great Kanto Earthquake occurred in the eastern part of Japan. In this way, the history of art collections always makes us pay attention to both light and shade, the ups and downs of any society.

Today *jikatabi* are so old-fashioned that most young people do not even understand the word. (SI.8) But this photograph, taken in 1930—only seven years after Ishibashi's invention of *jikatabi*—shows how they were manufactured by mass-production methods, and also explains clearly to

us how such a product could make such a big fortune for the owner.

However the industrialist was not satisfied with his success at all. When one follows the track of Ishibashi's progress, one is surprised at his flexibility, as well as his determination.

(SI.9) In 1928, Ishibashi donated a big building to Kurume city for a newly established medical college. This was only one of the instances in which he contributed to society. Because he was interested also in architecture and landscape gardening, his donations to the public tended to be some big construction projects of some kind. Thus he built a swimming pool for every elementary school in Kurume city, and finally in 1969, he donated the building of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, to the nation.

Only six years after his great success with *jikatabi*, Ishibashi determined to manufacture tires, a decision that led to the foundation of the Bridgestone Tire Company two years later. Using rubber for the soles of *jikatabi*, he could foresee the great possibility of tires for automobiles. (SI.10) This photo shows the bus transportation that started at Kurume in 1927.

Many modern industries in Japan originated from slightly different businesses. For example, Toyota Motor Corporation, established four years later than Bridgestone Tire, derived from a company manufacturing automatic looms or weaving machines. During the 1930s, though Japan confronted a very difficult situation both in politics and economics, many old industries were replaced gradually by new ones such as automobiles and the electric industries. (SI.11) This photo, taken in 1933, shows a road scene, with old and new modes of transport: those on the left, probably wearing *jikatabi*, are transporting coal with a horse-drawn wagon.

During his most critical years, Ishibashi decided to start not only a tire-manufacturing company, but also his art collection. (SI.12) In 1927, he built a

large house in the Western style—what Japanese call *yokan*—for himself in Kurume. For new-rich people in modern Japan, a *yokan* was absolutely necessary to show their status as new leaders, whose eyes were supposed to be open to Western culture. It followed that real European painting—or at least Western-style painting by Japanese artists: *yoga*—became necessary to decorate the interior of *yokan*. (SI.13) So, naturally, Ishibashi began purchasing oil paintings just after building his Western style house.

Only a few years after the construction of his *yokan*, which must have been followed by his first purchase of *yoga*, Ishibashi got the idea of making a museum by 1930. According to his recollection, it was the painter Sakamoto Hanjiro who advised him to do so. Sakamoto, who had taught Ishibashi as an elementary school teacher long ago, went to France in the early 1920s to study art. (SI.14) After returning to Japan he established his fame, and, just before 1930, chanced to move from Tokyo to the neighborhood of Ishibashi's new home.

Sakamoto told Ishibashi (SI.15) about another painter also born in Kurume, Aoki Shigeru, a painter of genius who had died in 1911, at the age of 28. Fearing that Aoki's pictures would be dispersed, it was in 1930 that Sakamoto advised his pupil-turned-businessman to collect them to make a kind of museum. Thus, paintings by Aoki, as well as by Sakamoto himself, became the first core of Ishibashi's collection.

Though Ishibashi did not often mention the Ohara Museum, it was in the same year, 1930, that this museum opened. When dreaming about the idea of a museum, both Ishibashi and Sakamoto must have been conscious of the Ohara Museum. Ishibashi Shojiro and Ohara Magosaburo—the latter nine years older than the former—had many things in common. Both of them succeeded to their father's business in the same year, 1906. Ohara was also running a manufacturing business: a spinning company, located in Kurashiki city also far from the Japan's two central areas, those

around Tokyo and Osaka. Moreover both were eager to contribute to the regional community, or for the benefit of the society. For example, just as Ishibashi donated the building for a medical college, Ohara established a hospital. Thus we can see the type of collectors just after World War I.

In 1936, Ishibashi moved his company to Tokyo together with his family. (SI.16) He built a new house there this time in a genuinely modern style, (SI.17) designed by a Japanese architect who had studied in the United States for a long time. From that point, his collection, as well as his business, expanded more rapidly. However, in the late 1930s he could not get any Western works of art, even in Tokyo. (SI.18) Instead he became acquainted with another important Japanese painter, Fujishima Takeji, also from the Kyushu region. Some years later, Ishibashi acquired from the painter, who was approaching the end of his life, (SI.19) 15 pictures including this one, all painted during his stay in Europe, more than three decades before. The industrialist then promised the painter to make a museum some day to store them. Although Ishibashi had a passion for Western art, he had also a deep sympathy with Japanese artists struggling to establish a tradition of oil painting in Japan, since he himself was doing a similar thing in the field of industry.

All these factors made Ishibashi stand ready at the starting line to rush into the collection of Western art in 1945. Perhaps it would be better to say that he made a running start. Having long been wishing to acquire real Western works of art, and also to create a museum, he expanded his collection explosively as soon as it became possible. The miserable defeat of the country made him all the more determined, because he was also a patriot.

For the Bridgestone Museum to be completed in 1952, this determination of Ishibashi's was one necessary precondition, however it wasn't alone sufficient. Another necessary precondition were the many other pre-existing Japanese collections. Now we come to the second subject: collectors of Western art in Japan before World War II. When,

and by whom, were the paintings and sculptures in the Ishibashi collection brought to Japan?

In the collection of the Bridgestone Museum of Art, there are at least 300 works of Western Art that were brought to Japan before the Second World War. The oldest among them are from Ancient Greece and the newest from just before the Second World War. The prints and works of applied arts were, though numerous, brought by only a few collectors, but the paintings and the sculptures were related to dozens of Japanese collectors. And although the provenance of each work is different, if we focus on one of the cores of the collection—19th-century French painting—we can find a clear tendency. Many of the paintings were purchased between 1918 and 1923 by Japanese collectors.

I am referring here to the artists of the generations from Corot to Van Gogh. In the collection of the Museum there are 54 paintings by such artists that were imported to Japan before World War II, and out of these 54, we know the date of purchase for 41 of them. Out of these 41 paintings, as many as 29 were bought between 1918 and 23; only 4 were bought between 1891 and 1917; and 8 between 1924 and 1939. Though it is true that the sample is not large enough to be regarded as providing statistical fact, the tendency is almost the same in the Ohara Museum, as well as in the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, of which the core is the collection of Kojiro Matsukata. And if one takes into account many fragments of prewar collections that were dispersed into many other Japanese museums, and also paintings that were destroyed or went out of Japan, the fact that many works were purchased between 1918 and 1923 becomes almost undeniable.

In short, a great wave of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings came to Japan between the end of World War I in 1918, and the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. Then why did this great boom come and why it then recede?

The First World War, fought between 1914 and

18, left millions dead in Europe, but those marginal nations including Japan, whose land was not the scene of any fighting, were able to take advantage of the situation, and their economies grew rapidly during the conflict.

(SI.20) The gross national product (GNP) of Japan grew especially rapidly between 1915 and mid-1919, when an excess of investment resulted in an economic recession and even a panic. As a result, the postwar years between 1918 and 23 were rather an unstable period.

(SI.21) Before World War I the exchange rate for the French franc was fixed at 2.5 francs to one yen. But there came a sharp fall in the French franc in 1920, when the rate became 5.4 francs to one yen; then 6.5 francs in 1923; and in 1926, it fell as low as 11.

(SI.22) The number of high-income earners—defined those with an income of more than 50,000 yen—was only 140 people in 1913. However, in 1918 it rose to more than 900; then as many as 6,000 in 1923, and thereafter it was more or less stable. The vulnerable economy during and just after the First World War caused (SI.23) a more conspicuous difference between the rich and the poor, as is shown in this caricature.

Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings were also comparatively cheap. In 1923, Matsukata Kojiro acquired from Wilhelm Hansen at Copenhagen (SI.24) 35 paintings in bulk mostly by Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters such as Manet, (SI.25) Pissarro, (SI.26) another Pissarro, the one on view in the show here, (SI.27) Sisley, (SI.28) Monet, (SI.29) another Monet, (SI.30) Renoir, as well as Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. By the way, all the paintings I show you today on slides belong to the Bridgestone Museum of Art unless I mention otherwise. Although almost all of those that Matsukata bought were typical of the artist and of high quality, the average price was no more than 50,000 Francs, making a total of 1,700,000 francs. However in the next year, in 1924, a single picture

by Frans Hals, the 17th century Dutch painter, was sold for 2,100,000 francs. In short then, a painting by Hals was worth more than 35 typical paintings by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists!

Also, in Japan works of traditional art were very expensive. For example, (SI.31) in 1920 the famous art collector Hara Sankei purchased this lacquered box, now in the collection of the Suntory Museum, for 270,000 yen, equivalent to approximately 1,300,000 francs. There were also a few other Japanese paintings that cost almost as much at the time.

Along with these economic factors, it is important to think about the permeation of Western culture into Japan. Japan started to eagerly absorb Western culture after the Meiji Restoration that took place in 1868. By 1918, just 50 years after the Restoration, Western modern art had become familiar up to a point in Japan.

As will be discussed in detail in Ms. Yamanashi's speech tomorrow, a pioneering role was played first by artists such as Takahashi Yuichi or Kuroda Seiki, and also by literary people such as Mori Ogai and Natsume Soseki. As for art collection, the art dealer Hayashi Tadamasu, who lived in Paris since 1878, was an exceptional pioneer. He exported many art objects from Japan, got acquainted with many artists including Manet, Monet, and Degas, and, after 1890, collected paintings by them, as well as works by more academic artists. His collection, which amounted to more than 500 pieces (though half were prints), was brought to Japan several years before his death in 1906. But it was unfortunately too early then for it to be properly understood in Japan and the major part of his collection was auctioned off in 1913 in the United States. (SI.32) This picture by Corot, bought by him at Paris in 1891, was one of his favorites and remained in his family. If we compare this important outflow of Western works of art just before the First World War with the boom of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings just after the same war, we understand how suddenly the stage had changed.

(SI.33) Among the activities by art experts before World War I, those of the circle of the magazine *Shirakaba* deserve a special mention. Young novelists, artists, and critics such as Mushanokoji Saneatsu, Shiga Naoya, and Yanagi Muneyoshi all belonged to this group. As early as 1910, they introduced Cézanne and Van Gogh to Japan in their magazine. Though their introduction was only in the form of black and white reproductions, it was in the same year as the fabulous Post-Impressionist exhibition organized by Roger Fry in London.

The *Shirakaba* group continued their activities even during World War I, and it was in 1917 that they began a campaign to raise funds for building a museum of Western art. This over-optimistic project would never materialize, but it had a huge psychological influence on Japanese art-lovers. Those who donated to the *Shirakaba* included many who would, only a few years later, try to buy Western paintings for themselves. Thus, just as Ishibashi was perfectly prepared to start his collection in 1945, many businessmen of an earlier generation were also prepared to start theirs in 1918.

The most important collector in this period was undoubtedly Matsukata Kojiro, whose collection is represented by many pictures in this show. He probably bought about 2,000 works of Western art altogether, and brought about a half of them to Japan. Born the son of a famous statesman, and representing a shipbuilding company located at Kobe, he began to reside in London as early as 1916. He started his art collection under the advice of Frank Brangwyn, with whom he had got acquainted just after his arrival in London. In 1918 he decided to make a museum of Western art in Tokyo, and thereafter expanded his collection at an extreme pace. The 18 pictures by Monet bought directly from the artist in 1921-22, and the 35 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings acquired from Wilhelm Hansen in 1923, which we already saw, mark the highest peaks in his collecting activity.

By the way, the formation of the great collection

by Wilhelm Hansen at Copenhagen took place in a short period between 1916 and 1918. However he couldn't ride out the economic depression just after the First World War, and in 1923 he was obliged to sell those 35 important pictures to Matsukata. But the latter was also already in serious difficulties in that year, and in fact four years later his company, the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company, was bankrupted, leaving his dream of making a museum unrealized, and his collection dispersed.

Although both Hansen and Matsukata formed their collections in a similar situation during World War I, there was a few years' gap between their respective declines. Otherwise those important modern French paintings would not have come to Japan, and to the Bridgestone Museum. Of course similar things must have happened for many paintings that went out of Japan.

Ohara Magosaburo, whom I mentioned already, was also a major collector of this period. But since Professor Takashina will discuss him tomorrow in detail, I would only stress here in my context that most of his acquisitions of paintings before World War II were made between 1919 and 1923. The Ohara collection is one of the rare pre-World War II collections that didn't later collapse, and so, there is no work of art in the Ishibashi collection that came from the Ohara collection.

As we already saw, Ohara, and Ishibashi as well as Matsukata created their fortunes through manufacturing industry located in the provinces. This type of collector became conspicuous after World War I and includes also, for example, Kishimoto Kichizaemon, who ran a steel company in Osaka. Kishimoto visited Paris in 1919 (SI.34) and was passionate in his pursuit of acquisitions of Manet, (SI.35) Cézanne, (SI.36) Renoir, Rodin, and (SI.37) Matisse.

However neither Matsukata nor Ohara was among the richest men of those times. A list of millionaires was published every year in the newspapers, and neither of them appeared on it. For example,

in 1922, among the 30 richest people, those who we know as art collectors were either from the family of daimyo, or of zaibatsu. The families of daimyo—the lords of feudal domains in the Edo era—included Maeda and Hosokawa, while the families of zaibatsu, the financial combines that had a near-monopoly of the Japanese economy, included Mitsui and Iwasaki (whose brand name was Mitsubishi).

For instance Hosokawa Moritatsu, number 30 in the millionaire list, who was a descendent of a daimyo in Kyushu, most unusually showed interest in Western art. It was partly because of the influence of the *Shirakaba* members with whom he had been a classmate at Gakushu-in school. (SI.38) In 1920, Hosokawa bought this self-portrait by Cézanne on behalf of *Shirakaba*, which did not have adequate funds in spite of their campaign to build a museum. (SI.39) Some years later he also bought—though the precise dates are unknown—(SI.40) these pictures by Matisse.

(SI.41) Dan Takuma bought several paintings including this Monet during his trip to Europe in 1921-22. He was a prominent figure related to the zaibatsu, in fact he virtually dominated the Mitsui Combine and was later assassinated for that reason. His son, Dan Inou, was an art historian who would become an associate professor at Tokyo University. Many businessmen (including his father) bought works of Western art on his advice. After World War II, he also became an adviser for Ishibashi Shojiro.

Besides members of the families of daimyo or zaibatsu, there were many other types of collectors. (SI.42) Hara Zen'ichiro, who bought this Cézanne in Paris in 1922-23, was not a big collector. However his father Hara Sankei was the collector who bought the lacquered box in 1920 at an enormous price. He became a big collector of Japanese classic art owing to his Yokohama-based silk export business. His son Zen'ichiro had a very keen eye for Western modern art.

(SI.43) Kuroki Sanji and his wife Takeko brought

about 30 modern French paintings back to Japan in 1922 after a few years' stay in France. Sanji was sent by Japanese government to conduct research about international finance. Especially important in their collection were four paintings by Monet including these two (SI.44), which they bought directly from the painter. (SI.45) It was chiefly Takeko who became close to Monet's family, and was invited several times to stay at the painter's home at Giverny. It was probably she who introduced Matsukata Kojiro, her uncle, to the old painter. I was surprised to see this photo at the entrance of the exhibition, and more surprised to see the painting in the photo.

After World War II, some Japanese-style painters—nihonga painters—visited Europe and bought some interesting works of art. This was because after the war, there was a great demand in Japan also for Japanese-style paintings. So they sold their own paintings in Japan, traveled to Europe, and bought Western art there. The painter Tsuchida Bakusen, who stayed in Europe from 1920 till 1923, bought about 30 paintings by Renoir, Cézanne, Redon, (SI.46) Rousseau and others. (SI.47) Maeda Seison, who had been supported by Hara Sankei, accompanied his son Hara Zen'ichiro to Europe, and there bought, for example, this drawing by Cézanne.

Between 1918 and 1923 there occurred in Japan a great boom of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism that generated this great variety of collectors. But the boom petered out very quickly after the mid-20s. Why did the boom end? We can put forward at least four reasons.

First, some of the businessmen could not survive the unstable economy after the war. The typical case was Matsukata. But still—as was the case of Ishibashi—there were industrialists who could achieve great success under the same situation.

Secondly, there were some collectors who suffered badly from the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. The disaster left 140,000 dead, and 70 per cent of the buildings in Tokyo burned down by the fire.

For example, Hara Sankei and Zen'ichiro lost all their warehouses full of silk to the fire: a loss of 8,000,000 yen—equal to what Matsukata paid for his entire collection. They could no longer continue with their collection of art. The *Shirakaba* group dissolved just after the Earthquake partly because all the copies of the newest edition about to go on sale were burnt.

Third, and the most important reason was a new tax imposed by the government in the next year, 1924. This was import duties on luxury items and its object was to rebuild the national finances that had become so vulnerable because of the earthquake. Among many items including alcoholic beverages or coffee, works of art were taxed at the rate of 100 per cent. From that point on, it cost twice as much as before for a Japanese to acquire a Western artwork.

At that time, Matsukata was still keeping the works of art he owned in storage in various foreign countries, but because of the new import duties it became almost impossible to bring them back to Japan. Hundreds of English paintings he had bought earlier remained in a warehouse at London, where they were all destroyed in a fire in 1939. He left a major part of his collection in Paris, but the French Government confiscated it during World War II as enemy property. After the War, the French Government, after excluding several of the most important paintings, gave 370 artworks back to the Japanese Government. These are now in the collection of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo.

The fourth reason was the steep rise of the prices of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. In the first half of this decade (1920s), the average price of pictures by Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Gauguin, or Van Gogh was around 50,000 Francs, but in the second half of the decade, some of them rose to over 500,000 Francs—which means ten times higher. Though the exchange rate was still favorable to Japan, for most Japanese collectors Impressionist painting went beyond their reach.

However, the Japanese never lost their interest in Western art. Like Ishibashi, almost all wealthy Japanese, after building their own house at least partly in Western style, wished to decorate its interior with Western-style paintings. Through the 1920s and 1930s, it is fair to say that modernization and westernization rapidly spread all over Japan.

For example, there appeared a strange French art dealer named Hermand d'Élsnitz. Between 1922 and 1931, he organized 10 exhibitions, each containing more than a few hundred mostly French art works, not only for view, but also for sale. He made this kind of show at several major cities in Japan, as well as in San Francisco. Thus, after the mid-1920s, the number of works of art imported into Japan rose even higher. However, they became much cheaper, and Impressionist pictures became much more rare. In the collection of the Bridgestone Museum of Art, (SI.48) we can only count this pastel by Degas and (SI.49) this landscape by Sisley, brought to Japan respectively in 1924 and 1926, both through D'Élsnitz, and both bought by Shiobara Matasaku, founder of Sankyo Drug Company, who was then supporting him.

But among those cheaper pictures imported to Japan after the mid-1920s, there were still many which are interesting from our viewpoint. They are paintings by Matisse, Bonnard, Picasso, Rouault, and their contemporaries. Intentionally I have not referred until now to the generations after Matisse, because through the 1920s they were just contemporary, actively creating each year.

In the second half of this decade, pictures by both Picasso and Rouault were available at around 30,000 francs each. Pictures by Matisse sometimes exceeded 100,000 francs, but even so, they were much less expensive than those by Impressionists.

Among the Japanese collectors of this period, Fukushima Shigetaro deserves a special mention. Receiving a considerable legacy from his father, who had made a fortune from his financial compa-

ny, Fukushima first stayed in London to study international law. But in 1923, after giving up law, he moved to Paris where he would live for ten years. During his stay in this city, he built an important collection (SI.50) mostly of French contemporary painting, including Matisse, the one on view now in the exhibition, (SI.51) Rouault (SI.52), (SI.53) Picasso (SI.54), (SI.55) Braque, and (SI.56) Utrillo. In 1929 in Paris, he began publishing an art magazine, *Formes*, which had both a French and an English edition, and for which many prominent art critics contributed essays. But he was not the type to create a museum, and although he became good friends with almost all the artists whose works he bought, he did not buy from them directly, because he knew that his own taste might change, and then he might wish to sell. He was a real connoisseur rare among Japanese collectors of Western art before the Second World War.

Thus, there were already hundreds of interesting Western works of art in Japan at the moment World War II ended. But if the Japanese collectors could have firmly retained them, there would have been no opportunity—or rather no necessity—for Ishibashi to buy them at such a remarkable pace. In fact, most Japanese collections collapsed after the War. And how it happened is our third and final subject. It again concerns economics and the tax system.

In 1945, Japan suffered a disastrous defeat in the Second World War. And under the occupation some important policies and measures were worked out to radically democratize the systems of Japanese society. As a result, the wealthiest class confronted an unprecedented situation. Only three months after the surrender of Japan, the dissolution of the *zaibatsu* (the financial combines) was ordered by SCAP, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Next year, 56 people who formed the nucleus of the *zaibatsu* were forced to abandon the stocks they held. Then came the Land Reforms, by which the government could buy all the land owned by absentee landlords to redistribute to tenant farmers.

But what put the rich people in the most serious difficulty was the switchover of money in circulation and a new property tax. The switchover of the yen forced all the high denomination bills to be deposited in banks, and then it was allowed to take out money only at a fixed rate determined based on the number of persons in the family. The special property tax, a graduated tax, was imposed to take away at the heaviest level, 90 percent of all property. Besides that, serious inflation was a problem for everybody.

Thus the rich, who didn't have any working business to support them after the war, confronted insuperable difficulties. They suffered from lack of money even for everyday living, and had no choice but to sell their possessions. The word *shayo-zoku*, "the declining upper class," was coined based on the title of a popular novel, *Shayo*, by Dazai Osamu, meaning "the slanting rays of the sun." The Western paintings and sculptures that had been treasured for decades in rich families came out, one after another, for sale.

Naturally, Ishibashi also suffered from the Japan's defeat in the war. He lost all his factories in China and Korea. But fortunately for him, none of his factories inside Japan were bombed. Japan imported all its natural rubber from abroad but Ishibashi had the good judgment to buy immediately what had been reserved inside the country. Only two months after the end of the war, he could resume the production of tires. New tires were necessary because many buses and trucks were then left undamaged, except for their tires. Until 1945 almost all Japanese industry, including his company, had been meeting war demand, but he was able to adapt quickly for new civilian demand. It was especially important for an art collector to have a daily cash income. Owing to that, he did not have to worry much about the switchover of the yen, the property tax, or even the harsh inflation.

However, this does not mean that his enterprise was in easy circumstances. On the contrary, under the influence of the labor movements that became

active all over Japan after the war, (SI.57) all the workers of his company went on strike for almost two months. The Korean War that broke out in 1950 also caused a great fluctuation in the price of natural rubber. Because of that, Ishibashi was brought to a crisis, especially towards the end of 1951, just one month before the opening of the Bridgestone Museum of Art. But even in these years, the speed of the expansion of his collection never went down.

The prices of the works of art after the war also affected his collection very much. Surprisingly the market of art was lively just after the war. According to the recollection of Hasegawa Hitoshi of the Nichido-Gallery, there were many bulk purchases for the residences of the Occupation forces. They made orders from him for, for example, one hundred landscapes and one hundred still lifes. But those who visited Japan during the Occupation did not buy precious objects all that much. Since no expert in Western countries could imagine that there were so many Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings in Japan, they did not think of paying a visit to the country in order to purchase them.

The prices of important Western paintings were therefore very low. (SI.58) In 1946, Hasegawa sold Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire* to Ishibashi for 370,000 yen. The exchange rate was irregular at the time and a precise comparison is difficult, but 370,000 yen was not more than 2,500 dollars (U.S.). However, in the same year in a Western country, a portrait by the same painter was sold for 20,000 dollars—almost 10 times higher.

Towards the end of the 1940s, the Ohara Museum, then directed by Ohara Soichiro, the son of the founder, became active again in making acquisitions. But anyway the supply and demand concerning important Western paintings and sculptures were totally out of balance, which resulted in low prices.

However, after the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect in 1952, (SI.59) many master-

pieces left Japan, such as *The Bay of l'Estaque* by Cézanne (now in the San Paolo Museum) and (SI.60) *Tahitian Girls* by Gauguin (now in the Metropolitan Museum). In the mid-50s some Japanese art dealers established ties with major European and American galleries to cooperate in exporting important Western artworks, and then prices—especially those of modern French paintings—jumped. In 1956, a painting by Degas, that Ishibashi had given up trying to buy because of the high price, 7,000,000 yen, was sold abroad. Another Impressionist painting was exported at 10,000,000 yen, or 30 times more than the price Ishibashi had paid for Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire* about 10 years before.

In the second half of the 1950s, the pace of Ishibashi's acquisition went down. But this did not mean at all that he had lost his enthusiasm for either art or museums. On the contrary he was then enthusiastic in accomplishing his ambitions.

(SI.61) In 1956 Ishibashi built another museum, the Ishibashi Museum of Art, this time in his native town, Kurume. The museum was devoted mostly to paintings by Aoki Shigeru, Sakamoto Hanjiro, and other Japanese artists. In the same year he founded the Ishibashi Foundation to which he gave almost all his art works. Also in 1956, he donated the Japan Pavilion for the Venice Biennale.

The history of art collections is always accompa-

nied by light and shade, but in the case of Japanese collections of Western art, the contrast of light and shade seems to have been especially conspicuous. Till the mid-20th century, it was only Ohara (SI.62) and Ishibashi who could make collections that lasted, and all the other collections collapsed in spite of the collectors' intentions. Exactly 150 years ago Japan opened the door to most Western countries, and then, during the first hundred years, the Japanese were vulnerable politically and economically. (SI.63) So, together with a few other museums in Japan, Ishibashi Shojiro's collection, the Bridgestone Museum of Art, literally makes visible the winding course that the Japanese have followed.

In Tokyo about twenty years ago, I saw an exhibition of ukiyo-e, Japanese woodblock prints, from the collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and my image of Hawaii changed at that point. For a Japanese person, the existence of a strong collection of Japanese art in this museum, not a whit inferior to your rich collections of Western and Polynesian art, seems to represent the profound and complicated cultural identity of Hawaiian Islands.

(SI.64) And so do some Japanese museums, including the Bridgestone Museum of Art. Although the collection mainly consists of Western works of art, it shows clearly the identity of Japan in the modern age.

List of Slides

BMA: The Bridgestone Museum of Art

Names in parentheses show the former owners of the painting

1. BMA in January, 1952.
2. Ishibashi Shojiro (Kurume 1889-Tokyo 1976).
3. At the gallery of BMA on the opening day, January 8, 1952.
4. View of Kurume city, c.1927.
5. Shimaya, the shop in Kurume to which Ishibashi succeeded, early 20th c.
6. *Jikatabi*.
7. *Waraji*.
8. Ishibashi's factory manufacturing *jikatabi*, 1930.
9. Kurume Medical College.
10. Bus transportation started in Kurume in 1927.



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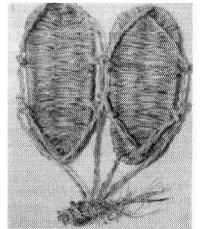
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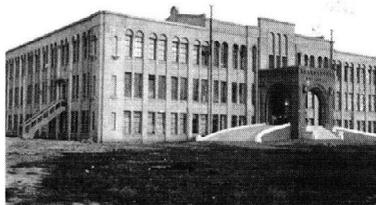
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11. Horse-drawn wagon transporting coal and an automobile, 1933.

Photo : W. Robert Moore, *National Geographic*.

12. Ishibashi's house in Kurume, seen from the garden, 1930.

13. Ishibashi's House in Kurume, Interior, 1930.

14. Sakamoto Hanjiro, *Three Grazing Horses*, 1932, Ishibashi Museum of Art.

15. Aoki Shigeru, *A Good Catch*, 1904, Ishibashi Museum of Art.

16. Ishibashi's House in Tokyo, seen from the garden, 1936.

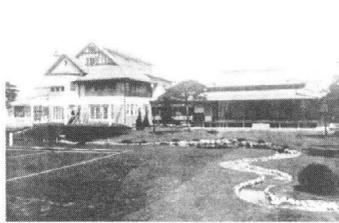
17. Ishibashi's House in Tokyo, Interior, 1936.

18. Fujishima Takeji, *Sunrise over the Eastern Sea*, 1932, Ishibashi Museum of Art.

19. Fujishima Takeji, *Black Fan*, 1908-09, BMA.



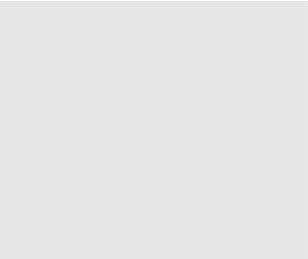
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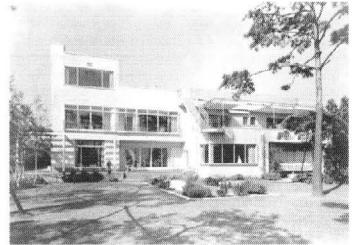
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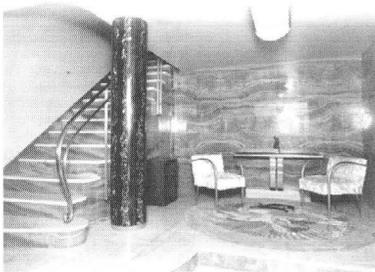
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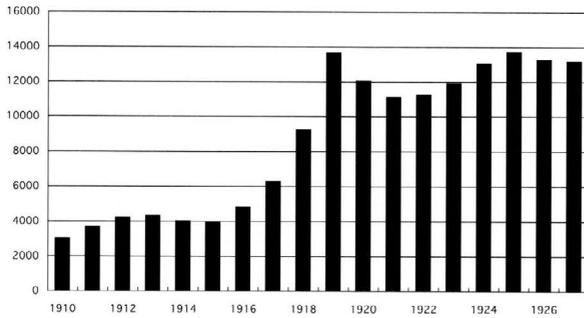


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- 20. GNP (Gross National Product) of Japan, 1910-1927.
- 21. Exchange rate for French franc, 1910-1927.
- 22. Number of high-income earners over 50,000 yen, 1910-1927.
- 23. A Caricature: *Those Who Suffer*, 1918
- 24. Edouard Manet, *Self-Portrait*, 1878-79, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)
- 25. Camille Pissarro, *The Seine at Bougival*, 1870, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)

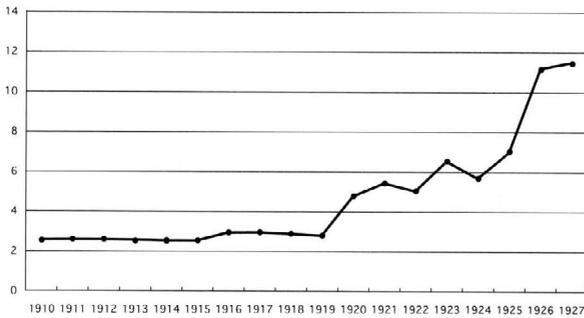
- 26. Camille Pissarro, *Vegetable Garden*, 1878, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)
- 27. Alfred Sisley, *June Morning in Saint-Mammès*, 1884, BMA (W. Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)
- 28. Claude Monet, *Flood at Argenteuil*, 1872, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)

Gross National Product (G.N.P.) of Japan (million yen)



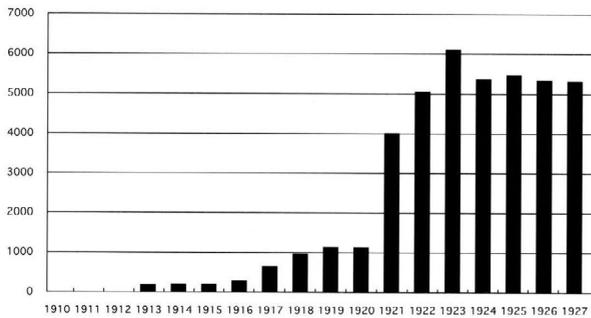
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Exchange Rate: French Franc/YEN



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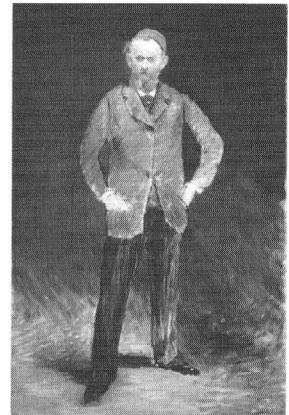
Number of High-Income Earners, over 50,000 yen



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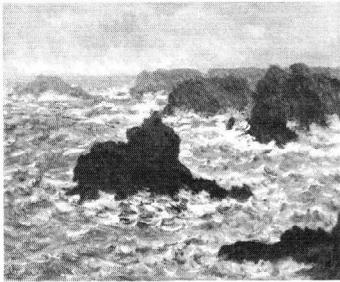
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29. Claude Monet, *Belle-Ile, Rain Effect*, 1886, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)
30. Auguste Renoir, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, 1887, BMA (Wilhelm Hansen, Matsukata Kojiro)
31. Box of Laquerware, with Fusenryo Design in Mother-of-Pearl Inlay and Maki-e, Kamakura Period, Suntory Museum of Art (Hara Sankei)
32. Camille Corot, *Ville d'Avray*, 1835-40, BMA (Hayashi Tadamasu)
33. Members of the Group *Shirakaba*.
34. Edouard Manet, *Méry Laurent*, 1882, BMA (Kishimoto Kichizaemon)

35. Paul Cézanne, *Bathers*, 1897-1900, BMA (Kishimoto Kichizaemon)
36. Auguste Renoir, *Seated Bather*, 1914, BMA (Kishimoto Kichizaemon)
37. Henri Matisse, *Woman on a Couch*, 1919, BMA (Kishimoto Kichizaemon)
38. Paul Cézanne, *Self-Portrait*, 1890-94, BMA (Hosokawa Moritatsu)
39. Henri Matisse, *Nude in the Studio*, 1899, BMA (Hosokawa Moritatsu)
40. Henri Matisse, *Striped Jacket*, 1914, BMA (Hosokawa Moritatsu)



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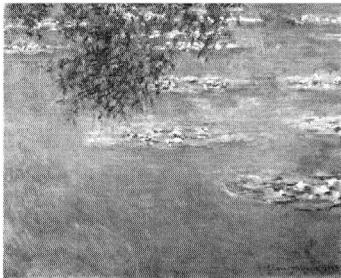
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- 41. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1903, BMA (Dan Takuma)
- 42. Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire and Château Noir*, 1904-06, BMA (Hara Zen'ichiro)
- 43. Claude Monet, *Water Lily Pond*, 1907, BMA (Kuroki Sanji and Takeko)
- 44. Claude Monet, *Twilight, Venice*, 1908, BMA (Kuroki Sanji and Takeko)
- 45. Kuroki Takeko with the family of Claude Monet, 1921-22.
- 46. Henri Rousseau, *Meadowland*, 1910, BMA (Tsuchida Bakusen)
- 47. Paul Cézanne, *Three Women Bathers*, 1874-78, BMA (Maeda Seison)
- 48. Edgar Degas, *Dancers in a Rehearsal Room*, 1895-98, BMA (Hermand d'Elmsnitz, Shiobara Matasaku)

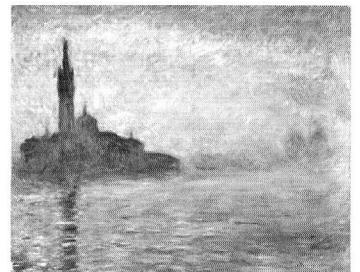
- 49. Alfred Sisley, *Women Going to the Forest*, 1866, BMA (H. d'Elmsnitz, Shiobara Matasaku)
- 50. Henri Matisse, *Odalisque with Arms Raised*, 1921, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
- 51. Georges Rouault, *Pierrot*, 1925, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
- 52. Georges Rouault, *Christ in the Outskirts*, 1920, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
- 53. Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Young Woman*, 1923, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
- 54. Pablo Picasso, *Landscape with Dead and Live Trees*, 1919, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)



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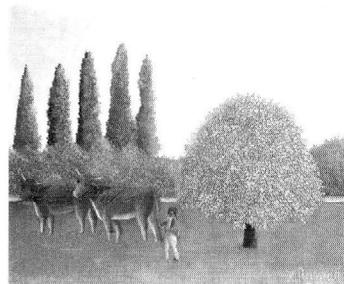
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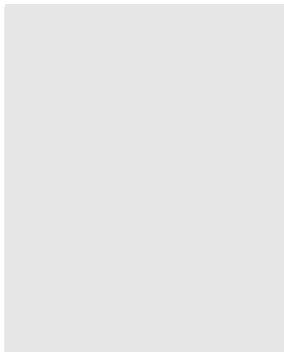
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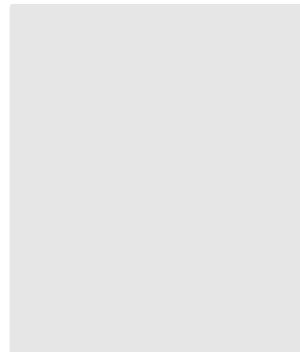
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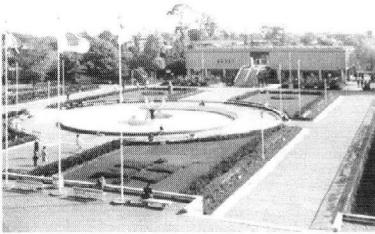
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55. Georges Braque, *Two Pears and a Peach*, 1924, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
 56. Maurice Utrillo, *Saint-Denis Canal*, 1906-08, BMA (Fukushima Shigetaro)
 57. Laborers on strike at Bridgestone Tire, 1947.
 58. Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire and Château Noir*, 1904-06, BMA (Hara Zen'ichiro)

59. Paul Cézanne, *Bay of l'Estaque*, San Paolo Museum
 60. Paul Gauguin, *Tahitian Girls*, Metropolitan Museum of Art
 61. Ishibashi Museum of Art, 1956
 62. Ishibashi Shojiro in his study.
 63. Bridgestone Museum of Art, 1952
 64. Bridgestone Museum of Art, 2004



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ここに掲載したものは、シンポジウム「日本とパリー印象主義, ポスト印象主義, そして近代」の基調講演として発表されたものの原稿である。今回掲載するにあたって、多少文章を整えた。同シンポジウムは、ホノルル・アカデミー・オブ・アーツにおいて開催された同名の展覧会にあわせて、同所で、2004年4月9-10日に開催された。司会は同アカデミー館長のスティーヴン・リトル氏が行い、宮崎以外の発表者は、高階秀爾、クリスティーヌ・グート、山梨絵美子、ルイーザ・マクドナルド、アリシア・ヴォルクの各氏（当初予定のトーマス・ライマー氏は都合により中止）であった。

This essay was delivered as the keynote address at the symposium *Japan and Paris: Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and the Modern Era*. I have tidied up my English slightly for publication, but the text itself is essentially unchanged. The symposium was held on April 9 and 10, 2004, at the Honolulu Academy of Arts to coincide with an exhibition of the same name. Stephen Little, the director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts led the symposium; in addition to myself, papers were given by TAKASHINA Shûji, Christine M.E. GUTH, Louisa McDONALD and Alicia VOLK. (Thomas Rimer, though scheduled to appear, was unable to attend.)