

Profile of Asian Minded Man IV

OKAKURA TENSHIN

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Introduction

Because of his suggestive aphorism, "Asia is One," Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913) was unduly glorified as an advocate of The New Order in Greater East Asia during the Second World War. It is now widely known that this was an abuse of Tenshin's ideas due to the one-sided interpretations of them by his blind worshippers of the day. It is true that some of Tenshin's ideas were suggestive enough to be abused in this way. However, one cannot truly understand all his ideas only through the reading of his written works.¹ Tenshin did not regard himself as a writer. He was a man of action rather than a man of letters. The works mentioned here were written during the last half of his life when he was in adverse circumstances. They may indeed represent some aspects of his thought, but not all of them. In order to draw the whole portrait of this unique man Okakura Tenshin, one should study both his intellectual and social activities during the Meiji era. The latter comprises such achievements as the founding of the Tokyo Fine Art School, carried out during the first half of his life, an effort for the preservation of objects of fine arts, and the founding of the Nippon Bijutsu-in or Hall of Fine Arts which took place during the same period of time as his written works were published in English. The present author would like to give a rough outline of Tenshin's life and then discuss his three main activities—1) the founding of the Tokyo Fine Art School, 2) the founding of the Hall of Fine Arts and 3) the publication of his English writings—cross-examining how significant each of these was in the course of the social and intellectual history of Japan.

I

Okakura Tenshin² was born on December 26, 1862—six years before the Meiji Restoration—in Yokohama, a newly opened port town. Tenshin's father

¹ Some of this later works published in the beginning of 20th century comprises: *The Ideals of the East* (1903), *The Awakening of Japan* (1904) and *The Book of Tea* (1906), all of which were written in English. The manuscript "The Awakening of the East," published after his death, is supposed to be written in 1901.

² "Tenshin" is a pen name. His real name is "Kakuzō."

Kan-emon, a former clansman of the Fukui clan of Echizen, had started his career there as a raw silk wholesaler in 1859. By the command of his former feudal lord, he was engaged in a trade of the goods manufactured within his territory. Those days Kan-emon was known as Ishikawa-ya Kiemon (Kiemon of the Ishikawa's).

Tenshin was the second son between Kan-emon and Kono, Kan-emon's second wife whom he met and married in Yokohama. They had three other children besides Tenshin. The first son Kōichirō, who was physically infirm and passed away at sixteen, third son Yoshisaburō, later a professor of English at Tokyo University of Science and Literature, and the first daughter Chō, who was to marry Yamada Kisai, a professor of sculpture at the Tokyo Fine Art School.

The fact that he spent his childhood in Yokohama towards the end of the feudal age is very significant. At the age of seven he started learning English from an American named John Baller. This was quite unusual those days when most children started their learning with the reading of the *Analects* or other Chinese classics such as the book of Mencius. It seems that his access to English at such an early age was enabled by two environmental facts: the international city Yokohama and the day of the opening of the country and, the Meiji Restoration. His proficiency in English language was to be a great advantage for Tenshin in his activities both during and long after his university days.

However, his traditional learning of Chinese classics was not at all neglected. It began as he become eight years old, when his mother died and he was sent to his family temple Chōenji in Kanagawa Prefecture. The chief priest of the temple, Gendō, was a learned scholar of Chinese classics. Tenshin studied with him such classics as *Ta Hsiieh* (Great Learning), *Chung Yung* (Doctrine of Mean), *Lun Yü* (Analects), and *Meng Tzu* (Mencius). While studying Chinese classics, he continued visiting Baller to take his English lessons. This compromise³ between the Chinese and English languages, or between the East and the West, in Tenshin was going to be his basic atti-

³ The word originally used here can be literally translated as "two-leggedness," which has been quoted from Mori Ōgai's *Teiken Sen sei* (Master Teiken) (1911), an essay on Taguchi Ukichi. The author says: "New Japan is a country where eastern culture and western culture meet and melt. In this melting pot of culture, some scholars are grounded on the East, and some on the West. Both of them are standing with one leg Views of these one-legged scholars are narrow and biased. Therefore they are not practical. The Orientarists are too conservative. The Occidentalists are too radical. Many intellectual conflicts are now seen between these two factors. Our country now needs two-legged scholars—those who stand with two legs, one on the eastern culture and the other on the western culture. These are the only persons who can build up truly sound arguments. They are the socially adaptable persons contemporary Japan needs." The author shows his respect to Teiken (Taguchi Ukichi), calling him "the most unparalleled two-legged scholar" who has more emphasis on the West than on the East. It may be said that Tenshin was one of "the most unparalleled two-legged,, thinkers of the time who had more emphasis on the East than on the West.

tude throughout his life.

In 1871, the Meiji government abolished "feudal clans" and established "prefectures" instead. Fukui clan, to which Kan-emon had been rendering his service, ceased to exist, and he closed his wholesale shop in Yokohama and decided to run an inn in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. Thus, all the family moved to Tokyo in 1873, and Tenshin entered the Tokyo Foreign Languages School. As his father's new business was a success, he continued his academic life with no financial worries. He entered Tokyo Kaisei School in 1875. In 1877, while Tenshin was still there, the school was combined with the Tokyo Medical School to become the Imperial University of Tokyo. Accordingly, he was enrolled in the Literature Department of the University and majored in political science and economics. He also studied such courses as Japanese literature, Chinese literature and English literature. The door of each department those days was freely open to any student.

Two literature courses that Tenshin frequented most were "Chinese literature" by Nakamura Masanao (1832—1891) and "English literature" by William Wharton. Professor Wharton was a learned and stern Englishman, who lectured mainly on Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, John Milton, and William Shakespeare. Tenshin enjoyed Professor Wharton's lectures very much, and read with enthusiasm various works by English and American authors. According to Takada Sanae (1860—1938) and Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859—1935), who were a few years junior to Tenshin at the Imperial University of Tokyo, western literature had not been so popular among Japanese university students before then. Tenshin was supposed to be one of the best read in English literature at that time.

On the other hand, he was an eager student of Chinese literature in Professor Nakamura's classroom. He composed many Chinese poems while he was a student and later published thirty of them under a title of *Sansōdō Shisō* (Poems by Sansōdō).

It is said that, while in the university, he learned Southern Chinese Style Painting from Miss Okuhara Seiko, a renowned lady painter of the time. He is also believed to have had *koto* lessons. All these episodes, tell us of young Tenshin's broad and generous interest in his academic as well as extra-curricular activities.

The most significant event for young Tenshin, moreover, was the arrival of Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853—1908) from the United States in 1878. Fenollosa, born in Salem, Massachusetts, by Spanish-American parents, was an energetic philosopher. He had graduated from Harvard University in 1874 with honours. His coming to the Imperial University of Tokyo as a professor of philosophy had been realized through the efforts of Edward S. Morse (1838—1925), who had greatly contributed to the diffusion of the Theory of Evolution in Japan.

As a philosopher, Fenollosa was a follower of H. Spenser and Hegel. His lectures were based upon the ideas of these two men. The course he taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo included not only philosophy and logic,

but also politics and economics. Besides, he was a student of Japanese Art, Fenollosa's interest in Japanese art was the greatest factor that drew Tenshin to him.

Besides his innate aptitude for music, Fenollosa showed a considerable interest in art also. Before he came to Japan, he had studied sketching (desin) and oil painting at the affiliated art school of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for one year. In Japan, he soon became attracted immensely by its climate, customs, and art. He started looking for antique writing, paintings, and pottery. Thus his interest in Japanese art grew deeper and deeper. It was necessary for him to have a good assistant in order to pursue his interest. And Tenshin, who excelled in English, was chosen for the assignment. That was a year before his graduation. The title of his dissertation, written in English, turned to be "An Essay on Art." This tells us how great Fenollosa's influence on Tenshin was.

There was, however, another personal reason for this essay to come out. Tenshin had already been married to Miss Ōoka Motoko a year before the graduation. And he had already completed "The Theory of the State" (also written in English) as his "first" graduation essay. This, however, was thrown into fire and burned up by his wife in one of their domestic quarrels. Later, Tenshin commented on the incident as follows:

"Just because of her mistrust, 'The Theory of the State' was burnt to ashes. I had worked it out for two valuable months. So I made up 'An Essay on Art' in two weeks. This made me the second poorest student in my class. And it has made me as I am now."⁴

The content of "An Essay on Art" is not known clearly. It seems that his communication with Professor Fenollosa had made him decide that the theme was the most appropriate one for him to deal with in such a limited period of time as "two weeks."

II

Tenshin graduated from the Imperial University of Tokyo in July 1880 as a first time graduate of the Literature Department, and at the age of only eighteen. In October he got a position in the Office of the Ministry of Education. It is said that his getting of this place was greatly due to his recommendation by Hamao Arata' (1849-1925), Vice-President of the University. Mr. Hamao had appreciated Tenshin's ability long before his graduation.

His new assignment was an assistant-interpreter to Luther Whiten Mason, a music teacher from the United States. He had been invited by the Ministry of Education in 1879 to help them establish a school for music. He had an office in the Music Education Section. Tenshin's resourcefulness, as well as his fluency in English, soon attracted Mason's favourable attention, and they became not only congenial co-workers but also very good friends.

In 1881, Izawa Shūji (1851-1917), who had been sent to the United States to investigate the trend in music education, returned to Japan to take office

⁴ Okakura Kazuo, *Chichi Tenshin* (My Father Tenshin), Tokyo, Seibun-kaku, 1939, p. 27.

as head of the Music Education Section. It turned out that Izawa and Tenshin could not get along well. In April 1882, Tenshin was discharged from his position and was transferred to the Recording Office. It was natural that Izawa's narrow-minded puritanism and Tenshin's unrestricted liberalism should not go together. As an advocate of rationalism or occidentalism, Izawa became the first president of the Tokyo Music School, where the curriculum was centred on western music. On the other hand, in the Tokyo Fine Art School, of which Tenshin was a chief figure at its foundation, the curriculum was centred on Japanese painting. Furthermore, the former instituted a system not only of musical education but also of teachers' education, and led a successful life as a member of the House of Peers, presiding over both educational and political circles. The latter, on the contrary, was ousted from the very institution he had founded to lead a defeated life. It seems that the conflict between these two individuals has some symbolical meaning. To explain this meaning, a further study of Tenshin's anti-academism and his concept of civilization may be necessary. However, I would like to discuss that later.

While working as an assistant to Luther Mason, Tenshin kept an intimate association with Prof. Fenollosa. In May 1882, Fenollosa gave a lecture on the promotion of Japanese painting at the *Ryūchikai*, an organization of patrons of art from the upper classes. The complete text of his lecture was later translated into Japanese by Ōmori Ichū and published under the title of "Bijutsu Shinsetsu" (My Viewpoints on the Fine Arts). It is quite likely that Tenshin also took part in its translation since he acted as an interpreter of most of Fenollosa's lectures and speeches.

In "Bijutsu Shinsetsu," Fenollosa explains the essence of the fine arts. He then makes some comments on Japanese painting, comparing it with western painting, and concluding that Japanese painting is superior to western painting. He emphatically argues that it is necessary and profitable to promote Japanese painting, and proposes the following three plans: 1) the establishment of an art institute, 2) financial support of artists, and 3) public orientation.

It was quite ironical that Japanese painting should be so highly evaluated by an American in the early Meiji era, when European-American culture had just been introduced in Japan and was indulgently praised and followed by the nation. For instance, Europe-centred art education was being imparted by such Italian artists as Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882), etc., at the Industrial and Fine Arts School, which had been founded as early as in 1876. Under such circumstances, Fenollosa's arguments, which in effect meant rejection of western painting, were regarded as unequivocal opposition to the general trend. Naturally, they must have widely affected public opinions. Incidentally, the Industrial and Fine Arts School was closed in 1883.

In the same year as Fenollosa's "Bijutsu Shinsetsu" was published, Tenshin's "On Reading the Essay 'Calligraphy is not an Art'" appeared serially in a certain periodical. This was a controversy with Koyama Shōtarō, an

influential figure among the western painting circles of those days. Koyama's points of argument were: 1) principles of calligraphy as an art can not be verified, 2) calligraphy possesses no artistic appearance, 3) calligraphy possesses no artistic value, and 4) calligraphy should not be recommended as an art. Tenshin's refutation against these points can be derived mainly from Fenollosa's influence. It is rather surprising that, in this controversial writing, a born poet Tenshin builds up his arguments quite logically. Disagreeing with Koyama on the point that he compares values of fine arts with those of industrial arts, he writes in conclusion:

"Reading this particular point, I am too shocked to utter a word. Western civilization is greediness itself. And greediness corrupts morals and deprives gracefulness. It turns a man into a mere money-making machine. The poor get poorer and the rich get richer. No general welfare can be advanced. It is an outrageous mistake to discuss art from a mercenary point of view. It is undignified. It deprives art of its genuine virtues. I extend my warning to you."⁵

Here we can already see Tenshin's criticism of western civilization that was to be manifested in his later publications.

As Tenshin started his new assignment in the Recording Office of the Ministry of Education, he met Kuki Ryūichi (1852-1931) who was interested in art administration. When he made his research tours on antique art during the years 1882-1884, Tenshin was allowed to accompany him and they visited several times old shrines and temples in the Kyōto-Nara district.

It is well known that in May, 1884, Tenshin visited Hōryūji Temple with Fenollosa to be the first persons to open the doors of the Yumedono Kwannon Feretory. This experience was so impressive that both wrote about it later in their writings, i. e., Tenshin in his *History of Japanese Art* (a record on his lectures given three times serially in Tokyo Fine Art School in 1890-93), and Fenollosa in his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (1912).

At the second competitive exhibition held in the spring of 1884, Fenollosa met Kanō Hōgai (1828-1888), a highly gifted artist of Kanō school of Japanese painting. Hōgai came to know Tenshin through Fenollosa, and close contact was established among these three. They all endeavoured to work out the plan of founding Tokyo Fine Art School so as to promote Japanese painting. Two more incidents should be mentioned here which promoted this plan.

The first was the internal discord of the Inspection Committee of Art Education of which Tenshin, Fenollosa and Koyama Shōtarō were members. Since early Meiji, pencil drawing had been officially adopted in the primary art education. Tenshin and Fenollosa expressed their disapproval of it and proposed brush painting instead. A fierce controversy arose between Tenshin-Fenollosa faction and Koyama who was for the pencil drawing system. It

⁵ "Sho wa Bijitsu Narazu' no Ron wo Yomu (On Reading the Essay 'Calligraphy is not an Art')," in *Okakura Tenshin Zenshū* (Complete Works of Tenshin Okakura), Vol. 5, Tokyo, Rikugei-sha, 1940, pp. 78-79.

was terminated, however, in the former's victory. Koyama resigned from the committee in 1884, and a new committee was formed in the following year by Tenshin, Fenollosa, Hōgai, and Kanō Tomonobu. It was called *Zuga Torishirabe Kakari* (Art Education Section) and later became a preparing committee of Tokyo Fine Art School.

The second was the official inspection tour abroad in 1886-1887 by Tenshin and Fenollosa. Its purpose was "to encourage art education and to promote fine arts." They toured successively in the United States, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, and England for about a year, and returned to Japan in the fall of 1887.

It is said that throughout the tour, Tenshin expressed great admiration for the Italian Renaissance paintings but was not at all impressed by others. In other words, the tour was the very chance for him to discover the superiority of Japanese art or oriental art to western art.

Before their return, the Imperial Ordinance for the founding of the Tokyo Fine Art School had already been issued. Hamao Arata had officially been appointed to president and director, and Tenshin secretary.

Thus the Tokyo Fine Art School finally opened in 1889. It was a place to give purely Japanese style art education in Japanese painting, wood carving and design. Western painting was totally eliminated from its curriculum. A report made in November, 1887, by Tenshin on his inspection tour reveals his impartial judgement of Japanese art, however. While denouncing the contemporary western painting as "a slave of sketching" or "a guardsman of drawing," he concurrently blames the present Japanese art for the absence of its former "exquisiteness and uniqueness." He continues:

"Principles of art are the same both in the East and in the West. If there is reason, follow it. If there is beauty, pursue it. Consider both the historical achievements and the present circumstances. That is the way to foster natural development of art. If there are virtues to follow in the Italian virtuosi, follow them. Apply the arts of oil painting when it is necessary. Examine them, improve them, and invent most appropriate measures for the future."

This is a rather vague statement. Yet it clearly shows the impartiality of Tenshin's ideas. They were embodied into the new Japanese Painting Movement, in which Fenollosa also participated.

This aspect of Tenshin is far more clearly shown in his *History of Japanese Art* (1890). In the "Introduction," he says: "Most people regard the history of our nation as a record of past events or a dead thing. This is a great mistake. The history of our nation is alive and active within us. We weep for the same things our ancestors wept for. We laugh at the same things they laughed at."⁶ In the main body the author discusses the artistic trends of each of the following ten eras: (1) Pre-Suiko era, (2) Suiko era, (3) Tenchi era, (4) Tempyō era, (5) Heian era, (6) The First Kamakura era,

⁶ "Nihon Bijutsu-shi (History of Japanese Art)," in *Complete Works of Tenshin Okakura*, Vol. 4, p. 1.

(7) The Second Kamakura era, (8) Ashikaga era, (9) Toyotomi era, and (10) Tokugawa era. The main body is followed by a conclusion, in which the author gives a brief historical summary of development of art in Japan and, considering its future prospect, selects the following seven points: 1) Art prospers if it is pursued by the truly creative spirit, but declines if its form becomes the sole object of our pursuit; 2) It advances with methods, but degenerates without them; 3) Art represents the spirit or the ideas of the time it is fostered in; 4) Japanese art is full of variety; 5) It is full of flexibility; 6) It approves invisible beauty or spiritual beauty (influence of Buddhism); and 7) It has gracefulness.

These are nothing but Tenshin's ideas of Japanese art and art in general. He continues to speak to his students:

"Mere imitation of the past [art] will lead to an inevitable extermination [of the present]. History has proved this. Follow the traditional methods, esteem the old, and make effort to improve them. Learn from western painting if necessary. However, always retain yourself. I wonder when it will be that this 'artistic nation in the East' will truly deserve its title."⁷

The above statement at least sounds less vague than the statement in his 1887 report on his inspection tour. It may be said that the ideas expressed here are the fundamental principles of art education of matured Tenshin.

As a staff member of Tokyo Fine Art School, Tenshin actively undertook various projects. Some of them were regarded to be even radical.⁸

In 1893 he made a trip to China in order to do his research on Chinese art. This is considered as an important undertaking by Tenshin those days besides the above-mentioned lecture "History of Japanese Art." It was an adventurous field trip to trace the origin of Japanese art. After careful preparations, he left Tokyo in July accompanied by a certain youth. He visited such cities as Peking, Kaifeng, Loyang, Sian, Chengtu, and Chungking. From Chungking he went down along the Yangtze to Shanghai. In each city Tenshin spent most of his time visiting historical sites such as the stone images of Buddha at Lung Men.

In December 1893, he returned to Tokyo. The next year, sponsored by *Tōhō* Association, several lectures were given by him about his findings throughout the trips. Each time, he stressed that 1) there exists no integrated culture in China in terms of geography, language (culture) and politics, but there are two separate cultures—one is along the Yangtze and the other along the Yellow River; 2) Chinese culture is closer to Europe than Japanese culture is; and 3) Japanese art may indeed be derived from China but it has developed its own virtues. All these findings came from Tenshin's first-hand knowledge and, therefore, came to form a vital part of his thought.

⁷ "Nihon Bijutsu-shi," pp. 265-266.

⁸ For instance, he chose for the school uniform a form of dress similar to the court caps and gown of the Nara period, and he invited a mere craftsman of the town as an instructor of wood carving to give vocational education.

III

In March, 1898 Tenshin was forced to resign from his office as president at the Tokyo Fine Art School. It is said that an immediate cause for this was the anti-Tenshin maneuvering by Fukuchi Mataichi, a professor of designing and once a follower of Tenshin. He had scattered copious slanders against Tenshin among the government officials, the press people and his professional acquaintances. According to those slanders, Tenshin was a neurotic who was unable to fulfil his academic duties; he was a fool to believe in those vain ideas of Fenollosa from which the spirit of the foundation of the Tokyo Fine Art School was derived; he and that lunatic painter Hōgai, with their eccentric concepts of art, plotted together to stir up Hashimoto Gahō so as to bring about a monster of painting and to promote industrial arts including sculpture; they led a host of art teachers and students along a desperately mistaken path.

It may be true that some of Tenshin's perfectly unorthodox behaviour caused this sort of misunderstanding. However, the fact that Fukuchi's maneuvering, which had started as purely personal blunders, did result in his victory shows an increasing disapproval of Tenshin's educational policy—that is, to encourage anything Japanese and to eliminate anything western. In other words, Tenshin's fall was inevitable in the course of intellectual development in Japan. It had already grown out of its infancy of civilization, and was steadily nearing its maturity. More and more people were getting ready to accept rationalism and bureaucratism of the western world.

As a matter of fact, the Department of Western Painting had already been organized, with Kuroda Kiyoteru (1866–1924) as its head, in 1896 in this totally Japanized institute. It was one of the results of the educational policies of Saionji Kimmochi (1849–1940), then Minister of Education. But most of its administration was entrusted to Kuroda who had studied painting in France. Thus, Tenshin's influence had gradually been growing tenuous even in his own institute.

Also as early as in 1889, a Meiji Fine Arts Association had been organized by Koyama Shōtarō and other important artists. It was backed up by the pro-West bureaucrats of the time, and was to play a major role in an anti-Fenollosa-Tenshin movement or anti-New Japanese painting movement. Meanwhile a conservative group within a pro-Japanese painting faction had also expressed their disagreement with Fenollosa-Tenshin policies. All these factors combined, the fall of Tenshin from the office of the president of the Tokyo Fine Art School was natural enough. After Tenshin, the office was held by several officials from the Ministry of Education.

Tenshin's resignation had its aftermath. There was a group of people, seventeen faculty members of the Tokyo Fine Art School, to be exact, who were in favour of Tenshin. They all sent in their resignations, which were accepted. Among them were Hashimoto Gahō, Shimomura Kwanzan (1873–1930), Yokoyama Taikan (1868–1958) and Hishida Shunsō (1874–1911). They

co-operated with Tenshin to work out a plan for founding the Hall of Fine Arts. It was accomplished in October, 1898, seven months after Tenshin's resignation from the Tokyo Fine Art School. Its grounding motto was: To accept to maintain, and to promote Japanese fine arts."

At the art exhibition held in order to commemorate the opening of the Hall of Fine Arts, everyone's attention was unmistakably drawn to a certain magnificent work by Yokoyama Taikan entitled "Kutsugen" (Ch'ü Yüan). It was an image of lonely Ch'ü Yüan wandering about a wilderness with a furious look. To the eye of the spectators it must have appeared to be Tenshin himself—Tenshin who had been dethroned from his glory.

Tenshin's ability as an art teacher was thoroughly displayed in the Hall of Fine Arts. Among his students, Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunsō followed his style most faithfully. They disclaimed the traditional line drawing and dared to apply colouring in Japanese painting, which was regarded as quite radical. Taikan later made the following remarks on this daring attempt:

"Shunsō and I perfectly agreed with Mr. Okakura's new style of painting, i. e., to use dry brushes to represent such phenomena as "air" and "sun beams." This was not regarded right by the art appreciators then. They denounced us as "ultra-impressionists," the label originally coined by the newspapermen. At the time when people believed that the mild style painting was the only kind of painting, our style must have appeared as almost demoniac. On the other hand, the style of such artists as Shimomura and Kimura was something like the "Tosa-style" and not as radical as ours. Their works were quite popular and they seemed to enjoy prosperous life. But our works were seldom in demand and we only received denunciation."⁹

In spite of their struggle to popularize Tenshin's new style of Japanese painting, they failed to gain common approval. Furthermore, things within the Hall of Fine Arts did not turn out as had been expected. On one hand, Tenshin spared no effort to realize every single plan he had thought of. On the other, however, he could not stick to a thing for long. Now he gradually came to lose interest in the administration of the Hall of Fine Arts. He became desperate.

In 1901, he conceded the request of Masaki Naohiko, then president of the Tokyo Fine Art School, and took the step of appointing Terasaki Kōgyo and Shimomura Kwanzan as professors at the school. Since both were fulltime faculty members of the Hall of Fine Arts, Tenshin's handling of the matter was criticized sharply by other members of the faculty. Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunsō, for instance, quit their duties and took an extended journey to the Hokuriku-Hokkaidō area. A few more followed their example. The Hall of Fine Arts was now about to face moral as well as financial crisis. And at this very moment, Tenshin himself left for India. That was in January 1901.

A trip to India had been Tenshin's intention for some time. It was now realized rather prematurely on account of the precipitate return of a Miss

⁹ Yokoyama Taikan, *Yokoyama Taikan Jiden* (Autobiography of Yokoyama Taikan), 1926.

Macrard to England. Miss Macrard, an elderly English lady, was a Tenshin's student of History of Japanese Art. Tenshin decided to join her trip home by way of India.

During his one-year stay in India, Tenshin met and admired Vivekānanda, who was a successor to Ramakrishna, a reformer of Hinduism; he also visited the Tagore family in Bengal to have a friendly talk with young Rabīndrānāth Tagore. After visiting numerous historical sites in the country, he returned to Japan in October 1902. What had he discovered during the trip? He had discovered the rising national spirit—that unique Indian culture thriving in spite of the British domination, and those youths united in their common purpose of national independence. This discovery was the greatest motivation for him to write *The Ideals of the East* (1903) and *The Awakening of the East* (1904).

While Tenshin was away in India, the Hall of Fine Arts continued to exist, though feebly. However, its annual art exhibitions in spring and fall proved to be complete failures. One of the art critics of the day commented: "How devastated the Hall of Fine Arts is! And so is the Japanese Painting Association!" In early 1903, Tenshin, after sending Taikan and Shunsō to India, sought a secluded life in a village of Itsuura in Ibaraki Prefecture.¹⁰ However, in the following February he visited the United States, accompanied by Taikan and Shunsō. They spent a few days in Seattle and in New York, and then made their way to Boston, where they were received with a warm welcome by a Miss Gardner, the city's renowned patron of art. It so happened that there and then Tenshin was engaged as an advisor in the Eastern Section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Back in New York, Tenshin sponsored a joint art exhibition by Taikan and Shunsō. Thus he contributed greatly in introducing the Americans to the contemporary Japanese art, and, at the same time, obtained funds for their travel. In May he gave a lecture at the Congress of Art and Science of St. Louis, which was one of the commemoration projects at the Universal Exposition. His lecture was entitled "Modern Problems in Painting," and was a great success. The whole audience applauded with cheers. In November, he published *The Awakening of Japan*, in which he illustrated modern Japan as being just awakened from its sleep in the "Night of Asia." It is said that Eleanor Roosevelt the First Lady at that time, was the first to give high praise to this book.

He stayed in the United States for about a year and half and came home in May 1905. However, he could not find his home in the Hall of Fine Arts any longer. Contrary to the warm understanding and enthusiastic support by the American people, he was received coldly by his own countrymen and was offered no deserving positions. He was obliged to stay in

¹⁰ A letter written by him to his daughter during his seclusion shows the state of his mind as follows: ".....I have been searching for the ideals in vain. They have let me to this defeated life. But I still have trust in Nature, which, I believe, is true all over the world."

Itsuura, and spent most of his time fishing. From this time on Tenshin was to be found either in Itsuura, peacefully fishing, or in Boston, presiding over the Eastern Section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Towards the end of 1906, the plan to move the Hall of Fine Arts from Tokyo to Itsuura was accomplished and thereby Kwanzan, Taikan, and Shunsō came to reside near Tenshin's home. However, in such a secluded place and with Tenshin's constant half-year absence because of his job in Boston, it did not flourish long. In addition to his regular assignment in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Tenshin busied himself making official tours twice to China and once to India during the following few years. And in 1910, he gave a special lecture entitled "History of Eastern Arts" for three months in the Imperial University of Tokyo. Hashimoto Gahō, Tenshin's best friend since the founding of Tokyo Fine Art School, had already died in January of 1908, and Shunsō, one of Tenshin's best pupils, died in September of 1911. Death of Tenshin himself took place in a mountain hut in Akakura in September of 1913. A year after Tenshin's death the reorganization of the Hall of Fine Arts was undertaken.

A full-length bronze statue of Tenshin was constructed in 1931, clad in an academic robe, it is erected now near the main entrance of the Tokyo University of Arts. The inscription on its pedestal reads: "Asia is One."

IV

With the phrase "Asia is One" starts the first paragraph of *The Ideals of the East*, which goes as follows:

"Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and Universal, which is the common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life."¹¹

Japanese culture, which is an amalgamation of Indian and Chinese culture, also has as its corner-stone love for the Ultimate and Universal. It is a museum for all the Asiatic civilizations or the very manifestation of "The Ideals of the East." After discussing the above, the author claims that now is the time for every Asiatic race to recognize their own values. Finally, he leads the reader to the concluding chapter, saying:

"We await the flashing sword of the lightning which shall cleave the darkness. For the terrible hush must be broken, and the raindrops of a new vigour must refresh the earth before new flowers can spring up to cover it with their bloom. But it must be from Asian herself, along the ancient roadways of the race, that the great voice shall be heard. Victory from within, or a mighty death without."¹²

¹¹ *The Ideals of the East*, London, John Murray, 1903, p. 1.

¹² *The Ideals of the East*, p. 224.

Tenshin's emphasis on the values of Asia grows much stronger in his later works. In *The Awakening of the East*, he declares: Glory of Europe is disgrace of Asia; so-called "White Disaster" is now beginning to permeate all over the continent. In this sense, Asia may indeed be one, but it should be one in another sense.

"The very threats of Europe are whipping Asia into a conscious unity."¹³ Here, he vigorously insists that it is absolutely necessary for the Asiatic nations to "It is only the organized raising of the patriotic spirit and a systematic preparation for war."¹⁴

We Japanese admirably took a step forward in modernization and have established a new government in this tiny land. Why do other nations not follow us? Why not China, with its 400 million people? And India, with its 300 million people? At the very moment all these nations would be united in the same purpose of modernization, "and a mighty Asiatic peace shall come to close humanity with universal harmony. And Europe shall receive the blessing of Asia given with a freer if a firmer hand."¹⁵

The passages quoted above were misinterpreted later so as to label him as an advocate of "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" and, consequently, to regard him as one of the war collaborators. Nothing would have been a greater distortion of Tenshin's intentions. His aim had been unification of Asia in terms of art and philosophy. His viewpoints had been purely idealistic.

Without doubt, Tenshin was a true interpreter of the eastern concepts of beauty. Watsuji Tetsurō, one of the students at Tenshin's lecture on History of Eastern Fine Arts (1910), relates his vivid memories of Tenshin as follows:

"In the classroom, Mr. Okakura used to speak with such passion that he imbued in us love of art rather than love of learning, though he never used such words himself. He would simply give a chronological account of various artistic works. When we listened to him talk about a certain work and tell us how to appreciate or evaluate it, we could not but feel strong affection for art in general. He did kindle our internal love of art quite unconsciously."¹⁶

According to him, Tenshin had his special way of describing the beauty of artistic works. For instance, he would soundlessly put the tips of his forefinger and middle-finger to that of his thumb in order to illustrate the subtle feeling of a jade of China. Watsuji continues: "In this way he taught us how to cultivate artistic tastes. This is my sole experience with Mr. Okakura. But I now believe that it shows his essential attitude towards life very well. I know nothing definite about how he encouraged the Indians for their independence, or how he inspired his colleagues at the Hall of Fine Arts, or how

¹³ *The Awakening of the East*, Tokyo, Seibun-kaku, 1940, p. 58.

¹⁴ *The Awakening of the East*, p. 61.

¹⁵ *The Awakening of the East*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁶ Watsuji Tetsurō, "Okakura Sensei no Omoide (Memories of Mr. Okakura)" 1936.

he inculcated in the fishermen of Itsuura the use of a new type fishing net. However, I can well imagine that he was a most 'reasonable agitator.'

"As he related to us how so many master-pieces of Japanese art had been sold for a song under the influence of the anti-Buddhism movement at the beginning of Meiji era, his tone was so persuasive that our hearts were all filled with sympathetic anger. He was not an agitator who would convince people with force. He was the one who would convince us with reason so as to awaken in us genuine sympathy."¹⁷

Indeed, Tenshin was "a most reasonable agitator." His English publications, which were not quite welcomed by his countrymen, were written in a way to agitate the western mind "with reason." This would-be "conservative" student of art insists:

"We of the East often wonder whether the West cares for Art. The desire seems to be not for Art, but for decorations,—decoration in the sense of subjugating beauty for the sake of display."¹⁸

"The conservatives assert that Asiatic civilization is not to be despised; that its conception of the harmony of life is as precious as the scientific spirit and the organizing ability of the West. To them, Western society is not necessarily the paragon which all mankind should imitate. They believe in the homogeneity of civilization, but that true homogeneity must be the result of a realization from within, not an accumulation of outside matter."¹⁹

"I, for one, who belong to the humble ranks of the conservatives, find it deplorable that the traditions of Chinese and Japanese painting should be entirely ignored. I do not mean to say that Japan should not study the Western methods, for thereby she may add to her own method of expression. Nor do I desire that Japan should not assimilate the wealth of ideas which the Western civilization has amassed. On the contrary, the mental equipment of Japanese painting needs a strengthening through the accretion of the world's ideals. We can only become more human by becoming more universal. The value of a suggestion is in the depth of the thought that it conveys. What I wish to protest against is the attitude of imitation which is so destructive of individuality."²⁰

Here are exposed the essential features of Tenshin's thought—his conservatism, his romanticism based on love for the Ultimate and Universal, and his firm belief in the oneness of Asia. And these "modern problems" that Tenshin presented more than half a century ago still remain unsolved at present.

¹⁷ T. Watsuji, "Okakura Sensei no Omoide."

¹⁸ "Modern Art from a Japanese Point of View," in *The Heart of Heaven*, Tokyo, Nippon Bijutsu-in, 1922, p. 195.

¹⁹ "Modern Art from a Japanese Point of View," p. 200.

²⁰ "Modern Art from a Japanese Point of View," p. 202.

A Short Life History

1862 26 December. Birth of Tenshin at Yokohama.

1873 The family's removal from Yokohama to Tokyo.

1875 Spring. Entrance into Tokyo Kaisei School.

- 1877 April. Tokyo Kaisei School becomes the Imperial University of Tokyo.
- 1878 Summer. Arrival of Ernest Fenollosa from the United States as an instructor in the Literature Department of the Imperial University of Tokyo.
- 1880 July. Graduation at the Imperial University of Tokyo.
- 1880 October. Appointment in the Ministry of Education.
- 1886-1887 September to June. The official trip to Europe to investigate the trend in fine arts.
- 1887 October. Appointment as Secretary at the Tokyo Fine Art School.
- 1889 February. Opening of Tokyo Fine Art School.
- 1890 October. Appointment as President of the Tokyo Fine Art School.
- 1893 July to October. The research tour to China on Chinese art.
- 1898 March. Resignation from the office of the President of the Tokyo Fine Art School.
- 1898 October. Foundation of the Nippon Bijutsu-in or Hall of Fine Arts.
- 1901-1902 November to October. The trip to India.
- 1903 May. Retirement to Itsuura, Ibaraki Prefecture. The publication of *The Ideals of the East* in London.
- 1904 February. The trip to the United States with Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunsō.
- 1904 March. Appointment as an advisor of the Eastern Section of Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The publication of *The Awakening of Japan* in New York.
- 1905 May. Return from the United States. (From then on, Tenshin's official life is divided between Boston and Tokyo.)
- 1906 The publication of *The Book of Tea* in New York. September. The second official trip to China. December. Removal of the Hall of Fine Arts from Tokyo to Itsuura.
- 1910 April to July. Taught "History of Eastern Fine Arts" at the Imperial University of Tokyo.
- 1912 May to June. The third official trip to China. August. The second trip to India.
- 1913 2 September. Death of Tenshin in a mountain hut in Akakura, Niigata Prefecture.

A List of Works

COMPLETE WORKS

Tenshin Zenshū (The Complete Works of Tenshin), two volumes, Tokyo, Nippon Bijutsu-in, 1922.

Volume 1: *The Heart of Heaven being a collection of writings hitherto unpublished in book form*. (In English) Poems. A Letter. The White Fox and Three Mediaeval Tales. Papers on Art. Bulletin Articles.

Volume 2: A Short Biography of Master Tenshin. Chronological Table. Commentaries. (In Japanese) Poems. Correspondence. Lectures. History of Japanese Art.

Okakura Tenshin Zenshū (The Complete Works of Okakura Tenshin), five volumes, edited by Okakura Kazuo, Tokyo, Rikugei-sha, 1939-1940. (In Japanese)

Volume 1: *Tōyō no Risō* (Original in English entitled *The Ideals of the East*). *Byakko* (Original in English entitled *The White Fox*). *Nempu* (Chronological Table).

Volume 2: *Tōyō no Kakusei* (Original in English entitled *The Awakening of the East*). *Jukyō-Jidai*, *Dokyō-jidai* (Original in English entitled *Age of Confucianism and*

Age of Taoism).

Volume 3: *Nihon no Kakusei* (Original in English entitled *The Awakening of Japan*).
Cha no Hon (Original in English entitled *The Book of Tea*).

Volume 4: *Nihon Bijutsu-shi* (History of Japanese Art). *Ōkyo, Hōgai, Gahō* (Maruyama Ōkyo, Kanō Hōgai, Hashimoto Gahō). *Shina no Bijutsu ni tsuite* (On the Chinese Art).

Volume 5: *Tōyō Geijutsu-ron* (Original in English entitled *Papers on Art*). *Bosuton Bijutsukan no Tōyō Geijutsuhin ni tsuite* (Original in English entitled *Bulletin Articles*). *Kindai Bijutsu no Shomondai* (Original in English entitled *Modern Art from a Japanese Point of View*).

Tenshin Zenshū Volumes 2 and 6, edited by Okakura Tenshin Iseki Kenshōkai, Tokyo, Sōgen-sha, 1944–1945.

(After two volumes had been published publication was discontinued because of Japan's defeat in war.)

Volume 2: *The Awakening of Japan. The Book of Tea. Poems. In Defence of* (In English) Lafcadio Hearn. *The White Fox. Etc.*

Volume 6: *Nihon Bijutsu-shi* (History of Japanese Art). *Taitō Kōgei-shi* (History of (In Japanese) Eastern Fine Arts).

BOOKS (In English)

The Ideals of the East, London, John Murray, 1903.

The Awakening of Japan, New York, The Century Co., 1904.

The Book of Tea, New York, Fox Duffield & Company, 1906.

**The Awakening of the East*, Tokyo, Seibun-kaku, 1940.

(*This book was a collection of the unpublished English writings of Okakura Kakuzō discovered by his heir, Okakura Kazuo, and was edited with introduction and notes by Prof. Asano Akira.)