

THE ART OF JAPAN IN LATER  
NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPE,  
PROBLEMS OF ART CRITICISM AND THEORY.

VOLUME ONE

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SPECIAL NOTE

This study is concerned with links between the European artist and Japanese Art which came within his orbit. It is therefore not an attempt to contribute to knowledge of Japanese art of any period but is solely concerned with the discovery of an exotic world by artists in search of new forms and new concepts with which to combat a crisis in their relations with Western tradition which emerged during the 1860's. The author makes no claim to a scholarly knowledge of Japanese art.

Unavoidable late changes have led to the following discrepancies in the pagination and sequence of illustrations of this thesis.

The following pages have been added 652b, 961b, 879a-k, .  
Pages IOII-IO22 have been repeated in sequence.

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Section One part two no's 6 and 27

The catalogue of the "Japenisme." exhibition Philadelphia 1976 came too late to influence the preparation of this text.

## SUMMARY

The thesis attempts to offer a new interpretation of some aspects of later nineteenth century European art theory through a detailed study of the European reaction to the appearance of Japanese Art in Europe in the 1860's and 1870's.

A detailed account is given of the importation of Japanese art and objets d'art into Europe from the 1850's to 1883. The appearance of many objects is dated precisely. Particular study is made of the appearance of the Japanese print in Europe before 1867. Exhibitions of Japanese art in Europe are studied in some detail. Considerable attention is given to the London exhibition of 1862, the Paris exhibitions of 1867 and 1878 and the Vienna exhibition of 1873. In each case the architecture, displays and performances associated with the exhibitions are studied as well as the objects on display. The European reaction to each exhibition is explored in some detail.

The development of European collections of Japanese art is described, with particular attention to the collections of Cernuschi, Guimet and Bowes, all of whom founded museums of Far Eastern Art. The voyages of Cernuschi, Guimet and other collections, the dealer Sichel, the critics Duret and Dresser and the artists Menpes and Regamey are studied.

European critical attitudes to Japanese art are also studied at some length, in particular the writings of Baudelaire, Zola, the Goncourts, Burty, Audsley, Alcock, Duranty and Dresser. The reactions of these critics to Japanese art are used to develop an interpretation of later nineteenth century art theory. A contrast is drawn between the English and French reactions.

The popular response to Japanese art and culture in both countries is also studied.

All the above studies are used in reworking the question of Japanese influence on major artists of the period. Special consideration is given

to Manet, Whistler, Degas, Monet and Van Gogh; F. Regamey, Tissot, Stevens, Menpes and Walter Crane are given special study amongst the minor artists.

Finally a theory of the nature of artistic change during the later nineteenth century is offered and the evidence of the thesis drawn on to support it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this thesis.

B.M.	British Museum
Burl. Mag.	Burlington Magazine
M.A.	Magazine of Art
J.R.S.A.	Journal of the Royal Society of Arts
R.D.D.	Revue des Deux Mondes
V. and A.	Victoria and Albert Museum
Ren. Litt. et A.	La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique.
G.B.A.	Gazette des Beaux Arts.

## INTRODUCTION

This introduction is in two parts. The first part is an attempt to recommend the subject to the reader, to explain my interest in it and to relate it to some general problems of method. The second part is concerned with the problems of selection and ordering of the material which the thesis presents.

### Part One

It is well-known that, as a result of the opening-up of Japan to trade with the West in the early 1850's a great deal of Japanese art and information about Japanese culture became available in England and France, and that during the later 19th century Far Eastern art had a considerable influence on Western visual art. It is the purpose of this thesis to provide the most accurate account possible of these events and then to discuss the implications of this account for the history of art in England and France in the later nineteenth century.

When Richard Muther wrote his "History of Modern Painting" at the end of the nineteenth century, he included a separate chapter on the history of Japanese art and its influence in Europe. He thought this influence of supreme importance. It was a revelation for painters which freed them from stiff symmetrical designs and dull unimaginative colouring. He believed this to be so self-evident that he barely touches on the reasons for the interest in Japanese art of individual artists.

Contemporary accounts of artistic changes often treat them in this way. It seems that when one writes within the context of a particular artistic situation one takes many aspects of the situation for granted. At any given time the making of art would appear to be perceived as a part of a continuum of levels of meaning, of associations and emotions, of which no more than a fraction are articulated by critics, historians or the artist himself. It is therefore very diffi-

cult to give an accurate account of the nature of changes in art, for one can seldom identify the factors involved in such changes, much less assign them their correct significance. In order to avoid transmitting historical myths or seriously distorting the significance of any influence in the creation of particular works of art it is often necessary to examine the interests and developments of individual artists in as much detail as possible, and to contrast this with a fully documented account of the art objects, information available and critical writings together with any other material that may be seen to have taken part in the complex process of artistic change. There are many ways in which the effect of any given influence may be described. Only by detailed historical investigation can one suggest which of these accounts is most valid.

Moreover this activity reflects back on one's conception of the subject of the change. In the case of this thesis for example, a knowledge of the use made of Far Eastern art by Impressionist artists and critics indicates a great deal about their artistic intentions. It also helps us to understand the overall meaning of their works and to resist attempts to reduce that meaning to simple, inadequate explanations, for instance that Impressionism was the result of the scientific analysis of light.

The study of later nineteenth century art has been particularly subject to such inadequate rationalisations. This is chiefly the result of the influence of those critics of twentieth century art from Fry to Greenberg who have made nineteenth century art into a mythology designed chiefly to justify their views of twentieth century art. 2

Until recently the development of art during this period has been accounted for in purely formal terms. Historical necessity in the guise of boredom with one set of forms or another was supposed to have led to a succession of forms which had the inherent merit of being different.

To put the thesis at its crudest it was in this way that the hard outlines and bright colours which were taken to indicate Post-Impressionism replaced the soft lines and natural colours by which Impressionism was defined. Because of this theory of art history as an action-reaction process, influences such as Oriental art tended to be described as external, inconsequential adjuncts to a process with unique laws beyond the consciousness of the artists through whom it worked. Oriental art was relegated to the role of a pattern book consulted by artists in need of a little formal stimulation.

Thus, though considerable work has been done on the influence of Oriental art during this period, most of it has been concerned with parallels in form between Eastern and Western art. In particular, certain formal qualities found in Japanese prints were recognised in the work of Western artists. Usually these qualities were no more than flat areas of colour with distinct outlines, although recently more subtle influences have been detected. Such research is necessarily 3 fragmentary and can never be expected to achieve an adequate description of the influence of Oriental art and the imaginative response to it. Even the influence of Oriental art on the subject matter has scarcely been considered. Another weakness of the formalist approach to the problem is that it directs attention almost exclusively towards a narrow range of Japanese prints as sources and away from other material such as contemporary publications about the Far East and exhibitions of Oriental art.

In the most recent general discussions of the problem that I know of, M. Roskill deals with subject matter at length. However he bases 4 his account of Oriental influences on a distinction between Japonisme, (the use of Japanese formal devices in Western painting), and Japonaiserie, (the literary use of Japanese subjects in Western style painting). In my opinion the evidence does not support his strict definition of the terms. By the use of this distinction he attempts to

uphold the action-reaction theory. He argues that Japanese art was of little consequence for the spontaneous formal innovation which for him constitutes Western art at this time. I disagree with his conclusions but more importantly, I disagree with his premise. Art may well be about art but not in the limited sense that the action-reaction theory suggests.

I hope to provide evidence in this thesis that the development of art during this period was an organic process much like the Italian Renaissance. That is to say that the different styles developed round a series of consistent problems and obsessions. There are basic preoccupations which remain constant, even in the works of artists who opposed each other in contemporary debates.

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The great range of artists attracted by Oriental art suggests this in itself. When this enthusiasm became a popular fashion in the '70's and '80's, it became clear that the appeal of Oriental art was related directly to the preoccupations which artists shared with other members of society and was not an esoteric fascination of an eccentric cult.

One of the most important of these problems was the relationship of art and nature, behind which there stood the search for an adequate account of man's relation to nature, which was in question throughout the nineteenth century. Writers on Far Eastern art in the nineteenth century are often stimulated by their subject to discuss the relationship of art to nature. Oriental art seems to have acted as a catalyst in the reevaluation of this relationship by critics and artists.

A parallel is also found in much contemporary criticism between the influence of Japanese art and Greek art on nineteenth century Western art.

These examples show how the study of a particular influence in detail should help us to understand not just the formal connotations of

that influence but a little more of the whole range of associations and meanings embodied in particular works of art. An artistic influence of any importance relates to its subject on many levels. It cannot be understood in terms of a few mechanical comparisons or generalised quotations. To understand an influence is to understand its subject more accurately.

It might even be argued that to use the word "influence" is to prejudge the relationship between two elements within an artistic change and to suggest a transitive, directly causal relationship between two elements within an artistic change, before such causal relationship has been justified. Indeed, as I shall show, Japanese art did not simply overbear Western art by its novelty and by force of numbers in the later 1860's and 1870's, as some writers have suggested. Japanese art was present in Europe before it became a major element in contemporary artistic culture and had very little influence indeed. I would therefore prefer to regard the nature of the change in which Far Eastern art took part as a completely open question until the conclusion of this thesis. I have tried to define its role in the 1860's through the metaphor of a catalyst, an element which is essential to a chemical change taking place but is not itself altered by it. This avoids the danger of a simple causal explanation for events which as I shall show depended on the interaction of many complex factors.

The investigation that I propose demands that one should look at familiar works of art and the historical accounts of them from a different point of view. This viewpoint will enable a more accurate account of the artistic preoccupations of the time to be given. This can be done because the peculiar circumstances of the appearance of Japanese art in Europe gives some hope of making progress away from the vicious circle defined by Gombrich in his essay, "In Search of Cultural History";

The study of such derivations, metaphors and symbols in language, literature and art provides, no doubt, convenient points of entry into the study of more cultural interactions. But I do not think more should be claimed for this approach than it is likely to yield. By itself it cannot offer an escape from the basic dilemma caused by the breakdown of the Hegelian tradition which stems from the chastening insight that no culture can be understood in isolation. It appears as if the cultural historians were thus still left without a viable programme, grubbing among the random curiosities of antiquarian lore.

Most, if not all, attempts to discuss creative activity in historical terms fall foul of this problem. They resort to unjustified generalisations which assume the overall unity of a cultural period and proceed to the illegitimate assumption that some central principle can be found behind the different aspects of a culture which can be used to explain the creative process. Gombrich has been the most consistent critic of all attempts to rationalise the existence and nature of works of art in this manner, whether in terms of immanent theories such as the "action-reaction hypothesis" discussed above, or in terms of social or economic causes. He sees all such causes as springing from Hegelian misconceptions about history. Yet without such a discussion the historian of art is reduced to recording the results of change by contrasting the form of the works produced before and after he believes that it took place. To group works of art into "Styles" or "Periods" in this way is to say very little about the creative processes which produced them and which in the end can alone account for their existence. It is easy to mistake such categories for a description of reality. The historian then finds himself cut off both from the range of cultural significance attached to works of art by those who made them and from the assessment of the works by his own contemporaries. Artists and their works are made to appear in history without visible support, like the victims of a rather dubious conjuring trick. Because of his demand for rigour, the knowledge of the

historian assumes that existence without reason to which so many biographies and catalogues raisonné act as ineloquent testimonies.

Gombrich's criticisms are in many ways justified. However he does not deal with the possibility of discovering more about the nature of the creation of works of art in history through the study of periods when artistic change is taking place, or at least is strongly felt to be taking place by contemporaries and by later critics and historians. For him "The study of cultures is largely the study of continuities". In one sense this is true, given a certain viewpoint the whole history of art can be seen as a continuous process. This is, however, a chosen viewpoint. It is equally possible to maintain that art develops by revolution and reaction. Neither attitude by itself helps us to understand the historical nature of the creative process. On balance it seems that by looking closely at a period when discontinuity is believed to have occurred one may escape some of the consequences of the vicious circle which Gombrich defined so clearly. The period which I propose to study in this thesis is of this kind. Stylistic differences, critical polemics and a mass of contemporary writings concerned with the nature of art make it possible to deduce a great deal about what was and what was not accepted as part of the overall sphere of significance attached to works of art. Moreover the appearance in Europe of Japanese art, an almost totally alien art form, with its attendant cultural information at precisely the time of such a change, provides an ideal instrument with which to investigate the art of the times.

When doctors wish to examine the flow of blood through an organ or the working of a complex bodily process, they often introduce an alien substance and trace its path through the body. A rigorous historical examination of the appearance of Far Eastern art in the West and its influence should give strong historical grounds for a parti-

cular interpretation of the nature of artistic activity at that time. If contemporary writers are unanimous in their choice of certain terms to describe Japanese art then we shall know that these terms can be treated as having a common importance in the artistic preoccupations of the time. If artists select the same limited repertory of forms, motifs or images from Japanese art for their own work we will know something of their individual interests and the extent to which they coincided. If there are consistent differences between the reaction to Japanese art in England and France we shall be able to infer something of the importance of national characteristics within culture. These are simple examples of the information to be gained through such a study. If there is any sort of Hegelian process taking place the historical investigation should reveal it. The same applies to all other hypotheses about the nature of cultural development including Gombrich's belief in continuity. Thus the study that I propose would not only produce a much more precise account of a particular historical event, it would also provide a test in a particular historical situation for many of the different hypotheses about the relationship of works of art to culture as a whole. The peculiar circumstances of the appearance of Far Eastern art in Europe enable this to be done without incurring the need to achieve Gombrich's impossible demand that one should account for the whole culture. It is open to question how far these general results could be applied to other historical circumstances, to the study of other periods.

Nonetheless the testing of various general hypotheses through rigorous historical examination is a most important aspect of this thesis. I would like to stress this here because I do not intend to refer to them again until I have completed my historical account. I also hope that this will help to justify what may seem at times to be an overscrupulous treatment of detail in the account, which occupies

most of the thesis.

This is therefore a good opportunity to outline some of the hypotheses which interest me. They have all arisen out of the practical problems of writing the historical account which forms the bulk of this thesis. None of them seem to me to be satisfactory, but they all have something to say about the nature of artistic change and development. I will refer to them again in my conclusion.

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The Metaphor of Art as Language and Information

It has been fashionable recently to treat works of art as a form of language, as a bearer of knowledge or information which makes use of a strictly defined grammar. Whilst this hypothesis has a great deal to recommend it as it offers a means of explaining the problem of stylistic consistence at any given period, it founders on the problem of establishing the units of variability, the equivalent of phonemes, of which the visual language is made up, and the grammar through which they operate. This is because visual "language", if such it may be called, has never been abstracted from reality to the point where it can be regarded as pure convention. Visual language in art appears always to be in some degree analogical, producing forms which refer by analogy to a wide range of human experience and thus acquire specific meaning. In the case of interaction between an Oriental and a Western culture, the visual language hypothesis of art would lead to the assumption that two alien language forms were interacting, and one would attempt to describe the interaction in linguistic terms. In this thesis I have attempted to discover how much of the original cultural significance of Japanese visual form was consciously incorporated into the meaning of works by those Western artists who made use of Japanese art. I have also investigated the extent to which Western culture created serviceable myths, almost as defensive reactions, to enable the forms of Japanese art to be used as part of a Western visual

language without disrupting that language with totally alien meanings. It seems that these two activities went on side by side and that a third development, the need to invent a visual language for new areas of experience grew in importance during the period under study. I have also tried to discover if there are any rules to this transfer of meaning from one culture to another, such as would imply a consistent "visual grammar" in either, and if so, whether these rules apply to forms, motifs, compositional patterns. There is in linguistics a theory called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which suggests that all cultural phenomena are determined by the meanings and concepts within the language of that culture. It is sometimes argued from this that two cultures cannot communicate with each other on any level unless their languages contain similar concepts. The hypothesis clearly applies just as well to visual language. I have borne in mind the possibility of parallelism between the context and hence the meaning of the two art forms. These are indicated for instance by a similarity between metropolitan Tokyo and metropolitan Paris. I have also looked for evidence of a response to Oriental art in terms of the ability to overstep the limits of a particular visual language to create new meanings.

As a result of these investigations I hope to show that the notion of visual art as a language and a method of articulating experience and a transmitter of information is important as a means of discussing the historical nature of creative activity. At the same time I hope to show that interaction between different cultures is possible in art and that it is not bound by the rules of any linguistic game, that the notion of a consistent limited visual grammar is inadequate as a means of describing cultural change.

## Structures

Another fashionable hypothesis as to the relation between art and culture as a whole has been that which starts from the assumption that underlying all human activity in any given culture there is an unacknowledged system of rules. These rules are taken to be the true content of the art produced by this culture. This content is thought to be explicable by observing formal changes within art to the exclusion of all consideration of the contemporary meaning of the work. The best known example of this is Jack Burnham's essay on the disappearance of the pedestal in modern sculpture. I hope to show that formalist 12 accounts of this kind are misconceived and that they fail to account for many aspects of cultural change.

## The social hypothesis

There are many versions of the hypothesis that art depends for its significance on economic and social conditions. Social and political change is often used as the rationale for an explanation of artistic change. Since there was both a popular and an artistic response to the appearance of Japanese art in Europe it should be possible to make some comment on the extent to which the popular understanding of Japan and the popular myths about it and about Japanese art formed part of the cultural basis which lent significance to Western works which made use of Japanese art. This was clearly so in the case of Van Gogh. Conversely it should be possible to show whether the use of the Japanese example in Western art influences contemporary popular appreciation of Japanese art.

It should also be possible to define the extent to which enthusiasm for Japanese art was the prerogative of any particular social group in England or France and whether its influence on Western art was conditioned by such a relationship. For instance the ideas of the English middle-class about what was and what was not art that had been

principally formed by Ruskin were to be seriously challenged by the popularity of Japanese art amongst them, and they were the chief patrons of art in England.

I have attempted an investigation of these questions in so far as they provide convincing explanations of some aspects of the art produced during the period studied by this thesis. I have found it necessary to study the response to Japanese art at some length for, as can readily be seen by considering the Japanese appearance at the great Paris exhibitions of 1867 and 1878, the popular and artistic responses proceeded simultaneously. The tremendous popular success of Japanese art in Europe would make a study of the popular response necessary in any case. One wishes to know why Japanese art achieved this while Indian and Chinese art did not.

#### Individuals and Movements in Art

In opposition to the social hypothesis there is the viewpoint which stresses the innovatory role of the individual in cultural change. This is the view expressed by Gombrich;

I hope and believe cultural history will make progress if it fixes its attention firmly on the individual human being. Movements, as distinct from periods, are started by people. Some of them are abortive, others catch on. Each movement in its turn has a core of dedicated souls, a crowd of hangers-on, not to forget a lunatic fringe. There is a whole spectrum of attitudes and degrees of conversion. Even within the individual there may be various levels of conviction, various conscious and unconscious fluctuations in loyalty.

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One is tempted to ask why Gombrich has never produced a monograph on a single major innovator if he believes this is the appropriate way to deal with cultural change, but this is not a serious answer to his point.

A more fundamental objection to this point of view is that while it is possible and indeed vital to pick out certain central individuals in the history of any cultural movement, individuals are only capable

of acting in terms of the image which they have of their culture. This image is the result of their social experience, part of what has been called the social construction of reality. In this thesis I have selected De Goncourt, Ph. Burty, Chesneau, Audsley, Dresser and Alcock as central figures in the development of Japanese enthusiasm. Yet it is clear that their role as innovators was conditional on the nature of the culture in which they acted.

They all saw Japanese art in terms of particular problems within European art at the time that they were writing. This was inevitable.

The thesis also deals in some depth with the use of Far Eastern art by artists who have been seen as part of the Realist, Impressionist or Aesthetic movements. Considered from this point of view, the notion of "movements" in the sense in which Gombrich uses it comes increasingly to appear as a convenient and misleading abstraction. For instance in which movement does one place Whistler? Moreover the response to Far Eastern art of the great individual innovators such as Manet, Monet or Van Gogh, shows that they, like the critics and collectors who led the enthusiasm for Japanese art, acted in the context of their total experience of their own culture. For this is the only way in which an artist can create work which is innovatory work that embodies significant aspects of contemporary experience. To pursue this discussion further would be to anticipate my conclusion. I hope to demonstrate that the apparent contradiction between the view of artistic change as socially conditioned and the artist as a great individual innovator has resulted from a misconception of the historical nature of creative activity. The truth is far more complex and far more exciting, as exciting as art itself. At any given time culture forms an organic unity which grows or changes as a whole. The historical development of art can only be understood as a part of this unified change.

The brief outlines of hypotheses I have given above are intended only as general codifications of problems which occur in a more complex but more realistic form as part of the method of the historical account which follows. I have no desire to conduct an extended philosophical polemic and will not discuss them again until I reach my conclusion. My primary concerns will be with historical accuracy and precise criticism of the works I discuss.

#### Part Two. Organisation and Method

It was the original intention of this thesis simply to investigate the use made of Far Eastern art in the visual art in England and France in the later nineteenth century, in terms of the available published research. This proved to be far more problematic than I had anticipated. It became clear that there was no consistent account of the nature of Far Eastern art and of the information about it available in Europe in the later nineteenth century, and that all published discussions of the influence of Far Eastern art in England and France were based on untested assumptions about this. For instance, no attempt had been made to document the kind of Japanese art available in the 1860's as opposed to the 1870's.

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During this period the chief event was the discovery of Japanese art and its emergence as a separate identity from within the general European idea of Far Eastern art. However the value placed on Chinese art in the West forms an inevitable counterpoint to this discovery. For Chinese art had been influential in Europe since the seventeenth century and had given rise to a European conception of Far Eastern art, which can be exemplified by eighteenth century Chinoiserie. Chinese art was not fully separated from Japanese art in the European consciousness till the late 1870's. They must therefore be discussed together despite the gradual eclipse of Chinese art.

The period I have chosen to discuss in detail covers the major

events in the European discovery of Japanese art. The first full opening of Japan to the West for nearly three hundred years took place as a result of trade treaties made with the United States and Great Britain in the 1850's. From then until 1867 Japanese goods appeared 15 sporadically in England and France as a result of the initiative of individual European dealers and collectors. In 1867 there occurred the first major official Japanese exhibition in the West, and immediately afterward Japan went through revolutionary political changes which caused a great flood of Japanese works of art and craft to enter Europe in the 1870's. During this decade two further great international exhibitions in Vienna in 1873 and in Paris in 1878, provided settings for triumphant appearances of Japanese art. There also sprang up a great trade in Japanese goods organised by dealers such as Bing and Sichel. This thesis sets out to reconstruct Far Eastern sections of the great exhibitions as far as possible, and to describe the work of the dealers. Through this it hopes to establish a general pattern for the types and quantities of artworks imported into Europe at different times during the 1860's and 1870's. It attempts to relate this pattern to the developing knowledge of Japanese art and culture and the critical reaction to it in Europe through the same period in order to discover the range of significance assigned by Europeans to it. For the experience of a visual work of art always takes place in the context of assigned meanings, associations and relationships. Most historians who have written on the influence of the Far Eastern example have neglected to study this context. Thus ignorance of both the precise nature of the "Japanese art" available to nineteenth century artists and critics and of the context of meaning into which it was placed has led to accounts of Far Eastern influence on Western art based on little more than apparent likenesses between an Eastern and Western image. There can be no discussion, no analysis

and no proof of such accounts, since they are not conditioned by historical evidence as to their probability or even possibility.

This thesis attempts to progress beyond this state of affairs by means of the fullest possible historical account of Japanese enthusiasm between the opening of Japan to trade and the mid-1880's.

The breaking off of the account at this point may seem arbitrary when one considers<sup>s</sup> that it barely includes "The Mikado" (1885), and would appear to deny the opportunity of discussing the context of the use of Far Eastern art by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and others. However I have been able to demonstrate that the full range of Japanese art works of all forms and from all ages became available and publicly known in the early 1880's. Almost simultaneously the supplies of good Japanese art of Edo and earlier periods began to dry up and the immense import trade in them came to an end.

I have also shown that at the same time a change occurred in the nature of Japanese enthusiasm in the West. It became scholarly, scientific and insular, concerned with identifying the works of particular artists, establishing accurate chronologies and other activities of a character which tended to isolate Japanese art from Western culture. In a word, Japanese enthusiasm became specialised, the province of scholars who had little or no interest in art as a whole. As I shall show, in the 1870's Japanese enthusiasts such as Burty in France or Audsley in England had been concerned to treat Japanese art in terms of their understanding of art as a totality. There were thus created a great many serviceable myths which were to remain the basis of Western appreciation of Japanese art throughout the nineteenth century. Some of these, such as the myth of the Japanese as great observers of nature still exist today.

I have therefore chosen to end my account of the context of Japanese enthusiasm at the point which is most readily suggested by

historical circumstances. There is no reason to continue a discussion of the probability of one kind of Japanese art having more influence on European critics and artists than any other, once all kinds of Japanese art have been shown to be generally available in Europe. One can only pursue the matter further in direct discussion of a particular artist or work of art. Moreover the vital critical junction between the discoverers and propagandists for Japanese art and current developments in Western art was severed in the mid-1880's. The study of later European writings on Japanese art would reveal nothing new of its influence on European art.

The thesis is divided into unequal sections, covering events before and after the 1867 Universal Exhibition in Paris. This division was made partly because of the importance traditionally accorded to the Japanese appearance at this exhibition by historians. However there are also general differences which call for some change in method between the periods before and after 1867. The general historical situation of European artists in England and France changed considerably between the 1860's and 1870's. Also there is much more detailed information available with regard to Far Eastern art in Europe after 1867. The discussion of context in each period is followed by a discussion of the role of the Far Eastern example in the development of the visual arts in which the contextual study is used to control the account of the effects of Far Eastern art and to criticise previous accounts of Far Eastern influence. In this way I hope to provide a more convincing account of this influence than has previously been possible. The fascination with esoteric Eastern cultures has always been present in Western art. One thinks of the illustrations of the travels of Marco Polo, who first used the word Japan (Zipangu), or Rembrandt's Persian miniatures. Chinese and Japanese lacquerware and ceramics were imported by the Dutch into Holland from the seventeenth

century. The blue and white ceramics gave rise to Delftware in Holland. In the eighteenth century a thriving trade existed in Europe in imported Chinese art, much of it specially designed for export. The Dutch continued to import small quantities of Japanese art from their trading station on the island of Decima, off the coast of Japan. At this time Far Eastern art had already acquired in the Western mind many of the exotic associations which were to remain part of the Western idea of the East. Several studies have been made of these events, and it is unnecessary to discuss them here. It is important, however, to discuss briefly the systematic discovery of the cultures of the Near and Far East which began in the late eighteenth century.

These discoveries were extremely significant in the creation of the romantic ethos which was dominant in Western culture in the early 1850's when large quantities of Japanese art appeared in Europe for the first time.

It was the Romantic conception of exotic cultures of both Near and Far Eastern, which shaped the early response to Japanese art. R. Schwab, in his book "La Renaissance Orientale", has claimed that the discovery of the East which began in the eighteenth century caused such changes in Western culture that it justifies the title "The Oriental Renaissance". In particular he thinks that the discovery of India and the religious experiences recorded in Sanskrit led to serious questions about the place of Western culture in the scheme of man's development. The self-confidence of Western civilisation was drowned in the consciousness of other cultures. This affected art, particularly literature, in a more direct way than some other areas. In 1800 Schlegel wrote in "The Athenaeum" an article entitled "Im Orient müssen wir das höchst Romantische suchen", referring to the Near East and India. One thinks at once of the references to the far east and far eastern art in literature such as Beckford's "Vathek"

The problems of Romanticism lie at the basis of all nineteenth century art and Orientalism is an inseparable part of Romantic consciousness. 20

In view of this it is surprising that there was little direct influence from Near or Far Eastern cultures on the visual arts. Oriental art as such seems to have left little influence on the art of the West in the early nineteenth century. At first this seems easy to explain. The art of the Near East which was available in the early nineteenth century virtually abstained from representation. The art of India seems to have remained a mystery to Western artists; perhaps because the religious motives for it were beyond their understanding and the greatest of its achievements were not portable. The Far East was only opened to the West towards the middle of the century, China in the late 1830's and the '40's, and Japan in the late 1850's and early '60's. Until the early 1850's all places east of the Red Sea remained part of "Les Grandes Indes". Artists such as Delacroix, Decamps, Chasseriau, Ingres and the Englishman, J.F. Lewis, treated the Near East as an extension of Italy, an addition to the Grand Tour. It was the experience of looking in a strange light at a strange land and a strange people which interested them. In order to express the shock felt by the West directly in literature, religion and scholarship, Delacroix had to content himself with a Baroque treatment of an exotic subject. Thus in "The Death of Sardanapalus" we have a literary response to the East used as a motif for an extended Baroque image. The only appearance of Oriental visual sensibility is in the theatrical properties or furnishings of the scene.

However this very simple explanation of the absence of direct influence of Oriental art in the early nineteenth century is not entirely satisfactory. Far Eastern art had been well-known in Europe at an earlier date. One has only to think of Chinoiserie. It therefore becomes necessary to trace the responses to Far Eastern art

in the first half of the nineteenth century in order to account more accurately for the postponement of the direct visual effects of the "Oriental Renaissance". This postponement has obscured to some extent the continuity of the Orient in the artistic consciousness of the nineteenth century, a continuity which affected the visual arts as much as any other.

I will try to show that the attraction of Far Eastern art was prepared in part at least by the happenings that Schwab calls the "Oriental Renaissance". The visual challenge to Western culture was postponed until Far Eastern art which was representational and portable was available in sufficient quantities to influence Western artists directly but the sensibility which received it was developed over a long period of time. The first task of this thesis will be to account for that sensibility.

SECTION ONE

CHAPTER ONE. The Development of the knowledge of Far Eastern art and the literary and critical response to the Far East from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century until 1867.

Many accounts of Far Eastern art in Europe during the nineteenth century suggest that the interest in Oriental art by Western artists was directly caused by the opening of Japan to Western trade on a significant scale in 1854. This is far too simplistic a viewpoint. 1  
 The literary involvement of Europe with the Far East goes back to the eighteenth century. Chinese art had even been made intentionally for export during that time and it is a mistake to separate the conscious- 2  
 ness of Eastern art which developed from this long contact with the Orient and the responses to the East made by artists in England and France in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Dutch in particular had a long trading history with Japan and had introduced a considerable quantity of Japanese art into Europe. The sudden development of Oriental influences in mid-nineteenth century art can only be understood by looking at the development of this awareness from the beginning of the century and attempting to relate this to the development of Western art.

There are two related descriptions of the development of Oriental influence. The first suggests that the eighteenth century view of the East was based on an idealised fiction derived from China as a "vision of Cathay". This then went out of fashion in the early nineteenth 3  
 century, and a new development came about only with the opening up of Japan. This new development was supposedly scientifically based on scholarly publications and a detailed discussion of Japanese art and artists. The second description sees the first half of the nineteenth

century as predominantly influenced by a literary view of the Orient founded on translations of Chinese literature and propagated by Théophile Gautier and other authors. Only with the advent of Japanese art in the mid 1850's did the visual side of the East come to have significance.

4

Both views assume that Chinese art had little effect on the development of Western art in the second half of the nineteenth century, but as I shall show it is a mistake to separate the influence of Chinese and Japanese art strictly in temporal sequence. We must also bear in mind that until the 1870's it is very difficult to be certain that the products of the two nations were separated fully by those who looked at them. The history of the years of Oriental influence is concerned with the development of distinctions and tastes beginning with the perception of characteristics unique to each nation. Simultaneously the West developed a series of cultural myths about the Far East which informed the visual experience with meaning. It is clear that these myths grew out of the western experience of both Chinese and Japanese culture and that they had their roots in both. It is true that Japanese art is the major influence on the West but to treat it exclusively would give a misleading impression of the situation in which its influence had effect.

It is also misleading, in my view, to separate the development of interest in England and France. Travel between London and Paris was quite easy during the middle of the century and important exhibitions in either centre attracted an audience from the other. An example of this can be seen in Gautier's visit to London in 1851. Artists like Whistler also commuted between the two capitals. Moreover major Japanese enthusiasts in each country knew each other and read each other's books. Ph. Durty's library contained all the English books published on Japanese art and he corresponded with Audsley, Anderson and other English authorities

In this chapter I would like to offer an account of the development of scholarly knowledge of Oriental art and the critical response to it in the nineteenth century before 1867 when a very large exhibition of Japanese art was held in Paris as part of the international exhibition. I am aware of the difficulty of making any definitive statements about this early period, for one's sources tend to be either books published by early travellers to the East who have devoted some small part of their work to description and illustration of Oriental art or literary works which make use of the idea of the East, often incorporating ideas or imagery from the travel books. Both of these sources are likely to be misleading by virtue of the whims of individual authors. However their illustrations are a unique record of the kinds of art that were available in the West, and the quality of these is a precise indication of the discrimination of those who made them and of those who looked at them.

The frequency of publications increases dramatically around 1860. This in itself acts as a trustworthy indication of the date at which the Far East became a matter of general interest. The publications in connection with the international exhibitions held in London and Paris, beginning with the London Exhibition of 1851, are unique and important sources. These exhibitions which displayed the arts of the East and West side by side, were highly influential in enlarging the sense of what was possible for Western artists and designers to accomplish and of the "legitimate" in the visual arts. They exposed in particular the vulgarity of much Western industrial design, and the pomposity of much Western "Fine Art".

#### The early development of knowledge of Far Eastern art.

##### China

By 1800, the Chinese export trade had led to the accumulation of much Chinese and some Japanese art in the great collections of Europe.

The royal and noble houses of Germany, Denmark, England and France boasted large collections, amongst them the collection of lacquer owned by Marie Antoinette that was to be proudly quoted by De Goncourt when he linked Japanese art to European eighteenth century taste.

In doing this, De Goncourt was not making a revolutionary discovery. Far Eastern art had been represented as sharing the slight charms of late Rococo throughout the early nineteenth century, both in literature and in Western illustrations of it. The earliest nineteenth century illustrated books on China make no mention of its art. The English translation of Breton de la Martinière's "China, its customs and arts etc.," published in 1813 is typical in this respect. The text does not discuss the arts and the coloured plates give little clue as to the aesthetic value of Chinese arts and crafts. Their value lies in their curiosity. The same may be said of books on Japan published in this early period.

Breton himself wrote one in 1818. Like others, such as Shoberl's "China in Miniature" and "Japan in Miniature" of 1816, it was composed of extracts from earlier works by travellers to the Far East and illustrated with small coloured plates showing native costume and customs. All such early works show little interest in the arts and contain no verbal or visual information about them.

It was in the 1840's that interest in the visual aspects of the Far East developed, as a result of the increasing European involvement with China in the opium trade and the wars which occurred as a result of that trade. The work of European artists who visited and lived in China, such as George Chinnery, began to appear in Europe. As we shall see, Baudelaire reviewed several such works in his Salons from the 1840's onwards. They formed a special genre of travel pictures which set a standard of expectation from Eastern subject paintings and a way of treating Eastern art and architecture which precluded

any attempt to understand Far Eastern art in its own terms.

Instead the new vision of the East was a result of the imposition of the Romantic vision of man and nature onto the ideas bequeathed by Chinoiserie. This is not <sup>as</sup> paradoxical as it appears, merely a natural consequence of the role of Schwab's "Oriental Renaissance" in the development of Romantic attitudes.

We have a good record of the visual image of the Far East current at the time in G. N. Wright's "China Illustrated" which has many folio 9 engravings of paintings of China by Thomas Allom, who we are informed "has dwelt in the land of the Cypress and the myrtle".

Many of the illustrations were based on sketches which Allom made while in China. From these it is clear that he was a visitor to the Nanking area where the European traders had settled. In his preface Wright claims that several others were taken from "The beautiful collection of Chinese drawings by Native artists of Sir George Staunton". 10 However it is impossible to tell which these are, as Allom's working has combined with the reproductive process to produce a standard Western "romantic" style for all the images. This demonstrates the unwillingness of Europeans in the early 1840's to consider that Far Eastern styles had any independent aesthetic virtues. Contemporary European vision was imposed on Chinese scenes with the same thoughtless self-confidence which led to the opium wars and the eventual destruction of Chinese civilisation.

Wright's image of the "Imperial Palace at Tseou-Shan" is a I (2) typical example of the imposition of the Romantic on the eighteenth century picturesque, with its high Turner-esque crags and back lighting. In this setting nestle several pavillions worthy of Brighton and some accurately observed but picturesquely disposed junks. "Nothing", says Wright, "can exceed the picturesque irregularity of the surface of this isle."

The link with Romanticism is stressed by Wright's habit of beginning his discussion of each illustration with a quotation from Romantic poetry, with the intention of thus colouring the image for his reader. His discussion of "Pavillion and Gardens of a Mandarin, near Pekin", begins with a quotation from Byron:

In marble paved pavillion, where a spring  
Of living water from the centre rose,  
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling  
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose  
They Sat.

In the same discussion Wright condemns Chinese and indeed Buddhist art as a whole for deriving its art and ornament from nature. In doing this he was, no doubt, following the common though already old-fashioned belief that the task of art was to struggle against nature by invention and regulation, that nature uncontrolled was uncivilised and hostile:

It has been before observed that the fantastic roof, so extensively adopted in China, is borrowed from the bell of the lotus flower inverted; their doors and their windows appear also to be formed after patterns presented by nature. As the lotus is the object of religious veneration, it is not surprising that they have introduced its likeness in those structures, with which human happiness is so closely associated; and the advantages which the mulberry leaf have, during all recorded time, conferred upon the nation, is sufficient reason for its introduction in architectural ornaments, and even in the doorways and casements of noblest mansions. Many decorations such as large china jars, sumptuous lanterns and gilded images are copied from the embellishments and furniture of Buddhist temples, yet the founders of that foolish faith have literally invented nothing new, they merely plagiarised and misapplied what they read "in trees and stones".

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This view of the relation of Far Eastern art to nature is evidence of the inaccessibility of European art to Far Eastern influence in the 1840's. In order for it to have had influence, European ideas about art and indeed about the inviolable primacy of the European Graeco-Christian cultural tradition as a whole would have to have changed considerably. Wright added the following poem to an illustration of "The Temple of the Bonzes in the Quang-yen Rock";

Christian look home! Thy heart's recesses scan  
 The chambers of thy spirit's imag'ry,  
 Mark well its mazes subterranean,  
 Idol enthroned and troops that bow the knee  
 Christian, look home! and ere to curse thou dare  
 Be sure no Bonze's cavern'd haunt is there.

12

Within fifty years that most "Christian" of artists, Van Gogh, was to paint himself as a Bonze, a Buddhist monk, as a complex allusion to his artistic vocation. Many other artists modelled themselves on Far Eastern examples and the relation between art and nature in European culture had been revolutionised. Invention and imagination, in Wright's sense, had come to be seen as dull and insignificant.

The emergence of a new, relativistic attitude to the art of different cultures was an inescapable prelude to such a change. I shall show that this change occurred more swiftly and easily in France and is reflected in the aesthetic writings of Flaubert, Gautier, Baudelaire and Zola, whereas in England, the religious and moral aesthetic theories of Ruskin inhibited such a development.

Allom continued to work as an illustrator and in 1852 produced some inadequate work for a book on Japan by Macfarlane. The illustrations are poor Westernised images, hardly distinguishable apart from their poor technique from those in Wright's "China". The natural movement of artists and illustrators and writers who studied in China in the 1840's to Japan in the 1850's onwards, was to strengthen the association of the two in the public's mind and to help to postpone the impact of original elements in Japanese art until the 1860's. The first Western cultural image of Japan was to be founded on picturesque or romantic images of China.

13

I (3)

A steadily increasing flow of Chinese goods into Europe began in the 1840's. Several sales in London and Paris testify to this.

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The most important event for the spread of visual knowledge of the Chinese and Chinese art at this time was the Chinese Collection. This was exhibited at St. George's Place, Hyde Park Corner, London,

in the early 1840's, and then went on tour throughout the country.

A handbill advertising the appearance of this collection in Paragon St., Hull, Yorkshire, in the late 1840's quotes from "The Times";

I (4)

This collection, the result of great expense, and a residence of eleven years in China by the Proprietor, is amongst the most curious ever opened in London. It is a complete illustration of the manners and customs and in many respects of the history and religion of an immense empire, but imperfectly known to Europeans. This is an immense collection of all sorts of things connected with the manufactures, the modes of living, the costumes and domestic economy and the state of the arts in China. There is something to please all inquirers. There is no Exhibition to compare with it in Oriental grandeur and beautiful arrangement.

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The exhibition was extremely popular. It was a highly elaborate display of Chinese furniture, art and craft which fully justified the claim of its English curator, W. Langdon to have created an accurate reconstruction of a part of China in miniature. I give a brief account of the exhibition taken from Langdon's catalogue and the handbill quoted above as Appendix A.

16

The most important of the thousands of exhibits, for this thesis, were the 322 paintings by Chinese artists on display throughout its various rooms. Most of these were chosen for their depiction of sights or human activities of general interest to westerners.

Langdon applied European criteria to Chinese art, but picked out the observation of flora and fauna and the use of colour as great achievements. These themes run through the whole history of European interest in Far Eastern art.

The Fine Arts in China are undoubtedly far from having reached the perfection that belongs to them in the enlightened nations of Christendom; yet the paintings in this collection, will satisfy every candid mind that great injustice has been done to Chinese artists, in the notions hitherto entertained respecting their want of ability and skill. They paint insects, birds, fishes, fruits, flowers and portraits with great correctness and beauty; and the brilliancy and

variety of their colours cannot be surpassed. They group with considerable taste and effect; and their perspective, a department of art in which they have been thought totally deficient, is often very good. Light and shade they do not well understand, and they positively object to the introduction of shadow in pictures. But in paintings for foreigners, they endeavour to meet the ideas of their employers by the introduction of light and shadow.

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Many of the items in this exhibition, from ceramics to Buddhist sculpture must have been among the first of their kind to be seen by Europeans.

However its importance for this thesis lies far less in the particular items it contained than in the context in which it presented them. The exhibition gave an overall image of the Far East to hundreds of thousands of English people. It did this through the first-hand presentation of works of art and craft. It thus contributed greatly to the Western cultural myth of the Far East which developed in the mid-nineteenth century.

18

In the late 1840's and '50's, Chinese visitors to London and Paris became quite numerous. Théophile Gautier became a complete sinophile and Baudelaire and many others were delighted by the Chinese jugglers, showmen and musicians that they saw. The Chinese visitors to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London were received with great interest, as I shall show.

19

#### The Early Interest in Japanese Art.

It is generally believed that Japanese art was not present in Paris until the 1850's. However by 1819 a considerable collection of Japanese paintings and prints had already been assembled in Paris. It was part of the material brought back from Japan by I. Titsingh who had been surgeon to the Dutch trading company's post in Japan in the 1780's. After being disappointed by the common "meubles chinois" of the sale of Titsingh's collection in 1812, M. Nepveu the publisher

in Paris was lucky enough to acquire the collection in the inventory in appendix B. This information was taken from the English version of a book of historical notes and descriptions of ceremonies in Japan collected by Titsingh. This book was published in Paris in 1819 without illustrations but with illustrations from his collection in London in 1822. The stiffness of these illustrations, indeed in the case of the landscapes, their total unintelligibility, indicates that there was no understanding of the Japanese aesthetic in the West at this time. I (5)d

Nonetheless, these dry mechanical copies do contain the formal elements which are supposed to have been of such importance to Western artists later. They show a lack of perspective, the use of separate outlines and flat, unbroken colours. These elements were treated simply as curiosities when they were noticed at all during this period. The illustrations were taken from the "Description of Marriage Ceremonies" - accompanied with original coloured Japanese engravings and the two rolls representing the "Funeral Procession and Tomb of the Governor of Nagasaki" and the "Funeral Procession of a Civil Officer of distinction". I give illustrations of the marriage prints which are far more interesting, although printed in very pale Europeanised colours. They retain many of the characteristics of Japanese prints, but they show that costume and treatment of subject matter was more important at that time than the aesthetic value of Japanese art. I also illustrate one of the strange landscape paintings reproduced in Nepveu's book, of a volcanic eruption at Simahara. I find this image almost totally unrelated to any Japanese art that I have ever seen.

It is most interesting that although Nepveu gives a full list of Titsingh's collection, he fails to make any comment on the paintings or prints. None of the artists are identified. I give the relevant descriptions by Nepveu as an appendix (Appendix B). When one

considers that Titsingh was in Japan in 1780 one would very much like to know what was represented by the entry on p.318;

Nine engravings printed in colours, on the same number of separate sheets, 10" wide and 1'2" 9 lines in height, representing Japanese ladies in various dresses.

This was the era of Utamaro, Kiyonaga and other great print makers. A glance through Appendix B will provide material for much more speculation of this kind.

In the introduction to the English version of the book, Abel Remusat, the French Orientalist, is reported as having declared the book of plant prints in Titsingh's collection to be the finest woodcuts that he had ever seen. He was planning to use facsimiles of them as illustrations to a "Flore chinoise et japonaise". If Remusat could make comparisons there were clearly other Japanese prints in Paris beside those owned by Nepveu. Clearly then Japanese art could have influenced Western painting as early as 1820. I have not been able to find any influence in the first half of the century. Indeed artists of this period studiously avoid the adoption of Eastern conventions. They are practically all topographical or genre studies using Eastern motifs in images that are not only Western in style, but also in the range of situations they choose to illustrate. 21

The development of needs and problems within Western culture which found their response or echo in Japanese art had to take place before Western artists could fully make use of Eastern art in their development.

There was no shortage of material had the need arisen. Books were published that were to be quoted frequently when interest in Eastern art did develop. The most important of these is "Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Japanische Rijk" by J. F. Van Overmeer Fisscher, published in Amsterdam in 1833 which included facsimile reproductions of Japanese art. However these are said to have had light and shade 22

effects imposed on them by the artist responsible for the reproduction. 23

Another early publication was Meijlan's "Japan" of 1830. The two illustrations in this work are scarcely recognisable as Japanese as they are so overlaid with Western illusionistic conventions. A large collection was formed by another doctor to the Dutch trading station containing both Chinese and Japanese art amongst all sorts of other material such as botanical specimens. In 1845 Siebold produced a catalogue in Latin in collaboration with W. Hoffman. Section XI of this, called "Tabulae Xylographica", contains several famous names amongst its 94 items, for instance Hokusai and Utamaro are identified as individuals in the West for the first time. Item 547 in the collection is Hokusai's "Mangwa" given as Jedo published in 1812. Amongst other works is a copy of Utamaro's "Insect Book", No. 531 in the catalogue. 24

Siebold owned a great number of Japanese paintings and prints. Many of these were connected with his own preoccupation with biology and botany. Many of the black outline plant and animal illustration books from his library were patiently painted in watercolour to record the native flora and fauna most accurately. Part of Siebold's book collection was sold to the British Museum by his son Alexander Von Siebold in 1868, and I have been able to examine them.

None of them are of great aesthetic interest, many are black outline prints. However there are one or two works by minor eighteenth century printmakers, without signatures. The remainder of his collection is still at Leyden.

From Siebold's library catalogue however one can identify a few works, including several by Hokusai which are of interest for the development of Western awareness of Japanese art. I give these in Appendix C.

An English visitor to Siebold's collection whom I have identified as a Miss Busk failed to see it in the 1830's because it was packed up. She published an anonymous account or compendium of writings based on the work of Siebold in London in 1841. This gives a good impression of the knowledge possessed by the non-specialist of Oriental art at this time. Thus she is aware that the best Japanese work has never reached the hands of foreigners and relies considerably on the opinions of Fisscher, Siebold and other authors. She does not name any Japanese artists despite her visit to Siebold. On the whole the Japanese are viewed as curiosities and their art is not treated to any aesthetic consideration. This is the passage which deals with the visual arts:

Leaving that therefore for the graphic art, we are told that the Japanese are extremely fond of painting, and eager collectors of paintings that they sketch boldly in charcoal and often with ink, never having occasion to efface; that their outlines are clear and their drawing as good as may be compatible with ignorance of perspective and anatomy. From this ignorance, probably, arises their acknowledged inability to take a likeness, the professional portrait-painters bestowing their care rather upon the dress than on the features of their sitters. In birds and flowers they succeed better; and two folio volumes of paintings of flowers, with the name and properties of each written on the opposite page the work of a Japanese lady, and by her presented to Heer Titsingh, her husband's friend, are spoken of as beautiful. Delicate finishing seems to be the chief excellence of Japanese artists.

25

The passage dealing with the art of producing miniature or gigantic plants is slightly longer than this.

Not all visitors to the Siebold collection were as unfortunate as the above author. In his "Contes du Lundi", published in 1866, Alphonse Daudet describes a visit that he made to Siebold just before his death. Siebold's publication had made his collection famous. Daudet's visit makes it clear that the Oriental art accumulated in

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Holland was known in Paris and accessible to visitors from France. Further evidence of the existence of models of Japanese visual style in Paris is found in the illustrations to "Yo San Fi Rok", a translation of a Japanese text on the culture of silk worms, published in Paris in 1848, of which I give some illustrations.

26 I(4)  
at

Thus there was Japanese art in Paris and in Holland long before 1856, the date commonly accepted as marking the discovery of Japanese art in Europe by the engraver Felix Bracquemond. Bracquemond's claim to the title of the first European enthusiast for Japanese art is problematic. However even if it were accepted it would be wrong to use it as a terminus post quem for the possibility of Japanese influence in European art.

The early critical responses to Eastern art.

Some clues to the attitudes to Oriental art in the first half of the century can be found in references to the Orient in literature. At the beginning of the century Chinoiserie continued in England, culminating in the Grand Pavillion at Brighton which contained both 28 real and imitation Chinese paintings and ceramics. The pavillion was by no means the only eclectic collection of Far Eastern styles in decoration and architecture in England. Mr. Barrett, the father of 29 Elizabeth Browning, had an Oriental castle built on his land. William Beckford, the most notorious builder of eccentric houses took an interest in the developing knowledge of the East. In France the Oriental taste was concerned with the Near East and with using it as a decorative background as I have said in the introduction so we need not concern ourselves with any survival of Chinoiserie in France.

I do not intent to offer an account of Oriental influence in these early years as the phenomenon is outside the area I wish to investigate. However the different in background development between England and France may have had some influence on subsequent events.

There was always the vestigial image of Oriental art in the English artists' and critics' minds. Frenchmen did not have the same traditional familiarity. Any preconceptions they had were based on literature, especially the work of Théophile Gautier.

The disinterest in Oriental art in the first half of the century in both England and France may be partially explained by the conviction that the Oriental races were inferior in some way to the West. Coleridge wrote that "China is an instance of a permanency without progression. Europeans and Orientals may well be represented by two figures standing back to back: the latter looking to the East, that is backwards: the former looking to the West, that is forwards." 30

The Orient lacked the principal of progression that counterbalanced the idea of permanency in European countries. Thus the Orient and China in particular became identified with a closed limited perfection incapable of any significance beyond the timeless culture that produced it. This was a blanket response to all Oriental art until the 1850's when the Far Eastern nations separated themselves in Western minds as a result of colonial wars. Then China alone bore the stigma of extreme decadence. In the '60's Gautier was to use the term "Bourgeois" to distinguish the closed perfection of Chinese art from Japanese and other Eastern art. 31

Ruskin provides a good example of how easily one's eyes may be closed by such feelings, writing in "Modern Painters" Vol.1, in 1843, about the difficulty of discerning truth, he compared Chinese art to children's drawings;

And the Chinese, children in all things, suppose a good perspective drawing to be false, as we feel their plate patterns to be, or wonder at the strange buildings which come to an end in a point. And all the early works whether of nations or of men, show by their want of shade how little the eye without knowledge is to be depended on to discover truth. 32

Ruskin speaks here for the common view of the time. Clearly for Oriental art to have a greater impression on the West the belief in a simple certain truth that he shows here would have to receive a considerable number of practical refutations. As Schwab has pointed out, the exploration of the East and its cultures provided one of these itself. Another was provided by the cumulative social effects of Industrialisation. There are many others and rather than deal with them in an abstract and specious way I will attempt to show their operation through my discussion of the work of individual artists and critics.

It might be said that there is no better single record of the dilemma of the gradual loss of the facility to believe in simple truths than the development of "Modern Painters" itself. One problem that Ruskin found intractable was "the generally passive or instinctive character of right invention" as he called it. Discussing the problem of the instinctual use of colour he wrote;

And this is the reason for the somewhat singular and palpable truth that the Chinese and Indians, and other semi civilised nations, can colour better than we do, and that an Indian shawl or a china vase are still in invention of colour inimitable by us. It is their glorious ignorance of all rules that does it; the pure and true instincts have play, and do their work, ..... instincts so subtle that the least warping or compression breaks or blunts them; and the moment we begin teaching people any rules about colour, and make them do this or that, we crush the instinct generally for ever. Hence hitherto it has been an actual necessity, in order to obtain power of colouring, that a nation should be half savage; everybody could colour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but we were ruled and legalised into grey in the fifteenth - only a little salt simplicity of their sea natures at Venice still keeping their precious shell fishy purpleness and power; and now that is gone; and nobody can colour anywhere except the Hindoos and the Chinese, but that need not be so and will not be so for long; for in a little while people will give up their mistake and cease talking of rules of colours, and then everybody will colour again as easily as they now talk.

This passage shows how far Ruskin's earlier confidence in simple truth has been lost. Volume three of "Modern Painters" appeared in 1856. It is striking that in this passage Ruskin turns to the East for an example of good colour, anticipating the painters who were to do so. He also links the East with medieval Europe and it is interesting to consider to what extent nineteenth century medievalism prepared the way for Far Eastern enthusiasm, particularly in England.

Many artists, in England, came to see Japan as a living version of the Middle Ages. They particularly admired the close association of ideals of craftsmanship and religion in the Japanese artist, and saw these as a consequence of his position in the Japanese feudal system. This was also held to be the reason for the supposed consistency and continuity of Japanese style in all objects of art and craft, not just in paintings. The Pre-Raphaelite Movement had sought these same virtues in early Renaissance paintings. It is natural that one of the great early English enthusiasts for Japanese art should be William Rossetti, the brother of Dante Gabriel. Moreover Japanese and medieval design were to become the twin pillars of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Behind the admiration for both there stood the desire for clarity in man's emotional and intellectual relation to nature, honesty in the relation of the artist or craftsman to his work, and the will towards just social relationships. In the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, as in Ruskin's writings, we find the belief that these matters are simple. Thus we have the great number of Pre-Raphaelite images ostensibly about one simple emotion. Rossetti's "Found" is an example of this. 34

There is a strong implied belief in such paintings, in an uncomplicated morality as a necessary concomitant of simple form. In Hunt's "The Awakened Conscience", one wonders if the lady is more stricken by sinister artifice of rosewood, cut glass and expensive materials around her, than by her suitor. Naturally Japanese art did not have the

easily readable, and above all, Christian moral content of medieval art. Thus the transfer of European admiration from one to the other involved, or was felt to involve, the abandonment of a moral position in regard to art. Of course the opposite view was to be taken by many others, outstandingly by Van Gogh.

It is important to understand this identification of the simple with the primitive and with an artistic truth. The lack of the progressive principal that Coleridge had observed in the Oriental nations was to be seen as a virtue by many artists who interested themselves in the East, for it appeared to produce simplicity and hence understanding.

Ruskin never escaped from his conception of the Eastern nations as savages. His first direct acquaintance with Japanese art did bring a temporary burst of enthusiasm. On June 15, 1863, he wrote to William Rossetti thanking him for the loan of "a book of uncoloured Japanese landscapes of a direct naturalistic treatment which I had recently bought";

Dear Rossetti,

The book is delightful and thank you so much for sending it. I should like to go and live in Japan -

and in the postscript;

I return Japan by book post. The seas and clouds are delicious the mountains are very good.

That aspect of Ruskin which recognised "truth to nature" in art was at once struck with admiration. However his passion for morality and high intention in art led him inevitably to see the work of Oriental artists as inferior products.

In 1867 he saw a group of Japanese acrobats performing at the Lyceum Theatre and wrote of his reactions to it;

The impression, therefore, produced on me by the whole scene, was that of being in the presence of human creatures of a partially inferior race but not without great human gentleness, domestic affection, and ingenious intellect; who were nevertheless as a nation inflicted by an evil

spirit, and driven by it to recreate themselves in achieving, or beholding the achievement through years of patience, of a certain correspondence with the nature of lower animals.

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Thus when Ruskin made a criticism or assessment of Far Eastern art, his judgement was conditioned by his belief in the inherent moral superiority of Western civilisation and of the art which it had produced.

By 1865 his mind was irrevocably made up against Japanese art.

He wrote of a forthcoming visit from Rossetti;

But we won't have rows; and, when you come we'll look at things that we both like. You shall bar Parma and I Japan; and we'll look at Titian, John Bellini, Albert Durer and Edward Jones.

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Ruskin's continuing hostility to Japanese art can be seen as a consequence of the critical attitudes he first formed in the 1840's when such a view was common. Ruskin remained the dominant force in English art criticism until the end of the 1870's, and the "Whistler vs. Ruskin" trial. I shall show that all English enthusiasts for Japanese art felt the need to justify it in Ruskinian terms, and to deal in detail with those aspects of Japanese art which Ruskin criticised.

Ruskin's criticism as a whole was a major cause of the paradoxically limited response to Far Eastern art by English artists. Dante Rossetti, for instance, was a passionate collector of Japanese art but there is little trace of it in his work. It took Whistler, an American artist trained in Paris, to become the champion of Japanese values in English art.

If Japanese art was too much of a challenge for the responsive powers of Englishmen, the situation is by no means so simple in France. Théophile Gautier sustained an interest in the Far East and its culture from the 1830's to his death. His "Poésies diverses", written between 1833 and 1838, contains two poems which show appreciation of the East, "La Chinoiserie" and "La Japonaise". It has been said that these two

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Poems show a continuation of the eighteenth century attitude to Eastern art but this view seems to ignore the obvious romantic attitude in both sonnets. The visual embodiment of Gautier's ideal of a mysterious and sensual East is not a lady on a Wedgewood plate but Chasseriau's "Esther".

The experience of Far Eastern art was to be central to the development of those attitudes which came to be known as "L'Art pour L'Art" in England. Gautier is often referred to as the founder of these ideas. In these sonnets we may see a precursor of one way in which Orientalism was to act in the visual arts transmuting the Romantics' concern for life as a whole into a concern for beauty intrinsically present in the object of one's experience. Esther was to be deprived of her associative qualities to become Whistler's "Woman in White".

It is important to the development of the visual arts that the imaginative possibilities were prepared for in this way by literature. Gautier's interest in Chinese art had begun by 1830 as a passage in an essay he wrote that year about E.T.A. Hoffmann shows. In 1833 he gave 40 his second reason for wanting money "pour acheter des vieux pots du Japon et des magots de la Chine". In 1840 while preparing an unpublished Chinese novel Gautier wrote of his researches;

J'ai à lire plusieurs volumes pour me barbouiller de couleur locale, et j'ai besoin de fourrer mon nez dans beaucoup de pots de Japon et autres.

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Gautier also had a journalistic interest in the East. In 1851 he visited the Great Exhibition in London and wrote a description of his experiences aboard a Chinese junk moored near the exhibition site. This shows the reaction that must have been quite common at this time 42 to Eastern culture. It is treated as a curiosity first of all, and secondarily as an artistic experience. Gautier observes that he has seen the junk before many times on porcelain, and invokes the atmosphere of a romantic Chinese novel before describing the scene.

There were various objects on display in the junk, including a small Buddha and porcelain of various kinds in cases. Gautier saw an artist, Charles Lavelle, making a drawing of a Chinese artist and scribe who worked on the boat. He describes the reactions of the Chinese to being portrayed by a barbarian who will blacken one side of his face, and recounts that on completion of the sketch the Chinese added a foot which Lavelle had omitted because of perspective.

Gautier also saw the Chinese artist at work and likens the movement of the hand of the artist to that of the Chinese musicians he also saw. He seems to have understood something of the Chinese aesthetic for he links this hand movement to the light lines and formal control which he praises as the highest achievements of Oriental art.

Thus a living example of Oriental technique and of Oriental attitudes to art was presented to Europeans as early as 1851, in a proper Far Eastern context. Yet there was little direct response to it despite Gautier's admiration.

The Chinese contingent at the 1851 exhibition was the subject of great popular curiosity. The Mandarin who led it is said to have caused some confusion by presuming that the great crowds waiting for the Queen to open the exhibition had assembled to welcome him and parading up and 43 down before them. He appears in a conspicuous position in the memorial painting of the event in the Victoria and Albert Museum. He and his companions also feature frequently in popular guides to the exhibition such as "The house that Paxton built" in which he is depicted three times.

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Thus even in the first international exhibition the unique qualities of Far Eastern art were presented in context to the West. Similar exhibitions were later to play a most important part in introducing Far Eastern art to a wide public. I shall attempt to reconstruct their role in some detail.

Further evidence of early Western knowledge of the technique of Far Eastern art is provided by a study published in the "Revue Contemporaine" in 1856, entitled "Les peintres européens en Chine et les peintres Chinois" by Feuillet de Conches. He discusses Chinese traditions and techniques at length and with great sympathy in the context of his discussion of the experiences of European artists in China.

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Despite such occasional sympathies however, Far Eastern art was treated largely as a variety of curio at this time. Even the Goncourt brothers did this despite their claim to have innovated the taste for Japanese art in their first novel "En 18". I have found three passages which refer to Oriental art but each is a fragment of thought or description not an advocacy of the merit of Eastern art. The most interesting passage is -

C'était une fort belle japonaiserie. Sur un fond de laque noir vernissé comme une feuille de houx, quelque Phillipe Rousseau de la province de Yamato avait jeté de grands coqs de hanches en saillie de cinq lignes d'or.

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"En 18" was published in 1851 and pieces such as the enamel work described above must have been common amongst the curios of many houses. In the "Maison d'un Artiste" published in 1881, E. De Goncourt claimed to have bought the first Japanese print album in 1852;

Cet album (une reproduction des scenes legendaires, figurées par des poupées, dans le temple de Kannou) acheté en 1852, a été, pour mon frère et moi, la révélation de cette imagerie d'art, alors bien vaguement connue de l'Europe, qui, depuis, a fait des enthousiastes comme le paysagiste Rousseau, et qui, à l'heure présente a une si grande influence sur notre peinture.

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However the absence of any record of Japanese prints in the journal before 1861 seems to suggest that he may have mistaken the date by ten years.

However, in the preface to his novel "Chérie", first published in 1884, De Goncourt dated this discovery to 1860, in a shop called "La Porte Chinoise". I have traced the existence of this shop back to the 1840's but it seems more likely that the De Goncourts first contact with Japanese art was as part of the fashionable crowd who frequented a similar establishment after it had been taken over by a Mme. de Soye during 1862. In fact I shall show that 1862 is the most convincing date for the intensification of European interest in Japanese art. 48

This coincides with the date of the first reference to Japanese art in the Goncourt Journal;

L'art n'est pas un, ou plutôt il n'y a pas un seul art. L'art japonais a ses beautés comme l'art grec. 49

The claim that the Goncourts were the first to discover Japanese art is as untenable as that for Bracquemond. There is, nonetheless, clear evidence of a developing sensitivity towards Far Eastern art, in France during the 1850's. How else are we to explain the remarkable statement of T. Silvestre that Ingres was like a Chinese painter lost in Greece. This has usually been taken as at best a disapproving witticism, despite its place in a long critical essay written during the fifties and published as part of "Histoire des Artistes vivantes" in 1859. 50

In fact it is a highly acute assessment of the problem that, not Ingres alone, but most European painters were feeling at this time. I would like to postpone discussion of this until the next chapter which will deal with the response of western artists to Eastern art, and to let Silvestre's remark stand only as evidence of developing sensibility towards Eastern art and its possibilities in the West.

Baudelaire extended the definition of the same problem in his 1855 Salon. Speaking of Ingres he wrote -

We see him wandering from archaism to archaism;  
Titian (The Sistine Chapel), the Renaissance

enamellers (Venus Anadyimene), Poussin and the Caraca, (Venus and Antiope), Raphael (St. Symphorian) the German primitives (all those little things in an anecdotal picture book style), antique bric a brac and the chequered colouring of Persian and Chinese art (the small odalisque), are forever disputing for his preference.

Far Eastern art was already being seen as one of the formal resources open to Western tradition. During the fifties Gautier produced a long series of articles on the Chinese but these were mainly anthropological rather than artistic. Nonetheless they testify to an increasing interest in the East. Gautier's interest in the Far East was to be taken up by his daughter who had a Chinese tutor, Tun Tun Ling from 1863 to about 1873. In 1867 she produced a book of metrical translations of Chinese poetry "Le Livre de Jade" and in 1868 a novel set in seventeenth century China - "Le Dragon Imperial" - which shows considerable knowledge of Chinese history and mythology. In 1875 she produced a Japanese novel "L'Ursurpateur" set in the age of the samurai and in 1885 the "Poemes de la libellule". Gautier's influence was thus extended throughout the period of Oriental influence on Western art, for Judith's work follows his own in being a romantic pastiche which made use of Oriental scholarship in an improvised, half European situation.

The distinction between the early French responses to Far Eastern art and those of the English seems to be that the French view arose from the general development of French romantic art and literature; whereas in England the implications of the romantic impulse were not acknowledged in the same way either in literature or in art. Ruskin is concerned with understanding and explaining artistic experience. Gautier is an explorer concerned with expanding that experience. It seems natural that the Western visual response to the Far East when it came should be far more in evidence in France than in England.

The effect of the opening of Japan to trade; the import of Japanese objects into Europe; the 1862 Exhibition in London; "La Porte Chinoise", early publication which reproduced Japanese art accurately.

The opening of Japan to trade following the missions of the American, Commodore Perry, in 1853 and 1854, led to a great increase in trade with Japan. Art objects naturally formed a large proportion of this.

This essay will describe the effects of this trade, first by describing the works which can definitely be located in the West and the exhibitions of Japanese art in Europe, then by using the illustrations and commentaries in the many travel books on Japan published from the late 1850's. Finally the European critical response to this will be discussed.

The Japanese trade began with the first ship to touch land on the Perry mission. On May 24, 1854, one of Perry's lieutenants, George Preble, described in his journal a visit he paid to the bazaar at Hokodadi;

but nearly everything had been carried off. I succeeded in purchasing a few Japanese Picture Books, some straw covered boxes and two pieces of silk. - The officers have a perfect mania for the Japanese things and buy anything, handsome or ugly.

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This bazaar was held daily for the convenience of the Americans who bought up everything.

By June 22nd Preble was writing of

The shopping mania which has siezed upon everything that in any way represents Japan. Their attics in a year or two will groan under their Japanese burdens. My collection is very miscellaneous.

Preble was wrong, the enthusiasm for Japanese goods did not fade so rapidly. They remained in demand until the 1890's. The crews of all trading ships to Japan behaved in the same manner as this first

one. Many more informal bazaars were held to accommodate them. The first English ambassador to Japan, Rutherford Alcock, regularly arranged them for traders and visitors to his embassy.

By 1859 a district of Yokohama, "The Bluff", had become a settlement for hundreds of European traders, many of whom were to turn to trade in works of art and craft to earn their living.

The district rapidly took on the shape of a European suburb, stretching over the hill above Yokohama bay. It acquired gas lighting and its own police force and newspaper, the Japan Mail. The Mail employed Charles Wirgman, an artist whose work is discussed later in this thesis.

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There were substantial European settlements such as "The Bluff" in most Japanese trading ports. They had an important role in providing a context for the initial adaption of Japanese art and crafts to a European context. A romantic novel was written about the Bluff which gives an excellent impression of life there.

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The enormous official report on the Perry exhibition by Francis Hawks says little about Japanese art. Some of the works brought back by Perry were submitted to Professor Duggan of the New York Academy of Fine Art for his opinion. Hawks based his account on this.

Duggan's general comments emphasised that Japanese art was highly sophisticated but still "a living example of the archaic period of a national art". He was surprised by the simplicity of expression in the 56 prints and paintings, and their sober colouring - "so removed from the gaudy tendencies of Oriental taste". He compared them to Etruscan vase painting and remarked that Japanese art seemed greatly in advance of the Chinese and Indian. In particular he analysed the drawings in a book on "The points of a horse" which he states were written by a Prince Hayashi, comparing the drawing to that of Durer. Several of the drawings were illustrated in the text. He praised their directness

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and also emphasised the same quality in a series of uncut prints of Sumo wrestlers;

The chief point of interest in this illustration considered in an artistic sense, is that, apart from its being a successful specimen of printing in colors - a process, by the way, quite modern amongst ourselves - there is a breadth and vigor of outline compared with which much of our own line drawing appears feeble, and, above all things, undecided. Whatever the Japanese may lack as regards art, in a perfection of its true principles, the style, grace and even a certain mannered dexterity which their drawings exhibit show that they are possessed of an unexpected readiness and precision of touch, which are the prominent characteristics in this picture of wrestlers.

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Hawks also gives a description of the technique employed by a Japanese artist hired by the chaplain of the Perry expedition, Mr. Jones, to paint him a set of screens;

He made no previous sketch, but drew at once the various portions of the landscape, putting in his houses, ships, horses, trees and birds, with wonderful readiness, the whole being a fancy piece, and when he came to paint the foliage of some pines he used two brushes at once, so as to expedite his work.

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Hawks also reproduced three Japanese prints in colour, one by Hiroshige. These are identified and illustrated in Appendix F which gives a full list of all attributable reproductions of Japanese prints and drawings accessible in Europe before 1867.

I (9)  
a-c

The trade in Japanese works in Europe began at the very time Perry was making his inroads into centuries of Japanese isolation. In February 1854 an exhibition of Japanese goods appeared in Pall Mall, London, and the "London Illustrated News" published an engraving of it and a brief report which is worth quoting in full, as it characterises the excitement felt about Japanese work at this time. (I give the report as Appendix D.)

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The exhibition was held in the Pall Mall rooms of the Old Water Colour society. I have been unable to trace any direct response to

Japanese art among the members of that society. Nonetheless this location shows that from the beginning Japanese work was fairly easy to see for artists who might have been influenced by it. This exhibition contained the whole range of Japanese goods. The commonly held belief that Japanese art was not openly present at the centres of western artistic activity until the 1870's is a misconception. Only the vulgarisation of Japanese taste was postponed until then. The much vaunted accidental "discoveries" of Japanese art in obscure settings by Monet, Whistler and others are probably legends. (The same "discovery" was still being made in the 1890's.)

The collections of the early visitors to Japan rapidly found their way round Europe. In the late 1850's a Doctor MacGowan gave several lectures in England and Scotland on "The Japanese Civilisation". In 1859 he lectured on the "Arts and Manufactures of Japan" to the Royal 60 Society of Arts. He displayed examples of metalwork, ceramics, lacquer and many prints and printed books. However he is typical of the enthusiasts of the 1850's and '60's in placing a low value on Japanese visual art. He barely mentions prints in his discussion. Similar "experts" appeared in France, for example Baudelaire attended lectures given by a M. Durandeaue, and was displeased with his condescension to the Japanese.

Alcock and the Japanese appearance at the London International Exhibition in 1862: the English response to Japanese art.

The first international exhibition to include a section on Japanese art was the London International Exhibition of 1862. It was held mainly as the result of the initiative of Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British ambassador to Japan, who persuaded several other European dealers and collectors to co-operate in contributing items to a Japanese Court for the exhibition. It has been eclipsed in Art History by the Japanese appearance at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867. Nonetheless it bears investigation in some detail as it provides the only documented and illustrated record of the imports of Japanese art into Europe before 1867. Moreover as the exhibition was assembled by a European it probably represents a fair cross section of these imports. Alcock stated that his intention was to provide a representative selection of Japanese manufactures and works of art.

Alcock himself described how, in the face of total disinterest in the exhibition by the Japanese government, he concerned himself with visiting the shops and markets of Yedo and Yokohama in order to gather material which he added to his own small collection for the exhibition;

For this purpose I visited frequently not only the various magazines and shops in Yokohama, where the articles deemed by the Japanese themselves most attractive or most likely to find purchasers among foreigners, were to be seen, but the less known and more important trading quarters of the capital, where only the members of the Foreign Legation were at that time allowed access. In these rich and busy quarters of a populous city, every day brought some new and interesting fabric to light, some original application of Art to industrial purposes, or examples of artistic work of unrivalled beauty: My self imposed duty became a labour of love, which long survived the tests of providing the International Exhibition with such a varied collection as should make known in England and through England to the rest of the world an almost unsuspected source of instruction as well as delight; in a wide range of Art industries

and manufactures. I found an original school of Art existing in Japan, worthy of serious study, rich in new Art motives;

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From this we may take it that most of the work in the exhibition was contemporary or at least made during the nineteenth century.

The other main contributors were Captain Vyse, the consul at Yokohama, Messrs. Remi Schmidt and Co., Messrs. Barton, Dent and Butt and a Mr. T. D. Neave. "The Illustrated London News" claimed that Alcock's own collection was limited to 190 pieces of lacquer ware, but this is probably a misjudgement as the catalogue made up by Alcock himself suggests that he sent several hundred items of all kinds, and that other contributions were relatively minor. However other major contributors are not listed in Alcock's catalogue which suggests that their loans were made in England direct to the exhibition. Remi Schmidt and Co., for instance, were an influential and independent trading company.

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The exhibition was mounted in "a sequestered portion under the north-eastern galleries on the British side of the exhibition". This is confirmed by the engraving in "The London Illustrated News". The illustration also confirms the general impression that the exhibition was cramped, crowded tier upon tier and not ordered in any significant way. The context of the presentation was Western, not Japanese, even the prints and paintings were given European frames.

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I (11)

The impression of the writer of a general review of the exhibition for the "Gentleman's Magazine" was of a disorganised treasure house;

There are cases filled with the most wonderful groups of men and animals carved in ivory, and just as much colour and gold delicately applied as relieves the ivory. - Other objects of attraction are the bronzes most marvellously cast and of different colours. Among other curiosities we find a rope made of human hair and a coat of mail the links, not riveted -

The ingenuity of the Japanese is still further illustrated by specimens of paper made to imitate cloth, by a numerous collection of surgical instruments and by the eggshell china, to say nothing of



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the many specimens of lacquer cabinets and other furniture. Truly the Japanese Court is the real medieval court of the Exhibition.

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The association of the Middle Ages with not only the Japanese but with all Far Eastern peoples was a common reaction to the work in the exhibition. However the Chinese and other races were seen as inferior to the Japanese. The same reviewer dismissed the Chinese work in the show with the exception of the enamels as greatly inferior.

His low estimate of the visual arts of Japan is also typical. Alcock included only 15 items in Section G of his catalogue, "Carvings in Wood, ivory and bamboo, Paintings, illustrated works, lithochrome prints, Models". Over six hundred and fifty items are listed in the catalogue; however it must be pointed out that item 571 consisted of "200 lithochrome prints" and item 559 of "32 illustrated books". Moreover many illustrated books and prints were shown in section H, on education, and in the exhibition of paper technology. Alcock's catalogue may therefore, conceal the real quantity of visual arts in the exhibition. Indeed it provides no proper descriptions of any of the objects on show, merely a hand list.

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Luckily it is possible to make use of press descriptions of the exhibition to provide a slightly better account of them. Illustrations taken from the Japanese exhibition were included in the chromolithographic survey of the exhibition published by J. B. Waring. These give a clear idea of the type of work on display. Most of it was nineteenth century in date, probably of contemporary manufacture.

66 I (1

I give an account of the 1862 Japanese exhibition derived from these two sources as Appendix E.

The "Industrial Arts", especially lacquerware, were the most commented on section of the exhibition. Little or nothing was written about the prints and paintings in the collection although Captain Vyse exhibited a magnificent screen and there were over 500 books or print

albums in the exhibition. These included many whose subject was contemporary Europeans in Japan.

Further evidence of the contemporary nature of most of the prints in Europe at this time is provided by the print collection of William Burges, who, I believe, first saw Japanese prints at the 1862 exhibition when he wrote a review of the Japanese Court. His print collection is given as part of Appendix ~~f~~<sup>F</sup>. I believe it likely that he acquired them from the exhibition as there is strong evidence that they were bought at that time. I (13)  
a-f

Alcock remained an enthusiast for Far Eastern art in the 1860's and 1870's. In 1863 he gave a lecture to the "Leeds Philosophical Society" showing them lacquer, ceramics and prints from his collection. He gave several examples of "decorative papers" to the Leeds Museum, which I have unfortunately been unable to find. In 1865 he exhibited a collection of Japanese goods in the Dublin International exhibition, including nine folio and nine octave books of prints, a roll of coloured woodcuts, forty netsuke and lacquers, ceramics and bronzes. 67  
In the 1870's he led public opinion in favour of Japanese art, and published a book on the subject which I have referred to above.

The response to the 1862 exhibition was very important for the future of Japanese art in the West. A mission from the Japanese government attended the exhibition and was so impressed by the popularity of Alcock's exhibit that preparations were begun by the Japanese government at once for the Paris Exhibition of 1867.

In his review of the exhibition for the "Gentleman's Magazine", Burges, an important Gothic revivalist architect, related Japanese art to medieval work. Burges is particularly interested in metalwork, bronzes and lacquerwork, and is greatly concerned with the technical aspects of the work.

He makes few observations of the aesthetic value of the work.

When he does mention this it is in a tone of gentle surprise, for instance speaking of a lacquer box, he says;

It is singular that the artist in his horror of regularity, has actually made one side of the heart and one corner of the fan to go over the edge and round on to the sides of the box. One can imagine how the whole school of design would call out if one of its pupils attempted so audacious a departure from European precedent, but somehow it looks alright and the eye is satisfied.

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The reason for the perception of a link between medieval art and Japanese art have been dealt with in the introduction. Burges' own collection of Japanese prints bears out this association in practice as they are placed in a book between studies of medieval designs. As can be seen in Appendix C, they were all printed after 1850.

Another English architect and designer, E. W. Godwin, also bought Japanese prints at this time, with which he decorated his dining room in his house at Bristol. He became a propagandist for Japanese art, even dressing his wife, Ellen Terry, and his children in Japanese costumes. He designed several pieces of "Japanese" furniture and collaborated with Whistler on "The Yellow Room" for the 1878 exhibition in Paris.

69

We have an accurate picture of the critical reaction to the Japanese Court in 1862 in the lecture given to the Royal Institute on May 1, 1863, by John Leighton. The text of this lecture is believed to have been lost, however a version of it is readily available in the proceedings of the Institution. Sir Rutherford Alcock also quotes from it at length in his book, "Art and Art manufactures of Japan" 1878.

The texts vary, so we may presume that Alcock is quoting from one of the fifty privately published copies of the book. I will make use of both sources in my discussion, to give a most accurate picture of Leighton's attitude. Speaking of the Japanese Court he described it as "separated by a gulf of six feet from China which it immeasurably

distanced - an enchanted island of great beauty round which visitors were never tired of travelling".

73

Leighton discussed the problem of asymmetry in Japanese art and explained the principle on which this worked by referring to the asymmetrical balance of the steelyards from Japan in the exhibition, comparing these with symmetrical European scales. He discussed the various forms of design applied by the Japanese to their decorated furniture and observed that formal designs were less common than those derived from nature.

74

He defended Japanese visual art against the charge that it lacked chiaroscuro and was therefore primitive;

The arts of Japan may be said in an eminent degree to depend on the picturesque, though rarely to reach the pictorial, that is to say they never produce a picture because the principal element of pictorial art is wanting; light and shade - a cloak that with us covers a multitude of sins they know not of, Art of the highest kind may, and often does exist without Chiaroscuro.

75

He foreshadowed the theory of Japanese art expressed by Duranty and other pro-Impressionist French critics by arguing that chiaroscuro has only developed in those countries which do not have a perpetually sunny climate and where clouds and mist cause tonal effects to predominate naturally over colour.

76

He defended the Japanese use of flat colour and unbroken contour by reference to Flaxman;

An outline or diagram may exhibit the highest Art without any pictorial effect, as, for example the outlines of Flaxman which are not pictures, because they lack pictorial effects. Yet were they added, they might become pictures while ranking lower as works of art. On the other hand the marvellous dabs and sweeps of the brush, without an outline often seen in common Japanese designs, must be held to show great dormant pictorial powers.

77

He warned against limiting one's appreciation of the qualities of Japanese art;

But whatever may be the speciality of Japanese art we must not fall into the error of putting it all into one class. It has great variety even to a limited power of light and shade, with much of a silhouette in it.

These remarks are very important in showing that Eastern art was appreciated as an art with various qualities almost as soon as it became generally known. Also of interest is the establishment by Leighton of the idea that "A work of Art need not be a picture" as he later wrote to Alcock. The notion that a complex work of art could exist without relying on ideas of perspective and volume drawn from the Renaissance is of tremendous importance to late nineteenth century art, and it seems to have been promoted by the discovery of Japanese art. Leighton goes so far as to suggest that Western illusionistic conventions would actually weaken the artistic effect of Japanese art or any non-illusionistic work. The modernist dictum that a painting is first of all a series of colours on a flat surface has an unbroken ancestry going back to this first realisation of the qualities of Japanese art.

78

79

Indeed Leighton is the first of many critics to use Japanese art as a stick to beat the Academy, both English and French, which he does throughout his lecture, with particular reference to colour and design;

With the revival of painting in Italy, purity of taste in matters of design died out. We know that the Loggia of the Vatican is by Raphael, but of what monstrosities and incongruities is it not composed! I just mention this by way of warning against the Renaissance and particularly the French version of it, that finds favour in certain quarters to the exclusion of better things; whilst in India, Turkey and Japan, we have an inexhaustible well of art, pure and undefiled, most eloquent in its teachings, an art that was appreciated by the great masters of mediaeval times, all styles being evidence of the Eastern forms and colours brought over land by the pilgrims of the Cross.

80

Leighton unconsciously places Japanese art into the role prepared for it by Pre-Raphaelitism. He sees it is a new source of strength

against the Academy, a well of pure truth in art. He noted with approval that there were no academies of art in Japan, hence "Nature's students standing less chance of being fêted, lionised or spoiled".

81

Leighton's knowledge of Japanese visual art was derived almost entirely from prints. He was interested in the works which showed Westerners, but was more impressed with what appear to have been prints cut from the "Mangwa";

The larger efforts in colours show what the Japanese think of us and our ladies; crinoline of the amplest being faithfully depicted, as also beards, chimney pot hats and other peculiarities of the Western race. One of a lady in wide hoops mounted on the wrong side of a native charger is inexpressively droll.....though I give preference to native art on native subjects, particularly where there is action, for curiously some of his best are figures in movement, porters lifting, balancing, and carrying their loads, an acrobat poising his companion, indeed a hundred and one phases of social and animal life: the lower portion of the creation being finely rendered, particularly birds in flight, ducks, geese, and cranes being hit off with wonderful precision by no ordinary marksman.

82

Leighton praises the Japanese sense of colour;

in colouring the Japanese are generally speaking very skilful, adopting a quiet and refined style and using full low toned colours in preference to excessively brilliant ones. In this they differ from the Chinese. Of course I do not wish you to understand that the Japanese artists do not use bright colours, for few men know their value better than they, what I desire to convey is that they use them judiciously and in comparatively small proportions, cleverly contrasting and supporting them with the secondaries, and other compound colours they use in grounds and large masses generally.

83

He consider their lack of linear perspective a deficiency, though he claimed that on occasion they produced nearly perfect examples of both. Leighton's lecture is most significant as it shows that by 1863 there was a considerable degree of understanding if not acceptance of Japanese art and its principles. He could not yet appreciate landscape prints for instance.

84

The landscapes are very quaint, aerial perspective seeming beyond their powers, except in one or two cases where white mists have been attempted as also rain fog and snow. In depicting clouds the Japanese artist seems sorely puzzled - the tinted ribbons they stretch across the heavens looking like labels for inscriptions rather than floating vapours.

85

Leighton considered Japanese architecture, design and sculpture: in each case he stressed the close relation of Japanese art to nature and praised its basis in craftsmanship. His lecture is remarkable however for the space it gives to the pictorial implications of Japanese art, and for its anticipation of many of the future European reactions to Japanese art and his patient detailed analysis of its forms.

He concluded by looking forward with mixed feelings to the future when museum collections of Japanese art were to be accumulated in Europe, that "we shall doubtless see the fertility of when we can find, in central Paris, a Musée Japonais, that we may copy secondhand, as we usually do".

86

Another visitor to the Japanese court in 1862 was Christopher Dresser, the author of a series of articles called "Botany as adapted to the Arts and Art Manufactures". Dresser was a lecturer in botany in the South Kensington Museum. He applied the principles of plant structure to design and when he saw Japanese art was so taken with it that he devoted himself to its study, he even made a journey to Japan. The relation of Japanese design to design derived from nature is of great interest in the development of the decorative arts in England in the nineteenth century. Designers like artists often saw the Japanese as a race with close contact with the organic structures which they sought in their own work.

87

Dresser was also interested in Chinese art and in his book "The Art of Decorative Design" published in 1862, he included a colour

reproduction of a Chinese vase design of a dragon swallowing a golden globe to represent an eclipse. Dresser discusses the symbolism of this design accurately. Reflection upon this causes him to suggest that a symbolic art might be possible in the West. He gives a rather banal example of the earth surrounded by clouds. Nonetheless, it is interesting that Oriental art produced the idea of a symbolic art in this way, at such an early date. It is another example of an early occurrence of one of the major themes in the history of the influence of Far Eastern art on the West.

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Dresser made eighty drawings from objects in Alcock's collection, and acquired several of the exhibits for himself. Unfortunately both have since been lost. Dresser went on to become a most influential champion of Japanese art and design. I have traced his career later in this thesis.

89

Other items from the 1862 exhibition were bought by the firm of Farmer and Rogers which had just employed Mr. Lazenby Liberty as their new manager. This began his long involvement in trading in Far Eastern art. Other firms such as "Hewlett and Johnson's" Chinese warehouse also bought from the exhibition. This firm claimed, in its advertisement of this time, to have the largest and finest stock of Japanese goods, implying that many other dealers were already in business in London.

During the 1850's and 1860's the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired one or two pieces of Japanese work every year. Significantly it acquired no prints or paintings. Its purchases were mainly lacquerware and the occasional piece of metalwork. I have examined these pieces and found few of them worthy of comment. Perhaps the most interesting item is a lacquer document box acquired in 1865, which contains paper-strips coloured red, yellow and blue, with many subtle designs embossed in them.

I (15)

The Art Referees report for 1863 shows that the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired 62 items of Japanese origin in that year, fifteen of them being lacquer. Unfortunately I have been unable to trace any of these pieces, which almost certainly came from the 1862 exhibition. 91

William Rossetti, another early Japanese enthusiast, does not mention the 1862 exhibition in his memoirs. However he does recall that the Japanese mania started for him in 1863, and that he was collecting a great many prints in the mid-1860's. In mid-1863 he wrote 92 a description of a Japanese book in his collection for the "Reader", a weekly review, as part of an article on "Japanese Woodcuts" which was probably the earliest article in English on Japanese prints. The book was, according to Rossetti, a chivalric tale illustrated by Hokusai under the name of "Gwakyrogi" - which is now anglicised as "Gwakyō Rojin Marji", the signature that Hokusai used from about 1830 until his death in 1849. I have identified the book as ~~a~~ "Yehon Sakigaki" 93 (Volume One) or <sup>//</sup> pictures of noted Japanese and Chinese warriors by Hokusai at the age of 76. Rossetti's descriptions are quite clear. I (16) The book was reproduced in several later articles on Japanese art, notably Duranty's "Japonisme". At the time Rossetti wrote his article however, he had not seen Hokusai's <sup>other</sup> work. He had heard the name "Hoxai" and this is the earliest recorded mention of the artist in European artistic circles in the nineteenth century.

In his introduction Rossetti remarks on the popularity of Japanese decorative art and the relative public ignorance of Japanese fine art, which he argues is among the finest in the world, especially in its imaginative powers;

It has a daringness of conception, an almost fiercely tenacious grasp of its subjects, a majesty of designing power and sweep of line, and a clenching hold upon the imagination such such as no Michel Angeloe, Tintoret or Durer amongst us, if we only had them, could afford, or could be in the least minded to despise. In

details of treatment and handling, it has a combination of the arbitrary and the unexpected with a rigid fixity of general system, highly calculated to rivet the strong impression produced by the great primary qualities to which we have referred.

94

He divided the subject matter of Japanese prints into four classes, scenes from social life, romantic or legendary history, books of drawings some miscellaneous, some encyclopaedic and landscapes;

well studied, accurate, though broadly summarised views of the mountainous and other districts of the empire, full of character and expression, when coloured, these have an almost Titianesque vigour and dignity of effect attained by the most simple means and positive colours.

95

The linking of Japanese art with the names of the great masters of European art was to become a constant theme of all Japanese enthusiasts, and as we shall see, the range of analogies with European artists was tremendous. On occasion they surprise one with their revelation as to how European as well as Far Eastern art was "seen" in the mid-nineteenth century as does Rossetti's analogy with Titian here.

Rossetti especially praised the Japanese representation of flowers and animals and cited a book of bird and flower subjects in his collection "of design, at once daring and exquisite, elaborate and simple" and even stated that in the representation of movement such as

the winding of serpents, whose length is to be reckoned by yards of stealthy vertebrae crunching motion - we incline to say that the Japanese reach higher in point of perceptive knowledge and instant magic of the realising hand, than any phase or period of European art.

96

Rossetti described the 33 double page black and white illustrations of the book in some detail, stressing the representation of costume and of movement and the imaginative quality of the various monsters or devils which the figure whom he believes to be the hero encounters in several of them.

He praised it as showing a full grasp of all the artistic resources available in black and white prints and compares the illustrations in particular to Albert Durer's work.

Nonetheless he is aware of the lack of a "European feeling for beauty". "Beauty" did not seem to be an intrinsic element in the Japanese attitude to art or to nature. The "devil in man and the doll in woman" seemed to be the aim of the Japanese artist. Unlike Ruskin and others, Rossetti refused to hold this against Japanese art: "we have no business nor any disposition to moralize" he wrote.

Unlike Leighton, Rossetti does not identify Japanese art closely with the revolution against the Academy. However his claim that moral considerations had no place in the appreciation of Japanese art or indeed of any art is an indication of one of the revolutionary effects of the experience of Japanese art on European art. Japanese art was to be quoted by all the critics of a narrow moralistic attitude to art in the later nineteenth century in England and France. One thinks of Duranty, Wilde, Huysmans and Whistler as major figures who do this. Rossetti's precise, detailed analysis of the pictorial forms of Japanese art is indicative of the capacity of some Westerners in the mid-nineteenth century, to transcend the visual language of their own culture and to see the formal qualities of a totally alien language without utterly falsifying it.

Rossetti's overall reaction to Japanese art at this time may be deduced from this passage, in his memoirs, on the subject of his early Japanese enthusiasm;

Was there ever in real insight and superlative strength, the grace that comes of strength, a better landscape painter than Hiroshige? Yes, there was Turner. Who else? Or was there a more stupendous master of whatever he set his hand to than Hokusai or one who understood a tiger - the essence of tiger, not to insist on his skeletal scaffolding and his "anatomy figure" better than Ganko? or an inventor of bird and flower groups, a seer of the life of

flower and bird, equal to Kitao Shigemasa.  
How pale and petty how anaemic and indecisive,  
do most European things appear beside such  
mighty handiwork!

From 1862 Rossetti became a fervent collector of Japanese prints and other art. Like many other early enthusiasts he visited shops in London and in Paris and his journal is one of the best records of the early Japanese trade in Paris which is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

The early trade in Japanese goods in Paris, the French response to Japanese art.

In 1861, Baudelaire wrote to his friend Arsene Houssaye, the writer and sometime director of the Théâtre Français, indicating that for some time he had been in possession of a collection of Japanese prints which he had divided amongst his friends.

98

Il y a longtemps que j'ai reçu un paquet de Japonneries. Je les ai partagées entre mes amis et moi, et je vous en ai réservé trois. Elles ne sont pas mauvaises (images d'Epinal du Japon 2 sols pièce à Yeddo). Je vous assure que sur du Velin et encadré de bambou ou de baguettes vermillon, c'est d'un grand effet.

99

The comparison of Japanese prints with the native popular prints of France was made by many who saw them. The most well-known is that by Zola in his essay in defence of Manet, but there are also references in writings on Japanese art by the critics Chesneau, Bousquet, Feydeau and the dealer Sichel, as well as other passing references in writings of hostile critics.

100

Epinal prints had been of great interest to Courbet and the Realists of the 1850's. Champfleury had studied them in some detail and advocated them as an example of successful popular art.

101

The association of Japanese art with these prints therefore had a partisan implication in terms of current Western art. Champions of Realism and its artists used this analogy to express their approval, others used it to denigrate Japanese art just as they used it to attack the whole of the French "Avante-Garde" from Courbet to Van Gogh as naive, crude and, inevitably, as left-wing revolutionaries. I will take up these references in the body of this thesis.

The comparison with Epinal prints also indicates the nature of the Japanese prints that were being seen in Europe. Epinal work could only be compared to Japanese prints made from about 1800 onwards, and

most closely compared to the prints of the 1840's and later by Kuniyoshi, Kunisada, Hiroshige and many minor artists. The delicacy of colour and line of earlier prints could never be confounded with ~~Epinal~~ <sup>Spinal</sup> work. The bright blues, reds, greens and browns of Epinal are found only in the later work.

102

The presence of Japanese prints in Paris in 1861 is also noted in the De Goncourt's "Journal". In June 1861 they speak of "dessins Japonais imprimés <sup>sur</sup> du papier qui ressemblent à une étoffe des toilettes - des visages des femmes qui ont l'air de venir d'un rêve, une magie enivrait les yeux comme un parfum d'orient. Un art prodigieux naturel, multiple comme une flore fascinant, comme un miroir magique".

103

We have seen that the De Goncourt's interest in Japan may have been briefly roused as early as 1852. However it was only in the 1860's that they, Baudelaire and many others, began the serious pursuit of Japanese goods.

It is difficult to identify any major items of Japanese art in Paris before 1867. Moreover the shops dealing with Japanese art seem to have begun business in the early 1860's. This dating fits in with the relatively late date of French involvement in Japan (1858). Two events are generally cited as marking the beginning of Japanese interest in Paris. They are the supposed discovery by Bracquemond of a volume of the "Mangwa" in the shop of his printer, Delâtre, in 1856, and the opening of the Japanese shop, "La Porte Chinoise", in Paris usually dated to 1862. I believe that Bracquemond, like Baudelaire and De Goncourt, first discovered Japanese prints in a shop called "La Porte Chinoise" in late 1861. I will therefore discuss the history of this shop as far as it is known, and the other outlets for Japanese art in Paris before 1867. I will then go on to discuss the case against Bracquemond's "discovery" of Japanese prints.

104

"La Porte Chinoise" and other Far Eastern shops in Paris.

It has recently been claimed that "La Porte Chinoise" was in existence as early in the 1830's, though no positive evidence has been presented for this. The earliest record that I have of the shop is an advertisement in a catalogue of the Paris exhibition of 1849. 105 106

The shop was located at that time at "36 Rue Neuve Vivienne, (anciennement Tue de la Bourse)", and was advertised as selling -

Magasin Special de Thés de premier choix,  
marchandises de Chine et du Japon, boites à  
 thé, théières en metal anglais, objets d'art,  
 du curiosités, etc.,

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The proprietor is given as J. G. Houssaye who had also written a book, the "Monographie du Thé". Houssaye had direct links with China and displayed a great variety of goods. I suspect that he was a relation of Arsene Houssaye though I have been unable to find any evidence of this.

The linking of Japanese goods with the sale of tea in this shop may well explain the many stories about the "discovery" of Japanese art by various artists in tea shops.

The first record of Mme. De Soye's presence in Paris is in "Le Journal Amusant" 20 Avril 1861, which announces that "Madame D" (De Soye?) "qui, apres 10 ans de recherches intelligentes a constitué le plus curieux musée chinois qu'on puisse imaginer". The collection was sold on the 23rd April 1861. This sale was one of several of Far Eastern goods that took place in Paris in 1861 and 1862. 107

Mme. De Soye could have begun trading in 1861, but her address was 220 Rue Rivoli. In the preface to "Cherie" published in 1884, Edmond De Goncourt claims to have visited "La Porte Chinoise" in 1860, where he discovered his first Japanese album. He also speaks of visiting Mme. De Soye "un peu plus tard". The first entry of the name "Desoye" in the Bottin occurs in 1863, indicating that she had begun business in 1862. The continued existence of the other "La Porte

"Chinoise" of the Rue Neuve Vivienne, once owned by Houssaye, into the 1860's would explain the problem of dates. Moreover the date 1862 is confirmed by Ernst Chesneau in his article "Le Japon à Paris" in the G.B.A. 1878.

Mme. De Soye's shop may not even have been called "La Porte Chinoise", as it is not referred to by this title in contemporary references, but I have retained the name as it is often associated with the shop by later writers.

As Mme. De Soye had spent time in the East it is easy to understand her importance as an authority to the early Japanese enthusiasts. William Rossetti remembered her as a good source of information;

Several of my earlier Japanese items were acquired in London; about an equal number in Paris, where I used to drop in at the shop in the Rue Rivoli, of Madame Dessoie - a very pleasant and well informed purveyor with whom I had several amusing chats. I know not what has become of Madame, for years past her shop has disappeared from the Rue de Rivoli. She told me a little personal anecdote over which we both laughed. One of those half bred British tourists who make themselves a pest and a jest among the "benighted foreigners", one who appears to have considered himself a lady killer, entered her shop, and, after looking at various things which she showed with her usual amenity he suddenly blurted out "Je vous amour". Madame Dessoie promptly showed him the door.

108

The best picture of Mme. Dessoie and her shop is given by De Goncourt in his Journal in 1878;

En ces derniers jours que de stations dans cette boutique de la rue de Rivoli, ou trône en sa bijouterie d'idole japonaise la grass madame Desoye! Une figure presque historique de ce temps, que cette femme dont le magasin a été l'endroit, l'école pour ainsi dire, où s'est élaboré ce grand mouvement japonais, qui s'étend aujourd'hui de la peinture à la mode. Ça été d'abord quelques originaux comme mon frère et moi, puis Baudelaire puis Villot, puis Burty, tout aussi amoureux de la marchande que des bibelots; puis à notre suite, la bande des peintres fantaisistes, enfin les hommes et les femmes du monde qui ont la prétention d'être des natures artistiques.

Dans cette boutique aux étrangetés si joliment façonnées et toujours caressées de soleil les heures passent rapides à regarder, à retourner, à manier, ces choses d'un art agréable aux touches; et cela au milieu du babil, des rires, des pouffements fous de la drôlatique et graveleuse créature."

109

De Goncourt goes on to record that Mme. Dessoye had visited Japan and that her fine transparent white complexion had caused a sensation, and that, while there, she had treated fever cases with Quinine and been mistaken for the Virgin Mary.

In an article written in 1872, Burty confirms De Goncourt's assertion that he was one of the first customers of Mme. Desoye. He bought Japanese goods from her as a consolation for having failed to master Japanese in one of the courses held in the early 1860's by De Rosny;

En chemin, j'achetai pour me consoler, chez une marchande de thé de la rue de Rivoli, une serie de petits volumes ornés de très-curieuses gravures sur bois. "C'est," me dit-elle (et je devais la croire car elle arrivait en ligne droit du Japon) "l'histoire des chiens célèbres." Cela me donna d'autant plus à réfléchir qu'il n'y a de chiens figurés que sur les couvertures; à très peu exceptions près.

110

Taken together the evidence that I have cited so far suggests that Mme. Dessoye took over a business, perhaps called "La Porte Chinoise", which had been importing tea and other goods from China, in 1862, and turned it over entirely to dealing in curios mainly from Japan, where she herself had spent a considerable time. It also suggests that the shop became a centre of the developing enthusiasm for Japan, as later authorities such as Benedité were to claim. The shop's importance reached a peak about 1864 when its customers included most of the artists and critics who were to play major parts in the history of the influence of Japanese art on the West.

Rossetti paid several visits to her shop in May and June of that year, on Saturday, 16th May, for instance;

Went to Dessoye's, the Japanese shop in the Rue de Rivoli, and bought books, etc. to the amount of 40 francs. There is to be a new consignment in October especially of books of birds and flowers...Madame Dessoye told me some particulars about Japanese matters. A figure with a robe figures with the leaves of a tree is the Tycoon (pronounced with the English "i"). The type of face constantly given to women is a mere convention. The real type is snub-nosed; but the Japanese as they admire long drooping noses improvise them for the purpose. The Japanese are much pleased with European work such as the cuts in the London Illustrated News.

111

Rossetti then indicates that Mme. De Soye knew the Japanese ambassadors then in Paris. Rossetti's brother Dante Gabriel, also had dealings with Mme. De Soye. On the 12th November 1864 he wrote to his mother that all the Japanese costumes in her shop were being snapped up by Tissot. Baudelaire also had considerable dealings with Mme. De Soye in 1864 and 1865. He wrote to his friend Ancelle on December 29th, 1864, asking him to visit Mm. De. Soye's shop at 220 Rue de Rivoli;

La dire qu'elle ait l'obligeance de me garder encore quelque temps le pupitre en laque que je lui ai donné à réparer. Lui demander ce qui je dois, et lui affirmer que je vais revenir prochainement.

113

There are several similar references in Baudelaire's correspondence at this time.

Whistler also bought from Madame De Soye in 1864. Benedité, claiming to be quoted from his correspondence with Fantin Latour, says -

Whistler, pour son compte, fut un des ferventes les plus enthousiastés du Japon et l'un des fidèles les plus assidus de la "Porte Chinoise" dans sa correspondance avec Fantin notamment en 1864, il ne manque jamais de faire quelque recommandation à son ami où de le charger de quelque commission en revenant du Louvre "pour la marchande qu'il appelle 'La Japonaise'."

114

Benedité notes that on one occasion Whistler asked Madame De Soye to put all the costumes in her shop on one side for him.

Fantin provides the first concrete link between Felix Bracquemond and Japanese art. In a letter to Fantin of April 9th, 1862,

Bracquemond mentions a gift of Japanese prints that he made to Fantin. Bracquemond can therefore be safely reckoned among the early customers of Mme. De Soye although the earliest reference to this is in Bénédicté's article "Bracquemond l'Animalier" of 1905. 115

There is no means of confirming the association of any other artists or critics with Mme. De Soye's shop directly. Undoubtedly, however, a much wider circle must have used the shop and the assertions of Chesneau, Bénédicté and others that Degas, Alfred Stevens, Alphonse Hirsch, Manet, Zola, Champfleury and others were customers during the 1860's are probably correct, though in some cases, such as that of Duret, their Japanese enthusiasm only arose after 1867.

The enthusiasts had several other shops to visit in Paris during the '60's. Bénédicté speaks of "une foule de petits comptoirs Japonais" 116 which followed the success of Mme. De Soy<sup>e</sup>'s "La Porte Chinoise".

Rossetti records visits he made in 1864 to Japanese shops at 7, Boulevard des Capucines, and in the Rue Vivienne (perhaps the original 117 "La Porte Chinoise"). At both he bought Japanese print books but noted a decline in their artistic quality which he attributed to European influence. However Mme. De Soye's shop remained the most important source of Japanese goods in Paris in the 1860's. In the 1870's it was overshadowed by other dealers notably by Bing and the Sichel frères. The last known date at which "La Porte Chinoise" was still open is September 19th, 1877, when De Goncourt records the purchase of an embroidered silk square there. Though as we have seen, De Goncourt also mentions the shop in a reminiscent passage in 1878.

We have no record of particular items which were sold at the shop though the range was considerable, as can be seen from the evidence I have given. We do know that Mme. De Soye dealt in prints by Hokusai as Rossetti mentions discussing him with her in 1864. She was under the impression that Hokusai had died some forty years before; his real

date of death being 1849. However since one of the other Japanese dealers informed Rossetti that Hokusai had died a hundred years earlier this is not such a major error.

The case against Bracquemond as the "discoverer" of Japanese art.

There is no doubt that Bracquemond was one of the early enthusiasts of Japanese art. We know that he collected Japanese prints, and that he made engravings and ceramic designs using Japanese motifs. However he is most well-known for being the "discoverer" of Japanese prints in Paris in 1856. This title and date have become something of a monument and therefore I believe it to be worthwhile to review the evidence for and against it.

118

Ever since 1905 when Bénédite wrote his article "Bracquemond l'animalier", it has been asserted that Felix Bracquemond, engraver and illustrator, was the first artist to have appreciated the value of Japanese prints. According to Bénédite this occurred in 1856. Bracquemond saw a section of Hokusai's "Mangwa" at his printers (Delâtre), and subsequently secured it by exchanging a valuable book from his own collection for it. This story has only once been seriously challenged, by Mme. Y. Thirion who made the following points against it.

119

First, there is no intermediate reference to Bracquemond's discovery between 1856 and Bénédite's article. The earliest records of the discovery of Japanese prints mention Bracquemond as only one among many people involved in the new craze. The most famous of these is Chesneau's 1878 article, "Le Japon à Paris". However the absence of any reference to Bracquemond's discovery of Japanese art in the article on his work written by his friend Ph. Burty, himself a major Japanese enthusiast, is much more telling. Burty, Bracquemond's comrade in the "Société du Jinglar", would have been the first to recognise such a claim.

120

Second, Bénédicté contrived to give the impression that Bracquemond had indicated that the date of his discovery was 1856. In fact he deduced the date from the fact that a print by Bracquemond, "La Marche des Canards" is described in Beraldi's "Graveurs du dix-neuvième siècle" as one of the first works to be printed on Japanese paper and is dated 1856. Bénédicté reveals that the date is a deduction from evidence and not an admission from Bracquemond when he says "La date 1856 est certain mais je ne sais pas si Bracquemond pourrait en certifier le mois et le jour".

Bracquemond told Bénédicté that the "Mangwa" was sent to France as packing for ceramics sent from Japan by Frenchmen. Thirion claims that no Frenchmen were involved in the Japanese trade in Japan until after 1858, which was the date of the first Franco-Japanese trade treaty. As we have seen that Mme. De Soye could have been in Japan earlier than this, and Japanese goods were on sale in Paris in 1840, this point loses some of its force.

Mme. Thirion's article was written in 1960, and it is remarkable that until then Bracquemond's role as discoverer of Japanese art was accepted without question.

Many books have continued to repeat Bénédicté's assertion. It has been highly convenient to have a clear date on which to base an account of Japanese influence which restricted it either to the role of a confirmation of formal trends already present within Western art, or to a deterministic and mechanical stimulus to change. These two views have in common a prior commitment to an account of painting in the second half of the nineteenth century in terms of successive "Avant-Gardes". Thus, although this dating is apparently a trivial matter, it has found its way into most books dealing with this period. In view of this I feel that additional evidence about Bracquemond's interest in Japan should be mentioned. Such evidence is drawn from his writings.

Bracquemond knew that the De Goncourts had claimed that they were the first to discover Japanese art. Yet he made no attempt to indicate his own discovery of 1856, even after De Goncourt's death when he wrote of his interest in Japanese art in the preface to the sale catalogue of the Goncourt collection of modern etchings and prints. In fact he treats his part in the development of Japanese influence as that of a participant in a general enthusiasm.

Certes mon admiration, ma sympathie n'ont subi aucun amoindrissement pour cette art qui sait tout dire, tout exprimer par des formes ornementales d'une originalité qui se renouvelle sans cesse. Mais après la période des surprises, des enchantements provoqués par la nouveauté d'expressions si inhabituelles, est venue le calme de l'examen critique. Sans cesser d'admirer les résultats, j'ai pu apprécier les moyens d'exécution.

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Surely had he been the first to discover Japanese art, Bracquemond would have mentioned it, at least, in such a passage. Since he did not do so, what reason would he have had for telling Benedité that he was the first to discover them?

In Bracquemond's own writings on art there is no sign of a deep interest in Japanese art. In the study of print making that originally appeared in the "Journal des Arts" under the title "Trois livres" and was later published as "Étude sur le graveur<sup>ure</sup> de bois et la lithographie", Bracquemond mentions his love of wood and refers to his discovery and love for Epinal coloured woodcuts around 1845. He also mentions Gavarni, Daumier and Raffet. He makes no mention of Japanese prints and apparently had no appreciation of their significance as technical achievements. This may be because the colour printing process for the prints was not widely known during the 1860's.

W. Rossetti was told by one Japanese dealer in Paris that the process was a secret known only to the Mikado's servants. However Wirgman and others sent perfectly accurate descriptions of the process to Europe.

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Nonetheless the absence of any reference to Japanese art does suggest that Bracquemond did not consider it an important part of his own development. If he had been the initiator of Japonisme as Benedité claims him to be, surely he would have mentioned Japanese prints in this discussion, as they would be a far more eloquent testimony to the illustrative potential of woodcuts than Epinal prints.

The didactic study "Du Dessin et de la Couleur" provides similar negative evidence. Bracquemond omits from his discussion the art of the Orient, the Persians, the Chinese and the Japanese, because they are beyond the central canon of his aesthetic "du modèle", and would require a special study.

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Bracquemond came to regard the black and white etching or engraving as the only legitimate form of print making, as he said, "le vrai blanc et noir" with its tones, subtleties of shadow and line was the ultimate achievement in print making.

The inferior quality of Japanese prints could be demonstrated in their deliberate avoidance of such subtleties;

L'art de l'extrême orient est incomplet dans la représentation de la nature. Par lui le dessin est réduit à la convention graphique due trait, il rend l'expression des choses seulement par leurs contours. L'art japonais ignore et veut ignorer la lumière et l'ombre, ces éléments naturel que pour exprimer rapidement nos pensées, j'appellerait la nature meme. L'infériorité de l'art japonais vient de la suppression voulue du clair et de l'obscur dans sa conception et son originalité. C'est à la fois son faiblesse et son originalité. Élémentaire dans son technique, il semble naturel à toute main; c'est une écriture.

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One cannot escape the conclusion that for Bracquemond, Japanese art was a passing interest, one of many, and that he was merely a minor member of the circle which discovered Japanese art in Paris in the early 1860's; as we have seen J.P. Bouillon's study of his correspondence shows that the earliest mention of Japanese art in his letters occurs in 1862.

It was at this time that Bracquemond began acquiring his volumes

of Japanese illustrated books. Gabriel Weisberg identified two artists' work in one book, in the possession of his grand-daughter, Mme. Henriod Bracquemond. The book was entitled "Flowers of the Present Reign" and contained print designs by Shonen, otherwise known as Tai-zen 1812-1869, by Shotei Hoku-ju, another artist of the mid-nineteenth century and a pupil of Hokusai. This adds evidence to my hypothesis that only mid-nineteenth century prints were available in Europe before 1867.

Bracquemond was essentially a minor figure, perhaps De Goncourt's judgement of him is best;

il a voyagé toute sa vie, allant de dessins de portières contemporaines, sur fond d'or à la Holbein, à la copie des fantaisies de l'Extreme-Orient et à leur introduction dans notre art industriel, sans jamais avoir trouvé une originalité tirée de lui-même.

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#### The De Goncourts and other Japanese enthusiasts

Further evidence of the new interest in Japanese art in Paris is provided by the De Goncourts. They refer to Japanese prints in their Journal for July 19, 1864;

Ce soir, le soleil résssemble à un pain à cacheter cerise, sur un ciel sur une mer gris perle. Dans leurs impressions en couleur, les Japonais seuls ont osé ces étranges effets de nature.

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Schwartz is of the opinion that, about this time, the Goncourts began a sustained propaganda campaign for Japanese taste and that it was through them that most French artists whose styles were formed during the '60's became aware of Japanese art. Edmond was to continue this propaganda until his death.

I am not convinced that the De Goncourts played such a central role in the developing enthusiasm for Japanese art. This is an impression that one takes away naturally from the Journal but I shall show that Burty, Duret and others were equally important in promoting the influence of Japanese art in the West.

The Goncourts turned quite naturally from their study of the eighteenth century French art to Japanese art, linking both by the concept of the natural in art and the observation of nature;

L'art Chinois et surtout l'art japonais; ces arts qui paraissent aux yeux bougeouis d'une si invraisemblable fantaisie sont puisés à la nature même. Tout ce qu'ils font est emprunté à l'observation. Ils rendent ce qu'ils voient les effets incroyables du ciel, les sébures du champignons, les transparences de la méduse. Leur art copie la nature comme l'art gothique.

Au fond ce n'est pas un paradoxe de dire qu'un album japonais et un tableau de Watteau sont tirés de l'intime étude de la nature. Rien de pareil chez les Grecs, chez eux, l'art - hors la sculpture - est dans la faux et l'inventé.

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Like others the Goncourts were attracted by the closeness to "nature" of Japanese art, and they allied it closely with their personal weapon against academicism, eighteenth century French art, as well as the more generally anti-academic taste for the "Gothic" by which they meant the Early Renaissance art as well as the more fanciful aspects of the art of the Middle Ages.

Their Journal for 1866 emphasises that they, like Rossetti, appreciated the elements of fantasy in Japanese art as much as its decorative excellence, by means of a bizarre simile, that of a human embryo;

Quand on étudie l'embryon humain dans des grossissements de figurations en cire et qu'on sait de la tâche embryonnaire à l'enfant, le développement de l'être, il semble qu'on voit la racine, le germe de deux arts, de l'art du Japon et de l'art du Moyen Age.

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They pursue this analogy to the point of arguing that an embryonic people and civilisation produce an embryo-like art.

In 1866 they published "Idées et Sensations", a volume of extracts from their Journal, which was still to be published. This contained passages praising Japanese prints. Once again the fantasy element of Japanese art was singled out, the Goncourts even argue that for the

Japanese, fantasy constituted an ideal similar to the Greek ideal of perfection;

L'imagination du monstre, de l'animalité chimérique l'art de peindre les peurs qui s'approchant de l'homme le jour avec le féroce et le reptile la nuit avec les apparitions troublés, la faculté de figurer et d'incarner ces paniques de la vision et de l'illusion dans des formes et des constructions d'être membrés; articulés presque viables - c'est le genie du Japon. Le Japon a crée et vivifié le Bestiaire de l'hallucination. On croirait voir jaillir et s'élancer du cerveau de son art, comme de la caverne du cauchemar, un monde de demons animaux, une création taillée dans la turgescence de le difformité des bêtes ayant la torsion et la convulsion de <sup>paris</sup> mandragore,.....

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Nous Européens et français nous ne sommes pas si riches d'invention: notre art n'a qu'un monstre, c'est toujours ce monstre de récit de Théramène qui menace, dans les tableaux de M. Ingres, Angélique avec sa langue en drap rouge - là bas - le monstre est partout. C'est le décor et presque le mobilier de la maison.

The attack on Ingres for his lack of imagination is most significant as it points to an important reason for the attractiveness of Japanese art to the West, especially in France. It was not simple a new awareness of nature that was needed in Western art, but a new, integrated consciousness of the power of fantasy and the imagination. Japanese art, as we shall see, offered, or was felt to offer, both. The Goncourt's description of the reaction of their painter hero Coriolis de Naz to Japanese print albums in their studio novel "Manette Salomon", which was begun in 1865, shows both these aspects. It is worth quoting in full as it shows the state of appreciation of Japanese art in the mid-60's in Paris, not just in terms of intellectual response, but in terms of the emotional tone with which the objects were regarded.

Pour Coriolis, après quelques essais de travail lâche, quelque coups de brosse, il prenait dans un crédence une poignée d'albums aux couvertures bariolées, gaufrées, pointillées ou piquées d'or, brochées d'un fil de soie, et jetant cela par

terre, s'étendant dessus, couche sur le ventre, dresse sur les deux coudes, les deux mains dans les cheveux, il regardait, en feuilletant, ces pages pareilles à des palettes d'ivoire chargées des couleurs de l'Orient, tachées et diaprées, étincelantes de pourpre, d'outremer, de vert d'émeraude. Et un jour de pays féerique, un jour sans ombre et qui n'était que lumière, se levait pour lui de ces albums de dessins japonais. Son regard entrait dans la profondeur de ces firmaments paille, baignant d'un fluide d'or la silhouette des êtres et des campagnes; il se perdait dans cet azûr ou se noyaient les floraisons roses des arbres, dans cet émail bleu sertissant les fleurs de neige des pêchers et des amandiers, dans ces grands couchers de soleil cramoisis et d'où partent les rayons d'une roue de sang, dans la splendeur de ces astres écornés par le vol des grues voyageuses. L'hiver, le gris de jour, le pauvre ciel frissonnant de Paris, il les fuyait et les oubliait au bord de ces mers limpides comme le ciel, balançant des danses sur des radeaux de buveurs de thé; il les oubliait dans ces champs aux rochers de lapis, dans ce verdolement de plants aux pieds mouillés, près de ces bambous, de ces haies efflorescentes, qui font un mur avec de grands bouquets. Devant lui, se déroulait ce pays des maisons rouges, aux murs de paravent, aux chambres peintes, à l'art de nature si naïf et si vif, aux intérieurs miroitants, éclaboussés, amusés de tous les réflets que font les vernis des bois, l'émail des porcelaines, les ors des laques, le fauve luisant des bronzes tonkin. ? Et tout à coup, dans ce qu'il regardait, une page fleurissante semblait un herbier du mois de mai, une poignée du printemps, toute fraîche arrachée, aquarellée dans le bourgeonnement et la jeune tendresse de sa couleur. C'étaient des zigzags de branches, ou bien des gouttes de couleur pleurant en larmes sur le papier, ou des pluies de caractères jouant et descendant comme des essaims d'insectes dans l'arc-en-ciel du dessin nué. Cà et là, des rivages montraient des plages éblouissantes de blancheur et fourmillantes de crabes; une porte jaune, un treillage de bambou, des pallisades de clochettes bleues laissaient deviner le jardin d'une maison de thé; des caprices de paysages jetaient des temples dans le ciel, au bout du piton d'un volcan sacré; toutes les fantaisies de la terre, de la végétation, de l'architecture, de la roche déchiraient l'horizon de leur pittoresque. Du fond des bonzeries partaient et s'évasaient des rayons, des éclairs, des gloires jaunes palpitants de vols d'abeilles. Et des dévinités apparaissaient, la tête nimbée de la branche d'un saule, et le corps évanoui dans la tombée des rameaux.

Coriolis feuilletait toujours: et devant lui passaient des femmes, les unes dévidant de la soie cerise, les autres peignant des éventails; des femmes buvant à petites gorgées dans des tasses de laque rouge; des femmes interrogeant des baquets magiques; des femmes glissant en barques sur des fleuves, nonchalamment penchées sur la poésie et la fugitivité de l'eau. Elles avaient des robes éblouissantes et douces, dont les couleurs semblaient mourir en bas, des robes glauques à écailles, ou flottait come l'ombre d'un monstre noyé, des robes brodées de pivoines et de griffons, des robes de plumes, de soie, de fleurs et d'oiseaux, des robes étranges, qui s'ouvraient et s'étalaient au dos, en ailes de papillon, tournoyaient en remous devague autour des pieds, plaquaient au corps, ou bien s'en envolaient en l'habillant de la chimérique fantaisie d'un dessin héraldique. Des antennes d'écaille piquées dans les cheveux, ces femmes montraient leur visage pâle aux paupères fardées, leurs yeux relevés au coin comme un sourire; et accoudées sur des balcons, le menton sur le revers de la main, muettes, rêveuses, de la reverie sournoise d'un Debureau dans une pantomime, elles semblaient ronger leur vie, en mordillant un bout de leur vêtement.

Et d'autres albums faisaient voir à Coriolis une bolière pleine de bouquets, des oiseaux d'or becquetant des fruits de carmin, - quand tombait dans ces visions du Japon, la lumière de la réalité, le soleil des hivers de Paris, la lampe qu'on apportait dans l'atelier.

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Schwartz claims that "Manette Salomon" was almost obligatory reading for young artists at the close of the '60's. However as I have shown, Japanese enthusiasm was widespread in Paris before 1866 when the book was published. It is simplifying matters to claim that the Goncourts highly rhetorical style which always emphasis the precious quality of Japanese prints and their visionary beauty could have influenced so directly the majority of painters at this time. However I will deal with their possible influence when I discuss the work of individual artists.

The Goncourts assimilated both the art of Watteau and Japanese art into their conception of an art based on nature. This is hardly an opinion which contemporary artists would have supported.

Other writers also showed an interest in the art of the East. In 1867 Zachary Astruc published a series of articles in the journal "L'Etendard" about Japan which were very successful and included 131 references to Japanese art. These essays were highly romantic in their treatment of Japan, which Astruc referred to as "L'Ile de la Demoiselle", recalling the lightness and colour of the dragonfly. Astruc even uses figurative magic carpets to transport himself and the reader round Japan. He dwelt on the Japanese interest in nature, and pointed to the connection this provided between Japanese art and modern artists.

Astruc's romanticising was based entirely on his reading of early travel books, such as those discussed in this chapter. He followed them in believing that Japanese art was the result of the Japanese religious cult of nature. He also wrote a play entitled "L'Ile de la Demoiselle" which embodied his ideas and was much admired although it was never published.

This development of knowledge did not help French critics to understand the adoption of Japanese devices by Western artists.

Gautier, reviewing Whistler in 1862 was puzzled by his strange 132 perspective and found the lack of depth in his painting incomprehensible. In the 1863 Salon Whistler's work was in the Salon des Refusés. Chesneau, 133 who was later to become one of the foremost of propagandists for Japanese art, quite liked Whistler's work. However he was amused rather than enraptured. In "La Dame Blanche" he observed that the carpet was not in horizontal perspective and an arm was out of place. She also had a bizarre expression, he thought, - "Elle est plus curieuse que séduisante", he wrote. To use the Far East successfully in painting was still for Chesneau a matter of painting a variety of genre. He notes in the Salon work of M. de Bannes who painted Chinese interiors after having seen 134 them while a soldier on duty in China.

Illustrations of Japanese art in European books of the 1850's and 1860's

Much can be learnt about the type of Japanese art seen in Europe during this period and of the attitude to it, by a study of the illustrated books which appeared incorporating illustration taken from Japanese sources. I give below a brief account of the books I have studied. With the help of Mr. Basil Robinson of the Victoria and Albert Museum, I have been able to identify the sources of many of these illustrations. I have included this information in Appendix F.

Within a year of the return of Perry's expedition the American publishers "Lippincotts" produced "Japanese Botany, being a facsimile of a Japanese book with introductory notes and translation".

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This is a perfect black and white facsimile of a Japanese flower book first published in the eighteenth century. It is arranged to be read from back to front. The text is simply a literal translation of the names of the flowers. The book entered the British Museum in November 1855, it is therefore the first accurate reproduction of Japanese art to become available in Europe. It reproduces many Japanese graphic mannerisms and motifs typical of mid-nineteenth century illustrated books.

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However, most of the books which contain reproductions of Japanese art at this time are travel books. Moreover, topographical illustrations or genre scenes by European artists make up the bulk of the illustrations in these travel books and it is worth recording that in none of them do I see any influence from Oriental art. By and large then it can be said that the first generation of European artists to see the art of the Far East in its own setting were untouched by it, for these illustrators must have travelled East themselves, or, at least seen Japanese art at first hand in Europe.

A good date for the beginning of the new intensive interest in the Far East is 1859, the year in which Leon Pages produced his

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"Bibliographie Japonaise", which claimed to list all the books published about Japan to that date. It is interesting to note that none of them say much about Japanese art. By 1859 Bayard Taylor's "A visit to India China and Japan " had reached its sixteenth edition. This indicates the measure of interest in Far Eastern travel.

Oliphant's account of Elgin's mission to Japan in 1859 contained four 137 colour reproductions of Japanese prints (in volume two). They were titled "A View of Fuji", a "Lady at her toilet", a "Winter Scene" and "Street aristocrats in a corner of Yedo". The prints were all late, I (18) almost contemporary with Oliphant's visit to Japan which took place a-c

between 1856 and 1859. Oliphant also includes black and white prints of Japanese people at work, one of which, "Plasterers at work", seems to derive from Hokusai. He has nothing to say about art except to 138 observe that Chinese art is no longer worth buying since a trade agreement ruined the market. Also in 1859 there appeared A. Steinmetz's "Japan and her people" published in London and New York. This contains 139 several line drawings taken from Japanese prints, but they show none of the accuracy of reproduction of Oliphant's work. There are also many Western style illustrations of Japanese costumes and manners which I (19) show very little appreciation of the grace of the Japanese costume. a-c

Of special interest is an illustration which shows the preparation of woodblocks for the making of prints. Many of these Westernised illustrations are signed E. Evans, which I suspect to be the signature of the draughtsman, wood engraver, and later publisher, Edmund Evans, who pioneered colour printing from wood blocks in England in his "Toy Books". It is tempting to suggest that Evans got the idea for his colour illustrations from Japanese prints but he makes no mention of this in his "Reminiscences". As I shall show Evans published the designs of Walter Crane in the "Toy Books" series and many of these made direct use of Japanese designs. Steinmetz quotes Fischer on Japanese art which

he describes as highly decorative, but with little or no portraiture. He also makes use of the report to the U.S. expedition to Japan, which praises Japanese nursery books and humorous illustrations as well as the highly precise Japanese woodcarving. However he lacks sufficient specimens, he says, to attempt an evaluation of Japanese art.

In 1860 the first French book to discuss the Japanese as artists was published anonymously. It was "L'empire des Sources du Soleil où I (20) le Japon Ouvert", Paris, 1860. Like Steinmetz, the author quotes from the report of the American expedition, praising their manual skill and carpentry. Discussing art, the author relies on the collection brought back by the American expedition which suggests to him that the Japanese are in the transitional period between a primitive art form and a new culture. Their work is compared to Etruscan vase painting, a transitional phase in classical culture. The only positive statement made is that the Japanese were keen observers of nature. The description given by Jones, the chaplain of the American ship "Mississippi", of the Japanese method of painting screens directly without preliminary sketches is quoted, but without any conclusions being drawn from it. 140

In 1860 Sherard Osborne a captain of a voyage to Japan published his experiences in the English magazine "Once a week", with the title "Japanese fragments". They were illustrated by a series of reproductions of black and white drawings by Hiroshige and other late Japanese artists. In 1861 the articles were expanded and published as a book with the same title and a series of hand-painted colour reproductions of late landscape prints added to the black and white illustrations. I have identified them in Appendix F. 141

The landscapes are reduced reproductions from prints by Hiroshige, and their colouring is bright and garish, in red, blue and green. 142

Osborne says nothing about the intrinsic value of Japanese art but does I (21) make comments on the prints. For instance in a street scene he is at a-c

pains to demonstrate the contrast of morality and immorality in the same image, the respectable travellers to a hotel and the prostitutes at its windows. Like others he compares Japanese culture to that of Greece. Some of his illustrations are very well-chosen to illustrate 143 or to produce a particular European conception of Japanese manners and calm, for instance, "A Japanese lady, famous for her courage and strength calmly surveying the landscape while standing on the halter of a very restive horse"; or 144 "A Japanese hero in the rain taking off his hat to a lady of surpassing beauty." 145

Osborne refers both in "Once a week" and in his book to a copy of the "Hundred views of the matchless mountain" which he brought back with the prints which he reproduces. This is Hokusai's work, the "100 views of Fuji" from which some of his black and white illustrations I (23) are taken. a-6

In 1862 another book was published which contained coloured illustrations. This was Fonblanque's "Nippon and Pe Che Li", the most 146 amusingly written account of a journey to the East. The frontispiece is a print of a street of theatres, and on p.14 is a colour print of an I (24a) actor playing a woman. 6

Fonblanque makes one very interesting reference to Japanese art which he refers to as "The perfect works of an Eastern Pre-Raphaelite school". He amuses himself then by commenting on the indecency of much 147 Japanese art which is a common thing in writers at this time. He mentions how even the Bishop of Victoria, a notorious prude and missionary, unwittingly purchased some porcelain which had obscene designs on it. Fonblanque appears to have journeyed to Osaka for the prints. He reproduces one Osaka theatre print and he also includes a large fold-out reproduction of a Japanese theatre bill in the book. I (24b) c-d

The illustrations in Fonblanque are of an exceptionally high quality. The tones are not garish like those in Osborne's book.

In 1861 the first attempt at a representative collection of colour reproductions of Japanese prints in France were published by Baron de Chassiron in "Notes sur le Japon, la Chine et L'Inde". The 148 plates are divided into three groups; natural history, caricatures and country scenes. They seem to be mainly by Hokusai (natural history) or Hiroshige (country scenes) with some weaker and later plates in the caricature section. Their colour is rather flat and faded and in some cases only a brown or green tint. I give several illustrations of them. I (25)

Chassiron makes an unfavourable comparison between Chinese and Japanese art. He claims that the Japanese are superior to the Chinese in their ability to unite thought and form in their work. The Japanese produce "un sentiment de mysticism et d'élégance élevée", the Chinese 149 are merely refiners of form.

Gautier read Chassiron's book and seems to have accepted his view of Japanese art. He claims that the Japanese have "le sentiment de l'art, leur goût n'est pas chimérique et monstrueux comme celui des 150 Chinois". In another essay he condemned Chinese art completely. The Chinese are civilised to the last degree of decrepitude;

La beauté consiste pour eux dans des inventions chimériques. Ils demandent aux deviations infinies du laid et des moyens de raver leur goût blasé et monstrueux. Malgré mille délicatesses diamantes mille ingeniosités singuliers, ils restent inférieurs à nos yeux, aux Indiens, aux orientaux et même aux sauvages. Au fond ils sont affreusement bourgeois.

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It seems that in France the stigma of decadence which had been attached previously to all oriental cultures began to be reserved for the Chinese alone. This opinion may have been stimulated by a poor exhibition of loot from the summer palace of the Chinese emperors which was held in 1861 at the Tuilleries. Pauthier's account of this exhibition notes its poor quality and regrets the bad impression it is making on the large crowds that attended;

Je ne puis m'empêcher d'exprimer d'abord ici le regret; et un regret profond, que ces objets d'art soient tombés, avec tant d'autres, entre les mains de nos soldats, par le droit brutal de la guerre; et ensuite, que les collections accumulées depuis plus d'un siècle dans les palais d'été des empereurs; collections assurément uniques en Chine; pour l'abondance et la rareté des objets, aient été dispersées à tous les vents, et qu'il n'en soit arrivé en France qu'un faible échantillon; lequel à lui seul, est loin de suffire à donner une idée complète de l'art chinois.

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Pauthier also notes that Baron Gros who was the leader of the French expedition to the Far East was an artist himself and has given him histories of Chinese art taken from the library in Peking. "The Illustrated London News" provided an illustration of the exhibition which confirms this view. Whatever the reason the Japanese now began to assume their identity as models of art, industry and craftsmanship, that was to last throughout the rest of the nineteenth century while the Chinese were slowly forgotten about.

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Other illustrated books which make no comment on Japanese art are listed in Appendix C. The tradition of publishing and reproducing images taken from Japanese prints in Japanese travel books continued in the 1860's. Alcock's "The Capital of the Tycoon" contains hundreds of black and white vignettes drawn from print blocks. Many are recognisably by Hokusai (some from the Mangwa) and Hiroshige although most are totally distorted by European engravers. However later books add nothing further to our knowledge of the Japanese art present in Europe before 1867.

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#### Photographs of Japan in Europe

Almost from the time of Perry's visit photographs were being made of Japan and these reached Europe in considerable quantities in the early 1860's. They formed an important source of visual information about Japan which was used in "The London Illustrated News" and many other periodicals and books from 1860 onwards.

In England the firm of Negretti and Zambra marketed a great many stereoscopic views of Japan which unfortunately are untraceable as all their records were destroyed in the last war. The earliest catalogue they still have dates from the mid-1870's, it records many such views both black and white and colour for sale, but gives no such details. 154

However, in 1861, Bishop Smith's book, "Ten Weeks in Japan", was published and illustrated with a series of engravings from Negretti and Zambra photographs. The engravings were printed in brown, green and over-printed in opaque white. Nonetheless they show that the early photographs of Japan gave an accurate picture of the Japanese domestic environment and the role that Japanese works of art had within it. I (28) 155

As early as 1859-60, the journal "Photo News" published a series of articles called "Through Japan with a camera". Indeed it was not long after that a flourishing school of native Japanese photographers led by Renjio Shinoke grew up. 156

Perhaps the most important photographer working in Japan in the 1860's was Felix Beato whose photographs were used most frequently by publishers of travel books, most notably in the book "Le Japon Illustré" by the Swiss ambassador to Japan, Aimé Humbert, which was written in 1868 though not published until 1872.

Beato's work is discussed briefly in the chapter in this thesis entitled "Disseminators of the Japanese image". 157

Humbert and many other travellers to Japan from the mid-1860's onwards took to employing men such as Beato or native photographers to record their travels for them. These photographs naturally found their way back to Europe and were used as the basis of published illustrations. 158

By 1867 Chesneau had seen a great many photographs of Japan in Paris. Thus both commercial and individual sources contributed to the building up of a relatively large range of photographs of Japan in Europe of the 1860's. These formed an important source of imagery for painters and

were also an important factor in creating the Western "cultural" image of Japan. Tissot's Japanese paintings, for instance, were almost certainly based in part on photographs.

### Conclusion.

This survey of the early discovery of Japanese art has shown that there were a great variety of responses to it in England and France. It has traced many of these and demonstrated that they are all to be located within the general development of Western attitudes to the visual arts at the time. Japanese art does not appear to have been an unlooked-for and overwhelming revelation, nor does it appear to have attracted to itself simply the partisans of an "Avant Garde".

I have shown that collections of Japanese art were available in Europe from as early as 1820, and that no special notice was taken of them. It is clear that Western artists made use of the Japanese example only at a time when factors in the development of culture and art in Europe made this a natural step. These factors will be discussed in the following chapter.

The supporters of Japanese art form a broad spectrum of artistic opinion in the 1850's and 1860's. Moreover the points which interested them about it are often similar if not identical. The relation of art to nature in Japanese art was to be a common theme and European writers on Japanese art often use it to express their own definition of this problem which became the most pressing one for art in the 1860's, as the following chapter will show.

This chapter has also shown that a basis for the acceptance of Japanese art into European culture had already been established by a European taste for Chinese goods dating back to the seventeenth century, and by events like the Chinese exhibition of the 1840's. Thus a ready-made series of references in Western culture existed for Far Eastern art and these were to affect the early response to Japanese art in cases such as that of Whistler.

If one contrasts the English and the French responses to Japanese and Far Eastern art during the sixties one is struck once again by the Romantic acceptance of their possibilities as the means to new experience in France, while the English approach was analytical and limited. The Concours and Astruc inherited their attitude from the Romantics through Gautier, while England was dominated by the ideas of Ruskin and the result was Leighton's careful analysis of the separate plastic qualities of Japanese art.

As a result of this different background there was a different range of possible artistic response to the Far Eastern example in each country. Its relevance was much more clearly felt in France because of the development there of a strong Romantic literature connected with the East, and because of the attitude of the French Romantic artists to the presentation of experience. I shall explain this fully in my next chapter.

Japanese art was tremendously popular from its first appearance in both countries, and achieved a great fashionable following in the later 1860's both in England and France. If one were to suggest a single date for the beginning of a serious Japanese influence in Western art it would be 1862 as this chapter has demonstrated that many important events took place in that year - for instance the opening of Madame De Soye's shop and the London exhibition organised by Alcock. Its appearance coincided with the full realisation of the impact of the industrial revolution in both countries, in the early 1860's. During the decade many artists and designers were to see Far Eastern art as a counterweight to these effects; their attitude was confirmed by experiencing the contrast between Japanese design and western work at the great international exhibitions. This counterweight took various forms as diverse as the simple absolute of material beauty supported by Gautier and the extremely complex absorption of ideas and imagery that

one sees in Van Gogh's work. One of the most common speculations in the sixties was that the principles of Japanese art could be applied to industrial design and thus regain for the West the beauty that had been lost when the machine took over from the craftsman in the manufacture of articles of everyday use. "La machine est sans coeur, Foedora, voilà tout le secret", wrote Gautier at the end of an article devoted to demonstrating the superior qualities of the "barbarian" work at the International Exhibition of 1862.

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This chapter has also demonstrated that Japanese paintings and prints were at first the least regarded amongst Japanese objects in Europe, although even prints were relatively expensive in the 1860's at four francs each, compared with only 15 centimes in the 1870's.

Furthermore it has been established by careful consideration of dated examples that only prints made after 1830 can be proved to have been present in Europe in the 1860's, and that the majority of works present were made in the late 1840's or 1850's. The only Japanese artist known by name was Hokusai, and ignorance of even the date of his death suggests that many prints by later, weaker artists were attributed to him by eager early collectors unable to distinguish his style or signatures. This is a most important point for consideration of the influence of Japanese art on Western artists in the 1860's, as the style of prints made in this late period is very different to that of earlier work.

By investigating the nature of the Japanese objects and images of Japan available in Europe it has become possible to describe accurately the artistic possibilities and visual meanings made available to Western artists by the "discovery" of Japanese art in the 1850's and 1860's.

I am aware that little has been said in this chapter which refers directly to art, but I believe that this investigation will justify

itself. It was necessary to deal with these matters at such length to avoid the misconceptions that could arise from a partial, generalised account. The artistic consequences of what has been described here will be explored in the following chapter.

## SECTION ONE

### CHAPTER TWO: The response of Artists and Designers to Japanese Art before the Paris Exhibition of 1867.

In Chapter One I indicated that to account for the sudden interest in Far Eastern art in the second half of the nineteenth century it would be necessary to investigate changes of attitude to art and to its practice. To describe an "influence" it is not sufficient to demonstrate the presence of the works which promoted that influence one must also describe the changes which gave that influence relevance, the situation which predisposed so many artists to look at Far Eastern art in a different way to that of their predecessors.

In this chapter I propose a characterization of these changes which I intend to relate to the documented use of Far Eastern art before 1867, the year of the first great public appearance of this art in Paris.

Paris was their centre and the Salon Des Refusés of 1863 is the most obvious historical indication that change was taking place. The 1860's have always been a problematic period for art historians as the relationships between artists and their comrades, their patrons and public were constantly shifting. Moreover the artistic developments of the earlier nineteenth century were made by artists such as Delacroix and Courbet, eager to develop a personal style from the possibilities they were offered. The controversy surrounding the period has been encouraged further by the informal or anecdotal nature of most of the evidence we have from the artists themselves. Manet did not keep a journal and we have only fragmentary evidence about the most of those who figure in this chapter.

The conditions of artistic life in the late fifties and early sixties were conducive to an informal spread of information and interest. It was very easy for the critics, artists and travellers to meet each

other in cafés which served as centres for various artistic groups or in the parties in artists' studios. There were also more formal occasions when knowledge of Eastern art could have circulated such as the lecture that Baudelaire attended. Critics such as Burty and Astruc 2 are important in this respect since we may work from their first interest in oriental art towards an understanding of the development of interest in it amongst the artists with which they were closely associated. Returning travellers from the East such as Lindau are also 3 interesting in this respect, and would have talked to many about their experiences.

Enough has now been said to make clear the difficulties of this chapter. It has inevitably, therefore, to rely on inference and deduction.

However we must not be prepared to accept apocryphal stories about the "discovery" of Japanese or any other form of oriental art at an early stage in an artist's career. It may be of interest to know that it has been claimed that Monet first saw oriental art during his boyhood at Le Havre, or that Whistler first saw Japanese prints being used to wrap tea at a grocer's stall by the Thames; but this information is of little value without corroboration, and in any case, fails to tell us what the artists concerned saw, when exactly they saw it, or whether they valued it at that time.

I therefore intend to rely heavily on the independent evidence which I have been able to discover as to the character and quality of the Far Eastern art that was available during the 60's.

Previous writers on the influence of Japanese art at this time have relied on E. Chesneau's article "Le Japon à Paris" written in 1878, as 4 a basis for their discussions. However it has been forgotten that this article was one of many written for the G.B.A. in connection with the 1878 exhibition in Paris at which the Japanese exhibits had enormous

success. In his article Chesneau made reference to all those he knew who had shown an interest in what was, by then, a highly fashionable subject. It would be a serious error to imply that this interest extended back to the 1860's. In his writings of that period Chesneau makes no mention of them. In his book of criticisms of the 1867 international exhibition "Les Nations Rivaless danL'Art", he wrote an article on Japanese art but only mentioned Boudin and De Gas as artists whose work had Japanese qualities. Moreover his attitude to these qualities is somewhat different to that commonly assumed since he saw them in a De Gas "Portrait de Famille" and a Boudin landscape. He does not mention Japanese art in connection with Manet, Tissot or Stevens, whose work he reviews. In his lecture on a Japanese exhibition published in 1869 he makes no mention at all of the interest of contemporary artists in Japanese art.

5

I therefore intend to use Chesneau's 1878 article only as an indication of possible interest by the artists of whom I write.

We must now consider the historical situation at the time when oriental influence first began to appear in contemporary painting.

After 1855 French art like French politics had come to a balance of opposing forces. Ingres, Delacroix and to some extent Courbet, were major figures who offered alternative standpoints both to young artists and to their teachers in the academies and various studios. The stylistic differences between these three great masters were emphasized and exaggerated by the immense influence of official patronage. This produced compromise rather than innovation both in style and subject matter. Thus we tend to look on an artist like Couture as an eclectic whose art is of little value, forgetting Manet's long apprenticeship.

It seems at times that political circumstances divided French art into camps on grounds that had little or nothing to do with the formal differences often catalogued by historians. Style was no longer the

man, it was merely his uniform. One was no longer expected to discover one's style but to choose it as one's ethics or ambitions dictated. Clearly there was a need for a means of escaping working in one defined mode or another. Oriental art supplied one of the most important ways of achieving another. Oriental art supplied one of the most important ways of achieving this.

As early as 1846 Baudelaire in "The Heroism of Modern Life" had argued that the great tradition of art had died and that a new start was needed to equip artists with the ability to describe modern life, to produce what he had earlier called "the most recent, the latest expression of the beautiful".

6

It was necessary for the modern artist to preserve the imagination, the "queen of faculties", whilst at the same time remaining absolutely of his time. Such a man would at all times recognize beauty, which by definition must be strange.

Writing of the 1855 Exposition Universelle, Baudelaire used the challenge offered by oriental art as the basis for his definition of this new "Man of the World":

Imagine a modern Winckelmann, (we are full of them, the nation overflows with them; they are the idols of the lazy). What would he say, if faced with a product of China - something weird, strange, distorted in form, intense in colour and sometimes delicate to the point of evanescence? And yet such a thing is a specimen of universal beauty; but in order for it to be understood, it is necessary for the critic, for the spectator, to work a transformation in himself which partakes of the nature of a mystery - it is necessary for him, by means of a phenomenon of the will acting upon the imagination, to learn of himself to participate in the surroundings which have given birth to this singular flowering. Few men have the divine grace of cosmopolitanism in its entirety; but all can acquire it in different degrees. The best endowed in this respect are those solitary wanderers who have lived for years in the heart of forests.....They know the admirable, inevitable relationship between form and function. Such people do not criticise; they contemplate, they study.

If instead of a pedagogue, I were to take a man of the world, an intelligent being, and transport him to a far away country, I feel sure that..... his sympathy would be so keen, so penetrating that it would create in him a whole new world of ideas, which would form an integral part of himself and would accompany him in the form of memories until the day of his death....several thousand ideas and sensations will enrich his earthly vocabulary, and it is even possible that, going a step too far and transforming justice into revolt, he will do like the converted Sicambrian and burn what he had formerly adored.

7

They were ideally suited to accept and extend Baudelaire's proposition that beauty "always contains a touch of strangeness, of simple unpremeditated and unconscious strangeness and that it is the touch of strangeness that gives it its particular quality as Beauty".

8

Neither Courbet, Delacroix or Ingres, could fit such a rigorous schedule for the hero of modern life. But the young painters who became prominent, though not successful, in the 1860's could and did. It is interesting that most of them had indeed spent some time away from art and France, and consequently had the cosmopolitan attitude which Baudelaire discusses. The Far East did indeed provide them with much that was new for their artistic dictionaries.

However Courbet had sought to extend his vocabulary slightly by the use of "strange beauty". It is as well to mention his interest in archaeology and his comparison of his self portrait with the profile of an Assyrian statue. Courbet also borrowed certain compositional patterns and imagery from the prints of Epinal, prints which were later to be compared to Japanese prints by many critics. In both cases he was 9 looking for a means of conferring upon his work that admirable relationship of form to significance of which Baudelaire speaks. In this sense Courbet's use of exotic source material is a predecessor to the use of Japanese art in the same way by later artists. However the art of Japan was far more suitable for the development of Western art than Assyrian or folk-art. For one thing it possessed a large imagery that was to

all intents and purposes neutral in relation to the current deadlock in French art. The use of Epinal prints was inevitably seen as a political gesture, no such meaning could be pinned on the use of Japanese art which as we shall see was placed in all possible positions in the current scheme of western aesthetic values by the critics.

The extent to which Realism and Realist criticism prepared the way for the influence of Far Eastern art has always been ignored.

Realism broke down the supremacy of idealist aesthetics and substituted for them a pluralistic attitude to style which led to the development of the ideas of different national and local cultures as a parallel to the idea of the brotherhood of man. Zola was to use this idea of the family of man in his 1866 Salon and in his writings on Manet, which I will discuss in some detail below.

In a review of a "Tableau Historique des Beaux Arts" by the brothers MÉRARD in October 1866 he wrote of "La grande famille des artistes de L'Orient et D'Occident". Moreover specific demands were made of realism by the critics. It was to regenerate French art by recreating a rapport between art and society, and for many this could only be done by reconciling the real and the ideal, thus for instance argued Chesneau in 1863:

"et recherchant ce qui est vrai raisonnable et sincère. aussi bien que idéal le réalisme donnera à l'art français son caractère essentiellement original et national; s'il sait unir les éléments divers, s'il réussit à satisfaire notre goût en fonde l'alliance étroite de l'idéal et du réel. Cette alliance nous invoquons au nom - les impérissables tendances du genre français."

For Chesneau as for many others realism was a doctrine;

"sérieuse et transitoire qui pourra bien servir à la régénération de l'art mais qui à coup sûr n'est pas l'art lui même."

10

For many artists Japanese art was to be an example of art itself, totally in harmony with society and a perfect model for the reconciliation

of the real and the ideal. Moreover Japanese art that appeared in Europe was the product of a metropolitan context with amazing similarities to contemporary Paris. The Japanese name for this style is Uki-yo-ye or "pictures of the floating world". In 1846 Baudelaire had spoken of the need to recognise this world in Paris:

The pageant of fashionable life and the thousands of floating existences...criminals and kept women... which drift around in the underworld of a great city; the Gazette des Tribunaux and the Moniteur all prove to us that we only have to open our eyes to recognise our heroism.

11

As we shall see, Japanese art played its part in developing the abilities of painters in the West to deal with such subject matter.

Landscape may appear to be one subject area to which the general thesis of stylistic deadlock cannot apply. Since the debate causing the deadlock had been about the central place of man in art, and the depiction of landscape had not been much involved in it (in France). However the painting of landscape had always been assumed to be about man's experience of the world in relationship to himself as a created being and it was as the last refuge of the religious painter that landscape was praised by Ruskin and defended in Germany. Japanese landscape paintings were constructed from very different premises about man's place in the universe. Japanese art and oriental art in general had a profound effect on the development of Western landscape painting as a celebration of man's place in the universe. Ruskin's outburst against Whistler was, as we shall see, produced by his reaction to the change that had been wrought. It will be one of the aims of this chapter to account for the early stages of the change in the attitude to landscape, in particular, in the early works of the artists later called "Impressionists".

12

Apart from Baudelaire and the development of realism, there are other indicators of the preparedness of French art to develop along

lines suggested by oriental art. In the 1850's Horace Lecoq Boisbaudran, a Parisian art teacher, encouraged his pupils to draw from observation and from memory, even at times taking them to watch nude models moving through a park landscape. His method was an attempt to train artists to understand the external world directly in terms of their own perception and comprehension of the experience (object) just as an oriental artist would have done. So close is the parallel that Focillon once suggested that Boisbaudran was one of the first to study Japanese art. However there is no evidence of this and some reason to doubt it. 13

Nonetheless there can be no doubt that his teaching prepared the way for an interest in Japanese art amongst his pupils, and their friends who included Bazille, Fantin Latour, Tissot and Felix Regamey, (one of the first artists to visit Japan in order to paint it), and they transmitted his attitudes to the future leading artists of France.

There were also many artists who were unable to follow Baudelaire's advice and needed the crutches of one of the current academic modes from which to exercise their imaginations. For them Japan became another, living, middle ages, or a contemporary version of ancient Greece. They followed the critics in attempting to assimilate oriental art by direct analogy to existing European styles. Eventually of course Japan itself provided a fashionable academic genre or sub-genre, but this was not to be until some time after the period discussed in this chapter.

Mention must be made finally of a long-standing controversy between those who have argued that the photograph was the most significant influence on the change in attitudes of European artists and those who have argued for the greater power of Japanese art, especially of prints. I hope to show that this debate is chimerical as it is based on the formal hypothesis of artistic development. Formal criteria alone are totally inadequate to describe the process of the influences involved. It has rarely been commented on, however, that Japan was greatly photo-

graphed during the 1860s and that many of these photographs reached Paris and London taking their iconographical information with them. Chesneau, writing in 1868, remarked that people in Paris had seen many 14 photographs of Japan, prior to the 1867 exhibition.

It has proved impossible to find out a great deal about the photographers of this period or to locate much of their work save as engravings. Nonetheless the large number of photographs of Japan present in Europe in the 1860's must be borne in mind when assessing the relative importance of Japanese art and of photography as promoters of artistic change.

It may be impossible to separate the two influences on a formal level. Only by an examination of the aesthetic attitudes of various artists in relation to these formal influences on their work, can the real course of an influence on their intentions and achievement be traced.

It seems to be most unlikely that a visual tool as flexible and open to interpretation in use as the camera would be capable of dominating the nature of any but the most feeble-minded artists. Moreover we know that in general early photography followed current academic standards in painting. I intend to develop this thesis especially in my discussion of the work of Degas, Manet and Tissot.

There remains the problem of the relatively small impact Japanese art had in England in the 1860's and 1870's. The answer to this may be found in the almost untroubled waters of English criticism during the mid-nineteenth century. No debate existed in England about the relative value of the real and the ideal, nor were the arts a matter for political controversy. The artistic morality of Ruskin and literary sentiment of the Pre-Raphaelites had come to dominate English art and were to do so for twenty or even thirty years more. For various reasons English artists and critics had few doubts. The same "strange beauty" which

Baudelaire welcomed made Japanese art unacceptable as a great example in England:

Japan and Asia will not do for Fine Art,  
for that we need the Caucasian mind.

Burne-Jones wrote to Ruskin in 1863, and even in William Rossetti's championship of Japan one feels that the English suspicion of the insubstantial quality of Japanese art. An art without perspective or chiaroscuro could never be regarded as first rate in an island where the ideals were the drawings of Ruskin and paintings of Millais and Burne-Jones. English art like English politics was to develop by slow reform without recourse to revolution.

The Response of Artists and Designers to Oriental Art before 1867.

The earliest known direct response to the import of Oriental works during the period covered by this thesis is an etching by Jules Jacquemart made in 1859, "Objets de la Chine et du Japon". This 15 showed a Japanese bronze, a figurine from China, porcelain bottles and various other objects on a silk cloth. Jacquemart later had a successful career as an artist-illustrator for the G.B.A. but this was his first work as a printmaker. Unfortunately only one copy was known to be in existence in 1871 at the time Louis Gonse wrote his articles on Jacquemart, so we have no illustration of it. In itself it is a trivial work, but it serves to show that at this date an artist was finding the art of the Far East attractive enough to record it in Western terms. This process of recording, of representation of Eastern art in Western terms is, as we shall see, one of the most important means whereby Oriental art changed the art of the West. The tradition of learning by copying which had for so long been at the centre of Western painting was to be extended to cover the interest in Oriental work developing in the '60's. One would like to know how many other artists casually sketched Far Eastern work at this time and found as later artists were

to find that their whole way of looking was inadequate to make a good record of such an object.

The career of Jacquemart will be discussed later, but having made my bow in acknowledgement of historical sequence I would now like to attempt a characterisation of the effects of Oriental art on the work of major Western painters before the International exhibition of 1867.

MANET

One must begin with Manet because he had his important "succès de scandale" during the sixties. Moreover he was older than most of the artists with whom we shall be concerned; only Degas and Whistler being near contemporaries. There has been considerable controversy over Manet's use of sources in the 1860's, promoted by the secrecy which the painter maintained in his use of engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi, of a lost cartoon by Raphael as a source for "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe". However a search for specific Oriental sources to parallel this seems to be a hopeless quest unless one has many years to spend. The most that one may hope for is a reasonable estimate of the role that Japanese art played in the changes in Manet's style at this time.

We are not without clues. The most famous is the reference to Japanese art by Zola in his criticism for the journal, "La Revue du XIXième Siècle" in Jan. 1867;

On a dit par moquerie, que les toiles de Edouard Manet rappelaient les gravures d'Epinal, et il-y-a beaucoup de vrai dans cette moquerie qui est un éloge; ici et là les procédés sont les mêmes, les teintes sont appliquées par plaques, avec cette différence que les estampes d'Epinal emploient les tons purs, sans soucier des valeurs, et que Edouard Manet multiplie les tons et met entre eux les rapports justes. Il serait beaucoup plus intéressant de comparer cette peinture simplifiée avec les gravures japonaises qui lui ressemblent par leur élégance étrange et leurs taches magnifiques.

16

This reference has generally been treated as a fortuitous comparison, an appealing analogy, designed to open the eyes of Zola's readers to the elegance of Manet's art, his "nouvelle manière en peinture", but as we have seen critics in general compared Japanese art to much more acceptable artists such as Boudin. In fact the reference to Japanese prints is a key passage in Zola's exposition of the new style.

The use of paint in areas of discrete tone and colour which brings to the act of mark-making the capacity to denote the visual world

directly, rather than through the systems of infinitely graded tone then in fashion is at the centre of the analyses which Zola offers of individual works by Manet. It is this use of colour as form which Zola meant by the word "tache", which occurs again and again in his writings. Zola chose to link this central stylistic idea to Japanese prints.

He wrote the article as a result of seeing in Manet's studio a collection of thirty paintings which the artist had assembled with the hope of getting them exhibited in the Universal Exhibition of 1867. Zola's piece was part of the publicity campaign for Manet's exhibition. It is impossible that Manet would have allowed Zola to maintain an attitude to his paintings which he disliked; we must assume that Zola's defence had Manet's approval. The reference to Japanese prints was prompted by the painter or by something which Zola saw in the studio.

The portrait of Zola painted as a thank offering for the critic's efforts on his behalf early in 1868 gives another clue to the presence of Japanese objects in Manet's studio. It has been assumed that the Far Eastern objects in this painting were Zola's and that they came from the 1867 exhibition. However, it is clear that Zola sat for the portrait in Manet's studio so that the print and screen were at that time part of the studio furnishings. Moreover they could not have been obtained from the 1867 exhibition for the Japanese section was transferred to Rue de la Victoire 41 and remained on exhibition until 1869.

There is in fact considerable evidence to suggest that Manet's interest in Japanese art dates from the second quarter of the 1860's and it was probably at that time that he collected the items in the portrait of Zola.

Manet knew several Japanese enthusiasts at that time. They included Ph. Burty who had acquired a collection of Japanese prints before 1867 and Whistler and Bracc<sup>que</sup>umond with whom he appeared in

Fantin Latour's "Hommage à Delacroix" in 1864. Manet also knew Baudelaire who was collecting Japanese objects in the early 1860's. Manet's profile portrait etching of Baudelaire strongly suggests Japanese influence in its use of a contour around a flat surface. Moreover Manet's signature takes the form of a cartouche similar to those on Japanese prints. The etching dates from 1864 and should be compared with the much more orthodox portrait etching of Bracquemond of 1865.

Sandblad has pointed out that it is possible to see the book on the table in Manet's portrait of Zachary<sup>u</sup> Astruc, on which Manet has placed his own signature, as a Japanese picture book, pointing to the cloth cover and the small cartouche label which is typical of such books. Astruc's portrait was painted in 1864, two years before he wrote about Japan for the journal "L'Etendard". All this evidence suggests that Manet was among the earliest artists to be impressed with Japanese art. There would have been Japanese articles in the studio when Zola first went there in 1865. Zola's observation was far more than a fortuitous comparison. 19

William Rossetti, in his memoirs, records a remark that Manet was "the head and front of Japonnerie", in the chapter dealing with the events of 1863, implying that it was made by Whistler. Few people could have been better suited to testify to Manet's interest in Japanese art than Whistler. Indeed as I shall demonstrate it was almost certainly Manet who introduced Whistler to Japanese art when he was working on "Olympia". 20 21

I will now attempt a description of the changes in Manet's art which were made possible by the Japanese example.

The Far Eastern objects in the portrait of Zola are a good starting point for an analysis of these changes. Unlike book illustrators who used Japanese art and objects solely as subject matter and tended to

imitate rather than understand the objects with the results which we saw in Chapter One, Manet is concerned with exploring the relationship between his means of making an image and that of the Eastern artist. The portrait of Zola contains vital evidence of how Far Eastern art transformed Manet's style.

We may see this in the print in the upper right-hand corner which has been identified as a work by Utagawa Kuniaki II, "The Wrestler Onarato Nadaemon of Awa Province". Kuniaki II was a minor artist active in the mid-nineteenth century and Manet's use of this print confirms my conclusion in Chapter One that only later Uki-yo-e prints were available. I (1)  
a-b  
22

Manet has resisted or been prevented from attempting a direct transcription of the print into the illusionistic convention of oil paint. Instead he has paralleled the "tâches" formed by the impressions of the woodblocks making up the image of the print by a series of unmodulated marks of pure colour made with a brush. We may say that the emancipation of the graphic potential of the brush mark was the result of Manet's study of the directly registered quality of Japanese prints. For instance the pattern of the pink robe is translated from the print to the painting in a few hatched lines of colour and the face is a flat brown surface with a few swift strokes outlining the features. 23

To the left of Zola is a panel of a folding screen showing a bird on a branch above a river against a gold background and above water. The rendering of the water with characteristic parallel white curved lines and the blossom on the trees suggests a work in the style of Korin, by one of his late imitators such as Sakai Hoitsu (1761-1828). The work shows a light fragile hand, less robust than that of Korin himself. Manet himself may have been responsible for this fragility for he certainly used motifs from at least two panels of the real screen for the one panel in the picture, so as to provide a continuous compos- 24

ional motif on the left-hand side of the portrait. No Japanese artist would have made such a messy composition as that in which the water trickling over a slight ridge forms such an unsatisfactory relationship with the edge of the frame. This rearrangement by Manet may explain why no model for the screen has been found.

Manet's rearrangement of the elements in the screen indicates that he was forced by the problem of transcription to consider the Japanese attitude to space and composition just as he had to analyse Japanese mark-making in order to produce the *tâches* which resembled the print.

Two other formative influences are indicated by Manet in the portrait of Zola. Next to the Japanese print is a photograph of Manet's painting "Olympia" which Zola had defended against much criticism. This photograph partly obscures a print of "Los Borrachos" by Velasquez, which is probably an engraving by Goya. Some critics have seen this as a simple allusion to the influence of photography and Spanish painting on Manet's art, the one obscuring the other as it drew closer to "reality". Whilst the effect of the example of the reduction of an image to flat tones which early photography gave cannot be denied, there is no evidence that Manet was interested personally in photography despite his friendship with Nadar. I believe that the juxtaposition of images with the Japanese print is, in fact, an assertion of Manet's debt to Japanese art in the formation of his style, and his direct debt to it in the creation of "Olympia". As for Manet's dependence on Spanish painting, we must bear in mind Zola's denial of this in his 1867 pamphlet.

25

The overall composition of the portrait of Zola has often been

likened to a Japanese print. Zola's flat face, his profile silhouetted against the background split into rectangles, have been seen as evidence of a sudden conversion to Japanese enthusiasm on the part of Manet, partly as a result of Zola's criticism, and as an attempt to please him. This attempt to minimise Manet's involvement with Japan breaks down in several ways. The Olympia is a far more radical example of painting in flat tones and sharp contours, and it was painted in 1863. I have already shown that the whole question of the language of the brush, of the marks a painter makes, is bound up with the question of Far Eastern influence which affects far more than simply the overall attitude to composition. The ease of the description of the quill pen on the table must have been learnt from the contemplation of Far Eastern painting such as that of the bird on the screen on the left. The decoration of the porcelain inkwell in which the quill rests is also indicative of the Oriental interests of Manet. It was seen by J. Adhémar in 1954 in the possession of Zola's son. Reff states that the design is based on the work of the Kenzan school, but that the object itself was made in Europe. I can find no evidence for this precise attribution of style and indeed it is more likely that the design derives from cheap Satsuma ware or from Japanese prints or paintings with flower motifs, both of which were available in Europe at the time, and both of which show loose brush work in some images.

Equally indicative of Manet's interest in Far Eastern art are the peacock feathers which appear above Zola's head in the portrait but which are difficult to see in reproduction. We have seen that as early as the 1840's peacock feathers were associated with an Eastern interior in the "Chinese Collection" on show at Hyde Park Corner. Then English aesthetes such as Burges, Godwin and Dresser had selected the peacock feather as a major motif in their Far Eastern designs. Many minor nineteenth century paintings have as their subjects either peacocks or

the similar but mythical Ho-Ho bird. Manet's friendship with Whistler, later the painter of the "Peacock Room", may have influenced him to use the feathers as an allusion to the Far East. I find Reff's notion that Manet had in mind the use of peacock feathers as a substitute for the laurel wreath unlikely as it would involve the type of historical allusion which Manet was trying to remove from his art. Moreover a better interpretation is to hand, the peacock was the bird of longevity, success and happiness in Japan and this meaning was known in Europe in the 1860's.

Thus Manet's portrait of Zola must be seen as a considered manifesto by an artist who had been forming his style for eight years at least, and who now used it to pay tribute to a critic who had observed this, and correctly described the means he used to create it. It is not surprising that such a picture should be at least in part a self-portrait. We should take both Manet and Zola at their word and not minimise the significance of the portrait by arguing that it is an eccentric response to an eccentric but enthusiastic friend and defender.

Manet is speaking of his development in the Zola portrait, and we are entitled to use it as a basis for our attempt to reconstruct the role of Japanese art in his earlier paintings.

Manet's paintings during the 1860's are remarkable for their departure from the technical means that he learned under Couture and for their subject matter which is equally a departure from Couture's teaching.

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His concern with contemporaneous subject matter can be explained in terms of the development of realism through Champfleury, Duranty and Zola. However the poetry of these paintings, their success in introducing the imagination into contemporary life as Baudelaire had asked, cannot be explained so easily. In order to achieve this it was necessary for Manet to change the whole language of painting, to provide a new

bottle for the new wine, a new form integral to the new subject matter.

He chose to do this by taking subject matter which had been 27  
sanctioned by tradition and reformulating it by placing it in a different context and by using new visual means.

Japanese art played a considerable part in this reformulation of the language of painting. We may define it by considering two paintings; "La Nymphe Surprise" and "Olympia".

"La Nymphe Surprise" was painted in 1861 and "Olympia" in 1863. 28  
It was probably in 1862 that Japanese art became well-known to the circle of young painters and writers in Paris as I have demonstrated in Chapter One.

The composition of "La Nymphe Surprise" is clearly based on a tradition of paintings whose subject was Susannah and The Elders. In particular, paintings by Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis and Berlin have been proposed as models for it and more recently an engraving after Rubens has been found to contain a similar detail. We know from X-rays that at one time Manet's nymph had elders behind her. Moreover, early sketches show the composition in its entirety with elders. We therefore have a complete record of the attempted transformation. The painters' whole effort was to divest the subject of its particular iconographical references. The elders have completely disappeared and with them the traditional power and relevance of the image.

Nothing has taken their place. The nymph remains a nymph, but the painting's stylistic dependence on Courbet jars with its iconography. It is like a conversation in two languages neither of which has quite the right vocabulary.

It was while painting "La Nymphe Surprise" that Manet defined for himself the problems of the transference of motif. By introducing references to past works into his own he was making room for the imagination in modern life. By this I mean that he was seeking the

means to introduce the multiplicity of response and ambiguity of situation that Manet's imagination saw as an inevitable part of a convincing representation of the real world. "Modern" life should have an art which did not depend on a myth of the past or a dogma of a present, a traditional (i.e. a Realist style) subject reduced to a motif and painted in a modern style, like "La Nympe Surprise", is no more than a way of defining this problem. The reference to the past does not function as a point of departure for the imagination, rather as a puzzle, a riddle for those who recognise it and a disturbing irritation to those who do not.

The "Olympia" on the other hand succeeds where "La Nympe Surprise" 29 fails. It also has roots in historical subject matter. The reclining female nude has been painted by many artists who Manet admired, especially Goya and Titian. Manet copied Titian's "Venus of Urbino" on his second visit to Italy in 1856. However the "Olympia" does not have the same relationship to its predecessors as "La Nympe Surprise". It is true that it is closely based as a composition on the Titian but Manet has metamorphosed the language of the composition rather than simply reduced its points of reference to the past.

The "Olympia" is painted in the broadest flat tones, in a manner that has never been reproduced in photographs. The broad flat mark of the brush, the "tâche" is sufficient for Manet to develop the pattern of flesh, cloth and flowers. For indeed it is a pattern, totally different from the painfully duplicated modulations of Manet's copy of the Titian. The large size of the painting adds to this effect of flat patterning so that at times, such as in the passage describing Olympia's bow or the flowers held by the negress, the image almost disappears in its own structure. This radically new relationship between an image and the language of painting had not previously been found in Western art except in one or two landscapes by Turner and in Constable. However, in

Japanese art, especially in prints, the narrowing of the gap between the image and the means of representing it had been a central stylistic tenet for centuries. It was this which Manet seized on as a basis for a style which would genuinely make space for the imagination in a modern subject. The new style is the result of meditation on Japanese art which acted as a catalyst in its creation. Here we must refer back to my discussion of the Japanese objects in the portrait of Zola which assert the importance of Japan in this stylistic change, this identity of image and the means of representation.

It happens that we have decisive evidence that Manet had Japan in 30 mind at the time that he created Olympia. Manet's drawings in connection with Olympia show that she was conceived first as an Arabian girl in the I (2) manner of Delacroix's Moroccan studies and then, as a natural sequence, as an Oriental and a Japanese princess. In the finished painting at present the screen behind Olympia is turned so that the cloth back is shown. Even this however is of a Japanese pattern. In a preliminary watercolour the front of the screen is shown but never finished. All I (3a) we have is the yellow orange wash which indicates a screen with a gold background and some pencil marks in the form of a Japanese building. There is no doubt that the radical flatness and breadth of handling of Olympia must have resulted from Manet's contemplation of Japanese screens. In these screens the necessity to cover large areas of space rapidly with watercolours in wall and screen painting had led to an aesthetic based on very broad strokes. Some eighteenth century Japanese painters actually prided themselves on using brushes as large as mops to make single strokes several yards in length. Manet has taken this idea of broad expressive brushstrokes and applied <sup>it</sup> to oil paint a medium which was developed to serve a completely different technique. Some strokes in Olympia are taches over two inches broad and over a foot in length. There is even a possibility that the very image of Olympia was suggested by

an Oriental copy of a print of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, the negress I (3b)  
 taking the place of Joseph; though this cannot be proved, it is an  
 interesting speculation as Potiphar's wife is an appropriate ancestress  
 for Olympia. 31

I have tried to indicate how Japanese art may have contributed to  
 the ability of Manet to paint a work in which imagination was brought  
 to a modern theme.

There remain minor indications of the Japanese quality of the  
 painting. The self-possessed and hostile cat at Olympia's feet was  
 probably derived from Japanese sources. It replaces the sleepy lap-  
 dog in the Titian with an animal parallel of Olympia's own self-  
 consciousness and as such establishes the viewer as a "voyeur".

In 1864 Bracquemond made an engraving of cats after Hokusai and in  
 1869 Champfleury used cats from a page of drawings by Hiroshige which  
 he attributed to "Foukousai" as "bas de pages" for his books "Les Chats"  
 for which Manet did some illustrations and posters. Champfleury makes I (4)  
 a brief reference to Asian caricatures in the preface to his "Histoire  
 de la Caricature Modern" of 1865. Duret, who first met Manet in Madrid 32  
 in 1865, recalled in the catalogue of his gift of Japanese art to the  
 Louvre in 1900, that Manet was enthusiastic about a volume of the "Mangwa".  
 Several drawings of cats appear in the  
 "Mangwa", especially in Vol.14, the latest to be published and one whose  
 presence in Europe I have demonstrated in Chapter One. I (5)

It is the idea of showing the movement of a hostile animal so  
 accurately that Manet derives from Japan. The cat does not have a  
 precise Japanese model but it differs substantially from the cat in  
 "Jeune Dame Couchée en coutume espagnol", painted in 1862. This cat 33  
 is modelled on the cats in Goya and is consequently a furry ball drawn  
 with little grasp of the implications of anatomy. On the other hand  
 Olympia's cat displays the requisite flatness and observation for a cat  
 drawn by someone who had seen and appreciated drawings by Hiroshige and

Hokusai. It even shows one of Hokusai's idiosyncracies, the tendency to make a cat thin and lynxlike. This Manet repeated in his poster for Champfleury's book "Les Chats" several years later. This image therefore is far more from the product of the uninterrupted development of a "talent" as Professor Reff has suggested. Its appearance is too sudden and it persists too long.

Another indication of the Japanese basis for the "Olympia" is the enthusiasm with which Whistler took up the idea of the image of a woman 34 surrounded by Oriental artefacts and backed by a folding screen which I believe was suggested to him by a meeting with Manet at a time when the Frenchman was contemplating the use of a Japanese screen as a background for the Olympia, in early 1863.

There is a final remark to be made about the Olympia. There is a slight possibility that Manet may have been influenced not only in the language that he used and in details, but in the overall psychological intention of the work by Oriental examples. There are several examples of pillow books or Shunga (books of erotic prints) which make use of 35 animals, especially cats, as comic counterpoint. The deadpan sexuality of Olympia may well have been suggested to Manet by such images which at the same time would have suggested the cat and its multiple function, which includes the comic. Such books of Shunga were certainly avail- 36 able in Europe since Lindau refers to them in a manner which suggests that his readers would be familiar with them. We know that Zola at one time collected "furious fornications" which George Moore saw later 37 during a visit to Medan. This line of inquiry is unlikely to lead to any definite results in the case of Olympia, but it is important in so far as the Olympia is the first of a long series of female nudes notably by Degas in which this deadpan quality can be traced to Japanese art. 38

If the general analysis that I have made is acceptable, then we may conclude that Japanese art affected Manet's development from circa

1862 and I would now like to examine briefly the possibility that other works from 1862 onwards were influenced by it. It will be convenient at the same time to discuss the objection that Spanish art could have supplied all the characteristics which I have ascribed to Japanese art.

The main reason for doubting that Spanish art was responsible for suggesting the developments in Manet's art that I have outlined is that it had not produced them by 1862. Manet had had plenty of opportunity to adopt the Spanish style before 1862 and we may assume that he made every effort to assimilate what he felt to be important in Spanish art in the late 1850's. The "Chanteur Espagnol" of 1860 may be taken as 39 a good example of a work inspired by Spanish art. It has the flat background of the later "Japanese" inspired works, but the background represents space, for it is simply a foil for the chiaroscuro of the figure. The depth of the background is indicated clearly by the shadows at the figure's feet. The figure itself is modulated in the orthodox manner with blended brushstrokes and an attempt to imitate textures such as the material of the trousers rather than to present a visual schemata which produces the effect by analogy. Finally we may point to the failure of the "Gypsies", a group painting which Manet destroyed in 40 1862 by cutting it into three pieces. This shows that the Spanish style was insufficient for Manet's purposes at that time. The Spanish style, like "Realism", was closely tied to fashion in literature and theatre. It is almost symbolic that Manet painted his most successful "Spanish" works in the studio of the fashionable portraitist, Alfred Stevens. These were of the dance company of Mariano Camprubi who performed in Paris in the autumn of 1862. In that of "Lola de Valence" Manet aban- 41 dons the Spanish style in order to represent more accurately his reaction to the subject. This is particularly noticeable in the tâches which he used to represent her skirt and necklace. Also the background of Spanish painting has been replaced by a pattern created by the juxta-

position of the backs of two stage flats. The rhyming of the curves of the edges of the two flats and the rectangles created by the straight lines of their supporting timbers may even have been suggested to Manet by Japanese prints. The view of an artist backstage with the audience shown as part of the background is common in Japanese theatrical prints. 42  
The device was to be taken up and exploited many times by Degas.

It has been suggested that the "Street Singer" of 1862 which is a portrait of Victorine Meurent who later sat for the Olympia is also an 43  
early example of Japanese influence. The clean lines of the figure set against the frame of the door have been likened to a print by Utamaro or Kiyonaga but only later prints could have influenced it. We may see at various places in the work the appearance of "tâches" which I have argued 44  
were a response to Japanese art.

In "Musique aux Tuileries" which I date with Rewald to 1862 we 45  
can see the literal working out of Baudelaire's injunction to glorify contemporary life in Art. This was first expressed in his Salon of 1845;

There is no lack of subjects, nor of colours, to make epics. The painter, the true painter for whom we are looking will be he who can snatch its epic quality from the life of today and can make us see and understand, with brush or with pencil how great and poetic we are in our cravats and our patent leather boots. 46

This call was repeated in various forms in Baudelaire's writings in the 1840's and '50's and made most explicit in his essay on Constantin Guys, "The Painter of Modern Life" in 1863. Tabarant has argued that "La Musique aux Tuileries" was painted in 1860 and that the date 1862 was put in long after the work was complete. I find this unacceptable. Manet's style had not developed to the point where he could have made such a painting by 1860. If there is truth in Tabarant's assertion it may well be that Manet was already thinking of painting the Tuileries in 1860. The German painter Menzel had made a similar work in 1856.

However Menzel's painting is traditional in modelling, detailed drawing and colouring and academic in its observation. Moreover the subject had some history in French art. Manet was clearly unsatisfied 46 b with the approach to the problem of signifying modern life in art that Menzel typified and was searching for a more appropriate form. I believe that one was given to him by the arrival in Europe of Japanese prints, showing Europeans in European clothes in the trading settlements at Nagasaki and Yokohama in traditional Japanese style. We know that such prints were shown by Alcock in the London exhibition of 1862, and we have the prints in the Burges collection which were acquired at that date (Illustration 13, Section 1). The earliest definitive date for their presence in France is given by the 1867 exhibition. Moreover we know that Ernst Chesneau the critic and early enthusiast for Japanese art showed several in the 1869 exhibition at the Union des Beaux Arts. The De Goncourts also acquired some at a relatively early date.

We have seen that Baudelaire's demand for modernity and imagination in the arts was mixed with and depended on a demand for exoticism. These Japanese prints of Europeans must have come as a direct revelation of the fulfilment of many aspects of the realist propaganda of Baudelaire and indeed of Zola and Chesneau also.

The example of such prints would explain Manet's direct approach to European costume in "La Musique aux Tuileries". One can find direct equivalents of the men in their stove pipe hats, white trousers and tail coats, and the women in crinolines and bonnets in Japanese prints of foreigners. The flat treatment of them is the same, so is the selection of certain elements of costume as motifs within the composition - the stove pipe hats are an obvious example. One of the images in the Burges collection even shows a small girl whose costume is described in a similar way to the children in Manet's painting.

The painting is a flat pattern of taches which deny recessional

space. The trunks of the trees are flat planes not modulated cylinders. Decorative motifs are provided in the foreground by the umbrella, the curved work of the iron chairs and the children's hoop in the right corner, the children and the seated women at the left who provide a harmonious effect in the foreground. The composition is thus managed in a Japanese manner rather than a European.

Manet has replaced the traditional attitude to describing a park in recession such as can be found in a print of the Tuileries Gardens by Debucourt made in 1784. Instead we have a tension between the decorative front plane of the scene and the homogenous texture of the taches which form the crowd behind the foreground figures.

I (7)

47

This method of implying space by a graded contrast of decorative textures is derived from Japanese prints. The imitation of Japanese prints explains the high tonality of the work as well as the large areas of flat colour and taches. These innovations and Manet's radical "decorative" way of seeing the dress of his contemporaries in the manner required by Baudelaire can only be explained by Japanese influence.

Antonin Proust wrote that Manet had painted "La Musique aux Tuileries", "en plein air", one spring. The work may have been started in the open air but its composition and form is not that of a painting made with an information intention. The compositional devices and individual motifs it contains are clearly a result of careful posing and reworking in the studio. The form of the painting cannot be explained simply as a brilliant invention provoked by the attempt to record reality directly. Its studied asymmetries and delicate observations are the result of an attempt to make an icon of modernity.

48

Manet included portraits of several of his friends in the work, including Astruc, Baudelaire, Champfleury, Theophile Gautier and Fantin Latour, all of whom were among the earliest enthusiasts of Japanese art. This provides further evidence that the work may have been influenced

by Japanese art, and that it was not a simple informal painting but a highly studied portrayal of modernity.

It is clear that it would be possible for me to make a case for the important role of the Japanese example, as a stylistic catalyst, in the creation of all Manet's major works before 1867, but since this would involve repetition of my previous discussion without fresh evidence being offered, I intend to speculate on this matter in a footnote. 49

I make only one exception which is the series of paintings of the battle between the ships "Kearsage" and "Alabama". These paintings clearly depend on the example of Japanese landscape or seascape prints. In particular their composition seems akin to those of Hiroshige whose prints Whistler was collecting in 1864. 50

The most obvious reason for this assumption is the characteristic absence of a middle ground in these paintings, which is also found in many Japanese landscape prints. All three show a single vessel in the foreground and a group of ships on or extremely close to the horizon line. The "Kearsage au large sur la mer" is the clearest example. In this Manet goes so far as to treat the whole composition "A La Japonais". He introduces specific Japanese motifs, the large flat shape of the sail of the boat has been placed right against the upper right margin. Moreover this particular curved shape, formed as the boat heels over to the wind is to be found in many Japanese prints. The other motif which Manet introduces into this picture is the pattern formed by repetition of the identical shapes of the sails of two sailing boats in front of the silhouette of the battleship. This repetition of identical shapes in reduced perspective is a characteristic Japanese device to indicate distance.

We have evidence that examples of seascapes by Hiroshige containing these motifs were available in Europe before 1864 in plates in Captain Osborne's "Japanese Fragments" (Illustration 21, Chapter 1). The plate 51

entitled "Fishing Boats at Sea" shows the motif of the sail balanced against the right hand margin of the composition and the plate entitled "View of Yedo Bay from the Hills near Kanagawa" shows the use of repeated sail shapes to indicate distance.

A further important use of the Japanese example can be seen in the juxtaposition of the flat shapes of the vessels against the sea in such a way as to give instantly readable spatial relationship which does not rely on central perspective. This can be seen at its best in the "Alabama" and the "Kearsage".

Manet's marine paintings are to some extent a diversion from his concern with bringing the imagination into modern life, since they are records of an event rather than attempts to monumentalise it in the manner of the "Execution of Emperor Maximilian". Nonetheless it is important that Manet chose to "see" the event in the Japanese manner, as this once more indicates the significance of Japanese art for his new visual language. Moreover as landscapes and as marine paintings in particular these works show a departure from the implied if not explicit central perspective which had been a tenet of all landscape painting until this time. The abandonment of central perspective is in this case an attempt to provide a simultaneous presentation of the firsthand experience of the sea battle. The direct graphic relationships derived from Japanese art seem particularly suitable for the presentation of an image which one can read in seconds, for instance the relation of the axes of the two ships is intelligible almost as a printed character. The simultaneity of an image seems to be an unavoidable aspect of "modernity". I hope to discuss the general implications of this phenomenon in the final chapter of my thesis.

Before leaving Manet it is necessary to look at his early drawings and preparatory sketches to see if it is possible to identify any evidence of Far Eastern influence within them. This is all the more

important because a recent catalogue of Manet's drawings by De Leiris practically ignores the influence of Japanese art on his work. 52

De Leiris acknowledges Manet's interest in Japanese work in the 1860's but treats it as a passing phenomenon without significance for Manet's development.

In fact there is little evidence of direct copying of Japanese examples in Manet's graphic work. De Leiris publishes an early drawing 53 of the heads of two Oriental children which seems insecure enough to have been taken from life. He dates it by implication to 1858 but if it was taken from life it is far more likely to have been made during the 1860's, perhaps taken from the children of Oriental tumblers who toured Europe in 1864, or even as late as 1867 from the child of someone involved in the Japanese exhibition of that year. Another drawing, "Femme nue assise", which De Leiris dates from 1852-1858 seems to me to 54 be incompatible with the style of the other drawings from that period, and in my opinion should be dated later. It shows evidence of decision and clarity of line not present in other drawings of the same time. This directness of line seems to me to be dependent at least partly on the Japanese example. If as De Leiris believes the drawing is a copy from Domenichino's "Chase of Diana" in Rome made at a period when in his other copies Manet was intent on learning about form and technique we have to explain the surpassing elegance of the drawing over the original painting.

On the whole it appears that Manet's graphic work was not affected by a desire to follow Far Eastern techniques before 1867. We may trace the effect of Far Eastern art in some of the preparatory watercolours which he made for the "Olympia" or for "Déjeuner sur l'herbe", but when he came to interpret these paintings as engravings we find that the traditional cross hatching method of European engraving and etching has prevented him from developing a successful means of rendering in graphic

techniques the new visual language he had created for painting with the help of Oriental examples. The one exception is the portrait of Baudelaire in profile done in 1862 discussed above which I have suggested is a tribute to Baudelaire's own interest in Japanese art.

For Manet, Far Eastern art was first of all a revelation of new possibilities for the language of painting. It was the use of this language which interested him. He used it to achieve the "contemporary" images which caused such scandal in the sixties. In doing this he was concerned with minimising the appearance of the outward forms of Japanese art in his work. His failure to realise the implications of Japanese art for graphic media until after 1867 is therefore no reason to deny his knowledge of it and his systematic use of its conventions and, on some occasions, its imagery, since 1862.

In his defence of Manet, Zola echoed Baudelaire's view of the universality of the imagination;

J'embrasse d'un regard l'humanité qui a vécu  
et qui devant la nature, à toute heure, sous  
tous les climats, dans tous les circonstances,  
s'est senti l'impérieux besoin de créer  
humainement, de reproduire par les arts les  
objets et les êtres.

55

He then talks of the artist as a unique translator of nature into personal language and of the works of all the painters in the world as one enormous poem in a thousand languages deriving its beauty from human life and not from a philosophical abstraction;

Et lorsque, au centre de l'immense salle où  
sont pendus les tableaux de tous les peintres  
du monde, je jette un coup d'oeil sur ce vaste  
ensemble, j'ai là la même poème en mille langues  
différentes, et je ne me lasse pas de le relire  
dans chaque tableau la charme des délicatesses  
et des vigeurs de chaque dialecte.

I believe this to have been a close parallel with Manet's attitude at this time, whether achieved through Zola's intuition or with the painter's conscious aid.

Manet set out to create a new language for painting in the 1860's, a language capable of responding and growing in accordance with the needs of the contemporary imagination. He drew many of its principal elements from Japan. The most important of these is the identity of the image of an object in paint with the marks which made up that image. The systematic practice of this means of painting was to have revolutionary effects on the development of visual art over the next fifty years. Zola used the word "tâche" to describe this phenomenon and in this essay I have attempted to show how fundamental it was for Manet's painting and to expand the original concept in proportion to its importance.

The second value which Manet derived from Japan was the treatment of space as a relative conception to be implied by the juxtaposition of images, which are at one with the marks that compose them, in sequences of patterned relationships, such as the juxtapositions of tâches which create an illusion of space in the "Musique aux Tuileries".

This attitude gave Manet freedom to create "modern" images, whose meaning was not restricted by the significance commonly attributed to traditional Western methods of composition. Occasionally a direct reference to Japan, such as the screen in the watercolour for Olympia can be found, however Manet did not wish to substitute a Far Eastern genre for the historically based aesthetic that he wished to escape. He therefore borrowed the language of Oriental art but retained his own imagery. It was the alien quality of Japanese style which interested him. Its universality was unclouded by a location within Western tradition of visual experience which would have given it a secondary, less contemporary significance.

I have not spoken of the effect of Japanese art on the colour range in Manet's paintings. This is because it is difficult to observe anything more than a general lightening of his palette consistent with his interest in the available Japanese art, all of which was high toned.

Zola's reference to Epinal prints confirms my belief that Manet's experience of Japanese prints at this time was limited to the bright and sometimes garishly coloured nineteenth century works, particularly those of the '40's and '50's. This may have had some particular effect on Manet's colour range, the purple browns, bright greens and reds which mark his work in the sixties.

The Japanese example was responsible for the liberation of colour, not only in terms of Manet's palette but also in its role as a means of describing plastic experience. The "tâche" relies for its descriptive power on the unity of a certain hue with a brushmark of a particular size and boundary. The role of colour in description is inevitably enhanced.

Finally it must be remarked that all the elements of language which I have mentioned tend to reproduce a simultaneous image. "Olympia" can be "read" very quickly because of its unity as an image and also because of the independence of the painting from the history of the reclining female nude is assured by the method of painting; so can the spatial relationships in the paintings of the Kearsage and Alabama. This simultaneity is in keeping with Manet's attempt to produce an image of contemporary experience which was independent of history and instantaneous rather than sequential.

Japanese art played an essential part in the formulation of this artistic language. We shall find a similar development in Manet's near contemporaries, Degas and Whistler, but neither of them were so involved in the problem of tradition and modernity as Manet, and so they did not pursue the problem of language of painting with the same single-mindedness.

DEGAS

At first sight the effect that Far Eastern art had on Degas followed a similar pattern to its effect on Manet. Like Manet, during the later 1850's, Degas was concerned with studying the old masters and he selected his hero from the grand old men of nineteenth century art. In his case the hero was Ingres. Degas, like Manet, was intimately involved in the café society of Paris in the early 1860's. Chesneau places Degas among the earliest collectors of Japanese art. Moreover we know that Degas was a friend of both Bracquemond and Ph. Burty in the later 1860's and 1870's. He was also a friend of the popular fashionable painter James Tissot who was an ardent Japanese enthusiast in the 1860's. Tissot would certainly have introduced him to the legendary shop kept by Mme. De Soye where he bought much of his collection. Degas was also a close friend of Manet during this period and without doubt would have been aware of Manet's fascination with Japanese art, notably the physician Dr. Camus and the brothers Alexis and Henri Rouart. Degas himself became a collector of Japanese art in later years.

Dr. Camus has sometimes been suggested as the sitter for Degas' painting "L'Amateur" which Degas signed and dated 1866. This painting is the first portrait of a collector of Japanese art. Using the same device that Manet was later to use in the portrait of Zola he shows several pieces of Japanese cloth or leather in bright patterns taken from the covers of books of prints wedged together with cards, small photographs and sketches in a black frame in the upper right hand corner of the frame. It is clear that the collector, whoever he may be, has removed the prints from their covers and placed them in the folio he holds between his knees. We have seen that this practice was followed by Burges in his collection during the 1860's. It may be that the "painting" in his hand is, in reality, a flower print by one of the

nineteenth century followers of the Classical school of Japanese print-makers such as Bunsho, as there are several very similar images behind him on the table. William Rossetti records that a special consignment of Japanese prints with bird and flower motifs was eagerly looked forward to by collectors in Paris in his diary for the 18th June, 1864. It is highly improbable that a collector at this time would have been able to find a series of European flower and fruit sketches of the directness implied in Degas' representation in this painting. We may therefore suggest that Degas could easily have been influenced by Japanese art and indeed that his technique may have been affected by such examples as those in this painting. 61

As in the case of Manet, the striking example of the graphic qualities of Japanese art caused him to loosen his brushstroke. But, unlike Manet, Degas was not concerned with the problem of creating an entirely new artistic language. Degas' classical inclinations led him naturally to the belief that the practice of art was, for the nineteenth century at least, a question of survival. He appears often to have expressed the wish to carry on painting in his "hideout". Such an attitude was certain to lead him to conservatism in subjects and in style. Manet's remark that Degas was still painting Semiramis while he, Manet, was painting life-like subjects may not be completely fair, but it does indicate an important difference in attitude between the two men during the early 1860's. Degas was not looking for something new. He would be interested only in those aspects of Oriental art which would help him in his journey towards perfection in his handling of traditional problems of European painting, especially figure painting and the portrait. This attitude would have been reinforced by Tissot, the closest of the Japanese enthusiasts to Degas whose early "Japanese" paintings are simply an extension of European genre painting. Degas's portrait of Tissot shows one such painting at the upper margin. It is 62

clear that Degas would have received little help from such work. However there is one tenuous clue in the painting to his attitude to Japanese art at this period. Degas has chosen to place a head by Cranach in the centre of the painting, partly as a comic contrast to that of Tissot but we may also see it as an indication of the screen of taste through which Degas would have seen Japanese art. We know that Degas was extremely interested in painters whose work involved linear almost metallic draughtsmanship and an extremely smooth finish, in particular Holbein and Pontormo. In other words, Degas looked for those 63 artists of the past who confirmed his attachment to the mannerism, to the perfection of the artificialities, which he so admired in Ingres. Cranach was one such artist. If Degas was attracted to Japanese art during the early 1860's it would have been because he perceived in it a similar manneristic quality. Of course there is one other highly mannered source which Degas could have made use of during the early '60's, the portrait photograph. The long exposures needed for these photo- 64 graphs have been held responsible for the elaborate mannered poses adopted in many of them. This is the case argued by Aaron Scharf but we must bear in mind that photography was also used to imitate practically every academic style of painting which appeared in the Salons.

The artifice apparent in nineteenth century photographs is not the result of technical imperfections in the camera, but of the operation of the same factors which determine visual style in painting, in dress and in every other aspect of human affairs. The camera alone could no more alter the nature of human perception than the brush. One has only to think of the lunatic thesis that Impressionist style was "produced" by the manufacture of stiff haired brushes to realise the folly of the argument that the development of the photograph "produced" Impressionism. On the contrary painting gave form to early photography by offering it a language. Degas's own photographs are in the highly

artificial posed tradition of nineteenth century portrait photography, 65  
 derived from academic painting. For Degas, photography imprisoned  
 within current European conventions could never have been more than one  
 minor means towards the development of the mannered formulae which best  
 expressed his artistic intentions.

Japanese art on the other hand was a totally non-European form  
 capable of being interpreted as highly "mannered" by Europeans who were  
 seeking a new development of the manneristic tradition in European art  
 such as Degas.

In looking for signs of Far Eastern influence in Degas's work in  
 the 1860's, we must look for the development of his manner away from  
 contemporary European conventions towards the employment of recognisably  
 Far Eastern means in order to make a "mannered" image. Drawing, brush-  
 work and compositional devices are examples of areas where this could be  
 found.

In his thesis on Degas and Uki-yo-e, Yujiro Shinoda argued that 66  
 Degas's composition was revolutionised by the Japanese example in the  
 1860's. He sees the asymmetrical composition of "La Femme aux  
 chrysanthèmes", sometimes called "Portrait of Mme. Hertel", as the key 67  
 sign of this revolution. For Shinoda this composition marks a complete  
 rejection of the previous European mode of portrait composition, which  
 Degas himself had employed in the "Portrait of Hilaire Degas" of 1857 68  
 or the self-portrait of 1863-65. Shinoda does not produce a source for  
 the composition in Japanese art. His argument is restricted to observing  
 that in works like Hokusai's "Views of Mount Fuji" the major element in  
 a piece is often in a subordinate place in the composition, for instance  
 Mount Fuji in this series is often concealed in the landscape background  
 of a particular print. Mme. Hertel is similarly placed in an incidental  
 relationship to the right of the bowl of flowers which dominates the  
 composition. A photograph is said to exist, in the possession of the 69

descendants of Guerin, which Degas used as a model for this painting. But this does not affect Shinoda's argument that this new mannerism of placing the main subject of a painting in a traditionally subordinate position in the composition was suggested by the Japanese example. Indeed, in the only fully documented example of the use of photography which we possess, Degas made use simply of a detail. If Degas used a camera, he used it in the same way in which he used the photograph of the Prince and Princess Metternich, to help him with the technical difficulties inherent in attempting so unorthodox a composition or, in other words, to get the detail right. The composition itself was almost certainly suggested by Oriental art. However I do not believe that it was motivated in the way Shinoda believes. I think that Degas was also inspired by Japanese flower prints, perhaps by Hokusai or a minor nineteenth century artist such as those owned by the subject of "L'Amateur". No bowl made could ever hold so many flowers in such a patterned arrangement, least of all the flat open bowl that Degas shows. Moreover in this painting we have one of the few early instances of Degas's paint strokes taking on a purely graphic quality. Several of the flowers are mere coloured silhouettes. Others are indicated by coloured strokes superimposed on each other without blending. Degas has even helped the graphic effect along by using a patterned wallpaper as a background for the flowers. The detail of the woman's pose was probably derived from a photograph, as it shows an entirely different technique to the flowers and such an insertion would explain the awkwardness about the right shoulder and upper arm.

An X-ray examination of the painting suggests that the work was painted in two stages. The first was simply a still life of flowers. The second may have involved a radical repainting of the flowers, the repainting of table corners in an inaccurate perspective, and the addition of the woman in the lower right hand corner. There are two

signatures and dates on the work. One is clearly 1865, and the other could be either 1858 or 1868.

If my hypothesis that the Japanese example had a catalytic effect on the style of younger painters in Paris in the earlier 1860's, then the earlier date, 1858, is to be preferred for the original still-life. Moreover this seems most likely as it was in a rather hesitant style, reminiscent of Delacroix's flower paintings. The repainting in 1865 would then coincide admirably with the height of the early influence of the Japanese example. Without this example I do not believe that Degas would have produced an asymmetrical composition, with inaccurate perspective and design which relies only on its inner consistencies for its integrity.

In 1867 Ernst Chesneau wrote of the Japanese quality in Degas's exhibits at the Salon, both entitled "Portrait de Famille";

Si je n'avais <sup>e</sup> pour de paraître saisir au vol une transition de rencontre, je dirais que je trouve des traces de cette étude des feuilles japonaise dans les deux tableaux d'un jeune homme, qui, si je ne me trompe, exposait en 1867 pour la seconde fois seulement, M. de Gas. L'un est une composition assez importante égarée dans les hauteurs du grand salon de l'ouest et dont, à cette distance, il était bien difficile les merites; l'autre était intitulé Portrait de Famille. Ce sont deux jeunes filles représentées en buste et vêtues de noir, dont la silhouette se détache sur un fond de tenture à teinte neutre.

73

The "composition assez importante" which was too high for Chesneau to describe was almost certainly the large portrait of the Belleli family, 74 finished by Degas in 1862, now in the Jeu de Paume. The second "Portrait de Famille" from Chesneau's description is unmistakably Degas's later painting of the two Belleli sisters alone, now in the Los Angeles County Museum. This painting was finished in 1864.

In my opinion, both these works show the gradual extention of Degas's portrait manner as a result of the Japanese example.

Degas is known to have begun the earlier work during his stay with

the Belleli family in Florence in 1856. He is said to have brought back a great number of studies of the family from Naples and Florence on his return to France in 1859. It is not certain whether Degas had conceived of an overall composition for the portrait before his return from Italy. Lemoisne was doubtful of this because he dates the pastel in which the final composition appears 1859-1860.

The composition was clearly inspired by the family portrait drawings of Ingres but also by the group portraits of Holbein. However when we compare Degas's ink drawing of Julie Belleli with her image in the finished portrait it is clear that the final composition is an assembly of studies. This being so, if we assume the composition to have taken final form in 1861/2, Japanese examples could have influenced it. Indeed there are already evident certain aspects of Degas's "manner" which are not found either in work by Ingres or Holbein. Neither of them would have placed the head of the mother in such a close juxtaposition with the rectangle of the picture frame, yet such an arrangement was common in Japanese prints since they did not give to the physiognomy the importance it had in European painting and so could afford to treat it as an equivalent element in the composition. Another aspect of Degas's manner not found among his predecessors is the use of the flat white aprons to create a patterned effect; indeed Giovanna's apron is distorted, flattened across the shoulders to emphasise the pattern. These devices are sufficient to indicate that the Japanese example played its part in the creation of this composition alongside Degas's European masters. 75 76

In the later portrait of the two Belleli sisters the extension of I (8a) Degas's portrait manner is almost completely dependent on Japanese prints. No European example exists of two women, one in front of the other, each looking out of the picture on their own side. But this strange overlapping pose is quite common in Japanese prints showing the routine 77

domestic tasks, or outings in the country. Many of these prints form part of triptychs, so that the apparently awkward pose seems quite natural since at least one of the two women looks to her partners in her task. One such example is the centre panel of a triptych called "Girls Preparing Dresses" by Utamaro. In this example the composition follows Degas's painting even to the extent of showing the woman in the foreground in a dark kimono and the one behind in a light kimono, just as he shows the foremost Bellini girl in a black dress and the one behind in a light brown dress. This reversal of the normal rules of contrast in European painting must have been suggested by the Japanese example. Indeed Degas gives the game away by his self-conscious use of the grey feather boa and the chair back in the foreground of the portrait to supply the curves which are missing from the inelegant European dresses. The placing of the chairback in the extreme right-hand bottom corner of the painting is itself an example of the extension of Degas's manner by the Japanese example.

It is most unlikely that Degas saw a section of a triptych by an eighteenth century Japanese master such as Utamaro. A much more probable source would be a disassociated print from a triptych by a nineteenth century artist famous for them, such as Toyokuni or Kunisada whose work had found its way to Europe in some quantities by the 1860's.

Degas's painting was dated by Lemoisne 1865, but Jean Boggs places it earlier, circa 1862-1864. In fact the earlier dates are more appropriate for my hypothesis that Japanese influence began in Paris in 1862.

In his thesis Shinoda postulates a model in the "Mangwa" for the seated Edouard Manet in Degas's portrait of the painter and his wife. Whilst the painter's relaxed pose, one leg over the other, is very close to that of the Hokusai drawing it must be asked whether the pose is sufficiently unprecedented for it to be undoubtedly derived from this drawing. I believe that it is, that it fits into the pattern of

extended "Manner" which I have proposed as the basis for Degas's interest in Japanese art at this time. I have already shown that Manet knew of "Mangwa" by 1865 and he may well have introduced Degas to it.

So far I have been discussing portrait and figure paintings, which have remained an unchanging part of the European tradition of painting. I have argued that the innate conservatism in Degas's attitude to art led him to adopt only certain aspects of Japanese art which would help him extend his "manner".

Before leaving Degas I would like to discuss briefly the possibility of Oriental influence on his "History" paintings and the development of his technique. "History" paintings have a less constant relationship to tradition than portraiture but, once more, Degas's attitude was highly conservative, completely untouched by the concerns of Manet. The subjects of the early pictures "Young Spartans" and "Semiramis" are highly 82 conservative and could have no relation to Oriental art. However the formal problems of these paintings show that within the tradition of mannered painting whose last representative had been Ingres, there were certain stylistic problems which Degas could not fully solve. In the "Young Spartans" these problems concern the relations of figures in space, the consequent representation of movement and, most obviously, the relationship between foreground and background and the apparent impossibility (for him) of representing continuously receding space in harmony with a dynamic image. In "Semiramis" these problems became so acute that the work was never finished. Degas seems to have rejected the idea of using the example of Oriental art to circumvent if not to solve them. He eventually abandoned such pieces altogether, but not until around 1867. It may well be that the exploitation of Far Eastern art to the full was partially dependent on the acceptance in some measure of the Realist doctrines which Manet had accepted so openly. Degas was later to make much greater use of Japanese art to the full, after having

adopted some of these beliefs.

The one "contemporary" subject that Degas worked on before 1867 was the race track, in which he made enormous advances in his attitude to space and movement. Hokusai's sketches of horses and riders in motion may well have helped him in this development. If one considers the almost Trojan stiffness of the horse in "Semiramis" it is clear that Degas must have had some example before him of the unlimited possibilities for expressive movement provided by the horse and rider. In the "Mangwa" Hokusai shows them from every angle and in all sorts of actions.

The clearest example of the Japanese stimulus is the "Wounded Jockey" which Lemoisne dates circa 1866. Hokusai drew such plunging horses as Degas shows here, sometimes riderless, but saddled. Moreover the flat presentation of this painting suggests that Degas was interested in the immediacy of the Japanese print. The preparatory sketches make it clear that he was interested in reconciling the idea of a plunging horse with the body of the jockey beneath so as to provide the most mannered composition possible. Lemoisne 144 makes it clear that the fallen jockey was really the excuse for this daring presentation of animals in movement. 83 I (9a) 84

It is clear that Degas's break from the "sporting print" method of representing the race track began in 1862 with his painting of Epsom race track. However at that time he was thinking more of the romantic treatment of horses in motion as swirling masses à la Gericault, which is a convention as rigid as that of the sporting print. Only in the "Mangwa" could Degas have found inspiration for his break from such conventions and the extension of his manner. I (9b) 86

There remains the problem of the change in Degas's technique during this period. I have already suggested that the broadening of Manet's brushstroke was due in part to the graphic example of Japanese art.

Degas also develops the use of taches and more especially of loosely brushed outline. Both devices may be seen in "L'Amateur" or "Woman with chrysanthemums", also I believe in response to Japanese art. Degas, before 1867 was an extremely conservative artist; it would therefore be a great mistake to claim as does Shinoda that during this period Japanese art converted him to a radical naturalism. In fact his use of Japanese prints was intended to extend "manner", not to negate it.

WHISTLER

Manet and Degas were both French artists concerned with the development of the traditional preoccupations of French art. Whistler was a cosmopolitan who entered the European scene in the mid-1850's, and promptly associated himself with current artistic fashions, or rather modes, since Realism and Pre-Raphaelitism could scarcely be called fashionable. It was this cosmopolitanism that placed Whistler in the position to become the first Western artist to attempt the recreation of the Japanese aesthetic in European terms. It is no exaggeration to say that, during the 1860's, Whistler attempted to adopt a Japanese persona - to become a "Japanese" artist.

There is no need to speculate about the influence of Japanese art on his work, for he began the process of becoming Japanese by direct imitation of Japanese art in several paintings. We are fortunate in having some record of his attempts to learn and collect Japanese art both in Paris and in London. The books of correspondence and memoirs published by W. Rossetti who knew Whistler during the sixties provide a good picture of his activities on both sides of the Channel, moreover Benedité obtained the letters of Fantin Latour for this period and published information from them in a series of articles in the G.B.A. and the letters by Whistler to Latour are especially relevant to his interest in Japanese prints, though Benedité's retelling is not always accurate. Therefore I propose to discuss Whistler's development 87

chronologically, and to establish his involvement with Japanese art through the narrative. Whistler was born in 1834, in 1855 he arrived in Paris to study art at Gleyre's studio. His life as a child of an American government engineer on loan to the governments of Europe and later his training as a West Point cadet had left him determined to succeed as an artist. His work at Gleyre's confirmed this determination but cannot be said to have given him a working relationship to tradition

such as that of Manet or Degas. Whistler's problem was to create a tradition for himself. The small painting "At the piano" of 1859 shows his difficulties. It is a weak attempt to create a great pictorial excitement using a genre subject, perhaps suggested by Dutch genre painting of the seventeenth century. However genre painting is extremely interesting because it offers on<sup>e</sup> the chance to identify with 88 what is depicted, whether it is interesting action, good company or articles of furniture or apparel which one would like to own. Whistler's painting offers none of these possibilities of identification. Indeed he excludes such identification by avoiding the presentation of normal spatial relationships. Instead he attempts hyper-refined pictorial formulae, such as placing the side of the piano parallel to the picture plane, with the girl facing the mother in the curve of the piano frame, both in profile. Clearly such formulae are not part of the Dutch genre nor are they found in European painting of the Post-Renaissance. 89

For whatever reason Whistler is looking back to earlier artificial pictorial modes. It is my opinion that as an American he was drawn to the idea of remaking painting to express an American attitude to experience. The connection between radical individualism and a concern to present human beings as integral entities in a highly ordered environment cannot be given lengthy discussion. Briefly it regards the individual and the means through which nature is informed with significance. The secret of success in representing such a concern is the presentation of a highly ordered environment which in visual terms implies the use of artificial and simplified pictorial formulae. Thus 90 we may say that "At the piano" was Whistler's first attempt to monumentalise the individual and individual experience. This is a paradoxical task since a monument is never an individual and it is not surprising that the Aesthetic Movement, which had this paradox at its heart, expressed itself in paradox. This can be seen in Oscar Wilde's famous

remark that "Nature imitates Art", rather than art imitating nature. Whistler appears to have used Far Eastern art first in a painting called "Harmony in Green and Rose; The Music Room" which supposedly dates from 1860. It shows a room in the London home of Whistler's brother-in-law, Seymour Haden. To the right is the figure of Mrs. Boot, a friend of the family, dressed in a black riding habit. She looks out to the right of the picture, presumably towards the person who holds the other end of the length of floral patterned material which she holds in her raised right hand. In her left hand which is covered by a white glove she holds the glove of an extremely thin riding whip. The white gloves and the thin line of the whip accentuate the elegance of the black silhouette of her figure, which is the only dark mass in an extremely light room. To the left, below and behind her, partially obscured, is the figure of the daughter Annie Haden, in a white dress reading a book with a white cover near a window which is obscured by two enormous curtains of the same material which covers the book she holds in her hand. The nearest of these runs right down the painting dividing off the left third in which we see the figure of Mrs. Haden reflected in a mirror on the upper half of a chimney breast, below which is a shelf jutting into the composition at 45 degrees, as in Oriental isometric perspective. In the bottom left-hand corner another section of floral material appears, presumably a curtain on the other side of the mirror. The elegant figure in black is clearly derived from the left-hand panel of a Japanese triptych print showing women performing a task such as folding material. Kiyonaga and Utamaro both made examples of this (Illustration 8b). Whistler probably saw a nineteenth century Japanese print which followed their example. Only thus can we account for the extraordinary composition which is both unprecedented and unsatisfactory. Whistler clearly was not aware of the other two pieces of the triptych. Miss Boot would not have been folding curtains

I (10a)

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in her riding habit, but Whistler used the black note to preserve the flowing silhouette of the Japanese model in a painting which retains a European attitude to the representation of light falling on objects. However in the isometric perspective of the mirror and its shelf and in the repetition of the floral material in the curtains as a structural element of the composition, Whistler is denying the usual European attitude to space by adopting Oriental devices. Ultimately this complex composition can be seen to have been a response to the problem of Whistler's desire to create a European painting based on an incomplete Oriental work of art. The mirror on the left is a way of apparently adhering to European attitudes to space, but in practice what we see is an insertion into the composition not a reflected continuation of space of the room. A "real" mirror would have reflected the other end of the cloth held by Miss Boot and the person holding it. Insertions of this I (10b) kind in a composition are a common device in Japanese prints and examples of them had certainly reached the West by 1860. 93

In "The Music Room" we therefore have a series of Japanese pictorial conventions, arranged so as to play down their effect on the illusionistic expectations of the European tradition. At the same time these Orientalisms have a substantial effect on our apprehension of the human beings portrayed, and on their environment. Whistler has gone to the point of distorting our spatial logic to quietly achieve his object of preventing our perception of the room as familiar, immediate and "homely". Instead we have an artificial but consistent order. Whistler was first attracted to Oriental examples because they gave him the means to achieve the monumentalising of individual experience which the realism of Courbet could never offer. It is insufficient to discuss the development of Whistler at this time in terms of a preference for the "pictorial values of painting" over "the anecdotes of Pre-Raphaelitism" as several historians have done. Whistler had a much

more precise idea of what he wanted to achieve.

I have been unable to establish dated examples of Utamaro, Kiyonaga or any other great Japanese print maker of the eighteenth century as being present in London or Paris before 1860. However both Whistler and Degas had prints by these artists in their collections on their death. Moreover "The Music Room" was painted in London and there were several sales of Japanese art in London before 1860, notably 94 in 1854. It might therefore have been possible though improbable for Whistler to have come across a separated leaf from an eighteenth century triptych and to have used it in the way I have suggested. Thus "The Music Room" is the equivalent in Whistler's work to Manet's work during the same period as it too uses a concealed Japonisme in order to move away from the devices of Realism.

In the apparently "Realistic" paintings and etchings of the Thames which Whistler made in the early 1860's, the presentation of a human being in a pictorially ordered rather than observed setting is an echo of Japanese art. For instance the complex asymmetry of "Wapping" which he worked on from 1861-1864, is an indication of his growing desire to 95 compose reality around individual experience, stimulated by Oriental art. His friend Legros and the model Jo Heffernan are carefully placed in the lower right hand quarter of the image, with Jo Heffernan on the centre line. Behind them is a carefully articulated pattern of rigging and spars of which it is sufficient to mention their culmination in the bright red stroke which indicates the funnel of a tug in the distance, to demonstrate their artificiality. Heffernan and Legros are shown in the same relation to the water as that enjoyed by Japanese in prints by Harunobu and others who were later to influence Whistler. Even in this painting and in etchings like the "Black Lion Wharf", the impulses 96 which led him to adopt the Eastern example can be seen. Eventually the tension between the real and the artificially ordered became too diffi-

cult for Whistler to maintain and he turned to a ready-made solution, to a direct imitation of Oriental art, rejecting his earlier admiration for Courbet.

Whistler began the collection and systematic study of Far Eastern art in 1862 in Paris, not in London, and was the means of introducing Japanese art to Dante Rossetti, who soon after let his brother know about it. William Rossetti remembered the beginning of the "Japanese mania" in London in the middle of 1863, just before he wrote the first English article on Japanese prints:

It was Mr. Whistler who first called my brother's attention to Japanese art; he possessed two or three woodcut books, some coloured prints and a screen or two. To him I take it this new revelation in art had been made in Paris, in the Impressionist circle. I have heard say and perhaps with accuracy that Manet was the "head and front of Japonerie".

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However in an earlier anecdote in the same memoirs he placed the event earlier;

Towards 1863 James Whistler and myself also, became greatly bitten by Japanese art (and I remain so this this day). Not so Burne Jones "No William" he remarked "Japan and Asia will not do, for fine art we need the Caucasian mine", herein he concurred with Ruskin.

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Whistler could have acquired the articles mentioned by Rossetti in the summer of 1862 or in <sup>2</sup>March 1863 when he was in Paris, and introduced Swinburne to Manet. Both dates are after the opening of the shop owned 99 by Mme. De Soye in the Rue de Rivoli and it is probable that he bought them there. He may have been led there by acquaintances he made at Delâtrès, his printer, who, at that time, was printing illustrations of Japanese ceramics by Jules Jacquemart for a book on porcelain by his 100 father. The same articles appear to have been in Whistler's hands in 1864 and to have served as the model for his work at that time, indeed he constantly added to his collection until 1866 when he left on a mysterious trip to South America.

Benedité remarks that Whistler was extremely assiduous in his visits to the De Soye's shop, especially in 1864. When in England he wrote to Fantin Latour asking him to report on the activities at the De Soye's;

Tu me raconteras tout ce qu'il-y-a, raconter  
sur les on dit du Salon, et du café de Bade  
et surtout sur ta visite chez la petite Japonaise.

On another occasion he wrote asking Fantin to request "La Japonaise" 101  
to put all the costumes she had on one side for him.

By 1866, his collection was so valuable that he wrote to Fantin saying that he was thinking of putting it up for sale and then going to Paris permanently. However no sale appears to have taken place, and Whistler made a mysterious voyage to Valparaiso.

Mme. De Soye and other Japanese dealers appear to have acted as informants as well as merchants and Whistler was keen to learn everything he could about Far Eastern artefacts. So fanatic was this pursuit of Far Eastern art that Whistler soon became known as "The Japanese 102  
Artist".

By early 1865 he was so committed to the Far Eastern persona he had created that he successfully requested Fantin to paint him in a kimono or to be more precise, in a Chinese robe which Fantin thought 103  
Japanese, in the centre of a painting which his friend had been thinking about for at least a year, "Le toast à la vérité". This was to be an "Hommage" in the manner of the earlier "Hommage à Delacroix" in which Whistler appeared holding a bunch of flowers. In the new painting, truth, personified by a naked woman, was toasted by Fantin's artist friends. Whistler knew of the dull formality of dress and the general conception of Fantin's group portraits. He meant to make a significant gesture by placing himself in this portrait. For him, artistic truth was now to be found in the East not in bourgeois Paris. Fantin himself seemed to endorse this attitude by including a Chinese lantern over the

centre of the group of painters in one of the latest of the many changes he made in the composition of this work. The light of truth now shone from the East.

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"Le Toast" as it was eventually called was exhibited at the 1865 Salon and provoked a justifiable reaction of laughter. Fantin had presented the head-on clash between European tradition and the urge for change that challenged that tradition. Manet had taken pains to minimise such a clash and had provoked outrage. Fantin was bound to fail and he acknowledged it by destroying the painting.

It has sometimes been argued that the first two "<sup>in</sup>Symphonies White" by Whistler show the beginnings of Far Eastern influence on his work. However, in my view, "Symphony in White No.1" of 1862, is simply an extension of certain aspects of the Pre-Raphaelitism and its presence in Whistler's oeuvre merely indicates a predisposition to make use of Japanese art. The elongated figure of Jo Hefferman, the obsessive elaborations of the tones of white and grey in the dress and curtain behind her and the use of the lily in her hand and the red tinge in her hair in such an "Exquisite" manner make this clear. It is also clear that the picture is a failure, it is not a satisfactory composition and does not succeed in producing a consistent artificial environment, a symphony, in which the figure can exist. Whistler was only to succeed in this by following the Far Eastern example.

Whistler's first attempt to create a completely consistent Far Eastern image was the "Lange Lijzen of the six marks". In January, 1864, he wrote to Fantin from London;

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I (11)

J'ai un tableau pour l'Academie ici. Je t'en enverrai une équisse prochainement. C'est remplie de superbes porcelaines tirées de ma collection, et, comme arrangement et couleur, c'est bien. Celà représente une marchande de porcelaines, une Chinoise en train de peindre un pot.

He added;

Mais c'est difficile et je gratte tant.  
Il-y-a des fois ou je crois avoir appris des  
choses et puis je suis fort decourage.

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Whistler was clearly trying to understand something of the Oriental attitude in making this painting. He was clearly aware that his porcelain was Chinese, moreover he has depicted a woman in the act of painting an example of it and he has tried to paint her action accurately with an Oriental brush in her hand. However the other articles in her right hand suggest that in fact he knew only the equipment for calligraphy or water-colour painting since amongst them is an inkstone, and the brushes do not appear to be suitable for porcelain decoration.

I believe that Whistler took as a model for this painting a work exhibited by T. Delamarre in the Paris Salon of 1861, "The Lantern Painter". "The Illustrated London News" published an engraving of the work with the following description;

I(12)

The Lantern Painter portrays a native of Canton, painting with much gravity, large antique Chinese characters upon a lantern already ornamented with antique figures. His manner of manipulating the brush or pencil is altogether peculiar and imitated from nature by the French Artist.

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It was this claim to an accurate description of Oriental painting technique which interested Whistler. He repeated the painting technique in the "Lange Lijzen", although it was appropriate for paper lanterns not for porcelain. The general pose of the painter is the same in both although reversed. Whistler probably substituted the female model as a reminiscence of Mme. De Soye and the large amount of blue and white porcelain in the work was from Whistler's own collection.

Whistler was clearly very interested in the techniques of Far Eastern painting. On February 10th 1861 his mother, who was staying with him in his studio at 7, Lindsay Row, where her bedroom was decorated with prints and other Japanese art wrote of his Far Eastern interests and

the "Lange Lijzen";

Are you interested in old china? This artistic abode of my son is ornamented by a very rare collection of Japanese and Chinese. He considers the paintings upon them the finest specimens of art, and his companions (artists) who resort here for an evening's relaxation occasionally, get enthusiastic as they handle and examine the curious figures portrayed. Some of the pieces are more than two centuries old. He has also a Japanese book of paintings, unique in their estimation. You will not wonder that Jemie's inspiration should be (under such influence) of the same cast. He is finishing at his studio a very beautiful picture for which he is to be paid one hundred guineas without the frame, that is always separate. I'll try to describe this inspiration to you. A girl seated, as if intent upon painting a beautiful jar which she rests upon her lap - a quiet and easy attitude. She sits beside a shelf which is covered with matting, a buff colour, upon which several pieces of China and a pretty fan are arranged as if for purchasers; a rug carpets the floor. (Jemie has several in his room and none others.) Upon it by her side is a large jar, and all these are facsimiles of those in this room, which is more than half studio, for here he has an easel and paints generally, tho' he defines it as our withdrawing room; for here is our bright fire and my post.

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Mrs. Whistler is clearly talking of her son's collection of porcelain. It has never been realised that Whistler took the motifs on his blue and white quite as seriously as visual sources for his painting as he did Japanese prints. The effect of loose brush work under glaze must have had a tremendous impact on his technique and it formed a great part of the inspiration for the limpid quality of his landscape studies. The large jar at the bottom <sup>right</sup> left-hand corner has as decoration a loosely brushed river scene which is the clear ancestor of his own "Valparaiso" of 1866, or "Battersea Bridge" 1875.

The collection of blue and white had become very fashionable in the circle in which Whistler and Dante Rossetti moved and was the subject of some determined rivalry between them. Rossetti however seems to have lost interest in blue and white circa 1869 whereas Whistler continued to

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look at it throughout his life. During his period of interest in Chinese porcelain Dante Rossetti also owned a "large and sumptuous porcelain screen of varied colouring", which later became the property of Watts Dunton. The images on this may also have influenced Whistler in his later paintings. It is certainly legitimate to refer back to the porcelain shown in the "Lange Lijzen" when we discuss Whistler's later development. The very title indicates that he thought a great deal of "pots". 110

The painting also indicates that he owned a black lacquered fan with a crane painting on it, and an undecipherably painted lacquer tray. Also in the upper right-hand corner he has signed the painting in two vertical cartouches "Whistler"1864". The script he uses is distorted to look like Oriental calligraphy. This is the first example of the Orientalism of Whistler's signature that eventually led to the famous butterfly. The adoption of this signature is further evidence that Whistler consciously adopted a "Far Eastern" artistic persona. I have added an appendix <sup>(in which this is discussed) (152)</sup> for this painting. Coloured cartouches of this sort used in this painting are to be found only in nineteenth century Japanese prints, particularly Hiroshiges. Whistler owned prints by Hiroshige at this time. They appear in his next painting "The Golden Screen", and Whistler was clearly trying to identify himself with the artist who made them. He even designed a special frame with Oriental motifs. It is usual to say that this painting is completely European in its attitude to space and in its technique. I have already pointed out that it is in part a meditation on the technique of painting found on blue and white porcelain. Also the pattern on the robe is treated as a means of exploring a new, freer painting technique. Moreover the bold, almost harsh colour arrangement of the work is clearly inspired by the colours in nineteenth century female portraits in Japanese prints, especially the purple of the underskirt and scarf. The spatial compos- 111

ition is apparently European but in fact it is uncertain and deliberately attempts to minimise the space around the model by obscuring her stool 112 and the wooden pottery rack behind it in deep shadow and extremely loose brushwork. Only the modelling of volumes by cast light and shade is retained and that is not applied consistently but rather as a decorative device, one of many pictorial schemata available to the artist to be freely used together in any painting. In the "Lange Lijzen" we therefore have a document of Whistler's attempts to learn about the East and to build his own style from his understanding of the Oriental aesthetic. Like most student work it shows this process to the viewer and it is therefore folly to treat it as a mature expression and to dismiss it as a fashionable genre subject, a "Chinoiserie", or to talk of it as a Vermeer in fancy dress. It has neither the chic of the one nor the optical accuracy of the other. The painting was exhibited to the R.A. in May 1864 and was well-received. Rossetti naturally wrote a highly favourable review:

His is the art of concealing art; yet always with so fine an originality that to the perceptive eye, the art is the one and main constituent of the whole, the sum of its result. He realises, through nature for the sake of art; an aim as legitimate as the usual one of realising through art for the sake of nature and even more intrinsically pictorial. Seemingly reckless to the uninitiated every touch which he lays on is nicely calculated for a right purpose, and takes its place. The rough is not too rough to be fine in its relations, nor the fine so fine as to fail of its significance. His picture of a Chinese women painting a blue vase is the most delightful piece of colour on the walls the more you examine it, the more convinced you become that it will yield new pleasure on reinspection and the conviction is never falsified. Its harmonising power of art is so entire that we find that we find it a choice piece of orientalism, though conscious that there is not even an attempt at the Chinese cast of countenance. This "Lange Lijzen" (or limp damsel, as the Dutch term the female figures on the Chinese porcelain) is painting her blue pot of the six marks so deservedly prized by collectors with a natty touch and appreciative turn of the head which do not allow us to mind whether she sees her own

painted "lange lijze" through eyes of the proper almond shape or not. Art is also justified of her children.

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As early as May, 1864, therefore, Whistler's work was defended in the terms of the Aesthetic Movement. Enthusiasm for the Far East was permanently linked with the quest for the "harmonising power of art". Nature was to be rearranged to make an artificial, highly ordered environment. Indeed we may say that Oriental art initiated this quest in Whistler for this review was written by a friend and neighbour who probably saw the work in progress. The review indicates the considerable Far Eastern element in Whistler's aesthetic at this early date.

Whistler was not averse to giving lectures on his ideas of Far Eastern art to visitors to his studio. George Moore once found him doing so surrounded by a crowd of admirers and embarrassed one of them by asking if "faces represented on a Japanese screen by two or three lines and a couple of dots could be considered well drawn?" as Whistler 114 seemed to believe. During the remainder of 1864, and in 1865, Whistler was entirely occupied with Far Eastern paintings which developed his knowledge and understanding of the Eastern aesthetic. It is difficult to fix the precise order in which the paintings were made. Mrs. Whistler's letter tells us that the Far Eastern paintings were "ordered" - by which, presumably, she meant commissioned and that he had several in hand. It is difficult even to identify the painting "portraying a group in Oriental costume, a tea equipage of old Japan. They look out upon a river with a town in the distance." 115

It seems most likely that it was an early version of the motif of "The Balcony" now in the Freer collection, Washington. It may well have been the same canvas, for it has been worked over considerably since its first painting. We know that Whistler was still working on the painting in 1867 when, according to Benedité, he wrote to Fantin Latour about it, declaring his intention to produce an almost life-size version of it. 116

There is a squared-off oil sketch of the work on wood in the Birnie Phillip Bequest in Glasgow University presumably made in 1867, though it also shows several alterations. I believe that the motif was originally suggested to Whistler by the scene "Fuji from the Pagoda of the 500 Rakans, Yedo", No. 32 of the "36 Views of Fuji" which we know to have been in Europe and by similar later representations of the tea parties on balconies looking out over water such as those by Kunisada. A panel from such a triptych made by Kunisada in the 1850's is amongst the works in the Burges collection. It has been suggested that the motif derived from a print by Kyonaga, "Youth and Courtesans" which can be shown to have once belonged to Whistler. However I do not believe that he could have acquired the Kiyonaga, an eighteenth century print, before 1868, and probably not until much later. Moreover the only "convincing" link with the Kiyonaga is the use of the samisen. The Kiyonaga has no balcony and the view is out of a window across mud flats. In any case the playing of the samisen in a tea party is shown on an anonymous print from the Burges collection.

I believe however that the accuracy of the details of the use of tea utensils and the samisen can best be explained by assuming that they were painted after Whistler had seen them in use in the Japanese exhibition in Paris in 1867 by the three Japanese girls who gave regular demonstrations in native costume. It is clear that these areas of the painting are amongst the latest of the reworkings, from the reproduction. It is impossible to say with precision what Whistler's 1864 Japanese "Balcony" looked like. In any case it is more important to note that the theme of figures by water grew out of his interest in Far Eastern art. From the beginning Whistler was seeing the Thames with eyes opened by the Japanese example. As Sutton rightly remarks, the background in the Freer version of "The Balcony" is a view of the Thames. Whistler's entire art, his unique vision, depends on the

technique and motifs he created from the study of Japanese art in the 1860's. He wanted to make an art which proposed a highly ordered, Far Eastern conception of Western experience. His use of Japanese art is in no sense superficial exoticism.

I will return to a discussion of "The Balcony" and its place in a series of works with a similar motif in Section Three after having discussed the European reaction to Japanese art after the 1867 exhibition and in the 1870's.

A little more can be said about "The Artist's Studio" now in the Chicago Art Institute. This sketch is usually dated to 1867 or 1868 for stylistic reasons. However this sketch and a similar one in the Municipal Art Gallery, Dublin, both show Whistler's models of 1864-66, Jo Heffernan and the woman he referred to in his letters to Fantin as "La Japonaise". Whistler never painted Jo after his visit to Valparaiso in 1866.

"The Artist's Studio" is clearly a record of the atmosphere in which Whistler created his Japanese pictures in the mid-1860's. The two models are rendered in an undeniably Japanese manner. Particularly the standing figure in a yellow kimono holding a fan with her back to the viewer is a pose in many Japanese prints. The liquidity of the brushwork on the figures in this sketch is a result of Whistler's need to create the fluidity of line necessary to such poses and which was a natural means of expression in Far Eastern ink painting where a very fluid medium was used. 122

The "refined" counterpoint of the background of the composition is also derived from the Japanese example. Only there could Whistler have learned to create the irregular rhythm formed by the dim silhouettes of the three Japanese scroll paintings on the left, the large gilt framed mirror and the small print on the right. He also recorded his cabinet of blue and white on the extreme left. The artist himself stands on

the right, looking sideways out of the picture to his unseen canvas.

If I am right and this painting was painted before Whistler's trip to Valparaiso in 1866 then it documents the beginning of Whistler's "liquid" technique and fixes its genesis at precisely the time when the artist was most interested in "learning" from Far Eastern art. This suggests that Far Eastern art acted once again as a catalyst in developing new stylistic ideas in Western art. The dating of "The Balcony" and "The Artist's Studio" must however remain controversial. It is best to return to better documented works.

During 1864 and 1865 Whistler was totally taken up with "Japonisme". In February, 1865, he wrote to Fantin;

J'ai fait encore un petit tableau japonais  
qui est ravissante.

and slightly later;

La Japonaise me prend du matin jusqu'au soir.  
Elle a été mise du côté jusqu'à présent à  
cause de la maladie du modèle.

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Jo Heffernan is said to have been the model for two of the paintings; "The Gold Screen" and "The Little White Girl", but she could only have lived with Whistler in the autumn of 1867 when his mother went to the coast for her health. It seems reasonable to assume that "The Golden Screen" was the next work to be painted after the "Lange Lijzen" as it is the closest to it in conception. Indeed, the face of the model in "The Golden Screen" seems to me to be far closer to the model of the earlier painting than to that of the model in "The Little White Girl".

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"The Golden Screen" is a very small work, only 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 27". It shows a woman in a black kimono sitting on an uptilted carpet. At her right, filling the lower left-hand corner of the painting is a black lacquer box, a piece of blue and white porcelain and a decorative arrangement of pink flowers and their green stems. The use of disembodied flowers in the corners of the composition is common in Japanese

prints as a balancing feature. This is its first use in Whistler's painting but he was to continue to use it many times throughout his life as a means of controlling his increasingly daring and unstable compositions. The right-hand lower corner is filled with scattered landscape prints which are clearly by Hiroshige. The woman also holds one such print in her hand. Strange identified the uppermost print on the floor as one of the set "Views of more than Sixty Provinces".

In painting these prints Whistler was clearly learning more about the Japanese aesthetic and about how to make a minimum of "taches" explain a whole landscape. This study was to be of tremendous value in his later work. The stool in the upper right-hand side is clearly the same as the one in the "Lange Lijzen". The lines formed by its thin black crossed legs form an elegant relationship with the dark boundary to the bottom of the screen at the back of the painting and with the black upright formed in the centre of the painting by the edges of the folding panels which are exposed. It has been claimed, without support, that the images on this screen are bowdlerised Hiroshige prints. In fact the golden clouds surrounding the scenes show that Whistler was aware of the conventions of Japanese screen painting as does the pictorial unity of the panels particularly the perspective diagonal taken across the two centre panels. In fact we may speculate that one of Whistler's screens which he used as a model showed a Kabuki theatre set in landscape and that, like Manet, he found it necessary to rearrange the composition in order to fit into the overall pattern of his work. The broad planks of the Kabuki stage are recognisable on the panel behind the model's head; many such examples of screens were made though I have not yet found an example of an early import. In view of the small size of his painting Whistler had inevitably to simplify the very complex drawing of the Japanese screen and it is worth remarking that Manet had been defeated by the challenge of placing a Japanese screen

in the background of his much larger "Olympia" only the previous year. In his rearrangement and simplification Whistler was learning even more about the selection and placing of marks and spatial clues in painting.

"The Gold Screen" has often been praised as the most successful picture in the Japanese convention by Whistler. This is to ignore the synthesis of several different Japanese conventions within it. The motif of a beautiful woman relaxing in a kimono derives from the eighteenth century. Such a woman would never have looked at Hiroshiges. The screen is of an even earlier date. The painting is a synthesis of all that interested Whistler about Japanese art at the time. Having achieved it he turned to an attempt to develop the resulting style, in the treatment of contemporary Western subjects. It is an essential stage in his development as an artist.

The most immediate Western style was that predilection for pathos and drama mixed with ambiguous symbols and literary illusions that for Dante Rossetti constituted Pre-Raphaelitism. Rossetti's work is of course a disguised celebration of contemporary emotions which if one were uncharitable could be called the mystification of the superficial and fashionable in contemporary life. Whistler's 1862 painting "The

White Girl", later called "Symphony in White No.1", had been interpreted as an illustration to Wilkie Collins' novel, "The Woman in White", although no such intention was ever indicated by Whistler. 130 However the dramatic mood of Whistler's painting was clearly intended. The straight pose of the model emphasised by the direct pleats of her dress and the strange note introduced by the lily in her hand and the carefully observed head of the bearskin at her feet contribute to what is clearly a dramatic presentation. It was this presence which interested Whistler on Pre-Raphaelitism. In "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine" which he painted through a long period in 1864, Whistler

found a means of changing the mood of the female portrait as well as substituting a Japanese environment for a dramatic presentation.

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The model is Christine Spartali, the sister of one of Rossetti's favourite models. Her oblique posture and the curved folds of her yellow robe combine to reduce the dramatic impact inherent in the single figure portrait. So concerned has Whistler become with breaking up the vertical line of the figure that he has arranged a piece of pink drapery behind her left elbow to look like an extension of her loose sleeve, although in fact it is draped over the screen. The Japanese example has enabled him to use drapery as an autonomous element in the design. The fan held in the model's right hand is carefully arranged in relationship to the rectangle which forms part of the screen behind her. The screen shows bird and flower subjects on a white background which is unusual in Japanese screens, and so it may well be an invention inspired by a sight of Manet's bird and flower screen, and by the flower painting on the fan. To balance the design Whistler has also included a piece of blue and white and a fan on the right in the background. The Oriental objects in the painting have often been seen simply as stage properties, as a different means to the Pre-Raphaelite goal of making common middle-class life mysterious. In part this is true, but clearly more is involved. Whistler has succeeded in creating a new mode and a new mood for the single figure portrait by referring to the Japanese example and this achievement was to remain when the Japanese costume disappeared from his sitters.

The first step in this direction can be seen in "The Little White Girl" for which Jo Heffernan was once again the model. Here we have only a fan held languidly downwards, an intrusively decorative pattern formed of pink blossoming sprigs and a blue and white jar on the mantelpiece to remind us of Whistler's attachment to the East. However the langorous pose of Jo, her arm stretched across the top of the

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mantelpiece and the severe rectangles created by it, and the joint of the mantel are clearly derived from Whistler's Japanese compositions. Furthermore, the daring juxtaposition of Jo's profile with her <sup>three-quarter</sup>  $\frac{3}{4}$ -face image on the mirror could only have been achieved after contemplation of Japanese figure prints in which heads and bodies have similar decorative relations which are difficult to rationalise. Whistler may have seen prints in which artists like Utamaro exploited the irrational aspect of reflection to decorative or comic purposes. The extent of the change in Whistler's attitude to the single figure painting which took place as a result of his intense contemplation of Japanese art can be measured by comparing the first "White Girl" with this painting. Even the brushwork has altered completely changing from the stilted detailing of the curtains in the 1862 painting to the free expressive quality in, for instance, the painting of the blossoms in the 1864 painting.

Swinburne wrote a verse which Whistler later placed on "The Little White Girl" which makes no mention of Japan and yet it is clear that the mood to which he refers was inspired by Whistler's contemplation of Japanese art;

Come snow, come wind or thunder,  
High up in the air,  
I watch my face and wonder  
At my bright hair;  
Nought exalts or grieves  
The rose at the heart, that heaves  
With love of her own leaves and lips that pair.

In "The Little White Girl" Whistler finally arrived at that celebration of radical individualism that I discussed at the beginning of this essay. From now on he was able all his life to fit the human being into a highly ordered environment as so to suggest immortality in the ephemeral. He learnt this from Japanese art.

There is no doubt that Whistler made other Japanese paintings in the mid-1860's. William Rossetti mentions one called "The Scarf" as

having been exhibited with "The Little White Girl" and "The Golden Screen" in the R.A. in 1865. He thought the painting could have been perfected to the standard of the other exhibits and shown the following year. 137

In the 1960 Arts Council Whistler Exhibition a painting called "Girl in front of a Screen" was shown which Pennell accepted as genuine in 1910. This apparently showed a Japanese screen but the composition was not "Japanese". 138

No doubt "The Scarf" and other "Japanese" paintings produced by Whistler in the mid-1860's are now lost forever, and it would be futile to discuss the matter further. But there is however considerable evidence to suggest that Whistler was completely engrossed in making "Japanese" paintings.

Whistler's landscapes before 1867 remain to be considered. I have already mentioned my belief that china painting, especially blue and white, had a great influence on the change in his attitude to landscape painting. The other major influence was Hiroshige, whose work was available to Whistler both in his own collection and in Rossetti's. Whistler owned some of the "Views of more than Sixty Provinces" which also supplied the colour plates in Osborne's "Japanese Fragments", and Rossetti owned some of the "Hundred Views of Yedo". We may assume these prints to have been in fairly wide circulation.

Whistler was never convinced of the value of Courbet's full-blooded realism in landscape and his work in the sixties shows a consistent attempt to formulate a different relationship to nature, a celebration of an experience rather than a depiction of a phenomenon. Hiroshige's prints were a perfect example of such a celebration of the experience of landscape, based on poetic concepts and a consistent graphic style.

Whistler's graphic tendencies can be seen very early in "The Blue

Wave", painted in Biarritz in 1862. The waves are almost flat patches of blue and the water runs over the rocks exactly as in "Wave and Whirlpool at Awa" from the "Views of Sixty Provinces" of Hiroshige. 140 Whistler's work is totally inadequate as a study of a wave compared with Courbet's "La Vague". When Whistler lived by the Thames he found subjects more suitable for his style, subjects which had direct models in Hiroshige's many prints of rivers and bridges. Paintings like "Last of Old Westminster", 1863, or "Old Battersea Bridge", 1865, must in part have been suggested by views of miniscule human beings scuttling across tressle bridges, such as the famous print No.52 of the "Hundred Views of Yedo".

Hiroshige's use of informal composition and his habit of leaving very large areas of a print with the minimum of marks, often just a blue, grey or green plane have especially transmitted themselves in the 1865 painting. The barges to the right hand are clearly treated as brushstrokes painted directly onto a flat surface. Moreover the Japanese habit of treating staffage figures as graphic symbols of a particular human action has taken hold of Whistler in the group of men about to launch a boat. The brushwork in these river pieces and their close tone areas is, as I have already pointed out, influenced by the glazed painting on blue and white porcelain with its open, liquid quality. The need to present in landscape the same order that he sought for in his figure paintings was eventually to lead Whistler to paint only twilight scenes in which this liquid continuity of tones was acceptable, within the naturalist conventions of his time. At this time however he attempted extremes in the full light of day.

In "Harmony in Blue and Silver" painted at Trouville, he took this desire for continuity to its logical extreme. There is a flat 141 open expanse of blue sea and sky with two white brush marks on the horizon to indicate the sails of a boat. In the foreground a figure is

looking outwards sketched in glaze, Whistler not daring to break the insubstantial unity by suggesting that his body has mass. The figure is Courbet, but one can hardly believe it. Whistler has taken the Oriental example as far as he could and his work looks like an Oriental painting, a watercolour of a sage contemplating the sea. In another seascape Whistler acknowledged the influence of Oriental art by signing it with a butterfly in a cartouche. This was "Symphony in Grey and Green" of 1866. The end of a pier juts out from the left and a few twigs with leaves rise from the right-hand of the bottom edge of the canvas. These are the only deep tones in the painting for the rest is a liquid mist with a few strokes to indicate the presence of boats. One feels that to paint landscape like this Whistler must have seen Oriental paintings as well as prints, yet the only examples we know that he was acquainted with were the paintings on his blue and white china. 142

This painting was probably painted during the voyage to Valparaiso which Whistler made from February to November, 1866, during which he made many seascapes. He undertook the voyage to give himself time to assimilate the discoveries of the previous two years since he was already writing to Fantin early in 1866 that he was thinking of leaving London for good to live in Paris. This is therefore a good point to break off the discussion of his development.

I have argued that Whistler was the first European artist to attempt to become "Japanese" and that he did so in pursuit of a new standpoint within the European tradition of painting. I have discussed Whistler's employment of Japanese motifs at some length, because I believe that their use was fundamental to the development of this new standpoint which later assumed the title of the Aesthetic Movement. I have tried to show that Whistler's "Japanese" paintings were meditations on the implications for his painting of the Oriental example

which was of overwhelming importance in the formation of a style which he was to develop throughout his life. For Whistler never stopped being Japanese. He openly acknowledged as much in his development of the butterfly signature which derives entirely from Oriental examples and on which I have written an appendix which I included here as it is most convenient to do so.

#### APPENDIX

##### Whistler and the Butterfly, the genesis of Whistler's signature.

It has always been generally recognised that Whistler's famous "Butterfly" signature has a close relationship to Far Eastern art but no serious study of the significance of the butterfly has been undertaken. Whilst the butterfly is clearly a symbol of the perfect but evanescent beauty which Whistler sought in his art, it is not a motif found in great numbers in Japanese prints or even on ceramics or lacquer.

In his earlier works Whistler's signature generally reflects his artistic intentions, by its association with the manner of the signature of the artist he most admired at the time.

In his early works the signature is a bold "(J.M.) Whistler", and is usually accompanied by the date. This mode of signature is clearly influenced by Courbet. It can be seen clearly in the upper right-hand corner of "The White Girl".

By 1864 however Whistler wished to identify with Far Eastern art and his first solution to the problem that this posed for his signature can be seen in the "Lange Lijzen of the Six Marks". In the upper right-hand corner he simulated the green and red panels which contain the title and signature in Hiroshige. He signed Whistler in the green panel and 1864 in the red, both vertically. In "The Gold Screen" we can see the prints which provided the model for this signature. The use of panels of this sort was to be incorporated with the butterfly in later

signatures. In "The Gold Screen" and in the "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelain" Whistler used the ordinary European signature. According to Murray Marks it was the apparent vulgarity of this signature in the latter painting which forced Whistler to look for a more suitable way of marking his works.

The Butterfly signature, which had been in use some nine years when the letters we reproduce were written, (1873) Whistler really owed, it must not be forgotten, to suggestion made by Rossetti. Marks well remembered the storm there was in Rossetti's studio over the Princesses du Pays de la Porcelaine because the first client who offered to buy it before Leyland saw it, objected to Whistler's signature on it, which he said spoiled the composition. Rossetti to smooth matters over drew a sort of Eastern cartouche with Whistler's initials in it and suggested he should use that instead. Whistler developed the idea and so the butterfly came into existence.

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If we accept this story then it is clear that the "Butterfly" signature was first conceived in 1864. We can be fairly certain of the form of the cartouche which Rossetti drew by looking at his own signature during the 1860's. This consisted of a circular seal in which his initials, D.G.R., were superimposed in a pseudo-medieval seal pattern.

If one superimposes Whistler's initials, J.M.W., one produces a primitive "butterfly" shape and this is what Rossetti must have done. This however would not have produced an authentic Far Eastern cartouche but something more like a medieval seal, as with Rossetti's signature.

The earliest "Butterfly" signatures are still placed inside a panel like those in the "Lange Lijzen" to make their Japanese association quite clear. This is the case with the signature of the "Symphony in Grey and Green, The Ocean" of 1866, in the Frick collection, New York. The "message" still had to be stressed.

Whistler's systematic development of the "Butterfly" can only be explained in terms of the development of symbolic cultural meaning for it. In the 1860's Madame Butterfly was still three decades away.

However there is one early source which could have linked butterflies with Japan in the Western mind.

There existed in Japan a popular form of juggling which consisted of a display or a dance in which the juggler made large paper butterflies appear to fly, settle on his clothes, flowers and other objects. Nearly all early written accounts of European travellers to Japan contain descriptions of this. Here is the one by Lindau;

Un tour saltimbanque excita particulièrement mon attention par l'adresse gracieuse avec laquelle il fût exécuté. Le saltimbanque produisit un grand papillon en papier, mais si parfaitement imité qu'à la distance de quelques pas on aurait pu croire l'insecte vivant. Il jeta ce papillon en l'air, puis, en agitant habilement son éventail, il le maintint au dessus de sa tête, le fit voltiger, monter et descendre en imprimant à tous ses mouvements l'apparence d'un être animé; il finit par laisser s'élever ce papillon à une hauteur assez grande, d'où il retomba lentement, ses larges ailes lui servant de parachute, sur une fleur que le saltimbanque tenait à la main.

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Not long after this these same jugglers made their appearance in Europe. In 1867 for instance they gave performances at St. Martin's Hall, London, when the performance became known as the "Butterfly Trick".

There is another pretty trick, done by a light-fingered artist named Asi-Kitch-San, who makes little paper butterflies and keeps them hovering in the air by the wind of the pair of fans, causing them to fly to and fro at his pleasure, to settle on a nosegay of flowers and to rise again seemingly with the easy motion of life.

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These accounts and performances undoubtedly established the association of the butterfly with Japan and the supposedly "Japanese" qualities of light-fingered artistry, delicacy of balance and judgement. These are all qualities that Whistler was attempting to develop in his own work. The decision to develop his monogram into the "Butterfly" would certainly have been influenced by the notion that these associations were in existence. Whistler selected the butterfly because of its meaning, not as an isolated and whimsical ideogram.

By 1867, in "The Balcony" the butterfly while still in the panel has become liberated from Whistler's initials. A similar form persists in the works of the early 1870's such as "Variations in Violet and Green" of 1871. However a different version of a butterfly in a circular seal appears in the portraits of Miss Cicely Alexander and Thomas Carlyle. In creating this form Whistler obviously had in mind the seals on Japanese prints and ceramics, but more especially the circular "Mon" or coat of arms of Japanese noble families. Several of these were butterfly designs and these were reproduced frequently in black and white Japanese books of heraldic prints, some even in Hokusai's "Mangwa". In his "Grammar of Japanese Ornament" published in 1879, Thomas Cutler had included a page of "Mon", several of which represented butterflies. Similar images were available in Europe from the late 1860's, they appear frequently in books such as Aimé Humbert's "Japon" written in 1869 and finally published in 1877.

There remains to be discussed the animated anthropomorphic personality which Whistler contrived to express in his Butterfly, particularly in his correspondence and in works such as "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies".

Once again this can be traced back to Japanese art. In Hokusai's "Mangwa" there is a page showing various poses in the Yakko-Odori dance, in which a peasant imitates the high-flown airs of a samurai's servant. This was one of the earliest pages in the "Mangwa" to be reproduced in Europe and it was often mistaken for a dance imitating the flight of the butterfly, for instance by Alcock. A comparison with the "Specimens of the Butterfly Signature of James McNeill Whistler" published in the Life of the Pennells shows that Whistler's line, his method of animating the butterfly and several of the expressive poses that he used are derived from Hokusai's print. It is evident that Whistler's adoption of the "Butterfly" signature was intended as an

acknowledgement of his debt to Japanese art and a declaration of his allegiance to aesthetic attitudes which he believed to be founded on Far Eastern principles. I shall demonstrate below (in Section Three) that Whistler maintained a constant study of Japanese art in the 1870's and 1880's and that the extent to which he was indebted to it has been considerably underestimated.

We now leave artists for whom the Oriental example was of fundamental importance to their development and turn to those who displayed a passing interest in it.

### TISSOT

If Whistler painted Oriental subjects in order to construct a new aesthetic, Tissot painted them in order to avoid this challenge. One of the principal aims of the popular painter in the mid-nineteenth century<sup>0</sup> was to be able to make "subject paintings" of almost any event in a style which amounted to an illusionistic reconstruction of the event, whether it was real or fictional. This form of painting, a mixture of history, archaeology and anthropology, had been given a certain respectability by both Ingres and Delacroix who had consulted "experts" about details in their paintings. Tissot's first successes were treatments of the Faust legend in "medieval" costume, three of which were exhibited at the 1861 Salon with quotations from Goethe on the frames. When Tissot took up Japanese paintings he used the same soft-toned illusionism and the same archaeological exactitude that he had used in the Faust paintings. Tissot ignored all factors in the Oriental aesthetic which his friends Degas and Whistler felt to be so important for their artistic development.

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He appears to have begun his Japanese subject paintings in 1864 when Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote to his mother about Mme. De Soye's shop;

all the costumes were being snapped up by the French artist, Tissot, who it seems is doing three Japanese pictures, which the mistress of the shop described to me as the three wonders of the world, evidently in her opinion quite throwing Whistler into the shade.

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He also collected other Japanese items. In June 1865, William Rossetti wrote in his diary;

The shopkeeper, who seems passably well informed on the subject, says that a European, even were

he to go to Japan could not learn the process of colour printing.....all these things are done in the city of the Mikado and are jealously guarded as secrets even the Tycoon himself must not meddle with; Hokusai's series consists of 30 parts and no one in Europe yet possesses a perfect copy; Tissot, I think comes nearest having 25. Hokusai died some hundred years ago, (Madame Dessoye said forty).

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We may assume that Hokusai's series was the "Mangwa", although there are only fifteen volumes in it, the latest of which was not published until 1878. Tissot must have acquired other similar work, perhaps earlier books by Hokusai or work by later artists such as Kuniyoshi. Alternatively we might suggest that the series was something such as the "Thirty Six Views of Fuji", but in this case Rossetti would hardly have called single prints "parts", and, in any case, the shopkeeper is demonstrably ignorant of even the century in which Hokusai lived.

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The three Japanese paintings Dante Rossetti referred to are identifiable as "La Japonaise au Bain", signed 1864, now in Dijon, the "Lady in Japanese Costume", undated, owned by Hirsch Adler Galleries, New York, and the painting which Degas shows in his portrait of Tissot made in 1866. No other Oriental paintings by Tissot are known from this period. We are therefore entitled to think of the paintings at least in part as a response to Whistler's efforts and influence painted late in 1864 and in the early months of 1865. Tissot exhibited a medieval subject painting in the Royal Academy summer exhibition of 1864, and probably saw Whistler's "Lange Lijzen" while he was in London.

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"La Japonaise au Bain" is probably the earliest of these paintings. It shows a decidedly French young woman naked save for a kimono and an elaborate but inauthentic headdress of flowers, and the typical Japanese wooden combs. She leans between two wooden posts of a bath house, her arm extended languidly across the entrance. The kimono, which is similar to the dress of "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine", has fallen open across the front to the very limits of decency for the time. Tissot had

obviously heard the common traveller's tale of public mixed bathing in Japan and no doubt also of the Yoshiwara and the Japanese custom of offering "wives" to visiting Europeans. That idle fantasy of the Japanese woman formed for the nineteenth century European dream of a sensual paradise which was to be epitomised by Loti, in "Mine. <sup>Chrysanthème</sup> ~~Chrysanthème~~".

Here is the description of communal bathing in Tokyo, given in 1861 by the puritanical Bishop Smith of Victoria in "Ten Weeks in Japan";

Towards the latter part of the afternoon at an early hour of the evening, all ages and both sexes are intermingled in one shameless throng of bathers without signs of modesty or of any apparent sense of moral indecorum. Some persons palliate this custom of promiscuous bathing in public by assuming the innocent simplicity of their primitive habits and dwelling on the wide differences of every country in the conventionalities of moral right and wrong. The obvious reply to this charitable theory is that the Japanese are one of the most licentious races in the world.

I abstain also from making a more than passing allusion to another of the national institutions of Japan, the government revenue accruing from the systematic licensing and control of these resorts of the dissolute. Young females of handsome appearance are sold by their venal parents, and consigned at an early age to a life of degradation. At the expiration of their term of service they are not infrequently taken in marriage by the middle class of the Japanese, who regard it as no disgrace to select their wives from such institutions.

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On the other hand, Lindau in 1864 took a much less jaundiced view of the custom in "Un Voyage autour du Japon";

Le Japonais le plus délicat et le plus rigide ne s'offusque pas de voir une jeune prendre un bain au seuil de sa porte devant les passants, et les gens de tout âge et de tout sexe qui se réunissent dans des salles communes pour y faire leurs ablutions, n'ont jamais cru commettre une action honteuse.

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Lindau records that the European community in Yokohama made strenuous attempts to ban public bathing and failed.

Tissot has altered the communal nature of the experience to a voyeuristic relationship between the bathing girl and the viewer of

the painting. In doing this he has imposed a Western notion of sexuality onto an image whose Far Eastern archetype had an entirely different meaning. Moreover he has done this by following European reports which themselves misrepresented Japanese behaviour.

The sources for Tissot's image are various. He could have seen photographs showing bathing scenes, as an engraving showing a Japanese bath house, clearly taken from a photograph is published in Aimé Humbert's "Japon" and we know that Humbert's work made use of photographs taken throughout the 1860's by Felix Beato and others.

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Tissot must also have looked at prints which followed a tradition set by the great eighteenth century print makers, Utamaro and Kiyonaga. Tissot probably saw the pose of his "Japonaise" in a late version of it by Kunisada or a similar mid-nineteenth century print artist. However I (15) I have not been able to find a precise model in nineteenth century prints so I can only describe the Japanese archetype in general terms, using earlier prints. The oddities on Tissot's image strongly suggest a nineteenth century model.

Utamaro, especially, made many prints of women with no costume save a loose kimono falling from their shoulders. Tissot may well have had such an eighteenth century image in mind when painting this work. However this possibility is diminished by the apparently fictional headdress with flowers in it which must either have been an invention of Tissot or a misinterpretation of a description of a print and it is difficult to think of a print by Utamaro that he could have misinterpreted in this manner. Kiyonaga also designed bathing scenes and his are in some ways more likely sources for the Tissot painting.

However Tissot probably saw a degraded nineteenth century version

. Evidence that such bathing scenes had reached Europe is provided in "Sketches of Japanese Manners" by J.M.W. Silver, published in 1867, in which a Europeanised version of such a print or painting is reproduced.

The sensuality of "La Japonaise au Bain" is akin to that of Manet's "Olympia" in its directness, and we may without doubt ascribe this to the example set by Hokusai in the "Mangwa" and to the erotic prints of the nineteenth century Japanese artists which had by this time reached Paris. Previously no-one in the West, not even Courbet, would have openly presented such a provocative pose. However while Manet concealed the Oriental basis for his presentation of Olympia as a personality rather than as a dead object, Tissot takes shelter behind the Eastern context. Tissot has extended the range of subjects for "subject" painting almost solely as a device for a sensual fantasy which might have been condemned like "Olympia" was, if it had been presented in a contemporary Western guise.

Tissot had a good idea of the construction of a Japanese house as can be seen from the paper screens in the background behind the model's arm and the wooden door posts and elevated floor. Probably he had seen photographs, though it is possible that this highly detailed illusion is a "rectified image" taken from a Japanese print; the illusionistic woodgrain on the posts and other such touches must have been added in the typical over-enthusiasm for visual archaeology of the nineteenth century subject painter. The small landscape to be seen through the back of the house is clearly derived from Hiroshige, almost certainly from "The View of more than Sixty Provinces". However once again we have a "rectified image". The landscape is seen in nineteenth century illusionistic terms.

This need to explain Oriental conventions reaches its height in the flowers along the upper edge of the painting which are presented as a climbing vine though they are derived from the use of flowers in Japanese prints in a purely formal manner. We only have to compare these flowers with those in Whistler's "The Golden Screen" or "The Little White Girl" to realise how little Tissot was interested in making

changes in his style as a result of the Oriental example. Tissot's flowers are like enamelled metal in their rigid details. Tissot owned a Japanese screen which can be seen to the right of the house: it is a bird and flower screen similar to that in Manet's portrait of Zola, or Whistler's "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine". Unlike those artists however, Tissot has stiffened the Japanese painting, and indeed, has made it a bad European work. The same is true of the panels of blossom to each side of the door. They seem to be a complete invention as they are not found on Japanese buildings. However such designs are sometimes used as decorative intervals in Shunga prints and Tissot probably interpreted their square shape as structural. The pot with flowers just inside the door is also a motif common in Shunga prints.

The overall composition of the painting is an elegant solution to the problem of using Japanese design devices without breaking with any of the tenets of European illusionism. It has been achieved by a systematic placing of horizontal and vertical elements to balance the pose of the figure and the extended lines of the kimono.

The second painting is the "Lady in Japanese Costume". This is based on the half length portrait conception originally found in works such as Utamaro's "Ten Types of Women". The model is much more Japanese than the one in the earlier painting and Tissot has gone to the extent of imitating the open-mouthed expression that Utamaro and several of his contemporaries gave to their female "pin up" prints. The hairstyle and the manner of wearing the kimono which is similar to the one in the earlier painting, are now almost authentic, a result perhaps of the advice of Mme. De Soye. The best immediate comparison is with Utamaro's print "The Passionate Type", though probably Tissot's model was a nine-teenth century print. However the gesture with which the model holds up a jar with a bird and flower motif in her left hand and an unidentifiable vessel in the other is entirely Tissot's invention. Tissot's second

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"Japonaise" still has the quality of a hot house flower perfectly at home in the conservatory complete with orchids and fish tank in which he has placed her. The subject of the "fashionable" woman had been the preoccupation of Utamaro and his contemporaries, as it was to become the preoccupation of Tissot in the 1870's and '80's. I hope to show that he was to benefit constantly from the Japanese example in his treatment of this subject.

The third Japanese painting is apparently lost. It appears at the top of Degas's portrait of Tissot. I suspect Tissot may have over-painted it during the 1870's or later. Tissot has adapted the subject of "Déjeuner sur l'herbe" to a Japanese costume piece whose broad-based many figures composition reminds one equally of Japanese prints and paintings showing picnics under blossoming trees near teahouses or theatrical performances, and of Watteau's "fêtes", especially the group in the Wallace Collection. There are piles of clothes on the ground and three groups of kimono-decked figures stand or sit before a background of trees and a shrine on the left and what appears to have been a teahouse on the right. If my reading of the composition is correct then we may assume that Degas has given us its essentials since the upper half would be trees and sky. The "Déjeuner sur l'herbe" theme was certainly repeated frequently through Tissot's career. Indeed, to the left of it in Degas's painting, there appears to be a version of the same subject in contemporary dress. An interesting aspect of this work is that it is the first example of the nineteenth century French taste for the eighteenth century French art relating directly to Japanese art. This way of seeing the East through a European tradition was to be particularly important for the De Goncourt brothers whose eighteenth century predilections led Edmond to an appreciation of Japanese art. The search for a single source in Oriental art for such a composition would almost certainly be futile. There are at least nine or ten figures in three

groups which explains why Tissot needed as many Japanese costumes as he could from Mme. De Soye. Tissot probably worked with models and from groups in various prints to compose the work which must have been large, at least two metres long. Such a painting is unlikely to have survived unnoticed.

Professor Reff believes the painting to be an invention by Degas which never existed apart from its appearance in Degas's portrait of Tissot. I disagree with this. Reff sees "at the bottom" of the composition a polyptych by a follower of Utamaro, and suggests a triptych print by Yeishi who died in 1820. I feel that this is most unlikely as a direct model and that a triptych print showing many Japanese ladies in full costume outside a teahouse by a later artist such as Toyokuni, who was active until the 1860's, would provide a much more likely model. However I doubt that one single model was used. Tissot worked up his painting from a variety of images and from models. Perhaps this painting was finished only after Tissot had seen "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine", for the figure in the foreground to the right repeats the stance of the figure in Whistler's painting and holds a fan, in the same manner. It seems that none of Tissot's three Japanese paintings made during the 1860's was exhibited until later. He failed in his attempt to outdo Whistler.

Nor is there any evidence that Japanese art had a strong effect on Tissot's stylistic development. His style remained a glossy, academic illusionism, and his favourite and indeed only mode was the anecdote. In the 1870's his painting was to become, as Ruskin wrote, "mere colour photography".

ALFRED STEVENS

Another, older, fashionable painter who showed interest in Japan was Alfred Stevens, a Belgian, who had exhibited in Paris since 1853 and lived there throughout the 1860's. Stevens was already an established artist by this time and unlike Tissot was reluctant to explore new subjects, preferring to continue working on the scenes of middle-class domestic life and the salons of beautiful women, which had established his popularity.

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As early as 1861 Stevens exhibited a painting using "Japanese" screen in the background of "La Mauvaise Nouvelle". We may assume that Stevens bought the screen himself since, although the painting shows a fashionable woman slumped over a writing desk, there are several frames or canvases leaning against the wall behind her indicating that she is in a studio.

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The screen in "La Mauvaise Nouvelle" is of a similar type to that in Whistler's "The Golden Screen". Stevens seems to have been the first artist to have used a screen in this manner and it may well be that his example was followed by Whistler and by Manet (in the first sketch for "Olympia"). However both Whistler and Manet developed their own style through a study of the East, while Stevens ignored the indications of a new language available through Oriental art. He clearly experienced the same need to abbreviate his brushstrokes in order to account for Oriental painting in a Western work but never attempted to extend this to his overall style.

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Stevens' friends during the early 1860's included Baudelaire and Manet, and they presumably encouraged him in his interest in Oriental artefacts which he included regularly in his paintings. However there are no other dated examples until the 1867 Salon Exhibition, partly because Stevens did not exhibit publically except in 1863 and partly because Stevens' work must have reflected the fashionable popular interest

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in Oriental art which seems to have developed around 1864 to 1865 in Paris.

Stevens showed sixteen paintings at the Salon of the 1867 exhibition many of which contained references to Oriental art. "La Visite" showed 170 two women in a luxuriously furnished room with a large Oriental screen in the background. It was the prototype of many increasingly elaborate paintings of ladies visiting one another in apartments that were eventually to become crammed with Far Eastern objets d'art.

"L'Inde à Paris" showed a woman standing behind a small table over which was draped a large Indian carpet and on which stood a carved and painted ivory sculpture of an Indian elephant carrying a howdah. These two paintings probably date from a year or two before 1867. "La Visite" is clearly close to "La Mauvaise Nouvelle" in composition, and the undeveloped technique which it shares with "L'Inde a Paris". Writing of this second painting in 1876, Lemonnier said:

L'Inde en France fait entrevoir toute une révolution d'habitudes, de goûts et de sentiments; un idéal nouveau apparait avec cet art exotique, enorme joyau enchassé d'éscarboucles qui tout à coup se pose au front de notre Occident; et la Parisienne en contemplation devant une cisélure d'ivoire qui dans le tableau de ce nom, semble boire de ses yeux perlés la beauté de l'objet énigmatique, dit bien la curiosité passionnée dont les esprits s'étaient animés. 172

The entirely misplaced use of the word "ideal" and the generally over-written tone of Lemonnier's prose will perhaps give an insight into the tremendous popularity of what inevitably seems to us rather slight work. These paintings and other similar works which Stevens exhibited in 1867 173 are indicative of great fascination which the Far East was beginning to exert on Western society. Far Eastern objects were to become an indispensable accessory of fashionable modernity.

In one sense Stevens did involve himself with the language of Eastern art. He looked to Japanese prints for an ideal for the elegance I (18) of woman. In the "Peintre et son Modèle" Stevens shows himself contem-

plating a model arranging her long gown in sweeping curves. A slightly earlier painting shows the model alone posed in the same place in the studio and in the stance. However in the earlier work the pose is stiffer. This elaborate array of the folds of the robe in a continuous curve and the presentation of the model's head in profile, was clearly inspired by the example of Japanese prints where similar poses are quite common. Stevens borrowed the formula for displaying the elegance of Japanese costume and used it for Parisiennes, exploiting the fundamental analogy between their two floating worlds. No one Japanese print could be found to supply a model for this exact pose but the ideal of elegance can be found in many. It is remarkable that Stevens saw no contradiction between such an ideal and the photographic accuracy of his painting of the studio setting, he has even reproduced a Brueghel in the background. 174 175

This painting is far more sophisticated than the others shown in the 1867 exhibition and was probably painted in 1866 or early in 1867. Stevens was later to invent an even more complex means of assimilating Japanese elegance into the fashionable salon.

Stevens was also influenced by the subtlety of colour in Japanese work. All those who have written of his work in the 1860's and '70's note a growing subtlety in his juxtapositions of bright colours against ochres, peaches and neutral blues. It would be interesting to see if Stevens' palette changed in relation to the range of Japanese art available in the West. As I demonstrate below, the work of great Japanese artists of the 18th century and earlier was unknown in Europe until the mid-'70's. Their range of colours would not have affected Stevens before this time, whereas the equally subtle but brighter range of Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi and the younger Ukiyoe artists working in Edo and Yokohama was available. Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to examine Stevens' work at first hand.

Lemonnier writing in 1878 indicated that Stevens also exhibited two 176

new paintings, "La Japonaise" and "Le Bain" in the 1867 exhibition, which revealed a completely new manner of painting. So far I have been unable to find either of these paintings listed in the Salon guides for the 1867 exhibition. It may be that Lemonnier was referring to the 1878 Salon when he referred to the "deux derniers envois" of Stevens.

Stevens had certainly made a good use of Eastern objects as stage properties before 1867 and had begun to explore the relevance of Japanese elegance to the Western world. However he was only able to fully exploit these possibilities when international exhibitions and fashion had made Japanese art the "powerful force in modern life" which he later declared it to be. Stevens' early paintings are a record of the invasion of Western middle-class life by the objects which made this development possible.

The Rise of the new landscape painting.

The Barbizon painters, Monet, and their attraction to Japanese art.

I have discussed landscape briefly in connection with Whistler, however I have not yet pointed to the specific historical factors which made it possible for Japanese art to have a great effect on the future development of the landscape painting. I will attempt that in this section. Whereas in the works I have previously discussed the example of Japanese prints was seen in distinct contrast to existing modes of expression by artists looking for a new language, the Barbizon painters found a close identity of purpose and method between themselves and the Japanese artists.

They discovered, or perhaps were introduced, to Japanese prints in the second half of 1863 and early 1864.

Sensier published a letter Millet wrote to him in 1864 which documents a quarrel between the painter and his comrade Theodore Rousseau;

Barbizon, 16 Mars.

Mon cher Sensier,

Quel fichu vent souffle donc sur nous du Japon? Et moi aussi j'ai manqué d'avoir avec Rousseau quelque chose de très désagréable à propos des images que j'ai rapporté de Paris. En attendant que vous me disiez ce qui vous est arrivé avec Rousseau, vous voudrez bien croire qu'il ne s'est commis contre vous de mon part aucune sorte d'infamie. Je veux que à mon voyage tout cela soit tenu à clair, car je serais l'homme le plus désolé pour le reste de ma vie, si pour une cause ou pour une autre il pouvait s'interposer le moindre nuage entre nous. Je quitte ma besogne pour vous dire cela.

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Sensier claimed to have introduced Japanese art to both painters and remarks that Rousseau wanted to acquire all of it for himself so that when he and Millet went to Paris to buy things he regarded them as having stolen them from him.

There are, however, other candidates for the role of initiator. Both men knew Ph. Burty who later wrote of them during this period. Millet for a time had Arthur Stevens, the brother of Alfred, as a

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private patron. Stevens had previously acted as agent for Rousseau in 180  
Brussels. We may assume that all these possible sources of information  
about Japanese prints played some part in developing the interest of  
the Barbizon painters. Unfortunately we have no first hand evidence of  
the type of Japanese prints which were available to the painters. However  
given the information we have about other collections we may guess that  
Millet admired Hokusai, in particular the "Mangwa", more than any other  
work. In 1869 Sensier sent him an album of prints of a highly coloured  
character. While admiring the beautiful arrangement of colours Millet  
expressed his disappointment as follows:

Je n'y vois point le naturel et l'humain qui sont  
ordinairement le fond de l'art japonais. C'est  
une chose qui, pour moi, rentre dans la curiosité,  
et pour le prix qu'il me coûterait j'aimerais mieux  
d'autres dessins japonais plus naturels (si l'occasion  
en fait découvrir) ou quelques gravures en bois du  
XVIème siècle.

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Millet seems here to be rejecting the highly decorative prints of the  
eighteenth century masters or their successors. It is significant that  
he asks Sensier for other "dessins" or for fifteenth century (European)  
wood engravings.

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The Japanese prints which most resemble fifteenth century woodcuts  
and can be referred to as drawings are the "Mangwa" and other books of 183  
studies by Hokusai and others which we know Ph. Burty knew of from 1863  
and which was in circulation at this time, as I have shown. Millet calls  
the Japanese drawings natural and humane. It is clear therefore that he  
did not admire them as examples of formal, decorative art, or of compos-  
ition in the abstract. Many of Hokusai's prints contain images of  
peasants working in the fields and other direct presentations of human  
activities. It is undoubtedly the direct presentation of simple human  
actions which Millet valued in Hokusai. In Millet's own art this repre-  
sentation had reached its height in late 1862 with the picture "Man with 184  
a hoe" which was exhibited in 1863 to a great deal of hostile criticism. I (19a

Millet had been working on this painting since 1859 and one wonders if, indirectly, Hokusai had given Millet the courage to present such a stark image as a finished painting. Millet had for a long time been moving towards such a radical formulation on the subject of labour. As early as 1850 he had made an oil study of a sower which is no more than the figure of the sower against a blank earth hill with crows in the sky and shadowy outline of a team of oxen in the far distance. However in his finished work, no such stark presentation occurs until the "Man with the Hoe". The critics attacked Millet for ignoring the beauty of the countryside. His defence was that he was trying to depict a man exhausted by a hard morning in the fields, a "naturel et humaine" subject. Hokusai does in fact depict men using hoes in the "Mangwa" while these could not have served as a direct model they make interesting comparisons with Millet's work and may have been one of the starting points for his appreciation of the volumes.

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R. Herbert has argued that Millet's drawing style was influenced by the formal aspects of Japanese art. He points to the "Hillside near Vichy" 1866 as an example of this. He argues that this is shown by the use of open line and untouched areas of paper. The inclusion of these drawings in the recent Millet exhibition has enabled me to confirm his opinion. We may add that the only possible source of such a drawing style available to him was either the "Mangwa" or similar sketch books.

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It has often been remarked that the spatial characteristics of Millet's painting changed as a consequence of his interest in Japanese art. I have been unable to find any evidence to justify this assertion, and I hope that I have shown that formal criteria of this kind are of little consequence for Millet's interest in Japanese art. Millet was not concerned with the problems consequent on an attempt to represent the perception or the experience of space in painting. He saw the landscape as a setting for human action. It was undoubtedly the direct

apprehension of this action which he admired in Hokusai.

The recent Millet exhibition at the Hayward Gallery afforded the chance to test these opinions. In general the influence of Japanese art on Millet's composition was hard to detect as I had thought.

However the canvases painted in Normandy from 1870-1874 revealed more formal influence than one might have expected from the Far East. In many of these paintings the high horizon line and the use of sophisticated juxtaposition of shapes to suggest space, together with the suppression of simple recessionals and other adjuncts of central perspective all point to the influence of Japanese prints. In particular "Normandy Pasture" 1871-72 in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts shows all these characteristics, with its careful use of bands of hedges running across the canvas. The group of trees in the centre with their long vertical trunks are also reminiscent of Far Eastern motifs, such as those shown in landscape series by Hokusai and Hiroshige and late nineteenth century artists such as Sadonobu.

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The two coastal scenes from this period in the exhibition also show the influence of the Japanese print, in this case the coastal views of Hiroshige in particular. "Whirlpool at Awa" from the views of the sixty odd provinces and the triptych of 1851 of the same subject.

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Moreover in the case of "Cliffs at Greville" the Far Eastern influence is made unmistakable by the dark brown, broken outlining or underpainting which dominates the composition although it can barely be seen in reproduction. This broken linear effect appears in no other painting by Millet. It is a close imitation of the Far Eastern brush work style, used by Hiroshige and others in their prints.

Monet was to take up the seascape theme where Millet left it in the 1870's and 1880's. It has been argued that these late Millets show a "tendency to impressionism". In fact they show Far Eastern influence changing the Western conception of landscape painting, not an inevitable

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slide to Impressionism, which, after all, is an historical abstraction. Had Millet lived to continue his exploitation of the Far Eastern linear brush stroke he would not have ended painting like Monet at Argenteuil. Monet's use of Far Eastern art was dependent on a transformation of several Far Eastern graphic and drawing styles into the terms of coloured marks by Manet as I shall show in Section Four.

The two cliff scenes are the only ones in which Millet abandons the idea of human action and habitation within nature as the central motif of his work. The change in the assumed place of man in nature in the later nineteenth century art was partly a result of the Far Eastern example. It may be seen, in context, as symptomatic of the blow to Western cultural hubris as a result of contact with other peoples that was to affect most aspects of Western life from the late 1870's.

Millet was, however, essentially concerned with man as the god created centre of the universe, and he was attracted to Japanese art mainly as a means of describing man's action in such a universe. It was for later artists to come to terms with the less palatable consequences of the Far Eastern example for Western culture.

With Rousseau the problem is more complex; he appears to have become obsessed with Japanese prints circa 1863. This obsession led to his quarrel with Millet recorded above. However we know nothing of the type of prints he owned. The only evidence we have is that he completely repainted one of his works, "Village of Becuigny".

He appears to have flattened it radically. When it was exhibited in 1864 Castagnary objected to the trees as far too flat, like fans against the sky.

C'est une habitude, depuis longtemps, de parler de la décadence de Theodore Rousseau. Le grande artiste semble avoir voulu en finir avec cette accusation, et il apporte au Salon deux toiles: l'un vieille de quelques années et appartenant a

son ancienne manière, l'autre, toute plate et représentant la nouvelle. Je dois confesser que la "Chaumière sous les arbres", qui est la plus ancienne, est généralement plus goûtée que le "village". Ce sentiment donnerait raison à ceux qui vont disant que le talent du peintre a baissé. Pourtant si le Village était expurgé de quelques fautes trop visible; si les arbres par exemple, au lieu de se plaquer en éventail sur le ciel, étaient moeletés et posés librement dans l'atmosphère; si les ombres portées correspondaient à des lumières plus réelles; si enfin le travail général de la brosse était moins uniforme, je ne mets pas en doute que ce tableau ne put supporter la comparaison avec les plus beaux du maître. Il est merveilleux pour la richesse des tons et la délicatesse des nuances. Tous les détails y sont à leur place; la plaine fuit sous l'oeil; et la justesse de l'effet ne le cède en rien au charme du coloris.

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Despite his objection to the fan-like trees and regular brushwork, Castagnary approved on the whole of this painting, especially Rousseau's tonal juxtapositions and his ability to create a unified experience of a landscape. Castagnary accepted the "justness" of the effect from the point of view of a realist.

Sensier saw the painting as far more radical than Castagnary. Rousseau "rêva un ciel bleu comme les sapliers colorés de l'Orient, comme les flammes ardentes des aurores boréales. Il refit ce ciel, il repeignait ses reflets, ses lumières, il ne laissa de son ancien village que des silhouettes. Tout excepte la forme arrâtée configurations mères, devint japonais par modes des colorations."

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Throughout his account Sensier, unlike Castagnary, stresses light and colour as essential aspects of Rousseau's reaction to Japanese art. He also provides us with much more evidence of the relationship between attitudes derived from Barbizon and Realist art and those which led Rousseau to accept Japanese art.

L'art Japonais, sortie comme une eruption volcanique des iles de la mer Vermeille, se présenta à Rousseau dans sa plus parfaite individualité; un produit logique et franc des contrées de la lumière, pas comme une émanation impersonnelle d'artiste, mais comme un fruit du pays des enchantments, des génies et des fabuleuses générations. Rousseau y trouvait

la configuration exacte du dessin, le résumé des horizons et des plans, la splendeur des couleurs, la phosphorence de l'atmosphère, la simplicité du procédé, l'impression, la nouveauté et l'audace des compositions.

Il avait la sous les yeux une formule parlant, qui resumait, en mille aspects, ses recherches sur le modèle de la lumière appliqué, jusqu'aux images populaires en pays japonais.

Il y trouvait une source précieuse, qui paraissait contenir enfermé tout ce qui avait tant occupé sa pensée. Le Japon était enfin le lieu où l'art s'était invariablement produit sous une forme vraiment naturelle, caractéristique.

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Sensier clearly saw Japan as the source of a radical change in Rousseau's painting language. He sees the "popular" quality of Japanese prints as a key to Rousseau's involvement. He also stresses that Rousseau felt that in the Japanese example he had found "une formule parlant" - the germ of much of the painter's own activities re-expressed in a different form:

Croyant avoir trouvé le secret de sa vie il paya un dur tribut à cette terrible Armide.

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Rousseau's struggles to understand the implications of the new art were still going on the night before "Le Village" had to be submitted to the 1864 Salon.

Il s'était jeté en plein art japonais, et, dominé par ces belles aurores orientales qui savent si bien marier dans un juste équilibre les douceurs des aurores et les ardeurs des tropiques, il avait fait à ce pauvre hameau de Picardie un firmament ou Boudha aurait choisi son trône de lumière.

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Unfortunately he later altered the painting again so that it no longer helps us to understand the nature of his "crisis" with regard to Japanese art. We may reasonably guess that Rousseau was looking at Hiroshige's work or that of his pupils, but he certainly could not have been surprised by the composition or motifs of such prints because he had used similar devices in his work. For instance "Under the Birches" (the Cure) of 1842-3 has a line of trees against the skyline and relies on the line of their trunks against the sky and the mass of the foliage to

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create an acceptable pattern against which to set the tiny figure of the cure. It was not therefore the Japanese attitude to space which surprised Rousseau nor the use of small figures as ciphers for humanity in nature. It was rather the language of marks which impressed him. He had always used dragged paint in highly complex systems to evoke the experience of landscape by mimicking the patterns of grass and leaves in a textural way often to the detriment of tone and of a broad colour range. Japanese art uses the opposite language; tonal unity is maintained at the expense of texture, colour is applied in broad areas and is thus of necessity carefully balanced and contrasted. Mark making is limited to line-drawing and the occasional indication of texture as on pine leaves. This complete opposition of languages with a common intention must have been the basis of whatever "crisis" Rousseau went through. One can see the hesitation over whether to use texture or outline and tone in "Sunset near Arbonne", which was finished in 1863 when I believe Rousseau 194 discovered Japanese art.

Sensier says that Rousseau's successful sale of May 1863 was regarded by him as partly a result of his adoption of Japanese examples. "Sunset near Arbonne" may well be one of the earliest works in which this appears. The rocks tend to appear like stage flats and the trees on the left are flattened into the fan-like configuration which Castagnary noted.

The ultimate result for Rousseau of his confrontation with Japanese examples was a capacity to use a broad brush stroke with a much more varied and highly coloured palette than previously. The series of sunsets he painted in these years are the finest examples of this. 195

It seems that a broad painterly language is inevitably linked in modern times with the ability to use a high toned palette. It is these two qualities which are the essential features of those nineteenth century painters who were recognised as being concerned with light. I have deliberately avoided a discussion of the problems of "light" and

colour in this chapter, as both terms are extremely difficult to use accurately. However it is clear that both Sensier and Rousseau himself saw "Japanese light" as a central reason for the attraction of Japanese prints. Their "formule parlant" gave him a thousand hints for his own researches "sur le modèle de la lumière appliqué jusqu'aux images populaires en pays japonais".

On the face of it this is absurd, Hiroshige and the other nineteenth century masters had no interest at all in light as a scientific or objective phenomenon and as Castagnary had observed Rousseau had displaced the shadows in "Village à Becuigny" from their logical position in the image.

However this is not so, for, from the beginning, the researches of nineteenth century painters into light in landscape had a metaphysical and religious motive. The concept of light became a screen for a metaphysical adventure in which paint became the means whereby men felt their way round the world. In a world where all is relative there can be no "mimetic" art, and the painter becomes a "blind" man looking for a language for his experiences. This language is essentially metaphysical 196 and conceptual. Rousseau himself recognised this in defending his decision to revise his paintings for the Salon without direct reference to nature:

Ne craignez pas pour mon Village, si j'y mets la dernière main à Paris, je n'en aurai pas moins présentés les impressions virginales de la nature: elles datent de loin et elles ne peuvent pas effacer.....

Il y a longtemps que la délinéation en est déterminée; mais j'entends par composition ce qui est en nous, entrant la plus possible dans la réalité extérieure des choses.

Si c'était autrement, le maçon armé de sa lutte en aurai fini bien vite avec la composition d'un tableau représentant la mer. Il suffirait d'une ligne tracée à n'importe quelle hauteur sur la toile. Maintenant qui composera la mer, si ce n'est l'âme de l'artiste?

Il y a composition quand les objets représentés

ne le sont pour eux-mêmes mais en vue de contenir,  
 sous un apparence naturelle les echos qu'ils ont  
 placés dans notre âme.

"Light" for Rousseau was still the light of the Creation and the Creator - whether the godhead or the artist.

Sensier was perhaps more accurate than he intended when he characterized Rousseau's Japanese paintings as a home for the Buddha. Ultimately Rousseau's argument about nature is identical with that of the Eastern artist who sees in calligraphy and in the ageless traditional brushstrokes a sound basis for an artist's statement about nature.

When Rousseau admired Japanese "light" he was admiring the metaphysical confidence of the Eastern tradition, which could make a unified statement about nature in an uncomplicated manner. 197

Rousseau's attitude to light as a metaphysical unity was a harbinger for later landscapists notably Van Gogh, who, as I shall argue below took the same metaphysical attitude to landscape painting and was deeply involved with the Japanese example in his formative years.

Both Millet and Rousseau had artistic and spiritual preoccupations which made them sympathetic to Japanese art and the Japanese example, Millet with the natural man and Rousseau with the possibility of making a landscape painting with the authority of direct experience of nature. 198

It was the second of these which concerned another younger painter who worked in Fountainbleu Forest in the early '60's - Claude Monet. Rousseau's experience points the way for treatment of Monet. Monet greatly admired the Barbizon painters and they had been among the earliest to encourage him as a painter. Something of their attitude to landscape must have been passed onto him. 199

Monet's early experience of Japanese art is problematical. No attempt has been made to define its possible contribution to his early style, primarily because of the lack of documentary evidence. However there are 220 Japanese prints from his collection once at Giverny in

the Musée Marmottan in Paris. I hope eventually to see these, though access is very difficult, and to be able to draw some conclusions from them as to when they may have been collected. They may serve as confirmation of the hypothesis which I propose as briefly as possible below. Monet probably first saw Japanese prints at Le Havre in his boyhood, but these had little or no effect on him despite his own interest in grotesques in his caricatures of town notables. 200

It has been characteristic of most treatments of Monet to assume that he could only have rediscovered Japanese prints in 1871 during his trip to Holland and to pretend to discover sudden formal patternings in his art as a result of this "revelation". I do not believe that Monet could have ignored Japanese art during the 1860's since most of the circle in which he moved were aware of it, and many were influenced by it. Nor do I see any sudden change occurring in the formal organisation of his work during his visit to London. It seems highly likely that Monet would have noted the importance of Japanese art to artists like Monet and taken an interest in it himself during the mid-1860's. This would have been reinforced by his attitudes to landscape inherited from the Barbizon painters and sustained by contact with Courbet. If this is so then certain problems in explaining Monet's uneven development and his eventual "impressionism" can be understood more accurately. 201

We do not have any statements about Monet's artistic intentions during the 60's that are trustworthy and therefore it is not possible to demonstrate the manner in which his intentions led him to the use of Oriental motifs. However it is reasonable to assume that he was trying to extend the conception of nature of the Barbizon painters and thus continuing the nineteenth century search for a stable image of man's physical and emotional relation to nature. 202

His interest in Rousseau and in Diaz is demonstrated by such works as the "Forest Interior Fontainebleau" in the Metropolitan Museum of 202

Art, which shows a clear attempt to imitate the detailed analysis of form typical of the Barbizon painters. More than that, the way of symbolizing forest by means of a stocky tree with rambling branches whose dark silhouettes are patterned over an intensely detailed and closed section of forest is typical of Barbizon paintings. Monet was using the Barbizon style as an archetype. Far from instinctively searching for nature, this study and similar paintings are "academic" pieces, done by a pupil with a somewhat rough technique.

I believe that such works occur relatively early in his career and that the Japanese example, in particular perhaps of Hiroshige helped to change his attitude. We must therefore date them to the first period Monet worked in Fontainebleau - in 1863.

If Monet did make his portrait of Jules Jacquemart, the engraver and Japanese enthusiast, in 1864, as seems likely, then this confirms my belief that he first became aware of the importance of Japanese prints and paintings in late 1863 and early 1864. Jacquemart would have introduced him to the prints and perhaps to some of the earliest circle of Japanese enthusiasts in Paris. The Jacquemart Portrait itself suggests the influence of Japanese art. Jacquemart's contour isolates him from the background so that his feet bear no weight. His figure is outlined in dark strokes and his face and shoulders are framed by the almost flat tone of the umbrella he carries. The extraordinary flatness of the foreshortened day is also a clue of some importance. Monet's brushstroke has broadened considerably. In substance the same linguistic developments have occurred as those discussed in Manet's work earlier in this chapter. It has been unanimously assumed that Monet simply derived this change from Manet. I do not think this is entirely justifiable. The use of the umbrella as motif and its treatment, the boldness of the strokes to indicate the setting, and Jacquemart's own interest and connection with Oriental art suggest that this had some bearing on Monet's painting. 203

The forest landscapes which he did after 1864 certainly show the influence of Japanese landscapes. Monet suddenly adopted the road as a central motif in his landscapes. It is a characteristic of Barbizon landscapes that the recession into space produced by a straight road is avoided almost completely. Barbizon painters aimed for a tapestry of light and shade formed by tangled undergrowth and rocks. Their nature most definitely abhorred a vacuum. In Japanese prints the road is a central motif. Hiroshige and other artists produced series of prints about the stations on the famous Japanese roads such as the Tokaido, which were available in Europe at this time. Moreover in Japanese prints space is of the essence, both in representation, as it is stylized, and as flat areas on the picture surface. Monet's move to the road as a motif is connected with a desire to paint space, and ultimately, of course, the light filling that space. In doing this he rejected the Barbizon "tapestry" version of woodland completely. "The Forest Road", which is signed and dated 1864, shows a road, displaying a stylized recession running between trees, which is used as the basis of a representation in which objects were implied to exist rather than accounted for. This was a vital impetus to Monet's development towards the painting of light. The recognition of the primacy of space and spatial experience as a subject was central to the development of the painting of light. Of course the Japanese example also encouraged Monet to use brighter colour.

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We have further clues in later landscapes. In 1865 Monet painted a snow-covered "Road near Honfleur" and several similar snow landscapes. This was a most unusual subject at the time, and not to be found in Barbizon paintings. Renoir's remark that snow was a symptom of a diseased nature was probably typical of most contemporary landscapists.

I (21a

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However it is to be found in work by Hiroshige and other makers of print series. Snow is an ideal medium for representing spatial structure

and light in space. By its very nature it minimizes the formal problems attendant on the representation of a convincing experience of landscape by minimizing all natural detail. In particular, a snow scene from a set of prints of the Tokaido Road by Hiroshige published by Marusei between 1842-1853, shows many analogies with Monet's painting - the shape of the huts under the snow and the type of marks made to indicate the branches of the snow-laden trees. Another motif often found in Japanese landscapes, especially Hiroshige to establish space, is a tall tree trunk in the foreground running from top to bottom of the painting. This trunk is usually to the right and associated with the view of a road, often with figures.

I (21

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Monet painted two studies of "The Bas Breau Road (Fountainbleu)", both of which use this device. The studies appear to be painted in 1866. Both of them are painted with flat broad brushwork and with a stylised recession. The version now in Copenhagen shows a later time of day than the one in the Louvre, and Monet has made especially successful use of large areas of shadows to imply rather than state the existence of trees, and to conjure up the experience of the forest light.

Monet's city paintings - especially "Le Jardin de la Princesse" which Rewald dates 1866, also contain elements derived from Hiroshige. In this case from his "100 Views of Yedo (Tokyo)" which were available in Europe at this time. The first of these is the high viewpoint common to many of Hiroshige's views. There is also the use of large areas of flat bright colour, especially the unbelievably flat lawn in the foreground. It is the use of large areas of intense colour that ultimately convinces me that this subject and mode of treatment were inspired by Japanese prints and not by photography as has been suggested. Finally the vision of human beings interacting as anonymous mannikins in the city environment seems to derive from Hiroshige's prints.

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Thus when the elements of my case are taken together, it becomes

difficult to cling to the belief of Monet's independence of Japanese prints in landscape at this time. The argument that Impressionism sprang fully armed from Monet's head is completely untenable, and we are entitled to use comparisons of motif as a means to suggest what stimulus may have led Monet to reject so much of what he had admired in Barbizon, and to some extent, in Courbet. The tremendous resentment which the "Princess Garden" aroused amongst other artists when it was shown in the window of the dealer Latouche underlines the difficulty of believing in the spontaneous generation of a style. One has to discover the clues which might lead to an understanding of the development of a new style, like those to which I have drawn attention.

K. Swiler Champa has argued that the paintings of the "Bon Road" were intended as studies for Monet's "Déjeuner sur l'herbe" - on the strength of the tree trunk on the right in all of them - despite the absence of any road from the small study for it, which is in Moscow.

I wish to say nothing more at the moment about the "Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" as a project, except to observe that the flat areas of intense red and green in the Louvre fragment suggest the influence of Japanese prints, and to link this with Geoffroy's later observation of Japanese prints showing Europeans in contemporary dress hung on the walls at Giverny. I have already argued in my passage on Manet that the decorative and attractive treatment of European costume in such prints may have opened the eyes of "realist" painters to the possibilities inherent in European dress, and to the possibility of presenting it in a convention other than that of a Salon portrait. I hope to be able to say more on this when I have examined Monet's collection of Japanese prints in Paris. We know that such prints were available in Europe from the 1860's.

Monet's "Women in a Garden" of 1866 seems to support the thesis that he was interested in different ways of presenting European costume.

Monet's mistress, Camille Doncieux, was the model for all the women in

the painting. It has been suggested that the three women on the left were based on a photograph taken in the garden of Bazille's parents. This photograph has never been found, and I am sceptical of this information.

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Had Monet simply painted "from nature" he would have painted like Rousseau, the newest visual language has to have a source for its vocabulary. Not even Monet could have become "an eye" so early in his career.

The posing of the group on the left strongly suggests the example of a very strong design such as could be found in the Japanese prints showing foreigners' wives. The dependence on the black braid patterns on the white dress of the woman in the foreground to create a beautiful decorative effect with the white, light ochre and yellow greys of the material is a Japanese device, which is also used in the green stripes of the women behind to the left.

The decorative intention of Monet's work has been lost in consideration of his interest at this time in painting in the open air, but it is clear in a work like "Women in the Garden", the broad black strokes, bright colours and sensitive use of patterned material are most important, in themselves. They must have derived from Japanese art.

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At one time I believe Monet was also interested in fashionable courtesan prints of the sort made by Utamaro, Kyonaga and many others. His portrait of Camille which he exhibited with great success at the Salon of 1866 is a clever adaption of a pose familiar in Japanese prints - a three-quarter back view with the head turned to give a three-quarter face over the shoulder with the arm raised. The illusionistic treatment of Camille's full silk shirt has led critics to miss the unusual pose's decorative effect and the complete absence of furnishings in the painting. The portrait is often explained away as a quickly painted substitute entry for the Salon. This may be true, but it is not an adequate

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explanation for the form of the painting. As we shall see, Monet's dependence on Japanese conventions in his portraits continued after 1867 with his portrait of Mme. Gaudibert.

There is one painting which may provide some positive evidence of Monet's involvement with Oriental examples. In the middle of 1868 Monet was trying to get together an exhibition of his work for the exhibition of paintings that Boudin was mounting for the International Maritime exhibition at Le Havre. He wrote to Bazille, who was storing many of his paintings, asking him to send some for the exhibition. Number Two on his list was "The Chinese picture where there are flags". This picture 217 has been identified by all as the painting Monet made of his family "The Terrace at Le Havre" which was painted either in 1866 or 1867. In my opinion, this was painted in 1866 as it shows a close relation to the other marines of 1865-1866. 218

Monet's reference to "Chinese" qualities in this painting is undoubtedly a reference to generic Far Eastern qualities which Monet saw in the work. The 1867 International Exhibition would have confirmed Monet's use of "Chinese" in this way, as it blurred the relationship between Chinese and Japanese art by displaying them mixed together.

I believe that Monet's letter is not a belated recognition of a common sympathy, but an indication that when he painted this work he was conscious of the Far Eastern example.

The painting contains all the elements that I have referred to in my discussion of Monet's relation to Japanese art. There is the high viewpoint, the decorative use of flags and fencing, and the mass of ships in the distance and the bright colours, in particular the red flowers. Even the umbrella motifs may have been suggested by Japanese prints. In the left foreground there is a tall spike of gladiolus picked out in bright colour against the shadow of the terrace. This juxtaposition of bright colour against a deep-toned field could be seen

as a purely visual effect, produced by an innocent eye. However it is a common decorative effect in Japanese prints and also in Monet's work. In my opinion, it is another example of a contribution to Monet's work by Oriental art.

This use of an implied reality achieved through a code based on light parallels Manet's achievement of a graphic simultaneity in his images. Both spring from the desire on behalf of the painter to allow his work the instant impact of experience, as conceived in the nineteenth century. They both indicate an attempt to escape from a demand that the pictorial arts should account for reality in a series of discrete propositions, a desire for a pictorial synthesis which overcame the contradictions in these propositions. It could be argued that the methods chosen merely sidestepped the problems of such a synthesis through a radical but "one dimensional" naturalism. However I believe that in my study of the effect of Japanese art on the search for this synthesis I have built a convincing case that the painting of the 1860's no less than that of any period refers to a variety of artistic and cultural problems, and constitutes an attempt to overcome these problems. I have discussed the general problems of this synthesis in my introduction to this section. It remains to state the particular contribution made by Japanese art to their solution by Monet.

If my discussion of Monet's art is correct we must see his renunciation of Barbizon and his development during this period as an adventure with visual language as complex as that of Manet. Oriental art contributed three essential elements to this adventure. The most problematic of these is a change in the attitude to meaning of the brushstroke within an image - I have discussed this change in detail in Manet's work, and it would have been redundant to repeat the arguments for Monet. The second and most important is the discovery of space and light, especially in relation to space, as a central subject of landscape

painting, the third is colour in the form of an example of how to use colour marks and patterns in a way which implies the experience of reality rather than accounts for it.

I have argued towards this conclusion by the use of analogies of motif and subject matter, in particular between Hiroshige and Monet. These arguments must remain tentative until I can examine the prints in the Musée Marmottan, and even then must be regarded simply as the most probable explanation of Monet's changing style and his move towards "Impressionism". "Plein-airism" alone would not have produced the changes that I have identified. Once more we see the Oriental example acting as a central catalyst to the changing forms of painting in the 1860's. Monet transformed Barbizon painting through this catalyst, and the Japanese example made possible the Impressionist landscape.

The disseminators of the Far Eastern image - engravers, illustrators and travellers to Japan.

A great many artists remain to be discussed who derived little or nothing from the style of Far Eastern art or its aesthetics, but who played a significant part in introducing the image of Japan and Japanese artefacts to the West. It is important that they should be mentioned as the context of public knowledge and attitudes which they created undoubtedly effected the later appreciation of oriental art and its use by artists.

The Far East provided the last great opportunity for the topographical artist before he was superceded for ever by the camera. From the 1840's onwards, artist travellers were going to China. Amongst them was Auguste Borget who was born in 1809 and made a career of exhibiting views of China and India in the 1830's and in the 1840's at the Salon. In 1845 Baudelaire saw his Pont de Chinois pre d'Anvy - (fête des lanternes après nature) with views from India there. Baudelaire wrote of them:

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I (22)

Eternal views of China and India. Doubtless it is all very well done, but they are too much like travel essays or accounts of manners and customs. There are people, however, who sigh for what they have never seen such as the boulevard du Temple or the Galeries de Bois. M. Borget's pictures make us sigh for that China where the very breeze, according to M. Heine, takes on a comical sound as it slips past the little hanging bells and man and nature cannot look at each other without laughing.

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Baudelaire despised this type of illustration but it is important as a beginning in establishing oriental archetypes. In England Borget's role was taken by T. Allom who published with the writer G. N. Wright "The China Illustrated, a series of views from original sketches displaying the scenery, architecture, social habits, etc., of that ancient and exclusive nation" which was discussed in detail in Chapter One.

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Allom's work is a perfect example of a Western, topographic view of the East. The landscapes such as "The Imperial Palace at Tzeow<sup>U</sup>-shan"

show a Claudian or Turnerian, Romantic landscape, in which junks glide on a river on whose banks rise enormous rocks on which nestle pavillions and pagodas.

In some of his interiors Allon displays a more accurate ease of the East, for example in "Pavillion and Gardens of a Mandarin" ( Chapter One, 222 Illustration 2) where fretted beams, trellised fencing, oriental lanterns and a pagoda next to a watery pool all seem to be taken from nature, and communicate something of the oriental aesthetic. However, in both the work of Borget and Allon there is irredeemable commitment to an idea of China as a mixture of Rococco Chinoiserie and Claudian landscapes and embryo romanticism which never deserts them however accurate their detail.

Detailed accurate coloured prints of Far Eastern costume had been provided in the volumes of Shoberl's "The World in Miniature" as early as 1822, dealing with China and Japan, but this had little or no influence on the "Rococco" vision of early travellers to the East.

This view was strengthened by such theatrical presentations as "Mr. Smith's China - or To China and Back" which played in a theatre with a pagoda-like box office in London in the second half of 1857, and 223 by a travelling exhibition of Chinese goods which toured England in the 1850's, which I discussed in Chapter One. 224

One artist who continued this tradition into the 1860's was Theodore Delamarre whose work I have mentioned in connection with Whistler. In 225 1861 The London Illustrated News published engravings of two of his Salon exhibits "L'Occidentaliste de Shanghai" and "Le Peintre de Lanternes de Canton". Of "L'Occidentaliste", The News wrote: I (23)

This picture represents a blue mandarin endeavouring to understand the books and newspapers of Europe, particularly those of England and France. On the table on which he is studying are The Times and The Moniteur. The wrinkles on his forehead indicate a supreme effort to contemplate the writing of those "Interesting Barbarians". Nations which he cannot at all reconcile with his previously conceived ideas of the perfection of Chinese Civilisation. The principles advanced by the foreign documents seem to

embarrass him more than the words of the foreign languages of which he has made himself master. The wooden background is very characteristic.

Delamarre was the son of a publisher who had given up the family business in 1851 to travel in China and paint. His work and that of the other travellers in China indicates the pattern of perception which was to be taken to Japan.

In the aftermath of the opening of the treaty ports of Japan in the second half of the 1850's, many artists went to Japan - sometimes as journalists, sometimes attached to government commissions, sometimes as traders.

One of the earliest was Heine, a German artist, who was hired by Commodore Perry to record the adventures and incidents of his exhibition, and did so in some rather dull lithographs which appeared in the official report and in his own volume "Graphic Scenes in the Japan Exhibition", which was published in English, French and German in 1856.

In 1860 the Count Lynden published in the Hague, "Souvenirs du Japon. Vues d'après nature, avec texte. Planches Chromolithographiques", published by C. W. Mieling at the Royal Press, and in 1863 produced "Vues du Japon, d'après nature" also published by Mieling at the Hague in six volumes. I have so far been unable to trace this book, but it is

obvious that if Lynden was able to find enough material to fill six volumes there must have been people to make the drawings. Many other artists contributed work to the books about Japan that began to appear in increasing numbers, but they are almost impossible to trace. We are

lucky however in having one artist whose career in Japan can be documented with some accuracy. He is Charles A. Wirgman, who was the artist of the London Illustrated News, "a painter of real genius whose works in oil now adorn many home parlours of ex-residents in Japan and whose gems, fine gold and dross, fill the pages of the Japan Punch", as W.E.Griffis

wrote in the introduction to his book The Mikado's Empire.

Wirgman's competent, factual, illustration and journalism provided an accurate image of Japan. He appears to have arrived there in 1860 or early 1861. Though Elisæv placed his arrival in 1857. His first signed despatch from Japan is in May 1862 though he appears to have sent many contributions anonymously before and after this date.

Wirgman stayed in Japan during the 1860's and sent back many drawings of subjects as various as the execution of criminals and street story-tellers, some of which are excellently drawn. He also shared several dangerous adventures with Rutherford Alcock, the first British ambassador to Japan which were principally caused by the attempts of conservative samurai to force foreigners to leave Japan. On one occasion he narrowly escaped death. In July 1861 he determined Alcock established a British Embassy in the capital Yedo, having asserted his free right of travel in Japan by a daring pioneer journey from Nagasaki. Wirgman was with him on this journey, probably the first Western artist to explore the interior of Japan. His sketches were later reproduced in the London News. In Yedo, however, the resentment of some samurai led to a vicious attempt on their lives, during which Wirgman hid under the foundations of the embassy. While Alcock and Oliphant repelled the bloodthirsty warriors with revolvers. This incident and many others in the progress of Anglo-Japanese relations were recorded by Wirgman and sent to London. He also illustrated Alcock's book, *The Capital of the Tycoon* (1863) with some surprisingly insipid colour lithographs of Japanese people and landscapes.

It is of no value to recount all of Wirgman's work during this period. Therefore I have selected several examples of his drawings and provided them with titles and brief notes. This will give a good overall picture of his activities and of his style.

The essential point for my thesis is that Wirgman is the forerunner of a type of artist which includes Felix Regamey, Mortimer Menpes, Alfred

East and many others who made a journey to Japan, and subsequently made a living from their travels. None of these travellers were profoundly affected by the Far Eastern aesthetic in the way that the major painters of the period were to be, many of whom dreamed of such a journey.

Nonetheless they all acted as transmitters of that aesthetic. In *a* ~~the~~ January 1866 issue of the Illustrated London News Wirgman described a "Social Meeting of Japanese Artists" to which he was invited in Yokohama;

The Japanese artists and amateurs of the fine arts (in Japan one of the Fine Arts is writing) hold pleasant meetings now and then. They hire a huge room, bring with them their red European blankets to sit upon, their paint brushes, paper and Indian ink, and then having knocked their heads on the floor by way of wishing each other good morning, they make several small pipes of tobacco. The business of the day now commences; all are busy drawing with water colours, and writing both on paper and on fans. Drawings of mountains and other landscapes, grotesque designs, such as that of rats nibbling at a giant raddish, figures of old men, women and children, storks, fir trees, bamboos and grasses, all find their way on paper, and are afterwards given to friends; those most worthy of remark being first pasted against the wall for general admiration. Several of the Chinamen are usually invited on account of their superior hand-writing. Plenty of Yakumins are there who use their brushes; but some even paint with their thumbs. I, being a foreign artist in Yokohama am always invited, but I know no rest from the moment of my appearance until it is too dark to see; I am surrounded by people who want something painted on their fans or paper, and I generally oblige them by making caricatures of any odd-looking person in the room or of drunken sailors or, best of all, of Englishwomen in gigantic and impossible crinolines of gorgeous glowing colours, much to the delight of all parties.

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Wirgman seems to have had scant awareness of the techniques of oriental art, but he was writing for a general audience and it is reasonable to assume that he discussed the technical problems of oriental art with other artists and that other foreigners must have met Japanese artists in the same open manner. Indeed in October 1864 a despatch was published which completely belies William Rossetti's con-

temporary statement that the process of print making was a deadly secret, the property of the tycoon. Wirgman described exactly the process of making a key block for a Japanese print and a drawing shows the engraver at work.

Wirgman and the other early artist visitors to Japan transmitted both the image of Japan and something of its attitude to art to the West.

Another aspect of the dissemination of the image of the East was in the illustration of western books and in humorous cartoons in journals such as Punch. The figure of the humorous Chinaman and Japanese eventually became the music-hall character known as the "Jolly Jap".

But at this time the mocking of orientals was in its infancy. In 1849 a cartoon appeared in Punch making fun of Chinese manners and costumes and humour about the Chinese was in vein for many years. This transferred itself naturally to the Japanese, and one outstanding document of this transfer is an illustrated edition of Gulliver's Travels published by Cassell in 1866. The eighty illustrations are by "the late T. Morten, in which the ill fated artist is seen at his best level; they display a really convincing imagination, and if technically speaking he has better work elsewhere, this is his most successful sustained effort".

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Part of Morten's "convincing imagination" consisted in transferring the "Laputans" to Japan, taking full advantage of Swift's title, "A voyage to Laputa, Balribardi, Glubbudrib and Japan". Morten derives much detail of their dress and furnishings from Japanese prints and Western work illustrating China, and perhaps from work like Wirgman's in both countries. On page 192 the King and court of this floating country are seen as mandarins holding their pigtailed heads on one side and dressed in kimonos. On page 195 Gulliver himself slops around in a vastly oversized kimono, with an obi or sash on which is a pseudo-Japanese inscription, modelled on a signature on a Japanese print. On page 224 the famous scene in which two "wise" men attempt a conversation

I (25c)

I (25b)

using the objects that they carry on their backs rather than words, is overlooked by two caricatured Japanese beauties with fans, dressed in kimonos and with their hair in enormous combs. They appear again on page 257 together with a screen, standing behind an irascible mandarin, based on a fat seated Buddha, who grants Gulliver an interview.

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One of the interesting side issues about Morten's work is that much of it was engraved by W. Linton - who about this time was making enquiries of William Rossetti about Japanese prints. However he failed to become a Japanese enthusiast and makes no mention of them at all in his book on wood engraving techniques. Linton's temporary enthusiasm is paralleled by that of Bracquemond, Jacquemart and other French illustrators and engravers. It is significant that the oriental example had no direct effect on graphic art until some years after it had such a great effect on painting. It would seem that the reason for this is that engravers were trained to be accurate, and to make of a continuous and consistent system of description by means of crosshatching. W. Ivin<sup>S</sup>, in his book Prints and Visual Communication, argues that this extremely disciplined engraving technique was the result of a need for accurate visual information and that the engraver only became free to develop styles when this need was taken on by the photograph and photographic techniques of reproducing illustrations.

Bracquemond, who was once considered the "discoverer" of Japanese prints was an engraver who exhibited "academic" engravings, such as Holbein's "Erasmus" at the Salon, and later became a designer. Ivin's thesis may explain his reluctance to draw any stylistic conclusions from his involvement with Japanese art.

It now seems probable that Jacquemart and Bracquemond discovered oriental art in 1862. If there is any truth in Bénédite's assertion that Bracquemond discovered prints in the shop of Delâtre the printer it probably happened in that year. For Delâtre was printing Jacquemart's

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illustrations to his father's Histoire du Porcelaine - amongst them 235  
 several illustrations of Japanese porcelain of all kinds. Perhaps  
 Bracquemond saw this material in Delâtre's workshop, and with it some  
 Japanese prints. This may well have been a volume of the Mangwa -  
 though we must remember that no clear idea of the styles of Japanese  
 masters existed in the West, and nowhere in Bracquemond's work can we  
 find a copy of a whole page of Hokusai.

Bracquemond certainly used individual motifs from Hokusai in plates  
 of his own, which look like pages from the Mangwa, as <sup>C</sup>G.P. Weisberg 236  
 has shown. However, since these animal, bird and fish motifs were  
 repeatedly copied in Japan itself - which was after all their function -  
 and some of them turn up in the multiple images of some of the sheets in  
 the Burges collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, we therefore 237  
 have no means of proving that Bracquemond went directly to Hokusai.

Bracquemond also bought Japanese books from La Porte Chinoise,  
 according to his daughter, Mme. Henriod Bracquemond, who told <sup>C</sup>G.P.  
 Weisberg that the nine books in his possession which belonged to her  
 father came from the shop. One of these volumes has been identified by  
 Mr. Weisberg as the work of Shotel and Shonen, both near-contemporaries  
 of Bracquemond. It is entitled "Flowers of the Present Day". None of 238  
 the others have been identified. Whatever Japanese work Bracquemond  
 saw, his immediate instinct was to make an accurate copy of the motif.  
 The catalogue of the Burty collection sold at Christie's in 1876 showed  
 that Burty acquired a print by Bracquemond of "Cats after Hokusai" in  
 1864. I believe that this print was not Hokusai at all, as no plate 239  
 of Hokusai shows cats of a recognisably Western type. I think that it  
 was probably taken from the plate of drawings of cats by Hiroshige which  
 were used by Champfleury in his book Les Chats, 1869. These drawings 240  
 are attributed to the Japanese artist "Fou-Kou-Sai" by Champfleury, so it  
 is possible that they are derived from the engravings which Bracquemond

had made in 1864. Bracquemond designed the frontispieces and some illustrations for Champfleury's "realist" books and studies of folklore, such as La Caricature Moderne 1864.

Bracquemond probably made other engravings at the same time, combining motifs from different books. These he transformed into decorative motifs for the dinner service exhibited in the 1867 International Exhibition "Le Service Rousseau". The Japanese ceramics illustrated by Jacquemart may well have acted as models for Bracquemond and this would strengthen the suggestion that he discovered Japanese prints at Delatres in 1862. 241

Weisberg has attempted to show that motifs of fish, butterflies and birds derived directly from Hokusai were combined in the engravings made by Bracquemond for the Rousseau Service. These come not only from the Mangwa but also perhaps the Shasin Gwafu . for instance the "pheasant" design on one of the dining plates. In fact the ubiquitous nature of such motifs makes it very difficult to "prove" this. The pheasant motif is not an exact transfer from Hokusai - its neck is different. Bracquemond's pheasant holds its head high, Hokusai's is pecking. They could have a wide range of sources. Beraldi in the section on Bracquemond in "Les Graveurs de Dix Neuvième Siècle" says that Bracquemond made twenty-five engravings of Japanese motifs for the Rousseau Service. The mystery about Bracquemond's involvement with Japanese art is that these engravings had little or no direct effect on his other work. 242

Bénédicté in "Bracquemond L'Anima *lia*" written in 1905 stated that Bracquemond's involvement with Japanese art greatly enhanced the naturalism of his engravings. He sees the early works such as "Les canards ont passé" as derived from Hokusai's drawings of birds and the presence of Hokusai and others behind most of Bracquemond's prints of animals. 243

Bracquemond's engraving "123. Oiseaux Japonais" which Weisberg

dated circa 1870 shows a grouping of birds in flight which Bracquemond used in his engravings of flights of wild fowl. One such is reproduced as a page heading in the G.B.A. article by Lostalot in 1884.

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However Bracquemond's treatment is totally naturalistic in a Western sense, and not dependent on a revelation produced by Japanese art. He is the first designer to begin the process of degenerating Japanese motifs which led to the endless flights of plaster ducks across suburban mantelpieces. Bracquemond takes an interest only in the "decorative" aspects of Japanese art and his engravings are dry notations of these aspects, reproductions in the same sense as Bracquemond's engravings of Erasmus by Holbein which was refused by the 1863 Salon.

Bracquemond's 1882 Salon exhibit, "Le Coq", is an even clearer example of the failure of Japanese style to have any impact on his own work. Feathers, claws and comb are observed in naturalistic detail. In an introduction to a catalogue of Goncourt's collection of etchings Bracquemond wrote:

L'art de l'extrême orient est inférieure, parce que il est incomplet dans la représentation de la nature. Par lui le dessin est réduit à la convention graphique d'un trait, il rend l'expression des choses seulement par leurs contours. L'art Japonais ignore la lumière et l'ombre....L'infériorité de l'art japonais vient de la suppression voulue du clair et obscur dans sa conception. C'est à la fois sa faiblesse et son originalité. Élémentaire dans sa technique il est à la portée de tous et semble naturel à tout main; c'est une écriture. Elle n'en pas moins permis l'éclosion d'un génie du dessin tel qu'Hokusai.

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Bracquemond rejected Japanese art for its unwestern naturalism. His relation to Japanese art was thus simply that of a dissemination of motifs. Even in the case of the Rousseau Service he simply carried the motif from one place to another. This process occupied only a brief period in the 1860's. Later Bracquemond referred occasionally to Japanese art but only in an oblique sense,

If Bracquemond was a simple disseminator of Japanese motifs we must look at his fellow members of the "Société des Aquafortistes" founded in 1862, to see how far his rejection of the aesthetic and linguistic implications of Japanese art is paralleled in their work. Legros had apparently no interest in Japanese art. Whistler has been discussed above but it is worth remarking that in the sixties his etching is relatively conservative in form - vide Black Lion Wharf.

Jules Jacquemart had considerable interest in Japanese motifs and acted like Bracquemond as a disseminator of Far Eastern form. However this was principally in the course of his career as a professional illustrator.

Jacquemart was, as I have observed, the first illustrator to produce an accurate representation of a Japanese object in his first engraving in 1859. 247

I have already mentioned the illustrations he made for the Histoire de Porcelaine of 1862. This book in itself makes clear the role of Japanese art in Jacquemart's work. The Far Eastern plates occupy one part of a long work and are engraved in the same highly competent representational style. Some plates are illustrated in this thesis and they require little comment. 248 I(28)

Plates II, VII and X show that this pottery was transmitting something of the Japanese way of life, costume and architecture. The appearance of the motif of the fishes on a cup and the cock on the central plate in Plate VIII indicate a further source of Japanese influence for Bracquemond's design of pottery.

Jacquemart himself used a cock in the frontispiece to a volume of prints published by Cadart for the Société des Aquafortistes in 1863 which is reproduced in the Gazette des Beaux Arts, and one wonders if its form and direct presentation may have been partly due to the highly naturalistic fowl on Japanese porcelain. 249

In 1862 Cadart had also published Jacquemart's "Huit Etudes et Compositions de Fleurs". Plate IV in this series, "Pivoines et Rhododendrons" was republished by the G.B.A. in 1875. Its open composition and tendency to spread the flowers in a decorative manner is reminiscent of the floral motifs on some oriental pottery, such as that Jacquemart had illustrated. It also relates to Japanese books of flower prints such as that owned by Bracquemond. If any confirmation of Jacquemart's conscious involvement with Japanese art is needed, it is found in a later etching "La Pivoine" from the publication "Eaux Fortes et Sonnets Paris, 1869. In the third state of this etching Jacquemart added the Chinese words "Moun-tan" which mean "peony" to the right-hand side. 250

Despite this Far Eastern connection Jacquemart, like Bracquemond, remained unaffected by Far Eastern aesthetic, and produced work which was essentially Western in technique, based on a very involved system of hatching and shading. However the "original" works such as "Pivoines et Rhododendrons" are considerably freer in technique than the purely illustrative pieces. In this respect it could be argued that Jacquemart had at least some feeling for the possibilities of a free use of graphic forms pointed to by the oriental example.

For the most part, however, Jacquemart's work was illustrative, and his principle role was to engrave the collections of Parisian orientalist such as the Duc de Morny. But as Gonse does not catalogue these works in his series of articles on Jacquemart it is difficult to be sure of the authorship of many plates in the G.B.A. where most of Jacquemart's illustrations appeared. Indeed many of the plates were reused in various contexts. 251 252

A curiosity in Jacquemart's oeuvre shows how intense was his interest in Japanese culture. He made an engraving of the head of a Japanese executed as one of the murderers of two British officers who were struck

down near the temple of Kamakura after having seen the giant Buddha. This etching, "Une Exécution au Japon" was published by Cadart and was probably made in 1865, since the murder concerned is recognisable as that of the officers Major Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird, which took place in November 1864. Jacquemart probably made the print in response to popular interest in current events in Japan, and would not have waited long before so doing. Charles Wirgman recorded the same execution on the spot for the Illustrated London News.

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Jacquemart's print provides a perfect example of the problem of distinguishing photographic effects on composition from oriental aesthetics. The position of the head in the lower left-hand corner and the use of the massive timbers of the Yokohama bridge, and the calligraphy of the banner showing the murderer's crimes could be a convenience of the camera, but they could also be a result of a cameraman whose vision had been affected by the oriental aesthetic.

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Both Bracquemond and Jacquemart were essentially disseminators of information about oriental art, and not creative interpreters of that art and its aesthetic. I will not therefore pursue their careers as separate entities later in this thesis, but rely on alluding to their roles as disseminators when this helps to illuminate the creative development of the oriental example in the West.

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Whilst it is not possible to give a detailed account of the work of photographers in Japan and its effect on the European image of Japan we are able to assess the work of one photographer, Felix Beato, as he published an album of his work in Yokohama in 1869. This album contained photographs which Beato must have taken during the 1860's in Yokohama and district.

Beato spent many years in the Far East. He began as a photographer of the Crimean War and went on to record the English Colonial adventures in India and China during the 1850's. His most famous work on the siege

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of Lucknow and his photograph showing the beheaded bodies of fifty Chinese pirates and their executioners on a beach near Singapore. During this period Beato worked in collaboration with James Robertson but his work in Japan in the 1860's was done alone.

Beato's work was regularly used by the Illustrated London News and other European publications as a basis for their engraved illustrations. Several of the photographs in the 1869 album were also used to illustrate books on Japan. Aime Humbert's "Le Japon Illustré" made extensive use of them as we shall see.

I give examples from the album as illustrations. It is interesting I (30) to note that Beato was already fabricating an "image" of Japan for the West. In one case Japanese ladies in traditional costume are clearly posing before a backcloth of Fujiyama.

Beato photographed landscapes as well as people, his pictures of the teahouses and the Buddha at Kamakara were almost certainly the originals of the archetypal western images of these subjects.

There can be no doubt that the work of Beato and other photographers in Japan during the 1860's had a great part in disseminating an "image" of Japan and Japanese art in the west. It is unfortunate that so little is known of his work during this period.

Summary of Section One. Far Eastern Influence before 1867.

It has often been assumed that the art of Japan only became generally known to artists in the West after 1867, and that no serious influence of Far Eastern Art could be demonstrated before that time. In my survey in this chapter I have established a considerable amount of evidence to support the view that from as early as 1862 a great many English and French artists were familiar with Japanese artefacts and imagery. 1862 was the year of the appearance of Japanese artefacts at the London International Exhibition and the year when "discoveries" of Japanese art can be documented in Paris. It has been wrongly assumed that this is adequate evidence for the dating of the first shops selling Japanese goods to that year. 256

Despite its equal start in London and Paris, Japanese art made less impact on the visual arts in London at this time. I have suggested that this may be explained by the developments in the theory and criticism of French Realism, (Baudelaire, Zola and Champfleury), which made a preparation for an international and intercultural view of art as a system of languages.

However the frequency with which Japanese prints were associated or compared with Epinal prints by Baudelaire and the Realist circle in Paris is the most well-known example of this. This is only one sign of the general willingness to broaden the definition of art to include all forms judged "authentic". This combined with the contemporary state of French art to make a very open situation in which Japanese art was likely to be most influential in Paris. The cumulative evidence indicates that 1862 is the most sensible year from which to date the beginning of a consistent and continuous Far Eastern influence on Western Art and particularly French Art. 257

At that time English painting was concerning itself with moral and religious sentiment held together by a fastidious concern for some of

the minutiae of observed reality. This may account for the failure of English artists, notably Dante Rossetti, to involve their own work with the Japanese aesthetic though they so much admired it. In English art, language was still a matter of content, the form of the work was valued for what it signified by association. This attitude was fundamentally antipathetic to Japanese art. In France, on the contrary, realism had seen form and content as an inextricable linguistic unity.

Paris then became the centre in which Japanese Art established itself. It only influenced London on the level of fashion, or of curiosities. It must be stressed that the influence of Far Eastern artefacts goes far beyond prints. For instance, Whistler was greatly concerned with the imagery on blue and white china he collected. It must also be stressed that while Chinese work was not so prominent as Japanese in its influence it is not possible to separate the two and to dismiss Chinese influence absolutely.

I have added an appendix to this thesis indicating the known and datable examples of Japanese art and artefacts in Europe before 1867.

Not surprisingly practi<sup>C</sup>cally all of them are near contemporary in date, since Japan had only been open to the West from 1851/2. Only in the Siebold Collection are there examples of the eighteenth century prints known to be in Europe before 1867. Moreover there was no general knowledge of the names or styles of Japanese artists and artefacts and certainly no scholarship concerned with Far Eastern art.

The available evidence therefore is against the use of comparative examples from prints by artists such as Utamaro or Kiyonaga or their followers, when discussing the influence of Japanese art on the West at this earlier period. I have used such examples with reluctance more as indications of my thesis than as firm evidence of influence. The alternative would have been to search for a later image and this search is quite impractical.

Despite these drawbacks I believe that I have established that the influence of Far Eastern Art was crucial for the future of painting. Most important was its effect on the language of art, in particular on the art of Manet, and to a lesser extent on Degas, Monet and Whistler. I have indicated that this is a much more complicated matter than is usually supposed. It involves a radical change in the painter's attitude to the marks made to describe a particular image. It also necessitates changes in the range of presentations of that image which are considered acceptable or legitimate by artists. These changes naturally brought about a change in the potential interest seen in different types of subject matter.

We may summarise them by saying that before 1867 Japanese Art in Paris had effected changes in the relations of perception and intellect through which a painting is made. Needless to say, different painters were interested in different aspects of these relationships. For this reason I chose to discuss each artist separately and to forego the advantages of a synthesis which would have obscured the variety of the appeal of Japanese artefacts.

In Manet's work the change in relations was concerned with the liberation of mark making from indirect, mimetic representation which had become standard practice in the mid-nineteenth century. The mark identifies once more with the object or phenomenon it describes, rather than allowing the viewer to infer the object's presence from a multitude of indirect signs. This leads to a purity of colour and direct expression unobtainable in any other way. This change, often referred to as a change in "vision", can be seen in all the painters who were involved with Japanese art before 1867, even such technically unadventurous painters as Tissot show a consolidation of the *pâte* of their brushwork and a brightening of their palette as a result of this Japanese influence, so do Millet and Rousseau. The change also predates the

emergence of an "impressionist" theory or even of a consolidated impressionist attitude. I shall argue in the next chapter that Japanese Art should not be seen as a fortuitous adjunct to "impressionism" but as an indispensable catalyst to the development of the styles of the impressionist artists.

I need not repeat here my discussion of each artist but it should be stressed that the attraction of Japanese Art for Degas was consistent with his stylistic tendencies prior to his discovery of it. Degas was mainly concerned with figure composition as a language and that is his central preoccupation when using a Far Eastern example. The same pattern of the extension of an interest as a result of contact with Japanese Art can be found in every artist I have discussed.

A further important point is the rate at which Japan was acquiring a popular image in Western culture. I have cited the example of Wingman who published many drawings of his travels to Japan in the 1860's; I have also drawn attention to the derivation of fresh Japanese work of the imagery in an illustrated Gulliver's Travels, and mentioned other examples. I pointed out that many photographs of Japan had reached the West in the 1860's, nor must we forget the Japanese ambassadors to the 1862 exhibition in London.

There must therefore have been a far more widespread popular acquaintance with the imagery of Japan at least in Paris and London than is sometimes thought. It was certainly sufficient to stimulate considerable interest in the Japanese exhibit in the 1867 exhibition in Paris.

I have suggested that the formation of this popular image of the Far East might have prompted Whistler, notably in the "Lange Lijzen" of the Six Marks", which is based on a popular image of the Chinese rather than the Japanese. Tissot's "Japonais au Bain" was probably conceived in reference to the popular image.

Whilst it would be wrong to describe Japan as fashionable before

1867 it would be equally wrong to disregard the considerable popular awareness that Japanese Art had achieved in the first fifteen years of its contact with the West.

Before 1867 a steady increase in the visual experience of Japanese artefacts by Western artists and the public in general had set the scene for the rapid development which is the subject of Section II of this thesis.

SECTION II.THE GROWTH OF JAPANESE INFLUENCE FROM 1867 to 1883.INTRODUCTION

This second part of my thesis will concern itself with the decade and a half during which Japanese art emerged as the dominant Far Eastern influence on Western art and design. Indeed during this period it was probably the most significant stylistic influence on the development of the Western plastic arts.

The period is bounded by the first official appearance of Japan at an International Exhibition, in the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, and by the enormous retrospective exhibition of Japanese art organized by Louis Gonse in Paris in 1883. This exhibition marks the complete development of the acquaintance of the West with Japanese art objects, composed as it was of works from more than thirty major collections, many formed by enthusiasts from professions unconnected with the visual arts.

This second period therefore is one of rapid discovery of the variety of Japanese art and its equally rapid acceptance as a "normal" element in the visual vocabulary of the West. This discovery was facilitated by the outward looking foreign policy of the Japanese government during the period known as the "Meiji Restoration" which was instituted in 1868 by the Meiji Emperor himself. This, together with a growing popular concern for contact and mutual exchange of knowledge with the West led to the appearance of a striking Japanese exhibit in every international exhibition of the 1870's - such as Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876, or Paris 1878. Private trade with the West also increased rapidly during this period, and many merchants, both Japanese and European, Hayashi, Wakai, Sichel and Bing, began to import Japanese

artefacts into Europe and America during the 1870's. This was also the decade of voyages to the Far East by wealthy and ardently curious Europeans anxious to learn about Japan at first hand, and to collect Japanese artefacts. The notable travellers were Guimet and Cernuschi, whose collections ultimately formed the basis of the Parisian museums of oriental art named after them, and the Sichel brothers who were beginning a business dealing in oriental art. Japanese travellers also came to Europe frequently in the 1870's. Ph. Burty was advised on his collection of swords and porcelain by a young Japanese student in Paris, Hayashi began to advise Edmond de Goncourt and Bing on Japanese artefacts. Many official Japanese missions arrived in Europe, such as the two scholars Machida Hisanari and Yanaka Yoshio who toured Europe studying Western museums in order to facilitate the organisation of the Japanese National Museum at Tokyo.

Against this background a considerable attempt was made to come to terms with the aesthetic qualities of Japanese art. Surprisingly, critical responses to Japanese art diversified during the 1870's rather than becoming more consistent and unified as the forms of Japanese art became more familiar. This phenomenon can perhaps be understood by considering the failure of the West to develop any serious scholarly study of Far Eastern art until after the 1880's. Even today there are very few scholars with a serious knowledge of Japanese art working in the British museums. Therefore Western critics were working from the smatterings of information gained from Japanese visitors in Europe, from occasional travellers to Japan, and from the official publications of Japanese commissions charged with participation in Western exhibitions. Therefore in this critical European reaction to the East, we see mirrored the whole range of the contemporary aesthetic attitudes and creative standpoints of Western art.

It will be the task of this section and the next to elaborate the

pattern of the discovery of Japanese art during the 1870's.

The final section will be concerned with the specific developments in European art which may be attributed to Japanese influence.

Because there is so much information available I do not intend to present the closely documented discussion of every artist which I found necessary for Part One. This is unnecessary as the general pattern of Far Eastern influence in the 1870's is far less controversial. I will therefore concentrate on specific problems such as the importance of Japanese art for Impressionism, the role of the Far East in the Aesthetic Movement, and the popular imagery of Japan in the 1870's. Problems concerning individual artists will be considered within these contexts.

SECTION IIPART ONE. THE DISCOVERY OF JAPAN 1867 to 1883.CHAPTER ONE.The Far Eastern appearance at the 1867 Exposition Universelle and its historical importance.

The Japanese exhibits at the Paris Exhibition have often been cited as the first great revelation of Japanese art in the West.

Most historians who have done so have relied on the account by Chesneau written in 1878 which stresses the year of 1867 as the turning point in the discovery of Japan. "En 1867 l'Exposition Universelle acheva de mettre le Japon à la mode", states Chesneau, implying that the great list of connoisseurs and artists whom he has just named were spurred on to study Japanese art by the 1867 Exposition. 2

However it is important to note that Chesneau's attitude in 1878 is not substantiated by his own writings about Japanese art and the 1867 Exhibition. While he is very enthusiastic about the Japanese show, he 3 nowhere claims or implies that Japanese art was "à la mode". Rather he is conducting a campaign based on his own enthusiasm for Japanese art.

The position is complicated further by the memory of another early Japanese enthusiast, Ph. Burty. Writing about porcelain in Bing's periodical Artistic Japan in 1889, Burty attributed the revelation of Japanese art to the exhibition in Paris of the collection formed in Japan by Henri Cernuschi in 1871. Of 1867 he wrote:

People had become only slightly acquainted with Japan, through the exhibits sent by the Prince of Satsuma to the Universal Exhibition of 1867. One or two lovers of curios had already seen albums printed in colours, brought back by sailors in their trunks. Figures of animals in white earth, delicately painted, had been imported by travellers, perhaps, but they had produced no feeling of interest. 4

This statement hardly correlates with the enthusiasm for Japan displayed by Jules de Goncourt in a letter to Burty from Trouville of 9th August, 1867. De Goncourt looks forward to twelve hours of aesthetic indigestion at the Exhibition and ends with the greeting "Japonaiserie for ever". 5  
Clearly Burty and his circle were much taken up with Japanese art, and the experience of it at the Exhibition.

Moreover Burty's memory is not confirmed by the evidence I have presented for considerable acquaintance with Japanese art before 1867. Burty himself apparently showed Japanese prints in the 1867 Exposition, which he had collected previously. Whilst stating that; 6

"On n'y avait encore vu que quelques rares objets à l'Exposition de 1867."

Theodore Duret remarked that during his voyage to Japan with Henri Cernuschi, he had been induced to begin collecting by the Japanese prints exhibited by Burty in the 1867 Exposition:

Pendant que nous recherchons particulièrement des bronzes, je me rappelai avoir vu avec plaisir quelques albums japonais, dans une vitrine de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867 appartenant à Phillipe Burty, et l'idée me vint alors de rechercher personnellement des livres illustrés. Ma collection de livres a donc été commencée en même temps que la collection de bronzes de M. Cernuschi. 7

Clearly for Duret the Japanese appearance in 1867 was something of a revelation but he concurs with Burty in his estimate of the limited effect of the 1867 Exhibition in spreading the appreciation of Japanese art.

Another Japanese enthusiast who received his initial impulse to collect Japanese work from the 1867 Exhibition was George Ashdown Audsley, who was completely enraptured by it. He wrote;

commencing with life-size mounted warriors in all the glory of their inlaid steel, gold lacquer and wrought silk armour and horse trappings it embraced all the artistic productions of the country down to the toy porcelain sake cup and the commonest sheet of paper valuable only for the few but truly artistic strokes of the brush it contained. 8

Audsley and his friend and collaborator, John Bowes, bought lacquer, prints and possibly ceramics, from the Exhibition. His estimate of the exhibition was that it had an almost unbounded effect on the appreciation of Japanese art in the West. Like Duret, Audsley was inspired to plan 9 a voyage to Japan but appears to have been prevented from making it. However he did go on to do a great deal of work to promote Japanese art in England.

Audsley's impression of the exhibition may perhaps be considered more accurate than that of Burty or Duret. It must be remembered that the Japanese exhibit had been under preparation since the visit of the Japanese Commissioners to the London Exhibition of 1862. Moreover the Frenchmen were probably a little ashamed of their early enthusiasm for what were, as I shall show, mainly nineteenth century works of relatively poor quality.

Finally we must consider the evidence of contemporary journalism in the significance of the Japanese appearance in 1867. All the reports I have seen are enthusiastic about the Japanese show, comparing it favourably with non-European exhibits, particularly those from China.

The popular writer Raoul Ferrère in "L'Exposition Universelle de 1867, Illustré", writes:

L'Exposition la plus complète et la plus brillante de tous les Etats Asiatiques est sans contredit celle du Japon.

10

P. Duchesne De Bellecoeur in the more respectable Revue des Deux Mondes writes:

L'Exposition Japonaise infiniment plus complète et plus variée que l'Exposition Chinoise, se présente aussi sous des meilleurs auspices, puisque le gouvernement Japonais la lui-même patronée. Les armes et les instrumens du travail, les objets de luxe et les jouets d'enfants, les livres et les oeuvres de la peinture, les plantes utiles et les minéraux, s'étalent dans ses vitrines.

11

Bellecoeur goes so far as to explicitly contradict the impressions

of Duret and Burty that the Japanese prints in the 1867 show had little effect and were not well known:

Chacun connaît déjà ces admirables albums Japonais qui représentent en relief sur papier de soie des fleurs, des papillons, des oiseaux.

12

He also praises the other Japanese art in the Exhibition.

Finally Ernest Feydeau argued that the Japanese exhibits should have been preserved in the Louvre:

Qui, nous rendrons les splendides vitrines de la Turquie, de l'Inde, de la Chine et du Japon? Il est à jamais regrettable que tous les objets renfermés dans ces belles vitrines n'aient pu être achetés par L'Etat pour former, à Paris, le noyau d'un vaste musée ethnographique.

Les produits de l'art Japonais, surtout méritaient d'être conservés. Nous connaissons fort peu le Japon.

13

Clearly the secondary evidence about the 1867 Japanese Exhibition is contradictory and, superficially, irreconcilable. Previous studies have taken part of this evidence and arrived at a picture of Japanese artistic influence relying on this partial view.

No previous attempt has been made to write an accurate description of the Japanese Exhibition of 1867 to test which of these pictures of the Exhibition is nearest to the truth. Moreover Feydeau was writing in February 1869 when the Japanese section of the Exposition was still on show in Paris at 41, Rue Victoire. His article was prompted by the imminent dispersal of the Exhibition as a result of the Japanese change of government which deposed the Shogun who had originally sponsored it.

The Japanese Exhibition was therefore on show in Paris from April 1867 to February 1869. It must have caused considerable interest. There can be little doubt that during this time it was seen by most important artists and designers in Paris.

14

The contradictory reactions in the reviews in spite of the obvious appreciation by the public of the Exhibition (to judge from its long duration) justifies my attempt to describe as accurately as possible the

image which the Far East assumed as a result of the 1867 Exhibition. It is necessary for that purpose to assess the quantity of material displayed, the nature of that material and the contextual information that was provided with it.

It will be convenient to discuss the Chinese and Siamese exhibits in the same context as the Japanese but it must be stressed that both were considered very weak and uninteresting in comparison with the Japanese exhibition. The Chinese government refused to participate officially and the Chinese exhibition was concocted by an alliance of French diplomats, traders and the architect, Chapon, who was responsible for all the Far Eastern settings. The Siamese exhibition was organized by one man, a M. Grehan, who had the backing of the Siamese government. The Japanese exhibition on the other hand was sponsored by the Shogun, the de facto ruler of Japan, and by the Prince of Satsuma, the second most powerful Japanese lord.

Chesneau reports that the term "Chinoiserie" was still in popular use for every Eastern product - whether from Japan or China. The Far Eastern exhibits were all placed together, undoubtedly they reinforced each other in the minds of the casual visitor and created an atmosphere of pseudo-orientalism, which was overwhelming if we are to believe De Goncourt who strolled through the exhibition one evening in May with Theophile Gautier:

Les choses prenaient partout autour de nous des aspects étranges. Le ciel du Champ du Mars prenait les teintes d'un ciel d'Orient. La facade des monuments du jardin, allongeait, sur le bleu du soir, la découpure d'un paysage du Marilhat, les kiosques, les minarets, les domes, les phares, faisaient recueillir la nuit dans des transparences et des molleses de nuits d'Asie.....et il nous semblait marchait dans une gravure peinte du Japon, autour de ce palais rond et infinie sous ce toit tournant comme celui d'ére pagode, éclairé par des globes de verre dépoli, tout pareils aux lanternes de papier d'une fête des lanternes. Et les entendants, les flammes, les drapeaux des nations, flottant nous donnaient presque la positive impression

d'aller dans une de ces rues de l'Empire du Milieu peint par Hildebrandt dans son Tour de Monde avec leurs enseignes et leurs oriflammes volants.

15

The structures which De Goncourt admired so strongly were mainly the work of French architects. The Far Eastern sections were designed by a M.A. Chapon from various pieces of information and drawings that he managed to obtain. De Goncourt's description undoubtedly refers to one of Chapon's creations - the Chinese garden with its cafeteria and theatre, and to the Japanese dwelling house next to it in the English quarter of the Exhibition ground.

The Far Eastern nations occupied one radiating aisle in the covered oval of the exhibition proper, and the sites in the peripheral oval gallery immediately beyond the end of the radiating aisle. Whereas there were over eleven thousand exhibitions in the French section, there were only thirty-seven for China, Spain and Japan together.

I (1)

16

There were also the constructions in the gardens which were intended to be in the style of the national architecture of each country. However the impressions of the visitors to the exhibition did not agree about the success of this. For instance, Owen Jones wrote:

In the attempt which the French have made in the present Exhibition to decorate some of their courts which contain the oriental treasures in their own style we see how little the principles of decoration and ornamentation which they themselves display have been understood or appreciated by those who undertook the task.

Ornaments have been misapplied in every direction magnified from original sources out of all proportion and mixed up with others of pure invention.

17

Chapon's creation for the radial aisle was indeed of mixed origins if we are to rely on the illustration in the "Exposition Illustré de 1867". It was a pastiche of mixed motifs from books such as Allom's China Illustrated, imitation Chinese lanterns, mixed with Moorish and Indian decorative motifs, all in cheap wood and plaster, employed to form dividing screens for the stalls of the separate nations. These

I (2)

were not strictly separated, however, as the drawing by Lancelot confirms Bellecoeur's remarks that the Japanese articles overflowed the limited 18 space available for them and mixed with the Chinese and Siamese items. Feydeau remembered the Japanese exhibition as "mal logée, entassée tout le long d'un couloir obscur, tandis que les machines et tous les disgracieuse produits de l'industrie s'étalaient dans la belle lumière". None- 19 theless the overcrowded groups of porcelain, lacquer, paintings and bronze vessels made an enormous impression on many visitors.

In the peripheral aisle the same confusion prevailed amongst the setting and items. Chapon created a "kiosque Japonais" ostensibly 20 derived from the summer temples of the Japanese Daimyōs, with a free standing arch based apparently on the gateway to Buddhist temples to the God Kwannon.

Clearly the western reports about these buildings were inaccurate, 21 probably verbal and without much illustration. The arch is shown in the I (3) engraving as a highly elaborate Moorish and Indian creation, full of scrolls, motifs and points, the exact opposite of the solid, square arches of Japanese temples, made of rough hewn wooden beams.

The "Kiosque" behind it contained a glass display case showing the collection of porcelain, that had been sent by the Shogun of Japan, and which, according to one critic, was magnificent. The corners of the kiosk were occupied by flawless bronzes. Outside the kiosk stood the Norimons of the "Taichiou of Tazouma" (Satsuma). These are Japanese sedan chairs, and Bellecoeur describes two of them as covered with 22 gold lacquer with elegant copper finishings for the body doors and corners of the roof.

Around the kiosk stood the bodyguards of the "Taichiou of Tazouma" in full Samurai dress and weapons. They were the cause of much curiosity and several accurate descriptions and illustrations were I (4) published.

Siam and China also had "kiosques" in the peripheral oval aisle but it is difficult to supply them with a specific function. The Siamese section seems to have displayed sculptured elephants in wood, often gilded, and large golden Buddhas and other Buddhist deities. Another Chinese kiosk had two floors and was in the garden with the other Chinese buildings. The upper floor displayed Chinese goods in a domestic setting, and the lower contained a teashop where two Chinese girls dressed in their national costume sold the best quality tea. The two girls, A. Tchoe and A-Nai, had been specially imported by a M. De Meritens at a cost of 16,500 fr. When not serving tea the girls lived in the upper storey, painting fans, making music, playing dominoes or giving away photographs of themselves to visitors. They are at the left in the illustration. Many other Chinese worked in the Exhibition in various capacities.

I (5)  
a

23

Other buildings in the English quarter of the Gardens of the Exposition appear from the illustrations to have been more accurate. Siam contributed a floating house, an Oriental houseboat. Japan sent a small city house. China had a whole garden tended by Chinese gardeners, devoted to it, with a theatre, a restaurant, and a display area for Chinese goods enclosed within it. The Chinese buildings were based on plans of the Summer Palace of Peking which had been rescued by a Colonel Du Pin who had participated in the notorious sacking and burning of the original French troops.

I (6)

Alfred Chapon scrupulously studied the documents and was said to have produced an exact replica of the style of the Summer Palace down to the smallest details. The illustrations confirm that his Chinese buildings were more accurate than his Japanese "kiosque". The sponsors of the Exhibition, the Marquis Hervy St. Denis and M. De Meritens, were both Orientalists and so must have been satisfied with its authenticity but it is still doubtful how far it went beyond Chinoiserie, such as

24

could be found decorating theatres. Entering the Garden through the archway and the two thatched pay kiosks, one passed down a sloping path, past various oriental flowering plants, furniture and coloured lanterns towards the main building of two storeys. The lower storey was covered with strange paintings in bright colours as substitute for the porcelain coverings of the original. It held the gallery of a dealer in Chinese goods whose main place of business was in the Rue Tronchet. This gallery known as the Chinese Museum showed many priceless exhibits, including a remarkable jewelled box originally made for Chien-Lung.

On the upper storey was a cafe or restaurant which served China tea and Chinese meals, including bird's nest soup, prepared by a real Chinese chef. The cafe was open to the air and one could look across the auditorium of an open air theatre to the stage where, at night, performances of the Chinese Theatre, complete with musicians, tumblers and jugglers took place. The theatre was lit by gaslamps made from bamboo. The Chinese Garden also contained the living quarters of many of the Chinese people working in the Exhibition.

Clearly the Chinese garden must have been a major attraction, and according to Henri Gautier, many thousands paid the fifty centimes charged to see it. It must have contributed enormously to the impression of the exhibition as a Far Eastern paradise, recorded by De Goncourt.

Next to the Chinese Garden stood a Japanese House described variously as "l'habitation d'un artisan, d'un petit marchand", "la boutique d'un marchand de thé", and "Un Ferme Japonais".

Unlike the other Far Eastern buildings this was authentic, not designed by Alfred Chapon. Henri Gautier states that it was imported from Japan. Unfortunately the building was never illustrated as a separate entity, but it is clearly recognizable in the view of the English Quarter of the Park. It looks like a typical suburban Japanese house of one storey.

The house was basically divided into two rooms and a "stables". The stables contained a display of Japanese costumes on mannequins. The two rooms, furnished in Japanese style, could be divided or changed in shape by the use of the room dividers typical of Japanese houses.

In the house a Japanese was employed to make tea which he offered to visitors. In the other room were three Japanese girls, O. Sutto, O. Soumi and O Koumi, dressed in rich Japanese costume, who sometimes showed themselves to visitors, and sometimes hid behind a large and beautifully painted Japanese screen. It was noted by Chesneau amongst others that the real Japanese women had little in common with the ideal shown in the prints.

I(56)

30

Bellecoeur states that the back room of the house was used for sleeping.

Some ceramics, lacquer and bronzes, for sale, were displayed in the house and on its veranda. In the garden surrounding the house were placed several models of dwellings belonging to the wealthy and influential, the house of a rich citizen of Yedo or Yokohama and a daimio's residence at Yedo, from the suburb surrounding the Shogun's palace.

A large bronze bell, suspended in a frame of wood, just above the ground in the Japanese temple fashion, was placed in the garden and was sounded occasionally with a wooden mallet. To judge from Bellecoeur's articles, considerable information about the civilization of Japan was given out during the exhibition. His article contains accurate descriptions of various classes of Japanese society which he claims to have gleaned from the exhibition. Another article, "Le Japon en 1867" by J. Layrle was also published in the Revue des Deux Mondes and this gives a thorough account of every aspect of the current situation in Japan. The Shogun's brother was present in person during the exhibition.

It appears that the 1867 Exhibition provided tremendous scope for the Far Eastern enthusiast to identify closely with his enthusiasm, to

take a voyage to Japan in his imagination. It also provided a tremendous amount of visual information for artists and designers, and we know that a great many of them visited the exhibition. We have already seen that the fantastic nature of the architectural setting of the Far Eastern exhibitions went unremarked by the popular press and by most visitors.

It remains now to reach as precise an estimate as possible of the goods on display in that framework. In this way we shall discover what kind of work contributed to the impression of the Far East formed by those who visited the Gallery and what use, if any, they made of it.

Clearly the living Orientals and their mode of dress were of great interest in this respect, particularly the Chinese and Japanese girls, who were to stimulate dress designers and fashionable portraitists.

Unfortunately the disappearance of the official Japanese catalogue for the Exhibition makes itself difficult to be sure of the contents of the four hundred cases despatched from Japan in the cargo ship "Asolf" 31 in early February.

However it is possible to form some impression of the Exhibition by correlating the popular reports of it. Moreover I have been able to trace the Chinese and Japanese articles bought or given to the Victoria and Albert Museum from the Exhibition, and these may serve, if used with caution, as a guide to the quality of much of the Exhibition. 32

Although the text which follows is largely descriptive and enumerative I have already decided to retain it in the main body of my thesis, as it is an original piece of research and an essential element of my argument.

I will discuss the Exhibition contents by nation and by type of objects beginning with China.

### Chinese Exhibits

Henri Gautier states that the Chinese exhibits, ivory boxes, lacquered furniture, richly coloured porcelain, musical instruments, religious statues and carpets had all previously been exhibited by Parisian dealers in Oriental Art. 33

Bellecoeur remarks that the Chinese exhibition had little or nothing 34 to show of Chinese art save a little porcelain, and confirms that all the goods have been on show elsewhere in Paris. He regrets the absence of serious painting or sculpture at the exhibition, dismissing the porcelain and the embroidered and painted screens as decorative work with little to tell of the real tradition of Chinese Art. He also saw some bronze vases and some red and black carved lacquer and some extremely luxurious silk robes. The exhibits were in small quantities and their quality appears to have been low - practically all of them were contemporary export work.

Mr. Arnas, writing about porcelain for the South Kensington Museum Reports on the 1867 Exposition, wrote:

Out of China and Japan where a high estimate of fine porcelain is traditional but which are indifferently represented in the present exhibition, the seat of the manufacture moved toward the close of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th into England and France. 35

We may therefore say that overall the Chinese exhibits were poor, mainly the stock in trade of Oriental dealers.

#### Particular items that can be identified.

The exhibits included a series of printed books, with a geography of the world written circa 1847 by the mandarin Siu and a popular novel The Cousins. A base made for the Emperor Chien-Lung (18th), with a lid with beautiful gold mountings, encrusted with pearls and precious stones and an inscription in Tibetan and Manchu, as the box contained the skull of a Tibetan general whom the emporor had especially liked.

There was also a marvellously carved jade snuffbox. The Victoria and Albert Museum contains only ten items bought from the 1867 Chinese exhibition.

They are two small handscreens, or circular fans, one large of five leaves, five foot six and one half inches by one foot nine inches, all decorated with ornamental landscapes and what is referred to as blue feather work. There were two small animal and flower paintings in "gelatine work" with lacquered wood frames. There were two vases, one in porcelain, with large figures riding on fishes floating above waves, and the other a cloisonne enamel vase from the Chinese Imperial Manufactory. Finally, there was a cup, box-shaped in brown porcelain, with a gold lacquer lid, and a small wooden table inlaid with mother-of-pearl in the form of flowers and foliage.

I (8)  
a-c

All these items seem to have been nonedescript export goods of no outstanding quality. The very limited number of purchases made from the Chinese exhibition compared with the eighty-six from the Japanese section confirm the poverty of the Chinese exhibits.

36

#### The Japanese Exhibition

The Japanese exhibits were much more varied. After a general assessment of them I will discuss them under headings of Lacquer, Bronzes, Miscellaneous Items, Prints and Paintings, Ceramics.

I have already noted that the contemporary reaction to the Japanese exhibition was entirely enthusiastic. This was the result of the sponsorship of the exhibition by the Japanese government in the person of the Shogun, and by the two Japanese noblemen - the Prince of Satsuma and the Prince of Isen. Each prince sent his own collection which consisted of work by artists and craftsmen within his jurisdiction - for instance Satsuma sent a collection of porcelain housed in the Japanese kiosk designed by Alfred Chapon. Satsuma controlled a fine and distinctive regional school of pottery whose potters held direct allegiance to their lord. A looser but similar relationship existed between the Shogun and the artists of Yedo.

37

The Japanese exhibits appear to have been kept scrupulously separate

in display. Great lords in Japan were vying for European support as the political situation in Japan deteriorated and the possibility of revolutionary change became evident to all. Despite this, the individual artists and artisans within each exhibition were named and therefore it should be possible to reconstruct the exhibition exactly if one were able to obtain a copy of the official Japanese catalogue. Without such a catalogue however one has to rely on popular accounts which only notice the name of an occasional craftsman. Feydeau states that besides the work of these mainly contemporary craftsmen many pieces were "des trésors des grands personnages du pays". It was not possible to gain works of this quality in the contemporary market in Japan and so individual lords were approached for their treasures, a bronze from one, an enamel from another and etc. 38 39

It is difficult to find out whether this material remained among the 1,500 items in Rue Victoire 41 or whether the Japanese nobles removed it to Japan, as they did with the most striking items from the 1878 show. 40

I have assumed that this did not happen as Feydeau makes no mention of it. (We shall see that at least two pieces of "ancient" lacquer found their way to England, one to the Victoria and Albert and the other to the Bowes collection.) However the conditional nature of all the evidence I cite should be borne in mind.

### Paintings and Prints

#### Paintings

There was a considerable quantity of Japanese paintings shown at the exhibition.

Feydeau was enthusiastic about them:

Il suffit de regarder quelques-un des lavis sur soie envoyé du Nipon à L'Exposition pour affirmer que les Japonais sont déjà en possession de quelques-uns des grands secrets de la peinture. 41

He speaks of "Une vingtaine de stores en soie, couvertes de peintures", presumably meaning kakemonos. They were of bird and flower subjects, and impressed him as being exquisite interpretations of nature, although he stressed their primitive quality.

Bellecoeur names M. Horiu and M. Sessai, two Yedo (Tokyo) painters, who were exhibiting a series of paintings on silk and a series of water-colour portraits of young Japanese. He observes their lack of chiaroscuro and perspective, but remarks that this has no adverse effect on their likeness. Chesneau saw examples of paintings in which Japanese artists had begun to use chiaroscuro. He condemned the European influence as destroying the originality of Japanese art. Feydeau, on the other hand, looked forward to the final perfection of Japanese art as a result of its Europeanisation. 42

The Victoria and Albert Museum bought only one painting, a picture on silk of a procession of the Mikado, four foot six inches long by one foot five inches wide. The painting was framed, but its dimensions and subject suggest a small painting. Unfortunately I have been unable to find it.

However I have located two strange small kakemonos which show figures of a mounted samurai and a woman. The backgrounds are in sumi-e painting, but the figures are made in raised cloth delicately patterned. The paintings are signed SEKKWA, they are undated but apparently nineteenth century. The work is remarkably intricate but somewhat dull. I (9)

### Prints

Many prints and print albums were shown at the exhibition. The Daimyo of Satsuma had a large exhibition of printed books, many with coloured illustrations, including novels and histories. According to Bellecoeur, Japanese print albums were familiar to most people by the time of the 1867 exhibition. He mentions especially albums of birds, flowers and butterflies.

Feydeau was particularly entranced by one album which was of no commercial value whatever. It showed scenes such as shrimps swimming in seaweed, peach branches in flower, a kneeling kimonoed woman, or a samurai loosing an arrow.

It seems that Hokusai's "Mangwa" must have been on display, for Chesneau chose to write about it at length and accurately in a book discussing the works of art on display during the exhibition.

43

The prints aroused no enthusiasm in the popular press and it seems that they were regarded as a minor part of the exhibition.

The South Kensington Museum bought two illustrated books and nineteen "colour engravings" from the exhibition. The books were two volumes of Shuga Kwakutei . Musha Kayami translated as The Mirror of 100 Warriors illustrated by Ichimosai Yoshitora - a mid nineteenth century Yokohama artist. They are undated but I would place them between 1840-1855.

I (10)  
a-6

The books are tiny; only four and three quarter inches by six and three quarter inches. Like the prints in the collection made earlier by Burges, they show how much of the elegance of the great print masters like Outamaro was retained in these later works. Consider for instance the pages where a kimonoed lady glances across to an old samurai reading. It is elegant and beautifully coloured.

45

The nineteen prints appear to have been bought unseen. Six of the prints consist of two copies of an anonymous triptych showing a meeting of a Daimyo and Samurai in a harbour and there is also a duplicate of its centre panel; all are in bad condition. Some sort of joust is taking place. I believe it to be a mid-nineteenth print, the work of an inferior Yokohama artist - perhaps Yoshitune. Despite this the work is striking and would be of great interest to someone who had not previously seen Japanese prints. The use of a screen of banners, raised naginata and wooden buildings to create space in a daring and novel manner would have

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I (11)

been especially exciting.

Three other prints form a triptych showing "The Army of Susaki Monetsin crossing the sea Fujite to attack the enemy" - a legendary scene by Yoshitoshi, another Yokohama artist of the mid nineteenth century. The print was published by Yeshi Hikobii but lacks a date. It is brilliantly dramatic portrayal of swirling waters, waves and banners, but in a restricted colour scheme of deep blues and brownish reds set on the white paper.

47

I (12)

There is also a triptych showing "Kyomon and others of the Taira clan staring in amazement at the Goddess appearing from the waves to crush his power" by Yoshitora, also published by Hikobei, with a seal date of 1849 (the year of the cock). It has a colour scheme of deep blues and brownish reds also, and the form of the goddess rising from the waves is especially impressive.

48

I (13)

Finally there is a triptych signed by Toyokuni Kunisada showing three women standing beneath trees, in tones of blue with a little brown red embellishment and undated. Kunisada also worked in Yokohama and collaborated with some artists like Yoshitora. The women are dressed in kimonos and retain some of the elegance of earlier prints; the patterns of the cloth are well marked in tones of blue. The remaining prints have been written off.

49

I (14)

From the Victoria and Albert purchases it seems that the prints on show in the 1867 exhibition were all contemporary and mainly from Yokohama where a European trading port existed. Perhaps the Japanese sent prints from which their previous knowledge they knew that Europeans would like.

It may be that the Victoria and Albert selection was not typical. However Audsley published a reproduction of a print which he bought at the 1867 Exhibition in his book The Ornamental Arts of Japan. The work shows a woman reading a scroll threatened by a spider which has woven a

web behind her. It is also from the mid nineteenth century. Audsley 50  
 claims this to be "one of the first specimens shown at the Japanese Court  
 in 1867". Mr. Basil Robertson<sup>in</sup> has identified it as by Kunisada, from  
 a series called "The Mirror of Magic" (WAHABIME) showing the witch  
 KITUTSU KAGAMIN reading spells from a scroll. It is signed "TOYOKUNI, I (15  
 77 years" by which it can be dated to 1862.

Bowes bought a second print from the same series -

It represents the figure of a man richly attired and bearing on his back the skin of a huge spotted animal, the head of which in an almost entire state forms his headdress, its closed mouth and glaring eyes appearing immediately above his brow. In his hand is a makimono unrolled and entirely devoid of writing, the only object on its white surface being a jet black horse. The lower end of the makimono is held in the mouth of a grey rat.

The prints in the 1867 Exhibition appear to have been almost entirely contemporary. No works by the great eighteenth century masters such as Utamaro or Kiyonaga challenged their supremacy. The paintings on show also appear to have been contemporary.

Two caveats must be added about the prints;

- 1) Aaron Scharf in Art Photography claims that works by Hiroshige II (Shigenobu) were on display in 1867.
- 2) An account of some of the prints has been published in the Tokyo "Museum" Journal.

I have received a summary translation of this and it confirms that my general conclusion that the work exhibited was nearly all nineteenth century is true. I add this information here.

Documents Relating to Prints in the Ueno Park Museum.

In addition to the information gathered above there exist certain documents relating to preparation of collection of Ukiyo-e prints made by the Bakufu, specially for the 1867 exhibition. 51

These documents are in the branch library of Ueno Park, Tokyo, and concern the commissions given by the Bakufu and the payment given.

Various Uki-yo-e artists were approached and supplied sets of drawings of either landscapes or portraits of women and a few of mythical heroes. The commissions were begun as early as 1862 as part of the planning for the 1867 exhibition initiated as a result of the visit of the Japanese Imperial Commissioners to the London Exhibition of 1862. The artists supplied their drawings to the Bakufu print-making workshops in Tokyo. They estimated in April 1866 in their preliminary invoices for the work that the whole job of engraving and printing the hundred separate prints from drawings would take only fifty days. The prints constituted "a 52 unique record of details of life during the late Bakufu period".

The term used to define the finished work is "gwacho" - which means collection or anthology and was usually taken to mean a bound book. It is strange that none of the European accounts of the 1867 Exhibition mention such a book. I am trying to locate it. However it may be that there was simply a loose folio of prints. The artists who contributed were as follows; (They worked mainly in Tokyo) - Yoshiki, Kunichika, Yoshitora, Yoshitoshi, Kunisada, Kuniaki, Sadahide, Yoshikazu, Yoshishi, Yoshitsu, Takesaja, Taketada, Takeyoshi. Unfortunately since Japanese proper names are ambiguous when one attempts to romanise them, they may not all be accurate, but they represent the most likely interpretation of the names. The list confirms my belief that the prints shown in 1867 were almost all by contemporary or near contemporary artists. Here are some typical examples of contributions.

Yoshikaza contributed a series of scenes in Edo including Kasimaseki, Sakurada (gate of the Imperial Palace), a Samurai's house at Assaka, and the Meguro Fudo - a bridge or castle forming the second stage of the fifty-two stages of the Yokaido Road.

Yoshimuni, Sadahide, Yoshitora, Takeyoshi and others also contributed landscape views, mainly of Tokyo.

Yoshishi contributed a series of portraits of women including a

princess, a prostitute, a Samurai's daughter, a female warrior, a country girl, a maid servant and a bleacher of clothes. Other artists also produced a similar series.

I have already discussed works by Kunisada, Sadahide and Yoshitsune, which I have found in the Victoria and Albert collections. Among the documents concerning Uki-yo-e prints there is also one recording an estimate for a commission given to Yoshimune for ten paintings on silk, five of landscapes and five of women. The cost of these works was to be 400 ryo. Presumably these were amongst the paintings noted in European descriptions of the 1867 exhibition.

I have been unable to locate either prints or paintings.

However I have found in the Victoria and Albert library an album (EJ.143) of prints of famous places in Yedo by Kunisada, etc., many of the plates shown scenes from Yedo life. Maps of Yedo districts are associated with the prints. The album may be a remnant of the 1867 exhibition, though it is unlikely to have survived intact. There are also two separate "Views of Yedo by Yoshikazu" E13676 and E13679/1886 which may have been made for the 1867 exhibition.

I (16)

#### Lacquers and Wooden Objects

The lacquerware at the exhibition was undoubtedly of fine quality and attracted more notice than most of the other sections. Lacquer covered all furnishings and wooden objects ranging from Noremans and large cabinets to the tiniest and most exquisite boxes. Japanese lacquerware was highly commended by the jury which awarded prizes for the best workmanship in the exhibition. The highest honour was given to "la lacque brune, s<sup>^</sup>m<sup>^</sup>ee de paillettes d'or".

Bellecoeur remarks that most of the small lacquer objects (petits meubles) on show were designed especially for the European trade and were not typical of Japan. Whilst it is true that most of the objects in the exhibition, now in the Victoria and Albert collection, are indeed

of mid-nineteenth century manufacture; the ones that I have examined are not the kind of miniature cabinet or tiny decorative box often referred to as export ware and several items are of excellent quality, notably a seventeenth century writing box. Perhaps the Victoria and Albert buyer was lucky or had a good eye for lacquer. 53

Feydeau describes three cabinets out of the many in the exhibition. The first, very large, had compartments of lacquer, some with porcelain plaques and linings, the inside of its doors were decorated with a delicate relieve design of two birds. The second was decorated with figures of samurai in gold and lacquer in high relief. The third and smaller one was made with carved ivory plaques and vermillion designs. Its hinges were made in the form of vermillion butterflies, the doors showed figures of women, deeply carved in ivory with an exquisite delicacy of design, against a background of gold lacquer. Similar designs ran in a border round the body of the cabinet. Lacquer novelties included a small lacquered wooden statue of an elephant, ornamented with mother-of-pearl, coral and tortoiseshell on a gold and lacquer mount. 54

The Victoria and Albert selection contains some very beautiful examples of lacquer, for example the writing box from the seventeenth century, mentioned above. I (17)

The cover shows mandarin ducks sitting on a rock by a stream; in gold and silver takamayiye (relief work built of lacquer over a base of putty), enriched with sheet gold cut into tiny spangles (kirikane), which have been placed over a ground of lacquer coloured by deeply embedded gold leaf, (Nashi-ji). Inside the cover is a mountain scene world in the same manner showing a temple and a summer pavilion by a lake. It contains a tray with a similar scene. Its fittings include an inkstone and a gilt bronze water bottle in the form of acorns, a carved cake of ink with no signature and a knife with a handle and a case of wood lacquered red. The blade of the knife is signed Kinkwazan Kiyonaga. It is of

truly admirable workmanship and must have been much admired during the exhibition.

55

Another magnificent item is an eighteenth century tray with a design of a rocky landscape, a stream, pine trees and autumn flowers in "tamakiyime and kinihane of gold and silver on nashiji, with a plain base". The tray also has nuggets of silver embedded within it. The magnificent design of works like this must have deeply impressed visitors to the Japanese exhibition.

I (18

Small work was often of equal stature, for example there is a beautiful small box, decorated with chrysanthemums and bamboo with the mon of the Honda Daimyo dating from the late eighteenth century, boxes also late eighteenth century very small with tiny trays decorated with a plant design, and a tortoiseshell dish with peacocks in gold lacquer.

56

These pieces are all of high quality and seem to be typical of the work bought by or given to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Their collection also includes one or two unusual items such as a large calligraphic brush given to the museum by the Daimio of Satsuma himself, with a floral design in gold lacquer. A full list of the items in the collections will be given in my appendix.

I (19  
a,b,  
c,d.

There is one other record of work from the 1867 exhibition. It was a large cabinet made apparently for the exhibition to demonstrate the variety of Japanese lacquer techniques, and purchased by James Bowes. Audsley describes it as follows in 1872:

I (20)  
a, b.

In a single cabinet which formed one of the gems of the Japanese court in the Paris exhibition of 1867 and which now ornaments the collection of Mr. James Bowes there are no less than nine distinct species of lacquer and twenty-four modes of artistic treatment represented on the main divisions. On a more minute inspection we find on one drawer sixteen different modes of applying and decorating gold work and on another seven ways of treating various metals..... The work is richly mounted with *silver* and the key drawer is faced with an engraved plate of that metal edged with gold and barred with a broad line of some black metal.

57

By 1901 the cabinet had been accurately attributed. It was sold as Item 1886 in the Bowes collection sale as -

A cabinet for holding papers.

A most important and interesting example by Kyekawa Kinjiro, by whom it is signed, the founder of the school of that and lacquer worker in ordinary to Iyetsuna, the fourth Shogun of the Tokugawa line, who ruled from 1650-1680 A.D. It was preserved by his successors in the capital until the year 1867, when it was sent to the Paris Exhibition by Noriyoshi, the fifteenth Shogun and last of his line, from whom it was purchased direct, the example is conspicuous for the brilliancy and perfection of its manipulation, and for the number and importance of the various processes introduced. It is of square form, fitted with nineteen drawers, protected by open guards, the furniture is of chased silver and shakudo.

(Size: height; 26 in., width 25in., depth  $13\frac{3}{8}$  in.)

The Bowes sale catalogue quotes also from the original Paris catalogue;

Cabinet riche, à compartments, de grands dimensions en vieilles laques de toutes couleurs assemblage des plus belles laque du Japon. Tres nombreuses et tres delicates incrustations. Cette piece exceptionnelle, remarquable par son ancienneté et le fini de son exécution.

58

Apart from good lacquer the Victoria and Albert Museum also bought a number of cheap boxes covered with patterns made of wood and straw inlay. Presumably these were meant as records of popular design motifs as they have little or not attraction as art objects in themselves. Such boxes were common in Europe at that time, and must have had some function in spreading Far Eastern motifs.

### Pottery

If the lacquer exhibited in the International Exhibition was first class, the pottery was apparently a rag-bag of the worst contemporary productions. The pottery in the Victoria and Albert collections is so little thought of that it has hardly ever been exhibited since 1869.

It may be that the best quality work that was exhibited has passed without record. The splendid display that the Prince of Satsuma organized in the Japanese kiosk would surely have contained the finest work that his province could produce. However, against this we have the remark of the reporter for the South Kensington Museum that the overall

quality of the Japanese and Chinese pottery was very low indeed.

Besides the Prince Satsuma, Bellecoeur gives us the name of one of the contemporary potters, M. Moussaciya, who exhibited many pieces in the show. Bellecoeur thought that Moussaciya's works outdid those of earlier potters. Unfortunately none of Moussaciya's work is in the Victoria and Albert collection. 59

Both Feydeau and Bellecoeur note that the Japanese pottery was in general of softer colours than the Chinese, and that its ornament was mainly butterflies, flowers, birds, or more often, simple imaginative designs.

Feydeau picked out two bowls of forty-five centimetres in diameter and with a design representing chimeras, flowers and foliage in relief on a blue ground. He also liked a celadonne vase with an embossed relief of turquoise blue leaves, a beautiful Satsuma vase. He was fascinated by a terracotta cup in Miako pottery decorated with enamels supported by three figures described as human "monsters" similar to Gothic sculptures. There were also terracotta figurines from Satsuma and Miako.

The Victoria and Albert collection is undistinguished. It includes several examples of cups and saucers of a white base with designs either of samurai warriors, or birds and flowers in crude reds, blues, greens and yellows. The large Satsuma vases in the collection are crude and unrepresentative of the best of nineteenth century pottery. The pair from Nawashinagawa province of Satsuma are remarkably ugly. 60

It is difficult to imagine any of this pottery having an individual influence on succeeding design, save as an element in a fashionable assembly of bric-a-brac. However some of these pots may well have been borrowed by Western designers for their very curiosity, and they may have communicated the general attitude to design of the Japanese potters. Assymetry, open spaces and the broad use of coloured glazes and brush work can be hinted at by the worst examples of a style. Some of the

better examples from the Victoria and Albert collection are shown, I also show a plate of a Kagee bowl bought by J. Grant Morris from the 1867 Paris exhibition taken from Audsley and Bowes "Kerami<sup>g</sup>. Art of Japan".

Metalwork, bronzes and enamel vessels

Little information is available about the bronze and enamel vessels at the exhibition. Bellecoeur mentions several magnificent displays of bronze vessels in various forms, often with a design of birds and flowers in silver inlay (niello). Feydeau mentions the same technique and in particular he describes two very large incense burners, case by cire perdue; their lids were made in the form of bouquets of peach flowers. Perhaps these were some of the bronzes displayed by Prince Satsuma in the Japanese kiosk. Another incense burner in the form of a junk hanging from delicate chains was made entirely in carved silver. It passed into the Bowes collection. I (22) 61

The Victoria and Albert Museum made only one purchase in metalwork, a kettle in copper with a brass lid, with a Japanese landscape worked in repousse. Enamel vessels are mentioned as being on show and admired, but none are described in detail. 62

It is therefore impossible to reach an accurate estimate of the quality or quantity of the bronzes in the exhibition. However if we take the absence of bronzes from the Victoria and Albert collection as indicative we may guess that neither was high. Burty confirms this in respect of cloisonnés enamels in Emaux <sup>et</sup> and Cloisonnés, 1869, in which he remarks that about twenty poor quality enamels were shown in the 1867 exhibition. Arms and Armour and Miscellaneous Objects.

One of the most striking exhibits of the exhibition were full size models of samurai, both mounted and on foot, in full armour and with full regalia.

There were apparently four groups consisting of one mounted soldier and one soldier on foot, placed around the Japanese kiosk. These, I (4)

together with the real bodyguards of Satsuma gave a good impression of the traditional Japanese warriors.

Bellecoeur states that a good collection of Japanese weapons, "armes blanches", was shown near the model warriors; some of it very elaborate. There were also arrows and what I assume to have been naganata - Japanese pikes. The prestige of Japanese arms and armourers seems to have been communicated well to the visitors of the exhibition. Bellecoeur, somewhat exaggeratedly remarks that there were only three good swordsmiths in Japan.

63

64

This section of the exhibition was important in relation to the display of the figurative arts and porcelain, much of which concerned the legendary deeds of samurai and must have seemed far more comprehensible to visitors when they had seen the real thing.

#### Norimons

A series of sedan chairs (Norimons) used by the Prince of Satsuma himself, were grouped around the kiosk. Strictly speaking these are lacquered objects, but their large size and function separates them from furniture or decorative objects. Bellecoeur gives the following description of two of them; the total number is unknown:

Deux de ces norimons sont en lacque avec des garnitures de cuivre doré, ciselées avec autant de soin que les coins d'argent adaptés souvent au petits meubles de luxe.

#### Textiles

The Prince of Satsuma arranged a display showing the techniques of silk culture and many varieties of Japanese silks and costumes were on show in the exhibition. Bellecoeur admired their design, but states that they were not comparable with the French weavers, Jacquard. This indicates that the silks exhibited could not have been of the highest quality.

Various other kinds of textile were on display, principally cotton, printed or painted. The Victoria and Albert Museum bought only a length of silk twenty yards long in red, green and blue, and an equal length of

violet printed cotton.

Other aspects of Japanese life were represented by cases of exhibits. R. Ferrère notes especially a whole case of pipes, in wood and ivory, ornamented with grotesque carvings of amazing workmanship. By this he implies the presence of inro and netsuke in the same case as the pipes - a natural juxtaposition. The Victoria and Albert Museum owns such a set.

Various ornaments in crystal, ivory and enamel were on display of which I have no details. Ornamental papers of various kinds were admired by Bellecoeur, Chesneau and many others. The Victoria and Albert Museum bought a collection of several kinds of wallpaper. It even bought such exotic items as three tooth brushes and boxes of tooth powder, umbrellas and a Japanese instrument, a Biva.

At least one travelling altar was one show. Feydeau describes it as 66 "un petit temple japonais en bois léger, enduit de laque rouge, entièrement doré à l'intérieur avec trois petites idoles sculptées en bois tendue".

However, perhaps the strangest of the miscellaneous assembled items was a group of statues in plaster, of bathing women "donnant une idée très complète de la beauté plastique des femmes Japonaises". Unfortunately 67 I am unable to place these objects. They must have been some novelty specially made for the occasion.

This account of the miscellaneous items in the Japanese Exhibition suggests strongly that anyone attending the 1867 show would have every opportunity of becoming acquainted with much of the material context of Japanese life. When we take into account the Japanese house in the grounds with its beautiful girls and costume museum, it becomes easier to understand why Japan became a vital factor in fashion, art and design, despite the relatively poor quality of most of the art and craft objects on display. The exhibition provided an overall, comprehensive experience of the Far East which centred on Japan, for the Chinese exhibit appeared to act usually as a mere background. The art works were seen in dazzling

context, made even more impressive by the apparent dullness of much of the Western art and decorative design.

I have provided an appendix (G) which lists all the items described in Victoria and Albert purchases of 1869,

We must now estimate the impact of the exhibition on Western attitudes to Japanese Art.

The Japanese appearance at the 1867 exhibition and Western art and design.

A. The reflection in the exhibition of Far Eastern influence in the West before 1867

In one sense the 1867 exhibition did no more than celebrate the considerable following and influence that Japan had acquired previously.

At least one Western collector, Philippe Burty, was showing Japanese prints in the exhibition. It seems a reasonable guess that amongst the prints he showed were some of Hokusai's Mangwa. 68

The Mangwa also made its appearance on the Service Rousseau designed by Bracquemond, and specially finished in time for the exhibition by Lebouf and Millet (discussed in Part One).

Rousseau, who commissioned the dinner service, showed some of his own Japanese influenced glassware. Victor Collinot, who with Adalbert de Beaumont had published a Recueil de Dessins with some Far Eastern designs as early as 1859, showed some of his own pottery. The Victoria and Albert Museum bought one piece, an "enamelled and ornamented placque with a Japanese design, consisting of flowers, foliage and birds with a blue border; composed of six tablets each 3 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$  ins. by a ft. 8 ins.". 69

Barbedienne and Christofle, two manufacturers of art bronzes took up Japanese motifs in their exhibitions. Barbedienne made a special effort to imitate Japanese cloisonné enamel in which he was highly successful.

China also had some influence on Western design. A lamp maker, J. Berg, exhibited two life size figures of a male and female Chinese in bronze, holding lamps in the 1867 exhibition.

We need not repeat the discussion of Part One but it should be remembered that amongst the works of Manet, Degas, Stevens and other artists exhibited in relation to the Exposition Universelle were examples of the cumulative influence of Japanese art over the previous five years. 70

The official exhibitions of Academy artists contained no examples at

all of the direct use of Far Eastern subject matter as genre, such as Tissot's La Bain Japonais. This would indicate that the progress of Far Eastern influence was far more rapid amongst established design circles than amongst established artists. Only outsiders such as Manet made serious reference to Far Eastern style and aesthetic attitudes, and no-one seemed interested in using Japanese subject matter for their salon pieces as several artists were to do in future years.

B. The effect of the 1867 Exposition on Japanese enthusiasm in France and England and on the critical evaluation of Japanese art.

One of the major events which enable us to estimate the impact of the Japanese appearance at the Paris 1867 exhibition was the exhibition of Far Eastern Art at the Union des Beaux Arts, Paris, in 1869. This exhibition contained work from the collections of Chesneau and Burty who were remarkable in that they showed prints as well as other forms. It also displayed the collection of many figures in fashionable society and the arts such as F. Villot, director of the Louvre and Bigot, the engraver. Burty's collection of prints included some described as by "Oak-sya" (Hokusai). I give an account of the exhibition as appendix H.

The evidence I have presented in Part One and the appearance of Western work influenced or inspired by Japan in the orbit of the 1867 exhibition makes it clear that 1867 could not have been the absolute revelation that Chesneau claimed it to be in 1878.

The evidence about the Far Eastern exhibits at the 1867 exhibition shows that in all probability the Japanese exhibits, though they created much interest, were of poor quality.

We are still not in a position to claim that among artists, masters other than Hokusai and Hiroshige had been seen in Europe, unless one wishes to count Kunisada as a master. In the applied arts the low quality of work available in the West is also the outstanding feature.

It would appear that the enthusiastic criticism of Chesneau, Feydeau,

Burty and Champfleury was based on this low quality work. However one must be aware that other sources of Japanese material may have been opening up in Paris and London. Mme. De Soye and others continued to deal in Japanese goods in Paris. In London, Farmer and Rogers Ornamental Warehouse also continued to deal, managed by Liberty, who was to emerge as the most important London dealer in the '70s and '80s. We have little or no evidence about the quality of their wares in the late '60s and '70s. Records have practically disappeared, and as we have no way of knowing what was being imported in 1868 to 1872, it seems reasonable to assume that it was of the same low quality as the official exhibition.

We have only one illustrated book from these years; the anonymous "Visits to Japan, 1865 - 1866", which was published in 1869, "Illustrated with drawings from Japanese originals". The book is small and the copies of Japanese prints very crude. However some of the motifs are clearly recognisable.

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The frontispiece is obviously from a series of landscape prints by Hiroshige - it shows a shrine under Cryptomeria pines, curtailed to fit the format of the page. Another illustration shows a woman and her servant on a balcony looking out to sea. The lady is apparently engaged in her toilette, to judge from the table in front of her, but she holds papers over a brazier - drying them. The setting of this print, the use of the wooden structure of Japanese building in the design, and the complicated coiffure of the lady suggest a pastiche of a late eighteenth century print, probably Utamaro. The identification with Utamaro is made certain by the design of the brazier, an identical object appears in at least two of the prints in the series "Annals of the Green Houses" of 1804. The hairstyle of the lady is also typical of this particular series. The presence of prints by Utamaro, in circulation, by 1869 is thus established; almost certainly they included a copy of the "Annals of the Green Houses". More evidence that Utamaro prints were available

I (23)  
a,b

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I (24)

at this time is provided by the frontispiece to Ph. Burty's "Emaux Cloisonnes" designed by Felix Regamey, which is also a pastiche of designs by Utamaro, recognisable by the black framed screen which appears only in prints of the late eighteenth century. The figure painting the title of the book and the bronze vessel on the screen is also recognisably derived from Utamaro. It is very close to a reversal of the self-portrait of "Utamaro painting a 'Ho-Ho bird in the Green Houses" - which also contains one of the braziers, although the work is so direct a copy it probably derives from another print which I have not seen. The style is in any case eighteenth century. Burty's book is discussed below. It is enough for the moment to note that this is the first evidence we have of Utamaro's work in the West.

The remaining plates in "Visits to Japan" are chosen to show unusual aspects of Japanese life. All are badly coloured and crude pastiches. It must be borne in mind however that Hokusai's "Chinese style" also contains many features from eighteenth century styles and that many nineteenth century artists imitated earlier styles and motifs. Mr. Basil Robinson thinks that my analogy here is probably misleading and that these images were based on minor nineteenth century works. The general weight of evidence suggests that eighteenth century works were not recognised until the 1880's.

The book is also interesting because it contains the first full reference to a Japanese market, with shops selling lacquer, bronzes, netsuke, ceramics and prints. All these goods must have been available to travellers in the mid-1860's. Since the anonymous author published in 1869 it is reasonable to suggest that travellers bearing such goods returned to Europe in small numbers from about 1868.

The effect of their purchases may have been small but it must be borne in mind when evaluating the effect of the 1867 exhibition. It is clear that the fashionable interest in Japan did spring from the 1867 show.

Chesneau records the foundation of the "Société du Jinglar", a club 78  
 which concerned itself with organizing regular Japanese dinners at which  
 chopsticks and saki were de rigueur, once a month at Sevres. "Jinglar"  
 was the name of a Japanese wine; one of the club's members, the poet  
 Zacharie Astruc, who had been a Japanese enthusiast for some years, 79  
 wrote a sonnet to it entitled "Salut, Vin des Mysterieux", decorated  
 with watercolours.

Each member had a membership card designed by Bracquemond and  
 engraved by Solon, a colleague of Bracquemond's in the Sevres pottery.  
 Ph. Burty's membership card is in the Print Department of the New York I (26)  
 Public Library. The card shows a sheet of paper upheld at each end by  
 a folded paper bird holding a string in its beak indicating the interest 80  
 in Origami, behind it appears the cone of Fujiyama on which a pot is  
 boiling. The members signed on the sheet of paper. Burty's sheet of  
 paper contains the signatures of L. Solon, F. Bracquemond, Alphonse  
 Hirsch, Zacharie Astruc, Fantin Latour, Nerat, Prudence and J. Jacquemart.

Below it a dolphin and a dog are being spit-roasted, to the left is  
 a circular seal with a dragon and surrounding it a motto "Jinglar à  
 gauche". G. Weisberg suggests that this motto has to do with the left-  
 wing sympathies of its members. However one would not have thought that  
 a society that attracted one spectacular entrepreneur (Hirsch) and one  
 recluse (Fantin) could have much interest in Socialist politics. The  
 overall impression of the members of the Jinglar is of an "establishment"  
 group of men doing well in society, not rebels or men of great talents.  
 One name is glaringly absent - De Goncourt. 81

Edmond De Goncourt's often repeated claim to have led the taste for  
 Japonisme with his brother is highly questionable. There is little in  
 the Journals for the years 1868, 1869 and 1870 to suggest a constant and  
 developing interest in Japanese art. It is only in the mid-1870's that  
 Edmond's interest develops, spurred on by the increasing enthusiasm for 82

Japanese goods provoked by collectors and dealers such as Sichel and Cernuschi returning from visits to Japan.

The Goncourts do record that in August 1868 their friend Princesse Mathilde Bonaparte was "fort occupée des albums Japonaises dont elle transporte les fleurs et les oiseaux sur les feuilles d'un paravent de soie".

83

In September they paid 2000f. for a Japanese bronze. These are both indications that the taste for Japanese goods was spreading in fashionable society, as is the composition of the Jinglar. But they provide no evidence of a leadership in Japanese taste. That leadership, if indeed there were one, belonged to Phillippe Burty who published articles in several journals at this time. Unfortunately these articles are hard to find. I have been unable to read them and based my account of

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Burty's reaction to Far Eastern Art on his books "Les Emaux Cloisonnés" of 1869, and "Chef-d'Oeuvres de l'Art Industriel" of 1866. Nonetheless I think that my account is accurate. Burty was undoubtedly the coiner of the phrase "Japonisme", probably in an article which he wrote for "Le Rappel" in 1869. During 1870 and 1871 Burty and De Goncourt were thrown together by the events of the Commune and Burty showed Goncourt many things from his collection.

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De Goncourt had known Burty since 1859 and it may have been their common interest in eighteenth century art which led to the deepening of their friendship.

Already in 1869 Burty was asserting an analogy between eighteenth century French art and Japanese work:

"L'Art Japonais tend constamment à rompre la roideur de la ligne droit, plutôt par des combinaisons d'angles, que par des courbes comme faisait notre aimable XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle français."

87

The analogy with eighteenth century art was to be a lifelong theme with Edmond De Goncourt. It is interesting to note its appearance in

an early phase of Japonisme. The taste for both Japan and the eighteenth century were fashionable at this time, and no doubt the perception of one coloured that of the other. Eighteenth century Chinoiserie was very much in fashion, as art and also as an attitude of mind. Burty wrote about Japan and China in comparison and while he is always praising Chinese work he makes it clear that Japan is far more fascinating to him. 88 His evaluation of Japanese objects was based on their superiority of workmanship and originality in design, for him they were essentially decorative objects, "bibelots", having the same aesthetic role as Chinese objects had in the eighteenth century. Comparing Japanese enamel with Chinese, he wrote;

Les grandes pièces en cloisonnés du Japon sont d'une tournure plus cavalière et plus artiste. Leur charme réside plutôt dans l'invention du décor et par cela même ils touchent moins le gros des amateurs que l'extrême fini des Chinois.

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Japanese art attracts an elite by its design but it remains for Burty a series of objects whose existence can be fitted quite easily into current fashion.

Burty saw fidelity to nature in both Chinese and Japanese work though he experienced this in different ways. When talking of China he speaks of Chinese Gardens and of picnics to which he adds that the colours of Chinese porcelain have been drawn from nature, "and not from the dubious combinations of some laboratories".

90

In Japan it is the observation of nature on which Burty lays stress. Discussing Japanese prints he says;

C'est la vie surprise dans ses manifestations infinies: l'hirondelle glisse entre les roseaux, la cigogne effleure l'écume de la vague, les messanges bleus s'abattent comme des essaims d'abeilles sur le pêcher fleuri, la tortue bage, le crabe danse sur le gravier.

91

He follows this with a tremendous list of all the subjects of Japanese prints that one could think of, from Fujiyama to ghosts and daimyos, and then another equally long list of design motifs which he found in a

series of pattern books. However "nature" in both Chinese and Japanese art remained the eighteenth century nature, amenable to principle and intellectual management. 92

The essential difference Burty saw between Chinese and Japanese art is summed up in his comparison between Japanese print albums and Chinese painted books:

The albums of the Chinese are drawn with a laborious, embarrassed hand, significant in the execution displayed of their proverbial reputation for patience. Those of the Japanese on the other hand are printed in bold vivid tints, that leave our crude and dull chromolithographs far behind. The sketches are of inexhaustible variety. 93

Chinese finish, refinement, was dull compared to the variety and inventiveness of the Japanese.

This attitude co-exists in Burty with the notion of "nature" in art as a quality amenable to intellectual moulding. Japanese ideas of beauty centred on an ideal "toute à fait fantaisiste et de convention". This, Burty says, is an attitude condemned by academies and academic artists. However he quotes both the English park and the entasis of Greek columns as justification:

Cependant dans la vie civile, cette part faite à l'imprévu, à l'ingéniosité, au gout subtil, ajoute infiniment de seduction et d'esprit au costume, au meuble, au bijou. C'est le triomphe du parc Anglais sur les ifs et les buis de Versailles. Les Grecs avaient grand de fondre aussi par de savantes altérations la glace d'une exécution trop rigide. 94

By using these examples Burty underlines the link between the eighteenth century and Japan, the notion that nature and intellectual convention are reconcilable.

He establishes certain specific qualities of Japanese art, "principles" in which it differs from the West.

These are, an avoidance of symmetry, and the symmetrical paralleling of items in a design, the accentuation of the silhouette in drawing which leads to an emphasis on the characteristic qualities of a person

or an object rather than its unique individuality and finally, in colour a careful grading of the most brilliant and the most refined tones. 95

Burty's ability to reconcile the eighteenth century and Japan through these criteria can be seen at its strangest when he offers analogies in Western art for Hokusai's "Mangwa". Hokusai made "sketches of every sort, rivalling Watteau in their grace, Daumier in energy, the fantastic terrors of Goya and the spiritual animation of Delacroix". 96

Of all the artists only Watteau meets the full range of Burty's demand for a meeting of nature and artifice in the eighteenth century sense. The others are all exemplars of artists for whom Nature and Intellect do not meet on comfortable terms. They are Romantics. 97

Burty quotes specifically from Delacroix; "le maître plus vivant de notre generation", in his defence of the relative irregularity of Japanese art.

Il y a des lignes qui sont un monstre: la droite,  
la serpentine régulière surtout deux parallèles.  
Quand l'homme les établit, les éléments les rongent.  
Les lignes régulières ne sont que dans le cerveau de  
l'homme. De là le charme des choses anciennes et  
ruinées: la ruine rapproche l'objet de la nature. 98

We find here expressed but unrealised the same conflict which possessed artists such as Manet when they were first influenced by Japanese art in the mid-'60s. The problem is to maintain art and therefore of necessity convention, against the increasing demands of fidelity to "nature". Burty disguises the problem by using the eighteenth century notion of the ideal balance between man and nature, and by treating Japanese art as a form of Chinoiserie. His intuition about the qualities of Japanese art being in essence a product of "la vie civile" does not enable him to avoid using analogies which appear time and time again during the next twenty to thirty years when Japanese art is discussed in Europe. 99

We have already seen examples of the Greeks and their architecture as an analogy with Japan we shall soon see more.

The pronunciations of Delacroix and his works were often to be compared with the Japanese, notably by Van Gogh. The essential linking of nature and artifice (intellect) is a theme of practically every writer on Japanese art.

Burty's response to Japanese art in the late 1860's was essentially that of a collector or a fashionable enthusiast, who rationalizes his taste for Japanese art in terms of his other enthusiasms. He therefore contributes no new ideas about Japanese art and very little direct information. Nonetheless we find in his response the same basic concern with the problem of nature and artifice which we found in the efforts of artists before the 1867 exhibition. His use of a mixture of eighteenth century rationalism and romantic art to justify Japan exactly mirrors the <sup>C</sup>progress through which Japanese art, against academic criteria, had affected changes in western painting in the 1860's.

The few facts which Burty does supply add nothing to our assessment of the growth of visual experience of Japanese art or our accurate knowledge about it. In 1869 Burty still believed that Hokusai's "Mangwa" consisted of 28 volumes, which indicates that he must have been unable to 100 separate Hokusai's work from that of other Japanese artists or that he was confusing several of Hokusai's works. He remarks that Martz, the enameller to whom Emaux Cloisonnés <sup>was dedicated</sup> owned "la serie complete des albums du grand artiste Japonais Ou-Kou-Say, des feuilles imprimés de Toyo-Kouni, de son eleve Kouni-Yosi, de Yossi-Tana, etc." 101

The emergence of the names of Kuniyoshi, Toyokuni, and Yoshitsuni into French is new and interesting, but only Kuniyoshi's prints had not previously been imported into Europe and in any case there is no way of identifying the prints concerned. Moreover they are all nineteenth century artists who had had work published in Yokohama. This therefore confirms my hypothesis that ( ) late Yokohama prints were practically X all that were available in Europe during the 1860's and the 1867 exhibition.

Burty's writings in 1869 certainly prove that he had seen a great deal of Far Eastern art in the previous two or three years. This was almost certainly the result of the 1867 Exposition. Indeed Burty's evaluation of the relative merits of Chinese and Japanese art follows the popular evaluation of the 1867 exhibition.

It seems likely that Burty's interest in Far Eastern art was stimulated by this exhibition.

The book "Emaux Cloisonnés" is illustrated with four nondescript colour plates of Japanese enamel designs by Gustave Regamey. They provide no evidence of Burty's statement that Martz the enameller was producing enamels based on motifs from his Japanese prints. It also contains decorative black and white vignettes, wood engravings based on Japanese prints made by Felix Regamey. They are very small but made with such felicity that some of them can be identified. For instance the riderless horse on Page 29 is undoubtedly derived from the plates showing small sketches of horses in Volume 6 of the Mangwa. Page 57 is a tiny reproduction derived from one of Hokusai's "36 Views of Fuji".

I (27)  
a, b  
102

The rest of the drawings are not so easy to identify though their style suggests Hokusai, during the period when he was influenced by Chinese art.

They are the first attempt by Regamey to study and make use of Japanese motifs. Some of the motifs are repeated at various times in his many illustrated books on Japan written as his interest in Japan developed over the years after his first visit there in 1876-77 with Emile Guimet. Their accuracy and sensitivity to Japanese style is remarkable and far higher than anything previously made in the West, and than anything produced by Regamey himself.

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One final point must be made about the context in which Burty saw Japanese art. It was not considered as art for its own sake but always considered in the context of design as in "Emaux Cloisonnés". This is

not to say that Japanese art was relegated to the status of an exemplar for industrial designers. Rather it points to a much closer relationship between "Design" and "Fine Art" than is supposed to have existed in the nineteenth century. Japanese art was to strengthen this connection in the minds of critics and connoisseurs. Indeed it may be that the Japanese example made a great contribution to the early development of the belief that Fine Art and Craft went hand in hand. This was of particular importance in Art Education and Art Theory in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It was impossible in Japanese art to distinguish between the intellectual and the skilful, to isolate an aesthetic from the observed practice. Thus critics in the late 1860's made no attempt to do so.

Besides Burty, Ernst Chesneau who wrote for "Le Constitutionnel" developed a lengthy assessment of Japanese art. Like Burty he avoided the distinction between design and art. Thus we find that the two articles on which I base my discussion of his views, are a mixture of discussion on both, despite one being ostensibly an article on "Fine Art" and the other a lecture to manufacturing designers.

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Indeed the lecture to designers repeats many of the points made in the Fine Art article, going so far as to quote several passages word for word. Thus as in the case of Burty we can treat the two as expressive of a continuous viewpoint. Chesneau's criticism follows much the same pattern as Burty's, but differs in that Chesneau's is far more elaborate and appears to be part of a worked out scheme of criticism. Chesneau follows through his analogies to Greek art and Romantic art and theory and, in his case, to Realism, at great length and is concerned to define much more exactly the specific aesthetic and intellectual problems raised by Japan. This concern arises as a natural result of his confronting Japanese art for the first time as a part of the task of writing a series of reviews of the Fine Art exhibitions of the various countries in the

1867 Exposition. Perhaps it is for this reason that he is concerned to define the Japanese as a race, distinct from the Chinese, whom he considers inferior in art and civilization, and he is also concerned to define Japanese civilization and culture accurately, in relation to Japanese art. The first ten of the twenty-eight pages of his lecture at the Union Centrale des Beaux Arts concerned with a description of Japanese civilization, justifying Chesneau's conclusion:

Avec de telles moeurs.....cette population, dis-je, paraît voir fixé, chose rare, l'idéal de bonheur, qu'elle s'est proposé la paix de l'âme et la sérénité absolue de l'esprit.

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In his Exposition article he wrote that Japan was superior in every way to China from politics to the arts. He also quotes two Japanese fairy tales, one of which is the familiar "Tongue-cut Sparrow", from Alcock's "The Capital of the Tycoon". He remarks that Japanese art is appreciated throughout the population and is thus a genuinely popular art unlike art in the West.

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Chesneau therefore creates a picture of a social paradise, as a basis for his admiration of Japanese art, especially Hokusai. This is to prepare for his introduction of "Realist" as well as "Classical" and "Romantic" analogies for Japanese art.

In his 1869 lecture Chesneau identifies three main areas of originality in Japanese art - absence of symmetry, style and colour. Like Burty and earlier critics, Chesneau spends a great deal of time discussing the asymmetry of Japanese design. The Japanese never make two of anything exactly alike, even a pair of vases. They operate on a principle which Chesneau calls "dyssymetrie". He defines this at great length by appealing to the Greek notion of organic symmetry, whereby an overall balance is achieved between slightly differing halves as in the human body, for which definition he quotes Viollet le Duc's "Dictionnaire raisonné d'architecture". He extends this argument by appealing to the

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work of Penrose and to Beule's "L'Acropole d'Athènes" as having shown considerable intentional irregularity in the Parthenon's structure and in other Greek buildings.

Irregularity, "dyssymetrie" is necessary for life, symmetry as defined in Europe is deathly:

Ce que je veux vous dire, Messieurs, c'est que les formes géométriques primitives, simples, parfaites, ne sont point des formes esthétiques. La ligne droite, le triangle équilatéral, le carré, le cercle, formes pratiques de force, de résistance de stabilité, sont des formes rigides, immobiles, des formes abstraites et mortes.

111

Chesneau is particularly concerned to defend Japanese art against the change of preciousness and lifelessness.

Il semblerait qu'une préoccupation si constante doit imposer aux ouvrages Japonais un caractère de fadeur excessive. C'est précisément le contraire qui se produit, et, en effet, avec la finesse de jugement qui leur est propre, les artistes Japonais ont su relever cet enervement de la forme par accentuation et le caractère énergique du dessin, et aussi par l'imprévu des combinaisons.

112

Japanese art is seen as bringing a new vitality into a redundant Western tradition in the visual arts. Many critics and artists were to follow Chesneau and to ally a view of Japan as a primeval social paradise with an assertion of the "life-giving" influence of its art on the Western tradition.

Chesneau's discussion of the problem in terms of symmetry is perhaps misleading, since clearly his argument is about the imagination and its manifestation in the plastic arts, not about a decorative mannerism. We can see this in his discussion of fantasy in art.

Chesneau charges "symmetry" with restricting fantasy in art. He extends this charge to all idealistic, classically based art. He points out, with some truth, that Ingres could not create a satisfactory monster in any of his mythological paintings such as "Angélique et Médor". Ingres could only create work like "La Source" through academic study, whereas

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Delacroix could create a convincing "monstre" in "Persée délivrant Andromède" through imagination.

The Japanese ability to invent ghosts and chimeras was, for Chesneau, proof of their creative ability, but of course he has also to save the Greeks from condemnation:

Eh bien! Cette faculté créatrice, les Japonais l'ont au suprême degré. Avec le sens de la beauté en plus, les Grecs créant leurs admirables centaures, leurs admirables faunes, n'étaient pas plus forts.

Chesneau draws the Japanese even closer to the Greeks by pointing out that the portrayal of Japanese women in prints is a total idealization. This is found even in Hokusai. 114

As in Burty's writing we see here evidence that the dissolution of the opposition of Romantic and Classical modes of thinking about art was encouraged or at least brought into focus by the Japanese example. 115

Chesneau's second point of difference, "style", is a further example of Japanese influence at the basis of changes in ideas about art out of which grew an understanding of art and design which has lasted until quite recently.

Chesneau identifies three major qualities in Japanese style in industrial, that is to say, craft objects, and in works of art.

Je dis que l'art japonais se présente dans ses moindres manifestations avec toutes les beautés de ce qu'on appelle le style. Ce rare mérite tient uniquement à la merveilleuse harmonie les artistes savent établir. 1. entre la forme et la destination de l'objet; 2. entre la forme constitutive et le décor superficiel de l'objet; 3. entre la forme et la matière de l'objet. 116

While it appears that Chesneau is talking here of design and arguing that Japanese objects show a relation of form and decoration to function, he is in fact going much further, for he insists on applying these criteria to all Japanese objects whether "decorative" or not. 117

This is particularly true of point three which is extended to a concept of truth to materials. Every Japanese object "met scrupuleusement en

lumière toutes les propriétés de la substance ou matière employée." 118

Chesneau also defends Japanese art by the linked concept of the essential character of all objects and living things which is paralleled in all Japanese prints, drawings and designs by an appropriate image and/or form. Japanese artists, he argues, do not believe in types of beauty, such as Western artists use and which have become an iron law for painters and sculptors. Instead;

La tendance dominante dans l'art japonais, c'est l'accentuation, la mise en lumière du caractère essentiel, du caractère vital et expressif de la plante, de l'animal, de l'homme en ses diverses fonctions, de la nature tout entière prise dans ses ensemble et dans ses particularités.

119

Chesneau calls this attitude "la recherche de l'expression". It is clear that we have here an anticipation of Bergson's attempt to base a theory of art on l'élan vital" and the beginning of the notion of art as a parallel to nature. Once again it is interesting to find such an idea brought into focus at this early date by the Japanese example.

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The notion of "expression" is, of course, an ancient basis for a philosophy of beauty going back to Plato, and made great use of by Romantic artists, in particular Delacroix and Goya with whom Chesneau and other critics often compare the work of Hokusai and other Japanese artists. Like Burty, Chesneau argues that the problems of creating expressive beauty can be seen to have been allied indissolubly to formal beauty in Japanese art.

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Expressive beauty is derived primarily from nature, whereas formal beauty originates with the intellect:

On peut dire que les artistes japonais ont pour la réalité un respect profond qui s'allie chez eux à une intelligence esthétique admirable. Ils ont le don d'assouplir le réel aux caprices d'imagination le plus étonnants, sans jamais trahir ni dénaturer cette réalité, principe et point de départ infailibles de toutes leurs combinaisons de forms.

123

As with Burty, Chesneau sees the ability of Japanese art to reconcile

nature with artifice, what is appropriate and what is beautiful, as its central value and importance for Western art. Like Burty he is repeating a discovery made by painters in the mid 1860's when the crisis of the separation between nature and artifice in the Western tradition was beginning to make art impossible. The difference between them is that Chesneau articulates a well thought out, if not highly consistent critical schema and in doing so anticipates later ideas and attitudes. His criticism provides evidence for my view that Japanese art was a vitally important catalyst in changing art and ideas about art in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Chesneau supports his ideas with a great deal of discussion which it is not necessary to repeat but some points bear on the development of the visual experience of Japan. Chesneau, like Burty, had clearly seen much Japanese art, but the only name he mentions is Hokusai. Nonetheless some of his information about the "Mangwa" is correct, he states that it had fourteen volumes and he had obviously studied some of them in detail, notably what he thought was volume five, in which he describes the second to last page, a priest before an enthroned deity. It seems Chesneau owned some volumes of the Mangwa. He also states:

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Un cahier, le cinquième, est consacré, à l'architecture religieuse; j'y remarque même un cours de perspective fort clair, fort bien fait, un autre aux représentations mythologiques, un troisième à des études d'animaux tantôt réel tantôt fantastiques; il y a tel tigre que Géricault, Delacroix ou Barye seraient fiers de signer.

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The analogies Chesneau draws with Western artists are similar to those of Burty. He attributes great inventiveness to them and naturally draws an analogy with Delacroix and other Romantics. However Chesneau was concerned as a critic with Realism and Realist art theory and so he also uses an analogy with Dutch artists, speaking of "le réalisme d'un Jordaens, d'un Rubens ou d'un Oksai" in order to defend Hokusai against the charge of impropriety; he also compares his sense of humour and observation to that of Teniers, Ostade and Jan Steen.

In doing this he was, like Burty, appropriating Japanese art for his own aesthetic predilections, but these predilections did not prevent the ability of Japanese art to relate nature and artifice from emerging as its central aesthetic appeal for both men. The aesthetics of the relative and the appropriate dominate the critical response to the Japanese appearance at the International Exposition of 1867.

126

Chesneau's criticism provides us with evidence of the increasingly relative nature of the standards of beauty in art and design that began with the Realists assertion that visual art had many languages, each equally correct. It is fascinating to see the relativity of all things which underly Japanese art emerging in the writing of an essentially conservative art critic. This is Schwab's oriental Renaissance in progress.

Chesneau was also the first critic to see or claim to see the direct use of Japanese art in the work of contemporary Western artists. In his review of "La Jeune Ecole" at the 1867 Exposition, he wrote of Boudin:

L'artiste a évité le péril fort heureusement (de tomber dans l'image de mode). L'artiste, il n'est attaché qu'aux ensembles, laissant le paysage, le ciel et la mer dominer tous ces groupes, qui n'y prennent place que d'une façon purement épisodique. Tout cela s'épanouit dans le joyeux éclat de couleurs des feuilles peintes Japonaises.

127

He also saw Japanese influence in two works which Degas showed in 1867 for the second time, one of which he does not describe. The other is recognisable as the "Bellalli Sisters".

In Boudin, Chesneau saw Japanese colour as the chief influence. In Degas he saw the study of the form of Japanese drawings and prints contributing greatly to;

une recherche tres délicate des finesses, des nuances de la vie en mouvement, mais d'un mouvement simple et grave.

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I have discussed the implications of Chesneau's criticism of Degas in Part One.

129

Here it is sufficient to observe the remarkably few direct analogies

made by critics of art between Japanese art and contemporary painters. This suggests the usual "time-lag" between critical appreciation and an already evident fact of art-history. We see both Burty and Chesneau, as critics, going over the ground covered by Degas and other artists before 1867. Chesneau says even less than Burty about the third element which he claims to be unique in Japanese art, colour. He appeals to the evidence of his audience's eyes and confines himself to observing the economy of colours with which the Japanese achieve their magnificent harmonies.

There are many places in his 1869 lecture in which he appeals to his audience's memory of Japanese work, when discussing colour in particular. That he could do this suggests that there was a large number of people in Paris familiar with the form of Japanese objects in 1869. This is a measure of the effectiveness of the 1867 exhibition in promoting interest in Japan.

Not only Chesneau was attracted to the aspects of Japanese art which could be represented as "realistic".

Champfleury was so taken with Japanese art that he reproduced several drawings from a plate of sketches of cats in his work "Les Chats" I (28) published in 1869. He attributed these drawings to Hokusai, but in fact 130 they were by Hiroshige, for S. Bing later identified the plate from which they were all derived as by Hiroshige in "Artistic Japan". The confusion I (29) of Hokusai with Hiroshige provides evidence that the name Hokusai was 131 being used as a catch-all for all Japanese albums and prints using any line drawing style which vaguely resembled the "Mangwa". We should therefore treat all claims to having seen Hokusai's work with some caution. Champfleury like Chesneau gives the information that the Mangwa has fourteen volumes, but the plate he reproduces is not amongst them. 132

Champfleury wrote:

I cannot convey a better idea of the merit of this painter - his name was Fo-Kou-Say, but he is more popular in Paris under the name of Hok'sai - than by likening him to Goya. He possesses the variety

and fancifulness of that great artist and even his manner of engraving bears a marked similarity to that of the author of "Les Caprices".

Hok'sai has done more to facilitate our knowledge of Japan than travellers and teachers of Japanese have effected. Due to the proliferation of his drawings, we are able to assess aright the civilization and intelligence of a people, who instead of slumbering amid the traditions of the past, like the Chinese, press resolutely towards competition with the discoveries of Europe.

Hok'sai was a thoroughly original artist. The institution of his country, the manners and customs of its inhabitants, his own nature, even the popularity of his drawings, furnished his genius with matter to work upon. That genius is rendered particularly striking and attractive to me by my present studies.

133

Champfleury's comparison of Hokusai's work to Goya's "Caprichos" is a direct link to the Realists of the early 1860's and to Baudelaire:

Goya cauchemar plein de choses inconnues,  
De foetus qu'un fait cuire au milieu des sabbats,  
De vieilles au miroir et d'enfants toutes nues,  
Pour tenter les demons ajustant biens leurs bas.

134

Hokusai, as a representative of Japanese art, is becoming one of the luminaries of art, "a thoroughly original artist" in the company of Delacroix, Goya, Manet and others whose work is reproduced in "Les Chats", alongside the Japanese drawings.

135

Champfleury cases new light on the reception of Japanese art as "Realism" and as "Fantasy" with his analogy with Goya. But his basic claims - that Hokusai is a social artist, describing the mores and beliefs of Japan, and that he possesses creative imagination of the same order of fantasy as Goya is closely paralleled by Chesneau.

136

In both cases my thesis that the "Realist" writers of the early 1860's had prepared a context for the acceptance of Japanese art in Paris is confirmed.

Champfleury's use of Japanese illustrations in his book marks the first appearance of Japanese art on equal footing with European fine artists. We may assume that he was influenced in this by the appearance of Japan in the 1867 Exposition Universelle.

Feydeau, in his article on the sale of the Japanese exhibition in 1869, makes no attempt to relate Japanese art to European art and art theory. However he does devote a fair amount of space to stating that the Japanese are hard-working and to demonstrating their superiority over the Chinese. Feydeau is the one writer to comment on the characteristics of Japanese art as inferior to European art. He remarks that although Japanese is undoubtedly original it will improve greatly when Japanese artists have assimilated the European principles which they lack. In this he is at complete variance with Chesneau who deplored the evidence of this which he saw in the 1867 exhibition. This is perhaps because Feydeau was not primarily an art critic, but a professional journalist who became editor of an art magazine. 137

Other Frenchmen who wrote about Japanese art during this period immediately following the 1867 exhibition, such as Adalbert de Beaumont followed the general lines I have drawn. 138

In England, on the other hand, there was little response to the exhibition in the media. The English tried to ignore the Exposition in any case and only reported the essentials despite the large British contingent. They made a special point of ignoring the Japanese Exhibition, not one critical discussion of it appears in a British publication of the time. This is hardly surprising when one considers that the British official guide makes no mention of Japan save to record the number of square feet allocated to the exhibition.

This leaves us with the problem of estimating the response amongst connoisseurs and collectors. For, typically, the English enthusiasts at this time were not concerned to convert others or to theorize about their discoveries, merely to acquire them.

We know that the English collectors, Audsley and Bowes were at work in the exhibition, and that others, such as a Mr. Joseph Beck who collected blue and white ware, also attended. We have already discussed 139

the exaggerated claims of Audsley and Bowes as to the completeness of the exhibition and it seems their reaction was one of uncritical enthusiasm.

Audsley and Bowes worked together on papers and exhibitions concerned with Japanese art held in Liverpool and also held occasionally in London. 140

Audsley was the more intellectual of the two. He emphasizes the industriousness of the Japanese in his early papers. He also stresses their closeness to nature and claims the Japanese artist to be a devoted worshipper of nature. In his paper for the Architectural Association written in 1872, Audsley describes a demonstration of the use of thumb-prints to represent fruit given by an acquaintance of his who had seen it in Japan. He cites this as an example of the direct and natural approach to creation of the Japanese.

There is no evidence that other English Japanese enthusiasts were as affected by the 1867 exhibition in Paris as Audsley and Bowes. William Rossetti makes no mention of it in his account of the Japanese mania in his memoirs. He does state that in 1867 he began to buy many more books 141 and prints than his brother and he arranged a frieze of them in his dining room at Endsleigh Gardens when he moved in there, that year. His purchases of prints were divided equally between London and Paris. Dante Rossetti also acquired a few prints, triptychs, and books. He had the triptychs framed and on his death they passed to William.

William's estimate of Hiroshige was that only Turner was a better landscape painter and Hokusai was a "stupendous master of whatever he set his hand to". 142

In 1868 Rossetti showed some Japanese drawings of animals to Nettleship, a young artist. He suggested that Nettleship should start his career by illustrating "Prometheus Unbound";

a suggestion received with favour. Showed him some Hokusai's and other Japanese work which took him aback by their power. He himself has an excellently good feeling for studies of animals. 143

In 1870 Rossetti commented in his diary on a Japanese painting by the artist Ganko, of a tiger, on silk, which he had been to see in the South Kensington Museum. He remembered Ganko in his "memoirs" as;

one who understood a tiger - the essence of a tiger, not to insist on his skeletal scaffolding and his 'anatomy figure'.

144

"Closeness to nature" was the element which the British enthusiasts of Japanese art stressed in their later writings. This they share with the French, but no Englishman attempted to interpret the aesthetics of Japanese art in the way that Chesneau and others did in France. The only possible critical influence on the English reaction was Ruskin and his animosity to non-Christian art prevented any systematic application of Ruskinian principles to Japan.

In England then, the 1867 Exhibition was of little influence in spreading the knowledge of Japanese art to a general public. Instead, a gradual familiarity with Japanese objects grew as a result of the activities of enthusiasts.

Popular entertainment and journals also helped to spread this knowledge. In May 1868 the Imperial Japanese Troupe of Jugglers and Acrobats performed at the Lyceum Theatre in London, against a background showing 145 a remarkable landscape of Yokohama with Fujiyama in the distance, painted I (30) by a Mr. Grieve. Similar performances had taken place in St. Martin's Hall in 1867, including the famous butterfly trick. They were to continue as part of the English Music Hall until Edwardian times and contributed a considerable amount to the English image of Japan.

One aspect of the influence of the 1867 exhibition of extreme importance for the future was the number of those in whom it inspired a wish to travel to Japan. These included Duret the art critic, the art dealers the Sickel Brothers, Felix Regamey, the jeweller Martz, the English collector Audsley, the English translator of Japanese literature, Dickins, and many more, not all of whom reached Japan. Throughout the

1870's these returning travellers revitalized interest in Japanese art by new revelations and collections.

To sum up, the Japanese appearance in 1867 had a considerable effect in France, casting its direct influence forward as far as the Franco-Prussian War. The French saw Japanese art as vital, in a period when the Western tradition of painting and design were sterile and deadlocked. French critics defended Japanese art by relating it to the aesthetic principles which they supported and by using analogies with various artists, Burty with the eighteenth century, Chesneau with Dutch genre painters and Rubens. The most popular overall analogies were with Delacroix and the Greeks, especially with Greek architecture. This indicates the role the Japanese example played in dissolving the Romantic/Classic deadlock of aesthetics and style in the arts in the 1860's. Moreover through such analogies Japanese art became accepted as a part of the Pantheon of artistic achievement available to young artists.

A further important point about the enthusiasm engendered by Japan in the 1867 Exposition is that it was, as Chesneau stated, "à la mode". Partisans of Japanese art were establishment figures and their acceptance of it was in no sense revolutionary. Even Chesneau was not led to condemn Ingres and other idealistic artists. Many writers have seen the beginnings of interest in Japanese art in Paris as part of an underground movement which burst on the world in the Impressionist exhibition of 1874. The opposite is the case. A love of Japanese art was highly respectable immediately after 1867 and has continued to be so ever since.

This raises the problem of the communication between creative artists and the modish enthusiasts of Japanese art. It would seem that this was no problem, that the artists were friendly with Burty, Chesneau, and even with the most fashionable of the Jinglar Society. Moreover they shared aesthetic attitudes. However the absence of any artists among the enthusiasts and propagandists for Japan after 1867 is significant and

and must be borne in mind when we consider artistic developments in Section Four.

The scholarly knowledge of Japanese art in France was not advanced greatly by the 1867 exhibition. We have seen that considerable confusion still arose about the identity of Hokusai, and although new artists' work was introduced into Europe - Kuniyoshi, Yoshitora and Utamaro among the prints, and some excellent work in lacquer - that no knowledge of the different styles and historical place of various masters existed in Europe. The 1867 Exhibition was not education except in providing direct visual experience of Japanese work.

In England the Exhibition had virtually no effect on the assessment of Japanese art. It appeared as one incident in a gradual growth of visual acquaintance with Japan.

In both countries the general enthusiasm for Japanese art was unhampered by considerations of relative quality and many visitors to the 1867 exhibition commented on the Japanese exhibition without being aware that the majority of the goods on display were of relatively poor quality. 146

In conclusion, we may say that the Japanese appearance at the 1867 exhibition did have a considerable influence in promoting interest in Japan and Japanese art. This influence however was part of a consistently developing pattern of interest in Japan, not a sudden and unprepared revelation.

The curiosity about Japan did bring about the publication of several books about Japanese life. The most important was Aimé Humbert's "Le Japon Illustre" of 1872. Humbert had been a Swiss diplomat in Japan. 147 His book had very little to say about Japanese art, but its two volumes are filled with reproductions of drawings, paintings and photographs of Japan by Europeans, many of which had been previously published. Drawings and paintings by Wirgman of the London News, by Roussin, originally published in his book "Un Campagne sur les côtes du Japon", and by others

such as Baynard, Catenacci Crépon and engravings from photographs by Beato and others are used in great profusion in the book. Their subjects are distributed over the whole range of Japanese life - from a young girl making up her face, by Roussin, to an engraving of the Daibutsu at Kamakura from a photograph. There are also drawings of rats as rice merchants and theatrical masks reproduced from the "Mangwa" and drawings of gods, such as Futen, also by Hokusai.

Humbert's book sums up the range of visual imagery associated with Japan which was available in 1870. It also contains what for the times was a large amount of Japanese history and culture as a record of Humbert's own life in Japan. I will refer to some of the illustrations in later discussions, but for the present it is sufficient to state that as a whole they demonstrate an iconography of Japan, thoroughly established in Europe by 1870.

A curious early example of that iconography is provided by the cartoon "Equilibre Européen" by Daumier, published in Le Charivari on 30th December 1867. It shows a spinning top balanced on a Japanese sword. Ernst Gombrich interprets this as an allusion to the European balance of power being seen to depend on the fear of the rising power of Japan. I find this unacceptable, as Japan had no power in 1867, as it was undergoing major internal upheavals. Nonetheless the fine edge of the sword and the known skill of Japanese jugglers are used to emphasize the delicate situation in Europe. This cartoon may also refer to the struggles of the European powers to establish diplomatic influence in Japan. Whatever its meaning, however, it remains an interesting example of the entrance of Japanese iconography into Western culture. 147b

The 1870's were spent enlarging the iconography, learning its Japanese significance, and establishing ever firmer patterns of association for it within Western culture.

The first important popular translations of Japanese literature

appeared in 1871. In Paris, Leon de Rosny translated a whole range of Japanese verse in his "Anthologie Japonais". In London, Mitford, one of the early British travellers to Japan published the two volumes "Tales of Old Japan". Both volumes contain Japanese illustrations. 148

De Rosny's work was prepared in 1869 but was not published until 1871 as a result of the Franco-Prussian War. It contains a full introduction, explanations of the Japanese literary tradition, and some discussion of the extracts from various Japanese anthologies contained within it. While it was partly intended for students, it was not by any means a textbook. The verse is interesting in itself and no doubt contributed to the picture of Japanese art being built up in Europe. Here is an example: 149

"Le Clair de Lune"

A Travers les eclaircies des nuages accumulés  
par le vent d'automne,  
Penetre la clarté lumineuse de la lune. 150

Verse of this kind had a definite effect on the sensibility of Europeans and especially in the manner in which they approached Far Eastern art. 151

However De Rosny's book has other direct information about art. The European text was bound back to back with a 72-page book of verse reproduced exactly from the Japanese. Japanese books read from back to front so this back to back arrangement was perfectly logical. The back cover is derived from a print, in a style similar to Kunisada. The poetry pages themselves are printed on designs of landscapes and flowers, in single colours, green, brown, yellow and occasionally in gold. 152

De Rosny also supplies a bibliography of Japanese poetry books in Europe, consisting of 160 items of which only five had illustrations, two owned by Rosny, two owned by the British Museum, and one in the Siebold collection. Rosny identified the illustrations of his work as by Issensai Morimitsu and Gyokransai Sadahide, but does not name the artists of the other works. I (31) a6

De Rosny had looked in all the oriental libraries of Europe for this list and it may be taken as representative of the availability of Japanese illustrated books in public, and indeed, in private hands in the years previous to 1860. The number is surprisingly small compared to the whole, which is in itself small. Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan" were also illustrated in many black and white prints specially made for the book. The illustrations were drawn by Odaké, an artist employed by Mitford, and then cut on wood by a famous wood-engraver in Tokyo. "They are therefore", said Mitford in his introduction "genuine specimens of Japanese art".

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Mitford added to his book his famous discussion of seppuku (hari-kari) and the description of such an execution which he had seen himself when in Japan. His work is discussed at length below.

No European fiction took up Japanese themes until 1875 when Gautier's novel about Samurai 'L'Usurpateur" was published. This may be a measure of the length of time taken for Japanese themes to work through the European imagination and to distinguish themselves from the Chinese.

Another possibility is that it was only with the continuous unfolding of information about Japan during the 1870's that it became sufficiently popular for a novelist such as Gautier to interest herself in a Japanese setting.

This spread of information is the subject of the next chapter of this thesis.

SECTION TWOCHAPTER TWOThe Discovery of Japan in France and England after the Franco-Prussian War.

(The Vienna Exhibition; exhibitions in London and Liverpool).

The decade and a half from 1868 to 1883 saw a rapid extension of the awareness in Europe, of Japan and of the Far East. The Franco-Prussian War acted in many ways as a hiatus between the 1867 Exposition and the interest which surrounded it and subsequent events. It is therefore important to the events of the 1870's as a separate entity.

However the Franco-Prussian war contributed to the greater interest shown in Japan by Europeans, especially Frenchmen. During the war itself many French artists and critics were exiled in England, particularly in London. There they made contact with English Japanese enthusiasts and exchanged knowledge and ideas. The relationship between Ph. Burty and the Englishmen, Audsley and Bowes, dates from this time, though Burty failed to meet them on his trip to England. There was thus achieved a mixing and amalgamation of critical attitudes to Far Eastern Art much stronger than that previously attained. The characteristic English concern with the "ornamental" aspect of Japanese art as exemplified by Alcock, Dresser and Leighton in the 1860's was to be broadened considerably during the 1870's.

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The Franco-Prussian war and its aftermath also made travel to foreign parts a much more acceptable activity for Frenchmen. This must have weighed in the minds of many who set out to the Far East in the early 1870's, such as Duret, Cernuschi or the writer Bousquet. It was during the 1870's that many Europeans trading in or with Japan made a fortune. Of course a few travellers to the Far East were not motivated by financial or social circumstances.

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The Franco-Prussian war also achieved the rapid dissemination of many of the finest Japanese objects collected by Frenchmen in the 1860's into English collections. Audsley noted this phenomenon in 1872. The most famous sale of a French collection in England containing Japanese work is that of Ph. Burty of 1876, but many other public and private sales followed the impoverishment of many of the French middle classes as a result of the war.

The Japanese themselves experienced a revolution during the period of the Franco-Prussian war. The period from 1868 to 1871 was one of political turmoil as Japan attempted to adjust to the consequences of the Meiji Restoration. 1871 marked the victory of "progressive" pro Western forces in Japan. Feudal powers were destroyed by government edict in August of that year. The struggle with "conservative" leaders went on until the defeat of the Satsuma rebellion in 1877. However from 1871 onwards the Japanese government felt safe in pursuing a strong policy of Westernisation internally and in actively educating foreign nations in the culture of Japan. The consequence of this was that future official exhibitions abroad were mounted by the Japanese government with the conscious aim of placing Japan alongside other nations in the world community. This was the case in Vienna in 1873, in Philadelphia in 1876, in Paris in 1878 and 1889. In all, Japan organized forty-four major official international appearances in Europe, America and Australia between 1873 and the 1925 International Decorative Arts exhibition in Paris. It had not been so with the somewhat confused and competitive organisation of the Japanese exhibit in Paris in 1867. In the 1870's Japanese exhibitions were deliberately planned to educate. Special ambassadors were entrusted with their preparation.

In pursuit of Western knowledge, Japan sent many missions to Europe and the United States. The most important was the Iwakura mission of 1871-1873. This was composed of forty-eight delegates together with

fifty-four students led by Prince Iwakura Totomi, an important leader of the reform movement. These missions served not only to gather useful information for Japan but also did much to communicate knowledge of Japan to the West. Ph. Burty was initiated into the technique of handling a Japanese brush by seeing an ambassador taking notes with one in Paris in 1873. He was also helped to identify and describe the metalwork in his collection by a young Japanese noble. This was the Prince Kimnochi Saionji (or Sayounshi as De Goncourt spelt it). He lived in Paris throughout the 1870's as a delegate and student, dining with De Goncourt, De Nittis, Burty and other Japanese enthusiasts. On one occasion he presented Burty with a set of Japanese swords belonging to his family, apologising for their poor condition, with the explanation that his friends had used them for chopping wire from the necks from champagne bottles.

Despite their strange behaviour these Japanese exiles were to be of great value to European enthusiasts for Japanese art.

In Japan itself a "museum", the Museum of Yushima, was founded in 1871 in Tokyo, to document and preserve examples of contemporary Japanese arts, crafts, design and industry. It also contained scientific exhibits. The "museum" concentrated on contemporary work and was intended to raise standards by example, much in the manner of the South Kensington Museum in London. The museum was carved in solid rock in the garden of the Yushima Seido Temple in Tokyo and remained there until 1873 when it was transferred to the residence of the Shimagu at Koji-machi.

It was founded after the Japanese scholars Machida Hisanari and Tanaka Yoshio had visited museums in Europe and the U.S.A. to study current museum practice. Later, in the 1880's as a result of the efforts of European scholars, notably Fenellosa, the museum, now established at Ueno Park, Tokyo, took full responsibility for the preservation of Japan's artistic heritage, the greater part of which had already been exported in the 1870's, in spite of a decree called "The Preservation of Ancient

Objects" which required the registration of all antiquities and works of art, which was first promulgated in 1871.

The officials of the Museum of Yushima had played a great part in publicising Japanese arts, crafts and industry abroad. They assembled material for international exhibitions in Europe and the United States 161 and made their Tokyo museum a focal point for Western tourists visiting Japan. Unfortunately little record of their activities remains, even in Japan.

The rapid westernisation of Japan is often held responsible for the absolute decline of contemporary art in Japan. This is not so clear as 162 it might appear. Whilst it is true that many Japanese artists and craftsmen starved, there were also many who made a good living and offered examples for Europeans to study. Kyosai was the most famous of these in the West. More important perhaps than the westernisation of Japan in the 1870's was the ability of Westerners to offer enormously inflated prices for works of art and craftsmanship, as a result of an extremely one-sided exchange rate. This lowered the quality of craftsmanship and eventually made it possible to make a good living by exporting in bulk. Already by the late 1870's many voices were being raised in protest against the declining standards of cheap artistic imports from the Far East, as cheap contemporary wares replaced ancient craftsmanship.

The Times, relying on statements by Audsley, as early as 1872 spoke thus of enamels:

It is surmised that enamels must have been treasured up in great houses which were plundered during the recent revolutionary movements in the country and that spoils were sent abroad for sale.....The attention lately given to the subject has produced a demand and several eminent persons have despatched agents to Japan to seek for the ware. The demand has produced an abundance of modern imitations, coarse in execution, blotchy in colouring, and although often artistic in design, presenting no trace of either the manual skill or the loving patience of craftsmen of a bygone time. The old enamel has disappeared from the market and collectors who now part with their specimens will probably find it impossible to replace them.

Alcock, E. De. Goncourt, Burty and many others voiced the same complaint as the 1870's passed into the 1880's, and what had been an artistic adventure rapidly dwindled into a fashion. Cloisonné and lacquer were the first objects to become debased and disappear, then metalwork of all kinds followed shortly by ceramics and lastly paintings and prints, the Uki-yo-e school being the last to lose its hold.

The main effect of westernisation was to provide vast quantities of seventeenth and eighteenth century goods for export. The effect of many of the measures taken by the Japanese government in the years following 1871 was to disestablish and dispossess many noble families. This frequently led to the sale of their family collection of art works, which were then exported, a process which reached its height in the mid-1870's. It led to the founding of the European importing businesses such as Sichel Frères and S. Bing in Paris and Liberty's in London.

Naturally demand for "ancient" wares far exceeded supply and as early as 1872 the export trade responded with products such as "Yeddo Satsuma" - a crude forgery of Satsuma made in Tokyo. Several examples appeared in the Liverpool exhibition of that year.

The 1870's were the period of the most rapid growth in imports of works of art and craft of all kinds. They may well have been the time of the greatest number of imports. It was in the 1870's that the great private collections in England and France had their beginnings and the famous oriental museums, the Cernuschi and the Guimet in Paris, and the Bowes museum in Liverpool were founded, and the Far Eastern collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in England began massive acquisitions.

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Scenes such as that described here by De Goncourt must have been common experience in the mid-1870's:

Ce matin, j'ai été prendre par Burty et nous avons été inspectionner l'arrivage de deux envois du Japon.

Nous avons passé des heures au milieu de ces formes, de ces couleurs, de ces choses de bronze, de porcelaine, de faïence, de jade, d'ivoire, de bois, de carton, de tout cet art captieux et hallucinatoire. Nous avons passé des heures, tant d'heures, qu'il était quatre heures quand j'ai déjeuné. Ces débauches d'art - celle de ce matin m'a coûté plus de cinq cents francs.

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The final factor which made possible the rapid "looting" of Japan by the West, and in some ways the most important, was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the technical development of steamships, with light steel hulls and powerful engines. It was the increased comfort offered by these ships which tempted travellers to the Far East and it was their capacious hulls that made possible the enormous quantities of western imports.

It should therefore be no surprise that one of the most important exhibitions of Far Eastern art held in the 1870's was that of the Liverpool Art Club in 1872. Liverpool grew prosperous as great steam port and a group of collectors of Far Eastern art was formed there as a natural result of this.

The founding of the L.A.C. was marked by the private exhibition in several rooms of the house of one of its members, of a large collection of Oriental Art. Over half the collection belonged to a Mr. James Lord Bowes and the catalogue for the exhibition was written by George Ashdown Audsley.

Bowes was a rich Liverpool businessman who formed the earliest of the large collections of Japanese work in England. The great mass of his collection was acquired in the period from 1867 to 1874. He made purchases in the 1867 exhibition in Paris and in the 1873 exhibition in Vienna. Many more objects were acquired in London, Amsterdam and Paris in private collections, and a good part in Liverpool itself.

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Audsley who was an architect by profession, worked with Bowes during this period, partly as his agent and guide. He had a considerable knowledge of Japanese art for the time and guided Bowes in his purchases.

Audsley, though not wealthy in terms of the nineteenth century, was also a collector. He was well travelled and had visited Siebold's Museum in Leyden.

The partnership between Audsley and Bowes lasted throughout the 1870's. They pioneered the use of chromolithography in the magnificent illustrations of their two volume "Keramic Art of Japan", first published in 1875 and in Audsley's "Ornamental Arts of Japan". Audsley was very active in arranging exhibitions and giving lectures on Japanese arts and crafts. In 1872 he gave a remarkably well-informed lecture on Japanese art to the Architectural Association, using examples from the Bowes Collection, and at the same time organised the Liverpool Art Club Exhibition of Oriental Art.

The Liverpool exhibition contained 1,054 objects, divided into eight 167 groups in Audsley's catalogue: Enamel, Persian Ware, Satsuma Faience, Kaga Ware, Lacquer Work, Porcelain, Ivory Carvings and Metalwork. Nearly a quarter of the exhibits were enamel ware and of these 192 came from the Bowes Collection, of which 149 were Japanese Cloisonné, the rest Chinese. Audsley exhibited some enamels from his collection, so did members of his family. Notable amongst them was a cabinet of cloisonne enamel, made on the same lines as lacquer cabinets, 27 inches high, 30 inches broad and 13 inches deep. It consisted of:

a framework of wood, covered on the top, sides and back with cloisonné in large plaques: those on the sides being ornamented with trees and birds and large panels of diaper in rich colours upon light green grounds; and those at the back being covered with scroll work and beautiful diaper patterns.

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The cabinet contained eight drawers, behind two large sliding doors with images of the Imperial Chrysanthemum and the Ho Ho bird in lacquer, and was also fitted with a movable shutter to the right of the doors on which were Chinese motifs. Many other enamel pieces showed equally complex, even bizarre ornamentation. They are a good indication of the work

available and the current taste.

The predominance of enamel ware in the exhibition was noted by The Times reviewer who gave it considerable stress in his article, pointing out the finer quality of Japanese work. He notes the tiny size of the individual leaves in the designs, not exceeding "half the size of a barleycorn". He accounts for the dark colours of cloisonne in general in that "the glowing surface would be lighted by all the glories of an Eastern sun".

The most striking thing about the Liverpool exhibition is the hierarchy of value placed on different types of Japanese work. Enamel was valued most, then porcelain, lacquer and ivory carvings. Prints and paintings were not exhibited at all, although Audsley and Bowes certainly owned them, Audsley discussed the work of Japanese painters in his 1872 lecture to the Architectural Association. This valuation would be almost exactly reversed if a similar exhibition were to be organised today. There has been a complete revolution in Western taste in Japanese art, cloisonne having very little value. However the Liverpool Art Club typifies the attitude of collectors in the 1870's, and the same marked lack of interest in prints and paintings can be seen among collectors who a decade later contributed to the 1883 exhibition arranged by Louis Gonse in Paris. This is an important point to bear in mind when one considers the influence of Japanese art on Western artists. It meant that prints and paintings became, relatively, cheap and easy to come by. It also explains the repeated phenomenon of the "discovery" of the Japanese print by one artist after another in the 1870's. Prints were not usually given space in exhibitions.

Over 537 pieces in the Liverpool exhibition were listed as "porcelain". The majority were Chinese, one or two pieces of which are identified as Ming or Chien Lung. About a quarter of the "porcelain" was Japanese, with a section of Japanese blue and white. A set of shells for playing the

shell game were displayed of "Japanese Enamelled Porcelain", in which:

An almost countless variety of tints and surface finish is presented, proving the perfect mastery the Japanese artists have over the art of vitrification.

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Audsley however did not realise that the shells were made in pairs.

The attributions of these "porcelain" exhibits are, in general, very doubtful, and without sight of the exhibits it is difficult to discuss them further.

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The next largest section in the exhibition was lacquer, which was all Japanese. It contained several pieces purchased by Audsley and Bowes from the 1867 exhibition in Paris. The Times reviewer notes especially the large lacquer cabinet which had been "the gem of the lacquerwork in the Japanese Court of the Paris Exposition of 1867", which he said attracted much attention. The lacquer work as a whole was of an excellent standard. Most of it was drawn from the Bowes Collection.

I (19d  
(20)

Audsley created two separate sections for ceramics, one for Satsuma ware and one for Kaga (Kutani) ware. The Kaga section contained the bulk of the exhibition of this ware from the Paris Exposition of 1867. Audsley is extremely appreciative of Satsuma, which he distinguishes as the finest of Japanese ceramics. Audsley and Bowes' taste for bright, multicoloured Satsuma and Kaga wares is in keeping with their predilection for cloisonné and much against modern taste. (Soames Jenyns has written to me of "horrible" Satsuma).

I (21)

A small section of the exhibition was devoted to ivory carvings, twenty-two of which were Japanese. Seven are listed as Netsuke. The majority of the carvings are owned by Mr. George Collie. Audsley makes no comment on the carvings or their significance.

On the whole, however, his catalogue notes are of a high quality. He clearly understood the process of lacquering and the refinements of its technique. The same is true of enamelling, despite his lengthy quotation from Theophilus whose technical prescriptions are not really

relevant to the problems of Japanese work. Audsley also understood a little of the process of making ceramics.

Eighteen collectors took part in the Liverpool exhibition and it is a measure of the popularity being achieved by Japanese wares that an exhibition of this kind could have been mounted in Liverpool at this time. The exhibition was typical of collector's tastes in Japanese goods in the 1870's and this was especially so of the Bowes collection. These tastes differ greatly from those of today and so I wish to include here a set of illustrations of items shown in the 1872 exhibition.

I (32)  
a-e

The Liverpool Art Club organised other exhibitions in which Japanese and Far Eastern art played a considerable part. In 1874 an exhibition of fans contained Japanese painted fans and Chinese fans lent by both Mr. and Mrs. Bowes. Ph. Burty also lent several fans to this exhibition, mainly dress fans made for Samurai.

In 1876 Bowes' collection of lacquer was exhibited alone, with new examples which he had acquired from the London International Exhibitions of 1873 and 1874, and from the Vienna exhibition of 1873. The catalogue for this exhibition is extremely informative; Bowes had clearly considerable information about lacquer techniques.

Bowes was to become Honorary Japanese consul in Liverpool and open his house "Streatham Towers" in Princes Road, Liverpool, as a "Japanese Museum". His collection was sold by auction on his death in 1901. The catalogue shows that he had collected a large number of paintings, prints and illustrated books, though it is unlikely that he bought them all at this time.

The general improvement in the standard of information about Japan in the 1870's is evidenced in the catalogue of The Loan Exhibition of enamels organised by the South Kensington Museum in 1874, to which a large exhibit of Japanese Cloisonné was loaned by Bowes. The museum also displayed the W. J. Alt collection of porcelain in its Bethnal

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Green annexe. The exhibition had a large section of Japanese and Chinese porcelain. The catalogue by A. W. Franks is well annotated. Undoubtedly most of the scholarship of this period has since been proved inadequate, but the general increase in information and in the numbers of Far Eastern objects is undeniable.

While London did not have a major international exhibition of Japanese art in the 1870's, Japanese art did make regular appearances in the international exhibitions organised by South Kensington in temporary two storey pavillions by a Major General (later Colonel) Scott. Most of these exhibitions were unofficial, organised by enthusiasts. However in 1873 one official Japanese exhibition came to London. It was organised as an adjunct to the major Japanese appearance in Vienna; the Japanese commissioners took advantage of the opportunity this afforded to send a small exhibition to England. 174

The exhibition was in the charge of a Mr. Nishiyama, formerly the Lord Tomita, who had given up his title in 1871, assisted by Messrs. Tekada and Sakada. On arrival in England in late March 1873, they were introduced to Major General Scott, chief secretary of the exhibition by Terashima, the Japanese plenipotentiary in London. After inspecting the exhibition site the Japanese set to and had fully laid out their exhibition by the end of the day. The Japanese exhibition was located in the lower half of one of the left hand row of pavillions erected behind the Royal Albert Hall by Major Scott. This suggests that it was an "industrial" exhibition but it may have included prints, lacquer and other Japanese arts which fitted into the western "industrial" classification. No detailed information can be found about this exhibition. 175

In the main the English were informed about Japan during the 1870's by enthusiasts such as Audsley and Bowes, by dealers such as Liberty and by Societies of art lovers and professional artists and designers. There is a markedly "amateur" quality about all these groups, and their

informal links and activities are very difficult to describe accurately. I will build up a picture of their activities when I discuss the careers of European travellers to Japan and the critical response to Japanese art in the 1870's. It was an amateur turned dealer, Dr. Christopher Dresser, who promoted the foundation of a Japanese village in London, in the <sup>an</sup>Alexandra Park near the Alexandra Palace in Muswell Hill, he announced:

The Japanese being convinced that their character as a manufacturing people was suffering from the fact that only the commonest wares were exported from their country, have arranged for the preparation of a number of objects of superior quality, to which they will affix a stamp indicative of their excellence. These articles will be exported to England and other countries; and through the kind assistance of Mr. Phillip Cunliffe Owen these have been secured to the Alexandra Palace Company, who have agreed to become sole consignees of these better goods in England. These Japanese objects will be shown and offered for sale at a Japanese village in the Alexandra Park, and this village, which Sir Edward Lee and myself had the honour of suggesting that the company should prepare, is now in the course of erection by Japanese workmen at Muswell Hill.

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There was also a small official Japanese contribution to the London International exhibition of 1874. Bowes bought three dishes of "Tanzan Ware" from the Japanese government at this exhibition. One, 25 inches in diameter, made by Tanzan, showed a group of geese in tints of brown, yellow and gold. The two smaller dishes were 18 inches in diameter. One was decorated with medallions showing stags, a shrine and a game of polo. The other showed Fujiyama, a beggar, an eagle on a rock in the sea, a thistle and a butterfly. However these small London exhibitions were of little consequence when compared with the large official exhibitions in Europe.

I (33)

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#### The Far Eastern appearance at Vienna in 1873.

The Austrian International Exhibition was the first one in which Japan set out to deliberately educate the advanced nations of the world

about her culture and customs. In the next fifty years the Japanese organised 44 major appearances at international exhibitions. This policy of deliberate propaganda for Japanese culture is a most important factor in the rapid popularisation of Japan and undoubtedly helped it to gain the position in the fashionable world it achieved during the 1870's and which was crowned by the next major exhibition in Europe, in Paris in 1878. Interest in Japanese art amongst artists and designers also rose 178 dramatically during the 1870's, especially in France.

The Vienna exhibition attracted many Frenchmen. A special illustrated journal was published in French during the period of the exhibition. The Japanese commissioners themselves published a special account of 179 Japan in French containing a history, information concerning the emporors 180 of Japan, its state of government, its trade figures, its industry, geography and manufactures, as well as a description of the contents and organisation of the exhibition. An album of photographs accompanied each volume. These two publications, together with documents of the 181 Tokyo exhibition serve as my main sources for my description of the exhibition. We know that the exhibition affected the circle of Japanese enthusiasts in Paris. Jules Jacquemart made a special journey to see the Japanese show. Goncourt reports in his journal that his acquaintance, 182 Robin, who had met the Japanese who travelled to Vienna on their landfall in Trieste, was escorted round their exhibition in Vienna:

Ils se firent alors un plaisir de lui montrer dans les plus grands détails, leur exposition. On causa, on parla de la philosophie de la forme des objets, de Dieu, auquel ils ne croient ne croyant guère qu'aux esprits, à des manifestations des armes des trespasés. 183

The Japanese were enthusiastic and treated many of their visitors to such discussions. The English collectors Bowes and Audsley were also entertained by an informative "Learned Commissioner", who corrected many 184 of their misapprehensions about Japanese ceramics. Apart from this directly informative role the Japanese were also asked for the first

time to sit on the international Jury of the exhibition. They applied their own "philosophy of form" to this work, praising, for instance, Worcester porcelain in Japanese terms.

When one considers that the Vienna exhibition attracted an average of 64,000 people per day and that the reporters of the Journal Illustré are unanimous that the Japanese exhibits were the most popular in the show it is clear that it is well worth investigation. The exhibition was formed as a result of an initiative by M. Henri Calice, the Austrian Charge d'Affaires in Japan, who approached the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March, 1871. However it was not until January 1872 that the Ministry studied the matter and came to the decision to exhibit. A commission led by Okuma Sangi, counsellor of state, Terashima Mounerari, Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, and Inouye Kaoron, Vice-Minister of Finances, was formed on 23rd January, 1872. This commission grew until it contained well over 100 members on 24th February 1872, it was joined by a small group of Europeans led by Baron H. de Siebold. This group gave great help to the Japanese in presentation of their work, and in producing the notes for the exhibits in various European languages. In March 1872 the Commission was given government offices in Tokyo. In August it issued a proclamation inviting all manufacturers to submit work for the exhibition. It noted as of special interest to foreigners silk, paper, porcelain, lacquer and tea. It insisted that all items should be accompanied with a full description of the working process of each, and other information which would demonstrate the skill and intelligence of the worker. This was translated into all major European languages and displayed with the objects in the exhibition.

All objects were to be sent to the Commission Officers which were established in each province of Japan. Those to be exhibited were selected by commissioners with specialist knowledge in one area, such as porcelain, enamels, Satsuma ware or lacquer. Many items were offered for

sale and exhibitors were asked to agree a price with the Commission which would eventually sell the goods in Vienna. Other, ancient, objects which were only on loan were insured by the government. These loans were the result of special negotiations by the Commission. However the overwhelming number of Japanese exhibits were of recent manufacture.

It is notable that nowhere in its deliberations does the Commission mention the importance of Japanese visual art. Indeed they were rather shamefaced about their own native style, preferring to point to recent beginnings made in oil painting in European style by Japanese artists, some of whose work they sent to Vienna.

The Commission took the opportunity to establish a permanent exhibition site in Tokyo as a foundation for future international appearances. It also took the opportunity of sending special missions to Europe to study foreign countries. Above all the commission wished to give "profound attention to the encouragement of the adoption of Japanese objects for everyday use abroad". On December 1st, 1872, Sekikawa Akekio was sent to Vienna to prepare the exhibition site. During December the entire exhibition was on display in the commission's main office in Tokyo. On the 19th December the Meiji Emperor<sup>e</sup> inspected the exhibition. He had encouraged it from the beginning and used his influence to secure the maximum resources for the work. On the 21st and 22nd December the, by now, over 200 members of the commission inspected the exhibition.

It was probably during this period that a print was made showing the exhibits, both artistic and industrial. It is unsigned and is entitled "Great Works of Ancient Art, Craft and Industry of Japan".

I (34)

The Nagoya Dolphin is clearly recognisable. So are the agricultural exhibits on the left. One of the paintings on the wall in the background is probably the famous portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a Japanese military leader of the sixteenth century. The other paintings are not so easily

identifiable but their form suggests the work of the great epochs of Japanese art of the 17th and 18th centuries may have been represented at Vienna, though no attempt was made by the Japanese to draw attention to the aesthetic excellence of this work. The exhibition's main purpose was propaganda, not the elucidation of Japanese culture.

Bronzes, ceramics and other objects can be observed in the print. However it is more of a novelty than a useful record of the exhibition's contents.

From the 23rd - 26th December the foreign residents of Tokyo saw the exhibition. Only after this was the native population of Tokyo allowed to see it.

On the 23rd January 1873 the French steamship "Phare" sailed with the exhibition and arrived at Trieste on the 15th March. It was presumably at Trieste that Robin, the friend of Goncourt, first met them. With the exhibition sailed a contingent of about fifty Japanese Commissioners, workmen and exhibition staff.

They soon arrived in Vienna and set about erecting the specially prepared constructions for the exhibition garden and the exhibit for the 12,000 square metres of space which they had been allotted in the main exhibition palace.

#### The Exhibition at Vienna

It is important to stress the educational and propagandistic nature of this exhibition. Unlike Paris, in 1867, this show was entirely directed to providing information about Japan. Apart from the publication already mentioned the learned commissioner supplied journalists with every sort of information about Japanese life and culture. Thus the reporters in Le Journal Illustré discuss the Japanese children's festivals, the calendar, the emperor and many other aspects of Japanese life. They paid special attention to the Crown Jewels of Japan and the legends attached to them. Replicas of the jewels were sent to Vienna. Japanese

weavers gave special displays of their skill during the exhibition and a Japanese tea house staffed with Geisha girls was open in the evenings. I (35)

It was decided to build a full size copy in papier mache of the Daibutsu (Giant Buddha) statue of Kamakura in the park at Vienna, presumably in response to the great curiosity about this statue expressed by many European visitors to Japan. I (36)

This deliberate seeking to satisfy public curiosity is the most important single factor in the rapid growth of the Japanese influence in Western culture in the 1870's.

The exhibition was mounted on one major site in the Main Exhibition Hall and in two sites in the park, one of which contained three small Japanese buildings placed round a Japanese garden, the other the replica of the Japanese bronze buddha at Kamakura. I (37)  
I (38)

The exhibits in the park caused great curiosity when they were built. Early visitors marvelled at the construction of the papier mâché Buddha which stood 45 metres high and was lacquered both to keep out the rain and imitate the bronze patina of the original. The Japanese hoped to demonstrate by this the durability of both their papier mache and their lacquer. Similar excitement was created by the work of the carpenters and gardeners in the Japanese garden and the unpacking of exhibits there:

Tout était nouveau, extraordinaire et original pour nous, les clous and les cordes qui servaient à fermer et emballer les caisses, les rebuts de bois et les joncs de bambous, qui étaient dispersés par ci, par, là, les hommes étranges, dans leur blouse bleu foncé couvertes de lunes et de signes blancs qui étaient occupé à arranger le petit jardin à construire une maisonette et à faire enfin les besognes les plus variées; tous creusaient, hachaient sciaient et rabotaient, comme nos ouvriers mais seulement d'une manière plus originale.

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One entered the Japanese garden by a gate on each side of which was a mast supporting a long paper banner. Inside on one's left was a large bronze temple bell suspended in a box-like wooden framework as in Japan. In the centre of the garden was a hillock down which ran a stream, through

rocks and over which was thrown a miniature bamboo bridge which one crossed to visit the garden. The garden contained stone lanterns, stone birdcages, miniature trees (bonsai), and many types of Japanese plants.

The paths of the garden were covered with different coloured stones and sand and bordered by small bamboo fences as in Japanese temple gardens. Amongst the rocks, bronzes and ceramics were artfully displayed on terracotta pedestals.

The central building in the garden was an imitation temple with traditional ornaments, paintings of gods and of chimerical animals. To judge from the illustration the Japanese temple must have been an imitation Shinto Shrine as typified by the Ise Shrines, and the paintings referred to would therefore have been votive images placed round the outside walls. Inside there would be only a mirror. Certainly Shinto was gaining official recognition at the expense of Buddhism at this time. 187

The two other buildings were kiosks which sold Japanese goods:

les deux maisons avec magasins garnis de marchandise et ornés de lampions rouges contiennent tout ce que le Japon fabrique en fait de soie, ivoire, lacque, bambou, bois sculpté, éventails, étoffes et surtout articles de bronzes. 188

All the articles were displayed in many tiered arrangements and supervised by eager Japanese salesmen dressed in European costumes.

Above the whole exhibition fluttered a huge paper kite, in the form of a carp. This kite is associated in Japan with a boys' festival which takes place on the fifth day of the fifth month of the year. On the fifth of May such a festival took place in the Garden, with the Emperor Franz Joseph and the Empress as enthusiastic spectators.

#### The Tea House

In an area of the exhibition grounds referred to as the Vauxhall a Japanese teahouse was established. In the evenings Suva-san, Zine-san and Orock-san, three Japanese ladies in native costume served tea, tobacco and "Japanese" wine, assisted by two Japanese manservants. The teahouse

was fragrant with perfumed Japanese wood and lit softly by many coloured lanterns. While commenting that this teahouse was intended for men only, the Journal Illustre was nonetheless quick to point out that teahouses were not brothels and that the Emperor was in the process of reforming the Geisha houses.

The exhibition inside the main palace, "Le Palais de l'Industrie" was dominated by a huge paper construction, an enormous lantern 3 metres 60 cms. in diameter, with a painted dragon which hung in the vault. Immediately below it, dominating the Japanese exhibit were two enormous bronze fish covered with gold and silver leaf. They were ornaments from the eaves of the famous Daimyo's residence at Nagoya, lent specially 189 for the occasion. Each was two metres 60 cms. high and they dominated the exhibition.

At one end of the Japanese display stood an enormous drum two metres 60 cms. across, painted in yellow and gold. It was called a Dai-dai-ko and came from a temple in Nikko where it was used in the religious dances connected with Shinto.

A large part of the Japanese exhibition was taken up with displays showing the customs and way of life of the Japanese. For instance a whole range of model buildings including palaces, temples and a peasant's house. A model of the pagoda of the ancient temple of Tenno-ji at Yanaka was of special interest. It stood some two metres 60 cm. high. The other model buildings appear to have been on the same scale. Near to these were various illustrations and texts explaining the Japanese way of life.

Another section of the exhibition was concerned with Japanese agricultural products; timber, oil, metals and other new raw materials. There was also a large display of Japanese swords and armour.

#### Japanese Arts and Crafts in Vienna

It is even more difficult to gain a precise idea of the quality of individual work in Vienna of 1873 than that of Paris of 1867. Very few

examples have been described in detail. I have found no examples in museums, only one or two illustrations survive of pieces coming from this exhibition. Nonetheless it is important to be as precise as possible about the exhibition's contents. It is clear that most of the work in the exhibition was "modern", by which was meant work made after 1840. I will now discuss each type of work separately.

#### 1. Porcelain and other ceramics

There was a great deal of modern pottery in the exhibition of all sorts, mainly decorated with flowers and abstract designs. The Japanese commentary picked out a pair of vases 1.623 metres, highly decorated with peonies.

Bowes identified four examples purchased from the exhibition in his collection, however in his general discussions of porcelain he indicates that he purchased many more examples than these.

In particular Bowes bought two large plaques of Owari Porcelain, 190 both the work of Kawomoto Masukichi of Seto. One, 37 ins. by 25 ins., was decorated with flowers and shrubs surrounded by a border of a multitude of "sudzume" in blue and white. The other plaque also in blue and white was  $31\frac{1}{2}$  ins. by 22 ins., framed in black and gold. The plaque shows the gathering of salt water for evaporation by the "Pine Wind" I (39) and to the left two noble figures, presumably the heroes of the traditional drama also entitled the "Pine Wind". Bowes illustrated the piece in both the large and small editions of his joint work with Audsley, Keramic Art of Japan. Bowes remarked that the piece was most unusual and he had seen nothing like it elsewhere.

Bowes also bought a bowl (Hachi),  $9\frac{1}{2}$  ins. diameter, of porcelain, 191 decorated with bands of conventional ornamentation, with very brilliant colours. A typical example of the Nishikide ware made for use in Japan.

The final identifiable purchase by Bowes was "a flower case 18 inches high, in porcelain decorated with red and gold with a group of

cranes, a pine tree, and waterfall upon the body and with bands of floral and diaper designs. The handles are modelled in the form of elephant's heads. It is accompanied by a stand decorated in the kinnande fashion."

Apart from these specific purchases Bower also mentions modern versions of Arita and Satsuma ware. The Arita ware consisted of "immense vases, cisterns and temple lamps, several pieces being nearly six feet high. The decoration consisted of flowers, birds and animals in ordinary blue, in some cases associated with lacquer." Bowes also mentions

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"Tokyo eggshell enamel".

#### Enamels

Bowes also bought enamel in the Vienna exhibition, but did not identify it in his collection. The Japanese themselves mention enamel buttons, two vases 37.5 cms. high and a coffee set, but do not describe them. Many more enamelware objects were exhibited but these are not described.

#### Bronzes

Besides the Nagoya roof ornaments, the outstanding bronzes of the exhibition were as follows. A pair of bronze vases, carved and inlaid with gold and silver to depict the defeat of devils on the O-ye-yama mountains. These were 1m. 20 cms. in height. They were made by Yokoya Yayemon of Takaoko in the province of Etchui.

There was also a sculpture in gold and silver encrusted bronze, showing the Wave God carrying a crystal ball by Takarayo Yamo So Ming of Tokyo.

There were also a pair of enormous temple lanterns nearly 2m. high. One of these can be seen in the illustration of the exhibit. Many other bronzes and metalwork sculptures of all types were on show in the exhibition, but these are not described by the Japanese.

One journalist writing in the journal of the exhibition noticed a large bronze Ho-Ho bird, in the form of a perfume burner and bronze

vessels of various sizes.

There was also a travelling altar in bronze which looked like a pagoda. At its four corners were the symbols of the four corners of the world, the green dragon of the East, the white tiger of the West, the black tortoise of the North and the red pheasant of the South.

### Lacquer

The most important of the lacquer exhibits was a 100 year old book cabinet with a gold lacquer image of a landscape at Yoshio Yama. It was 68.1 cms. high by 36.1 cms. wide and 6.9 cms. deep. There was also a lacquer paper box in nasi-ji lacquer (pear-skin) with a relief in gold lacquer showing the eight views of Lake Omi.

There was also a support for a perfume burner decorated with plum, bamboo and pine tree motifs in gold lacquer.

A large assortment of other lacquer work was also exhibited. The Illustrated Journal remarked that a collection so varied in colour and technique had not previously been seen in Europe.

### Ivory

Many articles made in carved ivory were exhibited. The most important of these was a cabinet 17.4 cms. high by 14.4 cms. broad, decorated with a gold lacquer motif of the four seasons represented by flowers and fruit. There was also a pedestal with the same motif in hexagonal form.

### Tortoiseshell, etc.

Besides ivory, other materials were also carved into various forms. Tortoiseshell was made into birdcages, insect cages and cigar cases. Similar objects made from whalebone were also shown.

### Sculpture

The major pieces of sculpture on display, the Daibutsu replica and the two Nagoya fish have already been discussed. Nonetheless it is worth making the point that these constituted new and previously unknown forms of sculpture in the West. The Japanese simply mention diverse forms of

sculpture in their description of the exhibition. The exhibition also contained many other examples of sculpture in wood, stone and metal, of various sizes. None of these have been recorded or described.

### Paintings and Prints

The Japanese Commission were very reticent about their visual art in their catalogue.

En ce qui regarde la peinture, l'art japonais ne se recommande ni par le fini de l'exécution, ni par la fidélité dans l'imitation de la nature, mais il révèle un goût qui lui est propre et qui se retrouve partout; tant des oeuvres des maîtres d'antiquités que celles que le Pays a successivement produites jusqu'à nos jours c'est là ce qui lui a valu quelques admirateurs. Dans ces derniers temps la peinture à l'huile a également fait son apparition au Japon et les premiers essais ne sont pas indignes d'être vus.

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The oil paintings may have been of an acceptable standard, but they were nonetheless displayed in the Palais de l'Industrie along with all other Japanese work and not in the Salon. Of the "ancient" paintings on show, the screens attracted the greatest interest. They were recent work mainly of landscapes, according to the Journal Illustré.

The prints that were exhibited were called "Nishi-ki-ye" in the Japanese catalogue - this simply means "brocade pictures" - or colour prints. A German journalist compared the prints to the naive coloured popular images printed in Munich.

A great many colour prints were displayed on one wall of the exhibition. They were arranged so as to create the silhouette of a ship with mast and sails.

This achievement was praised as a great example of the talent for fantasy supposedly a natural characteristic of the Japanese people.

Sir George Sansom reports that a special book of Japanese prints was commissioned for the Vienna Exhibition. He also claims that it was printed or reprinted in European aniline colours. I do not know of any other reference to this book.

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## The Chinese exhibition at Vienna

The Chinese contribution to the exhibition at Vienna consisted of an exhibition in the main pavillion, a theatre where performances of Chinese mime dramas were given, and a teahouse. As in the 1867 Paris exhibition the Chinese contribution was arranged by European dealers and officials.

The tea pavillion was designed by the French architect Montain, after instructions by the traveller Doctor Hart. It was an archaeological reconstruction of a Chinese house. No information can be found about the theatre.

The exhibition in the main pavillion consisted of a large triumphal arch, in a Chinese style. In the centre was a big panel displaying the Ying/Yang, symbol of universal harmony. This was the first time the symbol had been used in a general context in the West. It marks the beginning of its long career in the West as a popular symbol of all Far Eastern philosophies of ceaseless change and renewal.

We know of no specific pieces from the exhibition, or of any general catalogue of the works. However it is reasonable to assume that it consisted for the most part of nineteenth century decorative art - porcelain, stools, pagodas and other items popular at the time, ornamental screens, embroidered screens and decorative silk paintings. This is borne out by the brief notations of exhibits in the illustration for the Journal Illustré. Although the Chinese teahouse attracted considerable public interest, the Chinese exhibit was almost completely overshadowed by the Japanese.

The most important achievement at Vienna was that Japan established a distinct identity in the West. Japan characterised itself at Vienna in a way it failed to do at Paris in 1867. China sank almost completely from public consciousness.

Whilst it is difficult to be precise about the exhibits at Vienna it seems that Japan's contribution was even more "contemporary" than that

of 1867. Little or no "ancient" work was shown. Only the imitation Daibutsu and the Nagoya dolphins could be seen as monuments of the old Japanese culture.

It is difficult to give a clear picture of how the Japanese collection was dispersed. Much of it came to England. Audsley and Bowes made many purchases.

Christopher Dresser, another English visitor, drew on his experience of Vienna for his paper "Eastern Art and its influence on European Manufactures and Taste" which he gave to the Royal Society of Arts on February 6th, 1874. He used four Japanese kettles bought at the exhibition as examples of good design. He also displayed Chinese and Japanese enamelled bowls. 195

Some goods must have also gone to France, though I have yet to trace any.

The Vienna exhibition also provided evidence of continued development of Far Eastern influence on European design and taste.

Templeton's of Glasgow showed a carpet in a Chinese style. Minton's best vases were copies of cloisonné enamels from China, and Royal Worcester designs were recastings of Japanese lacquer ware designs. The Deck of Paris showed enamels based on Chinese and Japanese designs, so did Christophile and Barbedienne.

This was all noticed by Christopher Dresser who also recorded the tremendous demand for the Far Eastern goods from the exhibition. The most important aspect of the Japanese appearance at Vienna was not however the dissemination of Far Eastern objects in the West, but the spreading of "cultural information", of all kinds about Japan and the establishment of contacts. In particular Sano the chief commissioner at Vienna made contacts that were to be significant throughout the 1870's.

During September and October 1873 there was also an exhibition of Far Eastern art in Paris at the Palais de l'Industrie on the Champs

Elysées. This exhibition was of the collection made by Henri C<sup>e</sup>rnuschi, a financier, who had travelled to the Far East. Cernuschi was the first major collector to travel East specifically to study and to collect art. This exhibition therefore rightly belongs in the next chapter of this section.

CHAPTER THREETravellers to the East - Merchants, collectors, artists and scholars.

The early travellers to Japan had been either diplomats or dealers in raw materials and consumer goods such as silk. Their interest in the arts and culture of Japan was secondary to their main occupation.

During the 1870's however, a new group of travellers reached Japan - people whose first interest was in the arts of Japan, either as collectors, artists or dealers.

The idea of a journey to Japan as a great romantic adventure, a voyage into an artistic paradise had taken hold in Europe by the early 1870's. As early as 1863 Ruskin, on being sent a book of Japanese landscape prints by Rossetti, had expressed a longing to visit a place where such paradise-like landscapes could be found. Many other major figures of the period expressed the same desire; De Goncourt, for instance;

Depuis deux ou trois jours, je suis hanté par la tentation de faire un voyage au Japon. Et il s'agit pas ici de bric-à-bracomanie: il est en moi le rêve de faire un livre qui, sous la forme d'un journal, s'appellerait: UN AN AU JAPON - et un livre encore senti que peint...Ce livre, je sens que j'en ferais un livre ne ressemblant à aucun autre. Ah si j'étais de quelques années plus jeune.

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Whistler excommunicated Menpes, one of his favourite pupils, because he had dared to visit Japan, when his master had been unable to do so. Other painters also carried with them the same unfulfilled desire. Manet and Monet for instance are said to have expressed regrets that they were not able to travel. But the most notable travellers "manqué" are Van Gogh and Gauguin, both of whom were fanatical enthusiasts for Far Eastern art.

Oscar Wilde actually got half-way to Japan before giving up his travels. His American tour of 1882 was at one time intended as the first

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stage of a journey across the Pacific from San Francisco to Japan, then back to Europe via the Suez Canal. This was the typical pattern of 197  
journeys to Japan from the 1870's onwards. One began by seeing America and then travelled to the exotic East.

For various reasons no major writer or artist made the journey. Those who went were topographers and travel writers, often in the train of a rich collector. One suspects that this is no accident. Japanese art may have ceased to act as an inspiration if Japan had been experienced in reality.

Japanese work was of value as an artistic inspiration and as a countervailing example in the European context, and for that reason it was wise not to shatter the myth of Japan sedulously constructed by many literary and artistic figures during the late nineteenth century. The 198  
role of Japan for the West was at first that of a catalyst, not an alternative tradition. The work of those who did travel is often stilted, unimaginative, as if they were overwhelmed by what they saw and unable to co-ordinate it. From the many who did make the journey to Japan I have selected for study those figures whose place as transmitters of Japanese influence is central and of indisputable importance. I have concentrated on the 1870's because this was, for Europe, the most significant period. Later travellers came with more scholarly intentions, but less direct enthusiasm.

#### Duret and Cernuschi

In October 1871 Henri Cernuschi, a republican financier born in 199  
Italy, and Theodore Duret, an equally republican young novelist and critic of the "realist" school, set sail from San Francisco for Japan. They had left France towards the close of the Civil War, believing, correctly, that it would be a wise time to take a long journey.

Cernuschi was rich and he had set himself the aim of building a large collection of Far East art at first hand. Duret went as his com-

panion, with the intention of writing a "realist" account of the journey. He had also been excited by the Japanese appearance at the 1867 exhibition and, in particular, by Japanese illustrated books which had been displayed by Ph. Burty as part of an exhibition of his collection of Japanese goods. Thus it came about that while Cernuschi concerned himself chiefly with bronzes, ceramics and lacquers, Duret bought himself prints and paintings.

The steamer "Great Republic" brought Duret and Cernuschi to the bay of Yedo on October 25th 1871. They disembarked at Yokohama and found it 200 disappointing. The European colony there had imposed European fashions on the town, even horse-racing. They therefore set off along the Tokaido road for Yedo, observing the courtesy of the Japanese and their alien way of life. Duret writes of visits to teahouses and describes Japanese domestic architecture and its unfamiliar principles of construction.

In November they arrived in Yedo, and spent some time looking at the great sites - the Shogun's palaces, the great temples such as Asacksa and the garden of Hamogoten. They also visited the Shin-me-mai, a narrow street of shops where one could buy all the traditional goods of Japan. They had begun to buy "bibelots" as soon as they landed in Yokohama. A number of shops for the tourist had been established there, in which Japanese objects, many of doubtful quality, were heaped together. An illustration Humbert gives of such a shop is typical of the atmosphere I (41) in which such purchases were made.

However it was in December 1871 that most of Cernuschi's purchases were made, in Yedo. Through their Japanese servant they made contact with the Tokyo art dealer Yaki, whose shop was the centre of the trade in the 201 property of the daimios, the displaced functionaries of feudal Japan, who had been deprived of their state incomes that very year. The result was that the two Europeans waded through "une maree d'objets d'art et de bibelots".

Each day hundreds of objects were brought to Yaki's establishment

for Cernuschi to examine. He bought them en bloc, agreeing terms for an entire collection. He took a particular interest in works in bronze. Amongst these were statues of Buddha, of which he tried to achieve a collection representative of all the different incarnations and postures. Noting his voracious interest in them, Cernuschi's agent took him to Megouro, a suburb of Yedo, where in the burnt-out remains of a temple stood a huge bronze Buddha, 4 m. 28 cm. high. Cernuschi arranged for Yaki's workmen to discretely dismantle the Buddha, and store it in his yard until it could be sent to Europe. The very next day Cernuschi was besieged by a deputation of Japanese who offered to refund all his money if they could recover the Buddha. He had to pretend that the Buddha had already been shipped abroad. The Buddha became the centre of Cernuschi's I (42) collection of bronzes. 202

He also acquired other pieces directly from the temple. The monks seemed quite willing to part with their treasures, perhaps because the monasteries had just been disestablished.

The great outpouring of objects was a revelation to the two Europeans who had seen very little Japanese art. They relied on their Japanese advisers and when these were not competent, their collections became simply ramshackle assemblies.

Japanese dealers kept many objects boxed, hidden away in silk bags or envelopes. They assumed that Europeans would ask for the objects they required, and in turn the ignorance of the Europeans led them to accept contemporary works as the best available.

This was particularly the case with Duret's collection of Japanese prints and illustrated books. He recalled visiting the bookshops in Yedo with the books stacked away on high shelves so that one could not examine them or even read the titles. Duret's purchases were thus an uneven mixture, mainly common books in indifferent impressions. The works were mainly by Hokusai and Hokusai's imitators. They included 203

the fourteen volumes of the Mangwa and probably also two volumes of original Hokusai drawings which Gonse referred to in his book L'Art Japonais.

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Duret and Cernuschi completed their Japanese visual education with a visit to the last surviving master of the Kano school who was still working in Yedo. He showed them his wash drawings, water-colours and other paintings. Duret believed him to be the last surviving "old master" of Japanese painting. This was probably Kano Masanobu, whose work entered many European collections during the 1870's and 1880's.

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After Tokyo, Duret and Cernuschi visited Osaka, Kobe and Kioto. Everywhere they bought when they could. At Kioto they visited a theatre where they saw a performance of part of The 47 Ronin. Duret describes the elaborate structure of the theatre with great enthusiasm. During the latter part of their journey they travelled to see the Monumental Buddha at Nara; in this area Europeans were still so scarce that great crowds came out to see them pass by. On the way they saw shops full of fine arms and armour, the property of newly impoverished Samurai.

In February 1872 they set sail for China. Duret records the contrast between picturesque, bustling Japan, and dull unpleasant China. Even a hundred miles from the Chinese coast the blue waters that they had known since Japan turned yellow. Collecting was also much less interesting in China than in Japan. De Goncourt reports Cernuschi's impressions of China in his journal:

Il a longuement parlé de la putrefaction des villes, de l'aspect cimenterieuse des campagnes, de la tristesse morne et de l'ennui desolé, qui se dégagent de tout le pays. La Chine, selon lui pue la merde et la morte.

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The disembarked in Shanghai and travelled through Nanking, recently devastated by the Tai-ping rebellions. Their journey continued via Tient-sin to Peking. Duret remarks various architectural monuments on the way, such as the porcelain tower at Nanking, but gives no detailed

descriptions of them. From Peking they made a tour to see the Great Wall, which Duret does respond to with interest. After a brief stay with the Mongols beyond the Wall, they returned to Peking in May 1872 and began to buy art works to add to the few they had picked up on landing at Shanghai. They found the situation very different to that in Japan. The trade was run by connoisseurs and every notable work was known to Chinese collectors, who were well-informed about what was to be sold. Once again Cernuschi 207 bought chiefly bronzes, but only one at a time, and after long negotiation and the painful acquisition of knowledge and connoisseurship. Works of the Ming Dynasty and of the late eighteenth century Emperor Chien Lung constituted most of his purchases. They were surprised to discover that many of the pieces they had bought in Japan were not Japanese as they had thought, but Chinese.

Duret and Cernuschi travelled on from China to Siam and India, but saw little of artistic importance in either. Duret's account of their travels is mainly a realistic travelogue, at times little more than an inferior Baedeker, giving as he claims a description of places and objects which anyone who chooses to follow him may find for himself. The only place in which his artistic enthusiasm appears to have been aroused sufficiently to overcome his boring dedication to superficial realism was in Japan.

Duret and Cernuschi returned to Europe in the summer of 1872. In September and October 1873 the Cernuschi collection went on display in Paris at the Palais de l'Industrie. There were over 1,500 items altogether. The Japanese section dominated the show; for De Goncourt it was "l'exposition Japonaise de Cernuschi". The Chinese section of the exhibition seems to have been mainly of archaeological and antiquarian interest, much the same as it is today.

De Goncourt seems to have made several visits there, on one of which he met Burty who had made a special journey to Paris to see the show.

In general the exhibition was popular. Looking back in 1900 Duret saw it as the occasion for the beginning of serious connoisseurship of Japanese art in France.

Writing in 1873 Albert Jacquemart agreed with him, and blamed the massive importation of nineteenth century illustrated books for creating a European image of Japan as false as the eighteenth century image of China. He hoped that the Cernuschi collection might remedy this and provide a firm foundation for a popular appreciation of Chinese and Japanese style and design.

Jacquemart gives the following impression of one's first entrance to the exhibition:

en pénétrant dans les salles du Palais de L'Industrie une puissante émotion vous saisait; il y a quelque chose de particulièrement mystérieux dans ces pièces japonaises qui par leur volume et leur hardiesse, dominant tous les autres; à travers cette avenue de personnages mystiques, d'animaux extraordinaires, l'oeil se fixe sur ce Bouddha gigantesque assis sur le lotus sacré. Cette calme figure au geste symbolique? Quel est son âge, à quelles doctrines se rattache-t-elle?

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My own visits to the Musée Cernuschi have confirmed the powerful impression made by the Megouro Buddha and by the remaining Buddhas from Cernuschi's collection. Unfortunately I have been unable to trace a catalogue of the original exhibition in the Palais de L'Industrie and my requests for information from the Musée however received no answer. I have recently been invited by M.S. Eliseeff, the Conservateur en <sup>Chef</sup> Chap<sup>t</sup> du Musée Cernuschi, to research the original collections in its reserves. However this is a long term project and I am unlikely to finish it before submitting this thesis. I have therefore decided that a series of illustrations, taken from my own photographs, contemporary illustrations and later books, would be the best way of conveying the content of the exhibition. The reader is referred to these illustrations. Apart from I (43) Buddhas, there were exhibited a whole series of travelling altars in bronze, sculptures of domestic gods, and some purely ornamental or

humorous works, amazing naturalistic imitations of crabs, prawns, insects, rats and mice all in bronze, often made into perfume burners. There were also magnificent bronze birds, especially crows. There were also superb bronze vases with delicate dragons, butterflies and flowers worked into their motifs. Many pieces bore the Tokugawa arms, the family shield of the recently deposed Shogun. The exhibition of bronzes seemed so comprehensive that Jacquemart even made a feeble attempt to date them on stylistic grounds.

Apart from bronzes, all other aspects of Japanese art were on show. The exhibition of "ceramics" consisted of stoneware and porcelain, mainly of recent manufacture from Owari and Satsuma, with some Imari and also some Bizen figures. None of this material is at present on show in the Musée Cernuschi. However Jacquemart was sufficiently moved to compare the Bizen figures with work by Clodion.

There were also a number of wooden and ivory carvings. The subjects of the wooden sculptures included a kneeling philosopher, a kami (a Shinto spirit) enveloped in well formed drapery, a god holding an enormous toad in his right hand and a tiger crouching on a rock. They were all old, as resin had escaped from the wood to their surfaces and formed a patina. There were also two carved wooden masks displayed, clearly recognisable as Noh masks from the description given by Jacquemart who wrote of one, a devil mask:

*la bouche est largement ouverte, et les yeux semblait farouches, scélératique, autrefois dorée, etc.,*

Jacquemart recognized the facial expressions in Japanese paintings and prints. The other mask was of a young girl. Both were in a bad state of preservation having lost a great deal of paint and gilding.

Also on show were many netsuke, "les boutons japonais", as Jacquemart refers to them.

The whole range of subjects familiar to modern collectors was represented, if we are to judge from his description;

on y trouve des figurines, des groupes, des animaux, et souvent des caricatures religieuses ou civiles que révèlent tout le côté sceptique ou sarcastique du caractère japonais. Nous revoyons là le Cheoulao grotesque, des bronzes et des immortels, des ascètes et des moines mendiants groupés de la façon la plus bizarre et la plus ridicule; des agglomérations où la pudeur n'est pas toujours respectée nous initient aux secrets de la famille et à certain misères conjugales; la femme maîtresse s'y montre aussi acariâtre, aussi violente que dans toute autre contrée du globe. Puis ce sont des scènes gracieuses à figures ravissantes que cotoient des animaux combattant; une famille des singes superposés et entrelacés se livrant ardemment à une chasse pediculaire; des souris creusent leurs trous dans des fromages ou dans des fruits; des pieuvres à figure humaine; des sacs surmontés de têtes diaboliques; des jeux d'enfants.....

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I have quoted this description at length because it is the only clue we have to the visual excitement created by the exhibition. Jacquemart writes like the antiquarian he was, and his "descriptions" are almost useless, if one is attempting to understand the impact of the exhibition. He dismisses the paintings and prints in the exhibition in half a sentence, "combien de peintures curieuses qui sollicitent une étude spéciale; et ces albums sans nombre que signent des hommes intéressants, ces meubles, ces lacques". Once again the contemporary prejudice in favour of bronzes, lacquer and ceramics denies us important information. I have found no further documentation of the paintings and prints on show. One colour print from the Cernuschi collection is reproduced in Gonse's two volume edition of "L'Art Japonais", "Sansonnets touchant sur le soleil" par Shinman 1815. Presumably the exhibition was a mixture of Duret's collec- I (44) tion and Cernuschi's. These collections constitute a vital clue to the information about Japanese art and the aesthetic theories which Duret communicated to Manet and the Impressionists during the 1870's. It was not until 1882 that Duret's first writing on Japanese art appeared in the Gazette des Beaux Arts. Duret looked on his early attitudes to Japanese art as naive and unscholarly, but they would be of no less interest from the point of view of the development of Western art. In

any case the paintings and prints in this exhibition must have had a powerful effect in forming the ideas of other early Japanese enthusiasts such as Burty and De Goncourt.

We can only make a guess as to Duret's attitude to Japanese art in the 1870's by the two pages he wrote on it in "Voyage en Asie". Duret was struck in Japan by the "délicatesse de certains arts et du raffinement de certaines industries". He characterised the Japanese both rich and poor as a people of taste in all they used or made. He noted, with surprise, the absence of oil painting and fresco on Japan. He believed most Japanese visual art was in the form of drawings (presumably works like the Mangwa). He treated Cernuschi's collection of Buddhas as a series of interesting sculptural representations of the human figure, and discussed other bronzes, in equally representational terms. 211

For Duret, in 1873, the two great qualities of Japanese visual art were lightness of touch and the description of movement. Both these qualities he attributed to the use of the brush for writing and the ideals of elegance that were cultivated by this. He remarks on the unequalled facility with which the Japanese describe flowers, birds, bamboo and popular scenes in just a few strokes of the brush. Moreover he cites Hokusai's "Mangwa" as the leading example of this. For Duret, in 1873, Hokusai was one of Japan's greatest artists and the Mangwa was his principal work. He advanced an admirably Western and realist reason for this judgement. For him, Hokusai's sketches were remarkable in their exact portrayal of the people he had bumped into in the streets of Japan.

These attitudes are in no way different to those expressed by Zola and others about Japanese art in the 1860's. We may therefore assume that the paintings and prints in the Cernuschi exhibition reinforced, rather than challenged, these ideas, where they were present. They were undoubtedly present in the mind of Burty and of other Japanese enthusiasts.

Duret's account of his travels contributed very little to the

current assessment of Japan. One finds hardly any references to the book in contemporary art criticism or artists. This is perhaps because the book is boring, it creates no atmosphere and compared to even such a prosaic work as Aimé Humbert's "Japon" it has little to offer to an enquiring imagination. The task of providing "local colour" was much better fulfilled by journalists such as G. Bousquet who in 1874 sent back from Japan a series of highly descriptive despatches to the Revue des Deux Mondes.

Cernuschi's collection however, went on to help form the whole concept of Far Eastern art for the 1870's and later. The exhibition at the Palais de l'Industrie was accompanied by a Congress of Oriental Scholars which considerably broadened the available knowledge of the subjects of Far Eastern and of Buddhist art in particular. Cernuschi brought back several important Far Eastern texts on the history of art and archaeology which were studied by scholars pioneering in these fields. This knowledge gradually became common knowledge. One thinks especially in this respect of the significance of Buddha and Buddhist iconography. According to Migeon the collection was removed from the Palais de l'Industrie immediately on the closure of the exhibition and sent to 7, Avenue Velasquez, Parc Monceau, the large house (hôtel) which Cernuschi had built to contain it. Burty stated that Cernuschi completed his collection by buying a collection formed in Japan by the Japanese merchant, M. Meazza, in 1875. Cernuschi had one grand ball, during the Japanese success in the 1878 International Exhibition, when the entire fashionable world passed his collection. Apart from this, he lived like a hermit with his collection to which only his close friends and those with great enthusiasm for Oriental art could gain admission.

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De Goncourt was a frequent dinner guest at Cernuschi's during the 1870's. He did not think much of the house, on the first of July, 1875 he wrote;

Au milieu de ces murailles blanches, sur le ton de brique en honneur dans nos musées, ces objets de L'Extrême-Orient, semblent malheureux. On dirait qu'un mauvais génie les a transportés dans un palais imaginé par le goût à la fois grandiose et bourgeois d'un actionnaire du Siècle,

and again on July 25th, 1875;

Diner chez Cernuschi. Le fantastique et le chimérique du Japon montrés au gaz ça ne va pas.

Nonetheless he greatly appreciated the collection for its imaginative and chimerical forms.

However the collection was seen by a remarkable number of enthusiasts and became well-known through the writings of Louis Gonse, S. Bing, Anderson and others, whose books reproduced many works from it. It would seem that Cernuschi added little more to the collection after his initial purchases and that we may therefore assume that all reproductions are of objects in the collection on its first exhibition. Cernuschi died in 1896 and left the collection and the house to the Paris municipality as a museum, which it remains today. However the collections have been substantially altered and the remaining original items are no longer arranged as they were, according to Migeon. 213

As for the Duret collection, we have no means of isolating the works he brought back from Japan in 1873 from the enormous collection of prints (and some paintings) which he owned in 1900. This is unfortunate because Duret bought little more during the 1870's and his early collection was therefore important for its influence on Western art.

Much needs to be discovered about the Duret and Cernuschi collections. They had a substantial effect on Western knowledge of Far Eastern art and their effect on Western art and design must have been considerable. I hope to discuss this when I deal with the development of Western art in the 1870's.

### The Sichel Brothers

Cernuschi was simply a collector of Far Eastern works. We turn now to those whose aim in travelling East was to trade in works of art. Amongst the foremost of these were the Sichel brothers, Phillipe and August, who established themselves alongside S. Bing as the most important dealers in Japanese art in Paris in the 1870's and 1880's.

The brothers' visit to Japan was made partly on the recommendation 214 of Cernuschi. They followed the path of the Cernuschi expedition almost exactly two years later, arriving back in Paris to set up in business in the late summer of 1874. The brothers were also influenced 215 by a M. Réal, a friend who had been to Japan in 1867 on a diplomatic mission to the prince of Satsuma, and Auguste Sichel appears to have been to Japan previously. They took their friend with them and having landed at Nagasaki, visited Hiojo, Kioto, Kobe, Yedo and Osaka.

In Nagasaki they found very interesting lacquer work; bowls, tea-cups, into and especially writing boxes, (Phillipe refers to these as inkstands in his account). The writing boxes were a dollar, the intro half a dollar. In Europe the best of these were valued at over a 1000 Fr. Rare paintings, "Kakemonos", could be purchased for two dollars each.

Like Cernuschi they acquired a Japanese agent, Masaki, to help them with their purchases. One night an old woman was brought to them, who sold a marvellous lacquer cabinet decorated with flowers, a netsuke in the form of a devil, with a coral bead to hold its cord. By careful questioning of the woman they discovered that it had been made by her father, 65 years previously, in 1809.

On their way to Hiojo they bought some Imari porcelain. However they were disappointed to find that previous European visitors had removed most goods of any value. However they did find three ancient perfume or incense burners; the most interesting had a large bowl-shaped body with handles carved in the form of plum tree blossoms. All three

bore the Tokugawa arms. The same merchant sold them an enormous modern incense burner, of bronze encrusted with silver, again with the Tokugawa arms. There were also 15 bronze flasks and a signed netsuke showing a woman washing a child. They also bought a god of long life (Daikoku?) seated on a tortoise in terracotta, painted in colours on his robes. They paid 29 dollars and 50 cents for this "Clodion Japonais".

After Hiogo they made their first visit to Osaka, the "Venise du Japon". At Osaka they hired an old shop (perhaps a godown or merchant's warehouse peculiar to Japan), in which they stored their Japanese purchases until they could be shipped to Europe. On their first day they toured the town in a rickshaw and discovered the marvellous silk brocade squares with painted images, "Foukousas", which they state could only be bought in Osaka. They also bought an album of drawings and water-colours and 30 netsukes for 80 Fr.

On the second day the art merchants and cloth dealers descended on them and they bought over 200 carved ivories and 300 foukousas. One merchant, Nambaga, sold the whole household of a bankrupt feudal lord to the Sichel brothers for 15,000 Fr. They negotiated the sale by giving the merchant a banquet in his house with dancers and singers, at which the chief delicacy was red fish.

Nambaga later offered them 2000 bronze lanterns, standing between four to six feet high, of which he had an album of sketches, the property of a deposed prince. Such a large quantity had to be refused as there was no way of getting them to Europe. They did however buy a sword for 150 Fr.

They bought albums of prints and in particular prints of actors which they saw being sold to the audience at the entrances to theatres, in the hope, they speculated, of providing some distraction during the interminably long performances.

Like many others, Sichel compared them to Epinal prints. To

complete their stock they went to a bookshop of the Suisaibashi genre - "un libraire de Suisaibashi". This appears to be another word for Uki-yo-e, though I cannot find it in any of the standard glossaries. 217

They were shown all the works of this genre in print, and Phillippe Sichel remembers especially the 14 volumes of the "Mangwa" by "Oksai" which he claims to have been told was the work most esteemed by the Japanese and was constantly being reprinted. They bought this and many other works. They also bought 100 Kakemonos for between 5 and 15 Fr., but for a Chinese painting they had to pay 500 Fr. Several times during their journey the Sichels were amazed to find that the Japanese had such a low opinion of their own work compared to Chinese painting.

In Kyoto, they found a Western style hotel which had been opened by a Japanese inn-keeper from Osaka who had hired part of a monastery, as there was a large trades exhibition taking place under the auspices of the Emperor. They were able to buy a great variety of materials, including many illustrated books which they sent to Osaka.

By contrast Yokohama in 1874 had become a real tourist trap. Shops had appeared with titles in Japanese English - "Curious Shop, English Spoken" - these charged four times the price paid for the same goods in the interior of Japan.

From Yokohama they took the new railway to Yedo now renamed Tokyo, where they took lodgings in a palace that had once belonged to the young lord of the 47 Ronins. Everywhere they saw Japanese government officials, in European costume, looking like "chiens savants". Their first purchases were marvellous long-necked bronze flasks and five bronze tortoises so realistic that Sichel thought they had been cast from the animals themselves. They also bought a beautiful coromantel screen for 150 Fr. and lifelike models of insects and birds in various metals, tobacco boxes in wood with different interlaced designs.

One day they visited a Japanese doctor at the military hospital, who

was a friend of Phillipe Sichel. He was carving a death's head in ivory, with anatomical accuracy. This was his speciality. He sold the heads to Yokohama merchants for a derisory price. The doctor took them to see a great lord, a collector, from whom they hoped to buy a great deal. Unfortunately his one treasure was a large bronze jardinière and he absolutely refused to part with it. After this they left the business of dealing with the Japanese to Japanese merchants. The attended the opening of one such merchant's shop and made some extraordinary purchases. They also visited a metal workshop where they placed orders for a variety of objects saleable in Europe; they had to pay for material in advance. Sichel was of the opinion that the same workmen were later responsible for the Tsuba shown in the 1878 Paris exhibition which surpassed ancient objects in the esteem of the fashionable amateurs of the 1880's.

One purchase in particular illustrated the amazing gain in value that Japanese objects underwent on transfer from the East. The Director of the French school in Tokyo bought a collection of design drawings which were used as patterns by lacquer makers and metal workers, in a market which took place one evening a week in Tokyo in a suburb. He paid only a few sous for this work, but Auguste Sichel paid him 400 Fr. 218 for it.

The Sichels held on to this book until October 1876 when all or part of it was shown to De Goncourt. He was struck by the extraordinary quality of the work which was in colour, not as he expected in washes of Chinese ink. This led him to deduce that lacquer workers were attempting effects in colour as complex and as rewarding as paintings. Unfortunately later that week Burty introduced De Haviland, a pottery maker from Limoges, to the Sichels. Encouraged by Burty, De Haviland bought the collection for 12000 Fr., the price quoted to De Goncourt. However Burty had previously put the best album on one side for his own collection without telling De Haviland. Gonse later identified the 219

two volumes owned by De Haviland as a series of drawings and sketches collected by the artist Yoyousai and coming partly from the studio of Korin. Many of the thousands of drawings were copies of work by Korin, some studies for comb designs, boxes and fans bore the signature of Hohitzou 1761-1828, a major artist of the Korin school, who had arranged for the engraving and publication of Korin's designs for lacquer. 220

It would appear from this anecdote that the Sichels either held on to their collections for some years after returning to England, selling only a little at a time or that they bought in and resold work from previous clients. In any case the enormous boom in prices is indisputable.

The Sichels themselves visited the evening market whence came the craftsman's drawings, where they bought many items very cheaply, for instance, a lacquer box containing two beautiful Fizen pottery flasks and many netsukes, in particular an aubergine carved in ebony, split in the middle, on one side were carved mice nibbling at the fruit for which they paid 25 Fr.

On Sunday, they took a walk round the suburbs to relax from their purchases and found a stack of over 500 albums of actor prints in a rag picker's storehouse. They paid him 30 dollars for these, which amazed him, as he considered them to be so much waste paper. However in France each book sold for 30 Fr. and the Sichels themselves under-estimated their value. One group which they sold for 500 Fr. was resold for 6000 Fr. not long afterwards.

The brothers actually saw the Satsuma porcelain forgery that Bowes and other collectors were soon to complain of in Europe. It was run by a merchant from whom they bought some bronzes and lacquers. He employed skilful decorators to make rapid copies of Buddhist idols and Hokusai's sketches on cheap bowls and vases. Sichel observes that two plates of this type sold for two thousand francs at the 1878 exhibition in Paris.

After a long stay at Tokyo where they bought most of their collect-

ion, Phillipe returned to Osaka overland to supervise the collection and shipping of all their purchases. On his journey he was astonished to find many people who remembered the sensation caused by the Cernuschi visit of two years before.

Like Cernuschi, the Sichel brothers visited China before returning home. Phillipe told De Goncourt of meeting the greatest actor in China in absolute poverty in Peking.

The Sichel brothers lost no time in setting themselves up in business in Paris. In October 1874 M<sup>me</sup>. Burty complained to De Goncourt of her husband's extravagance:

Voulez<sup>3</sup>-vous voir des albums japonais? Il-y-en a toute une voiture dans le salon. Savez-vous qu'il en a acheté pour cinquante francs chez Sichel?

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The Sichels also took part in the community of enthusiasts for Japanese art which formed in Paris in the 1870's. Their shop was a favourite meeting place for Japanese enthusiasts and remained so till the middle-'80s. Goncourt wrote of being detained there by the contemplation of beautiful objects and conversation into the small hours of the morning. Felix Buhot etched a visiting card for the Sichel business, giving the address of their business as Rue <sup>5.</sup> Régalle 11.

I (44)

The Sichels however never became collectors or scholars and their names are not referred to in scholarly publication. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint items which passed through their hands.

However their great rival as a dealer, S. Bing, did become a major authority on his wares and published a great deal.

### S. Bing

Despite his many publications Bing remains a shadowy figure. We know that he made a journey to the Far East because he declared so himself in his publication Le Japon Artistique. He wrote in his essay on Far Eastern painting that he was in Peking in 1880. It is unlikely that someone who had been dealing for over half a decade in Japanese art would

have travelled that far without also visiting Japan. Moreover it is my opinion that Bing had visited Japan previously, in the 1870's. His extraordinarily rapid rise to the leading position amongst dealers in Far Eastern art in Paris can only have been achieved through excellent business contacts in Japan. These can only have been made personally or by special agents such as Tademasa Hayashi whom he employed during the 1880's. However we have no information about such visits.

R. Koch claims without offering any evidence that Bing was in Japan 222 in 1875 and indeed it seems a very likely time for him to have made such a journey, as he began business in Paris in the second half of that year and simultaneously began dealings with the Victoria and Albert Museum. Schwartz claims that he was in Japan in 1883 but this claim is disproved by Bing's correspondence with the Victoria and Albert during that year and by his role in the great retrospective exhibition of Japanese Art in Paris.

The date of Bing's arrival in Paris from his native Hamburg is unknown and it was probably in the break <sup>between</sup> moving from one city to the other that he travelled East. From the beginning his shop 223 stood in the Rue Chauchat, 19. I (45)

De Goncourt gives us the first description of "chez Bing" in 1875:

Il est cinq heures quand quelqu'un propose d'aller la journée chez Bing et de voir ses nouveaux de ballages. Tout le monde aussitôt rue Chauchat, ou jusqu'à sept heures, nous touchons, manions, palpons des raretés dans un état de fatigué tout proche de l'évanouissement. Une débauche de japonaiserie et de chinoiserie qui, dans la lassitude de la fin de la journée et le vide de l'estomac, vous donnent comme le sentiment de vaguer dans un cauchemar. 224

By July 1875 Bing was creating a sensation with his shipments from Japan, and De Goncourt hints that his shop had become a habitual gathering place for the fashionable Paris circle of Japanese enthusiasts.

In February 1876 Bing entertained De Goncourt to dinner with the Prince Sayounsi and a Japanese commoner. De Goncourt tells us nothing of

their conversation, being concerned only with their oriental faces, soft voices and their lack of the fat stomachs which typified Europeans at that time. However we can assume that it was through contacts like this that Bing picked up the scholarly knowledge he was to use effectively during the following two decades, when he wrote and spoke about Japanese art.

.During the remaining years of the 1870's and the 1880's, "Japoniser chez Bing" became an essential activity for the fashionable and others in Paris. Many enthusiastic encounters and discussions about Japanese art took place there. Bing was willing to talk to any enthusiast that he met, even to "undesirables" like Van Gogh.

Bing took his full part in the circle of Japanese enthusiasts being built up in Paris in the 1870's. To gain a good idea of <sup>its</sup> composition it is only necessary to refer to the list of owners who loaned their work for the 1883 exhibition in Paris. Financiers and manufacturers formed the backbone of the clients of the Parisian dealers - others were famous in literature or the theatre. It is significant that they visited Bing's shop occasionally and bought from him. No great collections of Far Eastern art were formed by artists. Alfred Stevens appears to have been the only one to make a special effort to acquire a fashionable range of work and this is hardly surprising in view of the subjects of his paintings. However it is surprising how little was collected by others who could certainly have afforded it; Manet, for instance.

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The atmosphere in which fashionable collecting took place will be discussed later, but it is important to understand the nature of the clientele whom the Parisian dealers relied on for most of their income.

The course of Bing's dealings in Far Eastern art in the 1870's and 1880's may be traced by his correspondence with the Victoria and Albert Museum. The records are in the Victoria and Albert file S.F. 170.

Bing began his dealings on the 5th October 187<sup>5</sup> when he sold the Museum three cases containing "Japanese lacquer plaques". On the 16th October 1875 the museum's representative, Mr. W. Fortnum negotiated the sale of some hundreds of bronzes and five cases of lacquer for £1,035. Bing made a particularly high charge - "10,000 francs", for one Japanese lacquer cabinet. On the 17th February 1876, Fortnum recommended the purchase of the following bronzes;

- a. 350 Ancient Vases
- b. 36 Tea Pots
- c. 10 Candelabra
- d. 5 Bells
- e. 46 Figures and other objects.

Fortnum also recommended that the museum should purchase a selection of lacquer, some wood carvings and a painting of a tiger. For this lot the Museum paid £2,000.

Fortnum remarked that he thought that Bing's prices were extortionate but that he was able to command any price he asked for the lacquer and more vulgar pieces of lacquer or bronze. Fortnum recommended those pieces which he thought more reasonably priced and examples of good design. The level of these prices may be judged by the price for 57 mixed Chinese and Japanese bronzes in June 1876; £850.

Bing used books of photographs of his objects in negotiating with the Museum. In theory these ought still to be in its records somewhere and I am making efforts to find them, as they would be precise documents about Bing's dealings during the 1870's. I have been able to locate a group of the bronzes which Bing sold in 1875/76 in the museum collection and I illustrate examples of them. They are not outstanding works, but do show the clear forms and simple design which Fortnum valued.

I (46)

It is significant that the Museum made no purchases of prints from Bing at all. Indeed it seems that prints were not collected by public institutions until the late 1880's.

I have located some Far Eastern ceramics sold to the Victoria and Albert by Bing in the 1870's. They are as disparate in taste as other

work he dealt with at the time, ranging from marvellous Chinese vases to vulgar nineteenth century Japanese porcelain. I give illustrations of a perfume burner with a lid of imitation chestnuts, a dish of blue and green glaze and a long-necked flask, all bought in 1875. These give a good idea of the range of material Bing deals in during the 1870's. Several hundred Far Eastern objects sold by Bing are in the Museum's collections awaiting full documentation. However one can only offer a brief account here. I (47)

Bing's business appears to have remained at a high level through the late 1870's. However by 1883 it appears to have been on the decline.

From that year dates his letter of the 1st February to Sir P. C. Cunliffe Owen, offering advantageous terms over a large bronze;

9, Rue Chauchat,

Tres honoré Sir Philip,

Je vous ai hier envoyé les photos d'une grande piece de bronze que vous avez vu à l'exposition de Paris en 1878.

J'ai fait en son temps l'acquisition de cette piece pour laquelle je professe une admiration sans bornes. Avec l'aigle de Mitford que vous possédez, je considère en effet cet objet comme le plus beau bronze qui sort jamais de le main d'artiste.

Aujourd'hui par suite de changement que je suis forcé de faire, je suis sur le point de m'en reparer. J'ai donc pensé à vous et mes regrets seraient moindre si cette merveille peut trouver place dans votre musée où elle serait appelée a provoquer une sensation considerable.

Sous le rapport du prix je me ferai un devoir de pretent simplement à celui que j'ai moi même payé (fr 40,000). Tout au plan y aurait - il les interests à ajouter à saison de 5% p.a.

Veillez donc me faire la faveur d'une prochaine reponse.

Votre sincere devoûé,  
S. Bing.

This piece was the great bronze incense burner which was designed by Sei Tei Watanabe and Ko Itou under the direction of Wakai, formed a

centrepiece in the 1878 Japanese exhibition in Paris.

It is still in the Victoria and Albert (No. 188-1883) though its I (48)  
 sale is unrecorded. It is easily recognisable by comparison with illus-  
 trations of it published in "L'Art" and the G.B.A. in 1878, in articles  
 by Burty and Duranty respectively. Nothing more dramatically illustrates  
 the change in taste between the 1870's and 1880's, than Bing's difficulty  
 in disposing of this piece which he must have once welcomed as great  
 business triumph. The appearance of the bronze in 1878 is discussed  
 below. Its final sale to the Victoria and Albert is unrecorded. However  
 the sale of a Chinese screen in 1885 is fully documented. Bing originally  
 asked £1,400 for the screen in January 1885. By April 27th he was  
 writing to Sir P.C.Owen of "un arrêt complet dans mes affaires - un  
 grande besoin d'argent, il faut que je réalise le paravent "anyhow"."  
 He eventually accepted £1,000. In 1889 he accepted £700 for a similar I (49)  
 screen.

An 1885 letter shows that Bing owned three shops in Paris; 19,  
 Rue Chauchat, 13, Rue Bleu and 19, Rue de la Paix. It would seem that  
 the Far Eastern vogue was in decline in the 1880's and Bing's business  
 was greatly overextended. One thinks immediately of the upper rooms  
 filled with Japanese prints that Van Gogh examined at Bing's at this  
 time.

Bing went on to become an important writer and speaker on Japanese  
 art but we may take it that his major dealing in Japanese art objects  
 was over by the late 1880's.

More will be said later about Bing's role as a critic and promoter  
 of Japanese taste. Now I wish to discuss an example of an English  
 traveller to Japan, also a dealer's agent, but a man of a very different  
 character to the French dealers.

Christopher Dresser.

Dr. Christopher Dresser was a very different character to the  
 travellers to Japan we have already discussed. Dresser was a member of

the new art and design "establishment" which emerged in London with the creation of the South Kensington Museum and the continued sentiment for the reform of design and decoration which occupied the English middle class and the manufacturers who supplied them with the various necessities of the life which they lived. Dresser participated in all aspects of this reform. His most notable work however was with the South Kensington 226 Museum where he occupied official and semi-official posts for many years. He was also involved with several major commercial concerns, and had acted as a designer/special advisor on various manufacturing processes both to private companies and to the British, United States and Japanese governments. He was also a writer on these problems and a designer in his own right, eventually forming his own company. We have discussed Dresser's earlier involvement with Japanese art and design which began in 1862. His enthusiasm for it was maintained by his work as an official British delegate and juror at the succeeding international exhibitions. 227

Dresser's fundamental concern with Japan was as a scholar and as an investigator hoping to promote reform and invention in British manufactures, and as trained designer who had much to learn for himself.

His plans to go to Japan were formed after seeing the Japanese exhibition at Vienna in 1873, where;

No-one could pass without being struck with the fact that the best works in carpets, in hangings, in china, in enamel wares, in coloured domestic glass, in wallpapers and in metalwork were Eastern in character. 228

Whilst at the exhibiton he had made the acquaintance of Mr. Sano the chief commissioner of the Japanese delegation and in this way prepared his contacts for his Japanese visit.

Dresser was associated with two importing companies; the prestigious "Londog Bros." and "Charles, Reynolds and Co.", which dealt in 229 cheaper Japanese goods and also with the Alexandra Palace Company which set out to import the most remarkable of modern Japanese work.

"Londos and Co" arranged for Dresser to be financed so that he should make for them " a typical collection of art objects such as should illustrate as fully as possible both the present and old manufactures of Japan, and have reliable tutorial value".

230

He also agreed to make a similar collection for "Tiffany and Co." of New York, and arranged to write a report for British companies on the art and industry of Japan.

Finally as he was about to depart, P.C. Owen, director of the South Kensington Museum suggested that he should take with him a collection of English goods, to replace those bought by Mr. Sano at the Vienna exhibition which had been lost by shipwreck in the Yedo Bay.

He appealed for donations and several firms donated works, to which 231 the South Kensington Museum added some plates and Dresser himself 60 design drawings. This valuable gift was to be offered to the Japanese government.

Dresser's voyage was therefore a trade mission, he was even provided with official credentials. The remarkable aspect of this is that within five years of the pillaging of Duret, Cernuschi and the Sichel Brothers, Dresser found an entire official apparatus ready to receive him. Already the opportunities for vast uncontrolled purchases of Japanese works had disappeared. The supply had dried up and the Japanese government had set up museums and trade bureaux. In Yokohama Dresser was offered a lacquer box six inches square, at the price of over £100.

He set out from Liverpool for America on October 28th 1876 and spent some time there, visiting the Philadelphia Exhibition. He met General 232 Saigo the head of the Japanese delegation there. He travelled with him across America and to Japan, where the general showed him great courtesy. They arrived in Japan on December 26th, 1876. During that time he managed to travel all around the craft centres of Japan despite the breaking out of the Satsuma rebellion. It is very difficult to disentangle his itinerary

from the written account he published in 1882. However we know that 233  
he spent some time along the 18 miles between Yokohama and Tokyo on the  
new railroad, staying with illustrious Japanese and European diplomatic  
officials and mixing with the new Japanese official circles. As a result  
of this he was able to obtain official support for the visit. The  
ancient collections of the Mikado at Kioto, the treasure house at Nara,  
newly opened after over a thousand years of private veneration by priests,  
the temples of Kamakura, the shrines of Ise, the sacred mountain Koya-zan,  
the castle at Nagoya and many other previously unseen treasures of Japan  
were fully opened to him, during his excursions. These were based on the  
towns of Tokyo, Yokohama, Kioto and Nana, which form a circle around the  
Lake Biwa area which Dresser travelled in a roughly clockwise direction  
beginning in the Yokohama/Tokyo area and going then by sea to Kiobe.

Dresser gives a full list of his journeys in his book. Altogether  
he travelled 1715 miles. More importantly the extent of his acquaintance 234  
with Japanese art can be judged by his claim to have visited 68 separate  
potteries during his stay. He crammed an enormous amount of study of 235  
Japanese crafts and art objects into the short time of his visit. It  
began in Yokohama with excursions into the curio shop district. There  
was a similar excursion in Tokyo. Dresser does not go into detail of the  
purchases he made but they were few and minor compared to those of  
earlier travellers. He also took the occasion to inspect the Da'mio's  
castle and the temple at Shiba in Yedo where five great Shoguns are  
buried. Dresser's descriptions of temples and architecture in general  
are thorough and extensive. At Kioto and elsewhere he hired his own  
photographer, the best available, to take pictures of many of them, and  
also hired an artist to make coloured sketches of the most important of  
the decorative schemes. On one occasion, this artist was completely  
defeated by a complex system of corner joints that Dresser had requested  
to be drawn in perspective. He made instead a model which he painted to

indicate the decorations which Dresser wished to record.

Despite his enthusiasm for the architecture, Dresser managed to keep his commercial sense awake. Speaking of the temple of Shiba in which the floors were of black lacquer, he said;

The surface of these floors may be compared with that of the best papier-mâché tray that Wolverhampton ever made.

During his stay Dresser managed to inspect the great religious centres at Nara, Nikko, the Ise province and others. Each he fully recorded and had many wood engravings made to illustrate his report. Dresser's descriptions are exact and interesting. Here is his image of a room in a Buddhist temple recently converted to Shinto;

Connected with this temple are two rooms, the columns of which are covered with gold with coloured decoration, in the form of folded drapery at the top of each shaft. The golden columns, together with horizontal members, divide the wall into panels, which have a margin of dark green diapered with gold. On this diaper-work falls a black lacquer frame pencilled with gold scrolls, while within the frame is a carving of unpolished wood of a vulture with a rabbit in its grasp.

When I first looked at this carving I thought that it consisted of one piece of wood, in colour resembling American walnut; but now I see that the carved parts are of one wood and the ground of another: but the two are so similar in colour that they simply present two shades of one general hue. The wall consists of a series of such panels, only in each one the subject differs. Above these panels are horizontal panels in which are coloured carvings or painted ornaments. The ceiling is divided into coffers, and every coffer has in its centre a carved group of flowers or ornaments in the natural colour of its wood. For a dining room or library I can imagine nothing more quiet or richer in effect than this beautiful room at Nikko; and I only hope that some millionaire who can appreciate the beautiful will give me an opportunity of producing a similar room in this country.

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Millionaires were, of course, to give Dresser and others the chance to produce such work in the coming decade.

The early part of January was taken up in visits to the great temples of Tokyo, Yokohama and Kamakura. On January 12th, Dresser met the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Okuba, who was of tremendous help to

him. On January 20th he had an audience with the Mikado at which he presented his gifts.

There followed a visit to the theatre in Yedo which Dresser described with great accuracy.

On the 22nd January Dresser was in Yokohama and discovered a surprise prepared for him by Mr. Sano. Five of the finest artists in Japan had been invited to Mr. Sano's house in order to entertain Dresser and some other Europeans, Sir Harry and Lady Parkes, Mr. and Mrs. Moussey and Mr. Crossley. The artists knelt on the floor and drew or painted on a piece of paper laid flat on a red velvet cloth. Sano presented Dresser with a drawing of a cock and hen perching on the ground in front of a branch which was made by the first artist. The evolution of the images on the paper fascinated Dresser, the use of silhouette, dynamic line and tonal contrast was clearly revolutionary to him. The same artist later produced another work at the end of the entertainment.

Like the last artist, this gentleman produces a tint and an outline at the same time, and by the same method. After what we take to be waves are finished and when we expect the artist to place in the water a few fish or upon it junks, he simply adds a few dots and dark touches and signs his name. It is now held up to view, when to our astonishment, the sketch is that of a train of rats, with one or two members of the party straying from the others. What we took to be waves prove only to be a background, against which the rounded backs of the white rats appear - the uncoloured paper forming the animals.

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The technique of Japanese artists amazed Westerners and it was the order of evolution of the image and the rapidity with which a fully convincing representation could be achieved which astonished them most of all. Dresser's reaction is representative of that of many others and it is not surprising to find him advocating a complete change in the system of training at the South Kensington Art School. The spontaneous and simultaneous use of line and colour that he had seen in Japan was actively discouraged in Europe by an initial training which was concerned

only with pencil drawing. Dresser was highly impressed by one of the other artists, of whom he subsequently made a friend, a flower painter who produced marvellous sketches in virtually no time;

Although I myself am a trained draughtsman and was as a young man engaged exclusively in studying plants and drawing flowers, I own my utter inability to produce so rapidly a sketch comparable with that which is now before us.

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Dresser describes the technique of every artist with considerable fascination. After three demonstrations black fans were brought and decorated by the artists. Then the company took tea, after which the artists further entertained them. One artist marked a cross on a piece of paper and another was challenged to incorporate the device into a sketch of a lady. This he did, reasonably well, in three minutes. Dresser remarks that this entertainment was the most pleasing that he had had in Japan.

However his overall impression of the pictorial arts occupies very little part of his book and he quoted Japan as a warning against the overvaluation of paintings as decoration in England. Japanese lacquer ware contained excellent drawing and delicacy of treatment and was a fine example of the finest Japanese painting. Moreover he completely ignores the Japanese print save as a means of recording the drawing style. He has no sense that prints could themselves constitute art.

After this Dresser set out to sea for Kobe as the first leg of a long journey to the interior. A Mr. Ishidu and a Mr. Sakata accompanied him. They acted as interpreters and official guides. Wherever he went the local craftsmen were paraded before him with their work and aided by Sahata he interviewed them as to their techniques and traditions.

At Kobe Dresser saw the festivities when the Mikado paid a visit. Then followed a journey to Kyoto through areas like the Sanja pottery districts Arima, where much excellent basketware was made. On the way Dresser took the opportunity to inspect the treasury of the early Japanese

emperors at Nara, the cases of which Mr. Okubo had arranged to be opened for him.

Dresser noted analogies with Greek and Arab and even Persian work. He noted also that many of the objects of the Imperial Treasury were Chinese in origin. Dresser was also granted the privilege of inspecting the imperial treasury at the later capital of Kioto.

Dresser took an interest in every aspect of design and even spent some time at Nara drawing the heads of ornamental nails at some risk of losing his companions. When he finally arrived in Kioto, he took some time to go round the curio shops and meet the local merchants. He was surprised to find a large exhibition of the finest Japanese craftsmanship with notices exhorting all craftsmen to produce such work as the survival of the country depended on it.

The Mikado's collection at Kioto contained a range of lacquer work stretching over 500 years in time. Dresser took every opportunity to study this collection with the result that his account of lacquer and lacquer making is the finest written until after 1900.

Dresser also attended the Cha-no-yu or tea ceremony given by the governor of Kioto. His description of this and other ceremonies, such as the Shinto dances at Nara is accurate and detailed. He noted especially the admiration of the tea set and utensils which form an important part of the tea ceremony and it helped to reinforce his belief in Japanese aesthetic sympathy for objects of daily use as the key to their success in design.

Dresser also managed to see pottery, bronze work, lacquer and cloisonne work being made in Kioto. At this time he also made an excursion to Osaka. There followed a journey through towns round Lake Biwa to Ise province, where Dresser studied and photographed the famous Shinto shrines. Then there were trips to Nagoya and Seto. By March 20th Dresser was back in Tokyo after a circular "whirlwind" tour into which he

packed an enormous amount of study.

The remainder of his time in Japan was taken up with further investigation of the Yokohama/Tokyo region, with one major excursion to the temples of Nikko. The engraved illustrations in his book of these temples are typical of the visual material he brought back, and their detail is matched by the detail of his description.

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It was at Nikko that Dresser began to feel jaded by the beauty he had seen:

I now feel that sweet forms and sweet colours and sweet harmonies of colour are making me sad. I am also weary of writing of the beautiful, for I feel that any words that I can use must fail to convey any adequate idea of the conscientiousness of the work, the loveliness of compositions, the harmoniousness of the colours and the beauty of the surroundings here before me; and get the adjectives which I have tried to heap one upon another, in the hope of conveying to the reader what I, an architect and ornamentist - feel when contemplating these matchless shrines must appear, I am afraid, altogether unreasonable.

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There is no doubt that Dresser's voyage was a quest for "the beautiful", and that in his lectures and writings about it he intended to convey the means whereby this quality should be introduced to England and to Western art and design. Today Dresser's account with its yards of even descriptive prose seems very dull, but Dresser and many of his contemporaries believed that the beautiful was amenable to description if not to analysis. This description he continued to attempt for the remainder of his life.

One aspect of Dresser's belief that "beauty" was accessible to study was his emphasis on craftsmanship. He talked with evident satisfaction about a Japanese manufacturer of pottery in Owaji from whom he had ordered two tea sets. Dresser remonstrated and suggested that more decorators should be employed. The manufacturer refused to do so, arguing that Dresser could not be sure of liking the work of other artists. (Dresser had to wait two years).

When Dresser saw that an individual mould was made to cast each of a 1000 identical bronze vases he applauded it as a virtue. On every possible occasion he observes "dedicated craftsmanship";

I have watched the poor artisan labouring at his work with an earnestness and love such as I never beheld outside Japan, and the very features of the workmen testify to their happiness, and to the love with which they perform their painstaking labours. No thought of gain appears to enter their minds and no touch is spared which will make the work more lovely; this is how the beautiful works which we delight to look upon are produced. They are works born of loving labour; they are the children of happy contented men who love their labour as they love their lives.....If our workmen could but see the dear old men of Japan engaged in their various handicrafts they would not fail to learn that happiness is not found in short hours and high pay but in the love of our work, and this is the reward which these poor men receive, perfect happiness.

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The amount of humbug in Dresser's account is probably a great deal less than we would at first judge. There is no doubt that the Japanese craftsmen which Dresser saw worked for little reward and with the maximum exercise of their skill. There was firm foundation for the myths of the perfectly happy Japanese artist craftsman which began to build up in Europe during the 1870's. It may well be that this example of craftsmanship as virtue rewarded had a greater influence on the development of the Arts and Crafts movement than we realise. Certainly an enormous number of artists and designers both in England and France were to use accounts of Japan, such as Dresser's, to justify their own position at a time when art was becoming increasingly isolated within society. On the other hand it is only fair to point out that French travellers to Japan did not emphasise the virtues of craftsmanship of the Japanese but rather their artistry. Dresser brought certain expectations with him to Japan. The audience of hard-headed manufacturers at Dresser's lecture inevitably produced sceptics. A Mr. Cornelius Pare challenged his description of the small manual workshops of Japan by pointing out that 200,000 lacquer trays, 25,000 lacquer cabinets, 150,000 boxes and an

undetermined number of fans had recently been imported and more were on the way. Dresser's reply was that labour was so cheap in Japan that even with no machines it was cheaper to import than manufacture in England.

The greatest contribution made by Dresser to Western knowledge of Japanese art was undoubtedly the detailed descriptions he wrote of the various crafts he studied. His 1882 book contains the fullest account of Japanese lacquer technique that I have yet read, and the accounts of wooden architecture, carpentry, weaving and pottery are equally well informed.

Dresser's information was not scholarly however, and while in Japan he made no attempt to pursue firsthand historical research, relying instead on pieces published in the Japan Mail and on previous travel books. We may therefore guess that his "tutorial" collection of Japanese art consisted of contemporary work, of high quality but probably not of great appeal to present day taste.

Part of the collection was sent to New York, to Tiffany's. They auctioned much of it after having made a thorough study of the designs. In particular Tiffany's craftsmen studied the silverware sent by Dresser, with such success that they produced work which was the highlight of the metalwork at the 1878 International Exhibition.

Part of the collection went to Glasgow, the major section however was eventually sold off in the London market by "Londos and Co."

Dresser makes no mention of discovering undreamed of hoards of art in Japan during his trip and collecting was a much less important part of his journey than of previous visitors.

I will discuss Dresser's role as a former of opinion about Japanese interests in the next section of this thesis. As a former of Japanese opinion he was not a success, as a Japanese government collection of sayings made by him in Japan revealed. A remark that ginger would be a

useful export to England produced the following comment:

The quantity of ginger used in London is very great indeed, being used in bread of higher quality, sponge cakes, sweet meats, etc., and also as a medicine. The people of the city are very fond of it and it has become, like tea and coffee, almost indispensable.

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Clearly this is a misunderstanding of "gingerbread". Dresser quotes several other amusing misapprehensions on the part of the government "spies" set to record his actions and sayings. Apart from its humorous side, this inaccuracy of understanding may have been responsible for many of the European misapprehensions about Japanese art, for instance about the status of Hokusai who was regarded as only a minor master in Japan itself.

Dresser's visit, then, was fundamentally different in character to those of Cernuschi and the Sichels and it marks a change in the trading situation with Japan. No longer could Japan be looted of great works at little cost, indeed most "ancient" ware had disappeared. Dresser's visit marks the transition between two phases of interest in Japanese art.

#### William Anderson

Dresser's lack of interest in the pictorial arts was counterbalanced very vigorously by the appearance in England of a massive collection of paintings, books and prints, formed by Dr. William Anderson who during the 1870's was the Professor of Medicine at Tokyo University. Anderson's enormous collection of over two thousand items represented all the major styles of Japanese art. The collection was soon famous. Gorse mentions it as outstanding, in the first edition of his work L'Art Japonais of 1882.

The British Museum acquired the whole collection and in 1886 published a scholarly catalogue of the paintings by Anderson. At the same time Anderson himself published an extensively illustrated book of "Pictorial Arts of Japan".

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Anderson's work is scholarly and without much aesthetic discussion.

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The sale of his collection to the British Museum marked the end of the age of discovery of Japanese art. From the early 1880's it is possible to assume that the whole historical range of Japanese art was publicly available in both England and France.

One major "traveller" remains to be discussed. He was responsible for achieving the consolidation of scholarship in France brought about by the British Museum in England.

Felix Regamey and Emile Guimet

The First Great Oriental Museum

In 1876 a rich Lyons manufacturer, Emile Guimet, set out from Paris to visit Japan and to collect material for the study of the religions and civilisations of the Far East. His mission had the support of the Ministère de L'Instruction Publique in its object of collecting oriental work to form a basis for a museum of religious iconography, not only of the Far East, but also of Greece and Egypt. Guimet had already travelled to Egypt as early as 1865. This official support was to be of great value to him in his research in Japan, where the Japanese education ministry also took an interest in his work.

Guimet took with him the artist Felix Regamey, whom he asked to record the scenes and customs of Japan. Regamey's paintings were to be used as part of the Guimet collection. Guimet's choice of artist was probably conditioned by Regamey's work as an illustrator for articles by Burty and E. Veron which had appeared in the periodical L'Art during the previous two years. Regamey had also been the artist who had illus- 244 trated Burty's book Emaux Cloisonnés with tiny vignettes and bas de page illustrations taken from Japanese prints and drawings. In fact Regamey, 245 at that time, was probably the only artist/illustrator with a familiarity with Japanese work. He is also important as a former fellow student, of several of the new generation of painters at Gleyre's studio. He was a friend of Bazille and knew many of the 'Impressionist' circle. Regamey's

connection with them has never been commented upon and yet he acted as a most important source of knowledge of Far Eastern art, particularly after his journey with Guimet. 246

The story of their voyage is told in a de luxe book which is, in itself, an important work in the history of Far Eastern influence on European culture, "Promenades Japonaises, Tokio Nikko". The text was by Guimet himself, with many illustrations, several in full colour, by Regamey. The book was published by Charpentier who had long been a Japanese enthusiast. The first edition was the triumph of the books section for the 1878 exhibition. A second, cheaper edition followed in 1880, with fewer illustrations. Guimet's work is less of an explorer's diary than earlier books. He does not give a detailed description of their day to day travels. Some events and customs are described for themselves. He retells several legends, such as the 47 Ronin. These are usually illustrated with facsimiles in black and white of Japanese prints of the story concerned. Guimet also discusses Buddhism at some length. He conceived of his work more as an introduction to Japan than as an account of exotic adventures. Thus he discusses the contemporary scene at length. The same can be said of Regamey's drawings and paintings. They are attempts to record what he saw as completely as possible and as amusingly. Thus Promenades Japonaises is probably the first well-informed, truly popular book on Japan. It enjoyed a wide circulation and it is therefore important to know of its contents. The Musée Guimet itself is well-known as the first and most important Far Eastern museum in France and it is equally important to study its early years to discover what impressions of the Far East it created. Degas, Rodin, almost certainly Van Gogh and many other artists were to visit it to see the Guimet collection on show during the 1878 Universal Exhibition when it was on display with Regamey's paintings in the Trocadero. Guimet and Regamey followed the same route as their contemporary traveller, 247 248

Christopher Dresser. They went from Liverpool across the Atlantic to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. After this they went on to Japan via San Francisco, arriving in autumn 1876 and remaining until early 1878. Unlike Dresser however, they restricted their travels within Japan to the area surrounding the line between Nikko, Tokyo and Yokohama. This restricted area gave them more time to explore their surroundings and they give many detailed descriptions of sites in the Tokyo suburbs. Some of Regamey's paintings are of subjects in the Kyoto area, but there is no discussion of a visit there in Promenades Japonaises. Regamey may have used photographs. On the other hand the Musee Guimet catalogue claims that one painting 'Predications et offrandes dans le temple de Tenmagou le dieu lettré à Kioto' was made as a memento of a visit to the French Mission to talk to the official priests of Shintoism.

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They arrived in Yokohama and were received by a friend from Lyons, an M.P. who guided them to Tokyo via the railway. Once there they made their way on foot to Sinagawa, a district where foreign legations and traders had formed a small community, using disused temples for premises. On the way they passed the temple of Siuja Koudiji which is near the tombs of the 47 Ronin. This gives Guimet a pretext for retelling the story and also of describing its conversion to a dramatic epic and the devices adopted by the author to avoid censure. On leaving this temple they noticed an enormous number of curiosity shops;

Tout est intéressant pour des nouveaux débarqués,  
et nous ne cessons d'admirer la disposition  
ingénieuse des habitations ouverte à tout vent.  
Nous voyons de nombreuses boutiques dont la plu-  
part sont occupées par des marchands de bric-à-brac;  
on nous avait bien dit que le Japon était le pays  
du bibelot et de la curiosité, mais je ne pensais  
pas que sur dix marchands, il y avait neuf antiquaires.

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However the numerous shops did not attract them and nowhere in his text does Guimet discuss the shops as sources of Japanese art. He describes several visits to streets of shops, such as the famous Nihon bashi doori

in Tokyo, where amongst others, the famous Mitsui "department store" was located;

Bronzes, livres, faïence, étoffés, jouets, antiquités, les étalages se succèdent tantôt sombres, tantôt brillants, et cette rue interminable ne cesse d'offrir aux chaulauds les produits les plus variés et les plus attraquants de l'industrie japonais.

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But presumably their wares were all contemporary, as was Mitsui's display sent to Paris in 1878.

There is almost no discussion of Guimet's collecting activities. Presumably this is because it was no longer possible to collect in the manner of Cernuschi and Duret. The heyday of great discoveries and bargains was over.

Regamey and Guimet soon reached the French embassy where they sought special authorizations to study monasteries. They were at once advised that they were wasting their time, the monks were all ignorant, and as for Regamey's hope of painting in Japan;

Du dessin, de la peinture! Mais ne venez pas au Japon pour celà. C'est un pays terne, sans lignes, sans horizons; les maisons sont noires, les vêtements gris, les femmes laides, les hommes hideux. Prenez le bateau qui part samedi prochain, il vous menera en Egypte, en Italie, c'est là qu'est l'art. Pour Dieu, quittez le Japon. C'est un pays sans couleur.

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This official was perhaps typical of many who worked in Japan and were unable to see more than their preconceived patterns of taste would allow. Guimet goes to ironic lengths to demonstrate that Japanese landscape has great beauty both of line and colour.

He describes Regamey at work drawing a view of Shiba and a picture of a young woman in a teahouse throwing "cakes" to sacred golden carp which jumped from the water. The whole description is lyrical, in a way not found in previous writings on Japan.

Les poissons sont-ils venus? Je ne sais. J'étais comme pétrifié par cette apparition de fillette fraîche et gaie, de robes aux papillons bleus, de lotus roses et de verdure sur l'eau.

This lyricism informs the entire book and is a very important indication of the development of popular opinion of Japan as a land of lyrical beauty and gracious manners. This conception was, of course, reinforced by the retelling of sentimental folk tales such as that of a couple cast out by their parents to whom the god Benten gave her dragon as a child, a beautiful daughter who made her father's patisserie famous through her beauty. Writing in the Revue Bleu in 1890 Regamey was to recall his impression of the beauty of Japan;

Contrairement au phénomène qui se produit lorsqu'on a beaucoup présumé de la beauté d'un chef d'oeuvre de l'art où de la nature, je n'eus aucune déception en arrivant au Japon.

Je retrouvai très exactement les paysages et les gens que les premiers albums parvenues en France m'avaient révélés il y a trente ans.

C'était sous un ciel superbe, cet archipel volcanique de plusieurs milliers d'îles couvertes d'une végétation luxuriante, où les bambous gracieux et les pins gigantesques impriment un cachet tout spécial d'élégance et d'ampleur. En vérité, les images ne m'avaient pas menti.

Throughout his later career Regamey was to emphasise the beauty of Japan, and pointed to Japanese prints as an accurate record of it.

Guimet and Regamey had met a Japanese named Matsmoto in Philadelphia and travelled to Yokohama with him. They visited him in Tokyo at his home. They removed their shoes and were served tea in tiny cups, in a room with no furniture save one large Shize vase. The description of Matsmoto's house is an account of a Japanese dwelling but very brief. He acted as their guide to Asaksa and Shiba - the temple districts of Tokyo. At the Asaka temple Guimet made a lengthy study of religious practices including the rather strange one of writing one's prayer on a piece of rice paper, chewing it into a ball and throwing it so that it stuck to a monumental Buddha in the temple. If it stuck firmly the prayer would be answered. Another prayer, for children, consisted of releasing a caged bird. Guimet also discovered an immense lacquered revolving book-case containing the eight principal Buddhist scriptures. It was said that

anyone who could turn the wheel once round completely could claim to have read the entire texts and to know the law. Guimet describes the sculpture in the temples he visits at some length but makes very little reference to style or artistic qualities. Instead he concentrates on the subjects of the sculptures and their iconographic importance, in particular he discussed the Buddhist saints "Amida, Quanon, Seissi and Jiso." He also gives strange amusing details, such as painting on a temple altar of a Buddhist "hell" for children which showed the children building up castles from stones, which small devils were busily knocking down again.

Matsmoto also took Guimet and Regamey to a fair in the temple grounds where traditional Japanese goods, toys, books and scroll paintings were sold alongside paraffin lamps, bowler hats, ice-creams and other Western imports. Guimet noticed many photographers in the temple grounds taking photographs of temple pilgrims. It would seem clear that photography became extremely common in Japan in the 1870's when one considers that Dresser also encountered many photographers. This being the case many albums of photos must have been sent to Europe during this period. There were also archery stalls and tumbling booths of various kinds at the fair. There was even an equivalent to a European waxworks in which wooden models displayed various heroes and events in Japanese history in set tableaux. There were also exhibits of Europeans eating with forks and a European woman seated on a velocipede - activities which were regarded as highly exotic by the Chinese.

Like all visitors Guimet was greatly impressed by the Shiba temples and gives a long description of them. He was privileged to be shown many buildings and objects not open to the general public. In one closed court he saw a temple made entirely out of gold lacquer;

C'est à peine si l'on voit le temple d'or qui est là; car, pour le préserver des intempéries, on l'a enveloppé d'une couche de planches brutes qui le recouvre dans tous les sens. Mais, en se glissant entre l'enveloppe et le monument, on reste émerveillé de la beauté des détails.

On connaît ces délicieuses petites boîtes de laque dorée, relevées de sculptures délicates et légèrement colorées; eh bien, tout le temple est de ce travail-là!

Les panneaux des murailles représentent des feuillages, des nuages et des oiseaux. Les colonnes sont fouillées comme des maderées. Les ors sombres alternent avec les ors vifs, de tons différents, et les quelques tâches de couleur qu'on a jetées sur les fleurs et sur les oiseaux ne font que relever d'accents qui un ensemble doux et harmonieux.

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After having inspected all the temples they could find Guimet and Regamey spent some time in restaurants and theatres. Regamey even went so far as to dress in a kimono and visit Japanese baths. There is an excellent description by him of a visit to 'La Restaurant des Lune et Fleurs'- complete with geishas and female musicians.

In the midst of all these adventures Guimet still found time to form an opinion of Japanese art. He was concerned to explain the attraction of Japanese art; 254

D'où vient que le moindre objet japonais nous étonne par sa simplicité, nous émotionne par son étrangeté et nous charme par son harmonie?

Qui a donné aux singuliers insulaires du Nippon le goût, la sobriété, l'élégance? Qui les a doués de l'invention, de l'adresse, du talent.

As one would expect from a man who was principally concerned with comparative cultural and religious studies Guimet framed his question in a very particular way and sought his answers in general factors.

These were race, climate and education. Guimet identifies three constituent races in Japan, the Koreans, the Chinese and the pure Japanese "la race des dieux" of Japan, which looked like the ancient Japanese pictures of gods. It was this race, sprung from the land, which according to Guimet provided the cultural basis for Japanese art. The climate of Japan is also said to have contributed to art;

Les montaignes vertes se mirent dans les golfes bleus. Partout les arbres géants alternent avec les bosquets fleuris, constellés de camélias; sur les versants rapides, les azalées roses ou blanches étalent leurs plaques lumineuses; ça et là, le palonia étage ses plumets de fleurs d'un bleu pale. A l'automne, les

chrysanthèmes monstrueux ressemblent à des soleils  
pendus dans la verdure; dans les vallons humides,  
les bambous vigoureux dressent leurs tiges luisantes  
vernissées de noir et de vert.

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This is only the beginning of a long passage in which Japan is portrayed as a pantheistic Eden, written by Guimet with all the authority of a first-hand witness. Shinto beliefs are stressed as a religious factor in the Japanese attitude to nature and the education provided through religion was supposed to have influenced the Japanese attitude to craftsmanship. Shinto is even compared to Greek pantheism as the basis for a highly humane and humanising civilisation:

Un peuple qui comprend ainsi le culte de la nature  
ne doit aborder l'art, ne doit toucher à l'imitation  
qu'avec une réserve, un respect, un amour, une con-  
viction qui le sauvent de toute erreur et de tout  
mauvaise goût.

Le Japonais adore la nature, mais la nature est  
ici tellement gracieuse que forcément le Japonais  
est gai.

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Guimet's writing is probably the clearest and one of the earliest formulations of this view of Japan as an artistic Eden, a view that was to become very important in the later 1870's and the 1880's and to have a great effect on artists and designers as different as the Post-Impressionists and the British Arts and Crafts Movements.

Following this discussion Guimet goes farther and describes another aspect of Japanese art which was to influence the development of European art. In a chapter called 'L'Hieroglyphe' he describes the influence of the Chinese system of writing on Japan and particularly on Japanese art. He points to the common use of the brush in writing and painting and the simplification which the Japanese made of Chinese writing. He sees this same simplification in Japanese drawing and also points out that many historical events, legends, famous men and many other Japanese incidents can be symbolized by a single object. This use of the simplified and the symbolic together constitute for Guimet the essence of Japanese art. Of the Japanese artist he wrote;

Il se met à épeler la nature et y trouve un nouvel alphabet dont toute lettre aura une signification et s'exécutera suivant un procédé déterminé par l'expérience. De là sorte, chaque plante, chaque animal, chaque objet sera un symbolisme et s'écrira en trois ou quatre coups de pinceau.

Et en effet, on peut regarder la plupart des dessins que les Japonais répètent sans cesse sur leurs kake-monos, leurs boîtes, leurs bronzes, leurs faïences, etc., toujours, ils sera facile d'y trouver un sens...

On peut dire que tout objet japonais est un hiéroglyphe.

Ou, pour être plus exact, que les artistes emploient dans leurs oeuvres les procédés hiéroglyphiques: le symbolisme et la simplification la pensée exprimée d'un trait.

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This theory of art as a process of symbolisation and simplification was to be of great significance in the development of 'Modern Art'. It appears in one form or another in the ideas of most groups of artists from 1880 to 1914, but it was not to be restated as precisely as by Guimet until Kirchner wrote his essay on art as a hieroglyph. One wonders how far the presence of Japanese art in Europe contributed to the development of the concept of art as simplification married to symbolisation. In particular, one wonders if Guimet's attitude created a popular belief about Japanese art, or did it represent an attitude already in existence. I believe that Far Eastern art had a considerable role in these developments in which Guimet played a great part.

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Guimet also repeats the more current responses to Japanese art. In particular he discusses Buddhist sculpture in terms of the "primitives" of the late Middle Ages (by whom he meant artists as late as Perugino), and in terms of Greek art:

les représentations bouddhiques ont ce sentiment indo-européen des peintures primitives du moyen âge.

Les plis des vêtements sont doux et harmonieux, on dirait que le Perugin a passé par là et qu'un reflet de l'art grec illumine ces oeuvres.

Guimet here is seeking a common Indo-European root for Western and Eastern art, linked together by Alexander's expedition to India. This

is hardly surprising when one considers the state of nineteenth century linguistics and the amount of linguistic and historical studies which had their origin in the Musée Guimet.

Guimet is attempting to explain by this precarious means the attraction of Eastern art for the West. He is engaged on an extension of the project of historical synthesis which occupied many scholars in the nineteenth century. The link between Japan and Greece was a recurring theme in academic discussion of Far Eastern art and in critical works. 259

Regamey and Guimet had more than an academic experience of Japanese art. By discussion they learnt of the influence of Northern and Southern schools of Chinese painting on Japan and of the Japanese Kano and Tosa schools. The Kano or popular school is discussed in more detail. Guimet names six basic schools, none of which seem to relate the modern scholarly divisions. However the sixth, 'le genre gai', approximates to the Uki-yo-e; Guimet traces this genre back to the thirteenth century satirical scrolls. Hokusai is seen as the leading modern exponent of 'le genre gai'. They noticed that though Hokusai was dead, new work which looked similar in style was appearing. They made attempts to find the artist but were frustrated as no-one would give them his name. Persisting, they discovered that it was Kiosai, a famous Tokyo artist, who had managed by his indiscreet caricatures to incur the displeasure of both the Tycoon's government and later that of the Emperor and had been in prison under both. 260

The two Europeans succeeded in finding Kiosai's house after some difficulty. Kiosai at first mistook their European dress as a sign that they were government officials come to arrest him again. However once this was explained away he invited them in to his house which was of two rooms, a studio and a room with two women who bowed to the Europeans on their entry. The studio contained one or two masks, a pile of papers, brushes, etc., and a young cat who nibbled a cake offered on the domestic

altar. We can see these items in the drawing by Regamey.

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Although he was embarrassed, Kiosai talked a great deal about his work through an interpreter. When Kiosai saw Regamey drawing him he immediately began to draw Regamey. The result was a "duel" during which two excellent drawings were produced. Both of them are reproduced in Promenades Japonaises.

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After this visit Kiosai visited Guimet and showed him an excellent painting of Sakia Mouni Buddha meditating. He also painted an allegory of modern times on a fan using a lotus shoot to support a telegraph wire and frogs with a lily pad metamorphosed into a Djinriksha wheel. It is a pity that Guimet did not record more of the Europeans' conversations with Kiosai. The direct confrontation of Eastern and Western artists is a fascinating event.

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This is the first record of Kiosai meeting with Western artists. Later on however he became well-known in the West. Mortimer Menpes and Josiah Conder who studied with him for eight years were amongst many who visited him, as well as scholars such as Anderson who collected 70 of his works. There is no doubt that the picture of the Japanese artist and his style forming in Europe at this time was based to some extent directly on Kiosai, who, as a Uki-yo-e caricaturist, valued extreme spontaneity and a particularly broad brushstroke. Indeed so consistent was European interest in Kiosai's work that by the 1880's he had taken to writing notes in "English" for students on his exercises in different styles of the old Japanese schools. Of course Kiosai was not a representative artist and therefore he contributed to a European myth. It was a myth to which many Europeans tried to live up to.

In 1877 Kiosai exhibited a painting of a crow at Ueno Park at a high price. When asked by the exhibition judges why it was so exorbitant, Kiosai replied that the price of a common crow was but a fraction of the fifty years of study that enabled him to dash off his picture in

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this manner. Interestingly enough this is an identical argument to that used later by Whistler in the Whistler/Ruskin trial.

Kiosai may have acted as a direct model for European artists. In the case of Regamey however, Japanese technique had little or no effect. Regamey was an illustrator highly trained in the Beaux Arts tradition, but incapable of innovation or of first rate work. In a lifetime of drawings, his work never refines itself in a way which would indicate a great interest in Japanese techniques. His great importance as a transmitter of Japanese culture will be discussed below.

The remainder of the Promenades Japonaises is a description of the sixty mile pilgrimage from Tokyo to the temples and tombs of Nikko undertaken by the Europeans, with an escort of two interpreters and three Japanese servants. The description includes events along the journey such as a visit to an inn, described and illustrated in some detail. The trip began in September 1877 and took longer than expected as the result of a monsoon.

During their stay at Nikko they were once more given facilities not available to most Europeans. A learned Buddhist expressed various beliefs to them and they were allowed to attend a Buddhist mass, or, as Guimet called it, "Les Vêpres Bouddhique". This is described in great detail in Les Promenades Japonaises, and Regamey made many interesting drawings of it. This was a privilege granted previously to the highest Japanese nobles. It was Guimet's discussion with the Buddhists at Nikko that led eventually to the presence of Buddhist priests in the Musée Guimet and to the regular performances of Buddhist and other Far Eastern religious ceremonies which were to take place in Paris. I (55)

There is no reason to discuss the trip to Nikko in detail since it would not add to the account I have already given of the voyage. However Guimet's popularisation of the Buddhist beliefs must not be underestimated. There has never been an attempt to assess the impact of Guimet's work on

art and literature, yet it is well-known that the collection and eventually the museum had a considerable impact in Paris.

On their way home from Japan, Regamey and Guimet made brief stops in China and India where they collected some sculpture, and Regamey made some sketches. No record of this visit exists, but it is clear that it must have been brief since they were still in Japan at the beginning of 1878 and must have been home by the summer of the same year.

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#### The Guimet Collection and the Musée Guimet

Guimet makes no mention of his collecting activities in Promenades Japonaises and yet it is well-known that he returned with a large collection of Buddhist sculpture. Part of this is now displayed in the annexe to the Musée Guimet in Paris, under the title 'Iconographie de Bouddhisme'. There are also in the collection a selection of Shinto religious artefacts, ranging from a mirror and a folded paper prayer offering, to small carved foxes. I have spent some time looking at this collection and I include some photographs of part of it which I made when there. Altogether there are about 150 small to medium sized altars and other sculpture and some paintings. There were also Regamey's multitude of paintings and sketches.

The second catalogue of the Musée Guimet written in 1880 gives the total number of works in the Guimet collection when Guimet brought it back from Japan as 300 Japanese religious paintings, 600 divine statues and 1000 volumes of Oriental books mainly concerned with religious matters but with some illustrated books also.

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However Mlle. Denecké, the present conservateur of the Musée Guimet, assured me that the present exhibit is the only work possessed by the museum attributable directly to the original Guimet collection. She was also kind enough to conduct a search within the museum for the paintings of Regamey - which was unfortunately unsuccessful. Given this minimal amount of physical evidence it is necessary to reconstruct as much as

possible of the history and contents of the Guimet expedition from documents.

### Trocadéro 1878

The whole collection appeared together for the first time at the Trocadéro in the 1878 Exposition Universelle, where it formed part of a massive triumph of Far Eastern art and culture. The Guimet collection occupied the whole of the second of the three rooms devoted to Far Eastern art in the 'Exposition Historique du Trocadéro'. This was an ethnographical exhibition covering most countries in the world. 264 265

The objects in the Guimet exhibition were in three sections and the Regamey paintings were spread around on the walls between them.

One large showcase (vitrine) contained Indian woodsculpture taken from a juggernaut which Guimet thought at least five centuries old. The remainder of the case full of Brahman idols in gilt bronze amongst which were representations of Charismas.

There was also a showcase of Indian, Chinese and Japanese writings/scripts and official seals.

A series of Chinese bronzes representing legendary figures led to the next showcase which contained Guimet's Chinese collection. This contained jades, bronzes, metal sceptres, ivories and two "series de vierges, l'une de vierges immaculées, l'autre de vierges avec enfants". Presumably these were modern Chinese christian artefacts. Next to these was a flat case containing objects from the Japanese Commission - these were boxes of various kinds and cut precious stones. The Japanese exhibition was twice the size of the rest. One showcase contained Buddhist and Shinto altars, the second held only statues of Buddha in various states of beatification. A flat showcase displayed Japanese money, and another Japanese books. The present exhibition in the annexe of the Musée Guimet corresponds to the description of sculptures in the Japanese section of the 1878 exhibition.

In the centre of the room was a bizarre facsimile of the "Mandara du Kooboo-Daishi" in the temple of "Thio-Dji à Kioto". Kobo-Daishi was the monk who introduced the Shingon Sect of Buddhism to Japan in 806 A.D. The mandara is a form of Buddhist Pantheon, paintings of which were used in the early centuries of Buddhism in Japan. Guimet did not stay long 266 in Kioto which probably explains his placing of the Todai-ji temple there, whereas it is situated at Nara. The ancient Kioto temple there is the Jingo-ji and a famous early mandara, the Ryokai-mandala, painted in gold and silver on purple, is located there. This was probably the model for the copy on show in the Trocadero.

This description of the Guimet collection is not very precise, and it is unlikely that one could have a more accurate one without a great deal of detailed research in the Musée Guimet, since no detailed catalogue had survived. Regamey's paintings appear to have been lost 267 completely. However we are in a position to reconstruct much of that aspect of the exhibition by means of reproductions of his work. I have done this in the discussion of Regamey which follows this discussion.

After being shown at the 1878 Paris exposition, Guimet's collection was incorporated in a museum bearing his name at Lyons, built in the same year. The museum was organised to provide ethnographical information about the Far East, in particular about religion. The collection was displayed and arranged on an iconographical rather than an historical scheme. There was also established an extensive library of all the sacred books/texts of the various religions represented there, some other oriental literature, and of all relevant European writings of the subjects of study to which the museum was dedicated. A school for studying Far Eastern languages was also attached to the museum. The whole venture was crowned by the Congress of Orientalists which was held in Lyons late in 1878, and the museum was inaugurated formally in the September of 1879.

This good beginning was not however maintained and by 1882 Guimet had decided to transfer the museum to Paris. In 1884 this task was accomplished and the present Musée Guimet was established in the Place d'Iéna with a considerable state grant.

During the Lyons period two guides to the museum were published, one in two volumes in 1880 and a one volume edition in 1883, both by the director, M.L. de Milloué. Both contained long discussions of the religions of the Far East. There followed in both cases a list of the items in the museum. However only the 1883 catalogue is explicit and descriptive. However it is of little value in reconstructing the original 1878 collection as the museum was expanding very rapidly.

From the catalogues we may, however, note that the museum had on display Roman marbles and various rooms full of oriental ceramics. One room on the ground floor was filled with Chinese porcelain. There were three rooms containing Japanese ceramics of every variety. This collection would appear to have been assembled by Guimet throughout the 1870's apart from his mission to the East. The Japanese ceramics appear to 268 have been mainly modern - though Guimet did not realise this. There was one section dedicated to showing the tea ceremony.

The first floor rooms were all occupied with the material previously shown in Paris, there was also a central rotunda containing the library, presided over by an enormous gilt Japanese Buddha. There were also 269 objects demonstrably Buddhist in Cambodia and Siam. There was also a Norimon, a Japanese sedan chair, usually highly lacquered and decorated, which had once belonged to the Princess Koudji. Copies of wall paintings from the temples at Shiba were also displayed.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal in detail with the contents of the collection; however it is important to note the paintings on display. Regamey's work was displayed on the landing and entrance hall of each floor and in rooms where its subject was appropriate.

There were also other paintings on show, for instance, above the

door to the library were hung Japanese paintings, on a gold background, of the six most famous poets of the canon of 36 Japanese masters. The gold background of the paintings strongly suggests that they were six dismembered screen panels; the six poets' theme was occasionally used for screen painting. 270

Several Japanese paintings were shown on the second floor. There were three Kakemonos of the death of Buddha, and also paintings showing the life of a famous Japanese general and ruler. The copy of a mandara that had been on show in Paris was also in the collection, plus several others. There were several other Buddhist paintings including the traditional Dharma Buddha, the goddess Kouannon, Djou Ro Djin, the Japanese god of happiness. There were also secular subjects such as the hero Kumagaya. There were also eight Chinese paintings in the collection. All of them appear to have been of a fairly recent date. The description of these paintings in the catalogue is of no value for the assessment of their style. However one must nonetheless be aware of the first permanent public exhibition of Far Eastern painting in France. Prints were naturally excluded from its collections as they have no religious content. In Paris the collection was originally laid out along the same iconographical lines as in Lyons, and the same paintings were on display. 271

From 1884 the Musée Guimet became the centre of Far Eastern studies in Paris. Its collection expanded rapidly, by purchase and by gift. Its buildings in Paris were finished in 1888 and from that time onwards the "conferences" held there covered all aspects of Far Eastern culture. Before the museum was fully built "conferences" were given in other buildings and to learned societies. In 1884 on the 16th April, Regamey and Guimet gave a talk on "Le Théâtre au Japon" at the Cercle Saint Simon. 272

This was a straightforward account of the Japanese theatre based on

their experiences in Japan and with particular reference to the 47 Ronin. The published version was illustrated with a print of a mother and child from ShiGenobu and two other drawings of the theatre by Regamey.

Among the later lectures at the Musée was the famous orientalist E. Deshayes, who gave numerous talks on aspects of Japanese art during the 1870's, many of these have been published in the Annales du Musée Guimet.

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The museum attracted several major legacies and gifts during the 1880's and 1890's, notably from famous collectors of Japanese art like De Montefiore and Alexis Rouart. Dr. Gachet also gave some of the Van Gogh Brothers' collection of Japanese prints to the museum.

Regular performances of Buddhist ceremonies were organised at the museum, and other Far Eastern rituals and dances were also performed.

The Musée Guimet thus became a most important factor in the dissemination of information about Far Eastern culture.

Guimet himself remained attached to the museum and occasionally gave lectures. He was on the fringe of the De Goncourt grenier and of artistic circles in Paris.

The Guimet/Regamey expedition was the most important of all the "artistic" expeditions to China and Japan of the 1870's. It had vital consequences for the future of Far Eastern art in the West, through the founding of the Musée Guimet and through the dissemination of information about the culture of the Far East. The expedition also marked the final shrinking and closure of the market in Japanese art which had existed since the revolution of 1871. Guimet and Regamey made no enormous discoveries of Japanese prints during their journey.

The most important effects of the Guimet expedition were therefore educational. It resulted in the propagation of a great deal of information about Japan. By doing this it was to be an important agent in changing the experience of Japanese art for Europeans and consequently

in changing European art.

The career of Felix Regamey and his role as a propagator of Japanese art and aesthetic activities in the West.

It seems natural to discuss the career of Regamey as a propagator of the taste for Japanese art in the content of the Guimet expedition. Regamey was an outstanding educator of Western attitudes, he may stand as an example of many other artists and teachers who travelled to Japan.

When De Goncourt wrote of the discovery of Japanese prints and the techniques used to make them, he coupled Regamey with Bracquemond as a pioneer and educator.

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Felix Regamey was born in 1844, the son of an artist, L.P.G. Regamey. His elder brother Guillaume (1837-1875) was well-known as a painter, wood engraver and illustrator of military subjects. His younger brother Frederic (1889-1925) was mainly an engraver.

Felix studied first with his father, and then as a pupil of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, (Gleyre's atelier), where he won a medal for anatomy. At the age of 23 in 1867, he obtained the post of professor of drawing at the Ecole Nationale du Dessin, then at the Ecole Spéciale D'Architecture. He also had a period as a student of Horace Boisbaudran, <sup>Lecoqde</sup> whose role in preparing the way for Far Eastern influence in French art has been discussed above.

Regamey was a caricaturist who worked for the Journal Amusant, La Vie Parisienne and L'Illustration. He also contributed illustrations to Le Monde Illustré, La Lune and L'Eclipse. In 1870 he launched his own journal Le Salut Public which soon failed. He was an early pioneer of chromolithography in popular journals. He also made several chromolithographic illustrations of Japanese art for periodicals such as L'Art I (55) in the early 1870's. He was a popular illustrator and his work found its way into many other French, English and American journals. An illustration which he made from a photograph of the Mikado opening the first

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Japanese Railway was published in several periodicals in 1872, including The London Illustrated News. His connection with Japanese art went back slightly earlier than this to the publication of Burty's Enaux Cloisonnés in 1867 in which he was responsible for the vignettes and bas de page illustrations based on Japanese prints.

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By the time of his first voyage to Japan in 1876-78, Regamey had already become an important educational figure. He was called in to help reconstruct and reorganise the Chicago School of Art after the Chicago fire. He had invented a teaching technique in which he produced hundreds of drawings very rapidly on every subject;

en moins d'une heure, il couvrait de croquis gigantesques des kilomètres de papier sans fin, touchant à tout à l'art à l'histoire, à l'actualité, à l'ethnographie, voir même à la morale, témoin la conférence qu'il fit un soir dans une église de Boston en prenait pour sujet: les bienfaits de tempérance.

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Clearly his drawing was influenced a great deal by Boisbaudran's teaching of an immediate technique and the disciplined use of memory in drawings. This attitude to pictorial creativity fitted Regamey to be a sympathetic observer and interpreter of Japanese art. One recalls how Hokusai would draw enormous religious images very rapidly to be seen by large numbers of people from the roof of neighbouring public buildings. It is the same public display of rapid virtuoso technique.

After his first visit to Japan Regamey gave up illustration and began a distinguished career as a teacher. In 1881 he was appointed Inspector of Drawing of the Schools of Paris. For the next 25 years until his death in 1907 he was a tireless advocate of Oriental art writing books and articles and giving numerous conferences. He revisited Japan in 1897-1898 on a special mission from the French government to study the organisation of schools of art and art education in Japan, especially Tokyo. There he became re-acquainted with many of those he had met on his earlier trip and with many Japanese artists who had been to Paris in the intervening years.

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Regamey was never very successful as a painter. He only had six Salon exhibits, all but one of which were drawings. However his Japanese 280 paintings were on display in Paris in 1878 at the Exposition Universelle, and from 1884 to at least 1904 in the Musée Guimet. He also had a three day one-man show in 1886 in his studio which contained many paintings of Far Eastern subjects. I have correlated these exhibitions and the titles appearing in them as an appendix (I). It has proved impossible to locate any of Regamey's original work, which seems to have disappeared completely from the Musée Guimet since the turn of the century. However this appendix can serve as a first step to a "catalogue raisonné" of his Far Eastern works. I have been able to identify several of these paintings and drawings exhibits in reproduction in his books on Japan, and these form an illustrated section to the appendix which also includes other examples of his work from these books which it is possible to date fairly accurately. The reader is referred to these illustrations in relation to the discussion below.

Regamey's illustrated books will serve as a means to recreate his work. This is not at all inappropriate since it is obvious that his work much have reached a much larger audience in reproduction. The most important of these books were the two editions of Promenades Japonaises 1878 and 1880, because they were the earliest and furthest distributed. Regamey's later major books on Japan were Le Japon Pratique, 1891, Le Japon en Images 1903-4, which was a collection of his drawings and paintings mixed with photographs, and Le Japon 1905, which was a massive illustrated summary of his thirty years as a Japanese enthusiast. The later works are of less immediate concern but they do reflect the attitudes which Regamey was expressing about Japanese art from 1878. One special publication was organised by Regamey, Okama, a careful remaking of an oriental illustrated book with a French text in a coloured imitation of Japanese illustrations was published in 1883. I have discussed this below.

In this chapter I will consider first the works of Regamey with a Far Eastern subject, and their relation to Japanese art, and then his role as a propagator of enthusiasm for Japanese culture.

The paintings and drawings of Regamey with Far Eastern subjects.

Regamey's paintings and drawings of the Far East are of considerable interest as they were probably one of the most accessible visual records of Japan in the later 1870's and 1880's. We must also consider the elements which Regamey selected from Far Eastern subject matters and art to apply to his own work. He clearly believed himself to be influenced by Japanese art since like Whistler, he adopted an orientalist signature based on his initials. Finally we must discuss the extent to which Regamey's work held up a "distorting" mirror to Japanese art, a mirror which subsequently influenced the attitudes of other artists to Japanese art.

The paintings that he made in Japan, some of which exhibited in 1878 in Paris are in many ways typical of the academic art of their period. They are synthetic compositions made up from separate sketches of figures and of the setting, true to his own artistic principle of analysis and synthesis. The details are observed with considerable accuracy, especially the figures. However the overall compositions are loose. The main compositional device consists of varying the level of detail within them. In "Cimetière et boutique de tir à l'arc", for instance, it is clear that the collection of Buddhist sculptures in the background have been carefully composed by Regamey. The mother with a young baby who is leaning against the tomb is a genre addition. The blind monk and his boy guide in the foreground of the painting have been placed there by Regamey, not simply because he saw them, but also because the blind figure with the guide had tremendous pathos in Western art and literature at that time. The two figures stand like a heroic sculpture conceived with Western sentiment in mind. To the left, the figure of

the girl in charge of the shooting booth is also conceived in terms of expressive pathos, hesitating slightly as she looks at the monk. This interest in human incident, rather than in the landscape or the architecture of Japan, or in the formal possibilities of Japanese costume, marks most of Regamey's work.

There are very few "Japanese" devices in this painting. The row of lanterns on the eaves of the shooting booth is used as a flat motif in the Japanese fashion. The only other "Japanese" device in the work is the use of thick black lines to surround and describe the figures and some of the objects in the painting. This is undoubtedly influenced by Oriental art as Regamey did not make such use of it before he went to Japan.

These stylistic characteristics are of little importance however, compared with the detailed observation in the paintings of Japanese faces, costume and buildings. The costume of the keeper of the shooting booth and the appearance of the monk are but two examples of visual information about Japan contained in the picture which were of great interest in the West. This transmission of new visual archetypes into Western culture was to be one of the most important of Regamey's achievements. "Cimetière et boutique de tir à l'arc" is typical of the Regamey paintings on show in the Musée Guimet.

Regamey treats Japan as a genre. In "L'Entrée de la Maison du grandprêtre temple d'Assaksa" of 1878 which was not in the Musée Guimet, for example, he concentrates on the stallholders and the passers-by in the forecourt of the temple. Clearly the figures have been composed from sketches.

Even when he tackles famous landscape themes, such as "Le Parc Tukiage" at Tokyo, or "Le Pont Sacré et le Pont Banale" at Nikko, we find this same employment of figures. Nor are the landscapes themselves treated in a Japanese manner, but in a solid, almost overloaded realism,

reminiscent more of contemporary European Salon landscapes. Only occasionally as the the "Grand Torü de Nikko" is the authentic "feel" of the Japanese subject matter allowed to achieve dominance over the European criteria of informal genre which dominate Regamey's finished paintings of the East. The main interest of these works was therefore as visual information and occasionally as anecdote genre in their own right. They could hardly have acted as a revelation of Japanese art or aesthetic principles. Nonetheless Regamey's works did possess certain peculiarities derived from Japanese art. His penchant for thick black outlines is one such quality. His use of bright colour appears, from reproductions, to have been another.

The first volume of Promenades Japonaises contains a coloured reproduction of a painting showing a woman with a baby on her back standing by a Shinto shrine painted bright red. The scene is rendered in large flat areas of wash and thick black outlines. A watercolour sketch, "Mère et enfants", also 1877 shows that Regamey was slightly influenced by the Japanese liquid watercolour style. The costume of the woman is beautifully handled, in a manner which he probably picked up from Kiosai. These coloured reproductions suggest that Regamey used gouache and transparent watercolour for most of his Japanese sketches.

The black and white reproductions of the finished paintings suggest that they were treated in the same manner. It is not always certain what medium Regamey employed in his finished work, but the reproductions strongly suggest gouache rather than oils. This is the most likely choice for an illustrator. There are also occasional compositional tricks which indicate Regamey's knowledge of Japanese art, such as the lanterns in "Cim<sup>e</sup>tière et boutique de tir à l'arc".

These peculiarities could have been seen as authentic allusions to Far Eastern art by contemporaries. Regamey's vision of Japan, imperfect as it was, may have supplied a substitute stimulus for those who were

interested in Japanese art.

There appears to have been little development of the style of Regamey's Far Eastern works from 1878 onwards. He used the sketches he made during his visit to Japan as a basis for more paintings and designs which he produced during the years between 1878 and his studio exhibition in 1888. This exhibition which lasted for three days - the 6th, 7th and 8th June, is the only known occasion on which Regamey's works were on public display outside the Musee Guimet. I have incorporated it in my catalogue of his Far Eastern paintings (Appendix I).

It is through reproductions and through his illustrations that his work became best known. It is in his work as an illustrator and draughtsman that Regamey shows a much more direct relationship to Japanese art. He brought hundreds of drawings back from the Far East and many of these were reproduced not only in Promenades Japonaises but in his other works, and as illustrations in magazines and articles on Japan.

In the drawing "Soirée de danse à Kobe", 1876, Regamey shows his typical illustrative sketching style with thick black strokes. This style is clearly related to Japanese art and it is most appropriate for drawings on Japan. The composition of these sketches is also related to Japanese art. In "Soirée de danse" we have a pattern formed from figures stretched out parallel to the picture plane. This robust pastiche is typical of many other drawings. I have included other illustrations in this style to give the reader a full impression of it.

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Regamey also made sketches of Japanese facial types using the same strong line. His sketches of Buddhist monks in particular have a quality that is closely related to Japanese art.

When Regamey attempted to pastiche Japanese landscape painting, whether in watercolour or in line, he failed utterly. In the drawing "Le Siro" in Promenades Japonaises for instance, the pine tree boughs are treated very heavily and there are far too many heavy lines dividing the

picture surface for it to succeed even as a reminiscence of a Japanese painting. Nonetheless it does contain some of the compositional devices the Western artists were to borrow from Japan.

Many of Regamey's sketches have this close affinity with Japanese compositional types. For instance on p.235 of Promenades Japonaises there is reproduced a sketch showing a garden lantern nearly hidden by a massive tree trunk running the whole length of the image. This is a common device, found for instance in Hokusai's 36 Views of Fuji, No.25, Fuji from the Pass of Mishima and in Hiroshige's Views of 100 Provinces and elsewhere.

Regamey knew of these masters for he uses motifs from both print makers in his frontispiece for the editions of Promenades Japonaises and mentions them by name in his book Okama.

The first edition frontispiece shows a rock standing out of the sea in the foreground drawn with short rhythmic brush strokes. One finds a similar style in Hokusai's studies of rock in the Mangwa or in Hiroshige's various prints of the Awa rapids. Regamey has carefully worked his orientalist signature and the date, 1877 into the lower left part of the rock. The view of Fuji in the background is derived from Hokusai's 36 Views of Fuji. Regamey used the same rock in his later book Japon as a chapter heading. It is inevitably reminiscent of Monet's paintings at Etretat and one wonders if Monet is more likely to have seen this than the original prints.

There are two frontispiece designs in the second edition of the Promenades Japonaises. The first one is a view of bamboos taken directly from the lefthand print of Hokusai's "Fuji seen through a bamboo thicket" from the second volume of 100 views of Fuji, published in 1835. I (59)

The second frontispiece, the title page, is not so easy to identify. It is a view of Fuji in the style of Hiroshige's views of 100 provinces. However I suspect that it may be a pastiche made up specially for the title page. I (60)

Regamey made constant use of pastiches of Japanese prints in his publications. Some are much more faithful than others. The 'facsimilés' which he uses to illustrate the late edition of the 47 Ronin are very close to their originals. However even these have a 'pastiche' quality; the figure on horseback at the front in the picture of the Ronins crossing Assano bridge is drawn with much too much concern for neat description. The horse shows too great a knowledge of anatomy. Above all the head of the horse could have been copied directly from the Pantheon. The air of 'translation' clings to most of the 'facsimilés' made by Regamey as illustrations of his work.

Regamey made one complete 'facsimilé' of a Japanese book. This was Okoma, based on a novel by Takizava Bakin, the famous Japanese novelist of the late eighteenth century. Regamey had first come across this story when he travelled with Guimet from San Francisco to Yokohama in 1876. Their travelling companion, Major Matsumoto, translated it for them from the Japanese. In 1883 Regamey's version appeared as the second volume of the *Annales of the Musée Guimet*.

The story was chosen for publication because it represents a sequence of crimes and punishment connected together in a wheel-like sequence, demonstrating the Far Eastern attitude to good and evil. The plot involves a usurping landlord, traitorous servants, a beautiful daughter, an immoral priest and the vengeful spirits of an ancient tomb. It is too complicated to relate here, but it is basically a series of short stories of crimes and their retribution arranged in an elaborate causal pattern involving both chance and supernatural interference.

It is Regamey's arrangement of the book and the images which is interesting. He has created a series of illustrations which describe the characters of the novel and highlight major incidents within it. These illustrations are based on the work of the original Japanese illustrator, Chiguenoi, but re-arranged into separate panels. The text, in

French, is laid out between the illustrations. There is also a series of explanatory notes running along the left-hand margin of every page which explain subtleties of translation and comment on the subjects of the illustrations and the objects and costumes portrayed within them. The notes also contain discussions of artistic technique in Japan, such as the use of the brush as an accurate description of the method of paintmaking and book production.

In producing his illustrations and decorations for the book, Regamey made use not only of Chiguenoi's original illustrations, but also of work by Hiroshige, Hokusai, 'Hokou-oun', 'Iszai', 'Joetsu' and 'Tatibana'. The last named were contemporary artists. The illustrations to the first edition were printed in clear bright colours. A second edition using only the basic line blocks was published some months later.

The illustrations are of a high quality. Let us take first Regamey's portrait of Bakin. Regamey has set the scene in delicate balanced Japanese interior with a circular window through which one can see the cone of Fuji delicately balanced. The image is divided down the centre by one of the wooden pillars of the house. To the left is a large heap of books sprawled over the floor in front of a set of lacquer shelves with

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scrolls in them. To the right Bakin sits in front of his writing table, his hands stretched in the air, the right hand grasping the left wrist as he prepares to commit himself to paper. He is dressed in his loose fitting blue robe, across his knees are laid a set of tongs which he used to pick up books for reference, without moving. This image is a clever adaptation of the image of Fuji worship from Hokusai's "100 Views of Fuji" with the same gesture, circular window and image of Fuji with colour added. The books and other objects scattered around are added inventions. Scattered around on the floor are a series of dolls which Bakin was said to have used to represent the characters in his novels and which he placed in a box when he had killed the characters off. In the

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upper left-hand corner of the design is a text explaining the reluctance of the author and the enormous difficulties of writing which he had no choice but to undertake.

The design as a whole is extremely delicate - the house brush in the upper right is a delicately balanced compositional device, as is the half obscured hanging flower case in the centre. The heap of books themselves are carefully and decoratively arranged.

Each one of the illustrations has the same highly refined quality. The individual characters in the introductory illustrations are careful imitations of Japanese prints. On the title page, for instance, the figures of Tatoki, Sai Sakou and Shohu are close interpretations of their Japanese models, in brilliant colours. The frame and the decorative cartouches in the upper corners are equally authentic. I (63)

The scene in which the traitorous Ikkakou attempts to kill the hero Sai-Sakou is done in shades of blue alone, as in a well-known Japanese print technique. The image also includes a small shrine, a lake with frogs and birds flying near the moon.

There are some marvellous multi-coloured designs, for example the illustration "Shohei portant son fils Chotaro vend des fagots" - Shohei is visiting the house in which his abandoned daughter Okema has found a home. The house is well observed with all the accoutrements of a Japanese garden, bamboo fences, water scoop, terrace and garden lantern. Through a circular window we can see the master of the house writing.

As in all Regamey's Japanese creations, these illustrations have the air of Japanese art which has been transcribed in such a way as to make it more acceptable. It may well be that in these illustrations we have a clue as to how Japanese art was perceived in the nineteenth century. Its neatness and compressed organisation were valued more than eloquent draughtsmanship or daring compositional organisation. This can also be said of two illustrations in which a rich man is tempted by a licentious woman. I (64)

"Okoma" received wide public acclaim. It was given notices in L'Illustration for February 10th 1883, and a short version of the tale was published in English in the Magazine of Art in 1886, together with several black and white illustrations from the book. The Magazine of Art was fulsome in its praise:

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How cleverly M. Regamey has done his work and how much of the Japanese spirit he has preserved in his graphic translation, the engravings that accompany this article will show. Even in black and white they are full of spirit and charm. A more successful pastiche of Japanese art has not often been produced.

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Okoma was indeed the height of Regamey's achievement as an exploiter of Japanese art. However he continued to make designs and paintings with Far Eastern subjects to the end of his days. Many of these have the whimsical quality of the design "Jeunes ingenieurs expropriant les papillons" which he showed in his studio exhibition in 1888. A great many similar designs, both in colour and black and white, appear in his massive work Japon which was published in 1905, shortly before his death.

Regamey's work was regularly published as illustrations to his own work or to writing about Japan by others. Indeed he may be regarded as the most widely known of all artists to have been influenced by Japanese art, when one considers that his originals were also on permanent public display.

His work was chiefly important as a documentary of Japanese scenes and customs. However we must be wary of dismissing the extent of his own affectation of a neat linear style in assessing his influence. This very neatness which is the product of the demands of European illustration, could easily be mistaken for a Japanese quality, as could his sometimes very bright palette.

Regamey's art undoubtedly acted as a major source of visual information about Japan and made many visual archetypes available to Western culture. Many artists saw his work. It would not be difficult for them

to confuse Regamey's efforts with the Japanese. The two would be taken as one.

This is the most important problem which minor artists like Regamey pose. It seems to be highly probable that Regamey's work was easier to come across than original Japanese art. It is therefore important to estimate the extent of his role as an indirect source of visual stimuli which arose in the East.

Regamey's work is also interesting as it represents the manner in which Japanese art was regarded by an artist who was a typical representative of his time. Regamey selects certain tricks of design and a picturesque neatness as the most important qualities in Japanese prints and painting. Speaking of Impressionism to Japanese artists during his second visit to Japan, Regamey was most disparaging;

En analysant ses beautés, je ne pouvais manquer  
de signaler les faiblesses et les puerilités,  
d'un art volontairement dépourvu de style, qui  
ne veut retenir de la fleur que le parfûm.

It would be misleading to forget that his attitude and not the attitude of a Manet, Degas or a Whistler, was the more prevalent in the later nineteenth century.

#### Regamey as a publicist and critic of Japanese art

Regamey was a prolific writer and speaker on Japanese arts and crafts from the time of his first visit there with Guimet.

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His publications on Japan include a major popular study of Japanese arts and crafts, Le Japon Pratique, published in Paris in 1892, which was translated into English and published as Japanese Art and Industry, in London in 1893. This English version will be the main source for my account for Regamey's views of Japanese art, as the French version has proved inaccessible. It represents at length the views he formed in the 1870's and which he expressed consistently ever since (in Okama, for instance). We will also make use of his article 'Le Japon Vu par un artiste' in Revue Bleue 1890, which is reprinted in Le Japon Pratique, and a section in his 1905 book Japon entitled "Artistes d'aujourd'hui et

d'autrefois" which he wrote after his second visit to Japan.

Regamey made a great contribution to the knowledge of Japanese art by his public lectures and teaching. This is very difficult to reconstruct. De Goncourt speaks of Regamey's lectures with enthusiasm in his Journal. Regamey himself mentions a lecture which he gave, illustrated by his own drawings, made on the spot. It consisted of a discussion of Louis XV style and of subsequent French art to show that it derived many of its features from Japanese art, which was first introduced to the West by the Dutch. The argument was mainly by analogy and used no serious historical evidence. It is interesting to find Regamey taking the same view on the relationship of French art and Japanese art as that taken by De Goncourt and by other established figures. Regamey gives the same opinion to his fictional Mme. de Mayrial, in Le Japon Pratique:

She was not ignorant that the Louis XV style, so elegant and so smart, so French in one word, owes much to Japanese art. Not that it had servily borrowed from it, nor copied it, but that its imaginative nerve was spurred by Japanese example to shake off the trammels of the precise rules of the preceding style.

Mme. de Mayrial thus feels quite happy to keep her eighteenth century harpsichord in a room in the Japanese style. As we shall see it became a common habit to draw an analogy between eighteenth century French art and the Japanese art.

While we cannot go further into Regamey's verbal teachings we can follow his ideas in his books. Le Japon Pratique consists of an introductory essay, "Le Japon vu par un artiste". There then follow several chapters of detailed discussion of the various Japanese crafts. These are accurate and well-illustrated. They cover every aspect of the skills associated with wood, stone, textiles and paper manufacture, as well as all the Fine Arts. There are many careful illustrations for this section, some of which are unintentionally humorous, like the

illustrations of the wood carver. His account of the graphic arts begins I(65) with the manufacture of the paper, the ink, and he discusses the role of the artist publisher and printer in print making. He gives excellent illustrations of the printing equipment. Regamey was probably the first author to do this in France. His style is more readable than his counterpart in England, Christopher Dresser. There is no need to discuss his account of Japanese crafts in detail. As with Dresser, his "message" in all his discussions is that Japan is an artistic paradise in which all crafts are pursued as satisfying ends in themselves. Amongst the detailed discussion of Japanese crafts Regamey inserts two chapters. "The Decoration of a European House" and "Midoro no Sato" in which two fashionable Parisiennes, Mm. de Mayrial and Mm. D'Arbois, discuss Japanese art and its role in fashionable decoration. Mm. de Mayrial is a fashionable Japonist, who has travelled to Japan; instructing her companion she says of the Japanese artist:

in that happy land the wants are very limited, living is inexpensive, and above all it has to be said, however improbable to us it seems, that the love of art born of the perpetual contemplation of nature, which penetrates artist and artisans down to the humblest, is such that the joy they experience in doing things of beauty enables them to look with indifference on the mercantile side of existence.

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Regamey is here reflecting an attitude which he helped to create and which he held in common with Dresser and with others who went to Japan. In "Le Japon vu par un artiste" he asserts the overall sensibility of the Japanese at great length:

Au Japon très hospitalier, l'art est partout 'comme mêlé à l'air que l'on respire'. Aussi les Japonais sont ils passés maîtres dans la science de vivre et de peindre la vie.

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He justifies this by citing as an artist an itinerant street seller, L'Amega, who sold sweets to children which he made from paste moulded into the shape of any animal the child desired. In a discussion on Japanese painting he gives the example of a grain merchant who draws the

picture of the plant and fruit produced by the seed he sells on the bag which he gives to his customers.

Regamey begins all his discussions of Japan by pointing out the difference between China and Japan, and showing that China is a dull, worthless and decadent culture;

Le Chine donne en spectacle la collection  
d'affâmes d'infirmes et de monstres la plus  
abjecte et la plus repoussante qui soit au  
monde.

Perhaps it was the contrast with China which made European travellers so convinced that Japan had an ideal civilisation. On the other hand Regamey was a resolute enemy of humbug about Japan. For instance he persistently attacks Loti's Madame Chrysanthème as a totally ignorant work, taking a wholly European view of Japan. He even went to the extreme of writing a book consisting mainly of a diary kept by Chrysantheme which explains the 'romantic' events in Loti's work in a down-to-earth manner, most discreditable to Loti's hero. It may well be that Regamey's presentation of Japan as an artistic paradise was more true than one may at first think.

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Regamey's explanation for this was the same as Guimet's "L'influence des milieux". According to this it was the Japanese climate, location and racial make-up, which produced the culture that Regamey saw. He drew an analogy here with Greece, about whose culture similar ideas were being expressed.

In explaining the Japanese attitude to painting he quoted Ingres' saying that one was not a competent draughtsman unless one could draw the figure of a man as he fell from a roof. He went farther in the Revue Bleu article, asserting that "L'auteur de Cherubini et de L'Apothéose d'Homère était un admirateur fervent des oeuvres japonaises". He also quotes Viollet le Duc on the power of observation of nature by Japanese artists. These are surprising choices amongst the available European artists and help us to understand the context in which Regamey

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perceived Japanese art and also the character of his own paintings of Far Eastern subjects.

Faithful to his training with Lecoq <sup>de</sup> Boisbaudran, Regamey saw Japanese art and craft in terms of analysis and synthesis based on nature, studied and committed to memory. He believed that all Japanese products owed their beauty and good taste to drawing;

Les artistes de cette bienheureuse contrée se sont fait une méthode special d'étude et de travail facile à expliquer, mais difficile à suivre pour quiconque n'est pas aussi bien doué que eux.

Ils vont d'analyse, longue patient et sure à la synthèse et ne se tiennent pour satisfaits que pour le jour où, après des éliminations succesives et raisonnées ils ont réussi à trouver la dominante. Aussi, ne dessinent-ils directement d'après nature pour apprendre à se meubler la memoire. Puis, quand ils créent, ils appliquent tout ce qu'ils savent, sans hésitation et sans repentirs.

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Regamey argued that photographs had since confirmed that the images produced by Japanese observation are accurate, despite European scepticism. The Japanese, he claims, will not use photographs to help their work at all. Nature is the only source for it.

Above all, Japanese artists are seen as simplifiers of Nature to its essentials.

Regamey quotes at length from De Goncourt and Gonse in justification for his attitudes. In particular he repeats Gonse's accounts of Hokusai and the artist's letter in which he claims to have understood drawing only when he reached the age of sixty.

He also stressed frequently the use of appropriate material in all Japanese artefacts and works of art; these are appropriate in value as well as utility.

Regamey's attitude to Japanese art may be taken as typical of the section of Parisian society which collected Japanese art and which took part in the fashionable enthusiasm for it from the 1870's onwards. Two of the most interesting chapters in Le Japon Pratique are those entitled

"Decoration of a European House" and "Midori No Sato". They are the fullest account of the use of Japanese art in fashionable houses and gardens. Mme. de Mayrial's efforts to enlighten her friend tell one a great deal about the level of appreciation of Japanese art. In the Villa Mayrial there are Ikebana arrangements, and the dry twigs of a peach tree are scattered about for their aesthetic appeal;

witness this branch - the green moss that covers certain parts, the little red points that enamel others, are they not exquisite? And see the caprice of form of these contorted boughs, which the Japanese turned to such good account. Look there you will find them again on the pictures on these screens.

Each room has its own decorative scheme, using every sort of Japanese work for its effect. There is even a Japanese library with alcoves containing sumi-é prints. The mistress of the house herself had painted some decorative panels in the Japanese style in the salon.

The description of Midori No Sato is equally detailed. It is mainly concerned with the garden. There are descriptions of every sort of Japanese garden furniture, bamboo gates, fences, bridges, tea-houses and stone lanterns. Each is carefully illustrated. The Japanese method of controlling the vistas of the garden is also discussed. Midoro No Sato was a real house owned by M. Krafft, who was a great Japanese enthusiast and made Japanese taste fashionable in high society. He loaned work to several exhibitions of Japanese art in Paris. He also published an illustrated account of his journey to Japan in 1885.

In these two chapters Regamey is writing about a fashion, indeed a way of living which he had been of great influence in producing. We find it reflected in the paintings of Alfred Stevens and many other fashionable painters of the later nineteenth century. We will return to them when we discuss these painters and their ambience in later chapters. Regamey's great importance as an artist and educator who travelled to Japan

His writings about Japanese art popularise the sentiments of many

enthusiasts and artists in Europe. They therefore give a good picture of the common knowledge of Japan and of the attitude to its art.

Regamey's achievement as a populariser of Japan through his writing and teaching was considerable. We must therefore be careful not to dismiss the conventional contemporary European ideas with which he discussed it. His associations of Japanese art with Ingres is a key to the vision through which a great many looked at it. The same must be said of Regamey's paintings and illustrations. It is too easy to dismiss such work as timid and conventional, peripheral to the influence of Japanese art on Europe.

Regamey was indeed a minor player, yet major figures as different as De Goncourt and Van Gogh could take him seriously. His art and his writings were known to all who were interested in Japanese culture. At the end of his life he wrote about the influence of Japan on his own career:

A son contact, ma foi en la puissance finale et souveraine de l'art s'est fait inébranlable.

L'art a toujours régné en maître dans l'empire de Soleil Levant. Sa signature se lit au bas de pages héroïques et superbes dont son histoire est remplie. L'art que j'entends n'est pas celui qui se confine en des oeuvres accessibles seulement aux esprits cultivés, mais l'art dans son acception la plus humaine et la plus générale, étendant son influence vivifiante sur toutes choses, les plus petites comme les plus grandes.

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It is perhaps as an educator carrying these sentiments into practice that Regamey made his greatest contribution as a transmitter of Japanese culture. To see all art and design as a unity is a commonplace today, particularly in education. The Japanese example contributed a great deal to this development. It was the work of minor figures such as Regamey in France and Dresser in England who made this contribution possible.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered the careers of several visitors to Japan in some detail. It is striking how quickly the expectations of

visitors to Japan changed. Cernuschi and the Sichel brothers were, in one sense, little more than looters collecting great hoards of Japanese art accidentally released from its owners' care by political change.

However very soon special export ware was being manufactured. Duret and the Sichels saw a factory for the manufacture of 'export' Satsuma as early as 1874. By the end of the decade the manufacture of such material was doubling every year. The following import figures were given in a debate reported in the Art Journal.

Japanese Manufactures imported into England

	<u>1879</u>	<u>1880</u>
Porcelain	36,000	66,000
Fans	17,500	33,500
Lacquer	46,500	80,000
Lanterns	-	481,359
Screens	---	5,388

and £12,000 worth of umbrellas. 291

There was thus a very brief period during which authentic relics of the Tokugawa period could be bought as bargains; probably this trade was over by 1876 when Guimet and Regamey arrived in Japan.

They, like Dresser, seem primarily to have been concerned with study and travel rather than with the accumulation of objects. Guimet limited himself entirely to collecting religious idols. As we have seen Guimet's visit may well have been motivated by his knowledge of earlier expeditions.

We can say that by 1878, the year of the overwhelming Japanese triumph at the Exposition Universelle, Japanese art and culture had become an established part of the panorama of visual arts known to Western artists. It is no accident that the major exhibition of Japanese art organised by Louis Gonse in 1883 was called "Exposition retrospectif de l'art japonais". Only the refinements of scholarship remained to be accomplished. It is therefore crucial to chart the experiences of travellers to Japan during the 1870's and to review the objects and

opinions they took home with them. I have attempted to do this for the major figures discussed in this chapter. However it must be borne in mind that there were hundreds, if not thousands of visitors to Japan during this period.

Most visitors have certain common attitudes to Japan. They seemed to believe that it was an artistic paradise in which art and craft were undivided and design was a consistently high standard. Japan appeared as a lost Eden where the dilemmas of Western culture had not arisen. China, on the other hand, is always castigated as a wasteland. These however are the only absolutely common points in their attitudes. Each visitor emphasised different aspects of the Japanese experience in accordance with his own European aesthetic and general interests.

The differences in stress were to be picked up in Europe, emphasised and absorbed into the development of European art and aesthetics. In this absorption the very nature of European art was changed.

We must now follow the development of European attitudes to Japan during the 1870's in order to complete our knowledge of the background against which artists made use of Far Eastern art.

### SECTION THREE

#### Introduction

#### The Literary and Aesthetic reaction to Far Eastern art in particular to Japan, in England and France from 1870 to the mid-1880's.

The previous chapters have established a general pattern of development of knowledge of Japanese art, through exhibitions and the work of travellers to the Far East. I have shown how this knowledge increased rapidly after the Japanese revolution of 1871 and that there was a brief period in the mid-1870's when trade in first-class Japanese objects was at its peak. In this chapter I intend to show the manner in which the new knowledge of Japanese art was mediated into Western culture. By the end of the early 1880's, with the triumph of the Japanese appearance at the 1878 exhibition in Paris, all kinds of artists, writers and critics were claiming Japanese art to be a "puissant élément de modernité" in their manifestos and critical writings. 1

This claim was made both in England and in France and it is the main aim of this chapter to demonstrate the roles that Japanese art played in the forming of the "modern" sensibility of the 1870's and 1880's. Undoubtedly there were many roles, for art and criticism took up various positions in the 1870's and 1880's and Far Eastern art was incorporated in many of them. It was still possible in this period to extract different significances from it, in accord with one's own attitudes to art in general, without the sensation of having done a disservice to Japan. However this possibility was to disappear during the 1880's as more "scholarly" material on the Far East became available. I have therefore decided to restrict my detailed study to the period before the mid-1880's and to refer only briefly to the later years when they provide important evidence of the development or continuation of an aesthetic

attitude established earlier. For it may be said without much fear of generalisation that with few exceptions the major attitudes to Far Eastern art that were to influence the development of art in Europe had been expressed by that time.

In terms of documents and the lack of problematic relationships between artists, the 1870's are much more comprehensible for the historian than the 1860's. This is not true for the development of critical attitudes to art. We have no "great men" to use as yardsticks for the influence of Japanese art. There are no obvious major writers on art in the 1870's. Baudelaire had been dead for some time and Zola<sup>a</sup> was to lose his interest in art almost completely and no writer of Salons replaced them. In England, Ruskin wrote on art, but his only relevance is in his perpetuating a critical theory which denied the possibility of treating Japanese art as an equivalent to European art and in his refusal to write about it.

As we have seen in the 1860's Japanese art had been worked into new aesthetic attitudes. It was the need for a new means of making and talking about art which arose at that time which led to its incorporation in the work of many writers and critics as a justification for the development of their ideas. Far Eastern art played the role of a catalyst, a stimulus to the development of new aesthetic attitudes and a new artistic language.

In the 1870's such a process could not be repeated and we see a complex working out of the earlier ideas developing, with the increasing knowledge of Far Eastern art. The position of Far Eastern art within Western culture becomes established.

It is most important to realise the difference in quality of the 1860's and the 1870's in this respect. During the 1870's Japan became a cultural fact, a normal part of the modern Western sensibility. This meant that it was no longer a tabula rasa for artists or critics, it

acquired a depth of references, a symbolic value in many levels. This can be demonstrated on the one hand by the spectacular success of "The Mikado" in the mid-1880's, and on the other by reference to W. Schwartz's thesis The Imaginative Use of the Far East in French Literature, in which he demonstrated the continuous occurrence of references to the Far East, in situations, metaphors, similes and analogies to Japan occurring in French writing from the 1870's onwards, especially in De Goncourt, Huguismans, Zola, De Maupassant and Daudet. It is significant that although Schwartz claims on several occasions that Far Eastern art changed the very nature of the French novel at this time he cannot offer any direct evidence of this. There are no statements of principle by any of these writers in the 1870's. Instead one is aware of a slowly growing network of ideas, of the development of a unified modern sensibility in which a knowledge of the Far East played an important but diverse, and sometimes fragmented role.

It is significant that De Goncourt himself did not produce any overall statement about the value of Far Eastern art in the 1870's and in the 1880's we have only the Maison d'Un Artiste, in which Japanese art is discussed in terms of an artistic milieu, an overall sensibility. It is not until the 1890's that he produced the famous works on Hokusai and Utamaro.

Schwartz argues that De Goncourt was the social and literary leader of the appreciation of Japanese art. He sees De Goncourt as an active campaigner for Japanese art who made many of his literary associates aware of it and thus promoted it as a part of the modern sensibility. I disagree with him, as it is quite clear that there were a range of sources of information about Japan and a range of aesthetic attitudes to it during the 1870's and the 1880's. In France the work of Ph. Burty was of considerable importance and Schwartz fails to consider this as a source for imaginative creation.

There is therefore no simple characterisation of critical attitudes which can be made to fit the 1870's. One may generalise in terms of a naturalism which eventually gave way to a purely "aesthetic" attitude to art, after the two had existed side by side for most of the decade. However this generalisation is subject to enormous qualifications. The changes in critical attitude are really changes in emphasis within a sensibility which was much more unified than is usually realised today. Naturalism is not the opposite of aestheticism, neither are they both the products of "Impressionism" whether in art or literature. Rather 5 there was a continuous range of sensibility which naturally produced various manifestations in its art and criticism. I hope by studying the reaction to Japanese art during the 1870's and early 1880's to suggest a different approach to the description of these shifts in sensibility and to estimate the role that Far Eastern art played in them. I shall also discuss the extent to which popular experience and knowledge of Japanese forms grew during the 1870's on the stage and in books, in journals and other popular forms. It should then be possible to look at the use that Western artists made of Far Eastern art with a clear idea of the potential available to them, and of the extent to which their use of Far Eastern art was grounded in a developing sensibility rather than being an arbitrary or revolutionary act.

There are, of course, some general themes which carry on from the 1860's. The most general is the Japanese nature myth - the belief that Japan constituted a natural paradise which had given rise to social harmony and in turn to an aesthetic paradise where all actions were beautiful. This we have noticed first in the work of Chesneau, Zola and others in the 1860's. We have also seen it develop during the 1870's and 1880's in the reports of travellers to Japan such as Dresser and Regamey. This myth was to remain important for artists, though naturally the socio-political aspects which attracted some of its earlier "realist"

proponents were to be given as little emphasis as possible in the aftermath of the commune, only to be revived in the 1880's by Van Gogh, Gauguin and other artists looking for a model of a community in which art could become a central aspect of human life.

On the other hand, the conviction that the Japanese were perfect craftsmen grew considerably during the 1870's and they were taken as models by many different campaigners for Western reform.

The belief that the Japanese had remarkably acute powers of observation of nature went hand in hand with the Japanese nature myth and was asserted by critics with various aesthetic attitudes.

Another frequently recurring theme is the comparison of Japanese art and Greek art. This also continues attitudes expressed during the 1860's and is found in the writings of critics representing different viewpoints.

The treatment of the Japanese image and its stylistic qualities follows on from the attitudes expressed in the 1860's. Asymmetry, brushwork and flat colouring are discussed in great detail by many writers. However their explanations of these qualities and their relationship to Western art vary greatly. The greatest problem in this respect is the relationship of Japanese art to Impressionism, and the use of Japanese art in the defence of Impressionist artists. One can see a parallel here with Zola's defence of Manet, but the problem is far more complex. I will therefore avoid a lengthy discussion of the importance of the attitudes of Duret and Duranty on this point until the discussion of the artists' work in the next chapter. I will simply build up a picture of the various attitudes to the Japanese image and to Japanese style.

The difference in attitude between England and France which we noted in the 1860's continues in the 1870's partly as a result of the working out of the earlier artistic development in the two countries, and partly as a result of the continuing domination of English art by Ruskin's aesthetic attitudes. This position changed slowly during the decade, with

the development of the English "Aesthetic Movement" which was to give Japanese "art" a place in English culture alongside the place already achieved by Japanese "design". Nonetheless the French attitude to Japanese art may be characterised as being based on aesthetic analysis and on consideration of decor, the choice of subject, etc., while the English attitude was based much more on formal analysis of design, truth to nature through direct observation and other virtues of more value to the designer than to the creative artist. This view can be seen as a development of Ruskin's theories in specific ways, despite Ruskin's own opposition to Far Eastern art. I will discuss this in the text.

These general themes however, were used in the 1870's in different contexts to those of the 1860's and therefore they took on a different significance. The change of emphasis within the nature myth of Japan is but one example of this. It will therefore be the task of this chapter to elucidate these changes in context. Notable amongst them are the steady increase in the knowledge of Japanese culture and the availability of Japanese art. I will therefore discuss the illustrated books on Japanese art published during this period. The problem of Impressionism inevitably became involved in discussions of Japanese art in the 1870's, and in some cases affected the emphasis given to certain aspects of it. There is also the negative change produced by the decline of the debate between Romanticism, Classicism and Realism in France, which I discussed in the chapter on the 1860's. The grand nature of this debate was not continued. It was replaced by the slow growth of a "modern" sensibility. In this context the controversy over Impressionism is of more value for its place within that growth than as the unique sign of major change in the nature of art and aesthetics. This had already taken place in the 1860's. In the 1870's and later it developed its various fruits, one of which was Impressionism. Japanese art played as great a part in their development as it had in the original change.

In this chapter I shall establish the context in which it did so. I shall define the range of the reaction of the "modern sensibility" to Japanese art and thus in one sense define that sensibility itself. In doing this I shall prepare the way for a discussion of the influence of Japanese art on European art at this time. For practical reasons it is necessary to deal first with the English developments then with the French. Only in this way is it possible to give an account of the development of the ideas of individuals and to retain an historical picture of the sequence of ideas.

In doing this however, it must not be forgotten that the enthusiasm for Japanese work was international. The libraries of Burty, De Goncourt, Duret, Audsley and Bowes all contained the entire range of Western publications on Japan during the 1870's and the 1880's.

Moreover there is a pattern of the development of ideas common to both countries. Burty and Audsley are in many ways comparable figures, and there are other analogies between critics and writers in different countries. I will attempt to point these out during the course of my discussion.

CHAPTER ONELa Farge and Jarves - Two American Writers.

I will begin by discussing the writing of two expatriate Americans which was published in England.

John La Farge's essay on Japanese art was published in 1870 in the third edition of a book recording a journey across America and Asia by Raphael Pumpelly. La Farge's essay is of value because he was an art student <sup>under Couture in the 1850's and a visitor to Japan</sup> Europe during the 1860's. His essay therefore records the general state of knowledge and appreciation of Japanese art at the beginning of the 1870's. 6

He begins by observing the increasing appreciation of Japanese art by artists and also the hostility of Ruskin to its influence!

Interest in Japanese art must have much increased, to have made Mr. Ruskin fear some malign influence upon his artists coming from this heathen source; and it is true that many artists are in the habit of looking to it for advice and confirmation of their previous tendencies and efforts. 7

This is an important indication of Ruskin's continuing hostility to Japanese influence, which was eventually to culminate in the Ruskin/Whistler trial. No admonition to artists is to be found in his published work. La Farge's comment must be based on remarks made at lectures or in unrecorded journalism. It is also interesting to note the contrasting opinion of La Farge, as a young student artist, on the importance of the Japanese example.

La Farge then discusses briefly the history of European knowledge of Japan since the seventeenth century, citing the early importation of porcelain into Holland. He goes on to remark on the effect of the opening of the Treaty ports, stating that "we have all admired the many objects made lovely by their workmanship". In particular he points out the superiority of the Japanese print to the crude Western chromolithograph.

He then presents an analysis which owes a considerable amount to current French attitudes to Japan, especially those of Chesneau. He talks of the "tactile" effect of Japanese prints and designs -

These things please the eye as if with the sense of touch.

He defends the Japanese lack of perspective and chiaroscuro as the result of stylistic devices and by pointing to the equally "barbaric" Western habit of painting illusionistic images in perspective, complete with charoscuro on the curved surfaces of vases.

Finally he compares the art of Japan to Greek art. It can, he argues, provide "a storehouse as ample and valuable in its way as that left by the Greeks". He also points to the possibility of the Far Eastern example forming an alternative realist ideal, an ideal of characterisation;

I have no space to enquire, whether if the Japanese have an ideal it can be contained, as with the Greeks, in their dream of a perfected beauty, the sufficient ideal of realism is character.

8

All these points were being made by Chesneau and other realists in the wake of the Paris exhibition of 1867, they are found especially in Chesneau's 1867 lecture.

La Farge takes the problem of realism a step further by pointing out the ability of the Japanese to completely reconcile the natural and the artificial:

ease of imagination is not an everyday matter, though with us also, the greatest successes in realism have been attained by men among the greatest in imaginative power. The exception with us seems to be an essential character with them, transforming nature, deeply studied and wisely understood. The sum of all this makes up our first impression that the two opposites of realism and decoration form the art of Japan, and that in the successful blending it takes a distinct place, never before filled in the logical history of art.

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This shows how widespread was the idea of Japanese art as a unique example of the resolution of basic conflicts within contemporary Western

art. La Farge must have picked up this idea as part of the common currency of studio discussions.

Like all other writers on Japan he repeats the myth of a near perfect civilisation;

We feel that we are looking at perfect work, that we are in the presence of a distinct civilisation where art is happily married to industry.

In his detailed analysis of Japanese qualities, La Farge makes a great point of the use of colour. Japanese colour was seen as original and decorative, but also as close to nature;

For the Japanese, no combination of colors have been improbable, and their solution of such as are put aside by Western knowledge recall the very arrangements of Nature.

He argues that the colour sequences found on Japanese prints far from being natural gives an extremely accurate account of the atmosphere of the seasons and times of day;

Their coloured prints are most charmingly sensitive to the coloring that makes up the appearance of different times of day, to the relations of color which mark the different seasons so that their landscape efforts give us, in reality, the place where - the illuminated air of the scene of action; and what is that but what we call tone? Like all true colorists, they are curious of local color, and of the values of light and shade, refining upon this they use the local colors to enhance the sensation of time, and the very colors of the costumes belong to the hour on the season of the landscape.

This is the first occasion on which a clear statement of the "naturalistic" quality of Japanese prints was made and it gives us a firm date for the beginning of the attitude to Japanese prints which was to enable them to have a major influence on the development of Impressionism. One can see the beginning of the change from the values which were seen in Japanese art by realist painters and critics in the 1860's. La Farge makes the attempt to see the prints as naturalistic essays in capturing the moment.

The appeal to "tone" was an appeal to a technical value shared by

realists and established Salon artists in the 1860's. La Farge used the commonly held attitude to this formal quality in the defence of a new naturalism which he thought could be seen in Japanese prints.

The quality of Japanese drawing was also justified by recourse to European notions. La Farge argues that drawing is the basis of all art and design and he compares the power of the Japanese to compose lines and masses to that of Michelangelo. He notes that the asymmetry of Japanese drawing and composition is a unique principle not found in European art, but treats it as an equivalent principle, an addition to European art rather than a negation of European attitudes. He goes further in this direction than earlier writers by pointing out that symmetry also exists in Japanese art but that it is reserved for religious paintings and sculpture and refers in particular to the Dai-butsumatsus at Kamakura which is illustrated in the preface to Pampelley's book.

As with colour La Farge argues that asymmetry is an essentially naturalistic device;

And so by a principle familiar to painters an appeal is made to the higher ideas of design, to the desire of concealing art behind a look of Nature. It has the advantage of allowing any division and extension and the super imposition of other and contradictory designs.

This is the earliest occasion on which resolution of the conflict between Art and Nature is explicitly claimed as one of the achievements of Japanese art. It is important to note that this claim is made by a writer who is reflecting current artistic attitudes and who is fundamentally a naturalist in his outlook. It was to be a constant theme with all later writers on Japanese art.

La Farge's work is illustrated with four "Reproductions of Japanese color printing" which are in fact pages or composite pages taken from Hokusai's Mangwa or other sketch books reproduced complete with their pink shading. I (66)

La Farge is ignorant of the name of any Japanese artist other than Hokusai as he calls him, and seems to have only known contemporary Japanese prints and paintings. He does not comment directly on the reproductions. He praises Hokusai for his ability to capture the characteristic element of an experience in his draughtsmanship, from the curves of flowing water to the gymnastic exercises undertaken by Japanese workmen. He also approves of Hokusai's ability to record the humorous aspects of life, "the Japanese draughtsman unites within him what is often separated in the Western artist - the power of representing grace and awkwardness, and a feeling of dignity with a sympathy for the laugh on things."

As in colour, so in drawing, it is the ability of Japanese art to integrate different levels of human experience through the imagination and within a "naturalistic" style which La Farge praises;

The summons of the idea is always answered by the imagination; the real bends before their will, though never trampled on and retaining all its essential laws.

12

La Farge's essay is a useful resume of the current attitudes to Japanese art amongst painters in England and France. It is doubly useful in that most writing on this subject during this period is by connoisseurs or designers. Despite its occasional inconsistencies it is clear that he approves of Japanese art because of its ability to reconcile a direct naturalism with a precise decorative quality, and with ideal or "intellectual" qualities previously only associated with the high art of Europe. He makes it clear that Japanese art was appreciated by Western artists not simply as a means of evading the problems of context in art, of intellectual and moral involvement in art which then seemed an essential but problematic aspect of Western tradition. Rather it offered an example of an alternative means of making art with such significance. This distinction which is crucial for the discussion of the development of Impressionism which I shall undertake in the final section of this thesis.

13

James Jackson Jarves.

The year following the appearance of La Farge's essay five articles on Japan appeared in the Art Journal entitled "A Genuine Artistic Race". They were written by James Jackson Jarves, an expatriate American 14 writer, who had published a book on Paris in the early 1850's and written several pieces of "art theory". He had spent some time in Japan and was 15 living in Florence in 1871.

Jarves' articles were so popular that he at once set to work to expand them into a book which came out in 1876 under the title A Glimpse at the Art of Japan. This book incorporated verbatim virtually the entire text of the 1871 articles, yet still took him four years to write. 16

Jarves' work was a critical account of Japan and Japanese culture based on considerable knowledge. However it was written from a "high-minded" attitude to art not unlike that of Ruskin or Matthew Arnold. In some ways Jarves' writing may even be regarded as the only attempt to stretch "highminded" nineteenth century European critical attitudes to cover non-European art. As Jarves expressed it;

That art which is only skin deep is not worth looking at twice. Having no meaning deeper than the drag of the brush, the impression it leaves on the mind is equally shallow.

He therefore appreciated Japanese art in the context of its cultural significance and his writing contains a great deal of discussion and speculation on the depth of relationship of Japanese visual art to literature, religion and to the "European" search for the ideal. He approved of Japanese art from an "idealistic" viewpoint. He broadened the definition of the "ideal" in art to encompass many different cultures;

Idealism in art is a complex phenomenon. It does not absolutely demand beauty in the meaning of the Grecian mind. Neither does it confine itself to the spiritual or ascetic standard of the mediaevalists any more than it refuses to lend itself to the strange symbolisms of Egypt, India and Etruria, and the gross diabolisms of the Far East.

As with Ruskin, the ideal in art is linked to religion - "the Alpha and Omega of the inspiration of all art of all races as regards its influence and powers". However while Ruskin generally rejected "Non-Christian" art as barbarian and therefore ugly, Jarves takes a universal view. He argues that all art is about "Truth" first and only secondarily concerned with beauty and that different national cultures produced different "ideals" as aspects of this truth. To make this point forcibly he compares the Virgin Mary unfavourably with the Japanese Buddhist mother goddess Benten. He argues that the Madonna is a relatively insipid version of the ideal. In a sense this argument is close to the notion of many different artistic languages which we have noted in Zola's criticism in the 1860's. 18

However Jarves extended the application of the notion of the "ideal" by a distinction between the "scientific" and the "ideal" in art. He gave as an example of the distinction the painting of a mouth, either in relation to its "adaptation to eating" or in order to express emotion. In other words, Jarves was arguing that an expressive image was more "ideal", than one made in perfect verisimilitude to the "scientific" appearance of its subject;

However perfect in modelling and lifelike in tint,  
it is only a dumb effigy until the artist endows  
it with the human soul and sets it in motion. 19

European art was increasingly "scientific" and concerned with "the dumb show of material objects".

However Japanese art was superior because of its emphasis on the spiritual aspects of art;

Japanese art tips the aesthetic scale towards the other extreme, paying less heed to the grammar of art and bestowing its greatest attention on the vivid rendering of the specific motive in its highest scale of idealisation. In other words it conceives art to be a supreme spiritual function of man; appealing to his faculties of mind more than to those of his body, and best fulfilling its office when it affects the imagination by limitless capacity of suggestion in preference to pleasing the

senses by superior skill of a downright realistic imitation.

20

Thus the expressive qualities of Japanese brushwork, prints and even the decorative arts are explained in terms of idealism based on a religious view of the work. The Far Eastern example became for Jarves a means of saving from the "scientific" developments within Western culture those aspects of it deriving ultimately from Greek idealism which seemed still to have great relevance.

A vital problem in this respect was the notion of a European tradition of the Fine Arts and in particular the central position of the human figure within that tradition. The incidental position of the human figure within Japanese art caused Jarves a considerable problem in his attempt to defend it as "ideal". He had to admit that

The fine arts with the human soul and form as their fundamental motives, and human excellence or spiritual loveliness as their distinctive aims in expression - are not found in the aesthetic constitution of the Japanese.

Despite this however Jarves argued that Japanese art was an idealistic art and that it displayed "a finer art of its kind that we have ever imagined."

21

Like La Farge, Jarves saw Japanese art as a "fitting and pleasurable supplement" to Western art and indeed looked to it to restore the appreciation of many qualities now lacking in contemporary European work.

Japanese art was:

More subtle, intense, varied, free and truthfully artistic in decorative expression; more abounding in unexpectedness and delicious surprises, in aesthetic coquetries and charms of aesthetic speech, intelligible to every culture. Its good things never grow stale nor seem monotonous or conventional. They are a Spirituel rendering of the actions and naturalisms of the daily life, intercourse with nature and imaginings of a lively impressionable race, in the full tide of an instinctive passionate craving for art, while yet in the infancy of its religious faith and material civilisation. This judgement will perhaps surprise even those who are fond of Japanese art and be challenged by the

unfamiliar. But the best qualities of the old art in Europe are scarcely heeded now, because our senses as a people have degenerated from their former sensitiveness. With Japan we are forced to altogether new sensations which astonish and oppress races long accustomed to thin, pale tints, meaningless, motionless forms.

22

Jarves sees Japanese influence as a strengthening of European tradition not the revelatory shock that others claimed it to be. Japan had retained traditional values lost in Europe. His discussion of Japanese art is punctuated by references to Fra Angelico, Perugino, Raphael, Michelangelo and the Dutch masters as comparisons. He stigmatised contemporary European artists as an illegitimate "mercenary egoistical class, largely ignorant of culture of any kind, indeed, indifferent to it, where the highest ambition is to get rich and famous by shamming a knowledge it does not possess."

23

Jarves looked to Far Eastern influence to revive Western art. He repeats all of the well-developed myths of Japan, as a natural and artistic paradise and as an example of the "living Middle Ages". He also elaborates the idea that racial and climatic characteristics played a great part in the development of Japanese art, though he rejects Taine's attitude that this was the entire explanation for different cultures.

He discusses Japanese religion at length and he is well-informed on both Buddhism and Shintoism, which he refers to as Kamism. However for a book on art, Jarves' work is overburdened with religious and cultural information, and often repeated contradictory speculations on the metaphysical importance of art. These speculations arise from his anxiety to preserve the integrity of the highminded European attitude to art.

Despite this imbalance, and his tedious Ruskinian style Jarves also makes some perceptive remarks about the nature of Japanese art;

I have before me a bunch of tall bamboos sketched in india-ink, the <sup>axial</sup> perspective being rendered by gradations of tinting. The joints of the canes are simply interstices in the drawing, through which the delicate india paper shows, while the leaves, all disconnected from the pavement, were they real, would tumble to the ground. A looser freer manner of design could not be imagined. Yet each leaf has its own physiognomy; its physiology is perfect and action complete alone as in the moss. No Art could be more artless in execution nor with less of what the Pre-Raphaelites call truth of detail: and yet no individual has seen it but has involuntarily exclaimed "What a perfect study of nature!" In sparing himself the artist has spared the spectator and still realised to him a real plant swaying in the breeze and sunlight, free as nature, and imbued with the poetry of her growth.

24

Jarves has an equally intense appreciation of Japanese religious painting and religious mythology. He provides the most entertaining descriptions of Japanese gods, such as Yebis, the Fish God, whom he describes by using a bronze from his own collection. He discusses a religious scroll painting, describing the judgement of souls. Another religious scroll painting haunted Jarves' imagination. He praises its simplicity of treatment and grandeur of expression, in a long purple passage reminiscent of Ruskin's description of Turner's slave ship. The painting showed the sacred turtle of Japan on a rock surrounded by a stormy sea, receiving the force of life from "Tsouri Samo", The holy crane;

Its immense milk-white body sweeping downwards with majestic stroke of wing; its jet black neck and head topped by a crimson crest and curling gracefully toward the turtle on which its piercing eyes are fixed, with its equally black tail and legs in a magnificently conceived movement, balancing the similarly bold action of the enormous wings; these all make up a mysteriously grand figure in strong relief against a huge bloodred orb whose lower edge is buried in driving mists. A lurid glare, like that of the sun half shrouded in fog, gleams from the upper portion of the disk, while far above and extending into space on either side is seen the infinite empyrean.

25

Jarves even quotes Milton in relationship to this painting;

Those who with mighty wings outspread  
Dove like sat brooding o'er the vast abyss  
And made it pregnant.

He saw it as a perfect symbol of the "stupendous creative forces of the universe". Jarves is almost unique in his literary and imaginative response to Japanese religious art which was avoided or arbitrarily dismissed by most Western enthusiasts. Jarves' work shows that the pattern of European attitudes to Japanese art was not fixed inevitably by historical circumstance. It could have been possible for Japanese art to have been seen primarily as a metaphysical and religious art, quite acceptable to academic artists, painters of allegories and symbolists of the 1870's. In fact it was the "naturalist" aspect of Western art which took the most from Japan, but even in his discussions of their greatest source, illustrated books of prints, Jarves cautions us against a facile assumption that Japanese art was only made accessible to Europe through the "naturalist" canon. He talks about them as a form of literature, a *biblia pauperum*.

He describes the books competently, though he does not name any artists, however he does know the titles of some of the published albums of drawings, such as the "Treasure of Japanese and Chinese Celebrated Drawings". Their chief artistic merit for him is their colour, which like La Farge he compares favourably to European chromolithography. Since he speaks of "Extremest depths of colour, no faint toilet tints", we may assume that he knew only nineteenth century prints. He praises their images of birds, flowers, fish and insects which he claims to be the finest botanical illustrations in the world. He is especially enthusiastic about the fantasy subjects of Japanese prints and quotes Hokusai, "Hoffskai", as he calls him, as saying that it is easier to create imaginary scenes than copy nature. He sees Japanese fantasy as superior to that of European artists. "Not even a Raffaele, or Rossi, could impart to their bizarre fancies the constitutional verity of existence which animates Japanese designs". His attitude is that European fantasies are impossible lies, whereas Japanese designs appear

to be a continuation of the real world. Jarves identifies several fantastic creatures including the "ink spectre", the longlegged and long-armed man who live together by fishing, and the "birdpeople" who are recognisable as the mischievous mythological race the Tengu. The depictions of these fantasies are included in the illustrations to his book. Admiration for Japanese "grotesque inventions" was to become commonplace in the 1870's, mainly for the reasons given by Jarves.

He also knew prints of "fashionable life" and describes them in some detail. The ability of Japanese artists to compose images of human action despite their inability to draw accurate anatomy or modelling fascinated him as did other aspects of the "artificiality" of Japanese art. In discussing one print he notes that although it shows a musical gathering at night, the blossoming trees in the garden are shown as if in bright sunshine. He perceives this as a poetic device of one artist;

he wants us to know that the air of that room is filled with their fragrance. To the concert of sweet sounds he adds a concert of sweet odors, and doubles our sensuous enjoyment, at the expense of an unimportant material fact.

26

Jarves' attitudes may be seen as presaging the aesthetic attitude of the symbolist painters. It illustrates the support which Japanese art gave to the development of their aesthetic. Jarves attacks Ruskin's axiom, that no art is vital and beautiful which does not represent the "facts of things" and points to Japanese art as both vital and beautiful;

We cannot too often be told that the quest of art is not in imitating nature in view of rivalling her work, but in studying her methods, laws and principles, to the intent to create independent works by the exercise of the artist's own creative will, thereby making himself a creator.

This organic principle is found in all sound Japanese work.

27

This understanding of a work of art as a creation "parallel to nature" was to be one of the most important gains from Japanese influence on

the West. Jarves is one of the first to express it clearly. He goes further and identifies specific devices in Japanese landscape prints and drawings. For instance he points out that the Japanese artist can produce spatial effects by careful graduation of tone, texture, and colour and juxtaposition of shapes. He is an acute analyst of Japanese landscape effects:

volumes of rolling mists and abrupt disclosures of forms and lines dissolving instantly into fresh oblivion, a dash of poetical beauty and sympathetic feeling in every stroke, keenest choice of aesthetic conditions, all these and much else make up the artistic machining of detail which is used to deepen the stress of the main motive.

28

Jarves points out that Japanese landscape painting is a synthetic rather than an additive process in which the principal compositional motives are only slightly encumbered with detail, appealing instead to the poetic imagination of the spectator to achieve their full conviction as a landscape;

Waves and rocks seem beyond their skill in a strictly realistic sense, but their conventional forms are frankly and sincerely rendered. The spirit and tone of any given spectacle are certain to be largely and unmistakably rendered.

It is perhaps not surprising that a critic who represented the high-minded tradition of European culture should be among the first to be struck by the implications for the relationship between art and nature in Western art which were revealed by the Far Eastern example. It was this tradition which had always maintained and still maintains the essential "artificiality", the inevitable disjunction between art and nature and the role of the imagination in relating the two.

Jarves knew only one Japanese artist by name, Hokusai, or "Hoffskai," as he called him. Like La Farge, he associated him only with the Mangwa, several examples from which he reproduces in a strange pale grey tint as illustrations for his book. Like La Farge he also praises Hokusai for his humour and lack of prurience as well as his observation of human

characteristics. He also uses Hokusai's work to demonstrate the relationship between Japanese calligraphy and brushwork, another commonplace observation which had not been clearly made before his work.

Jarves attempted to produce accurate coloured illustrations for his book but found himself hampered by residence in Italy where no adequate printers or engravers were to be found. As we know that he owned several albums of prints and paintings, some scroll paintings, bronzes and ceramics, it is a great pity that he did not succeed. Instead he had to be content with a Frontispiece showing the eight Japanese household gods taken from "Ye-ma-no-te hon" or the book of famous pictures exposed in temples together with illustrations taken from the "Treasury of Japanese and Chinese celebrated drawings", one reproduction of a brush painting, "Portrait of a Man distinguished in the Battle of Yashiriu" by San-gaku, twenty-three plates or composite plates taken from Hokusai's Mangwa and his other books of sketches and drawings and one from the "Mirror of models of Japanese Drawing".

All these were reproduced in dull grey outline and cannot have had much artistic influence. However they do mark the first occasion on which work not from the Ukiyo school was reproduced in a Western book. Both the work by Sangaku and the Portrait of Benten show strong Chinese characteristics of style. Even Plate 25 which is a flower and bird print, within the Uki-yo-e tradition, is a type of print not previously reproduced in the West. Jarves was the first Western author to bring to the discussion of Japanese art an awareness of different styles within it. Nonetheless most of his illustrations were derived from Hokusai's Mangwa which was then the archetype of "Japanese art". It is no surprise that Jarves was the first author to draw attention to the relation of Japanese literature to Japanese art. He quoted several pieces of translation both in his 1871 article and his book which had originally appeared in the Westminster Review of 1870, having first been translated

I(67)

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by a seventeenth century Portuguese priest. Among them was;

Icy flakes are falling fast  
Through the chilly air, and now  
Yonder trees with snow bloom laden  
Do assume the wild plum's guise  
With their mass of snowing flowers  
Gladd'ning winter's dreary time.

From 1870 onwards there was to be a steady flow of literary translations from the Japanese, often with illustrations, by De Rosn y in France, who translated poetry, by Tanefico, in Switzerland who translated drama, and by Severini in Italy, whom Jarves quotes, and by Mitford, in England whose work we shall examine below.

Jarves devoted a considerable part of his book to a discussion of the Japanese crafts and to an explanation of the good taste of Japanese objects. He begins with a chapter on the conditions of life of the artisan and ends with a set of rules for good taste such as absolutely perfect finish, harmony through variety of form and expression and other commonplaces. He writes at great length about the different sorts of Japanese craft objects, without adding to these assertions and without much detailed knowledge. He invokes aristocratic patronage as providing the Japanese craftsman with the time for his work. Jarves was one of the earliest to point out that most work imported into Europe in the 1870's was in fact inferior produce specially made for the West. However craft was not his central concern. In his writing Jarves is above all a defender of the idea that art must be rooted in the entire culture in which it exists. He argues the need for meaning in art which is to be achieved through such cultural correspondence and his whole criticism of Japanese art is based on elucidating the role of such correspondences in giving Japanese art its significance. Having done this he attempts to set the Far Eastern example to work on Western art, to show the want of such cultural resonance in contemporary Western work and to act as an example to Western artists. His writing is remarkable

for its consistently "high-minded" attitude to art, which contrasts with most enthusiastic writings about Japan.

CHAPTER TWO.Illustrated translations from the Japanese

The poems quoted by Jarves were the first in a long series of literary translations which were to build up a literary image of Japan. Two of the most important were published by English Japanese enthusiasts during the 1870's. They were the two volumes of Tales of Old Japan by A. Mitford, later Lord Redesdale, published in 1871, and F.V. Dickins' translation of Chiusingura or the Loyal League which first appeared in Tokyo in 1875, and was then sold in England and became sufficiently popular to merit several editions. Both these publications are still greatly valued by Japanese enthusiasts in the West. Their importance for this thesis lies in their role as transmitters of knowledge of Japan into the West. Both books were illustrated with specially commissioned prints by contemporary Japanese artists who drew on the whole of the Uki-yo-e tradition for their work. Moreover both authors, but in particular Mitford, went out of their way to explain Japanese customs and beliefs. 29 30

Mitford began his series of translations with a brief version of The Forty Seven Ronin. This same story occupies Dickins' entire book. Chiusingura was the Japanese name for this famous Japanese epic which describes the satisfaction of honour by the disendowed servants of a wrongly condemned nobleman. Like all epics it could be extended to include many incidental stories and Dickins gives several of them. It seems to have fascinated Westerners as many translations of it were produced. In 1882 there appeared a French version, Les Fidèles Ronins translated by A. Gausseron from an American translation and illustrated by a contemporary Japanese artist, Kei Sei Yeisen. Another French illustrated version, Tchou-Chin-Goura appeared in 1886. 31 32

They nearly all took advantage of the considerable tradition of

of Uki-yo-e illustration of the Chiusingura, which had built up to a peak in the mid nineteenth century, to publish illustrations based on this tradition. Toyokuni, Hiroshige, Hokusai, Kunisada and Kuniyoshi all produced Chiusingura cycles.

Mitford's work also contained other historical stories of Japan. Each is accompanied by a discussion of some aspect of Japanese culture. Kazuma's revenge, for instance, a story of chivalry and honour, is accompanied with a short essay on the political struggles between Shogunate, the Mikado, and the contemporary Japanese isolationist movement. The Adventures of Funakoshi Jujiyemon, a story of romance and adultery, is accompanied with information about Japanese marriage laws, and about wrestling, as one of the chief characters is a wrestler. Mitford also included in his book a selection of Japanese fairy tales. He published all that he could find and was frustrated by being unable to persuade the Japanese to take his interest in them seriously. Among the finest stories is "The Tongue cut Sparrow" a Japanese version of the "caskets" story in which virtue in the form of a kind old man is rewarded by a right choice amongst two caskets enclosing good and evil while cruelty and greed in the form of an old woman chooses evil in the larger casket and opens a veritable Pandora's box of demons and torments to torture her. Another story, "The accomplished and lucky tea kettle", concerned a badger, which as a sacred animal in Japan, was able to turn itself into a tea kettle and in this form to perform various tricks both to baffle and to reward its owners.

Other stories concerned various anthropomorphic animals. In one a hare revenges himself on a badger who made a stew of his mistress; in another a crab revenges himself on a villainous ape with the aid of his friends who are a rice mortar, a piece of seaweed and an egg. The whole range of Japanese ghosts, goblins and monsters appear in these stories.

At the end of the book Mitford provides appendices dealing with

the Japanese Marriage Ceremony and with Seppuku, the custom of judicial suicide better known as Hari Kiri. Mitford attended the suicide of Taiki Zenzaburo, a Japanese soldier who resisted the entry of Westerners to Japan, as part of his diplomatic duties, and he gives an eye witness account as well as historical documentation. The most important aspect of the book for our purposes are the illustrations, which contained pastiches of many other artists' work. Mitford states that "they were drawings in the first instance, by one Odaké, an artist in my employ, and were cut on wood by a famous wood engraver at Yedo, and are therefore genuine specimens of Japanese art".

The drawings are all in black and white and all display the uninspired eclectic style which marks the last phase of Japanese print making before the full decline in standards of craftsmanship during the Meiji period.

The illustrations to the heroic stories are sturdy and dramatic. The artist draws on the considerable tradition of illustration of The Forty Seven Ronin, in particular, his version of the scene where the Ronin at last confront their deadly enemy, Kotsuke, is drawn from a long tradition of such scenes. Odaké makes considerable use of the direct contrast of black and white areas to suggest the dramatic climax to the story. This theatrical tradition of illustration is also captured in the scene from Kazuma's revenge in which the villain Matagora kills Yukiye.

I(69)

One or two illustrations concern the topics of Mitford's commentaries, for instance there is one of Seppuki and one of a Japanese Sumo wrestling match. The wrestlers are clearly taken from a tradition of wrestling prints in Uki-yo-e, of which the best known are those by Hokusai.

I(70)

Odaké's drawing sometimes reaches the quality of the earlier masters. In the print which illustrates the story of "The old man who

caused withered trees to flower", the picture on the left shows an old villain about to strike a dog dead with a hoe. The poise of the old man's body as he raises the hoe and the movement of the dog are beautifully caught, indeed the whole drawing is extremely well-balanced.

Above all it is the drawings of fantasy subjects which are attractive and which probably attracted most Westerners at the time. The illustrations to the "Accomplished and Lucky tea kettle" are an excellent example of this. On the left the kettle turns into a badger and shocks the priest about to use it to make tea, on the right the badger/kettle walks on a tightrope holding a parasol to earn money for its new master who waves a fan and sings on the stage below.

I(71)

Equally remarkable are the illustrations for the "Tongue Cut Sparrow". On the left the kind old man talks cheerfully to the sparrows who are to give him a fortune as a reward for his virtue. The sparrows are dressed in classical Japanese robes, in between them is the box with the old man's fortune. On the right the cruel old woman has opened the larger box and a variety of horrors are leaping out at her, notably a large bald head on a snake's body and a skeleton. Similar fantastic qualities are displayed in the illustration to the foxes wedding in which foxes act out a Japanese wedding ceremony. Anthropomorphism is carried to its limit in the illustration of the Ape and the Crab. All the characters, from the Ape to the egg are given Samurai bodies and clothes where necessary. Their personification is achieved by mounting their character body on the neck of a Samurai body, a strange but powerful device.

I believe that Japanese fantasy illustration had a considerable influence on the development of illustration in England in the 1870's and 1880's, and on the development of French Symbolism. I will discuss the Japanese contribution to these movements below.

Mitford's book was very popular and it made many people aware of Japanese art and culture. As an anonymous reviewer in the Art Journal

for 1871 wrote;

These "Tales of Old Japan" possess a threefold interest, in the stories related, in the general information they can supply, and in the examples of an art curious and original in its development. They are books to be inquired for by the novel-reader, as doubtless they are, and will continue to be.

33

Indeed the illustrations to Mitford's book and the others discussed here were more easily accessible to popular audiences than Japanese work itself, and one should not underestimate their role in transmitting Japanese form to the West. Again one is left with the problem of how far such works were used by Western artists, of how far they acted as intermediaries. This is crucial when one infers Japanese influence in a Western work, by making use of formal elements alone.

F. V. Dickins was to become a very important figure in the transmission of Japanese influences. He first travelled out to Japan at the same time as Cernuschi and Duret and was to produce many pieces of translation, mainly under the auspices of the London Japan Society. "The Loyal League" is an almost direct translation in detail of the Kabuki "Script" and retains the dialogue. Dickins' translation is slightly "mediaevalised" and avoids most of the problems of the declamatory style of Kabuki. The illustrations are in some ways closer to the models established by earlier Uki-yo-e artists than those in Mitford's work. We may see this by comparing the scene which the Ronins invite their arch enemy to commit suicide. The theatre is ever present in Dickins version, which has only four figures and concentrates the action on the struggling Kotsuke No Suke, held by his wrists by a grim faced Ronin. All four figures in the composition are beautifully balanced and expressive. I(72)

The prints are unsigned and Dickins gives no clue to who the artist or artists were who made them. There is a colophon above each illustration which could be an indication of the artists and craftsmen in-

volved, but this varies for each print and I have not been able to get it translated.

Mitford's version leans more to the Hokusai style, whereas the robustness of Dickins work suggests a model closer in time, probably the artist was a pupil of Kunisada or Kuniyoshi.

The Dickins designs are more attractive in that they are made in three colours, black, grey and blue. This means that many textures and gradations can be achieved, very close to those in Japanese prints. For instance the figure on the left in the picture of the Ronin's revenge has a very subtle pattern on his leggings. Equally interesting in its mass of dark cloth dramatic figures around a central figure is the scene in which the Ronin are testing one of their peasant helpers by threatening his baby son. I(73)

The artist has taken advantage of one situation in the Chiusingura to use the colour process to give the effect of snow on a house, on fences and gate posts, and to combine this with strongly conceived brush effects. The dramatic substance of the scene is the interruption of a suicide by a strolling beggar, an important character in the plot, disguised by a basket over her head. Some other illustrations show Japanese moors and surroundings. For instance the scene in which the Ronin consult a map of their enemy's house shows them sitting on the floor, a group studying a document. Another print shows a lady travelling in a norimon, a Japanese sedan chair, being challenged by the Ronin. Good use is made of the colour to suggest night and as usual the artist has a tremendous sense of the drama of the event. I(74)

The direct and bold portrayal of action in Japanese prints had a considerable influence on Western illustration. Dickins' publication made a considerable contribution to this. I(75)

Dickins' translation and that of Gausseron from the American version by Seite and Greery were reviewed together by Robert Louis Stevenson in

The Magazine of Art in 1883. Stevenson compared the Chiusingura to the epic El Cid and condemned its continuous repetition of the theme of moral choice between duty and family. He preferred the illustrations in the French book which I find more congested, though he criticised both as less "vital" than those in other Japanese illustrated books;

The consummate generalisation, the singular clarity and elegance of design, are not here so conspicuous as in many of those enchanting picture books that find their way to us from over seas, and are a joy for ever. The effect is sometimes a little scattered, the details are too much insisted upon. But the cuts in M. Quantin's book, four of which we reproduce, are still of striking excellence, vigorously drawn and composed with that happy knack peculiar to the nation, in which every incident of the subject and the very title of the picture are put together like the elements of a pattern; and both in the use of line and the opposition of the flat black and full white, some of the charm of arabesque is added to the significance and representation.

34

Stevenson analyses several illustrations from each book and justifies his description of them. His knowledge is indicative of the general spread of information and experience of Japanese art in creative circles by the early 1880's. Stevenson was well aware of the nature of Japanese prints and paintings. He criticised the illustrations in both books for their failure to represent violent action convincingly but recognised this failure as "exceptional in the vigorous and fantastic art of Japan".

35

To Stevenson most of the illustrations in both books were "purely pictorial" and lacking in "direct" emotion. This he attributed to the unwillingness of the Japanese artists to make use of detailed representation;

The mass of incidental information which goes to the making of a modern European landscape - the difference of planes, the intricacy of outline, the patient effort after a combination of local and general colour - contrast strikingly indeed with the few patient strokes with which the Japanese will represent mountains or a city.

36

Stevenson pursues this thought to a logical but unexpected conclusion for such a great writer. The lesson of Japanese art was one of

modest aims;

Pictorial art in the west is still following false gods, literary gods; it strains after passion, which is beyond its purpose and beyond its capacity to communicate, it too often addresses itself to faculties beside the eye.

37

Thus we have an example of a literary figure being provoked into a radical criticism of European art on the grounds of its emphatic literary content some decades before the criticism became commonplace as a result of the advocacy of Roger Fry. Once again we can see the Far Eastern example at the beginning of the change in attitudes to art which occurred in the early twentieth century.

Dickins' next illustrated work was a translation of the complete text of Hokusai's 100 Views of Mount Fuji with a scholarly introduction. He published this together with three volumes which completely reproduced the 100 Views. I have examined the volumes of reproductions, they are an exact facsimile of the original, even to binding and paper.

38

The text volume shows that this work was one of the earliest examinations of a Japanese work. Dickins discusses both Hokusai and Fuji at some length. His placing of Hokusai within the European context is much nearer to modern attitudes than most writers on Japanese art. He calls Hokusai the Katsushika Callot. Nonetheless he knows of no documents concerning Hokusai and very little factual information. Instead he relies on translations from the prefaces to the volumes of the Mangwa.

These prefaces support Dickins' argument that Japanese art is a mixture of close imitation of nature and strong conventional structure. Dickins points out that the preface to the eight volume of the Mangwa Hokusai is quoted as saying "There is no teaching of Art, you have but to copy Nature and you are an artist". But he then qualifies this statement very carefully by pointing out that Japanese art is not an accurate account of what one sees, "even the flower and bird compositions

of the Japanese, exquisite as they are, are almost always, botanically and ornithologically, incorrect in drawing".

Dickins characterises the relationship of Japanese art to reality as a rendering of the "special port and gesture" of their subject. He justifies his view that Japanese art is based on convention by quoting from the preface to the eleventh volume of the *Mangwa*;

Just so is it with artists; those who adhere strictly to the unvarying rules laid down by the ancient masters, but succeed in depicting flowers so as to make the beholder almost swear he could detect their fragrance - in representing snow so as to cause the onlooker well nigh to shudder with the cold.

39

This is followed by an accurate description of the training of a Japanese artist and especially the great part played by copying of the work of his master. This conventionalism is criticised by Dickins as narrow and "wearisome to European eyes". He regards the conventional perspective of Far Eastern art as highly disagreeable. Only in colour will he admit it is superior to the West. Indeed he goes so far as to say that Japanese art is much overrated in the West, while Chinese art is hardly appreciated at all. Furthermore he declares that the golden age of Japanese art is over for ever and that nothing more is to be expected but a general decline.

Dickins' introduction shows that by 1880, when he wrote it, the unscholarly enthusiasm for Japanese art was giving way to specialised scholarly study. His attitude to Japanese art is much less dependent on parallels within Western art than earlier writers. Indeed he is practically uninterested in the revelations of Eastern art for the West. He attempts instead to set the 100 Views of Fuji in the context of their own texts, a history of Fuji and quotations from the discussion of the pictures, found in "Wa-kan-sanzui-dzuye", the great Sinico Japanese encyclopaedia published in 1714.

Dickins abandons all "Westernised" rationalisation of the content

of Japanese art and instead presents the reader with direct evidence of the oriental attitude to art. The dependence of the 100 Views on a specific Japanese religious tradition is cleverly brought out. Each of the plates is given a commentary by Dickins which explains the significance of the different names given to Fuji in different prints and the relevance of the different views.

Dickins' book is the first on any aspect of Japanese art which can be regarded as wholly scholarly. All earlier works contain large sections of theoretical discussion of Japanese art in the Western context. It provides more evidence for the end of the period of assimilation of the basic forms of Japanese art into the West to the early 1880's.

Felix Regamey continued the tradition of the illustrated translation from the Japanese with his elaborate version of Okoma (1883) which I discussed in the context of his career in the previous chapter. Okoma was the finest of the European illustrated translations from the Japanese and constituted a virtual facsimile of a Japanese book.

There were some minor illustrated translations published on the continent in the 1870's whose visual interest is much less than their literary contribution to the developing Western image of the Far East. In 1871 there appeared an Anthologie Japonaise by L. de Rosny. De Rosny had been teaching Japanese in Paris since the early 1860's, his anthology was intended as a text book for language students. It consisted of a series of selections from various Japanese poetry anthologies, reproduced in Japanese characters, in Romanised characters and in a translation by De Rosny. Each poem was also provided with notes explaining its symbolic references and the anticipations of meaning required by Oriental poetry.

At the back of the text was bound a reproduction of a Japanese poetry book, in which the poems were printed in black on drawings of plants or landscapes printed in light tones of green, yellow, brown and

grey. De Rosny's book also had a cover which was a full colour reproduction or pastiche of a late Japanese print showing a woman in a kimono on a typical carpentered wooden balcony.

I(76)

The quality of Japanese poetry was accurately transmitted by Rosny's translations as in this Haiku entitled "La Separation":

Malgré les milles obstacles que le lit du courant  
leur oppose, ces eaux, longtemps divisées par les  
sables, finiront toujours par se réunir,

41

or in "Clair de Lune";

A traverse les éclaircies des nuages accumulés par  
le vent d'automne  
Penètre la clarté lumineuse de la lune.

42

The anthology found its way into the libraries of all the major French Japanese enthusiasts and some of the English. Ph. Burty even attempted Rosny's classes in Japanese with little success. Rosny's characterisation of Japanese poetry in these translations became the basis of current European belief about Japanese literature.

Another translation from the Japanese accompanied with a few illustrations was Komats et Sakitsi, a novel by Ruitei Tanefico, an eighteenth century Japanese novelist. It was translated by F. Turretini, a Japanese scholar living in Geneva and published there in 1875. This was a typical romantic Japanese historical novel with an ironic meaning for contemporaries of the author. It contained four black and white portraits of the chief characters, made by Japanese artists. The plates are of no special interest but they should be mentioned as Ph. Burty knew of the work in Geneva, and recorded its influence on him, in an article in La Renaissance in 1871.

43

I(77)

44

The vogue for books with original Japanese illustrations faded by the mid-1860's. One suspects that this was because Japanese artists and wood engravers with sufficient skill were no longer available. In the 1880's and '90s a great many Western authors wrote imaginary tales of Japan and these were illustrated by Western artists. The exception

to this general rule was the series of illustrated books of Japanese and Western fairy tales using Japanese artists which appeared throughout the 1880's and 1890's. These were extremely popular and exerted a continuing influence on English illustration which will be discussed below.

As a whole the illustrated translations from the Japanese had an important role in spreading knowledge of Japanese style, in the context of literary and cultural information which gave it a specific range of cultural significances for the West. This process was over by the early 1880's and Dickins' publication of Hokusai's 100 Views of Fuji is an early sign of its completion. However this is a question best discussed in the next section of this thesis.

CHAPTER THREEThe Popular Response to Japan in England in the 1870's and early 1880's.

Popular attitudes to Japan varied greatly between England and France. In general the intellectual and artistic implications of Japanese art were fully explored by the French, whereas in England a more mundane view was taken. It may be said that England absorbed Japan into a pattern of sentiment appropriate to the English middle-class values of the period. English "progress" had little relationship to French "modernité". There was no equivalent in London to the Parisian demi-monde until at least the 1890's. Instead civil servants, soldiers and lawyers, formed the bulk of Japanese enthusiasts, with a few businessmen. Their prototype was William Rossetti, the art-loving Home Office official. He referred to himself as a "Japanese maniac" and to Japan as his "hobby". He spent a great deal of time acquiring Japanese prints and other work in the 1870's and 1880's simply to look at, never feeling that it needed scholarship or that it had a major original contribution to make to Western art.

One interesting aspect of his attitude is treatment of Japanese prints which he used as a frieze round his dining room at 5, Endsleigh Gardens, from 1867 to 1890. A similar frieze was placed on the walls of his daughter Helen's bedroom, consisting mainly of Hiroshige's. This peculiar decorative use of Japanese prints was fairly common among enthusiasts. E. W. Godwin, the designer, had a similar one in his house.

Clay Lancaster

has published a photograph of the Japanese bedroom of Dr. William H. Hammond of New York in 1882, showing such a frieze. It was the fashion to place the prints side by side in a continuous band. This probably came about because a series of prints often came in one long uncut strip - originally intended to be folded into a book.

The major English museums took little interest in Japanese art until the mid-1880's. It was therefore in the context of Victorian middle-class parlour and drawing-room <sup>and</sup> as we have seen, the bedroom, that Japanese art and aesthetic values appeared in England. This context may well explain the failure of England to make full use of the Japanese example save in the decorative arts and illustrations. In any case the sentiments and beliefs which we shall try to define in this chapter stand behind all English use of Far Eastern ideas whether in the Fine or Decorative arts. 46

The essential difference between the English and French developments may be seen in the contrast between S. Bing, the most prominent French dealer in Japanese art, and A.L. Liberty, both of whom began independent businesses in 1875. During this period Bing was a dealer in relatively small quantities of work of a high artistic merit. Liberty, on the other hand, sold cheap export ware in bulk to the growing middle-class. In a Liberty catalogue dated to the early 1880's by the V. and A., the following items are offered: 47

Books full of grotesque drollery or beautiful landscapes. Each 6d., 1s.0d., 2s.0d., 3s.6d.  
A few volumes by the celebrated Japanese artist Hokusai, the HOGARTH of Japan. 48

On the following page we read of -

The long scrolls or kakemonos made for hanging in temples and Private Houses, can be utilized for corridors, smoke rooms, studios, and they are fine in colour and very charmingly drawn. Amongst them are the grotesque as well as the lovely.

Prices for these ranged from 1s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. Liberty's also offered "carved ivories", "fine lacquer ancient and modern", "hand painted Japanese D'oyleys (paper)", "Japanese miniature fans for use as guest cards" and "Japanese paper leather photograph frames". The chromolithograph illustrations made clear that all this was export ware cheaply manufactured. Even the lacquer cabinets were of a kind which is still to be found in local curio shops in England, black lacquer with I(78)

small Japanese designs in gold or red.

The Japanese goods appeared among a plethora of Persian enamels, Indian carving and other exotic items. Liberty's customers are said to have included Morris, Carlyle, Ruskin, the Rossettis, Burne-Jones, Whistler, Norman Shaw and Godwin. Many of these people had dealt with him since he became manager of Farmer and Rogers Oriental warehouse in 1863. It is doubtful however, that their main business with him in the 1870's and 1880's was for Japanese work. Ruskin was openly opposed to it by this time, and it plays no part in the work of Morris or Burne-Jones.

Liberty's customers also dealt with another shrewd businessman, Murray Marks. Marks also began business in 1875 at 395 Oxford Street, W.1. His trade card, showing a quill pen in a blue and white vase on a gold background is said to have been designed jointly by Whistler, Rossetti and Morris. Although he dealt in most Far Eastern curios, Marks was especially famous as a dealer in pottery, particularly blue and white of which he bought a great deal from Holland. In 1878 he arranged a major exhibition of blue and white belonging to Sir Henry Thompson, for which the catalogue illustrations were prepared by Whistler. At a dinner to celebrate the event the guests included Beerbohm Tree, Arthur Sullivan and many other leaders of middle-class taste. The blue and white craze attracted a large number of middle-class enthusiasts in the late 1870's and 1880's. One club, "The Sette of Odd Volumes", took a consistent interest in it and a book published in 1891, Blue and White China by Alexander T. Hollingsworth, artificier to the Sette of Odde Volumes, gives a good impression of the seriousness with which blue and white was taken. Hollingsworth compares some china painting to the work of Frans Hals.

It was to the restricted market of enthusiasts formed by such men as the members of the Sette that Marks made his appeal. Like the

English public in general they had a sentimental view of Far Eastern art despite their fine taste and the learned diligence of Marks.

However Liberty was the largest dealer in Far Eastern wares in England and it would seem that his taste was shared by most of his customers. Christopher Dresser and others made attempts to create a market for a better range of work. Dresser founded a company for this purpose based at Alexandra Palace. Such attempts were of little value against the prevailing romantic sentiment.

This has been referred to by more than one author as "Cherry blossom exoticism". Whilst this term embodies much about the attitude which led to the success of goods sold at Liberty's, it also conceals a great deal of the importance of the growth of a myth based on one culture in another culture. Cultures perceive each other in terms of themselves and of their information about each other which they contain. "Cherry blossom exoticism" constitutes a major source of cultural information about the Far East, and it would be wrong to dismiss it because that information was inaccurate or falsified. Such points have little meaning in cultural exchanges. We are not able to dismiss the element of fashionable exoticism even in the greatest manifestations of Far Eastern influence on Western art.

Miner argues that the several hundred "Japanese" travel books, novels and poems produced during the last three decades of the nineteenth century are all alike in their sentimentalism. For him, this is a good reason for ignoring them. I disagree with this, for the popular notion of Japan changed considerably during this period. In the 1870's it was just forming, only in the later 1880's was it consolidated. We may see this clearly in the rapid increase of "popular" publications about Japan from the later 1880's onwards.

Two poems written during the 1870's give us a good impression of the popular impression of Japan at that time. The first, A Japanese Fan, by 50

Margaret Veley, appeared in the Cornhill Magazine for 1876. An illustration accompanied it showing a middle-class lady and gentleman contemplating a Japanese fan, while behind them is a table loaded with other Far Eastern curiosities, presumably purchased from Liberty's. Within this setting a conversation takes place about the fan. The gentleman describes "all the meaning, the romance" of the subject:

I(80)

Here's a lady small of feature  
     Narrow eyed  
 With her hair of even straightness  
     Queerly tied  
 In her had are trailing flowers  
     Rosy Sweet  
 And her silken robe is muffled  
     Round her feet  
 She looks backward with conscious  
     Kind of Grace  
 As she steps from off the carpet  
     Into space  
 Though she plants her foot on nothing  
     Does not fall  
 And in fact appears to heed it  
     Not at all  
 See how calmly she confronts us  
     Standing there -  
 Will you say she is not lovely  
     Do you dare  
 I will not! I honour beauty  
     Where I can  
 Here's a woman one might die for  
     - In Japan.

The gentleman continues telling the story of betrayed romance, combined with a long description involving jasmined perfumed nights, sunsets and silk robes - all the imagery found in cheap Japanese export goods.

Veley's pen gives a good idea of the popular response to Japanese goods. "Mystery and Romance" were the most attractive qualities associated with it. These qualities are identical to those sought in Western art by the newly growing English middle-classes, nourished by the Pre-Raphaelites.

All use of Japanese examples by English designers and artists took place in the context of this overwhelming sentiment. A better-known poet, W. E. Henley, expressed it more concisely in his "Ballade of a Toyokuni Colour Print" of 1877 or shortly after. In this poem he even

takes advantage of the Buddhist idea of reincarnation to explain the attraction of Japanese art in sentimental rather than aesthetic terms;

Was I, a Samurai, renowned  
 The Sworded, fierce, immense of bow?  
 The histrion angular and profound?  
 A Priest? a porter? Child, although  
 I have forgotten clean, I know  
 That in the shade of Fujisan  
 What time the cherry orchards blow,  
 I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing gowned,  
 And hugely sashed, with pins a-row  
 Four quaint heads as with flamelets crowned  
 Demure inviting - even so  
 When merry maids of Mijako  
 To feel the sweet of the year began  
 And green gardens to overflow  
 I loved you once in old Japan.  
 Clear shine the hills; the rice fields round  
 Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow  
 A blue canal the lakes blue bound,  
 Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo!  
 Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow  
 I see you turn with flirted fan,  
 Against the plum tree's blooming snow  
 I loved you once in old Japan.

Dear twas a dozen lives ago;  
 But that I was a lucky man  
 The Toyokuni here will show  
 I loved you once in old Japan.

51

This is the first public reference in England to any other Japanese artist than Hokusai. The poem therefore marks a stage in the development of public awareness in the later 1870's, a broadening of familiarity in harmony with that which we observed being developed as a result of visits to Japan. We shall see the development in the major English defenders of Japanese art.

It also shows that the English were determined to see Japanese art in terms of sentiment, to incorporate it into the Pre-Raphaelite and Ruskinian attitude to art.

Henley may have been introduced to Japanese art through his friendship with R. L. Stevenson in Edinburgh, whose interest in it we have already noted. Another, later poet, Alfred Noyes, acknowledges Stevenson

as his introduction to Japan as a source of inspiration. Noyes' work was mainly written at the turn of the century but it shows how strongly Japan was embedded in the popular and literary imagination during the later nineteenth century. In Noyes' work Japan becomes a symbol for the lost imagination. A vehicle for romantic speculation which inevitably involves childhood and fairy tales. His "Flower of Old Japan" is a Japanese Peter Pan, in which children, led by a magician with a fan, dream of a quest to a magical "Old Japan". Old Japan is a symbol of the lost romantic imagination.

The road to Old Japan! you cry  
 And is it far or near?  
 Some never find it till they die,  
 Some find it everywhere,  
 The road where restful Time forgets  
 His weary thoughts and wild regrets  
 And calls the golden year  
 Back in a fairy dress to smile  
 On young and old a little while.

Some seek it with a blazing sword,  
 And some with old blue plates  
 Some with a miser's golden hoard  
 Some with a book of dates,  
 Some with a box of paints; a few  
 Whose loads of truth would ne'er pass through  
 And, O, how shocked they are to find  
 That truths are false when left behind.

52

All Noyes' poems express this nostalgic regret for an imagination which has lost its power over experience. "Haunted in Old Japan" contrasts the impermanence of rational Western man with the faded but still attractive image of Old Japan:

All our dreams are blown a-drift as flowers before a fan  
 All our hearts are haunted in the heart of old Japan.

This nostalgic, almost mystical sentiment of regret, became associated with Japan only in the mid-1890s. It is a different emotion from that simple identification with Japanese objects and myths represented by Veley and Henley. Noyes represents true "Cherry blossom exoticism" in a way that they do not. This distinction is important as it helps to define the changing popular tone against which artists made use of the

Japanese example. It is significant also that the popular romances with Japanese subjects published in England occur after 1880. A typical example is J. Morris's Kotaka, a Samurai's Daughter. It has rather insipid wood engraving illustrations by Stanley Wood. It is a highly romanticized story of love and chivalry in Japan. 53

Wood's illustrations are factually accurate but show little if anything of the influence of Japanese art. His frontispiece showing Kotaka at her door is an example of homely illustration to be found by the hundred in contemporary English illustrated books, usually under a title such as "Shepherd Girl" or "The Sweetheart at home". I(81)

These popular romances mark the complete absorption of many superficial aspects of Japanese culture into the English context. It is perhaps superfluous to point out that such absorption tended to obliterate the creative dialectic between Eastern and Western cultures. Where one feels no tension one is unwilling to make fresh discoveries. The move towards understanding and synthesis is stopped short by serviceable myths. The presence of a superficial "myth of Japan" in English popular culture may have acted as a damper on the influence of Japanese art in this way. In particular the eclectic absorption of Japanese motifs into the design of domestic objects in the 1870's and 1880's tended to have this effect. Two recent exhibitions, "The Aesthetic Movement and the Cult of Japan", Fine Art Society, 1972, and "The Aesthetic Movement", Camden Arts Centre, 1973, have shown the extent to which this took place. 54

The Camden exhibition in particular showed some excellent ceramics by Minton, Wedgwood, Worcester, Coalport, Burmantofts, Doulton and many others. Worcester and Minton in particular produced excellent work based on Japanese designs from 1872 onwards. Textiles, furniture by Godwin, silverware by Etherington and Co., from 1875, and even cast-iron work (fireguards and fences), designed by Thomas Jekyll and made by the

firm of Barnard Bishop and Jekyll from 1873 also used Japanese designs.

It is misleading to subsume all these manufactures under the idea of the "Aesthetic Movement", for this did not really exist as a conscious movement until the early 1880's. Rather they represent one aspect of a popular response to Japanese form. They are all articles intended for the Victorian middle-class parlour, designed to fit with the sentiments expressed by Veley and Henley.

A plate with a design registered as "Bamboo and Fan" in 1875 contains bamboo leaves and stems, flowers, an oriental design of flowering birds and some abstract designs, made by a transfer process which enabled the black outline style of Japanese prints on which they were based to be preserved. Wedgwood manufactured plates with painted copies of Japanese prints from 1873. They also had excellent imitations of drawings from the Mangwa in their borders. 56

It is the transmission of Japanese motifs such as these on manufactured domestic goods in the 1870's which is important for this thesis, which is not concerned with the history of design in itself. The notion that such motifs were appropriated by a narrow elitest group - the Aesthetic Movement - is simply untrue. Indeed the present notion of the movement as a heroic campaign for good taste by a small minority who nonetheless produced an enormous number of objects, seems to be a product of the imagination of design historians, led on by Walter Hamilton and Oscar Wilde. 57

I would like to reserve the term "Aesthetic Movement" for the refined attitude to art and to taste expounded by Wilde and Whistler in their lectures. This makes it possible to distinguish between their very specific attitudes to Japan and the popular response to it which made possible the manufacture of articles such as those discussed above in great numbers. Similar use of Japanese motifs is found in almost every European country in the 1870's - for instance by Collinot,

Christophe and others in France, but without being regarded as part of a movement and without being overburdened with romantic sentiment as they were in England.

If we turn to other measures of popular familiarity with Japan such as journalism and the theatre it becomes clear that Japan did not leave the middle-class parlour during the 1870's.

The London Illustrated News continued to publish occasional illustrated articles on Japan by Wirgman and by Regamey. However Punch makes no reference to it at all. As for the theatre there was no successful work based on a Japanese theme until "The Mikado" in 1885. Japanese jugglers and acrobats were regular features of music-halls during the 1870's and 1880's, but it was only in the later 1880's that a character called "The Jolly Jap" appeared as a music-hall stooge.

"The Mikado" gave the lead for a great many other pieces of theatre about Japan. An example of one such drama was "The Japs" which also opened in 1885. All the theatrical productions followed "The Mikado" in its use of coy, giggling maidens and archetypal tyrannical rulers.

"The Mikado" itself was, of course, an excellently documented production. Gilbert paid many visits to the Japanese village in Knightsbridge and bought 134 tinted tourist photographs which are still in existence 58 in the British Museum. Japanese dressers were specially imported to assure the accuracy of the costumes. The sets too were designed with painstaking accuracy. "The Mikado's" comical depiction of Japan was to have a permanent effect on the popular image of Japan in the English-speaking world, but it was only written when Japan had already become familiar in Western culture and when it had already had its major effect on Western art.

In this chapter I have defined the popular knowledge of Japan in England at the time of its greatest influence on Western art. I have shown that familiarity with Japanese articles in England came about

through middle-class enthusiasm for Japanese objects as decoration. This led to the imposition of contemporary middle-class romantic sentiments onto Japanese art, similar to those current in English middle-class art.

It is against the background of these sentiments that the English enthusiasts and critics of the 1870's and 1880's operated. These are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

English Apologists and Enthusiasts for Japanese Art in the 1870's,  
Audsley and Bowes, Cutler, Dresser, Alcock and others.

We have now established the historical background to English appreciation of Japanese art. It will be the business of this chapter to account for the development of specific critical attitudes in England during the 1870's.

The champions of Japanese art in England were very much affected by the sentiment which placed it amongst the other decorative items in the middle-class parlour. Hardly ever do they claim, as did Jarves, that it had a place as "High Art" or Fine Art.

This may well be explained by the continued dominance of English taste and criticism throughout the 1870's by Ruskin who had condemned Japanese art as decadent in 1869 in the "Queen of the Air";

On the other the pure colour gift, when employed for pleasure only, degrades in another direction, so that among Indians, Chinese and Japanese, all intellectual progress in art has been for ages rendered impossible,

and he remained implacably hostile, never discussing it in his published works. By 1881 he considered it "Diabolic";

On the 23rd, I believe, Alic and I were looking at the Diabolic Japan book which I had nearly burnt dozens of times - lucky I had it now

59

he wrote in his diary in September. Ruskin's art criticism was based on the notion of "High Art" inextricably associated with Christianity, which had, according to Ruskin, led man to a full appreciation of all the wonders of creation. To admit the beauty of Japanese art would have been to betray a basic premise of his criticism. Ruskin's disciple, Collingwood, reduced his master's attitude to absurdity. He claimed, in his account of Ruskin's teaching, that the taste for Japanese asymmetry was nothing other than a sign that the late nineteenth century had lost its religious faith.

Collingwood also points out one of the essential paradoxes of the Ruskinian attitude. Japanese art provided excellent accounts of natural objects, animals and landscape, "decoratively treated". Ruskin never made any attempt to resolve this paradox in print. We have seen that he continued to speak out against Japan as both La Farge and Dresser remark on this in their writing. What is understandable if illogical in Ruskin became irrational prejudice amongst many of those he influenced. Japanese enthusiasts in England were also apologists. 60

Nonetheless the defenders of Japan seized upon those Ruskinian criteria which they could use. They talked mainly of the Japanese use of Nature, but they also made use of his ideas on craftsmanship and on the inherited cultural disposition of a community. Moreover their books are full of analysis, point by point, of Japanese drawings and designs made along Ruskinian lines. In 1879 Thomas Cutler published a book entitled "The Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design" which reproduced many drawings and designs with separate specially drawn plates of analysis.

None of the critics we are to discuss were great writers. It seems that they lacked the intellectual strength to oppose Ruskin's view of art. Some of them may even have been unaware of the possibility of alternative attitudes. Caught between the sentimental enthusiasm of the middle-classes and Ruskin's austere moral criticism they could do little despite their own enthusiasm to promote a new, well-informed and sympathetic understanding of Japanese art and its possibilities for Western culture.

However they could publish descriptions of their collections at great length, and make aesthetic propaganda within the Western context. This they did.

They were greatly helped by the development of chromolithography. This colour printing process was suited to the reproduction of Japanese art objects, as it made use of a system of overprinting with many blocks to achieve its effects. The Parisian firm of Lemer cier brought it to

perfection and they were responsible for colour plates for books by Audsley and Bowes, Anderson and the Frenchmen Bing and Louis Gonse.

The outstanding English users of chromolithography were Audsley and Bowes, whose work has been referred to above. In their great two volume opus "The Ceramic Arts of Japan" of 1875. Following this in 1882 Audsley published the "Ornamental Arts of Japan" which contained chromolithographic examples of all the Japanese Arts and Crafts while Bowes published "Japanese Marks and Seals" in 1881.

Both Bowes and Audsley continued as active writers on Japan after the mid-1880's. Neither of them however published any serious critical work after that time; both restricted themselves to catalogues and surveys. Bowes eventually opened his house in Liverpool as a Japanese museum. 62

Audsley was clearly the more literate of the two and it is his opinions which stand out in the "Ceramic Art". We may trace the development of his critical attitude to Japan from his lecture "Notes on Japanese Art" given to the Architectural Association in 1872. 62b

Most of this lecture was concerned with acquainting the audience with the various types of Japanese art and crafts. However Audsley did make some general comments. He saw Japanese art as based essentially on nature;

The Japanese have for thousands of years, worshipped at Nature's shrine, watching her every movement, and noting every change of mood and costume with a loving eye, until each detail of her marvellous handiwork, and each expression of her changeful face, are imprinted on their minds, to be transferred to every work they set their hands to do. 63

Audsley uses exactly the same words in his introductory essay to the "Ceramic Art". In this he discusses, with illustrations, the whole of Japanese art. He is also careful in both the lecture and "Ceramic Art" to distinguish Japanese art from Chinese art, which he considered inferior.

The direct expressive quality of Japanese drawing was greatly ad-

mired by Audsley. He dwelt on it at length in his 1872 lecture;

It seems strange that so much could be told by half a dozen up and down brush strokes as is plainly told in the simplest Japanese sketch, but let the artist have a clear idea to set forth and he will never fail to do so, even in so humble a material as a grass blade.

He challenges anyone who doubts this to examine their common illustrated books or the paintings on their "beautiful Satsuma Ware". In the "Keramic Art" Audsley takes this further. He discusses the Japanese artist's ability to capture "the straight ascending habit of bamboo" which is a unique natural quality. Japanese artists, he argued, were seeking something much more than natural resemblance. They were trying to capture the power of nature itself. Japanese art, appealed to the imagination rather than gratifying the eye with verisimilitude. In doing this, it "stirs the soul with varied emotions";

Japanese art springs from the brain and does not affect the studied and laboured renderings of the Western modern schools, and thus it speaks directly to the mind, not with one voice only, but in strains powerful or weak according to the individual imagination.

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Of wood block prints Audsley wrote that the restricted means of expression was so powerful that those who look at them "are drawn into communion with the artist's soul and find that the drawing is but a symbol of a great moral reality, after all". (He offers examples of Japanese expressionist technique. In the lecture he recounts the tale that a Japanese artist used his thumb to depict grapes and in Keramic Art he discusses the contests among artists as to who could paint Shinto votive pictures of horses (Yama) with the least number of strokes.)

This argument that expressive representation of nature is at bottom a moral activity is drawn straight from Ruskin; in particular his writing on Turner. Audsley's comments on Japanese landscape are highly reminiscent of Ruskin;

Their way of representing a mist at sea is very amusing, positively nothing being shown but a few

straight and curved lines, shaping upper portions of masts and sails. Imagination supplies the mist which obscures all the rest of the vessel.

It is not surprising that in order to defend Japanese art against the charge of being decorative, and therefore inferior, he quotes Ruskin to the effect that the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, Veronese, the Correggio cupolas at Parma, Greek temples, and all examples of the highest order of art are essentially decorative.

Audsley argues that all Japanese art is decorative and that the pictorial principles required for decorative art vary greatly from those "necessary in pictorial perspective". He points out that decorative art is inseparable from useful objects and that finely made articles are found in the homes of rich and poor alike in Japan. Moreover such art is always in sight and in use.

Audsley argues that Japanese art is a "development unique in itself" and should not be criticised for its lack of aerial perspective or chiaroscuro.

In both the 1872 lecture and "Keramic Art", Audsley sets up a hierarchy of subjects for Japanese art - at the top of which he places flower and bird paintings, and at the bottom figure subjects. He includes in the hierarchy chimerical creatures such as the Foo Bird, dragons and the domestic gods, which are described in detail.

In "Keramic Art" Fujiyama is acknowledged as a major subject. Audsley remarks that Bowes owns an album with 24 double page coloured plates of Fuji, perhaps a volume of Hokusai's "36 Views". He also prints an illustration of Fuji derived presumably from this book and one of a blue and white porcelain ornament in the form of the moon rising above Fuji. He quotes Fonblanque's description of Fuji as a great religious centre, and places it carefully in the iconography of Japanese art. The thoroughness with which this is done typifies his approach throughout the essay.

In "Keramic Art", Audsley follows Jarves in defending Japanese figure art by making use of religious painting and sculpture he claims that Japanese altar paintings show good facial and figure work. Like Jarves he singles out the Kamakura Buddha as a symbol of Nirvana, "an embodiment of the most elusive metaphysical mysteries". In this way, like Jarves, he defends Japanese art against the common Victorian charge that all Japanese drawings of the figure, in particular the nude, are caricatures and that many are crudely obscene.

Audsley was very concerned with the decorative devices in Japanese art. In his lecture he emphasised the appropriateness of Japanese ornament for its purpose and the excellence of ~~as~~ymetry.

In "Keramic Art" he spends a great part of the introductory essay discussing Japanese designs. He distinguishes many types of decorative design, using a series of specifically prepared plates. Plate A is concerned entirely with different types of frets and diapers used in Japanese ceramics; Plates B and C reproduce geometrical designs from woodwork and leatherwork; Plates D, E and F, are designed to show the irregular distribution of design elements in Japanese design.

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Decorative motifs are all discussed individually, categorized and related to their model in nature where this is relevant. The Kikumon, for instance, is related to the Chrysanthemum, and its treatment in Japanese painting. A separate section of the introduction is devoted to "Graphic Delineation". It is here that Audsley makes his argument for the importance of Japanese art as a serious spiritual activity.

Two plates, K and L, are devoted to an analysis of drawings of flowers and birds and fishes. Japanese modes of representing particular natural phenomena and objects like wind, grass, rain and cherry blossoms, are categorized and discussed with great sensitivity. Some paintings on silk are reproduced in autotype from a book called "Shin Rokassen - the Six New Seasons" by the artist "Goehu do gen ye" in the Bowes collection.

They are emblems of the Japanese festivals and give a good impression of the type of Japanese painting on which Audsley was basing his ideas. They possess the neat, decorative quality of early nineteenth century Japanese paintings which is also shown in the bird, flower and fish paintings reproduced from books in the collection of W. G. Alexander.

Audsley is well-informed on the use of paintings in Japan and comments on the tea ceremony, where one painting is always displayed in a tokonomo, a specially designed niche in the teahouse wall. He mentions that he owns two such scroll paintings with paintings of flowers.

The introductory essay on Japanese art in "Keramic Art" is remarkable in the depth of its treatment of the subject of Japanese art as well as in its sensitivity to Japanese style. Despite his bedevilment with Ruskinian critical attitudes, Audsley's work is a remarkable achievement for 1875.

The detailed discussion of ceramics was an equal achievement but its scholarship is now hopelessly outdated, much of it was based on totally inaccurate information. Nonetheless many different varieties of Japanese ceramics were identified and illustrated with magnificently worked chromolithographs.

Burty, who reviewed the first part of the work in the "Academy" in 1875 agreed with this opinion but felt some reservation about the figure drawings in the chromolithographs;

The ornamentation is drawn with great exactness; but the figure drawing is less characteristic. The draughtsman is evidently afraid of just that point of exaggeration which marks the difference between his own school and that of the artists of the empire of the rising sun.

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Burty also criticized the colour range of the plates. He observed justly that the process killed the brilliancy of the colours and that Regamey was trying to avoid this in some plates he was working on for the French magazine "L'Art".

Nonetheless I find some of the plates extremely effective. For instance three dishes of Hizen blue and white from the collection of Joseph Beck reproduce beautifully, so <sup>o</sup>des a red and gold Kaga ware dish from the collection of the Duke of Edinburgh, who was Audsley's patron and to whom the book is dedicated.

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The more complex colours of Satsuma are not so successfully represented. Though a plate showing a dish and a pair of vases from the Bowes collection gives an acceptable representation. In any case the chromolithographs are a great improvement on the photographs printed directly from negatives with which the 1872 lecture is illustrated. "Keramic Art of Japan" was one of the first books to discuss Japanese art in an informed manner. Audsley succeeds in placing the art, and the ceramics in particular, in the setting of Japanese customs and beliefs. This achievement and the production of the chromolithographs make his a work of major importance in the development of European appreciation of Japanese art. Audsley's next book "Ornamental Outlines" was published in 1881. It was an architectural "pattern book" which incorporated full plate black and white illustration of designs from medieval bosses, Islamic tiles, Persian carpet patterns and Japanese decorative patterns juxtaposed to create a highly consistent range of choice for designers and architects.

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Audsley had been trained as an architect and like many other Japanese enthusiasts, such as his fellow architect E.W.Godwin, he had come to admire Japanese art through seeing it as the product of a living Middle Ages, and therefore acceptable to the "Gothic" taste in fashion in the 1860's and early 1870's. By the time of "Keramic Art" however this theme has disappeared from his writing. Japanese motifs had found their way into the general decorative vocabulary of English designs. Audsley comments on the rising demand that they should be included in pattern books, claiming that "Outlines of Ornament" was the first book to do so.

By 1882, when the first part of "Ornamental Arts of Japan" was published, knowledge of Japanese art was increasing enormously. Nonetheless Audsley sticks to the basic outlines of his estimate of it in "Keramic Art" in his introduction, and in the text written in 1885 for the two volume complete edition of 1885 he retains the hierarchy of subject matter with flower and bird paintings and prints at the top. For him Japanese art remains essentially naturalistic despite much evidence in his own detailed accounts that this is not so. He quotes in justification from a translation of a work by an early nineteenth century artist, Masatami, which was published between 1804-1818. Masatami claims that he always copied every new form of tree or plant he saw as an aid to his art.

The translation appeared first in the preface to Bowes' "Japanese Marks and Seals" - one of the first dictionaries for collectors of Japanese works. In the preface to this Bowes too maintains the naturalistic thesis expressed in "Keramic Art". 68

Audsley relies on the highly detailed work by Gonse and Anderson and Dickins for much of his new information. He quotes at length from "L'Art Japonais" and refers many times to Anderson's papers and lectures and to Dickins' translation of the "Mangwa". He also makes great use of the Japanese Commissioners' report from the 1878 Paris Exhibition. The "Ornamental Arts" is divided into nine sections of which the most important for us is the first, on Painting and Graphic Arts.

It contains an historical essay on Japanese painting which is remarkable for the number of major figures which it identifies. Audsley divides Japanese painting into four schools, the Korean (or Chinese); the Buddhist, which he still likens to Byzantine art; the Toza or Imperial school and the popular school. This division remained the basis of western study of Japanese painting for many years.

Among the major painters he identifies are Sesshu and his school,

Korin, Kano, Masanobu, Katsugawa, Shunsho and Utamaro. Among contemporary artists and printmakers he lists Kuniyoshi, Kunisada, Shungs, Sadasage, Sadahide, Hiroshige, Kuniyasa and Shunto and the pupils of Hokusai, Isai and Keisai Eisen. Not even Hokusai had been mentioned in "Keramic Art". This tremendous increase in scholarly knowledge from the mid-1880's onwards is extremely important, for with it went the ability to distinguish between the different styles of Oriental art.

Hokusai remained for Audsley the great Japanese artist. He quotes a panegyric on him by Gonse but expresses his disapproval of Gonse's assertion that Hokusai represented Callot, Rembrandt, Goya and Daumier all rolled into one. Audsley makes him the leader of a great popular school of art which finally broke with the Chinese artistic tradition. Ironically he reproduces several pages from the print book, "Yehon Teikin Orai" by Hokusai of 1828. This book whose title translated is "Communication of Home Precepts", was originally written by the fourteenth century Chinese Genye Hoski (d. 1350) as a model of calligraphy. Audsley's illustrations include a picture of a Japanese couple using an enormous umbrella and a picture of an Oriental artist at work which was used to show the far eastern method of painting. He also reproduces a black and white engraving based on a Hokusai Kakemono of a bowsman in his introductory text. 69

Plate 2 bis, one of the sixteen which follow, reproduces a magnificent kakemono by Hokusai, from the Hart collection, showing a hero struggling with supernatural creatures, dating from 1800. Plate two shows a painting of Tokaru, a famous Yoshiwara courtesan, by Mayagawa Chosuei, an eighteenth century artist. This is also a kakemono, from the Hart collection.

The remaining plates reproduce every aspect of Japanese painting and prints with the notable exception of screen painting. Among them are a Buddhist altar painting, a scroll depicting events in Hell, a 70

painting of monkeys by Sosen and paintings of flowers and landscapes including a view of Fuji from Anderson's own collection.

Of the Japanese print makers Audsley chose to reproduce two plates of figures from a book by Katsugawa Shunsho which he dated to 1775. He claims Shunsho's works to be amongst the earliest coloured prints. The subtle eighteenth century colours of these prints are very well-reproduced. Audsley also reproduced part of a Kunisada diptych that he bought at the 1867 exhibition in Paris which I have discussed in my account of the exhibition.

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The inclusion of the prints by Shunsho and the eighteenth century kakemono indicate the establishment of stylistic categories within the idea of Japanese art. The separation of eighteenth century and nineteenth century Japanese prints and painting in the European consciousness is a fundamental change which was to affect the perception of Japanese art by European artists in the 1880's.

The other eight sections of "Ornamental Arts " are as detailed as the first, but it would be tedious to discuss them all. It is sufficient to stress that Audsley's book is the first in England to delineate a historical consciousness of Japanese art. It appeared contemporaneously with Gonse's "L'Art Japonais", which performed the same function in France and will be discussed below in relation to the 1883 retrospective exhibition of Japanese art in Paris.

In 1886 William Anderson, who had been a professor of medicine at Tokyo, published "The Pictorial Art of Japan". We have seen that Anderson had taken the opportunity afforded by his time in Japan to form an enormous collection of Japanese art and the scholarly knowledge to go with it. On his return he sold the collection to the British Museum and published an excellent catalogue of it. The 1886 book is based on the British Museum collection. It is essentially an historical study, with a few comments on style in painting and design, "The application of pictorial art" added to the end.

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Anderson contributes nothing more to Western critical appreciation of Japan. His book is of interest to us as evidence that the full range of Japanese art had become available in Europe and that an historical consciousness of it was beginning in Europe. Like those in Audsley's "Ornamental Arts of Japan" the plates in Anderson's work will prove to be of great value in assessing the contribution of Japan to Western art in the later 1870's and 1880's.

Public lectures played a great part in spreading information in the late nineteenth century and Japanese art was no exception. One of the most successful lecturers during this period was Dr. Christopher Dresser. 73

Dresser had been a lecturer at the South Kensington Museum since 1852. He had been a Japanese enthusiast and a collector of Japanese goods. We have already discussed his travels in Japan for three months in 1877. As an official functionary he gave many talks on art and design. In 1874, after acting as a British commissioner to the 1873 Vienna Exhibition, he gave a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on Eastern art and its influence of European manufactures and taste. In it he pointed out 74 the great influence that Far Eastern art was having on Western manufactures and cited Worcester and Minton pottery as outstanding examples shown at Vienna. He was particularly concerned with the idea of "ornamentation" in utilitarian objects. He regarded the "ornamentalist" as an important contributor to manufactured articles;

He should be an artist in every sense of the word, yet he should be a Utilitarian also. He should be able to perceive the utmost delicacies and refinements of artistic form, yet he should value that which is useful for the very sake of its usefulness. 75

This function he saw fulfilled in the art of all Eastern countries, but most especially in the art of Japan. He was more concerned for the loss of ornamentation in European design than for its failure to create simple useful objects suitable for their function. He argued that most Western goods were functionally adequate but that very few had the

attractiveness of those of the Far East. To prove his point he analysed a Japanese kettle exhibited in the Vienna Exhibition. He praised its simple oblate spheroid form and its general functional adaption. He went on to examine the different textures in the bronze and comment on the inlaid silver on the lid;

Its shape is good, the protrusions of its surface give to it beauty as well as increase its utility, and the ornament on the handle and on the lid is consistent in character, appropriate as a method of enrichment and exactly what is necessary to render the kettle what Keats would term "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever".

It was in these terms that Dresser defended Japanese goods throughout his career, as prime examples of good taste.

Other criteria than proportion and appropriate textures intrude into his defence however. Speaking of a kimono from the Vienna exhibition he argued that all ornament should have meaning and pointed out that Japanese design always contained an "idea". At the same time he pointed out that the greatest degree of artistic honesty is always found in convention rather than in imitative work;

It is not however simply the colour harmony that I wish to call to your attention, perfect as it is, nor the beauty of the drawing, excellent though it is; nor the consistent treatment of the flowers and the flies, although this is worthy of special study - but to the thought realised in the work - namely, summer. No one can look upon this lovely dress without feeling the influence of the sunny ground, of the profusion of the richly coloured bloom, of the gay and glorious insects which appear to hover over the flowers.....But by the employment of truthful means more can always be achieved than by resorting to falsehood. No merely imitative treatment of flowers could possibly convey the thought of summer so well as this conventional treatment does.

This theory that "honesty" or convincing representation could be arrived at by generalizations appropriate for one's medium is ultimately derived from Ruskin's. One even suspects that Dresser may be implying that all good ornament and all Japanese ornament is derived from natural objects - though he denied this in a lecture on Japanese art given in

1878 - when he attributed this attitude to Owen Jones. Certainly Dresser, like Bowes, valued the naturalistic qualities of Japanese art above others. This is hardly surprising when one considers his training as botanist and botanical illustrator and his earlier advocacy of the use of botanical examples for Western design.

Dresser developed the idea of the "poetical significance" of Japanese ornament at length in his 1874 article and in his later work. He makes a strong plea that European designs as well as being attractive should;

remind us of the dell where the bells grow, they  
may well us of the fading year, they may call up  
thoughts of joy and spring, of evening and shade,  
or of ten thousand welcome ideas or emotions.

In his own work as a designer, however, this attitude was not fulfilled. His own work is formal, with no designs or at best stylized patterns often borrowed from the Japanese. Nonetheless it remained part of his defence of Japanese art and design that it related simultaneously through its design to the whole spectrum of human experience from the utilitarian to the poetic. We have already seen how impressed Dresser was by the craftsman's position as an integrated cultural individual, in Japan, in his book, "The Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures of Japan";

I cannot help thinking that the Japanese are right in regarding the man who can make a beautiful pot, a lovely cabinet, a charming fabric or a perfect netsuke as a being superior to the mere buyer or seller of goods; for while the one devotes his best engines to mere moneymaking, the other ennobles matter by the impress of his mind, love, intelligence and skill.

We have also seen that many others were equally enthusiastic. It is clear that the Japanese example was to appeal to all those who regarded the nineteenth century art and design destructively specialised and divided through industrialization; for example, Japanese art was to contribute greatly to the ideology of the Arts and Crafts movement.

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However when one considers Dresser's notion of "poetical significance" it becomes clear that the appeal of Japanese work was more broadly based than is argued by design historians who see it as simply an example of clear formal and utilitarian thinking. Dresser's defence of Japan is based as much on sentiment as it is on utilitarianism. It was more closely related to the taste of the English middle-class than is usually accepted. 80

After his visit to Japan in 1877 Dresser gave a second lecture to the Society of Arts, "The Art Manufacturers of Japan from Personal Observation". This lecture was mainly concerned with communicating information about Japanese arts and crafts techniques. Dresser did not change his assessment of Japanese art, he merely elaborated it in greater detail. He did not lay the same stress on the "poetical" aspect of the work. 81

Dresser does not discuss painting or prints in either the 1874 or the 1878 lecture, as they were given to an audience of designers and manufacturers. In his book he does discuss them. Whilst the vast bulk of the book is irrelevant here as it is either travelogue or a detailed account of Japanese crafts and skills, his discussion of the visual arts is worth considering, as it adds to our knowledge of the attitudes of English critics to Japanese art. Dresser remained essentially a designer and he gives his interest in design education as a reason for including twenty pages of reproductions of black and white drawings from Japanese print books;

I cannot too strongly recommend our young ornament-  
alists to consider these drawings and try to acquire  
the Japanese power of delineating natural forms with  
simplicity; nor can I too strongly commend to him  
the use of the brush in preference to the pencil. 82

Dresser had the blocks for the illustrations specially made in Japan, but mentions no artists' names, not even Hokusai, who is recognisably the author of several of the animal plates such as that of a 83

peacock from the small Mangwa, (Mangwa Gwafu), on page 289.

Dresser saw crispness of outline, the use of pure black and white and the ability to make accurate characterisations from nature as the most important aspects of Japanese drawing. The overwhelming number of reproductions are of bird or flower drawings which exemplify these qualities. Like Bowes, Dresser takes this to its limits and argues that the precise, characteristic expressions of the Japanese are able to achieve a unique relation to their subjects;

When we draw a bird, we are content to imitate its form; and either to produce the general effect of the object copied, or to portray laboriously every detail of the creature. The Japanese artist on the contrary, produces a bird which appears to live; it pecks, it flies, it rests in dignified repose or it is eyeing its prey. There is life in his rendering of birds, while ours are inanimate objects bearing but little more relation to the living thing than waxworks do to human beings.

This assertion of the relatively "lifelike" quality of Japanese art compared to Western art is common in English writing about Japan at the time. The vitality of Japanese art was universally acknowledged.

Dresser stresses this vitality in his discussion of Japanese plants, figure and landscape drawing and argues strongly for its adoption in Western art. He praises black and white sketches as the finest Eastern art. However he sees the same quality in full colour painting and observes that it may be a result of the direct working methods of the Japanese as opposed to European studio techniques; the Japanese -

cannot heap up labour on a subject and cover a canvas with colour as we do.

Dresser's enthusiasm for Japanese art was expressed in terms of his work as a designer and design teacher and most of his written work was therefore of a technical or descriptive nature, particularly "Japan: its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures". Nonetheless as we have seen, his advocacy shows the same pattern of values as Bowes and others. He relates Japanese art to Ruskinian ideas about Nature in Art, and sees it

as extraordinarily lifelike. He has the same mistaken hierarchy of subject matter as Audsley, placing the greatest value on flower and bird paintings. He also regards Japanese art as "honest" in its use of conventions suitable for its medium. Like Bowes, he has the problem of dealing with middle-class sentimental taste and it is interesting that in the 1870's he does not oppose it completely but argues for the "poetical" aspect of ornament as essential to good taste.

Dresser's unique contribution was in his continual effort to educate English taste in Japanese work, through his lectures and writing, but mainly through his business activities with the London firms of Londos and Co., Jackson and Graham Ltd., and others, and with Tiffany's in America. From 1879 he had his own firm, "Dresser and Holme", in partnership with Charles Holme, a Bradford manufacturer, who was to become an important figure in the development of Japanese enthusiasm in the 1880's and 1890's. Holme also contributed many articles on Japanese art to the Studio. This firm imported a great deal of "high quality" Japanese goods into England. It also sold Dresser's own designs for ceramics and silver ware, which, as I have mentioned, carried Japanese patterns. This aspect of Dresser's enthusiasm for Japanese art is difficult to assess accurately, but it should not be underestimated. Enthusiasm of this kind played an important part in the development of the familiarity of Japanese goods in England.

The chairman at Dresser's 1878 lecture was Sir Rutherford Alcock, K.C.B., F.R.G.S. Alcock, when ambassador to Japan, had organised the Japanese court at the 1862 International Exhibition in London which is discussed above. Dresser was very flattering to Alcock, whom he acknowledged as the person who introduced him to Japanese art.

Alcock spent the later 1860's working in China but in the 1870's had returned to Europe. He wrote a series of articles on Japanese art for the Art Journal in 1876, and later published a book "Art and Art Indust-

ries in Japan", which expanded the articles into a book in 1878.

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Alcock's work is long-winded, derivative and inconsistent in its arguments, but it serves as a record of the attempts of an enthusiast for Japanese art attempting to justify it by making use of current fashionable attitudes to art. Over half the book's three hundred pages are concerned with a theoretical discussion about the nature of art and current Western ideas about it, in terms of the experience of Japanese art.

Alcock begins by arguing that Japanese art shows the primitive state of an historical development at the end of which lies Greek or Renaissance art. Because of this he claims that a study of Japanese art will revivify Western work which had departed from the principles of Great Art. The Japanese were like the Greeks - a "nation of artists". Alcock deals at length with all the usual objections to Japanese art. In the introduction he dismissed the European notion of "High Art" and points to the association of these ideas with the art market and speculation.

He points out that craftsmanship creates value;

Art which can give a priceless value to the commonest and least costly materials, such as clay and iron - by the mere impress of genius and taste...is the Art which I believe to be the most precious.

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Throughout the book Alcock delights in pointing to the cries of woe about European art arising from Royal Academicians and fashionable critics and using their condemnation of the practical results of High Art to defend Japanese art against any attempt to judge it by the canons of High Art;

A critic of the Royal Academy exhibition began lately by lamenting the rarity of true Art, observing that "Academic work of which the aims are grandeur and beauty and the employment of these for decorative effect, as distinct from the reproduction of common nature, in forms, accessories, expression and storytelling is so rare in this exhibition that the examples of it may be

counted on the fingers". We are scarcely entitled therefore, to speak in terms of disparagement of the Japanese, if "true Art" as here understood be absent and the "reproduction of common nature in forms, accessories, expression and storytelling" constitutes their chief artistic merit.

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Alcock defends Japanese art as "An original school of decorative design", and following Jarves, Bowes and Dresser, argues that decorative art is the greatest form of art. Like them he quotes Ruskin to justify this argument, which runs through the whole book.

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Alcock's first chapter deals with the idea of Artlife or "Kunst Leben", that is to say with the notion of national characteristics to be seen in art. He quotes an article by W. E. Gladstone to the effect that the vast mass of any nation's artlife takes place in articles of common use and considers the artlife of the Japanese. He does this without any assertion of the superiority of Western forms, in fact he points to the relative superiority of much non-European art.

Alcock defines the artlife of the Japanese in the familiar terms of craftsmanship (about which he quotes Ruskin) and of a direct relation of art to nature. The Japanese -

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evolved their leading ideas from a study of Nature and inspired by the perception of some of the more subtle principles which govern the evolution of grace and beauty in the animal and vegetable kingdom.

In justifying the use of symmetry and selective expressionistic drawing by the Japanese, Alcock concentrates on the principle of "Unity in Variety". He draws on two sources which must have been known to him since the 1862 exhibition; Leighton's lecture on that exhibition and Dresser's work on the application of botany to design. From Leighton he takes the metaphor of the asymmetrically balanced steel yard to explain visual asymmetry. He also makes comparisons between natural asymmetries such as those in a tiger's stripes and asymmetries in Japanese design, for instance in a group of shelves. He demonstrates this principle at work in two highly complex fan designs - which are ugly enough to have

been chosen at random, as he claims. He also gives very simple asymmetries in design, such as a lacquer box.

Asymmetry in Japanese art is thus related directly to natural laws. Alcock takes this argument further by appealing to Dresser's work and to that of later botanists. He points to an asymmetrical but regularly repeated and mathematical disposition of leaves, flower petals and other parts of plants and identifies this closely with the Japanese mode of depicting them and all nature. His reason for this argument can be seen in the diagrams he gives of the spiral distribution of the leaves of the limetree.

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Alcock discusses asymmetry, alternative and repetition of regular forms;

The true artist seeks from the simple elements of natural beauty to follow Nature's lines, and reproduce new combinations upon some elementary principles for the delight of mankind. So, at least it seems to me, the Japanese have ever proceeded in their artistic development and its decorative tendencies and with no minor success.

By means of this argument Alcock justifies Japanese art as essentially naturalistic, in that it follows the fundamental laws of beauty which are found in nature itself. The notion of asymmetry runs right through Alcock's argument as it is the key to his naturalistic justification of Japanese art. He even finds a quotation from one of Ruskin's lectures of the early 1860's in which Ruskin made the same argument (in reference to the 1862 exhibition);

It is impossible to set out a diaper or devise figures for a wall or a carpet, unless the artist is familiar with actual leaves and boughs and flowers - nay unless he habitually lives in the study of these, and only gives his less numerous hours to drawing ornament. Japan the most perfect of the three countries in decoration, is that in which all other branches of Art have carried farthest. The small ivory carvings and castings in brass are by far the most natural and vivid work of the kind which we have seen from any Oriental source, whilst the fine and true feeling of the Japanese not only for birds and beasts and vege-

tation, but for landscape in its larger features is shown with equal clearness in the lacquerwork and the popular coloured books.

Alcock must have known of Ruskin's change of opinion during the 1860's and indeed takes him to task for his assertion that drawing of the nude was still essential to all Art and Design. Alcock points to the magnificent Japanese drawing of draperies compared to their weak drawing of the nude. Later he points out at length that Ruskin's notion of High Art which included only pictures (easel paintings and frescoes), sculpture and architecture was completely destroyed by the Japanese example. Indeed a good part of Alcock's Chapter VII is devoted to breaking down the difference between the "liberal" and "mechanical" arts by using Japanese examples.

Following Leighton, Alcock argues for the originality of Japanese art. His most convincing argument is that Japanese art could not have created an "era of Japonisme" in Europe unless it was original. He argues that Japanese art contains many varied effects.

Alcock is careful to point out the great variety of pictorial effect obtained by brush drawing as opposed to the dry outlines of a Western artist such as Flaxman. He adds that in inkwash drawings great variety of volume and movement is available, quoting from Jarves. In his anxiety to demonstrate the variety and naturalness within Japanese art he even advances similar arguments to those of French naturalists such as Buret. He argues that Japanese landscape prints may look flat because there is little light or shade or aerial perspective in nature in Japan. He also notes the high vanishing point which is common in Japanese art and defends it against charges of artificiality. On the other hand he is quite willing to defend the treatment of clouds in Japanese painting against Jarves' charge that it is unnatural by arguing that it consists of well-understood symbols and that such conventions are common in European art.

He follows Jarves' analysis of the subtle effects of Japanese landscape paintings and prints and quotes him at length.

Colour impressed Alcock as one of the greatest achievements of Japanese art. He opposed Ruskin by arguing that colour was not an immoral or anti-intellectual component in art but a fundamental means of expression. He states that Japanese artists prefer harmonies involving tertiary colours and suggests that William Morris may have taken some of his ideas of decoration from the Japanese example. Strangely he does not mention Whistler.

Alcock follows earlier critics in seeing the supernatural and mythological art of Japan as unique and extremely important for an understanding of Japanese culture. In Chapter VIII, "Artistic renderings of the supernatural", he gives a large number of illustrations of ghosts and mythological creatures, such as one of juggling Tengu, mostly derived from the Mangwa. He explains their subject, but is content to refer his readers to Mitford for a full discussion of Japanese mythology and fairy tales.

Alcock discusses bronzes, cloisonné enamels, ivory and wood carving and lacquer and fabrics in Chapters IX-XIII. This is a relatively small proportion of the text compared with that given to the "applied" arts by Dresser or Audsley. Alcock's work is far more critical, far more concerned with polemic in favour of Japanese art and with using the Japanese example to contribute to the development of English artlife.

There is no specific chapter on the visual arts but they are discussed throughout the book. Only one artist is mentioned by name - Hokusai. Alcock, like Audsley, believed that Hokusai had founded a new popular art;

Hoffsai (or Hoksai) and his school, have left a strong impression on the Art of succeeding generations. From him seems to have come a whole library of popular literature in cheap pictorial books, embodying the history, mythology, legends, trades, occupations and

national customs in a compendious form accessible and intelligible. Like popular lectures or penny-readings they must have served to keep alive a strong artistic feeling among the uneducated.

He compares Hokusai to Hogarth and points out that both wandered the streets drawings figures and events from life.

We have seen that many of the black and white illustrations in his book are derived from Hokusai's work, notably "The Mangwa." It is difficult to identify many of the illustrations, firstly because they are often pieces of context rearranged, and secondly, because they are badly interpreted by the English engraver. Nonetheless it is possible to replace some in their original context.

Alcock reproduces some unusual aspects of "The Mangwa" - such as the sketches of perspective Hokusai copied from a Dutch print and several ink drawings of rocks originally made to indicate a mastery of different brush styles, as well as the usual bird, insect, flower and abstract designs. In this respect Alcock's illustrations, poor as they are, were the means of making generally available a whole area of Japanese art.

On p.67, without identifying it, Alcock reproduces one of Hiroshige's "100 Views of Yedo", "Theatres by night, Monkey Street", in a black and white line engraving. He uses this to demonstrate that Japanese artists use both perspective and shadow - in this case the shadows created by moonlight, but the reproduction is totally inadequate to make his point. He also reproduces a print of two geisha sitting in an alcove, but this is either by a very rare artist or the reproduction is too difficult to identify. The work could be by one of Kunisada's followers but style is an unreliable guide when one is looking at bad reproductions in an alien convention.

The remaining illustrations are used as examples of particular aspects of Japanese life, in pursuit of Alcock's aim of defining a "Kunst Leben"

for Japan. Some appear to be partial reproductions of Hiroshige prints, showing the figures only, but the majority are productions of the large school of imitation of Hokusai which developed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Those representing ghosts and monsters are of some interest in that they are the first body of such work to be reproduced. The influence of such images on Western illustration and indeed in Western literature is still problematical and I hope to investigate it later in this thesis.

Alcock concludes his book with a "Summary of results, general and practical conclusions". Much of it is a repetition of his earlier arguments in the book itself. However some of the analogies he finds for Japanese art within it are revealing. He insists on the originality of Japanese art and will only allow "Gothic" art to be compared to it.

It becomes clear that by this he meant early Renaissance art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He compares Japanese art to a painting by Fra Lippo Lippi, "Adoration of the Infant Saviour", which was shown in an old master's exhibition at Burlington House in 1877. He argues that the figures and cattle in it are drawn "much as a present day Japanese would draw them". He also refers to Cimabue and Giotto and even invokes Durer at one time in making his case that Japanese art could be seen in the same light as early European paintings.

Some less logical comparisons are also made. Alcock compares a Japanese painting of "A great flight and descent of storks, all sorts of shapes in black and white" to Michelangelo's "Last Judgement" because of their "magnificent movement". He points out that storks have a religious significance to the Japanese, but even this does not make it easy to understand his analogy.

Alcock explains the vitality of Japanese art by the statement that it possessed the same profound religious basis as Early Renaissance art and contrasted with present day decadent Western work which was made

"purely to excite admiration". However he admits that Japan does not possess the "higher" kinds of art associated in Europe with Ancient Greece and the High Renaissance. He explains the absence of a Japanese Apollo Belvedere as a discussion of the Japanese view of life and of customs such as Hara Kiri. He argues that only a culture which has the notion of good and evil at its centre could produce a classical art because only such a culture could have "ideals". The Japanese were unconcerned with such ideas. Despite this reasoning Alcock condemns Japanese figure drawing as totally incompetent and expresses regret that;

a correct and appreciative idea of the beautiful in our species as an Art Motive does not exist in the orient and nowhere less than in Japan.

Thus using notions of the beautiful derived from moral and idealistic criteria.

He takes this argument further and criticizes Japanese art for lacking those other High Renaissance virtues, grandeur and simplicity. Japanese gods he states, were always depicted as grotesque or comic figures.

The qualities which Alcock approves of in Japanese art include its close relationship to nature, its sense of the appropriate material and form for a particular function and above all, the craftsmanship evident in all Japanese work.

As we have seen, Alcock, like many nineteenth century Englishmen, believed in the idea of an "Art Faculty" differing in quality in each nation. He regarded his book as an attempt to define the art faculty of the Japanese. He does not achieve this however. His use of this idea as a basis for the discussion of Japanese art is indicative of the attitude with which the problem of an alien art was approached. The idea is first applied to Japanese art by Jarves.

In some ways a far more accurate impression of the "Art Faculty" of the Japanese, as conceived in Europe is given by a man to whom such

notions would have appeared high-flown - Thomas Cutler.

In 1879 Cutler published a book which reflected exactly the patterns of taste and the hierarchy of values which have been discussed in this chapter. We have seen that the English response to Japanese visual art was extremely biased in favour of the bird, flower, fish and other nature subjects to be found in prints.

Thomas Cutler's "Grammar of Japanese Ornament and Design" of 1879 reflects this bias accurately in its choice of plates and their divisions.

The fifty-eight plates are divided into subject areas - Birds, Fishes, Insects, Flowers, Plants, Trees and Ornament. Like all other enthusiasts of the 1870's, Cutler can only identify Hokusai and his imitators by name. He knows the master and his pupil Isai - both have their work reproduced. Ten plates of birds or plants are identified by him as coming from Hokusai's "Mangwa" and other works. Indeed they do so, although like nearly all reproductions of this period they have been arranged so that plates taken from two or more originals are combined in one of Cutler's octavo plates. In his Plate 1, two sets of cranes from "The Mangwa" are juxtaposed with a crane motif from a common lacquer tray. This juxtaposition of images is common, and suggests that no real sensitivity to Japanese styles had yet developed, since different qualities of work are placed side by side.

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In Plate 9, Cutler has extracted all the geese and ducks drawn by Hokusai for the "100 Views of Fuji" and put them on display as decorative motifs.

He occasionally reproduces pieces in colour as in the cranes in Plate 12 - from an old silk hanging though the colour is not accurate. One of the most interesting sections of the plates concerns mons, (Japanese coats of arms). They are reproduced simply as decorative devices.

Perhaps Cutler's conception of the book as design primer is responsible for this. Plate 33 shows studies of trees, ostensibly deriving

from "The Mangwa", but they are printed in two shades of brown, not in the grey and pink of the original. Indeed Cutler is very arbitrary in his use of colour. He reproduces a highly coloured painting in a brown decorative outline suggesting that it might have been derived from a print. The reproductions are also very slick for the same reason. The English engraver has reduced them to neat schema, suitable for copy into "original" designs.

Cutler's "Analysis" of Japanese design is done through the use of black and white plates which show the development of different types of ornament.

Plate A shows geometrical ornaments, frets, mons and diapers, and the means of constructing them.

All six remaining plates concentrate on the building up of ornament from free brushstrokes. They are of great interest in that they are the first published Western analysis of Japanese brushstrokes. Plate B consists of a whole series of strokes which are necessary to form abstract architectural ornament. The other plates concern themselves with the strokes needed for bamboo, flowers, and for the drawing of birds. The most spectacular is Plate G which reproduces many different ways of forming waves, much in the manner of "The Mangwa".

In the text which accompanies the "analysis" Cutler spends hardly any time discussing the technique used to make such drawings, only pointing out the facility of the Japanese with the brush in relation to their childhood training in calligraphy. Instead he discusses the subject matter, informing us for instance that bamboo is the Japanese symbol for long life. This constant recourse to general information as opposed to criticism of Japanese art is typical of English enthusiasts at this time. Even when he set out to write a simple "analysis" Cutler cannot resist the pressure of this way of thinking about art. Ultimately this mixture of apparent formal analysis and extended discussion of symbolism

derives from Ruskin; but Ruskin, had he been able to "see" it, would never have been so insensitive to the physical qualities necessary to produce Japanese art.

Like other English enthusiasts of the 1870's, Cutler supplies a short history of Japan and its entry to the Western world. Like them he believed that Hokusai was the greatest Japanese artist and that he had rescued Japanese art from moribund Chinese traditions and created a new popular school of art, free of domination by the Samurai. He gives a brief but inaccurate biographical note about Hokusai, placing his birth in 1760 in Yedo, and also brief notes on Japanese architecture and crafts which are of little interest as he simply repeats in general terms ideas expressed by others.

His section on painting is simply a brief history taken from a paper written by Anderson for the Tokyo Japan Society in 1878. Following Anderson he erroneously identifies the Momoyama Painter, Mariyamo Okio (1733-95) as the direct founder of the popular realist school, though at that time it is unlikely that any of Okio's work had reached Europe for him to make this judgement himself.

Cutler's section on Decorative Art is probably the most important. It deals with the same problem that obsessed all English enthusiasts, the problem of the use of nature in Japanese decoration.

Cutler points out like them that the Japanese natural drawings are codified. However, unlike them he draws the correct conclusion that Japanese art is originally learned by copying.

He also describes accurately the Japanese seating position for painting, the preparation of brushes and ink for drawing, and the use of "The Mangwa" as a model book by Japanese artists.

He denies that Japanese paintings were the result of "direct or deliberate study from nature" and blames Europeans for introducing such an idea to Japan, and causing a decline in the standards of Japanese art;

The Japanese artist learns to draw as he has learned to write. He does not sit down opposite a model or natural object and endeavour to represent it as it appears to him, as he learns to form the innumerable and complicated characters of his language by constant repetition so does he acquire the power of drawing.

Although he is not concerned to defend Japanese art in terms of European traditional values or in terms of Ruskinian criticism, Cutler nonetheless asserts repeatedly that the values of craftsmanship and design epitomised in Japanese work are those of great art.

If we study the decorative art of the Japanese we find the essential elements of beauty in design - Fitness for the purpose which the object is intended to fulfil, good workmanship and constructive soundness which give value to the commonest article, and some touch of ornament by a skilful hand together creating a true work of art.

Cutler's book is itself an epitome, a summary, of those elements of Japanese art which were most problematical and of most interest to English enthusiasts and critics. Like many later compendia it indicates the state of appreciation and knowledge of its subject without explanation. Its primary interest for us is as a work which typifies the common English concept of Japanese art in the late 1870's.

We have seen that the English critical reactions to Japanese art in the 1870's show consistent characteristics and that these can be explained in terms of the difficulty of relating Japanese art to current English aesthetic theories and attitudes to art. However enthusiastic the English writers on Japanese art were, they could only perceive it in terms of these ideas.

English enthusiasts faced the problem of a strongly moralistic conception of High Art, whose greatest spokesman was Ruskin. It is notable that they all make use of Ruskin's conception of art, after quoting from Ruskin himself, in defence of Japanese art.

Their insistence on seeing Japanese art in these terms forced them to make out a case for decorative art as a form of High Art, for Japanese

art did not fit into the traditional categories of the West. Paradoxically this stress on the decorative aspects of Japanese art make it extremely difficult for painters and other English practitioners of "Fine Art" to adopt Japanese techniques or motifs. Instead Japanese art became a proprietary pattern book for English designers.

This was the case despite the consistent recognition of the "Natural" quality of Japanese art. All Japanese enthusiasts without exception claim that Japanese art is noblest in its studies of nature, using this as a touchstone of virtue. However as we have seen, every writer had his own theory of how this closeness to nature came about. Some claim that it derives from religious or cultural heritage, others invoke observation of nature, while still others claim that Japanese art is in reality an abstraction, based on fundamental laws of nature, not on direct observation.

The importance of various concepts of "Nature" in English aesthetic thought in the 1860's onwards is well recognised. To some extent the stress placed on nature in the English defence of Japanese art resulted from the imposition of Western thought on Eastern art. However Japanese art, by raising the problems associated with the "natural" in art acted as a catalyst, bringing out the difficulties and paradoxes associated with a defence of art as a reflection of natural and moral law. The Far Eastern example, in its simplicity and directness, became, in the end, a means of making this description of art untenable. One can see this process beginning in the development of the ideas of English enthusiasts for Japanese art discussed in this chapter.

As more and more information became available about Eastern art, its defenders can be seen giving up their attempts to relate it to Western criticism. Jarves' claim that Japanese painting could be treated as High Art was made in 1871. By 1880 such ideas were clearly untenable and the great works on Japanese art by Audsley and Anderson are essentially

factual and historical discussions.

The contradictions inherent in the claim that Japanese art was a form of European High Art or could be fitted into any current European attitude to art finally became too difficult to maintain.

However this did not leave a vacuum, for a new conception of the relation of form and content in art was developing in England. We have seen how the Japanese enthusiasts refer to the "poetical" in Japanese images, to the "idea" in relation to the motif, as opposed to the emptiness of Western art. Sometimes this may mean no more than a plea for a new, mechanical awareness of literary symbolism in Western art. Often however I believe it is a sign of a new awareness of the fundamental unity of form and content, of reality and the imagination, in art and in human experience.

A belief in unities of this kind was part of the content of cultural certainties in which Oriental artists worked. There can be little doubt that the appearance of similar beliefs in the form of the "Aesthetic Movement" was in great part a response to the Far Eastern example.

The direct practical effect of the actions of the English defenders of Japanese art is difficult to assess. Clearly they affected the Western image of Japanese art tremendously by stressing nature drawings in painting and prints - flowers, birds and insects, and similar motifs from the decorative arts, received their greatest praise. They created a myth that nineteenth century Uki-yo-e was a popular, almost a folk art, which was also the greatest achievement of Japanese art as a whole.

They also emphasised the fantastic and grotesque elements within this school, and in doing so made available to Western artists a great collection of chimeras and monsters which were to appear in enormous numbers in painting and illustration throughout the later nineteenth century.

Perhaps their most important achievement was their propaganda for Japanese art. In the long run this was to contribute to major changes

in English art and design and art theory. The first of these was the emergence of the "Aesthetic Movement" in the 1880's. Japanese art continued to be a prop for new English aesthetic ideas until after the First World War.

The Literary and Critical Reaction to Far Eastern Art in France from 1873 to the mid 1880's. A Definition of "Japonisme" in its most influential period.

The French response to Far Eastern art in the 1870's differed greatly from the English. French critics did not need to defend Japanese art as it had scored a great popular triumph at the 1867 Exhibition and was becoming ever more in demand in Paris. Frenchmen could become unashamed enthusiasts for all things Japanese, "Japonistes"; they did not have aesthetic preconceptions of a kind which demanded that they distort their enthusiasm to fit arbitrary Western standards. The emergence of the French "Japonistes" from the "Société du Jinglar" onwards indicates the much more direct relationship to Far Eastern art that was possible there. This chapter will attempt a definition of that relationship. It will show that the range of response to Japanese art was much broader than is usually believed. "Japonisme" had adherents with a wide range of aesthetic viewpoints.

As we have seen, in the 1860's, French art and art theory had developed a manner which made them open to Far Eastern influence. This applied in particular to the realists who defended Japanese art in terms of their notion of the real, the modern and the natural. In the 1870's this symbiosis between current artistic ideas in France and those of Japanese art was continued. However its form was more complicated than previously. This was partly due to the greater acquaintance with Far Eastern art which developed during the 1870's by means which we have already discussed. More important, however, was the change in the range of aesthetic ideas current in France. This has often been characterized by a distinction between Realism (Zola) in the 1860's and Naturalism represented by the De Goncourts.

Realism is seen in terms of its adherence to a hierarchy of meaning within the work of art which made it possible to retain a "moral" or at

least a humanistic basis for it. During the 1870's this is said to have been replaced by an aesthetic attitude concerned with describing objects and human behaviour for their own sake rather than in terms of the moral or social relations of the subject or the art work.

Another means of characterising the change has been to emphasize the "scientific" quality of realism and the "impressionistic" quality of naturalism. This is, in my opinion, an evasion of the problem of the humanistic content of realism, for science, in the nineteenth century, was believed to be the standard bearer of humanism.

The emergence of a more or less coherent group of artists ostensibly devoted to such an "objective" naturalism in France, the Impressionists, is said to parallel the literary change. The abandonment of a moral theme in literature is paralleled by the abandonment of the iconographic associations of the traditional "motif", however transformed, by many artists in the 1870's. It was undoubtedly the rise of naturalism in the visual arts as defined here, which made it impossible for Zola to develop his defence of art during the 1870's. In place of the rejoicing in the many languages of art which he had hoped for, painting in the 1870's must have seemed to him to be abandoning many of the major possibilities open to it, to be becoming trivial.

I do not believe Zola's reading of the situation in the 1870's to be accurate, and later in this thesis I shall try to show that "naturalism" of the 1870's had as many levels of meaning within it as earlier art. I shall do this by showing the complex uses made of Far Eastern art by French artists during the decade.

In this chapter however, two important aspects of this problem must be discussed. One concerns the extent to which the experience of Far Eastern art contributed to the development of naturalism and the emergence of an aesthetic in which all values are relative; to the emergence of an art which depends solely on the sensibility of its

creators and its immediate audience for its significance. The possibility of such an opinion emerging from an art which carried the cultural implications of Buddhism and Taoism is obvious. We must note that many of the Japanese enthusiasts of the 1870's were committed to an "Objective" literature. Duret, for instance, makes an emphatic claim to pure description free of literary or moral values in his account of his voyage to Japan and China.

There is also the possibility that the extreme difficulty of absorbing the alien but highly developed art of Japan by means of the normal Western mechanisms of artistic change produced the conclusion that all aesthetic values were relative. However we have seen that this is unlikely as a good foundation had been laid in the 1860's for the creation of a Western aesthetic capable of giving a meaning to and containing Oriental art.

The second question concerns the extent to which this foundation was built on during the 1870's. In many ways it opposes the first diametrically. It involves the investigation of accumulated associations and debate or assertion on particular aesthetic points in relation to Japanese art. These would constitute a cultural ground, a system of values, from which artists using the Far Eastern example would inevitably begin their work.

This chapter will be concerned with the development of these two possible responses to Japanese art. The evidence offered by this discussion will lead on to a consideration of the nature of Impressionism and Symbolism in the next chapter. Through a consideration of their relation to Far Eastern art we should come to a clearer understanding of these developments.

At the same time this chapter will try to give a picture of the popular knowledge of Far Eastern imagery, similar to that given for England in the previous chapter.

Because of the increasing relativity and complexity of the situation it will also be necessary to discuss the development of the ideas of some critics at length, the "Naturalists", Duret, Duranty and Chesneau will be discussed as a group, but two central figures for the development of "Japonisme" at this time, Ph. Burty and E. de Goncourt, will be treated as individuals. In 1867 Jules de Goncourt had written to Burty signing himself -

"Au revoir donc, Japonaiserie, for ever."

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Burty published this letter in his obituary essay on Jules in 1870. The letter symbolised the enthusiasm with which Japonisme was pursued in France in the 1870's. It also links Burty with the De Goncourts. Burty and Edmond de Goncourt were friends and colleagues in the leadership of Japonisme during this period, visiting showrooms together, debating and writing of Japanese art. The Goncourts' "private" Journal provides an admirable counterpoint for Burty's many public articles and lectures.

I shall rely on W. Schwartz's "The Far East in French Literature" for much of my information in this chapter. However I disagree fundamentally with his account of Japanese enthusiasm which is exclusively centred on the De Goncourt brothers. He writes -

Edmond de Goncourt was the principal channel through which the French literary public learned about Far Eastern Art. The activity of this man and his friends created a fad called "Japonisme" lasting from 1875 to 1895 and this has permanently altered French ideals of beauty.

This is to misjudge the De Goncourts' place in a broadly developing movement. Schwartz has been misled by the "Journal". De Goncourt was only part of the pattern which led to Japonisme. The development of French attitudes to Far Eastern art was seriously affected by the Japanese appearance at the 1878 exhibition, which marked the high point of Japanese enthusiasm in France. Much critical and popular acclaim came from this exhibition. It is important to assess whether it altered the French

response to Japanese art. Therefore I will discuss the writings of the major Japanese enthusiasts concerned with the 1878 Exhibition in this chapter only if they relate to the general development of attitudes and responses to Far Eastern art. For a full account of the 1878 Exhibition however, the reader is referred to the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The "popular" background to Japanese enthusiasm in France.

As in England there was a "popular" response to Japanese work but it was not contained by previously formed sentiments of middle-class romantic domesticity. No such sentiments could be found in Paris after the Franco-Prussian War and the events of the Commune. Indeed French enthusiasm for Japan as a whole is much less concerned with exploiting its romantic possibilities. Even Loti's fantasies are based on notions derived from the real Japan however crudely mis-used.

During the 1870's there grew up in the area of the Rue St. Victoire and the Avenue de L'Opera, a great many shops where cheap Japanese wares were sold. Little or nothing is known of these places for none of them became a Liberty's and they were held in contempt by serious dealers and collectors, all of whom constantly made a distinction between true Japanese art and the cheap export ware sold in the popular shops.

L. Gonse, for instance, looking back in 1898 to the 1870's, observed;

Il est entendu qu'il existe un Japon de pacotille dont nous sommes infestés et dont j'ai une profonde horreur. C'est le Japon qui règne dans les magasins de nouveautés et à l'avenue de L'Opéra. L'art dont je parle est un art élevé, sévère, délicat, connu seulement depuis peu d'ans et réservée à une élite vouée à son étude. Jusqu'à la nous avons jugé le Japon sur des objets tout à fait inférieurs; nous étions, nous Européens, vis à vis de cet art exotique, dans la situation d'un Japonais qui viendrait à Paris et auquel on ne ferait voir que les magasins de Menagère ou du Bon Marché.

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Gonse thought that the work of "le vrai Japon" first appeared in France in 1868. Even after that date much, if not most, Japanese work sold in Paris was not directly related to the Japanese national tradition. He states that many artists and collectors were prejudiced against Japanese art by its popular success, which flooded the shops with cheap contemporary goods. Only as the good was distinguished from the bad was Japanese art accepted by them as a great art in its own right, like the

Greek. He condemns the popular appreciation of Japanese art as mistaken, and;

De ce Japon de pacotille je déteste jusqu'aux mots qui le caractérisent "japonisme", "japonaiserie". Je considère l'art véritable du Japon comme si grand, si parfait, que je ne suis lui accoler des mots qui, pour moi expériment une idée de diminution et d'avilissement.

The term "Japonisme" was used by the leaders of Japanese taste to identify themselves in the 1870's. Gonse's remarks suggest that no clear distinction existed during the '70's between high and popular taste in Japanese articles, that contrary to Schwartz's belief a spontaneous popular interest in Japanese art developed during the 1870's. Alfred Stevens' paintings of bourgeois interiors of this period also suggest a considerable general interest in Japanese goods.

From the late 1870's big Parisian department stores took an interest in Japanese art. Bonnard and Monet are said to have owned Japanese prints with the "Au Printemps" price mark stamped on them.

Zola, in "Au Bonheur des Dames" in 1883 describes a sale of low-priced Japanese goods in a department store which had arranged a special Far Eastern setting for them;

Mais sur le palier du grand escalier central le Japon l'arrêta encore. Ce comptoir avait grandi, depuis le jour où Mouret s'était amuser à risquer, au même endroit, une petite table de proposition, couvertes de quelques bibelots defraîchis, sans prévoir lui-même l'énorme succes. Peu de rayons avaient des débuts plus modestes, et maintenant il débordait de vieux bronzes, de vieux ivoires, de vieilles laques, il faisait quinze cent mille francs d'affaires chaque année, il remuait tout l'extrême Orient, ou des voyageurs fouillaient pour lui les palais et les temples. D'ailleurs les rayons poussaient toujours, on en avait essayé deux nouveaux en décembre, afin de boucher les vides de la morté saison d'hiver: un rayon de livres et un rayon de jouets d'enfant, qui devaient certainement grandir aussi et balayer encore des commerces à voisins. Quatre ans venaient de suffire au Japon pour attirer toute la clientèle artistique de Paris.

Zola based his shop partly on "Au Bon Marché" which was a most successful Paris store in the 1870's. This store had an "ancien capit-

aine" as buyer in China and Japan, and Zola's working notes say that his letters were most interesting, Zola's description of the store is of great value in view of his detailed research. It is significant that Zola wrote "Au Bonheur des Dames" in order to "faire le poeme de l'activit  moderne". In France Japonisme was seen as part of "modernit " throughout the 1870's and 1880's, and is presented as such by many writers and artists.

We can form a good idea of the customers for the Japanese goods from the works of other writers and painters. If Chesneau is to be believed, the price of Japanese prints fell rapidly in the 1870's, as the numbers imported rose from the trickle of the 1860's to the thousands of the mid-70's. The price in the 60's was 4 francs per print; in the 70's it was 10 centimes.

Maupassant's hero, Bel Ami, was able to find a very cheap source of Japanese prints to decorate his rooms;

D s qu'il eut fini sa besogne journali re, il songea   la fa on dont il arrangerait sa chambre pour recevoir sa ma trese et dissimuler le mieux possible la pauvret  du locale. Il eut l'id e d' pingler sur les murs de menus bibelots japonais, et il acheta pour cinq francs toute une collection de cr pons, de petits  ventails et de petits  crins dont il cacha les t ches trop visibles du palier. Il appliqua sur les vitres de la fen tre des images transparentes representing des bateaux sur des rivieres, des vols d'oiseaux   travers les ciels rouges, des dames multicolores sur des balcons et des processions de petits bonshommes noirs dans des plaines remplies de neige.

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As Schwartz points out, Bel Ami was not a highly cultured individual, neither were most of the ladies he wished to impress. Japanese art must therefore have been part of popular experience in the late 1870's and early 1880's when this novel is set.

In 1876 De Goncourt visited Hervilly the poet in a slightly more salubrious apartment than Bel Ami's;

Dans le fond de la rue Vaugirard un logement ou le mur dispara t sous des images japonaises   deux sous, des tessons de faience republicaine, des portraits photographies, des joujoux de petit enfant

une bibeloterie criarde et sentant la misère.

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Japanese art was reaching a great variety of social contexts by the mid-1870's. Prints in particular remained cheap and it is doubtful whether there was a high level of trade in them until after the 1878 exhibition. In 1877 Bousquet dismissed prints as artless, Japan;

ne produit que des estampes au trait, confuses, monotones, mal venues, qui servent d'illustrations aux romans, aux petits traites populaire, et des caricatures, quelquefois spirituelles par le sujet, rarement par l'exécution, qu'on vend pour quelques centimes après les avoir grossièrement passées en couleur. Comme exécution et comme goût, cela rappelle notre imagerie d'Épinal, mais n'en est par moins religieusement achetée dans les magasins parisiens par de prétendus amateurs, victimes d'un engouement bizarre, et trop heureux de se passer a bon marche à la fantaisie de quelque objet venu de ce prestigieux pays du soleil levant.

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Duranty's story "Bric à Brac" written in 1878 also contains many allusions to Japanese and Chinese objects, in fairly common situations. There is therefore considerable evidence for a popular appreciation of Japanese art in Paris in the period under discussion. Naturally, like all goods, Japanese art would tend to move "down the market" as it became more popular and to some extent it is correct to point out the decline of standards coinciding with greater popular involvement in the later 1880's and 1890's. However there was a "popular" interest in Japanese goods throughout the 1870's. This is clear from the tone of Chesneau's article "Le Japon à Paris", written to celebrate the Japanese triumph of 1878.

Artists may well have drawn their knowledge of Japanese art from the popular enthusiasm. This was certainly the case after the great triumph in 1878. It is a pity that little can be said in detail about the export objects sold in Paris. One can only assume that their range was similar to that found in England and discussed above.

Appreciation of Japanese art and culture is more readily seen in the "Haute bourgeoisie" of Paris. We have already seen that wealthy

collectors of Far Eastern objects, such as Krafft at Versailles or Cernuschi at Parc Monceau lived their lives surrounded by their art objects, in a suitable decoration. We shall consider De Goncourt's house at Aut<sup>1</sup>euil as a special case in this way of life.

However there were many others not directly involved with the development of Japanese enthusiasm who pursued the same interests. Sarah Bernhardt acquired a very fine collection of Chinese and Japanese art and was painted surrounded by Far Eastern objects by Bastien-Lepage in 1879.

An ideal example of this was Georges Charpentier, the head of the French publishing house of the same name. He took over the firm in 1871 and shortly after married a highly enthusiastic "Japoniste". Charpentier's authors included Flaubert, De Goncourt, Daudet, Huysmans, Duranty, Zola, Maupassant and other Japanese enthusiasts. He was also the publisher, in 1878, of "Promenades Japonaises" by Guimet and Regamey; the importance of which we have already discussed. He also published the artistic magazine "La Vie Moderne" in which Duranty's article "Le Japonisme" appeared in 1879 and which took up the cause of "Modern" art.

De Goncourt was a frequent diner at Charpentier's. On March 15th, 1874, he attended a production of the first successful "Japanese" play in French, "La Belle Sainara", dedicated to Mme. Charpentier by the poet and Japoniste Ernst Hervilly. Daudet was also amongst the guests, as, most probably, was Zola, for they with their wives and De Goncourt made up "Les Cinq", a literary clique.

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The plot concerned a Japanese poet "Kami" who was attempting to write a 10,000 verse poem to his unresponsive love, Sainara. Musme, a dancer, pretends to be in love with him and attempts to distract him from his writing, while her lover, the Samurai, Taiphon, contributes a menacing jealousy, but both are in reality friends of Sainara engaged in testing Kami's loyalty in love and danger. A third test is made by

Sainara herself, when she asks Kami to lend her money to save her uncle from dishonour.

The play is light-hearted and ironic. Schwartz criticises its many inaccuracies, the Japanese names are impossible, the geography is a nonsense, the play is set in "Yeddo, aujourd'hui Kioto", and the idea of a 10,000 verse Japanese poem is laughable.

Schwartz fails to realise that these inaccuracies were intentionally humorous and satyric. When Musme is offered tea by Kami she comments;

Ah Quel breuvage! Fi Jamais du thé sur la terre  
Ne fut bien préparé par un célibataire.

This is a joke about the well-known peculiarities of Japanese tea and the Cha No Yu (tea ceremony). At one point Kami rushes out of doors to contemplate the moon in order to press on with his poem. He returns shortly in a very businesslike manner to carry on with it, declaring himself satisfied. This is an obvious satire on the romantic notion about Japanese poetic expression.

Above all, "Hari Kiri" is satirized when Kami is dishonoured by being discovered with Musme by Taiphon he swears suicide but Taiphon makes a humorous offer to save him the trouble.

Japanese poetry, as revealed by De Rosny's translations, is also satirized in Kami's writings, for instance;

Quand ta bouche où la joie éclate  
Est entrouverte et que tu ris  
Tes dents semble des grains de riz  
Au cour d'un piment écarlate.

Many verses with similar "exquisite" and highly coloured metaphors are read out by Kami during the play and no doubt were received with amused laughter by the audience as well as by Sainara.

The importance of the play to our story is seen in its use of fairly sophisticated references to Japan to create humour. The play appeals to a pre-existing knowledge of Japanese culture for its comedy. It sets this knowledge in the context of western nineteenth century attitudes

and the result is very amusing. The play was first presented in public in 1876 at the Odeon Paris on November 22nd. In 1893 it became part of the repertory of the Comedie Francaise, and remained in print until the 1920's. The emergence of an informed popular audience for such work can be dated between 1874 and 1876, for in 1872 an opera "La Princesse Jaune" which involved a long dream sequence set in Japan, failed completely. The score was the first major work of Saint-Saens. Yet on October 18th 1876 a three-act Japanese comic opera, Kosiki opened at the Renaissance and ran for 75 nights. The sets for this work were reported to have been realistic reconstructions of Japanese scenes, though the plot was, of course, inaccurate. There followed in 1878 a successful "Japanese" ballet, "Yedda" in three acts, by Ph. Gille (a friend of De Goncourt), 105 and A. Mortier, with music by Olivier Metra.

The performance of Hervilly's play was followed by a song, "La Jonque des Amants", with words and music by M. Armand Gouzier. This is the closest approach in France to the "Cherry Petal Exoticism" of England;

Sur la mer, à l'horizon rose  
Comme dans les songes charmants  
Ou s'enfuit les sourci morose  
Passe la Jonque des Amants.

However the theme is really the eighteenth century "Passage to Cythera" and is an early example of the sentiment linking Japanese art to that century which is uniquely French and was expressed most powerfully by De Goncourt in "La Maison d'un Artiste".

The Charpentiers continued to act as a focus for artistic life in Paris during the remainder of the 1870's and into the 1880's. During 1878 they entertained Japanese visitors on more than one occasion and on November 6th 1878 they persuaded some of the staff of the Japanese exhibition to serve a Japanese dinner in Japanese dress at their house. After dinner the Japanese gave exhibitions of brush drawing. In 1879

Renoir painted the portrait of Mme. Charpentier and her children now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

The painting shows Mme. Charpentier dressed in a superb black dress by Worth, sitting in a drawing room with her two children, one of whom sits on a large black and white dog. All four are neatly brushed and looking their best. Renoir had a great success at the 1879 Salon with this work. It is said to mark his abandonment of pure impression and indeed has many of the marks of a first-rate Salon portrait in the manner of Stevens. The figures are carefully composed, the details, notably the still-life on the table on the right, painstakingly studied. The painting marks the return of formal concerns to Renoir's work.

Four Japanese kakemonos are visible on the back wall. On the left is a large one showing two peacocks, apparently painted on straw, next is one whose subject is undefined, then comes another bird painting, and finally a small figure subject. Little in the overall composition suggests Japanese influence, except perhaps, the spreading of Mme. Charpentier's dress, out across the artificial decorative perspective of the carpet border, recalls the spatial devices used by Whistler in his "Japanese" paintings of the 1860's.

Renoir was never greatly attracted by non-European art. He is said to have remarked that Gauguin was a fool ever to have left Paris. In his book on Renoir, Vollard recounts that Mme. Charpentier exhausted him by her enthusiasm for Japanese art. It is therefore likely that the portrait represents a compromise between Mme. Charpentier's enthusiasm and Renoir's disinterested attitude to Japanese art. There is little in the painting to suggest that the work is permeated with Japonisme, as many critics have seen it to be. Compared with the work of Stevens, such as "The Visitors" in the 1878 Exposition Salon, Renoir's use of Japanese material is negligible.

The Charpentiers are an excellent example of a large number of

wealthy Japanese enthusiasts who appeared in France in the 1870's.

French writers, as a group, showed more interest in Japanese art for itself and for its literary possibilities than English writers.

In 1870 at the time of his marriage, Verlaine had acquired;

Un grand dessin japonais collé sur une toile, en  
façon de bannière, (donné à moi par M. Ph. Burty)  
Une douzaine de dessins japonais, dont deux dans  
le petit salon du rez-de-chaussée.

106

We know that Flaubert, Zola, Judith Gautier, Herédia and many other writers working in the 1870's and 1880's collected Japanese objects.

However the writing of these two decades does not show a serious commitment to Far Eastern ideals in art. We have instead only works which are symptomatic of the growing popular interest in Japan.

Judith Gautier wrote many novels on Far Eastern themes, but her early work was all on Chinese themes. Only in 1875 did she produce a Japanese novel, "L'Usurpateur". It is set in Samurai Japan and contains much historical detail, reminding one of a Japanese version of Romola. Like the early theatrical pieces it helps us to place the emergence of an informed audience for art with Japanese subject matter in the mid-1870's. J. Gautier went on to write two "Japanese" plays, "La Marchande de Sourires" (1880), and "Princesses d'Amour" (1890). These and Gautier's later Far Eastern works were written for a popular taste in Far Eastern art which had not changed much since the 1870's, and they are of little merit. Clearly the formation of the Western "cultural myth" of Japan took place in the 1870's and 1880's.

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Poets also produced work on Japanese subject matter. José Maria de Herédia who collected Japanese art wrote "Le Samourai", which Ph. Burty published with an engraved illustration of a young Samurai in his Salon of 1883.

I(88

Le Samourai

C'est un homme à deux sabres.

D'un doigt distrait frolant la sonore leva

Elle a vu, sur la plage éblouissante et plate  
S'avancer le vainqueur que son amour rêva

C'est lui. Sabres au flare, l'éventail haut, il va  
La cordelière rouge et le gland écarlate  
Coupe l'armure sombre et, sur l'épaule, éclate  
Le blason de Hizen ou de Tokougava.

Ce b<sup>h</sup>eau guerrier, v<sup>h</sup>tu de lames et de plaque  
Sous le bronze, la soie, et les brillantes laques  
Semble un crustacé noir, gigantesque et vermeil.

Il l'a vue. Il sourit dans la barbe du masque  
Et son pas plus hatif fait reluire au soleil  
Les deux antennes d'or qui tremblent sur son casque.

108

Heredia had a collection of Japanese objects, amongst them the two kake-monos referred to by De Goncourt in "La Maison d'un Artiste". One was "un canevas blanc, entouré d'une première bande amarante sur lequel courent des branchages d'or, d'une seconde bande réseda sur laquelle sont jetées également en or des armoiries de prince. Le canevas blanc est brodée d'une paonne et d'un paon".

Many similar "Japanese" poems were written in the 1870's and 1880's. None of them however add to our understanding of the French conception of Japan and of Far Eastern art. Like "Le Samourai" they simply convey the impression of a rapid increase in general familiarity with it. In the 1882 volume of the "Gazette des Beaux Arts", for instance, there are 109 two "Japanese" sonnets by A. De Montaiglon published with an illustration I(89) by the famous plate of the long-necked smokers from Hokusai's "Mangwa" and a plate from Hokusai's 100 views of Fuji, "Fuji in the Rain". Their texts are as follows:

Le Fusi Yama

Sur l'île de Nipon le gigantesque cône  
Du Fusi Yama dresse sa majesté  
Si haut que, nuit et jour, toujours est projeté  
Son grand triangle d'ombre aux flots de la mer jaune.

Plus que les Mikados c'est lui qui règne et trône.

Tout est plus bas que lui - du faucon argenté  
Le vol, si fier qu'il soit - le temple respecté -  
Le nuage, le vent, les effrois du cyclone

C'est le héros, le Dieu du vieil Hokusai  
 Dont l'album merveilleux tient notre œil ébahi  
 Le grand pri s'y profile à chacune des planches

Il n'est pas une scène, un croquis, un motif  
 Farouche ou délicat, plaisant, tendre ou plaintif  
 Qui n'ait pour fonds constant ses éternités blanches

Les Fumeurs d'Hokusai.

Avant que l'opium le desseche et le rouge  
 L'éveil ensommeille du fumeur enivre  
 Dans l'étrange torpeur ou sa pipe le plonge  
 De ses liens mortels sent son corps délivré

Il voit réalisé le rêve du measonge  
 Sans le sens du désir dont il est enfiévré  
 L'avare étend ses bras, qu'il jette et qu'il allonge  
 Pour saisir de plus bien son trésor recouvré.

Une femme - une fleur en ce borbierperdue  
 Dans les ravissements de l'ivresse attendue  
 Abandonne la terre et va chercher l'azur

Son col, avec les tours d'une lente fâcée  
 Monte comme un parfum, et sa tête pâmée  
 Se berce aux flots profonds et bleus de l'amour pur.

They are part of 24 Sonnetti d'Arte. Amongst the others is one on Delacroix in which Montaignon praises him for unity, form and colour in the service of the imagination. In another sonnet "Le Bal de l'Art" Montaignon makes clear the reason for his interest in Japanese Art. He speaks of the power of art to remake and intensify human experience;

Mais, dans la finité de son mutisme intense,  
 Il retient, il conquiert, il prolonge et condense,  
 Le rêve et le désir de l'idéal humain.

Romanticism had led Montaignon, like many others, to value the imaginative aspects of Japanese art.

However, he misunderstood the "Hokusai" image, which he characterizes in one of the sonnets, as a scene in an opium den.

There remains the possibility of evidence that French perception and literary style was directly altered by the Far Eastern example. It is difficult to deal with this question briefly.

The evidence consists of analogies using Japanese imagery and of

changes in structure and descriptive technique in the novel.

In De Goncourt's novels, for example, critics have seen an "asymmetrical" narrative, in which different sections of the work are given the length appropriate to their topic and the plot is distributed unevenly in the various chapters.

Sabatier, in his "L'Esthetique des Goncourts" goes further than this in arguing that the entire mechanism of description used by the De Goncourts has its roots in the type of selection of information found in Japanese art, particularly in Japanese prints;

Les Goncourt, sans l'avouer implicitement croient encore à l'influence du japonisme sur la littérature: ils en sont d'ailleurs eux mêmes tout impregnes. Comme les artistes japonais, ils veulent faire de la photographie esthétique; ils veulent offrir au lecteur des détails fugitif, hereusement surpris. Comme les artistes japonais, ils ont voulu tout quintessencier; les couleurs, les formes, et les sensations, et, comme eux, ils n'ont pas su se garder d'un certain maniérisme, et d'un prédilection un peu trop vive pour la micrographie et pour la micro-peinture littéraire.

110

Schwartz has found numerous direct similes using Japanese art in De Goncourt's descriptive writing in his novels from 1877 onwards, for instance in "Les Frères Zenganno", one of the acrobats, Gianni, is compared in action to a Japanese bronze of a monkey. In "Le Faustin" and also in the Journal's account of his Swiss Journey, De Goncourt compares the Swiss landscape to that in Japanese prints.

111

Schwartz finds similar references and a similar impressionist tendency in the work of Daudet, notably "Le Nabob" of 1877, and in Maupassant and Proust. Huysmans also made great use of Japanese art and aesthetic ideas in his writings, notably in "A Rebours"; these are discussed below in relation to aestheticism. Huysmans' hero, Des Esseintes, was based on the real Comte Robert de Montesquiou<sup>vieux</sup>. When Des Esseintes has a Japanese design worked in gold and precious jewels on the shell of his pet tortoise, or talks in terms of a language of perfumes which

sprang from a familiarity with Eastern thought and art, we have important evidence of the significance of Far Eastern art to the development of some extreme aesthetic ideas in the 1880's.

Only Huysmans' work can be said to provide direct evidence of a change in "literary consciousness" of the type argued for by Schwartz. The literary evidence that we have examined is practically all circumstantial. It strengthens the case for a rapid development of the consciousness of Japanese art in France in the 1870's, that could be exploited by writers. It also gives us some indication that a popular demand for Japanese goods developed during the 1870's. There is, in my opinion, no expression in the literature of a sustained and connected interest in the Far Eastern example, nor appreciation of the significance of Far Eastern art for Western consciousness.

For evidence that such appreciation did develop in the 1870's we must turn to the critical writings of the Japonistes and others. The general impression is that before 1873 there was no more than an acquaintance with Japanese art. In that year was founded the Societe des Études Japonaises. J. Geslin, an artist and a former official of the Louvre, saluted the event with a brief article "Questions sur L'Art Oriental, en particulier sur L'Art au Japon". This article shows that very little was known, in detail about it. Geslin defines Japanese art as imaginative but uncontrolled;

par le besoin de rendre sensibles des idées abstraites, l'art, en restant en Asie, a produit des formes bizarres et inattendues, des assemblages souvent ingenieux de couleurs crues et de tons entiers.

In contrast, Greece was seen as the source of a gradual regularisation of form, colour and composition. Geslin acknowledged that Japanese art had the right to be considered as an art form in the same light as the European tradition. He insisted however that many questions would have to be answered before this consideration could become a reality.

His first question was;

À quelle époque peut-on faire remonter l'apparition d'un art réellement japonais; quels sont les caractères distinctifs de cet art, n'a-t-il point avec l'art chinois une parenté plus intime qu'avec le coréen, le javanais et le siamois; quels sont ses degrés de parenté, si parenté il-y-a?

Etant données les aptitudes des Japonais et l'état de l'art en Europe, quels peuvent être les effets de l'influence européenne sur l'art au Japon? Quels avantages l'industrie japonaise pourrait-elle tirer sinon de l'introduction du goût européen, du moins plus particulièrement de l'introduction des méthodes d'enseignement touchant l'art et ses applications en Europe et particulièrement en France?

Geslin added four more questions. He asked if it would be possible to produce histories and catalogues of Japanese art by using Japanese monographs and writings on aesthetics. He also asked for a definition of predominant aesthetic intention of the Japanese artist;

Est-ce parler aux yeux, à l'esprit, à l'imagination, ou n'est-ce que satisfaire à des besoins positifs ou chimériques?

Geslin's questions were to be answered by the work of the Japonistes. Just as in England, interest in Japan in France entered an intense phase in the mid-1870's. We can see this clearly in the work of E. De Goncourt and Ph. Burty. First we consider the "japonisme" of Ph. Burty. It is particularly important when one considers that he was a partisan and friend of the Impressionists, Manet, and the young men of the 1860's. Burty's "japonisme" and his defence of the Impressionists ran together through the 1870's.

CHAPTER SIXThe Japonisme of De Goncourt and Burty. Relations between De Goncourt and Burty.

Both De Goncourt and Burty had, <sup>on</sup> ~~by~~ their own evidence, been interested in Japanese art since the 1850's, but as we have seen, their acquaintance with it remained limited before the Franco-Prussian War. Burty and the Goncourt brothers had been friends since 1859 and Edmond continued his close relations with Burty in the 1870's. Their relations are recorded in the Journal and show the growth of their enthusiasm in response to the increasing quality of Japanese imports in the mid-1870's. 113

In September 1873 the two men visited the newly opened Cernuschi exhibition which as we have seen Burty later claimed in an article in Bing's "Artistic Japan" to have been the exhibition which opened his eyes fully to the beauty of Japanese art. Duret, in his preface to the catalogue of the print collection which he gave to the Louvre states that it was in 1873 and that the two men began to collect Japanese art systematically. 113a

During that year they dined together several times and discussed Japanese art, and Burty's other great interest of the time, contemporary painting. By October 1874 Burty's mania for collecting had reached sufficient heights for De Goncourt to record that his wife was complaining about going into debt despite his large income. High on her list of his obsessions were Japanese print albums; 113b

Voulez voir les albums japonais? Il-y-en a toute  
une voiture dans le salon, savez qu'il en a acheté  
pour cinquante francs chez Sichel.

In the same month De Goncourt records that he was taken by Burty to inspect a new shipment from Japan. They spent from mid-morning to four o'clock looking at the work. De Goncourt spent over 500 Fr. and bought;

des albums anciens, un bronze si gros qu'il semble  
la cire perdue de ce bronze....la robe d'un tragedien  
japonais ou sur de velours noir des dragons d'or aux  
yeux de'email se griffent au milieu d'un champ de pivoinnes roses. 113c

But Burty seems to have taken the lead in acquiring both objects and knowledge. We know that throughout the 1870's he was keen to contact Japanese living in Paris to learn from them. He had help from a young Japanese student as early as 1875 when he was studying sword furniture. This was the prince Sayounsi who gave Burty and his family swords in October 1875, according to De Goncourt who dined with Sayounsi and another Japanese at Burty's in February 1876. Chesneau, in his article "Le Japon à Paris" (1878), indicates that many Japanese resided in Paris in the 1870's and there is no doubt that Burty made full use of their knowledge.

113d

113e

A slight coolness occurred between De Goncourt and Burty in October 1876 when Burty beat De Goncourt to an album of lacquer designs offered for sale by the Sichel Brothers. However the dispute did not last long for in the following year De Goncourt dined at Burty's regularly, again with the prince Sayounsi and attended the wedding of Burty's daughter to the third party in the sale of the lacquer designs, the collectors De Havilland. After the marriage, the two departed to "japoniser chez Bing and Sichel".

113f

113g

During the presence of the Japanese Commission in Paris for the 1878 Exhibition Burty played an important social role in the dinners and entertainments arranged for and by them, some of which De Goncourt records in his Journal. One evening at Burty's for instance the painter Watanabe gave a demonstration of traditional painting on silk "un vrai Kakemono" which De Goncourt attended. He then presented the painting, of birds and flowers, to Burty. It became one of his prized possessions. On another occasion the tea ceremony was improvised at Burty's house. He recounts it in Bing's "Artistic Japan".

Burty served throughout the 1870's as an important link between the Parisian artistic community and the Japanese helping to transmit much knowledge of their art and culture. The Goncourt Journal shows us some of

this activity, it also helps to place the rapid expansion of Burty's collection in the early 1870's;

One evening during the Exposition of 1878, some Japanese friends who were at my house improvised a cha no yu. Some barbarians of the West were also there. The beverage was tasted, and seemed more disturbing than agreeable. A. De Nittis closed a nostril after inhaling the perfumes, declaring that they had an after taste of soup. I experienced a feeling of sadness. I felt myself a stranger in my own house. Does the charm exist only where it unfolds itself naturally?

113h

The relationship between De Goncourt and Burty continues in the early 1880's. De Goncourt records several days spent with Burty touring the shops of Oriental art dealers in the early part of the decade. In June 1880 they found a new dealer to visit, a M. de la Narde, who had in fact been in business since 1878. Burty even discussed the Japanese section of "La Maison d'un Artiste" with De Goncourt while it was being written. However by 1883 the relationship had deteriorated, principally because of De Goncourt's resentment of Burty and other Japanese enthusiasts. This came to a head with a retrospective exhibition held at the Petit Gallery that year. De Goncourt, who had refused to lend to the exhibition, visited it just before closing time to avoid Burty and Gonse. Nonetheless he overheard Burty showing visitors his collection;

113i

C'était la voix de Burty, qui raccrochait les ambulants et les retenait de force à admirer ses choses, avec les amabilités bases des vendeurs des expositions d'industrie. Et dire qu'il fait cet office de cornac benevolé de l'art japonais depuis le jour où la Salle Petit est ouverte jusqu'au l'heure aujourd'hui, ou l'on a fermé.

113j

If we allow for De Goncourt's destructive impulses we are left with a picture of Burty as a major figure in Japonisme in the 1870's and 1880's.

Burty's propaganda for Japonisme and his collection of Japanese art.

Burty earned his living in the 1860's principally as a journalist, writing mainly art criticism. During this period Tourneux estimated that he produced one major article every two weeks. His series of articles on Japan therefore took a small place in the context of his criticism in general. 114

Nonetheless they had great influence. During the 1860's Burty had made his name writing for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" on the various Salons, the works of "academic" artists, but above all, about Millet, Rousseau and Delacroix. He had also become an authority on the applied arts, most notably in his book "Chef d'Oeuvres d'Art Industriels" (1866) and on modern prints of which he possessed a complete collection from Goya to Delacroix. 115

In 1869 his increasingly "radical" attitude to politics and in art disturbed Charles Blanc who edited the Gazette des Beaux Arts. Burty left the magazine and contributed instead to several new periodicals which sprang up during and after the Franco-Prussian War. These included "La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique", "L'Art", "Le Rappel" and Gambetta's radical journal, "La République Française". The consistent radicalism of most Japonistes and advocates of artistic modernism in the 1870's is not often remarked on, but it is surely not accidental that Burty, Duret, Duranty and apparently all the members of the "Société du Jingle", together with many others, were radicals. The identification of Japonisme with radical social ideas may have been important for its influence on some artists, notably Van Gogh.

It was in Gambetta's journal that Burty conducted his defence of the Impressionists. His first article in their defence appeared anonymously during their first exhibition on April 25th 1874. In this article Burty talked of the "qualité des impressions" of the painters which may have contributed to their name.

It is interesting that Burty defends Impressionism using ideas which he could only have derived from his knowledge of Japanese art;

Disons que cette exhibition nous intéresse d'abord par la clarté de couleur, la franchise des masses, la qualité des impressions. Tout le monde - il n'est question ici que de ceux qui sont loyaux et fiers, tout le monde y est pris et en convient. Un second examen ne laisse pas de heurter les idées reçues sur le degré du fini, sur le clair obscur sur l'amabilité des sites.

N'appuyons pas; mais bien que l'on constate dans ces oeuvres des lacunes, bien que les sensations transcrites soient parfois aussi fugaces que la sensation elle-même d'une fraîcheur de sous bois, d'une bouffée de chaleur de chaume, d'une langueur de soirée d'automne, d'un parfum de grève, d'une rougeur du jeune joue ou d'un éclat de toilette, on doit savoir quelque gré à ces jeunes artistes de les poursuivre et de les fixer. C'est par là que leur oeuvre se relie à celui des vieux maîtres.

116

In particular Burty defended his friend Degas. Burty had been instrumental in organizing this exhibition together with Degas. He had helped to persuade Nadar to let his premises for the show and had persuaded Bracquemond to add his work to it.

117

Burty continued his defence of Impressionism throughout the 1870's mainly in "La République Française". Degas, Manet, Renoir, Monet, Morisot and Sisley were all defended specifically. In none of his work does he make direct analogies between Japanese art and Impressionism. As we have seen in his 1873 essay on Lecoq de Boisbaudran, Burty pointed out that close observation of nature and the direct method of painting were both characteristics found in Japanese painting.

118

119

There can be little doubt that Burty, through his friends Degas, Bracquemond and Astruc, communicated a great deal of information about Japanese art to Impressionists. This must be borne in mind when we consider his writings on Japanese art. These writings demonstrate that Burty's ideas about art and his criticism were chiefly affected by his knowledge of Japan.

They fall into two groups, the first written in 1872 and 1873 for

"La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique" under the title "Japonisme", and the second series written from 1875 to 1878 for "L'Art". Both groups are written from as profound a knowledge of Japanese art as he could obtain at the time.

In 1872 when he wrote the first set Burty was already in pursuit of a serious scholarly knowledge. He describes his researches in the Bibliothèque Nationale and The British Museum, which took place early in that year. He states that at some previous date he had attempted to learn Japanese with Leon de Rosny but had given up and taken to studying Japanese art instead. Since 1871 he had acquired "des albums de caricatures: des drames et des comédies; la légende des 47 Ronins; des récits nationaux de guerres ou de conquêtes; puis des traités d'histoire naturelle, des recueils de modèles pour les sculptures en ivoires, les peintres de porcelaines ou de laques, les modeleurs en bronzes, les fabricants de gardes de sabre, de peignes et de bijoux; même des représentations de scènes absolument passionnées et intimes, (presumably Shunga), enfin toute l'encyclopédie religieuse, poétique ou artiste qui court les ateliers, les gynécées des palais, les terrasses des maisons de thés, les sacristies des temples, les corps de garde et les chaumières car là-bas encore, tout le monde sait lire, chanter les vers, écrire et très-souvent dessiner tant bien que mal".

Altogether he possessed in 1872 over a hundred illustrated books or paintings. He was convinced that they and not De Rosny's classes were the key to an understanding of the Japanese. During the year in which the articles were published, Burty's collection was expanding enormously. In the last but one of the articles he mentioned that he had bought a hundred books, once used in a Japanese school, from someone who had just returned from Japan. They showed scenes -

pris dans la vie courante, des légendes des histoires de métamorphoses, beaucoup d'assassinats des scènes de sorcellerie et quelques farces sur les dieux et les prêtres.

His knowledge was also changing rapidly, for Burty's library of Far Eastern literature shows that he bought almost every one of the many books published on Japan in the 1870's. This situation explains the fragmentary nature of the seven articles.

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The first article discusses the Japanese relation to death and points to the Buddhist acceptance of death. It describes an album of thirteen paintings showing the death and decomposition of a woman whom Burty assumed was a princess whose prince had commanded the volume as a memorial. He contrasted it to "nos danses macabres européennes, impiés et prétentieuses". He contrasts the aesthetic repose of the Japanese descriptions of death with the deliberate self-mortification implicit in Baudelaire's work. He begins by describing the early paintings, portraits of the woman and scenes of her death. He continues;

Sa belle tête pale repose sur un coussin bleu; on a jeté sur son corps une grande draperie de pourpre. Sur une table, un vase auquel on devait arracher les branches pour l'asperger d'une eau consacrée et peut être de lait.

On l'a revêtue d'une longue robe blanche serrée à la taille, on l'a couchée dans un jardin, sur une plate bande fleurie, un bras étendu, l'autre courbe sur le poitrine, les pieds nus, les cheveux épars.

Ici commence ce que l'on pourrait hardiment appeler "la symphonie de la morte". Les diverses phases de la décomposition cadaverique s'accomplissent, se succèdent avec un régularité effroyable. Ce corps toute a l'heure virginal comme celui d'Ophélie flottant sur le ruisseau, se gonfle, palit, vendit, se marbre de tâches sanguinolentes, éclate.... La pièce de Baudelaire, la charogne, décrit étonnement cette série d'événements mortuaires; mais elle à une sort d'aigreur, de chatouillement cruel, que ne révèle point notre album. (L'artiste qui l'a peint avait les nerfs infiniment) reposes.

Tout au contraire du poète, l'artiste qui l'a peint avait les nerfs infiniment plus reposés.

Tout au contraire du poète, l'artiste japonais a fait quelque sort veiller les fleurs sur ce pauvre corps.

Eventually the corpse is reduced to bones and the flowers by it grow although they have nothing to shade.

Les fleurs et la mort. Ah le profonde artiste qui  
vous laisse gravée dans le cerveau cette double  
image quand vous avez fermé son terrible album.

Burty must have chosen to begin his articles with this discussion because he had owned the paintings for some time, he showed them to Edmond De Goncourt in 1870. Burty's extremely sensitive description of the painting indicates that he was able to empathize fully with the work and did not treat it as an alien curiosity. 125

His treatment of the painting is indicative of the link between Japonisme and the legacy of Romanticism that we saw in the comparison of Delacroix and Japanese art in "Les Emaux Cloisonnés", and in the general treatment of Japanese art in the 1860's. However the use of the Romantic symbol of Ophelia is carefully chosen. For Ophelia, as seen by Delacroix or Millais, was beautiful, reposed in death not the paradoxical image of Baudelaire's "Charogne", which attracts only as it repels.

Burty's appreciation is entirely for the relationship of the aesthetic quality of the imagery to the neutral Buddhist conception of life and death. One may even see the beginnings of Symbolist art theory in such discussions.

One is inevitably reminded by Burty's description of the famous incident in which Monet forgot the death of his wife Camille in his struggles to capture the light on the face of her corpse. Zola fictionalized this episode in "Le Chef d'Oeuvre" in order to examine the moral problems of naturalism. One is tempted to speculate that the infinite repose of the nerves before the sight of death which Burty so much admired in the Japanese artist was to be transmitted to Western artists interested in the Far Eastern example. Certainly Burty makes it clear that he was well aware of the importance of Buddhism in the formation of aesthetic detachment of the Japanese. This passage is early evidence for the Japanese contribution to the development of aesthetics in which all values are relative, flowers and death are juxtaposed as images of beauty and decay. 127

Burty was concerned that Japanese art should be seen as a profound and serious endeavour. In the third article he reports that he has read in "Le grande salon d'un journal Néo-Hegelian" that Japonisme was a "caprice de dilettante blase".

He defended it against this charge and against the charge that it was purely decorative or a form of crude realism by claiming that its basis was pure poetry;

on prêt les Japonais uniquement pour d'habiles  
enlumineurs de papiers peints, des réalistes  
réussis. Je dois donc montrer qu'ils ont des  
poètes, de purs poètes dignes de toucher les  
esprits délicats et curieux.

The remainder of the third article is concerned with substantiating this point with a discussion of Japanese poetry taken from two books, F. V. Dickins' "Hyaknin is shia or Stanzas by a century of poets being Japanese lyrical odes" of 1866 and De Rosny's "Anthologie Japonaise" of 1877, which we have discussed above.

Weisberg has shown that Burty changed the text of De Rosny's translations in his article in order to point up the romantic associations of the poems in his article. This can be seen in De Rosny's line -

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Séparée loin de toi, je contemple la voute céleste,

which became

Séparée de toi, je regarde longuement la voute étoilée.

Burty also changed the order of the words on the page and on one occasion supplied a poem with a fictitious origin, an inscription on a temple wall. Weisberg points out that Burty's changes all move the poetry towards a more romantic expression and that Burty's selections are all concerned with love, death and sadness. However it is too simplistic to see Burty as a mere romanticiser of Japanese art. He makes a definite case for the unique quality of the Japanese perception of man's relation to nature throughout all these articles.

The fourth discussed Japanese legends and fairy tales making use of

Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan", and other contemporary European writers.

The fifth followed it up with a discussion of ghosts and supernatural events in Japanese theatrical and legendary prints. Burty refers to several prints in his collection but none are recognisable. He uses some examples to discuss the absence of the concept of a soul amongst the Japanese. He comments on the popular representation of Kamis and the variety of ghosts.

In his first article in 1873 Burty returns to his own collection of prints. He points out the close link between Japanese calligraphy and drawing. He still believed that all Japanese could read and that illustrated books were a popular art form. He refers to images of "vastes bibliothèques de Yeddo" in the print albums in his own collection.

The descriptions of Japanese scenes in this article show that he was studying his Japanese albums very carefully;

Les femmes s'enforcent avec délice dans la lecture. Celles-ci allongées comme des chattes, ouvrent le roman sur un coussin et lisent les pages dans les paumes des mains jointes au poignet. Cette autre, les jambes croisées sur un divan, se courbe et s'affaisse, et suit les lignes en se grattant distraitement la tête d'une de ses longues épingles d'or estampé. En voici encore une qui, debout à l'extrémité d'une galerie extérieure, semble jeter aux iris violets, aux grues rayant l'étang de leurs pattes pendantes, aux arbres roses, aux leurs purpurines flamboyant derrière la colline noire, les vers d'un poète aimé.

In the same article Burty welcomes a new translation "Heike-Monogatori Recits de l'histoire du Japon au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle" partie 1, translated by a M. Turretini of Geneva. Burty praised it as the beginning of a contribution to the enlightenment of the West about Japan. Burty praised the rather weak black and white illustrations and decorations in this volume as perfect copies of Japanese art. This indicates that he had not yet developed refined judgement of Japanese art despite his studies, and suggests that the bulk of his Japanese collection was still of mid-nineteenth century works.

In the last article Burty continued his discussion of his print collection and mentioned in particular Hokusai's "Mangwa" and his landscape and animal drawings.

Burty's first series of articles indicate that he had not yet formed a consistent critical attitude to Japanese art. Unlike English writers in the early 1870's he seems reluctant to make use of easy generalisations about the relation of the Japanese to nature and their disciplined craftsmanship. Instead he writes in terms of what he knows about Japan and its art. Nonetheless his attraction to Japanese art can be clearly seen to be related to his interest in romantic art theory and his championship of Delacroix, Millet and Rousseau.

The articles also show Burty to be one of the first critics to value Japanese prints, paintings and illustrated books as a major art form. As we shall see French critics in general valued the Japanese print more than English critics but no-one, not even De Goncourt, placed the high value that Burty did on them at such an early date.

Nonetheless Burty knew relatively little about his collection at this time, and it is impossible to identify the prints and paintings from among the 837 lots, many of forty or more items, which make up his collection as it was sold on his death. He remarks in an article on ceramics in Bing's "Artistic Japan" in 1889 that he bought a great part of his collection in 1875, presumably from Bing and Sichel.

We do know that at this time Burty's collection of Japanese objets d'art of all kinds was famous in England and in France. S. Blondel, in his "Histoire D'Éventails", Paris 1875, speaks of Burty's collection of Japanese books as the first in Paris, "riche en albums et en livres japonais" and mentioned in particular a 14 volume work, the "Collection des Tresors du Temple d'Itikusima", a temple famous for its collections of arms, armour and works of art. Volume IV of the work held many illustrations of fans; amongst them was a colour print showing a group of

Samurai, one of whom is casting down his fan before the enemy. Burty speculated that this was a heroic challenge similar to that made by Conde at the battle of Friburg in 1644, showing once again his tendency to interpret the prints in a romantic manner.

Blondel illustrates the finest fan in Burty's collection with Burty's own notes. This was a fan in chiselled iron signed by U-da-Kane-sigue. Burty had bought it in 1874 when it arrived from Japan in a very rusty condition. Burty claimed that it was as light as ivory. It imitated a bamboo carving, each side having a motif of mythological lions and flowers.

Burty contributed notes to Blondel's book and to several others during the 1870's. This indicates that he was establishing a reputation as an expert on Japanese objects at this time.

Burty owned many other fans. He loaned eight to an exhibition of fans organised by the Liverpool Art Club in 1874. Item 85 is of particular interest:

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Japanese fan which belonged to a Commander in Chief. The leaf is of stout buff paper, covered with silk tissue, painted on the front with a group of figures - The Seven Sages on the Forest of Bambou - chiefly in Indian ink and drawn with great spirit; and on the back, with temples, buildings and foliage.

We do know of one Japanese book that was in Burty's collection in the early 1870's for it was sold at Sotheby's amongst the collection of modern prints which he sent in April 1874. It was Item 959:

Yedo ovo Setza you - Kai zau or the large Encyclopedia illustrated with coloured maps and title pages and about 1000 woodcuts in the text referring to matters of history, geography, natural history, literature, etc., and also the arms of great Japanese families.

By the middle 1870's Burty's Japanese collection is known to have contained arms and armour, bronzes, ceramics (which were mainly Bizen ware), ivories and lacquer.

It contained representative products of most Japanese arts and crafts.

It is not possible to research them all, but I have prepared a series of illustrations from contemporary books which will give some indication of the range of his collection at this period.

I(90)

Burty's second set of articles on Japanese art was published in "L'Art" in 1875 and 1876. All of them are concerned with specific Japanese legends or beliefs and contain a large range of coloured and black and white illustrations of prints and paintings. These illustrations were the work of Felix Regamey and of H. Somm, a young illustrator who had attended De Rosny's classes some years before and was therefore well fitted to transcribe the Japanese characters in the illustrations. Burty was especially pleased with the illustrations to the first article, "La vie de poetesse Kō-mati". In the article Burty tells the story of the beautiful young poetess Kō-Mati, who turns into an ugly old beggar-woman and washes the pages of her poetry so that none may read them again, preferring instead the life of a wandering soothsayer.

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Regamey provided to this a reproduction of a print of the poetess believed to be by Hokusai from Burty's collection. She is shown in her finery hiding her face behind a fan, in front of a blossoming tree branch. Regamey did indeed make a remarkable job of the detailed production of this.

I(91)

For the same article H. Somm made a copy of a black and white line drawing, "Kō-Mati composant une poesie dans la campagne", taken from a book of her poems, one of which is inscribed in the middle of the image.

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Somm has captured the original lines of this early nineteenth century book, especially in the flow of the rivers and in Ko Mati's costume.

In another article "Les femmes de Qualité", Burty deals with the legends attached to aristocratic women of Japan.

Two further articles, "Les Patrons de la Vie Heureuse" are taken up with a discussion of the seven gods of domestic happiness. Burty chose to discuss them because of their constant repetition in popular art of

all kinds;

On les rencontre à chaque moment sculptés en netzukés, fondus et bronze, modèles en terre, émaillés sur la porcelaine, peints sur les rouleaux.

He also chose them because they best represented the highly irreverent humour of the modern school of Japanese painters which he saw as deriving from Hokusai.

Here is his description of Hotei, the god of good humour;

Ho-Tei est le personnification du parfait repose du cerveau venant d'un parfait équilibre du muscle.

Constamment Ho-Tei, la poitrine pendante, chauve, velu, la face élargie par un gros rire qui bride ses yeux, adossé d'un sac plein et évente son ventre énorme, qu'il met à l'air. Ce ventre est comme le crâne de Foku-Roku. Toute le monde en rit. Dans un des albums Hoku-sai, des gamins, qui ont trempé un pinceau dans du vermillon de grands caractères d'affiche sur cette saillie en citrouille. Ho-Tei d'ailleurs est le père-gigogne de l'extrême Orient. Il laisse les enfants danser sur ses grasses épaules, fouiller dans son sac, lui tirer la langue, se bousculer entre les courtes jambes.

Burty provides similar descriptions for all seven gods and refers when necessary to Kaempfer and other sources of legends.

The illustrations for this article are excellent. H. Somm provides a splendid image of Hotei from a Japanese album and an equally fine copy of Bishamon, the Japanese god of arms, confronting the devil.

The finest illustration of the whole series is a folio chromolithograph by Regamey of a painting showing Yebis, the god of fishermen, wrestling with Daikoku, the god of merchants. It is an excellent reproduction of an early nineteenth century work painted by a follower of Hokusai. It is important as it is the first work of this kind to be reproduced in the West.

Burty's articles for "L'Art" all contain illustrations of a high quality and confirm Burty's reputation as the first Japanese enthusiast to take Japanese paintings and prints seriously. The articles also show that Burty felt no need to rationalise Japanese art in terms of European

aesthetic attitudes. He is seen to be investigating the iconography of Japanese art and to be commenting on it in the light of his knowledge. He says little about the "style" of his illustrations.

In 1877 Burty gave three lectures on Japonisme in Paris. The first, "Le Japon Ancien et Le Japon Moderne" discussed the effect of the Meiji 132 restoration on Japanese art and culture. Burty discussed the historical development of Japan and characterised traditional Japanese art as "élégant, robuste, variée et intelligent".

He claimed that since the Meiji Restoration Japan had played the same artistic role as France - "le rajeunissement perpétuel de l'invention ou de l'adoption des modèles antérieures". In Burty's mind then, Japan in the 1870's had acted as an independent element in the rebirth of Western art, equalling the importance of the innovation of the French artists themselves. Burty's conception of the effect of the Japanese example was not one of "influence" but of a new element in the visual tradition, in the perpetual renewal of visual experience which was his definition of the visual arts.

To help his discussion he made great use of examples in his own collection;

Il a parlé de la céramique, des ivoires sculptés avec un art infini, de l'emploi varié des métaux et des patines, du papier, des étoffes, etc., cherchant surtout à expliquer la signification des sujets religieux, poétiques, familiers, guerriers, qui reviennent sans cesse sous le pinceau des artistes, puisant dans les romans et poésies qui ont été traduits, dans les matériaux qu'il a patiemment et abondamment ramassés depuis quinze ans.

He also dealt with the treatment of landscape by Japanese artists, using a map to show the various kinds of landscape subjects available to the Japanese. He stressed the importance of the direct observation of nature in their art;

L'observation directe de la nature animée, les oiseaux, les fleurs, le bambou, les jeux d'enfants - faut au Japon une place à part et tout à fait supérieure dans le classement des modes esthétiques

propres aux differentes races qui ont brillé dans les arts en quelques temps que ce soit.

Burty believed this unique example had a beneficial effect on contemporary art in France and England.

He characterised the two extremes of Japanese art as the sensual and the imaginative, using the images of butterflies and chimeras.

In his second lecture Burty made use of a translation by Turretini, of a Japanese novel, "Komats et Sakitsi" (1820), by Ruitei Tanefico. He praised the writing, comparing it to that of the elder Dumas. His third lecture was a discussion of the Genji wars and the art and legends associated with them. In all three lectures he related his comments to Japanese art and artists, thus acting, once again, as a major publicist for Japanese art in the 1870's.

In 1878 he congratulated himself and "L'Art" on their achievements in discussing and reproducing examples of Japanese art.

Enfin c'est ici que nous avons donné audacieusement pour titre à nos études "Japonisme" que nous avons forgé pour bien caractériser le courant special de nos idées et qui fit grener les râteliers academiques.

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Already however he felt that his articles in "L'Art" were arid and communicated little of the riches of Japanese art. His review of the Japanese exhibits at the 1878 exhibition shows him to have been at the centre of Japanese enthusiasm in Paris in 1878. However it contains little of his own ideas on Japanese art, being a highly competent account of the current state of knowledge about it, greatly enhanced by the 1878 exhibition.

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As a result of this exhibition Burty projected a special study of Japanese prints and paintings. However he did not write this, presumably because he was kept busy by his new duties as Inspecteur des Beaux Arts, a post to which he was appointed in 1880.

He did attempt several drawings and prints of Japanese objects in his collection. He also made drawings in the margin of some of his books

on Japanese art, notably his copy of De Goncourt's "Maison d'un Artiste". Some of them were made public by Bing in "Artistic Japan".

Nonetheless he maintained his interest in Japonisme. In 1886 he gave three lectures on Japanese ceramics, to accompany a major exhibition of them at the Union des Beaux Arts. These were later published as a book which I have unfortunately been unable to find. However we have Burty's later attitude to Japanese art preserved in articles that he wrote for Bing's "Artistic Japan" in 1889, one on swords and one on ceramics.

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Burty's writing on Japanese ceramics reveals him to have become an expert of some merit by the late 1880's. He is precise and technically competent. He even quotes from original Japanese sources such as the fourteenth volume of "Bam-po Sen Shio", published first in 1698, which he claims to be an ideal source on many forms of Japanese decorative art.

He also shows his knowledge of the tea ceremony and of the role of pottery in it.

As is usual in his writings, there is no attempt to make inappropriate aesthetic claims for Japanese art. Indeed he says nothing about its importance for European taste, preferring to praise Wakai, a modern artist, for maintaining his adherence to the classic style.

Burty's writing on Japanese swords is equally competent. Once again he adheres to basic information he has about the manufacture of the sword and its place in Japanese life. There is little else to say about either of the articles. They serve to demonstrate Burty's continued interest in Japanese art until his death in 1891.

There can be no doubt that Burty's public propaganda and private scholarship made a great contribution to the knowledge of Japanese art in the 1870's.

His writings are also unique in their aesthetic objectivity. Burty was able to perceive the values in Japanese art for themselves and to

write on the assumption that these values were important. Nowhere in his work does one find a rationalisation of them in Western terms. He brought this same objective aesthetic judgement to his defence of the Impressionists. There can be no doubt that he acted as a major figure in the transmission of knowledge and experience of Japanese art to them and to other artists in the 1870's. This becomes particularly important when one considers that he was one of the first Japanese enthusiasts to value paintings and prints as much as other imports.

The lack of a consistent theoretical standpoint in his work makes it difficult to write about in terms of this thesis. Nonetheless he remains an important figure of the 1870's. The nature of his enthusiasm for Japan, detached from his preoccupations in Western art is in many ways typical of the times. It may also have been of great importance in his role as a transmitter of the Japanese influence to the West.

#### The Japonisme of De Goncourt

If Burty was a public figure whose role in promoting the influence of Japanese art in the 1870's is clear, the role of Edmond De Goncourt is, despite his journal, obscure and hard to define until the 1880's.

The journal forms the most important source of information about the day to day activities of Japonistes in Paris. It would be superfluous to rehearse all their activities once more as we have dealt with them elsewhere in this thesis. Moreover the Journal makes clear that De Goncourt did not take the initiative in these activities. He was present in the society in which they occurred, and collected a great quantity of Japanese art but until the publication of "La Maison d'un Artiste" in May 1881, he published nothing about Japan. Indeed no reference to Japan occurs in his novels in the '70s until 1877 in "La Fille Elisa" when he begins to use literary similes involving Japanese art. 137

Moreover although he knew Degas and Stevens and had indirect contacts with the Impressionists and later painters through Charpentier, Huysmans

and many other of his acquaintances, there is no evidence that his opinion was highly valued by any of them. Indeed he appears to have taken little or no interest in current developments in the visual arts after the 1860's.

His reputation as a great Japanese enthusiast rests on the relevant passages in "La Maison d'un Artiste" (1881), and on "Outamaro, le peintre des maisons vertes" (1891), and on "Hokusai" (1896), which were the only two volumes of a projected series "L'Art Japonais au dix-huitieme siecle", to reach the publishers. The latter two are known to depend for their scholarship on the work of a Japanese in Paris, Tademasa Hayashi, who had been working principally as Bing's assistant until the 1890's. The book on Hokusai was the cause of a public scandal for Hayashi had been working with Bing on a similar one, and Bing made accurate public denunciations of De Goncourt's plagiarism from Hayashi. 138

I have already discussed the limitations of literary "Japonisme" in the 1870's and 1880's, including that of De Goncourt. I have also dismissed any claim that De Goncourt was a pioneer Japoniste. He was, in fact, rather late in the field and the bulk of his collection was acquired like that of Burty in the latter half of the 1870's. Indeed Gonse claimed that De Goncourt only became interested in collecting Japanese art after 1873 with the return of Sichel from Japan. 139

We must therefore ask what an inquiry into De Goncourt's Japonism can add to our understanding of the period. De Goncourt's Journal contains some brilliant analysis of his own reaction to Japanese objects and this is important. It is a matter of judgement as to how far his records can be seen as relevant to the general change in sensibility in France as a result of the campaign of the Japonistes. Perhaps the best justification for looking at De Goncourt's Japonisme was given by himself in the Journal - the entry for April 21st 1884. Therein he reacts to press criticism of the bourgeois for having no "sens artistique";

Je parle par exemple du japonisme, et ils ne voient dans une vitrine que quelques bibelots ridicules, qu'on leur a dit être le comble du mauvais goût et du manque de dessin. Les malheureux! Ils ne se sont pas aperçus à l'heure qu'il est que tout l'impressionisme - la mort du bitume, etc., est fait par la contemplation et l'imitation des impressions claires du Japon. Ils n'ont pas davantage observé que la cervelle d'un artiste occidental, dans l'ornementation d'un assiette ou de n'importe quoi, ne conçoit et ne crée qu'un décor placé au milieu de la chose, un décor unique ou un décor composé de deux, trois, quatre, cinq, détails décoratoires se faisant toujours pendant et contre poids...

Et quand je disais que le japonisme était en train de révolutionner l'optique des peuples occidentaux, j'affirmais que le Japonisme apportait à L'Occident une coloration nouvelle, un système décoratoire nouveau, enfin, si l'on veut, une fantaisie poétique dans la création de l'objet d'art, qui n'existe jamais dans le bibelots les plus parfaits du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance.

De Goncourt was well aware of the nature and breadth of the impact of Japanese art on France. His reactions to it can therefore help us in making our understanding of that impact as precise as possible, even his claim to have led the three most important movements in the nineteenth century;

La recherche du vrai en littérature,  
la resurrection de l'art du XVIII<sup>ème</sup>  
la victoire du japonisme,

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is difficult to take seriously.

The Goncourt brothers had become famous for their scholarly criticism of French eighteenth century art in the 1850's and 1860's, principally through their work, "L'Art au dix-huitième siècle", published in twelve parts between 1856 and 1875. Edmond transferred the criteria and technique of these studies to his appreciation of Japanese art, an identification which became stronger as he came to believe that the finest Japanese art was also of the eighteenth century.

He frequently stressed this identification of the two. In his arrangement of his house at Auteuil, "La Maison d'un Artiste", he deliber-

ately juxtaposed pieces from both. On the stairs there was a large eau forte of Watteau's "Embarkation from Cythera" placed centrally, near the lacquered coffer containing his collection of Japanese prints. Around it were eighteenth century drawings and Japanese kakemono paintings, Kutani, Owari and Kaga pottery were displayed in the niches.

In April 1880 De Goncourt identified his work of "La Maison" as of 141 the same importance for Far Eastern art as "L'Art du XVIIIème siècle" for Western art. In his preface to "Hokusai" he compared his publication of this work with his publication in 1860 of Caylus' biography of Watteau. Indeed, in all his writings, such a formal link is made. However the question was not just of a formal relationship. De Goncourt perceived the two groups of works with the same unified sensibility. Here are the De Goncourt brothers writing about Watteau;

The grace of Watteau is grace itself. It is that indefinable touch that bestows upon women a charm, a coquetry, a beauty that is beyond mere physical beauty. It is that subtle thing that seems to be the smile of a contour, the soul of a form, the spiritual physiognomy of matter.

All the fascination of woman in repose: the languor, the idleness, the abandonment, the mutual leanings upon one another, the outstretched limbs, the indolence, the harmony of attitudes, the delightful air of a profile bowed over a lute, studying the notes of some gamme d'amour, the breasts receding, elusive contours, the meanderings, the undulations, the plancies of a woman's body; the play of slender fingers upon the handle of a fan.....

And it is not simply that Watteau brought this grace to life, delivered it from quiescence and immobility, bestowed upon it an agitation, a quivering, but it seems also in his art that it is a grace which pulsates in accordance with a rhythm that in its balanced progress is a dance drawn onwards by some homophony.

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And here Edmond is writing on the Japanese prints showing women in fashionable dress and occupations:

Nous voici dans ces jardins tout pleins des serpentements d'un ruisseau autour d'un tonon, d'une lanterne de pierre en ces fournes de pivoinies éclatantes, ou la sieste des promeneuses confond la flore des robes avec la flore des

massifs. Nous voici dans les salles d'apparat; ou sur une estrade rouge, des musiciennes, en robe bleu, jouent des choses lentes, que des geisha, des danseuses miment dramatiquement dans des robes amples, entourées qui semblent agiter, derrière leur dos, des ailes de papillon. Nous voici dans les chambres, où des femmes rampent à terre sur des instruments de musiques à cordes, s'occupe à peindre des éventails, agenouillées près de petites tables,

or again;

Dans ces impressions la femme développe une élégance qu'elle n'aura bientôt plus, son dessin profile les longueurs et les élancements des grandes époques du dessin; et même une remarque qui n'est pas sans valeur, le type féminin y est presque différent, et comme fabriquée d'une pâte plus raffinée, plus aristocratique.

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The mise en scene of both passages is the same, so is the mixture of interest in formal grace achieved by the formal artistic means and observed or characterised feminine behaviour. The importance of human type or style in the Goncourt's criticism of eighteenth century art is well-known. Edmond applies the same sensibility to Japanese women that he applied to "La Femme au dix-huitième siècle". It is most important to note that De Goncourt is praising Watteau for his use of contour and form in the same manner in which he later discussed Japanese prints. This formal relationship is inextricably related to the ultimate link between the De Goncourts' treatment of the two areas which both show an admiration for the ability to represent a limited but exquisite human scene in all its aspects or a simple object in an essential form. This ability comes from a cultural and exclusive milieu such as one finds in the eighteenth century France or in Tokugawa Japan. De Goncourt recognised a similar "tone" in both, a pursuit of limited but exquisite aesthetic emotion. This is more important than the endless parallels that one can draw between the writing on the eighteenth century theatre and on the Japanese theatre print, or between his treatment of women and the erotic in both arts. An exquisite refinement is represented in both arts, and De Goncourt makes this point by identifying a simple Chardin still life

with a Japanese print. What De Goncourt saw or thought he saw in both arts was a harmony of poetic license with the demands of the depiction of reality in producing an exquisitely perfect image, nature and artifice unified in beauty.

The exquisite harmony of the two arts found in his house and writings was worked for over many years by De Goncourt. In 1884 he wrote of his house's decorations;

Sur le palier du premier, pour l'individu qui monte, pour moi, j'ai mis des années, oui des années, à combiner un fond aux matières et aux nuances assemblées dans une harmonie artiste. Sur la tenture toile de toile, c'est d'une côté, au-dessous d'un plat bleu aux fleurettes blanches, ciselées dans l'émail, un fokousa, rose de Chine; de l'autre, sous un plat de Kutani jaune traverse d'une branche de chrysanthèmes mauves, c'est un kakemono, où une grue bleuâtre est tissée sur un fond ecru, trame de feuillages d'or. Ces deux panneaux sont séparés par un étroite portière en tapisserie de Beauvais gayée d'attributs champêtres et d'arabesques Louis XVI au papillotage de couleurs amortées. Et cette portière, ce kakemono, ce fokousa se voient entre des encoignures changées de porcelaines de Chine et de bronzes du Japon, aux coloration et aux patines les mieux assorties.....

pour arriver à ce mur d'harmonie, il m'avait fallé des années, et cent fois changer les choses de place, et cent fois les remplacer.

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The endless pains that De Goncourt took with this assembly of exquisite objects indicates the poetic nature of the common tone or sensibility which he perceived in both.

The critical harmony of the two styles was equally as difficult to achieve. In 1876, when Japanese imports were at their peak, De Goncourt's taste was caught off balance and Japanese art caused him a crisis of perception;

Depuis que mes yeux prennent de l'habitude de vivre dans les couleurs de L'Extreme-Orient, mon XVIII<sup>e</sup> siecle se décolore: je le vois grisaille.

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The effect of De Goncourt's confabulation of Japanese art and French eighteenth century art on the general development of French Japonisme is difficult to judge. Certainly it emphasised the exquisite and the pursuit

of sensation, regardless of its tendency to extreme artifice and in doing so imposed a Western notion of beauty on an Eastern art. De Goncourt was unable to appreciate the aspect of Japanese art which was concerned with veneration of simplicity. He mocked Wakai, the Japanese art dealer, for preferring a small plain lacquer box, found hundred years old to the elaborate late eighteenth century works in Burty's collection, and praised Marie Antoinette's elaborate gold lacquer as the finest available. To this extent De Goncourt imposed an aesthetic perception on Japanese art. However as we have seen he was not unique in his preference for elaborate decorative ware. Nor in my opinion was he responsible for the failure of Europeans in the nineteenth century to understand the simplicity of Japanese interior design and the place of contemplation of a single art work in the enjoyment of Japanese art. We have seen that information 116 about this was freely available. However the Japanese displays at the 1867 exhibition and in most cases at the 1878 exhibition were extremely cluttered and would have supported De Goncourt's western treatment of the art.

It is probably a mistake to see in De Goncourt's interest in Japanese art a belated "Chinoiserie" as does Hugh Honour. De Goncourt's theory of 147 the sensations was not simply a matter of decoration, in the manner of eighteenth century English taste. He wished to refine his perception of experience to the highest level through art, to link poetry with the experience of reality. The problem is to define De Goncourt's notion of the poetic in visual art in relation to that of Huysmans or Degas. Essentially De Goncourt laid more stress on grace, on subtle harmony of form and colour than on the bizarre stimulation of the senses on the ruthless depiction of a visual sensation. He also ignored realism with its appeal to moral and emotional associations and its dependence on a social context for its significance. There is no place in this thesis for deeper consideration of this problem, but the consequences of De Goncourt's

theory of the sensations for his appreciation of Japanese art will emerge in the discussion of De Goncourt's record of his sensational reactions to it in his Journal. This is worth discussing because it is the only one of its kind.

As early as 1871 De Goncourt reacted to the sight of the melted metal of the bell of the Hotel de Ville by comparing it to the textures of Japanese bronzes.

By 1872 he was looking regularly at Japanese prints. The painter Ziem called on him and finding an open Japanese print album on the table 148 compared them to the work of Giotto and the Italian primitives, because the figures in each were disposed in such a manner as to create a broad perspective to enable a whole group of people to be spread on the image.

De Goncourt was less confused than Ziem about the nature of Japanese art. Later in the same year he remarked that he had noticed that the shadows of things serve the Japanese for their drawings. He links the shadow of a branch cast on his wall by the moon with the motif of a branch in Japanese art. Once again nature and the poet are perceived as linked. 149

By 1874 he was sufficiently involved with Japanese art to see Switzerland in terms of Japanese prints;

toutes ces légères architectures de bois, le pied dans l'eau, portant des fleurs et des femmes, me semblaient dérouler devant moi, les images d'un album japonais, les représentations de la vie au bord de l'eau de L'Extreme Orient. 150

In January 1875 he bought a Japanese bronze duck for 120 Fr. which he regarded as "un bijou de Cellini", and recorded his amazement that an Italian work would have cost him 10,000 Fr. at least. Moreover he was pleased to have introduced a Japanese art object into his collection alongside those of the eighteenth century because albums, bronzes and ivories all called for an immediacy of response;

Ils vous rejettent le goût et l'esprit dans le courant des créations de la force et de la fantaisie.

De Goncourt thus recognised the power of the fantastic in Japanese art and indeed welcomed it as a counterbalance to the prevalence of the "Classicisme du joli" which he was disturbed by in eighteenth century art.

De Goncourt only acknowledges the effect of Japanese art on contemporary French once in his journal during the 1870's, in February, 1877; he does so in a typical manner, by commenting on a general change in refined sensibility which made possible certain artistic achievements. De Goncourt always assumes that art proceeds from the possibilities of the sensibility of the times;

C'est curieux, la révolution amenée par l'art japonais chez un peuple esclave, dans le domaine de l'art, de la symétrie grecque et qui, soudain, s'est mis à se passionner pour une assiette où la fleur détail plus au beau milieu; pour une étoffe où l'harmonie détail plus faite ou moyen passage par les dernier teintes, mais seulement par la juxtaposition savamment coloriste des couleurs franches.

Qu'est ce qui aurait osé peindre, il y a vingt ans, une femme en robe jaune? Ca n'a pu tenter qu'après La Salome japonaise de Regnault. Et cette introduction autoritaire dans l'optique de L'Europe, de la couleur impériale de L'Extrême Orient, c'est une vraie révolution dans la chromatique du tableau et de la mode.

Regnault's painting was a great success at the Salon. Yet we know I(93) that compared to the activities of other painters it seems now to have represented a minor shift in style and in sensibility. Nonetheless De Goncourt's point that Far Eastern art was revolutionising the senses and thus the aesthetic expectations of the West should not be dismissed as trivial because of that. His Journal is the only record we have of changes in that delicately balanced and hard-won appreciation of formal beauties in their human context that was European taste in the later nineteenth century. Propaganda by historians of design has characterised all nineteenth century taste in small objects as a meaningless jumble, even Pevsner has given this impression. In fact as we have seen, De

Goncourt's "taste" was carefully worked for, each work of art considered as a sensation and each sensation carefully co-ordinated.

De Goncourt's Japonisme helps us to appreciate the French habit of considering works of art in terms of the "sensation" they evoked and its possible role in promoting Japanese influence in France. A theory which sees art in terms of "sensation" is no obstruction in itself to the art of an alien culture. This notion of sensation links De Goncourt's taste with Manet and the Impressionists and even ultimately with Cezanne.

During the 1870's De Goncourt evolved a view of the Japanese as children, whose sensibilities were extreme but whose intellectual capacity was limited. In his writings he refers several times to the occasion at Burty's when a young Japanese was scandalised by the direct nature of Western courtship and remarked that in Japan only distant metaphors would be used on such occasions. In particular he saw Japanese sensibility reflected in the infinite pains taken in the representation of small parts of nature;

Pour que la campagne nous parle, nous tente à la reproduire, il faut qu'elle se montre à nous avec de grands aspects de grandes beautés, qu'elle soit dramatisée par un orage, par un coucher ou un lever de soleil. Les Japonais, eux, ils ne demandent pas tant de choses. Je viens d'acheter une garde de sabre, ou dans un ciel écorné par un quartier de lune d'argent, deux feuilles d'automne tombant à terre sont tout le motif de la ciselure. Ces deux feuilles, qui font tout le decor imaginé par l'artiste, feraient également tout le libretto d'un poem de là-bas.

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This treatment of the extreme selectivity of Japanese images points to certain parts of Impressionist and Symbolist art. Moreover it imposes the theory of sensation of De Goncourt on Japanese art, in so far as the Japanese image is seen as a means of heightening one's sense of nature by means of a carefully prepared descriptive image.

The stress on this theory of sensation is important for the influence of Japanese art in France, for it leads to a different perception of the Japanese attitude to nature than the viewpoint which lays stress simply

on the acute observation of nature by the Japanese. This second viewpoint is mainly found as we have seen, amongst English writers on Japanese art. De Goncourt's attitude is closer to a precise interpretation of the Japanese aesthetic, it thus helps us to understand the greater potential for influence by Japanese art in France than in England.

As we have seen, De Goncourt's Japanese collection was mainly purchased in the mid-1870's as he decorated his house at Auteuil. The two volumes of "La Maison" give the impression of a large and comprehensive range of Japanese objects of all kinds. It would be tedious to survey the collection here. The description of the cabinet "de L'Extrême Orient" is mainly a list of his collection, described with great sensitivity but little knowledge. De Goncourt clearly relied for his information on Burty and the Sichel Brothers, and on his general reading about Japan. Few of his objects are attributed or dated despite the knowledge that he obtained during the 1878 exhibition. Hokusai is still the only artist to be dealt with at length and by name and De Goncourt gives two very similar footnotes describing his life, one in each volume. The second is culled from Dickins' publication of "The Hundred Views of Fuji" in 1880 and includes some detailed discussions of "The Mangwa" and its prefaces. Like other writers, De Goncourt saw Hokusai as the leader of an artistic revolution in Japan. By turning his back on the Chinese traditions, De Goncourt believed, Hokusai had founded the first true Japanese art. De Goncourt's taste in Japanese art was for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century work, which derived from Hokusai's style;

Et pour moi, c'est seulement en toutes les dernières années du siècle dernier, et dans les cinquante premières années du siècle actuel, qu'ont été fabriquées, toujours à l'exception des lacques, les originales japonaises ou l'élément européen n'a pas encore le temps de s'introduire, et qui ont eu la fortune d'être exécutées et parfaites par la vieille génération d'ouvriers anciennement aux gages des princes et qui ont mis aux services d'Oksai.

Despite his limited knowledge, De Goncourt does reveal a depth of appreciation of knowledge of the methods of Oriental artists which is not found in earlier writing. He describes at length the painting methods of Watanabe-Sei and others that he had witnessed at the social gatherings associated with the Paris Exhibition of 1878. These descriptions are the earliest detailed records of the Oriental painting method to be published in the West, for Regamey's account in "Promenades Japonaises" does not deal with it in the same depth. The improvisation at Charpentier's is particularly interesting. In describing it, De Goncourt appeals to Lecoq Boisbaudran's theory of drawing;

un autre peintre japonais, la joue labourée par une constriction du muscle zygomatique, sa grosse bouche sérieuse gonflée et avancée, et le front peinant, comme si sa mémoire cherchait à refaire un dessin déjà fait, tenait le pinceau entre le premier phalange du pouce et l'index, et, pour ainsi dire, à pleine mains. Je me rappelle un suprenant dessin de trois corbeaux et l'adresse avec laquelle, de son écrase et aux poils presque sec; dans une teinte plate d'encre de Chine encore humide, l'artiste facsimila le duveteaux de la poitrine d'un des noirs oiseaux.

*Pinceau*

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De Goncourt stressed the immediacy of the Japanese method of painting, without previous drawing, which he still regarded as a novelty for most people in 1881. His discussion of print making is equally detailed. Following Regamey's lectures he describes correctly the Japanese hand printing process. He points out that prints made by the artists themselves have much greater value, stressing the flexibility of the method and its adaption to the expression of individual sensation. His treatment of prints and paintings in "La Maison du Artiste" is important enough to merit further discussion. At this time his Japanese print collection was almost exclusively of prints from 1800 to 1850.

He discusses eighteenth century prints only briefly at the end of the long essay on prints and their subjects and seems not yet to have heard of Utamaro, although he praises the unique type of woman depicted in earlier prints. One can see the beginning of a change of taste in his

remarks;

Là, ce qu'on peut reprocher à l'imagerie moderne japonaise, le voyant un peu brutal, n'existe absolument pas. C'est dans le coloriage, un assouplissement du ton, un passé de la nuance, une harmonie délicieusement discrète. On dirait vraiment que l'art japonais de ce temps a pris ces couleurs aux émaux des porcelaines de la famille verte.

De Goncourt's attitude to prints is that of a traditional connoisseur; he praises certain copies for their refinement and laments the disappearance of the new perfect copies that one could buy in the early 1870's from La Porte Chinoise. His print collection covered every conceivable subject of the nineteenth century, from erotic works to pictures of Europeans. He constructed from them an impression of an ideal landscape through which beautiful women wandered, extravagantly dressed. Like other critics he saw Japanese landscape prints as a product of the observation of bright sunlight on a perfect landscape, free of murky shadows such as are found in Europe;

Une floraison toute gaie, toute claire, toute pimpante: des arbres blancs, des arbres roses, dans lesquels les aquarellistes japonais n'introduisent même pas les obscurantes ombres de L'Occident, et qui se détachent dans les albums sur le soleil couche au-dessus des balcons sur lesquels leurs rameaux pendent, étoilent la nuit noire de véritables étoiles.

Hokusai's "100 Views of Fuji" and other landscape prints are dealt with in this lyrical manner. Bird and flower prints are also praised for their direct naturalness and once again sunlight is invoked as a partial explanation for the observation of the artist and the delicate colour harmonies of the work. The real and the poetic are once more linked in De Goncourt's appreciation;

Une image d'un effet à la fois réel et poétique auquel n'est jamais arrivée une composition ornementale de L'Occident. Ces fleurs et ces oiseaux sont peints, tout pénétrés de lumière sans que leur éclat, leur vivacité, leur ensoleillement, soient atténués par l'ombre des demi-teintes, et le dessin très savant, très technique, très botanist, tout en serrant de tout près la nature.

Japanese flower prints had for De Goncourt an authentic "style" not seen in any Western work on the same subject. He compares them favourably to the work of Durer. There follow descriptions, or rather eligies, on other subjects - theatre prints, (which were the most numerous of all), historical subjects, and various kinds of interiors, in particular tea houses and brothels. De Goncourt is fascinated with the artificial elegance of the Japanese women and devotes many pages to the discussion of prints showing female costume.

Special praise is given to Hokusai's "Mangwa", as one would expect. His ability to capture movement with a few strokes, the amazing variety of his drawings, but above all, his drawings of birds, insects, reptiles and fishes, are held up as examples for Western artists to emulate. De Goncourt also has a special appreciation for his humour and fantasy. Hokusai remains for him the great master of Japanese art, linking nature with fantasy, accurate representation with caricature.

De Goncourt says little about his own collection of kakemonos, presumably because he knew little about them. He describes the form of the painted roll and notes that it is the only form of painting which Japanese connoisseurs would accept. He gives a brief list of the names of the greatest Japanese painters, notably "Tosa Mitsunobu, Sesshui, Josetsu, Oguri, Sotan, Schuiban, Sesson et le plus celebre de tous, Kano Motonobu". However he seems to have taken this list from the information the Japanese gave out in the 1878 exhibition. He had no appreciation of the tradition of painting which lies behind these names. His appreciation of the painting is based on the same unity of the poetic and the real that he sees in the prints;

Toutefois le merveille est une guenon tenant son petit dans se bras. Il est vraiment impossible de rendre, par une coloration plus vrai; le rose violacé de la face et des bouts de sein de la singesse, de la face et des callosités ischiatiques du petit, au milieu de l'envolée fauve du pelage, où, ça et la se voient des aplatissements, de lumineux versements de nuits faits d'un ton bleuâtre indescriptable. Ce kakemono

est signé: Lei Mei Wan Sossen; Sossen, au Japon, est reconnu comme le grand peintre du singe, et ne peint uniquement que le singe.

This description of a work by Sosen is a good example of the final point I wish to make about De Goncourt's Japonisme. His writing on Japan is full of references to colour, to the experience of colour as a new discovery. The passages that I have quoted demonstrate this amply. Moreover it is not simply colour in the abstract, but colour in nature, colour as part of the sensations of perception. Similar discussions are not found in the De Goncourts' writings on the eighteenth century which as Edmond observed, turned to grisaille in comparison to Japanese art. His Japonisme therefore provides us with direct evidence of a change in sensitivity to colour promoted by Japanese art.

In the 1880's his Japonisme continued though he felt himself increasingly overshadowed by others. In his Journal we find sarcastic remarks about Wakai, the Japanese art dealer, and L. Gonse, the editor of the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" who published a major work on Japanese art in 1883. Bing is attacked as a devious Jew and even Burty is satirised. One has the impression of a man who has lost an illusory patrimony attempting to reduce his losses by minimising the achievement of others. Schwartz sees the 1880's as the period of De Goncourt's greatest influence as a Japoniste. He points to the creation of his "grenier" and the guests who attended it, claiming them to have formed the nucleus of De Goncourt's consistent propaganda for Japanese art. 155.

I do not agree with this description. De Goncourt never had a unique central position in the development of Japonisme. He is significant as an outstanding enthusiast and a highly articulate litterateur whose work chronicles the effect of Japanese art on his own sensibility and offers considerable insight into its effect on the general sensibility of the times.

The Japonisme of Burty and that of De Goncourt have two characteristics in common which are important for the influence of Japanese art. First, they were both accumulators of art objects of all kinds, of bibelots. A craze for collecting such things swept Paris in the 1870's and it was an important factor in promoting the spread of Japanese art in France. Second, both Burty and De Goncourt were concerned to learn about the culture and customs of the Japanese and both of them used this knowledge to interpret Japanese art, though often imperfectly. This interpretation contributed to the cultural myth from which Western artists were to approach Japanese art. In particular both writers stress that Japanese prints constitute a consistent record of all aspects of Japanese life as it was lived when they were made.

This admiration for an art which went into the streets, which recorded everyday events without prejudice, an art that was believed to have recently undergone a "naturalist" revolution led by Hokusai was a most important factor in the spread of Japanese influence amongst Impressionists and their associates.

Both Burty and De Goncourt also placed an emphasis on the independence of the Japanese sensibility from moralistic or social concerns. Burty did this through his neutral criticism of their art, De Goncourt through his emphasis on his theory of aesthetic sensations as the key to the understanding of Japanese art. Both therefore tended to suggest that the Japanese example supported the notion of a totally relative aesthetic in which aesthetic values can only be found in the form of the individual works considered, not in the culture to which one belongs. Thus De Goncourt reconciles Japanese and French eighteenth century art within a unified sensibility. Sociologists of art would no doubt object to this notion, seeing the two critics as the eminently recognisable products of Paris society in the 1870's, and arguing that their criticism was the product of the limited values of that society. However this is

simply to argue that Burty and De Concourt were mistaken, that their sensibilities were limited by their social context. They were indeed mistaken but the aesthetic disengagement implied in their criticism of Japanese art has nothing to do with the factual accuracy of their beliefs.

#### Committed Critics.

Duranty, Duret, Chesneau, Bousquet, Le Blanc, Du Vernet and Viollet Le Duc.

During the 1860's, as we have seen, nearly all the criticism of Japanese art was committed in the sense that its writers assimilated Japanese art to one Western aesthetic viewpoint or another. This tradition was carried on in the 1870's by the heirs of the realist tradition and their opponents to whom, for the wants of a better one, I will grant the title "academic".

The debate between them was in essence about the relation of Far Eastern art to nature and to the new "naturalist" art, i.e. Impressionism and its associates. The pro-naturalist critics concentrated their arguments on Japanese prints, especially on Hokusai's "Fangwa" with its range of natural observation, and on coloured landscape prints which offered strong analogies to Impressionism. Anti-naturalistic critics reversed the emphasis choosing to discuss the elegance of Japanese decorative art and the precision of the Japanese observation of nature.

The novelist Duranty was friend and defender of the artists of the new naturalism from his association with Manet in the early 1860's until his death in 1880. The monument to this association is his portrait by Degas, now in Glasgow, painted in 1879.

Duranty discovered the relevance of Japanese art to modern painting in 1869 as a result of the exhibition at the Union des Beaux Arts discussed earlier in this thesis. Japanese images had, he wrote, "de l'énergie; un intensité à la Delacroix". He found them "un peu fatigantes par la monotonie de leur éclat, à leur dessin large mouvementé".

He preferred "calmes minutieux peintres de l'Inde et mieux encore certains peintures chinoises plus complètes".

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He also argued that all Far Eastern art was "anachronique et éloigné du goût moderne", fit only for use as minor decoration, which has nothing of value to say to anyone. In the same year he called Fantin's paintings "laques", seeing Japonisme in his style and also in the etchings of Edwin Edwards. The modern artist, he wrote, could only take from the Far East -

"l'aisance de ses yeux en dessin et de couleurs",

everything beyond this in Japanese art would lead to faddish reproductions of bibelots fit only for shops selling bric-à-brac.

Nonetheless by 1870 a brief reference to "L'école japonais" crept into his writings, and by 1872 he was contrasting the tremendously positive influence of Japonisme in modern painting with the malign effects of the Salons, which he led a long campaign to reform during the 1870's.

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During the early part of that decade Duranty changed his estimate of Japanese art. Breadth of drawing or brushstroke and light bright colour now became important to him as a result of his admiration for the Impressionists. This may have been the result of his increasingly friendly relations with Degas who is sometimes said to have written, or at least inspired, large parts of Duranty's famous defence of the Impressionists, "La Nouvelle Peinture".

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His attacks on the anachronism of the studio system, advocacy of the attitudes of Lecoq Boisbaudran and his destructive comments on the Salon painters - "cet atelier d'archeologie anecdotique universel où l'on opère le costumage depuis le casque du mirmidon romain jusqu'au petit chapeau de premier consul" - are well-known.

So is his analysis of Impressionism as an art based on the objective analysis of light which has frequently been misinterpreted.

It starts from the consideration of light as an aesthetic sensation, not as a scientific phenomenon.

What is not so often stressed is his idea of the continuous tradition of French painting and his emphasis on intuition and the human qualities of "la naïveté, la sincérité, le naturel" in his defence of Impressionism. It is "sensation" and not science which Duranty stresses in his account of the Impressionists' art theory and this allows him to relate colour in Japanese art to colour in Impressionist images;

A ce propos, on a parlé des Japonais, et on a prétendu que ces peintres n'allaient pas plus loin que d'imiter les impressions en couleurs sur papiers qu'on fait au Japon.

Je disais plus haut qu'on était parti pour doubler le cap de Bonne Espérance de l'art. N'était ce donc pas pour aller en Extrême-Orient. Et si l'instinct des peuples de l'Asie qui vivent dans le perpétuel éblouissement du soleil, les a poussés à reproduire la sensation constante dont ils étaient frappés, c'est à dire, celle de tons clairs et mats, prodigieusement vifs et légers, et d'une valeur lumineuse presque également répandue partout, pourquoi ne pas interroger cet instinct place, pour observer aux sources mêmes d'éclat solaire.

*interrogé*

L'oeil mélancolique et fier des Hindous, les grands yeux langoureux et absorbés des Persans, l'oeil bridé, vif, mobile des Chinois et des Japonais n'ont ils pas su mêler à leurs grands cris de couleurs, de fines, douces, neutres, exquis harmonies de tons.

This passage has often been misinterpreted as a claim that the Japanese were accurate, photographic observers of their landscape, and Duranty has been mocked for his naïveté. In fact he is claiming only that the aesthetic sensation of bright sunlight is best recorded in light tones and flat areas of colour, and that Japanese prints are an example of the naive and the natural in visual art recording the aesthetic sensations of living in bright sunlight.

He parallels the aesthetic intuition of the Japanese with that of the Impressionists, and he sees the influence of one on the other as a logical development.

Duranty thus subscribed to the view that Japanese art was natural,

based on free observation of nature and that it was the product of a society in which human sensations retained a simple directness.

In 1878 Duranty wrote a survey of the Far Eastern art in the Paris Exposition. The review was one of several, mostly concerned with contemporary art which he wrote for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts".

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Most of it is concerned with description of Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Persian exhibits. Each art is given a considerable space and the review confirms the impression that Duranty valued Chinese, Indian and Persian art as much as Japanese. Indeed he pleads for a revaluation of Chinese art.

His appreciation of Japanese art is based on its truth to nature; "On peut y reconnaître aussi combien les Japonais ont les sens des animaux, avec quelle énergie et quel accent vrai ils rendent l'oiseau, le singe, le rat, le poisson, le boeuf, le cerf, etc."

Like others he identifies Hokusai as the greatest of Japanese artists and the leader of a school of naturalist Japanese artists independent of China. He pursues the idea of Far Eastern artists as instinctively accurate observers of nature. However he is aware of the limitations of Japanese art in the exhibition;

nous voyons que le dessinateur n'y suit pas ou sait à peine modèler, qu'il observe d'un façon hâtive, si on le compare à l'Européen, qu'il n'entend réellement pas l'anatomie, ni le clair obscur, ni la perspective linéaire; que chacun des éléments de son dessin est toujours la même dans les trois ou quatre seules catégories de facture qu'il emploie; qu'il mêle les ignorances de traditions antérieures avec les adresses de progrès nouveaux, sans pouvoir étendre à la fois ces progrès à l'ensemble d'oeuvre.

In 1879 Duranty wrote an account of Japonisme for "La Vie Moderne" in which he reaffirmed his enthusiasm for Japanese art but criticised the craze for everything Japanese.

Duranty wrote it in the aftermath of the great Japanese triumph

at the Paris exhibition of 1878. Far from being a totally committed Japoniste by this time, he came to regard Japonisme as a misconceived craze which he attacked with an ill-judged pun;

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L'Exposition universelle aura porté jusqu'à l'aigu chez les Européens la maladie du japonisme, qu'on peut regarder comme une espèce de jaunisse artistique, si l'on songe à la couleur des gens que nous l'ont transmise.

He went on to declare that Western art and design had been "humiliated" by the Japanese;

Quelques images en couleur et quelques caisses de petits pots ont suffi à nous conquérir.

He took up his earlier plea for a revaluation of other non-European arts, particularly the Chinese, and pointed out that the passion for Japan was hopelessly exaggerated. He speculated that in twenty-five years' time Japanese art might be totally rejected and that Hindu, Persian or even Oceanic art might become the centre of a new Western aesthetic obsession. Duranty's plea is not against Japanese art but against Japonisme as an example of the tendency to irrational artistic fads which he had observed in contemporary artistic activity. He even warned against the assumption that asymmetry was in itself a new aesthetic principle, rightly pointing out that it was only a pleasant game and that much Japanese art had a symmetrical basis. He was also the first critic to argue that Japanese art and particularly drawing was the closest of the exotic arts to that of the West;

Ils dessinent avec une hardiesse, un flambant, une effluve hypermichel-angelique d'ou est prescrite toute naïveté.

He pointed out that this European like style was only a hundred years old and praised the older, more sober style of Japanese painting which he saw exemplified in sixteenth century scroll paintings that he had seen at the 1878 exhibition. Modern Japanese art was, for Duranty, the equivalent of the academic "tra-la-la" of the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

It was the similarity of Japanese to European art which according to him made it acceptable in Europe. He quoted from Rutherford Alcock's book on Japanese art as evidence that Japanese art alone of non-European cultures possessed a sense of satirical humour.

Duranty also pointed out that Japanese art enshrined the principle of progress. He noted that in Hokusai's albums the drawing styles recapitulated the history of Japanese art and that nothing was ever rejected from the Japanese tradition.

He went further and saw this principle of progress represented in a contemporary Japanese satirical print. He describes this as showing a Japanese dressed in an English style police uniform struggling with a Samurai in traditional costume. Above them was a Japanese text on a banner, held aloft in the European manner by two putti. Duranty thought that, apart from the comical aspects of the nude putti, this work was a perfect example of the ability of Japanese art to reconcile the old and new side by side.

Duranty's ability to take such a trivial piece of work so seriously and to make such a superficial judgement of Japanese art from it contrasts remarkably with his uniquely shrewd rejection of "Japonisme" as misconceived, and his perception that in fact European culture had within it many factors that predisposed it to accept Japanese art as of great value.

The original version of this article is illustrated with a drawing of a Japanese pot by Eugène Grasset, a contemporary western style drawing of Japanese girls playing badminton by Yamamoto and a reproduction from Hokusai's album "Yehon Sakigaki" of 1835. These illustrations sum up the condition of "Japonisme" immediately after 1878 and reinforce Duranty's argument.

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Duranty has often been regarded as an unreflective partisan of Japonisme. In fact as this last article proves he was one of its

sternest critics. He remained nonetheless an enthusiast for Japanese art which he continued to regard as a unique example of intuitive naturalism.

Duranty's involvement with Japanese art is important in linking it with Impressionism and in showing one of the paths by which it came to be influential in the development of the visual arts in the 1870's and 1880's.

Theodore Duret's Japonisme follows a similar path to Duranty's. Duret was also a close associate, first of Manet, and later of the Impressionists and Whistler. He wrote a long defence of their work in 1877. As we have seen he travelled to Japan and having discovered Japanese art formed a large collection of prints which were almost all dated from the mid-nineteenth century, similar to those in the collection of Burty and De Goncourt.

In his account of this journey in 1874 he offered an image of picturesque landscape filled with beautiful architecture and works of art. Unlike other critics, Duret at this time believed that the Japanese did have a tradition of making images of the human figure which expressed their view of life, and he cited the Buddhist sculpture as a magnificent example of this in the account of his travels.

He also praised their drawing of plants and animals, relying on Hokusai's "Mangwa" as the basis for his views. Like Duranty, Duret's view of Japanese art in the mid-'70s seems to have been coloured by the idea of a people living in a beautiful country intuitively at harmony with nature, surrounded by objects of great taste. At times he even asserts that the Japanese had a special inborn sensitivity to the aesthetic appeal of natural phenomena unknown to the West, but he makes no attempt to relate this to Buddhism.

In his essay, "Les Peintres Impressionistes" of 1878, he carried this view into his comments on Japanese art;

A ce que les Impressionistes tenaient de leurs<sup>S</sup> devancier<sup>S</sup> est venue s'ajouter l'influence de l'art Japonais.

Si vous-vous promenez sur le bord de La Seine à Asnières, par exemple vous pouvez embrasser d'un coup d'oeil, le toit rouge et la muraille éclatante du blancheur d'un chalet, le vert tendre d'un peuplier, la jaune de la route, le bleu de la rivière. A midi en été, toute couleur nous apparaitre crue, intense, sans dégradation possible ou enveloppement dans une teinte générale. Eh bien! cela peut sembler étrange mais n'en est pas moins vrai, il a fallu arrivée parmi nous des albums japonais pour quelqu'un osât s'asseoir sur le bord d'une rivière, pour juxtaposer sur une toile un toit qui fut hardiment rouge, une muraille qui fut blanche, un peuplier vert, une route jaune et de l'eau bleu. Avant l'exemple donné par les Japonais c'était impossible, le peintre mentait toujours. La nature avec ses tons forcés lui crevait les yeux, jamais sur la toile on ne voyait que des couleurs atténuées dans une demiteinte générale.

Lors qu'on a eu sous les yeux des images japonaises, sur lesquelles s'étaient côté à côté les tons les plus tranchés et les plus aigus, on a enfin compris qu'il avait pour reproduire certains effets de la nature qu'on avait négligé ou crus impossibles à rendre jusqu'à ce jour, des procédés nouveaux qu'il était bon d'essayer. Car ces images japonaises que tant de gens n'avaient d'abord voulu prendre que pour un bariolage sont d'une fidélité frappante. Qu'on demande à ceux qui ont visité le Japon. A chaque instant, pour ma part, il m'arrive de retrouver sur un éventail ou dans un album la sensation exacte des scènes et du paysage que j'ai vu au Japon. Je regarde un album japonais et je dis: Oui, c'est bien comme cela que m'est apparu le Japon: c'est bien ainsi, son atmosphère lumineuse et transparente, que la mer s'étend bleu et colorée....L'Art Japonais rendait des aspects particulières de la nature - par procédés de coloris hardis et nouveaux, il ne pouvait manquer de frapper des artistes, chercheurs et aussi a-t-il fortement influencé les Impressionistes.

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Like Duranty, Duret sees Japanese landscape prints as springing from a range of natural experiences, notably colour, associated with bright sunlight. It is noticeable that he talks about Japanese art offering a range of devices for Western Art. On another occasion he wrote;

Sans les procédés divulgués par les Japonais; tout un ensemble du moyen nous fut resté inconnu.

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It is mistaken to see Duret's assertions as a claim that the landscape print is objective in its presentation of the image of the

landscape. Like Duranty, Duret sees it as an accurate description of visual sensations in their aesthetic aspect only; in subjective terms of subtlety of colour and tone, of a perceptual analogy, not a coloured photograph.

Duret's personal experience of Japan must have made him a credible authority for many artists, therefore his assertion about the authenticity of the images in Japanese prints would have reinforced the tendency to see Japanese art in terms of naturalist art theories. He must have repeated this opinion many times during the 1870's. Regamey later made the same observation, given the tremendous stress on the observation of nature and the use of natural ornament in the writings of many Japanese enthusiasts it is easy to understand the enormous influence which Duret's ideas had.

In 1882 he wrote two articles on Japanese prints for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts". He had, by then, established contact with Anderson, the English medical professor who had formed a large collection of Japanese prints and had become an authority on Japanese art. Moreover Duret had acquired a reputation for promoting Japanese art as a "vitalising" force. De Goncourt stigmatised Duret as a "Marchande de l'eau de vie japonisant". 162

As a result of his studies Duret is aware of the basic history of Japanese art. He refers to eighteenth century Japanese histories of painting as well as to eighteenth century albums of various kinds. However he praises these albums in terms of their relationship to Hokusai and his school. The drawings in "Jiki-shi-sho", an album of drawings by Monkuri, are praised in this manner;

L'auteur s'est représenté, au frontispiece du livre, avec un grand parapluie qui le préserve de la pluie qui tombe; il tient une lanterne à la main, sans doute par allusion au but de son livre, qu'est de faire la lumière dans les arts du dessin; il s'avance, de cet air narquois que savent si bien rendre les artistes japonais, vers une tori flanquée d'un grand pin contourne. C'est là une petite page absolument japonaise, qui pourrait avoir été dessinée cinquante ans plus tard en pleine époque d'Hokusai.

Duret believed the development of colour printing techniques to have occurred right at the end of the eighteenth century. He is the first French critic to describe works by Utamaro which he saw at the British Museum, though he did not place great value on them compared to the work of Hokusai;

On a d'Otamaro vers 1800; de grandes planches de femmes d'un dessin élané et d'une extrême élégance, où le ton rouge ne domine plus exclusivement, mais où le coloris se compose de couleurs variées pour chaque composition. Des lors l'art des impressions en couleur peut être considéré comme pleinement développé et, avec les élèves et successeurs immédiats d'Otamaro, commence la reproduction des scènes de théâtre.

Hokusai remained the great master and Duret presents an accurate biography of him relying on the work of Dickins and Anderson for his information. Duret knew of only two paintings by Hokusai, in the British Museum, and assumed that Hokusai worked exclusively as a print artist. The "Mangwa" is praised as an accurate record of all Japanese life, in drawings which almost breathe. Duret praises several of Hokusai's works, notably the "100 Views of Fuji". He regards the artist as the equal of the greatest European draughtsmen;

Hokusai a le don si rare de mettre sur le papier des personnages pleins de vie, avec lesquels on entre en communication et qui, à la longue, vous restent dans le souvenir, aussi réels que si on les eut connus vivants. Le peuple sorti de son pinceau est doué d'un inépuisable humour; le comique et la gaieté, ces choses essentiellement japonaises d'épanouissent et débordent en lui: Hokusai a, comme paysagiste, la même supériorité que comme dessinateur de figures. Ses paysages, mélange d'observation réelle de la nature et la fantaisie sont pleins de poésie, d'air et de profondeur.

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This treatment of Hokusai, stressing his poetry as well as his observation of reality, makes it clear that Duret did not believe that Hokusai was a simple eye, an objective observer. *There was more poetry in Impressionist methods than is usually admitted.*

Poetry and the real occur as the two complementaries in Duret's

appreciation of Japanese art as frequently as they do in the writings of Burty or De Goncourt. Moreover Duret was well aware that he was applying a carefully thought out Western aesthetic to Japan. He states clearly that Hokusai's reputation as the greatest Japanese artist is dependent on Western opinion, in Japan Hokusai remained an artist of the people, an Oriental Daumier faced with the "Ecole de Rome" of the Chinese tradition. This picture of Hokusai and of the Ukiyoye print-makers as a whole, could of course make them highly attractive to the realist "Refusés", "Impressionistes" and all the others whose art combined some populist intention with failure to achieve official recognition.

Duret's conception of Impressionism in terms of Japanese art and vice versa is given further development in his discussion of an album by Kesai Yeisen, an early nineteenth century artist specially famous for his blue prints. The album, "Rigaku guashiki" (1804), was related to the "Mangwa" in conception;

Cette publication est le triomphe de l'impressionisme.  
 Les hommes, les animaux, les plantes qui s'y trouvent  
 figures, sont réduits à la plus simple expression. On  
 y voit des groupes en mouvement, tels que bonzes en  
 procession soldats en marche, où chaque individu est  
 représenté par un seul trait tortillé du pinceau.

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Further on Duret characterises Japanese prints as "Cet art des délicates impressions".

Duret's conception of Impressionism clearly included the use of expressive selection by the artist, not simply the ideal of a record of reality passively perceived. Duret's conception of Japanese art and its significance in Western art is much closer to De Goncourt's than is often realised.

Duret also discusses the work of Hokusai's students and that of Toyohuni II, Kuniyoshi and Hiroshige. He is fully aware of the collaboration between the latter three artists. He even gives a brief notice to Yosai who died in 1878, the most important Imperial Court painter of

the early Meiji restoration period, whose collected drawings were published in 1850.

We may therefore say that Duret's acquaintance with Japanese visual art in the 1870's like that of De Goncourt's was almost exclusively with early nineteenth century work and that an awareness of the eighteenth century artists and printmakers only began in the early 1880's. This is confirmed by Duret's characterisation of Japanese prints in his writings of this time as misplaced and arid in the preface to the catalogue of his large collection of prints which he gave to the Louvre. He asserts in his 1900 Preface that until the 1880's the Japanese booksellers did not believe that Westerners were interested in earlier prints than those of the nineteenth century.

In his book of collected essays, "Critique d'Avant Garde", published in 1885, the articles on Japanese prints are reprinted and with them another essay, "L'Art Japonais" dated 1884, but with no indication of a previous place of publication.

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In this essay Duret raises for the first time the idea that there is no hierarchy of aesthetic values or art objects in Japanese art, and he criticises those critics who have attempted to apply such a European idea to it. He discusses the merits of all Japanese arts and points to the unity of artist and craftsman in Japan. While acknowledging that the unified quality of Japanese art has prevented the emergence of an art with great metaphysical significance, he defends it as the most harmonious in the world and sees the restrictions on its ability to deal with profound questions as the price paid for this harmony. We know that this is a complete misconception and that Japan in fact does possess a profound religious art and a great symbolic architecture. Duret knew this also, for he wrote about it in his account of his travels in Japan. Duret is in fact voicing a Western problem in his criticism of Eastern art, for it was Western artists who increasingly in the 1870's felt the

necessity to abandon metaphysical and religious problems in order to create a harmonious visual art.

The essay also contains the most precise formulation of Duret's belief that the attraction of Japanese art was produced by a mixture of a direct method of painting and an extreme sensibility to magnificent light and climate.

L'artiste japonais, auquel nul retour sur la première touche n'est possible, fixe sa vision sur le papier, de prime saut avec une hardiesse, une légèreté, une sûreté que les artistes européens les mieux doués habitués à d'autres pratiques, ne sauraient atteindre. C'est à ce procédé, cultant qu'aux particularités de leur goût; que les Japonais ont du d'avoir été les premiers et les plus parfaits des Impressionistes.

Vivant sous un ciel lumineux dans une atmosphère d'un extraordinaire transparence, les Japonais semblent posséder une acuité et une délicatesse de vision supérieure à celles des Européens. Pour eux promener l'oeil sur de belles couleurs est une volupté. Aussi dans leur art, l'éclat et l'harmonie du coloris sont ils, plus que dans tout autre, une condition essentielle de beauté. On peut même dire qu'ils ne sauraient envisager comme oeuvre d'art un objet pêchant par la couleur. De là vient que dans la coloration des choses qui prêtent le mieux aux effets de couleurs, les étoffes, les broderies, la céramique, ils sont arrivés à des combinaisons de tons et à des raffinements de nuances tout à fait extraordinaires.

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Duret is the outstanding "committed" critic who supported Japanese art. He saw it as an essential part of the development of the Western artistic tradition, a major factor in the development of Impressionism and naturalistic art theories, no different in character to other important factors such as the art of Corot or Courbet. Duret's writings on Impressionism make it clear that he was absolutely committed to defending it as part of a continuous Western tradition. To do this he was prepared to impose a Western naturalist interpretation of Japanese art and even to deny his own knowledge of the full range of Japanese art.

His interpretation of Japanese prints is especially valuable for the insight it offers into the attitude of contemporary artists to them, for as the owner of one of the largest collections of prints in Paris in

the 1870's, his opinions would be of some influence and he would naturally be aware of the artists' opinions about them. I shall discuss the truth of his assertions about the central role of Japanese art in the next section of this thesis.

We have seen that the critic, Ernst Chesneau, was very much involved in promoting Japanese art in the 1860's, and that he wrote an interpretation of it from a realistic viewpoint. During the 1870's he wrote nothing about Japanese art. Then in 1878 he wrote an account of Japonisme in Paris in an article entitled "Le Japon à Paris", in which he gave a comprehensive account of every artist whom he felt to have been influenced by Japanese art, together with a short history of the discovery of Japanese art in France. His account is somewhat rambling and shows no discrimination between the different types of artists who were affected by Japanese art or their reasons for being so affected.

Chesneau's article gives a false impression of a unified artistic modernity, a superficial linking of all who remotely expressed any enthusiasm for the Far East. At one point he states that Japanese art had a profound effect on the nature of French art, while at another he claims that it supplied no more than a confirmation of the individual artists' vision.

His description of the value of Japanese art follows many of the themes of the critics we have discussed in this thesis. Asymmetry, naturalism, new decorative principles, the intuitive perception of subtle colour and many other such ideas are referred to within the text. The conglomeration thus created had served as the basis for most art-historical accounts of Japonisme. Chesneau had been out of touch with current developments in the visual art for some time, thus his account is written from the outside and confused. Chesneau's article says very little about Japonisme except that it existed. He was clearly committed to modernity and to the importance of Japanese art but his commitment was of

a vague, ill-informed, journalistic kind. His article has been grossly overvalued. In his next book "L'Education de l'artiste", published in 1880, there are chapters on Nature and Art, Landscape with a discussion of Monet and others and on the decorative arts. Japan is not mentioned once.

Apart from critics committed to naturalism who supported Japan there were also critics committed to academic art who attacked Japanese art but denied that it had the aesthetic content which the naturalist writers and artists saw in it.

George Bousquet belonged to the first of these groups. A traveller to Japan in the early 1870's, he published a series of highly informative articles describing the life and culture of the country. These articles played a significant role in building up the French picture of Japan. He thus acquired the cachet of an authority. In 1877 when he published a criticism of Japanese art couched in Western terms in the "Revue Des Deux Mondes" it was taken very seriously.

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Bousquet characterises contemporary Japan as decadent in the face of Europe, like Egypt facing the rise of Graeco-Roman civilisation. The art of the West was characterised as a struggle against incoherence;

L'art est chez nous le résultat d'une réaction  
voulue du génie humaine contre le désordre  
incohérent et sublime de l'univers organique,

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and the finest manifestation of organic order according to Bousquet was symmetry, as found in vertebrate animals. The absence of axial symmetry in Japanese architecture and of visible symmetry in their plastic arts was a sure sign that they were inferior to Western art. Bousquet turned the argument that Japanese society and climate favoured the production of beauty, upside down. The Japanese were "un peuple routinier, formaliste, enfermé, soit par les lois, soit par quelques conditions climatologiques", which inhibited them from creating a serious art.

All Japanese art forms are discussed by Bousquet, in an informed

manner and each in turn is criticised for its failure to measure up to Western aesthetic standards, in particular with regard to the central expressive function of the human figure in Western aesthetics. Of sculpture, he says;

Eh bien! non, le Japonais ne fait pas le moindre effort pour voir et montrer le réel par son côté éternel et typique; on ne sent pas chez lui la recherche individuelle, le ressouvenir inquiet d'une beauté supérieure entrevue dans quelque autre monde et pour-suivre dans celui-ci, aussi n'aborde-t-il jamais les difficultés du nu.

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The same criticism is levelled at painting;

La figuration du corps humain n'est pas à ses yeux un but, mais un moyen; c'est un caractère hiéroglyphique agrandi, un signe conventionnel dont il se sert pour écrire un traité d'histoire. Dans ces compositions traitées avec un formalisme étroit, on ferait en vain effort pour assigner à chaque peintre un style particulier, c'est à dire une manière personnelle de voir et de rendre la nature, puisque ni les autres ne s'en occupent et qu'aucun n'a songé de sa vie à prendre un modèle. Il n'y-a-pas d'écoles diverses comme chez nous. Les maîtres ne se distinguent que par la délicatesse de leur faire.

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Before either Regamey, Burty or De Goncourt, Bousquet published a brief accurate account of Japanese painting methods in this article. While in Japan he had visited the studio of a painter called Genzabaro. Unlike other early witnesses of Japanese working methods he was not impressed.

Voici tout d'abord en trois coups de pinceau, une forme noire confuse, qui tout à l'heure représentera un rocher; de là se lance une tige menue, surmontée d'une noue à jointes évasées; cette noue transforme en chrysanthème puis la tige se garnit de feuilles, il s'en détache d'autres fleurs, dans chacune on peut compter le nombre de coups de pinceau; un seul suffit quelquefois pour représenter la révolution d'une feuille tordue. Jetant par ci par là une vigueur sans jamais s'y reprendre à deux fois, pour finir la même trait, sans se donner un instant de repos ou de réflexion l'artiste travaille avec la rapidité et à sûreté d'un mécanisme.

Helas c'est en effet vers ce but trivial que tendent ses efforts. Le mérite consiste dans une très grande habileté de main et une très grande promptitude d'exécution.

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Bousquet saw this method of painting merely as a means of producing enough work to live on, moreover he claimed that greater works, such as large kakemonos or screen paintings were all degraded copies of old masters and that no Japanese artist had the ability to produce a complex original painting.

Bousquet attacked the formal elements of Japanese painting as an ignorant nonsense. They knew nothing of perspective, chiaroscuro, the laws of composition or anatomy. They created no optical illusions nor ordered images with "une savante continuation des lignes", instead they produced heaped confusions.

Bousquet however is not ignorant. He agrees with most other commentators on the nature of Japanese art. He even <sup>is in accord</sup> agrees with Duret and others about the source of their use of bright colour - the uniquely transparent Japanese air and the bright sunshine;

Quoi du surprenant que, charmés par cette fête de la lumière, les Japonais aient essayé avec bonheur d'en fixer l'éclat dans les oeuvres? Imitateurs patients et fidèles de la nature ils n'ont pas eu d'autre maître. C'est d'elle qu'ils ont appris à chercher l'harmonie optique non dans les dégradations savantes mais dans la juxtaposition des tons francs portés à leur plus haute puissance et s'exaltant réciproquement par le contraste; à faire vibrer et chatoyer la couleur par le rapprochement des diverses teintes, en un mot, à étaler hardiment les trésors de leur palette en vue de produire un spectacle joyeux et invraisemblable, une féerie resplendissante. C'est à cette école qu'ils ont pris l'audace de peindre sur un fond d'or mat des paysages, des oiseaux, semblables à autant de silhouettes entrevues dans l'atmosphère d'un coucher de soleil.

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Despite this, Bousquet does not approve of the aesthetic attitudes which produced this attitude to colour unlike the pro-Japanese critics he does not see an admiration for nature as a defensible aesthetic theory. He argued that Far Eastern art was of little value because it did not remake nature but presented it directly and uncritically. Bousquet accepted the belief about the relation of Japanese art to nature held by most critics and artists, but challenged the value placed on this belief;

Le naturalisme du Chinois - du Japonais se traduit par une admiration sans critique et sans restriction du spectacle merveilleux qu'offre la planète. Ils n'imaginent pas d'autre chose, ils ne rêvent pas mieux; ils n'essaient pas de réaliser, dans leurs oeuvres, des lois idéales entrevues dans la conscience, et d'asservir les formes au foi supérieur de l'éternelle raison. Ils ne sont pas tourmentés du besoin du rétablir l'harmonie dans le chaos; l'imitation leur suffit, il n'y-a-pas pour eux une catégorie du beau, au-delà et en dehors des beautés visibles et palpables, le type ne se sépare du signe, ils voient Dieu dans la nature et point ailleurs.

Japanese art was an imitation of "ce gracieuse et picquant désordre" that Bousquet saw in the Japanese landscape, for him this was not a great achievement.

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He dismisses prints, the great central example of the pro-naturalist enthusiasts of Japanese art in one paragraph;

Il n'a produit que des estampes au trait, confuses, monotones, mal venues, qui servent d'illustrations aux romans, aux petits traites populaires, et des caricatures, quelquefois spirituelles parle rarement par l'exécution, qu'on vend pour quelques centimes apres les avoir grossièrement passées en couleur. Comme exécution et comme goût, cela rappelle notre images d'Epinal; mais n'en est pas moins religieusement acheté dans les magasins parisiens par de prétendues amateurs, victimes d'un engouement bizarre, et trop heureux de se passer à bon marché la fantasia de quelque objet venue de ce prestigieux pays du soleil levant.

Bousquet's account is well-informed and consistently reasoned. It was clearly written in the context of a great public controversy over values such as naturalism, descriptive techniques in the visual arts and the nature of the "poetry of experience". Bousquet took the "academic" viewpoint and saw the values contained in Japanese art as inferior to the Western tradition. Like other writing on Japanese art, his work is at the same time a pronouncement on the current aesthetic debate in the West. It offers valuable evidence of the central position that the Japanese example occupied in this debate. In his concluding paragraph he makes clear that his essay has been a special plea against the value of that example within the Western tradition;

Non, ce n'est pas à l'extrême Orient de nous fournir des modèles. Ce n'est pas à cette source épuisée que notre imagination se renouvellera. L'art japonais comme l'art chinois est un art depourvu de souffle, d'aspirations élevées... Réaliste et prosaïque ou bien fantastique et monstrueux, il ne procède d'aucune conception supérieure et n'en saurait provoquer.

Yet one cannot help observing the close relationship between De Goncourt's justification of Japanese art in terms of the notion of art as a search for the poetic in the real, and Bousquet's definition of "la vérité typique dans la vérité réelle" as the basis of the Western tradition, a factor which could not be found in Japanese art. Clearly the same idea could not mean the same thing to both men in terms of artistic form.

Japanese art seems to have acted as a touchstone of western aesthetic theory, forcing precision in meaning and bringing differences into direct conflict. Ultimately the debate about the values inherent in Western art and the changing assumptions about it was focussed by Japanese art. It was not simply a disagreement about terms, for as we have seen there was surprising unanimity in the 1870's about the nature of Japanese art.

In 1879 a small book, "Le Japon Artiste", was published in Paris anonymously. It was the work of the critic Le Blanc du Vernet and was given wider circulation when it was published in two parts in "L'Art" in the following year.

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Blanc du Vernet expresses great enthusiasm for Japanese art though his account of it is of little interest. It seems to be based entirely on the 1878 exhibition and the publications of the Official Commission. He regards Japanese art as a "respectable" traditional art form and treats it in that context.

One point in his essay is important for this discussion; his treatment of Japanese naturalism. He saw Japanese representations of nature as valuable because they were artificial. He resisted completely the notion that Japanese art and Western Impressionism had anything in common.

Japanese Impressionism was "vibrante et spirituelle", derived from a close religious contact with nature and was very different from the "élucubrations lourdes et maladroites de nos impressionnistes".

In the West, "le pinceau s'arrête au moment où la difficulté commence" and spiritual difficulties were completely avoided.

This is a remarkably perceptive observation of a difference in intention and social context between Western and Eastern naturalism. This difference was not remarked on so directly by other writers, although it is a crucial aspect of the debate about the relationship between Impressionism and Japanese art. The accusation of abandoning "spiritual" values was constantly repeated against Impressionism. Japanese naturalism was known to have a basis in Buddhism, yet no other adverse critics of Impressionism ever tried to dissociate one from the other. The disassociation of Japanese art from naturalistic ideas was phenomena of the later 1880's when symbolism became the dominant aesthetic mode in France. Fénéon, for instance, frequently appealed to Japanese art as a great example of symbolism. Further evidence of the range of audience being reached by Japanese art is provided in a book written by Viollet Le Duc as an introduction to the practice of art in "Histoire d'un Dessinateur".

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Le Duc uses the teachings of an imaginary drawing master, M. Majorin, to put over his own ideas about art and art education. Le Duc stresses the unique value of different national forms in art and writes about Egyptian art, Leonardo da Vinci, the Venus de Milo and the great collections of the Louvre as equivalents to Japanese art and to each other.

Writing about a Japanese print album he observes that the Japanese were excellent draughtsmen and close observers of nature, and praises the print albums as records of the whole of Japanese life,

tous ces personnages sont à leur affaire et ne posent pas pour la galerie, quelle sincérité et quel esprit dans ces attitudes! Comme tout cela est vivant!

He gives an illustration of the drawings which he praises as so natural and lifelike. This makes it clear that those who praised Japanese drawing for its closeness to nature and direct observation had in mind the common print albums of the late nineteenth century, for Viollet Le Duc reproduces examples from these.

As is well-known, Le Duc was detested by a great many of the artists of the 1870's for his hidebound academicism, his greatest reputation being as a dogmatic architectural historian. Renoir once left a studio because he discovered it faced on to the Rue Viollet Le Duc. It is therefore surprising to find a sympathetic discussion of the naturalist attitude to landscape in his work. Moreover it is a discussion which stresses poetry in naturalism as opposed to science.

La méthode scientifique consiste à donner les résultats de toute observation, si minimes qu'ils soient en apparence, une analyse aussi complète que possible de l'objet ou du sujet observé, quitté à en déduire la synthèse. L'art ou la poésie, si tu veux, peut faire cette analyse et par procéder comme procède la science; mais elle doit ne présenter que l'effet dominant, l'impression majeure qui se fixe dans l'esprit en y laissant une trace indélébile; c'est là son mérite et la difficulté, car pour rendre cette impression majeure; il faut la ressentir soi-même, ce qui n'est pas donné à tout le monde; et beaucoup, dans les lettres et les arts, se croient poètes qui ne sont que des commissaires priseurs faisant une inventaire. Eh bien! pour en revenir à ces dessins japonais voici tel site par exemple, qui, à l'ordre de quelques traites et de trois teintes; représente une vague se couronnant de mousse emportée par le vent; au dessus du dos de cette vague se découpe la silhouette d'arbres et le sommet de Fou Si, du volcan. Une nuée d'oisillons tourné sur un ciel gris. Le moyen d'exécution est des plus simples. Mais les lignes sont si heureusement observées et rendues, les formes de cette mousse déchirée par le vent sont si admirablement interprétées, par suite d'une observation évidemment minutieuse, que ce croquis produit une profonde impression.

writing is equivalent to the discussion of poetry and the real in De Concourt's works. The problem of defining and reconciling these two factors in a work of art runs through all the critical writings on Japanese art in France in the 1870's. It first appeared in relation to Japanese art in the 1860's as we have seen. It became the central aesthetic debate in France during the 1870's. The attempt to locate Japanese art within Western aesthetics provided a focal point for it.

Those who wrote on Japanese art from a "committed" standpoint in Western art took differing views on its importance which paralleled their view of Western art. The "committed" critics are therefore significant for indications which they give of the range of opinions it was possible to hold about Japanese art in the 1870's. They also show that discussion about Japanese art was spread throughout the artistic activity of Paris and not restricted to those who had an immediate involvement with Impressionism.

The French critical response as a whole shows that in the 1870's Japanese art was becoming an accepted part of the artistic possibilities available to Western art. It could be said that it became a recognised element of Western visual experience, that it entered the tradition of Western art, for as we have seen a system of meanings and associations developed round it very rapidly as a result of the activities of the Japonistes and the dealers.

CHAPTER EIGHT.French Illustrated works on Japan and the work of Louis Gonse.

There was no parallel in France to the works of Audsley, Bowes and the other major chromolithographic publications of Japanese art undertaken in England in the 1870's. However in 1879 as a response to the 1878 Exhibition there appeared "L'Album Japonais Motifs inédits de décoration japonaise", edited by Fraipont. The 49 reproductions in it conform to the impression given by criticism that natural motifs and in particular those in the work of Hokusai remained the most popular aspects of Japanese art. There are several illustrations derived from "The Mangwa". The remainder are decorative motifs or bird or flower subjects which say nothing new about the nature of Japonisme. The reproductions are, however, of a reasonable accuracy. I(95)

This is more than can be said of the Japanese volume of the "Encyclopédie des arts décoratifs de l'Orient", edited by Collinot and Beaumont, which was published in 1883. In the forty plates of this work, black and white Japanese prints are transformed into simpering pastel coloured motifs, eminent examples of the degraded aspects of nineteenth century decorative taste. In particular motifs from "The Mangwa" and other books by Hokusai are treated in this way. As can be seen, the distortion in this illustration of a peacock motif from Hokusai, the motifs are also rationalised by being given a descriptive background. 181

This work is made to seem even more ridiculous if it is compared with the same motif reproduced accurately in Gonse's "L'Art Japonais" also of 1883.

Louis Gonse who was the chief editor of the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" was a relatively late adherent to Japonisme, probably a convert of the 1878 Exhibition. However he made up for this by rapidly acquiring an enormous collection despite his limited knowledge. De Goncourt mocks his ignorance in his Journal in 1882, by recounting that Gonse I(96 a,b)

believed that Hokusai had made embroidered cloths (foukousas) and had allowed himself to be taken in on this point by Wakai the Japanese dealer.

In 1883, with the aid of S. Bing, Wakai and probably of Tademasa Hayashi, Bing's Japanese assistant, Gonse organised a major "retrospective" exhibition of Japanese art in the George Petit gallery. This exhibition is discussed in detail in the next chapter, Gonse made use of his work for this exhibition to prepare a massive two volume work, "L'Art Japonais", which was published in a limited edition of 1,400 copies in the same year. The book contained a history of Japan and a description of Japanese civilisation and a section on painting, prints, metalwork and lacquer, nominally by Gonse, and a special section on Japanese ceramics by Bing who was rapidly becoming an authority on them. All the texts are authoritative, but the most important aspect of the work was the collection of over one thousand engravings and 64 plates, some were photogravures but many were chromolithographs. These form a remarkable record of the state of Japanese collections in Paris in the early 1880's and they will be of great value in this thesis. We know that Gonse's taste for earlier and more refined works was influenced by the high-minded attitudes of Bing and Wakai, but this does not detract from the representative character. In a sense the book also marks the beginning of the change in Japanese taste which occurred in the late 1880's, the recognition of eighteenth century paintings, lacquers and ceramics as being the finest products of Japanese art.

The chapter on the history of painting has a shape similar to that of a modern history. Gonse traces painting back to that of the nineteenth century and reproduces a painting of a Buddha by Kanaoka owned by Wakai, which was in the 1883 Exhibition. He stresses the Korin school in the seventeenth century and Okio, Utamaro, Shunso and the Uki-yo-e (école vulgaire) in the eighteenth century. Hokusai nonetheless has a

chapter devoted to him. Gonse wrote "Il est à la fois le Rembrandt, le Callot, le Goya et le Daumier du Japon". "The Mangwa" is described as the complete human comedy and Hokusai is presented as a man of the people, just as in the writings of Duret who influenced Gonse, though this assertion is kept in proportion to the excellent short biography present.

The illustrations equally reflect the new discriminating taste towards Japanese art. They include some marvellous photogravures of ink paintings, including an excellent painting of a fish from the Burty collection, and several kakemonos of birds owned by Gonse. There are also some excellent reproductions of watercolours by Hokusai also in the Gonse collection.

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The colour reproductions of prints are also chosen for the new taste. They show the soft tones of the eighteenth century prints even when the artists are of the nineteenth century as in the print "Japonaises en Promenade" by Gakoutei, from the Cernuschi collection.

Gonse's book marks the end of Japonisme and the beginning of serious scholarship about Japanese art. It is not necessary to discuss its scholarly content here.

The last product of old-fashioned Japonisme was an article written for the journal "Paris Illustré" by Bing's assistant, Tadamasa Hayashi in 1886, entitled "Le Japon". The article included a special note on art and many illustrations of Japanese prints and paintings.

Hayashi sees Japanese art as close to nature, "charmant et plein de verve". He also stresses the poetic fantasy found in Japanese work;

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La peinture Japonais, qui que ayant une methode  
incomplète, a su revivre à la fois nature et  
l'imagination.

Nature and poetry are still seen as the basis of Japanese art.

De Goncourt's Japonisme is specially represented in the article by the illustration of modern Japanese painting showing girls on a swing

\ a la Watteau.

A copy of this magazine and of the early issues of Bing's "Le Japon Artistique" were among the prints taken to Arles by Vincent Van Gogh.

"Le Japon Artistique" was a magazine published simultaneously in English, French and German, from 1888 to 1891. It contained a great many articles by various authorities and collectors, and a magnificent series of reproductions of every aspect of Japanese art. The magazine is a monument to the great age of Japonisme and amateurs of Japanese art. It is beautifully produced with magnificent decorative layout as one can see in the first page.

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I(98)

In the next decade Bing presided over the sale and dispersal of every major collection of Japanese art, beginning with Burty's in 1891, and ending with Duret's in 1900 and the era of Japonisme was over.

The enormous concentration of Japanese art in Paris from the later 1870's had had an overwhelming effect on the French visual arts, which will be discussed below.

The Apogee of Far Eastern enthusiasm, exhibitions in 1878 and 1883 in London and Paris.

To complete the account of Far Eastern influence given by this thesis it is necessary to examine three important public manifestations which occurred at the end of the period studied. These are the Far Eastern sections of the Exposition Internationale of 1878 in Paris, the Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Works of Fine Art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, in the same year, and the "Exposition Retrospectif de l'Art Japonais" held at the George Petit Gallery in Paris in 1883.

Between them these three public events mark the apogee of popular interest in Far Eastern art.

Japan was less committed to later international exhibitions such as

the 1889 or 1900 exhibitions in Paris. Moreover, although there were large scale exhibitions of work on Western collections at a later date such as the 1910 "Red Cross" exhibition, they arose from the quiet privileged world of collectors. China, of course, never recovered from the deprivations of her dowager Empress. Her appearance at the 1878 exhibition was entirely due to the domination of the Chinese Customs and Excise Office by the European administrators who organised the exhibition.

### 1878

By far the largest and most influential of these exhibitions was the Far Eastern appearance in the 1878 show. This is because it was an occasion for large-scale international propaganda as well as a centre of trade. Moreover the merchants of China and Japan had been highly stimulated by the remarkable sale of Far Eastern goods in Europe in the 1870's.

The result was that both countries sent large quantities of goods for the exhibition, most of which was modern. Each country's appearance was divided into two parts. One part, in "Avenue des Nations" in the Champ du Mars, consisted of a long deep pavillion with a short street-facing facade, in which most of the "modern" goods were on exhibition and were for sale. The other half consisted of exhibition space in the exhibition of historic art of all peoples mounted across the Seine in Trocadero. These exhibitions drew largely on collections in Paris as well as works sent from the Far East. The difference in quality between the "Ancient" and "Modern" wares was a cause of great despair amongst Far Eastern enthusiasts.

Several commentators on the exhibition, notably Georges Bousquet, were appalled by the low standard of the work. They saw the new "commercial" work as infinitely inferior. Nonetheless the "commercial" work was very influential and it should be studied.

Each nation also had a "pavillion" in the Trocadéro gardens,

supposed to demonstrate the vernacular architectural and life patterns of the country concerned. Of the non-European countries, only China, Japan and Cambodia took full advantage of this and built work typical of their own countries. China's pavillion was used as a second selling point for its goods. Japan built a small Japanese house.

Both countries placed great stress on their art and craft works in their exhibition although, as Bousquet rightly pointed out, this formed a minor part of their total overseas trade. While acknowledging the tremendous popularity of the Far Eastern exhibits, Bousquet resented them;

Cette exhibition représente les industries de l'extrême Orient tout-juste comme le magasin de Barbédienne ou celui de Beurdeley transportés au Japon représenteraient l'infinie variété des industries française....

Le biblot (puis qu'il faut l'appeler par son nom) envahit tout, déborde de toutes parts enjambe audacieusement, d'un section sur l'autre. Vous allez chercher le Japon chez lui, la Chine chez elle; vous vous retrouverez devant l'inévitable joujou confectionné à l'usage européen qui s'étale aujourd'hui à l'angle de tous nos boulevards, dans la montre de tous nos magasins.

Il ne pouvait guère en être autrement, après l'accueil fait aux produits du Japon tant à Vienne qu'à Philadelphie par le succès les Japonais nous en ont envoyé de grosses cargaisons sorties de mêmes ateliers et enlevées d'ailleurs avec la même avidité. Les Chinois, à leur tour, gens à ne jamais négliger une bonne affaire ont voulu disputer les chalands à leurs voisins. Les uns et les autres donc ouvert boutique au Champ du Mars. Escomptant habilement la satisfaction ingénieusement qu'éprouve l'acheteur à traiter directement avec un Fils du Japon ou un sujet du Mikado; ils vendent au décuple de leur prix normal des objets qu'on trouverait presque sans exception et à des taux moins exorbitants chez nos grands entrepositaires parisiens.

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The prices were indeed excessive. "The London Illustrated News" records that between £300 and £600 was being paid for a small bronze; large works sold for thousands of pounds - equivalent to the price of major paintings at the time.

Bousquet's views were not typical of the general reactions to the

Far Eastern appearance. De Goncourt selected Japanese manufacturers as one of the three worthwhile items in the show.

Du fond, dans toute cette Exposition de 1878, il-y à les produits japonais, les imitations de verres de Venise et le moulage russe d'un seul jet d'un corps de femme.

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The great shock of discovery which marked the 1867 exhibition was missing but in general the Japanese were still believed to have the finest exhibits of all.

Chesneau records that the whole of the Japanese collection in the Champs du Mars was bought up in three days after the exhibition opened, despite their high prices.

Ce n'est plus une mode, c'est de l'engouement  
c'est de la folie.

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A less committed author, Emile Bergerat, selected Japanese art as a main theme in his book, "Les Chefs d'oeuvre à L'Exposition Universelle de 1878" - collecting many articles on the Japanese exhibition.

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There was some controversy over the arrangement of the exhibition, some people like Gonse thought that the division of the exhibition site into two parts split by the river, and the use of endless parallel "hangers" on the Champ du Mars was exciting and aesthetically appealing despite the prevailing rust red paint on their roofs. On the other hand, many people thought that in general the show was vulgar, badly organised, and that it was difficult to see any area of work as a whole. Chesneau made these points as part of a complaint about the relatively limited space allotted to the Japanese show.

Les membres des jurys de toute classe savent à quelles marches et contre-marches forcées, à quelles fatigues et à quelles lacunes d'examen cette dispersion les a condamnés. Si l'on veut borner son observation aux oeuvres de même pays, la fatigue pour être moindre est cependant excessive encore, puis qu'il faut se transporter des cimes du Trocadero jusqu'à l'Ecole militaire, et la difficulté de comparer reste la même. Elle s'augmente au Japon de l'étroite parcimonie avec laquelle le genie civil lui a mesuré l'espace

dans les galeries du Trocadéro. M.M. les ingénieurs, qui ne se piquent pas, je suppose, d'être artistes, ont disposé de beaucoup de place pour toute sorte de tableaux vivants empaillés et de ridicules mannequins qui de leurs yeux blancs poursuivent le visiteur à tous les détours, mais ils ont rigoureusement mesuré l'entendue aux trésors de l'art japonais des divers âges. C'est une faute, car le grand et légitime succès qui était réservé à l'exposition moderne organisée par les soins de M.M. Matsugata et Maeda se fut accrue de beaucoup si la part faite aux envois officiels de l'art rétrospectif eut été plus importante.

The success of the Far Eastern exhibitions may, in part, have resulted from the excessive vulgarity of the remainder of the show, if indeed it was the funfair which Chesneau indicates. The disparate organisation of the exhibition has resulted in an equally disparate group of publications about the Far Eastern appearance. I have attempted to give a balanced picture of the exhibition from my reading of them. To save constant detailed references I give here a bibliographical note of the main sources.

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The close juxtaposition of the Chinese and the Japanese pavillions intensified the debate about the relative merit of the arts of each country.

Bousquet was severely critical of the Chinese work shown at the exhibition and of the Chinese buildings. He accused the Chinese of imitating European goods and denying their own traditions.

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Other critics felt that the Chinese exhibition prompted a revaluation of Chinese art. Duranty, for instance, wrote;

Je crois que nous avons souvent trop rabaisé l'art chinois pour exalter le japonais. Il ne faut pas oublier que celui-là est le père de celui-ci, et qu'en sculpture la Chine égale absolument le Japon. Assurement l'exposition chinoise sent le pays très développé, le grand pays, tandis qu'avec ses finesses artistiques le Japon a encore un peu du sauvage. Le Chinoise s'assoit; il a des fauteils, des tables, un mobilier. Rarement et si ce n'est en des scènes des temps anciens; les dessins représentent le Chinois accroupé par terre. Rarement, au contraire, les images nous montrent des Japonais, même des grands, assis sur des sièges.

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This is a strange reason for raising the evaluation of Chinese art. It may well be that the popular appreciation of all the Far Eastern exhibits was greatly encouraged because its form suggested a high stage of civilised development. This must be borne in mind when one considers the reliability of many of the statements about their popularity.

Several other writers also pointed to the more favourable impression created by Chinese art at this exhibition than previously. Henry Houssaye for instance made an interesting analogy;

On pourrait dire qu'il-y-a dans l'art chinois quelque chose de la patience, de l'effet et de la magnificence de l'art égyptien, et dans l'art japonais un peu de la grâce, du mouvement et de la liberté de l'art grec. Mais il est bon de le répéter par ces temps de fanatisme les japonais n'ont aucune idée du beau, ils sont aussi loin de la grandeur de l'art égyptien et de la beauté de l'art grec que la Venus hottentote est loin de la Venus de Milo.

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It was the 1878 exposition that, however confusedly, initiated in the Western mind the notion of a complementary stylistic relationship between China and Japan, rather than a comparison wholly denigratory to China.

Nonetheless it was Japan which was regarded as the greatest representative of the Far East. Japan figures prominently in the official decorative schemes for the Trocadero.

In the middle of the half circle of the Trocadero buildings was a fountain surrounded by stone statues personifying Air and Water and the six continents, one of which was "L'Asie en Japonaise par M. Falguière".

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The central space in the Trocadéro buildings was a 4,500 seat concert room. Behind the orchestra was a great arc or hemicycle designed for acoustic effects on which a M. Lameire painted a great allegory of the nations. France was in the centre on a throne playing a harp in the guise of the giver of harmony. Other nations were represented around her, including Japan, which was represented as a coolie driving the chariot

of the sun. This was a strange iconographical development, a confounding of the ideas of the Far East with a classical image which itself had recently been given a specific meaning in Ingres' "Apotheosis of Napoleon". It demonstrated the extent to which the idea of Japan had made headway even in the most academic circles. I(99) 192

A similar iconographical oddity was to be found on the peristyle of the entrance facade of the main exhibition in the Champs du Mars. Amongst the enormous plaster statues representing various nations was "Le Japon" by a M. Aizelin. It was a very much larger than life image of a young Japanese woman in a kimono and traditional Japanese hairstyle with combs. Her left hand holds flowers across her breast while her right hand rests on the rim of what appears to be a large shield resting on the pedestal. To her left is an imitation of a large Satsuma vase with an elephant's head handle. Louis Gonse selected it as the only interesting element in the whole decorative scheme; I(100) 193

puis la nullité navrante des grandes figures internationales en plâtre qui décorent toute la largeur du péristyle. On n'est pas en vérité plus médiocre. Il n'y-a guère à retenir dans toutes ces viragos que la Japonaise de M. Aizelin qui est charmante. 194

The pose of the sculpture and the entirely redundant shield place Aizelin's work well within the rhetorical tradition of nineteenth century public sculpture with its roots in the classical tradition. One is irresistably reminded of a Japanese "Liberty" or "Britannia". This is further evidence of the seriousness with which Japan was regarded by even the most unoriginal of nineteenth century artists. Indeed, taken with the evidence of Jarves and other critics it suggests that the conflict of values between academic art and Japan was not so simple or obvious as it has been assumed to have been.

These "official" decorations confirm the place that Japan had achieved in the European consciousness by 1878.

I will deal with the major Far Eastern exhibitions by country.

## China

The Chinese exhibition was entirely prepared by the office of the Director General of Customs, Shanghai, who at this time was the Englishman, Sir Robert Hart who dominated much of Chinese foreign policy during the later nineteenth century. Hart arranged for Englishmen to occupy most of the important posts in the Chinese customs and was thus able to pull together an impressive exhibition. 195

Exhibits were organised directly by the customs office and also by individual Chinese merchants and craftsmen, who were encouraged to send their wares by Parkes.

### Architecture of the Pavillions.

The architecture of the two Chinese buildings was carefully designed to reflect vernacular work. The Chinese facade on the "Avenue des Nations" was covered with bright green and grey ceramic tiles, and had a bright red door. It formed a striking contrast with the subtle moderation of the Japanese facade next to it. I(101)

Au-dessus de murailles couvertes d'un treillis de carreaux gris-noir encadrés de champs vert d'eau, elle développe un étrange couronnement. C'est une double frise de motifs découpés par panneaux sur fond noir au dessus d'une corniche de petites glaces en plan incline qui miroitent sous la saillie du toit. Cette toiture se mouve et se relève en une seconde toiture avec angles retroussés qui forme motif milieu en raccord avec la porte d'entrée de la facade. Seule cette porte, peinte du vermillon le plus vif, herisée d'énormes chevilles rouges à têtes dorées, jette une note éclatante sur ce sombre. Le double bâti qui l'encadre est part de rouge et d'azur. Au-dessus la porte s'incline l'écusson impérial porté et défendu par d'horribles dragons grimaçants. A droite et à gauche, des groupes de petits guerriers accrochés à la muraille battent l'air de leurs bras armés de sabres et de lances.

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The result was in fact rather like a paraphrase of the facade of a Chinese palace.

Behind the facade was a series of rooms laid out in a linear arrangement. There were four rooms in which the Chinese gods were laid

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out in order. In the first room were books, papers and prints. In the next were furnishings and carpets, and the following rooms were filled with ceramics, cloisonné enamels, then silks, satins and finally industrial products, minerals and medicines.

The Chinese building in the Trocadero Gardens was a U-shaped open walled pavillion. In its courtyard was a small pagoda. It was believed to be a reproduction of a Chinese temple;

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La grande construction chinoise est également remarquable à bien des titres. Elle affecte les dispositions ordinaires d'une pagode bouddhique, en un quadrilatère ouvert sur l'une de ses faces et enveloppé de constructions sur les trois des autres côtés.

Au fond devrait se trouver le grand autel de Bouddha, ici remplacé par un riche salon. Sur les côtés seraient les autels de second ordre et les habitations des bonzes. Ce sont des comptoirs de vente très achalandés qui les remplacent. Cependant la disposition de générale est exacte et l'ensemble est juste. La porte d'entrée seule présente des modifications sérieuses apportées au type ordinaire; elle devrait se trouver à l'intérieur et masquée par un mur. On n'entre jamais directement dans l'enceinte consacrée d'un temple chinois.

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Bousquet dismissed this claim completely;

Cette construction prétentieuse, chargée d'ornemens bizarres, encombrée de marchandises de pacotille, dépourvue même du mérite de l'exactitude; sorte de compromis entre le temple et le ya-men, c'est l'annexe chinoise. Êtes-vous dans la maison d'un riche citadin, dans un restaurant, ou dans la demeure d'une idole. Vous n'en savez rien et les voyageurs les mieux renseignés sur l'Empire du Milieu auront peine à vous l'apprendre.

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Sedille however claimed to place the style of the Chinese building to a particular period, in the Ming dynasty around 1450, and he compares it to the emperor's tombs near Peking. He describes the gold and vermillion "pagoda " in some detail;

Bien coiffée de toitures mouvementées, elle semble, par un sentiment de coquetterie savante, retrousser les saillies angulaires de ses toits pour laisser voir la richesse prodiguée de ses corniches. La multiplicité de leurs détails sculptés disparaît

dans une chaude coloration d'or et vermillon rayée par les dessous bleus ou verts de chevronnage recourbé. D'ailleurs, ces tons incidents disparaissent dans la masse dominante du rouge et de l'or, et n'en troublent pas la calme et riche harmonie. Toute la pagode apparaît à la fois sombre et étincelante: sombre par l'ensemble de ses toitures et de ses murailles peintes en gris et noir.

The many details of decoration on the building were also painted in gold and red. They included carved dragons, chimeras, small groups of warriors and various crests. They were dotted around the building in various places. The sculptured warriors can be seen clearly on the end roofs of the wings of the building. The illustrations also show two large flagpoles flying Chinese dragons and large traditional Chinese gateway fencing off the fourth side of the courtyard. The major woodwork of the building and all the ornament and carving were prepared at Ningpo in the south of China, where a "liberal" taste in architecture was believed to exist. They were assembled by Chinese workmen, in Paris and Chinese attendants in traditional costume sold their wares in them as they did in the "pagoda" kiosk in the centre. The photograph in Glueq's Album of the exhibition shows the array of ceramics and bronze vessels in the left hand wing of the Trocadéro "pagoda", and the quite conventional gardens which surround it. Unfortunately it has not been possible to identify any of the goods by enlarging the image as the original photograph was not fully in focus. The engraving in the "Journal Hebdomaire" shows that the right hand wing was used mainly for paintings.

The multicoloured Chinese buildings had a great effect on the exhibition and helped to establish an image of China and Chinese architecture.

The display furnishings inside the building were also carved in the Chinese fashion and painted red and gold, rose and black. We have three illustrations of their interiors showing the general mixture of

objects; furniture, ceramics, ornamental screens and bronzes. I will now discuss the exhibits in detail. Unfortunately I have not been able to find examples of Chinese work from this exhibition in museums in England. I will therefore have to rely on documents and contemporary illustrations.

The principal document is the catalogue of the Champ du Mars prepared by the English officials of the customs and excise department.

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The official Chinese exhibition in the Champ du Mars and the Chinese paintings in the Salon.

Paintings and Screens.

The notes in Glucq's album record that there were no real works of art in the Chinese exhibition, only a few grossly executed watercolours on rice paper, but he praises the magnificent collection of furniture, bronzes, ceramics and glass - all believed to be modern replicas of traditional designs.

Indeed no writer praises the Chinese paintings. This is strange as one of the collection of paintings, made by G. Glover, the head of the exhibition staff in Paris was given a gold medal. Another collection of paintings were sent by the Customs at Tientsin, six of which were in frames. There were also albums of paintings by the Cantonese artists, Chun Quan Kee, Hoa Ching and Lee.

Some of this work was exhibited as part of the Salon of the exhibition in the "Galérie des Beaux Arts" in the Palais du Champ du Mars. The paintings were all modern. Unfortunately there is no indication of their subject matter. Only one "Vieille Peinture", was on show, a painting of lotus flowers owned by the Vicomte de Bezaure of the French mission in Foochow.

The only aspect of the visual arts which attracted some admiration were the various forms of screens exhibited throughout the exhibition, even Bousquet remarked;

Il est nombre de paravents, représentant des oiseaux de paradis et des canards mandarins brodés de soie, le tout encadré de bois noir de Canton, il en est un surtout de dimensions formés de feuilles de cloisonné, qui, toute en demeurant de lourdes machines; attestent du moins la science décorative et l'habileté de main des ouvriers.

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Duranty went much further. While admitting that there was almost total ignorance about painting and drawing in China, he praises screens in the terms one would use for paintings;

De remarquables paravents de Canton frappent les regards et égalent en certains points les bonnes peintures japonaises. La beauté, la variété de la végétation, des arbres, du paysage, des terrains, des fabriques, les groupes et les incidents si divers de la vie publique ou privée qui s'y déroulent et s'y étagent, en suivant comme le paysage, les lois de la perspective aérienne, sinon linéaire, c'est à dire en diminuant avec éloignement; le soin du dessin des figures, ou l'oeil de face en quelques têtes de profil indique la persistance des vieilles traditions, un essai de teintes modelantes, mais légères; des femmes rappelant celles des miniatures indo-persanes, tout rend ces paravents fort intéressants et fait supposer qu'ils sortent d'une école de peinture qui cherche et qui a volontiers accepté des influences étrangères. Ailleurs tels personnages de parfaite réalité en terre émaillée, de vif et savant modelé, des pièces, en un mot, belles ou curieuses, assez anciens ou modernes, indiquent une tendance à rapprocher des Japonais.

Duranty also noticed three scroll paintings in the Chinese pavillion in the Trocadéro;

un store ou une tenture dessinée en noir, représentant un philosophe en grand chapeau rond, un jeune bonze et une sorte de jardinier, dont le dessin est superbe de largeur, de correction et qui surpasse à mon avis les meilleurs dessins japonais (peut être vient-il de Corée).

On the whole however the interest in Chinese Fine Art created by the exhibition was minimal as a result of the extremely poor show, though as we can see from the reaction to the screen paintings there was a willingness to consider Chinese work if it had been exhibited.

The official catalogue indicates that many dealers and craftsmen sent screens to the exhibition. Sing Singkung of Ningpo showed twelve,

Foo Loong of Canton showed three and Loo Shing of Canton showed five. The majority were in painted silk, but lacquer, wood, embroidery and jade were also used. About thirty large screens were displayed in all.

On the whole the Chinese fine arts were poorly represented, but the decorative arts were well received and had a considerable success.

### Decorative Arts

#### A. Woodwork, furniture and textiles

We have already remarked on Duranty's amazement that the Chinese, unlike the Japanese, possessed tables, chairs and beds.

The overall effect of the Chinese furnishings and textiles was of a multicoloured fairyland;

les soies pourpres, écarlates, turquoise, émeraude, à arabesque d'or ou à figures brodées en relief, il semble que les Chinois forment des tons plus brillants, des oppositions plus vives des châtiments plus lumineux.....Voyez dans la section chinoise cet ameublement complet de bois peint en rouge surchargé de sculptures dorées, et recouvert de satin écarlate ou sont brodés de personnages aux longues robes multicolores.

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Bousquet thought that all the furniture had been specially made for Europeans, even the copy of the Chinese emperor's bed sent by Tuan Ching of Shanghai which can be seen in the photograph taken by Glueq.

Bousquet remarked that the English ambassadors had made greater progress with the Imperial Palace than the French, "Le Souverain de 400 million d'hommes coucher dans un lit de 25,000 francs, quel dénuement".

A great number of tables, chairs and furniture of all kinds, was on display. The furniture section of the catalogue contains eight-six lots of six or eight items each.

#### Ceramics and Cloisonné

The bizarre forms of the ceramics shown by the official exhibition did not in the least detract from their popularity with general public as represented in "Le Journal Hebdomaire", but the reviewers universally condemned them. Bousquet's impression will stand for all.

Celui-ci goûtera la bizarrerie des contours, l'éclat des couleurs, la monotonie classique des sujets, celui-ci en déclarera insipide du laideur compassée..... Regarder ce grain rude, ces bariologes délavés, aux tons faux, ce vernis épais et comparez les nouvelles porcelaines avec le vieux chine!

The new multicoloured and often enormous cloisonné vases and other enamel ware received the same condemnation, as did the jade and other carved work. The illustrations which we have of the exhibition confirm the critics' censure of most items. Nonetheless there were occasional worthwhile pieces in the Chinese section; De Goncourt found one;

un objet que je trouvais un des plus beaux du Champ-de-Mars, un de ces objets à la richesse barbare et précieuse, digne d'une galerie d'Apollon. C'était un très grand vase en jade vert en forme de balustre avec, sur la panse, un quadrille incrusté d'or et relevé d'un cloutis de corail, et avec des anses formées par des têtes de dragons aux yeux de cristal de roche.

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He managed to reduce the price of the vase from 2000 Fr. to 800 Fr. after a long period of bargaining with one of the Chinese dealers, Tien-Pao. Tien-Pao and others were guests at many dinners and receptions in connection with the exhibition, but unlike the Japanese they had little to say about their art.

Bronzes and other metalwork. Ivories and other craftwork.

The Chinese bronzes were mainly in the form of vases or similar vessels with a few small sculptures of animals such as the bronze crab and birds shown by Hu Kyangyang of Shanghai. Duranty observed that Chinese work was much less elaborate than the Japanese;

Le bronze chinois est plus tranquille. C'est un vase dont les reliefs ne sont point si agressifs; la plus grande change qu'on y mette est de l'entourer d'une théorie de personnages en plein relief - On voit là d'anciennes formes pleines, robustes, sobrement décorées.

One of the bronzes was a vase in the form of a swan, a modern version of one in the Cernuschi collection.

The ivories and other craft items were also much less interesting than their equivalents in the Japanese exhibitions.

Bousquet and other critics dismissed them as examples of patient work without any art. Speaking of the many small ivories on show he said;

Il est difficile de rien imaginer de plus minitieux. Ces personnages lilliputiens, taillés par douzaines dans le bloc, avec lances, sabres, bonnets, pointus, découpés en épargne, donnent une haute idée de la patience des artisans qui s'y emploient; mais c'est tout, le sentiment de l'art ne se manifeste ni dans la distribution des groupes, ni dans l'attitude des personnages; qui sont à peine indiqués.

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This judgement sums up the general reaction to most of the minor art works in the official Chinese exhibition. Out of the 3391 items in the exhibition 1312 were art works of one sort or another, but very few were of real value or interest. The general impression created was that Chinese art was completely decadent. This impression was compounded by the appearance of the collection of "ancient" Chinese wares owned by French collectors in the Trocadéro.

The exhibition of Chinese work in the Trocadero.

The majority of one room in the Trocadéro was taken up with collections of Chinese ceramics of Sartel, Grenet, Gallery, Gasnault, Grenet, De Poinet and Taigny, all of whom were minor figures in the artistic life of Paris in the 1870's. There were also the major collections of the dealers Bing and Sichel and the collector Grandidier. A large, marvellously carved Tonkin shrine and two large Chinese bronzes owned by another dealer, M.A. de la Narde.

Gasnault, one of the minor collectors, wrote on Far Eastern ceramics for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts". He selected the Sartel collection as outstanding, especially as it had never previously been seen in public. The large vases exhibited by the Sichels were also outstanding. There is no worthwhile description of any of the individual pieces but Gasnault's article does contain engravings of some examples which I include in the illustrations section.

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There were also a few older Chinese paintings in the Trocadéro. One was an ink drawing of the disciples of Confucius, owned by the sino-logist Gallery which Duranty described briefly;

les yeux y sont nettement de face dans les têtes  
de profil, et les bouches ont le sourire antique.

A final group of Chinese works was displayed as part of the Guimet collection. Guimet showed a group of large Chinese bronzes of legendary figures, and a case full of bronzes, jades, ivories and other small art works. No detailed description of any of these works is available.

All that can be said of the display in the Trocadéro is that it was favourably received in comparison with the "official" exhibition. It is clear that the appearance of Chinese art in the exhibition as a whole was no more of an artistic success than the appearance in the 1867 exhibition despite the indications given by Duranty that the quality of "ancient" Chinese work in the Trocadéro had raised the general estimate of Chinese art. Nonetheless Chinese work did have a considerable popular success.

#### The Japanese Exhibition.

In contrast to the Chinese exhibition, the Japanese exhibition was the product of the careful political initiative of the Japanese themselves. The driving force behind it was the President of the Commission in Paris, Masayoshi Matsugata, who was both vice-minister of finances of Japan, and the President of the Japanese department of agriculture. Matsugata was thirty-two and had been a major figure in Japanese politics since he had helped in the 1868 Meiji Restoration, and played a vital role in creating the new open Japanese foreign policy. To Matsugata the artistic aspects of the Japanese exhibition were far less important than the political opportunities for creating a greater general flow of trade. The chief commissioner for the exhibition, M. Meada, felt otherwise. He had lived in Paris as a student and diplomat from 1869-1876

and knew of the interest in Japanese art there. He was responsible for convincing the Japanese government that it was essential to follow up the Japanese successes at Vienna and Philadelphia with an appearance at Paris. He arranged the necessary credit with the Japanese finance house of Mitsui and recruited all the workmen and the administrative staff for the exhibition. He was even personally responsible for the design of the Japanese wooden architecture in the exhibition. He had it made in Japan and shipped to Paris, though he did not achieve everything he had hoped for as some pieces did not arrive in time to be used.

Meada and Matsugata were also primarily responsible for the publication, "Le Japon à L'Exposition Universelle de 1878", in two volumes. The first volume gave a full official history and geography of Japan. The second gave an account of her culture, industry and education system. It would appear that the Japanese exhibition as a whole was designed to achieve the same end. However in practice far greater stress was laid on the arts and crafts in the exhibition than in the book, in which only four pages were devoted to an account of the history of painting.

There is no official catalogue of the Japanese exhibition available. However the "Tokyo Exhibitions Club" publications and various contemporary documents are of help in reconstructing it.

In preparing their information for the show and the publication, Matsugata and Meada had the assistance of scholars such as the director of the Tokyo Museum at Ueno Park, which was the Institution responsible for preparing the artistic displays of Japan's foreign exhibitions, of which Vienna was the first. Also, amongst their number, in a minor post, was Tademasa Hayashi, who was to play an important role in the development of Japanese enthusiasm in Paris in the 1880's.

A group of important Japanese artists were also included in the

Paris party. There was Wakai, who had recently become the chief Imperial artist and art expert and art dealer. There was also Watanabe Sei, an outstanding painter who made drawings for reports on the exhibition and who went on to have one man exhibitions of his work in London and Paris in the 1880's and 1890's. There was also a large retinue of craftsmen, gardeners and assistants. All of them appeared in Paris in European costume, with the exception of Tanaka, the artist and tea master who presided over the Japanese pavillion in the Trocadero garden.

Contemporary craftsmanship and works of art were collected from all over Japan by local government officials who were ordered to do so by a decree of the 23rd August 1877. The decree exhorted all exhibitors to ensure that their work was of the highest quality. 45,316 exhibits were eventually sent to Paris; of these over 36,000 were furniture, textiles, ceramics, paintings and prints. Very few exhibits - some 3,500 only, were "manufactured goods" in the Western sense.

Work for the exhibition was submitted by the great Japanese companies and artistic guilds and dealers. Twenty-four separate companies exhibited together with work submitted by individuals. These included Kiriu-Ko-Sho-Kai-Sha - a large company in Tokyo dealing with the export of all kinds of arts and crafts, the Kiran-Sha, a company chiefly concerned with porcelain in Nagasaki and the Shippo-Kai-Sha, a similar organisation in Owari.

The displays by "Fine Art" dealers included that by Wakai himself and an outstanding show by Minoda-Chojiro of Tokyo, another artist dealer. There was also an outstanding show of metalwork by the house of Saito. It is often difficult to tell whether a particular name in reports refers to the artist or the dealer who displayed the goods in Paris. Often as in the cases I have mentioned the two functions went together.

Because of this high level of commercial involvement nearly all the Japanese work was of recent date. Nonetheless it all sold within a few days of opening despite the extremely high prices for the various items. A large screen sold for 60,000 Fr., a bronze vase for 10,000 Fr., a small lacquer cabinet cost the same, even small vases and screens sold for 2,500 Fr. The official valuation of the total sale value of the Japanese exhibition was 1,230,909 francs, but this seems to me to be a gross underestimate. The real figure may have been two or three times this amount. The name of the buyer of each item was inscribed on a rose-coloured card placed on the item. However the Japanese did not display prices on their articles, thus causing much criticism and confusion.

Bousquet and others went further and accused them of not having any labels or intelligible sequence to their displays. Moreover he mistakenly claimed that none of the work on show had a counterpart in Japan, that it was all manufactured exclusively for the European market. The Japanese arts and crafts had become nothing but the reflex of a European fashion. Nonetheless the exhibition as a whole was a tremendous popular success for Japan and undoubtedly had a considerable effect on the European conception of the Japanese and their art. The Japanese representatives were men of the highest distinction in their own country and made an excellent job of representing it. They willingly answered all questions asked, providing an endless stream of information and demonstration for the Western Japanese enthusiast. It is therefore important to examine the exhibition in as much detail as possible to determine the extent to which it created a new notion of Japanese art rather than acted simply as a mirror of an already determined European attitude.

Japanese buildings in the exhibition.

The facade on the "Avenue des Nations".

The sobriety of the Japanese facade in contrast to the Spanish and Chinese pavillions on either side was greatly commented on by the reviewers of the exhibition. The facade was believed to represent the entrance to a middle-class suburban house in Tokyo, in fact it was a stylised creation modelled on the architecture of palaces, temples and Daimio's residences.

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Maeda designed a structure using carpentered wood beams to provide a gateway and entrance in the traditional Japanese manner. However he arranged for the ends and the bases of the beams to be covered with copper in an antique bronze colour to prevent the wood deteriorating. The wooden supports and the canopy over the entrance were left in their natural colour, but polished. The main entrance doorway was 14 ft. high by 22 ft. wide.

The decorative motifs on the panels, which were mainly the imperial chrysanthemum and other flowers were painted in sombre tones of green, yellow and blue. On a large panel in the right-hand bay was a map of Japan, in the left bay was a plan of Tokyo. Above the central entrance was a panel with an exquisitely carved frame bearing the title "Japon" above the canopy.

In the areas to each side of the canopy was a small Japanese garden with bamboo fences, plants and pots of flowers. Above all there were the two large porcelain fountains equipped with traditional bamboo scoops with which passers-by could drink. This was a popular activity as the illustrated reports of the exhibition make clear. Chesneau recorded the atmosphere created by the Japanese facade;

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Une bouffet de fraîcheur vous frappe au visage,  
un bruit cristallin d'eau retombant, vous arrive  
à l'oreille. Ce frais murmure de source s'échappe  
de deux petits parterres fleuris, où se dressent  
de jolies fontaines de faïence; elles ont elles-

memes la forme de grand fleurs, de nénuphars au large coeur épanoui, jetant par l'orifice de leurs pistils allongés de grêles filets d'argent liquide en de belles conques étagées. La vasque supérieure tient en réserve pour le passant de petits gobelets de bambous emmanchés d'une tige fine et longue. Dans celle qui s'arrondit au ras de terre dans une ceinture de galets historiés, dorment et rampent quelques crustacés et batraciens en terre cuite émaillée, de l'eau, des fleurs, un décor étrange, une attention hospitalière: c'est le Japon!

Several critics saw the Japanese facade as a brilliant example of the fundamental laws of the relationship of parts in architecture.

Charles Blanc wrote;

Jamais cette vérité que l'architecture est un art essentiellement relatif, n'a été plus sensible, plus clairement exprimée. Il-y-a, dans la porte Japonaise, quelque chose de primitif et de raffiné tout ensemble. Deux poteaux pour soutenir les battants, deux poteaux corniers, deux sablières, et deux trumeaux en menuiserie tels sont les éléments naturels de la construction mise en évidence sans la moindre sophistication de la matière.

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The display of the natural form of the wood struck Blanc as particularly laudable, and he went on to make an analogy with the Parthenon;

La second baie, c'est à dire l'ouverture même de la section japonaise, est surmontée d'un auvent dont les lignes inclinées présentent une insensible courbure, comme celle du fronton du Parthenon. Cette courbure correspond délicatement, et en sens inverse au redressement de la sablière.

Blanc was a leading proponent of Beaux Arts "classical" architecture in France and it is interesting that the Japanese work should have struck him so forcibly. Perhaps one may see in his comments evidence for the early involvement of Japanese art in the development of the International style, or at least an indication of the possibility of the Beaux Arts tradition transforming itself through the activities of Le Corbusier and his associates. The facade of the Japanese exhibition stood out almost alone against the vulgarities and the arbitrary decorations of the exhibition as a whole.

The Japanese pavillion in the Trocadero gardens

In complete contrast to the Chinese pavillion Meada designed for the Trocadero a small building in traditional Japanese style. The writers describe this building either as "la ferme japonaise" or "le métairie". Although it was in fact an invented structure which showed the wooden framework, sliding doors and paper dividing panels of the traditional Japanese house, Burty with some authority identifies it as a traditional garden house for the tea ceremony. It is certain that the ceremony took place there but the house was a little large for it. The house was surrounded by 36,000 square feet of gardens with Japanese plants tended by Japanese gardeners. Some reports even state that the soil for the gardens had been brought from Japan.

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a

One entered the Trocadero compound through a large carved wooden gate, 8 feet high and ten feet wide, decorated with peonies, chrysanthemums, lilies and other carvings, designed once again by Meada.

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Chesneau once again captured the atmosphere;

On y pénètre par une barrière que supportent des piliers en bois plein où s'épanouissent des pivouines et des tiges d'iris sculptées; sur les vantaux de la barrière courent deux frises de fleurs ciselées à jouer comme une pièce d'orfèvre et couronné en guise de fronton un adorable petit coq et sa poule qui sont un chef d'oeuvre de sculpture en bois. Silencieuse, attentifs, sans en faire montre souriants à leur pensée intérieure, qui leur montre de hautes piles de pièces d'or monnayé dans une belle forme oblongue, l'oeil mi clos, l'esprit ouvert, les maîtres du lieu ne sollicitent pas le visiteur. A son intention, ils ont disposé çà et là de petits pliants, des sièges de bambou et de larges parasols en papier peint où l'ombre et le repos s'offrent d'eux memes.

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In the garden, two Japanese gardeners tended the plants and mended the winding paths. There was even an imitation paddyfield with growing rice. Large bronzes and ceramics were placed out in the open amongst the plants. A fountain supplied a small stream which irrigated the garden through its twists and turns. One of the gardeners can be seen talking to Tanaka, the resident of the house, in the engraving in the

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"London Illustrated News". Tanaka was the only member of the Japanese delegation to wear native costume. There was also a compound for Japanese ducks, fowl and other animals.

He lived in the house in native style and served Japanese tea and other delicacies to those who visited him. He also sold the cheaper sort of Japanese goods such as the fans that can be seen in the illustrations of the interior of the Japanese house. The official record states that he kept elaborate gold lacquer bookshelves (Shodana) and an antique lacquer writing desk in the teahouse along with some beautiful bronzes, some bonsai plants and many albums (Owacho) of paintings and prints mainly of bird and flower subjects.

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Occasionally he demonstrated Japanese writing and painting. Tanaka was referred to irreverently as "the Japanese cook" in most of the reports of the exhibition. Burty gave a more accurate description of his activities.

J'ai passé de douces heures dans la cour minuscule qui avait été réservée entre les palissades de bambous et l'arrière-magasin. Assis sur un étroit pliant ou sur la natte de l'estrade, j'écoutais le ronron de la cascade et le piétinement de la foule. Le coin de ail bleu qui faisait dome était coupé par les tiges brisées par les feuilles pointées d'un bouquet de bambous. Tanaka le seul Japonais qui eut été autorisé à porter le costume national, s'asseyait les jambes repliées et préparait le thé avec ces soins lents et propres d'une béguine qui arrange l'autel pour le sacrifice de la messe. L'eau bouillait perpétuellement; comme dans un samovar, sous un feu de cendres entre-tenu avec des fragments de charbon de bois de chêne gros comme un manche de fouet. Il jetait dans la théière en bronze, avec une mesure plate en bambou où se lisait une distique gravé en creux quelques feuilles de thé; et par dessus l'eau qu'il avait puisée à l'aide d'un godet en bambou emmanché par le milieu. Presque aussitôt; il offrait sur un présentoir, la petite tasse en porcelaine pleine d'une eau safranée et d'un goût un peu âpre. Puis après avoir époussété les moindres grains de poussière, les moindres pellicule de cendre avec une plume de grue grise, après avoir avivé les cendres du foyer avec ses pincettes à tiges libres, il reprenait sa pose décente et grave, la tête inclinée, le corps droit, les yeux mi fermés; les mains étendues sur les cuisses. De temps à autre, il bourrait de

tabac blond sa pipette profonde comme un<sup>2</sup>e petite fille; tenait une dizaine de bouffées la vidait en la frappant d'un coup - sur le rebord de son tabac. Il suivait de son regard glissant la fumée de ma cigarette; et s'il la voyait jaunir et s'éteindre, pendant que je lisais, que je prenais quelques croquis ou que je rédigeais quelques notes; il me tendait un petit charbon en entrouvrant sa large bouche au sourire respectueux et compatissant. Excellent Tanaka! Qui n'aurait accepté et croqué avec des grimaces de satisfaction polie vos pois gris routés dans du sucre rose, bonbons primitifs et poteaux que Boissier ne cherchera jamais à contrefaire quelle que soit la vogue du Japonisme?

In the garden of the "farm" were three small kiosks each managed by different Japanese companies, the Mitsubusan and Okidate companies traded in bibelots in general, the Doki Kaisha company specialised in bronzes.

De Goncourt, Bousquet, Duranty and many other Japanese enthusiasts visited the Japanese farm and found it fascinating. All believed it to give an accurate picture of a normal Japanese style of life. As Eugene Montrosier put it;

Quelques-un pourtant sont venus apportant avec eux la terre sacrée qui les a vus naître et le toit qui les a abrité. C'est ainsi que les Japonais ont pu refaire une patrie dans un espace large ainsi qu'un mouchoir de poche.

The Japanese architecture at the 1878 exhibition was not so spectacular as that at Vienna, nor did it have the fascination of the completely new of that of the 1867 exhibition. Nonetheless it was more accurate and did make a considerable impression both on the public and on the Japanese enthusiasts.

#### The Japanese exhibition at the 1878 exhibition.

Like the Chinese exhibition, the Japanese exhibition was divided between the major collection of modern works on the Champs du Mars, and the exhibition of "ancient" wares in the historical exhibition in the Trocadero Palace. However there was not the exact division between the two which marked the Chinese exhibition. The Japanese commission itself had many "ancient" wares on show in the Trocadero and elsewhere.

The first impression of the Japanese official exhibitions was of confusion;

Le Commission japonaise à disposé ou, pour parler plus exactement, entassé enchevêtré ses vitrines de manière à former un véritable labyrinthe, dans les étroites défiles duquel on devait s'estimer heureux de ne laisser que ses illusions. Dans l'intérieur des vitrines, meme entassement, même désordre, pêle-mêle inconceivable, absence totale non seulement de classement, mais encore de simple rangement. L'art de présenter les objets sous leur jour le plus favorable, de les entourer ou de les isoler de manière à les faire valoir, cet art.....semble si nous en devons juger par cet exemple, totalement étranger ou indifférent à ce peuple, qui pourtant est doué à un si éminent degré du sens de l'harmonie et du pittoresque.

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This impression is confirmed by Glucq's photograph of the exhibition. I(111) It shows great numbers of ceramics and bronzes piled in pyramids. The large objects in the centre of the two large displays are Buddhist shrines, similar objects are found surrounded by vessels of various kinds in Buddhist temples. The exhibition provided much else to distress connoisseurs. Bousquet observed that many items of enormous size had been produced especially for European taste and that much of the verve had gone from the designs which were a mindless repetition of those which had brought earlier success.. Like several others he observed that all the finest Japanese art was in the hands of French amateurs and that even the "ancient" wares sent from Japan were much inferior to that displayed by European collectors. As I shall show, the few examples of work bought from the exhibition by the Victoria and Albert Museum confirm Bousquet's impression. However the general picture I have assembled of European taste in Far Eastern art in the 1870's does not permit us to infer that Europeans owned all the works of the greatest significance in the Japanese tradition, only that those works they did own were better than those in the 1878 exhibition. Most work in Europeans' collections was made in the nineteenth century. Indeed the shock of the lower standards of much in the 1878 exhibition

may have been a spur to finer discrimination, aided also by the information supplied by the Japanese commissioners.

Despite the reservations of some however the exhibition was received rapturously by many Japanese enthusiasts, such as Burty, De Goncourt, De Nittis, Chesneau and also by the general public.

Henry Houssaye wrote;

rien n'y est comparable à l'exposition japonaise, comme richesse, comme somptuosité et comme éclat. C'est le style Louis XIV de l'extrême Orient..... c'est dans les ouvrages qui indiquent l'art et dans les mille objets qu'on doit regarder de très grands paravents lacquées à incrustations de jade, de bronze, de bois précieux ou à panneaux rapportés, représentant des figures de guerriers qui brandissent leur deux sabres ou de jeunes filles qui jouent de l'éventail, consoles et brûles-parfums de bronze ciselé dignes des maîtres de la renaissance italienne, petites boîtes en laque d'or valant plus que leur pesant d'or, figurines d'ivoire d'un travail exquis desquelles les miracles de patience des Chinois semblent art de sauvages. Et les albums gravés. Quel éclat dans ces couleurs, quelle ingénieuse variété dans ces compositions, quelle coquetterie dans ces figures de femmes, quelle allure et quelle férocité dans ces types de guerriers.

Houssaye gives us an adequate account of the range of goods on display as they would have been seen by the average visitor wandering around the exhibition. It is clear that for many the overall effect was of a vacuous intoxication with the "Japanese" as in the bas de page I(112) drawings published by Bergerat. However it is still essential to characterise the different types of goods on display.

#### A. Paintings, screens and prints

Little is said in European accounts of the exhibition about these visual arts, moreover the Japanese documents are of little further assistance.

There were many kakemonos on display in the exhibition, but only one is remarked on in the Western accounts. The painter De Nittis bought it as a model and De Goncourt records this in "La Maison d'un Artiste";

De Nittis a acheté le beau et grand kakemono de l'Exposition, représentant une vingtaine de pigeons, s'ébattant à la marge d'une vasque en pierre - il me faisait toucher, avec l'enthousiasme, qui jaillit de son individu en présence d'une vraie chose d'art, tous les détails de l'exécution, et ces contours dans l'ombre et qui sont faits simplement du balayage et du rebroussement lavé des teintes de la pleine lumière.

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The paintings on display were clearly much admired and had some influence on Western artists.

The only other paintings I have definitely identified are four panels of lacquered wood, 17 inches by eleven and three quarter inches, which showed a painting of a flight of birds near bamboo by "Wakai and Matsue of Japan". These were the only visual objects which were purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum from this exhibition. (The British buyers were even slower to appreciate the exhibits in 1878 than they were in 1867.) I have been unable to locate them in the Victoria and Albert stores.

Houssaye's description of the exhibition makes it clear that many screens of all varieties were on display. The Western sources however only mention the decorative ones, ignoring the painted subjects which Houssaye mentions. De Goncourt for instance was attracted to two of them;

Decidement à l'exposition du Japon, l'écran au heron d'argent et le paravent avec toute cette flore sur laque, en pierre dure, en ivoire, en porcelaine, en métaux de toutes sortes, ce sont pour moi les deux beaux objets mobiliers que depuis le commencement du monde à fabriquer l'art industriel chez aucun peuple. Comment Rothschild a-t-il pu laisser cela à vendre cinq minutes?

The folding screen decorated with flowers was by Iwasse Tei-Minobe. It was put on sale by Minoda Chodjiro at a price of 60,000 Fr. It was illustrated by two Japanese artists on the exhibition staff, Sei Tei Watanabe for Emile Bergerat and Yeizo Hirayama for Ph. Burty's article I(113) in "L'Art". All visitors to the exhibition commented on the magnificence of the work. Christopher Dresser who was there as an English juror

mentioned the work in his book on "Japanese art and Art Manufactures";

Besides the bold, magnificently treated, foliage, which was of the most tenderly-worked lacquer, lotus flowers were formed of pearl and wisteria flowers of small polished mussel shells, which in conjunction with the lacquer vastly heightened its effect. This work was one of the most marvellous that lacquer workers had ever made.

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There is no doubt that to modern taste such a work would be unbearably vulgar. Once again one is reminded of the great revolution in attitude to Japanese goods which took place after the turn of the century.

Another lacquer screen was illustrated in Burty's article in "L'Art". It shows a rather nondescript Chinese style figure framed with a decorative pattern of water lilies. It indicates that even the taste of such a devoted Japanese enthusiast as Burty differed radically from modern taste.

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Many other examples of visual art were on display - painted fans, paintings on wood and silk, ink paintings on paper, many of these may have been of greater value than those which claimed the attention of the reviewers.

Many prints and illustrated books were also on show but it has proved impossible to identify them.

### Bronzes

The modern bronzes in the Champ du Mars exhibition were overshadowed by the work on show in the Trocadero. Bronze animals of all kinds were on show and bronze vessels. Bousquet thought that all Japanese bronze was made for export and attributed the decline in quality to this. He observed giant bronzes with niello inlay and peculiar designs, full of hesitant curves and over-ripe vegetation superimposed on conventional patterns. In the case of large incense burners in the form of stalks he traced the problem of the decline in their design specifically to Western demands.

Dans les vieilles collections en effet on trouve souvent une grue, l'oiseau favori des Japonais, montée sur une tortue le col tendu, et portant dans son bec une fleur unique de lotus. Dans la corolle de la fleur se dissimule une fine pointe métallique, sur laquelle on peut ficher la petite bougie de cire à mèche de papier en usage dans le pays. Une première modification malheureuse a consisté à changer la pointe de métal pour une petite galerie circulaire destinée à recevoir une de nos bougies. C'en était déjà faux de la vérité, car le fleur pend aussi toute sa grâce. Le second pas a été de placer dans le bec de l'oiseau une girandole de fleurs, enfin comme ce poids de bronze eut entraîné l'échassier hors de son centre de gravité, il a fallu ramener le col en arrière par une contorsion pénible, ou remplacer la grue trop svelte par un oiseau massive.

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It is easy to follow this process to its logical conclusion in the 7' high incense burner incrustated with gold and decorated with doves and peacocks <sup>card</sup> by M. Zouzouki Tchokitchi, which was exhibited by the Kocho Kuisha Sha. This was illustrated by both Burty and Bergerat and was an outstanding success at the exhibition.

I(114)  
a, b  
c, d

Bing bought this large bronze and as we have seen it subsequently turned out to be a white elephant; though in 1883 he finally sold it to the Victoria and Albert Museum, where I examined it. The craftsmanship of the piece is impressive, some of the bronze casting on the birds is very fine indeed. However the overall vulgarity of the design cannot be mitigated in such a large work.

Burty also illustrates a smaller but even more elaborate one sold by the Minodo Chioguro Company. I(115)

When one compares these works with those in the Cernuschi collection or even with the simple bronzes sold to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Bing in 1875 the decline in artistic standards is evident.

#### Lacquer Wares

European interest in Japanese lacquer was overwhelming. Maeda wrote a special article on the subject for the "Revue Scientifique". In this he recorded that the lacquer makers had almost been destroyed by the demand for facile export ware but that since the Vienna exhibition

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steps had been taken by the government to produce work of a higher quality once more. This was the material on show at the exhibition.

Burty repeats this story and also the history of lacquer given by Meada in his article for "L'Art". He also illustrates two works, a cabinet designed to show off all the different varieties of lacquer and a plain polished wood cabinet with a design of leafy branches on its doors in raised lacquer.

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They show that the official revival of lacquer had not improved the quality of design to a level remotely like that of the "ancient" wares to which modern boxes, cabinets and panels were damagingly compared.

### Ceramics

It is in the ceramics on show in the modern section that we can see most clearly the effect of European influence on Japanese goods.

The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses several pieces which were given to it by the Japanese commissioners. One is a small blue and white plate from the Arita pottery in Hizen, showing a wave engulfing a small hamlet. The wave motif obviously derives from Hokusai and is influenced by the European taste for the work of that artist. However it is so degraded in its interpretation that the effect is comical. Work acquired directly from Japan by the Victoria and Albert Museum during the 1870's strengthens this impression that the motifs which found favour in Europe were forced willy-nilly into whatever material it was desired to sell.

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The Victoria and Albert Museum also possesses two dishes of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. in diameter in Arita porcelain with a blue and white design of flowers, frogs and insects, somewhat crudely drawn. They bear out the assertion by many critics that crude enlarged forms were being manufactured specially for the European market.

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However not all ceramics sold were of this order. The Victoria and

Albert Museum also owns a blanc de chine figure of a goddess Benzai Ten from the 1878 exhibition which has an exquisite simplicity and an elaborate porcelain cup and saucer in red and gold decoration. Both these items are contemporary with the exhibition and excellent in design. I(119)

The collection also contains one earlier work, a sixteenth century partly glazed terracota figure of a mendicant saint breathing out his soul, which has no aesthetic attraction whatsoever. T(119)  
G-c

The Japanese ceramic exhibition as a whole was a mass of confused types and styles of work.

Bousquet recorded the scene at great length noting enormous vases from Satsuma and Kioto, vast dishes of Owari earthenware, and 7' high multicoloured flasks from Nagasaki.

Occasionally fine pieces were to be found amongst this collection such as the sixteenth century blue and white pot with a cover which Burty remarks on in his article in "L'Art". Burty even found a reasonable modern vase to illustrate by a M. Miagawa. Equal approval may be given to a vase exhibited by Hiotzen of Tokyo. I(120)

Nonetheless one cannot but agree with the conclusion of Paul Gasnault, writing about the modern ceramics in the exhibition;

Le Japon n'existe plus! et c'est l'Europe qui  
l'a tué! Espérons qu'il n'y à là qu'une affaire  
de mode passagère et qu'un peuple aussi essentielle-  
ment artiste réagir de lui même contre une  
influence aussi funeste.

Gasnault's comment may serve as a general verdict on all the modern work on the Champ du Mars. Some of it was highly elaborate and fantastic, but the same tendencies ran through it all. There was an inclination to make objects far larger than had been traditionally necessary, to lay stress on motifs and styles that had become fashionable in Europe and to modify designs specifically for European usage. Besides the works we have discussed there were also cloisonné enamels,

carved wood and ivory, silks and costume materials, works of every kind of Japanese craftsmanship were also on show and all displayed the result of European pressures.

However it would be a great mistake to ignore this work which was so popular, it represents a most important indication of the popular notion of the Japanese in the late 1870's. The visual motifs in this art may have had just as much influence on the European visual arts as the more refined work to be found in the Trocadéro and to which they were so unfavourably compared.

#### 1878. The Japanese work in the Salle des Beaux Arts.

The Japanese commission entered several works for the Salon of the exhibition.

Two artists submitted oil paintings. T. Takahishi of Tokyo submitted several, and T. Otiai of Nagasaki sent one with some sections in bas relief.

Several artists submitted paintings using Japanese media. There were paintings in lacquer and paintings on porcelain. M. Nounada of Tokyo submitted an album of watercolours.

Examples of fine metalwork and woodcarvings were also shown in the Salon and the Tokyo Museum organised a display of "ancient" sculptures.

None of this work is described in detail.

#### The Japanese appearance at the Trocadéro

The mixture of loans from Parisian collectors and dealers with loans from Japanese collections and the Tokyo Museum which was shown in the Trocadero Palace outshone all the other Far Eastern works in the exhibition in quality. All of it was "ancient" and of fine quality, but the general impression was that the French collectors owned the finest work. The exhibition was very mixed, being ordered by collection rather than by type of work. Moreover very few of the works had proper

labels although Wakai did label some of the lacquer and ceramics in his own display and in those of Vial, De La Narde and Bing. Most of the Japanese work was contained in one room, Room No.3, but some was mixed in with the Chinese collection in Room No.1, thereby causing some confusion as to its origin.

I have already discussed the display in room No.2, the Guimet collection and Regamey's paintings, in some detail. I will not therefore deal with them again except in occasional references. Another major collection on display was that of Ph. Burty. While I shall discuss this I ask the reader to refer to the section of illustrations concerning his collection and to the discussion of the collection earlier in this thesis.

#### Painting and Prints

In Room No.1 alongside the Chinese collection, Jules Jacquemart showed a collection of Japanese paintings from albums which Duranty claims to be of great interest. He remarks that similar specimens were owned by the Louvre at that time and it may be possible to identify these and thus deduce the nature of the paintings.

With them a large screen was shown, probably seventeenth century, sent by Mr. Davis of London;

c'est un très beau paravent composé de neuf panneaux de plus de 2 mètres en hauteur, envoyé par M. Davis de Londres. Le dessin est hollandais; il représente un des gracht (canal) d'Amsterdam, borde d'un quai avec maisons et premier plan d'un port, au fond une partie de la ville. Des personnages en riches costumes du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle des banques semées sur le canal, donnent à la scène une animation toute particulière; l'architecture est travaillée avec un soin minutieux.

The painting was made in lacquer with certain sections raised in gold but mostly red, green and brown shades. De La Narde also showed a large screen but it is not described. Guimet showed several paintings in his display and a large Namban screen, which was regarded as most important as it permitted a definite period, the sixteenth century, to

be assigned to its style, since all foreigners, except the Dutch, were expelled from Japan in the seventeenth century, including the Portuguese who were shown on the screen. In Room No.3 Duranty observed painted screens in a similar style sent by the Japanese government, but does not describe them.

He does stress, however, the importance of Burty's collection of paintings and painted albums and manuscripts, which was also on show. He attributed it to the Kano and Tosa schools and claimed that it provided a good overall historical account of Japanese painting. Since Burty's sale catalogue of 1891 does not give the dates of purchase, it is not possible to separate the works shown in 1878 from the eighty paintings and albums, many of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which are listed in the catalogue under the titles of Tosa, Kano and Korin schools. Burty also exhibited some of his finest prints which are also unidentifiable. In general there were fewer paintings and drawings in the show than might have been expected.

#### Metalwork

Burty showed his excellent collection of sword furniture in Room 2. He also showed several bronzes, mainly vases. Some of these works were illustrated and can be seen in the illustrated section showing Burty's collection.

Burty himself praised the collection of bronzes shown by Bing, especially a masterpiece signed by the late eighteenth century artist Sei-min, a perfectly modelled group of tortoises. This group was illustrated in Gonse's "L'Art Japonais". Duranty illustrates one of Bing's bronzes. The Count Camondo, De Nittis and others also showed bronze vessels of a high quality.

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The official Japanese exhibition also showed "ancient" bronzes but there was some doubt as to whether they were Japanese, Korean or even Chinese.

Lacquer and wood and ivory carving

Much lacquer work was shown. Mme. Cahen <sup>d'</sup>Anvers showed a collection of work which mingled old and new lacquer. Three of her pieces were illustrated in the "Gazette des Beaux Arts". Ephrussi I(122) described one of these as

un ravissant cabinet en fond aventurine moucheté de la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, que nous reproduisons ici; toutes les ressources de l'art du lacquer ont été épuisées pour ce bijou de 10 cm. de haut sur 13 de large; sur les quatre côtés, de minuscules personnages, des grues et de petites girafes au milieu de paysages accidentés; la devantier s'enlevant, le dedans se montre partage dans la hauteur en deux parties d'inégale dimension, ici quatre petits tiroirs, la un godet orné de papillons, doublé d'argent à l'intérieur, sur un plateau semé de fleurs; le tout soutenue par un tiroir qui occupe la largeur du cabinet.

The Japanese themselves showed a collection of ancient wares and Bing had a group of very beautiful and expensive eighteenth century writing boxes on show. De La Narde also displayed some delicate boxes and cabinets.

Burty's collection stood out above all others. Ephrussi described it thus;

Elle contient les échantillons les plus variés au double point de vue de la matière et du décor; un cabinet en laque d'or avec fond à dessins géométriques, décoré d'un pommier à fleurs d'argent enlacé dans un sapin; au dedans quatre petits plateaux dessinés sur toutes les faces, en fine aventurine, l'objet n'a que six centimètres de haut sur six et demi de profondeur et quatre et demi de large..... une boîte en ivoire sur quatre pieds, ornée de dragons laqués d'or, un peigne burgauté en laque doré sur fond noir, avec pêle-mêle de fleurs, feuilles et branchages.

A great many more items of a similar nature are listed Ephrussi. Above all Burty prided himself on his collection of inro and netsuke, some in lacquer, some in ivory and some in precious wood. He displayed all sixty of them in one small case. Several are illustrated in the section on his collection. When Wakai examined them he found several rare early examples.

Burty and others also showed carved theatrical masks and ivories including representations of the seven domestic gods.

### Ceramics

The European displays of ceramics in the Trocadero were the most highly praised of the Far Eastern section. The outstanding collections were those of Bing, Sichel and Vial. There were also loans from amateurs such as Sartel, Poiret and Taigny, whose names appear occasionally amongst the host of Japanese enthusiasts to be found in Paris in the 1870's.

The Japanese expert Wakai had an extremely well-laid display of Korean pottery. He also helped Vial to arrange and label his collection including the Satsuma which Burty greatly admired. Gasnault describes some of the collection, for instance;

Un magnifique brûle parfûms, en forme d'urne élevée sur trois pieds en faïence craquelée d'Awata (province d'amishino). Le couvercle ajourne est surmonté d'un bouquet de chrysanthèmes et la panse à fond d'or est décorée d'un vol de grues planant au-dessus des flots de la mer.

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Bing's collection took up several large showcases and was the most complete collection of Japanese ceramics ever to have been seen. It was the assembly of this collection which began Bing's serious studies of ceramics and led him to write an authoritative text on Japanese work for Gonse's "L'Art Japonais" (after a journey to the Far East in 1882-1883). Many of Bing's pieces are reproduced in that work and there is no doubt that many shown there were on display for the 1878 exhibition. Gasnault reproduces several pieces from the ceramic collections on display in the Trocadéro, including those of Bing and Sichel, and I have included them in the illustrations to this thesis.

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No more detailed information can be given about the Trocadéro exhibition as no catalogue was ever made of it. There remains only the general impression that the European collections completely out-

shone the work sent by the Japanese. Moreover, of all the Europeans Burty emerges as by far the most knowledgeable and his collection by far the most outstanding. Only Bing surpassed him in one area, that of ceramics, to which Burty had never been fully committed.

The Trocadéro exhibition was the first occasion on which a full historical range of Japanese art was on display at one time in Europe. Together with the information supplied by the Japanese ambassador this led to the first accurate assessment of the relative merits of painting and other arts. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were recognised for the first time as the greatest period in Japanese art.

Educational and scholarly activities in connection with the Far Eastern exhibits.

The Japanese commissioners were the only ones to make a positive effort to teach other nations about their culture. Apart from their publication, "Le Japon à l'Exposition de 1878", the commissioners spent a great deal of time talking to Burty, De Goncourt, Gonse and many others about Japanese art and its history. The impact is to be seen immediately in the writings of those who reviewed the exhibition. All give accurate accounts of different techniques for making lacquer and ceramics, and give a much more accurate history of Japanese painting and print making than previously. However on one point they were misled by the commissioners, perhaps deliberately. They all assume a much earlier beginning to the Japanese tradition than is historically possible, placing it in the third century instead of circa 800 A.D. when Japanese civilisation first formed. They all claim to have seen ninth century paintings and seventh century lacquers which are most unlikely to have existed much less to have found their way to Paris. Apart from the transmission of a great deal of information the Japanese also gave practical demonstrations of their culture.

At Burty's they gave the tea ceremony which I have mentioned above,

but which Burty remembered with disillusion. On another occasion they served a Japanese meal of fish and rice cakes at Charpentier's. Matzugata also entertained visitors in his hotel rooms where De Goncourt on one occasion dined and was surprised that there were no works of art there, merely "Une pendule en forme de chalet suisse, de faux meubles de Baule, un service de table en affreuse porcelaine anglaise" ("La Maison d'un Artiste"). De Goncourt records that an artistic demonstration took place on three occasions at these three places and it is tempting to identify these happenings, though it is unlikely that the Japanese gave only the three informal entertainments that we can identify during their entire eight or nine months residence in Paris. Two of the artistic demonstrations were merely of brush technique, but at Burty's Sei Tei Watanabe painted a complete kakemono. De Goncourt describes the occasion in full in "La Maison d'un Artiste". His description, with its air of admiration and amazement, is worth quoting in full;

L'artiste japonais s'était muni cette fois d'un coupon de soie gommée presque transparent, se fabriquant pour cet usage au Japon seulement, et le coupon de soie était tendu sur un châssis de bois blanc. Sauf deux ou trois batons de couleur, parmi lesquels il y en avait un de gomme-gutte et un autre d'un bleu verdâtre, l'aquarelliste se servait de couleurs au miel, de couleurs européens; D'abord, pour commencer, ce fut au milieu du panneau comme toujours un bec d'oiseau devenant un oiseau, puis encore trois autres becs, trois autres oiseaux: le premier grisâtre; le second au ventre blanc, aux ailes vertes; un troisième ayant l'apparence d'une fauvette à tête noire; le quatrième avec du rouge dans le cou d'un rouge-gorge. Il ajouta à la fin au haut de son panneau, un cinquième grimpereau, un calfat au bec de corail. Ces cinq oiseaux furent exécutés avec le travail le plus précieux, et presque avec le froufrou révolté de leurs plumes. Et c'était charmant de voir notre Japonais travailler, tenant deux pinceaux dans la même main: l'un tout fin, et chargé d'une couleur intense, et filant le trait; l'autre plus gros et tout aqueux, élargissant la linéature et l'estompant; tout cela, avec des prestesses d'escamoteur debout devant sa petite table aux gobelets.

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Les oiseaux paraissant terminés, Watanabe Sei a jeté dans un coin des feuilles, des bouts de branchages, sans le dessin des branches. A ce moment, d'un gros pinceau sans couleur et trempé d'eau, il a mouillé le fond resté vierge de toute coloration, en épargnant, autour des oiseaux, de petites déchiquetures, laissées par lui sèches, dans le papier mou. Le panneau a été séché, un moment, à la flamme d'un journal dans la cheminée, et retire lorsqu'il conservait un rien d'humidité. Alors brutalement, et comme sans souci de la délicatesse de son dessin, il a laissé pleuvoir, sur tout son panneau de gros pâtes d'encre de Chine, qui, étendus avec un blaireau, ont tout à coup mis la plus douce demi-teinte autour des branchages et des oiseaux, enfermés dans une couche de neige faite miraculeusement par les espèces d'archipels, gardes secs dans le papier. Puis, quand le panneau a été ainsi préparé, ainsi avancé dans certaines parties, ne voilà-t-il pas que notre peintre japonais s'est mis à le laver à grandes eaux, donnant, sur la tête colorée des oiseaux, de petits coups de pouce amortissants et ne laissant sur le papier que la vision effacée de ce qui y était tout à l'heure. Et le panneau est encore une fois remis au feu et retiré mollet, et l'artiste indiqué le tronc tortueux par un large appuiement, mais interrompu, mais cassé, et piqué avec la plus grande attention, dans le vide et l'effacement, les petites fleurs rouges d'un cognassier du Japon, ne plaçant qu'au dernier moment la valeur noire de son dessin, la tache intense à l'encre de Chine du tronc de l'arbuste. Et ç'a été encore des lavages, des séchages, des reprises, des relavages, au bout desquels le lumineux et moelleux dessin était parachevé, tirant de tout ce travail dans l'humide quelque chose du joli flottement des contours que l'on voit en un dessin baignant dans l'eau d'une cuvette de graveur, et sans que, - selon l'expression d'un peintre, - dans cette chose souffle se sertit la moindre fatigue.

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Apart from these activities Europeans also made use of the Japanese exhibits. In his "Conférence sur le Mobilier", M. Emile Trelat analysed a Japanese lacquer screen at great length to demonstrate the possibility of using refined colour and surface modulation in manufacture and modern furniture.

In a "Conférence sur le Bouddhisme à L'Exposition du 1878", M. Leon Féer made great use of the Guimet collection of Buddhist art, Regamey's paintings, and of work shown by De La Narde and Bing. He gave a clear explanation of the place of many pieces in Buddhist belief and cere-

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monial. This scholarly aspect of the 1878 exhibition is most important. All Japanese enthusiasts became far more knowledgeable about Japanese art than previously was the case. However the process of selective myth-making which we have seen at work from the early period of Japanese enthusiasm did not cease. Popular participation in this myth-making was considerable. I have located a hand bill printed with Japanese figures I(124) and landscapes like a Japanese print. It advertises the sale of work from the Japanese exhibition by the "Midland Educational Company". The text reads;

The Royal Arita Porcelain. Japan. Chiunji Tukagawa and Co., established over 300 years. Close of the Paris Exhibition. This Magnificent collection of valuable Vases, Plaques, Bowls, Dishes and Ornaments are guaranteed as formed a portion of the Japanese Section in the Great Exhibition.

The bill offered special examples of Awari porcelain and also "Yebisu" and "Daikoku" money boxes.

Another example of the boost given to the popular aspect of myth-making can be seen in the light-hearted illustrations published in Emile Bergerat's "Chef d'oeuvres d'Art", such as the "Poem Retour de Pêche" complete with brush drawings of Fusi Yama.

At a more profound level the knowledge of Buddhism in particular was to become a new part of the Western cultural myth of the Far East, and consequently part of the language available to art. One thinks at once of the Buddhist idols in Gauguin's paintings. Moreover as we have seen in the previous chapter, the myths of the Japanese relationship to nature and of Japanese art as a mixture of first-class physical craftsmanship and ultra-refined sensibility was strengthened by the Japanese demonstrations in Paris.

Western work in the 1878 exhibition which provided evidence of Far Eastern influence.

Several paintings shown in the Exhibition Salon were seen by the critics as indicating the triumph of Japanese art.

Stevens' painting "Les Visiteuses" was praised as the epitome of the popular craze for Japanese objects, and indeed it does manage to gather a remarkable variety of Japanese objects into one domestic setting. Bergerat recorded its appearance;

Ici, l'amoureux du Japon se révèle dans la toile intitulé les Visiteuses, qui a été achetée en plein Champ de Mars la bagatelle de soixante mille francs. On sait qu'Alfred Stevens a une admiration passionnée pour tous les artistes inconnues à que nous devons tant de chefs d'oeuvres. Chefs d'oeuvres incisés dans l'ivoire, dans le jade, dans le bronze, aussi a-t-il donné un large cours à ses sentiments en composant en l'honneur des maîtres de la civilisation, des précurseurs du goût et de la lumière, un oeuvre d'un caractère inéluctable.

Trois femmes et un enfant perdus dans les splendeurs d'un salon japonais en sont comme les strophes ailées. Ces femmes luttent de grace d'élégance, de distinction un peu hautaine, de ce je ne sais quoi qui fait que l'être faible paraît toujours tenir un sceptre à la main quand il ne tourmente qu'un éventail avec les raffinements, les rêves, les splendeurs de ce Japon plein de sonnets de vertiges, qui sème à profusion les fleurs.

The painting was in Stevens' restrained palette of rose, blue, browns and ochres. It is discussed in the essay on Stevens below.

Only one painting of a Japanese subject appeared in the exhibition "La Japonaise", by the Salon painter Berne-Bellecour. There were also two bronze busts, "Un Japonais" and "Jeune Japonaise" by Guillemin, which had appeared in the 1876 Salon. These two bronzes belonged to Christophle, the maker of decorative bronzes and furniture. Guillemin designed several "Japanese" pieces for him. These were displayed on his stand in the exhibition, which is discussed below. There is no evidence that Japanese subjects became increasingly popular among Salon painters during the 1870's. A few works with Japanese subjects appeared every year.

The critics also identified Japanese qualities in several Western works in the exhibition. The writer for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" saw strong Japanese influence in the painting "Almond Trees on Monte Pincio" by the English artist Walter Crane. This was probably a superficial

identification. The main theme of the painting is a man and woman standing beneath some blossoming almond trees on a hillside above the town.

Other English artists also found their work identified with Japanese art by Louis Gonse;

A ces tonalités se joignent parfois des nuances neutres prises aux Florentins, mais plus encore aux Japonais. MM. Richmond, Watts, Burne Jones se servent d'un olive bronze et d'un violacé grisâtre qui viennent des bords de l'Arno, de Lombardie ou de Kioto. Le tableau égyptien de M. Alma Tadema renouvelle les tons des papiers de Nagasaki ou de Yeddo.

Several similar strange identifications are made by critics, between Western and Japanese art, which indicate that Japan still had no set place within the Western tradition.

A more accurate example of Japanese influence could be seen in the work of De Nittis. V. Cherbulliez was puzzled by the source of De Nittis' pictorial effects;

Parmi les tableaux qu'il a exposés au Champ de Mars, il en est quelques-uns d'un peu bizarres, ou l'on voit au premier plan des personnages coupés à mi-corps par le cadre, qui ressemblent trop à des photographies et qui même temps font penser à certains effets des éventails japonais, car le Japon préoccupe M. de Nittis comme bien d'autres.

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One of these paintings was "Place de République", in which the difficulty of deciding whether Japanese art or photography was responsible for the extreme composition is made very clear. The probability is that both were involved.

I(26

Fortuny was also thought to have been considerably influenced by Japanese art in his use of colour;

Fortuny a mis à la mode avec l'aide du japonisme, le culte du ton pour le ton, c'est-à-dire l'art purement sensuel des couleurs.

The overall impression of these comparisons with Japanese art is that the critics who made them were unsure of their assertions. This has some significance for the consideration of Chesneau's article

"Le Japon à Paris" which makes broad claims about the range of Japanese influence on French artists. Chesneau's article was published in connection with the 1878 exhibition. I shall consider his claims in the next section of this thesis.

### Decorative Arts

The influence of Japan on the decorative arts was much more apparent than its effect on the fine arts. Practically every manufacturer of ornamental porcelain, metalwork and other decorative materials produced pieces using Japanese designs. The most important of these was the House of Christophle, which had been manufacturing Japanese style metalwork since the 1860's.

Bronze vessels in the Japanese style, large and small, mixed with an imitation shrine and other medieval work were displayed on the Christophle stand. Japanese motifs were also worked into the enamel and niello work in cabinets and jardinières. I(127)

The two outstanding Japanese items were life-size bronze lamp standards in the form of Japanese women in full geisha costume designed by Guillemin. Their dress was carefully detailed in the bronze and the patterns picked out with semi-precious stones. I(128)

Japanese art had now reached the height of decorative fashion, vying with the Renaissance style table piece, "The Triumph of Amphitrite", made in silver for the Duke of Santana. The two Japanese torchières eventually found their way to the Vanderbilt House on 53rd Street, New York, in the Japanese room. The description of this room in the "Magazine of Art" gives a very good idea of the setting for which this type of work was intended; I(129)

The effect is precisely like that of the boudoir of some oriental princess. The rafters of the ceiling are open, as if to show the roof above, and the upper part of the walls is finished in bamboo. A light cabinet with shelves and open work runs around the room and this like the woodwork generally is tinted with rich red lacquer. In one corner is a divan cushioned with figured silks from Japan. On

either side of the door, supporting a cluster of lights stands a great female statue in Japanese costume cast by Christophle of Paris in imitation of Japanese bronze. Opposite the door is a large and elegant fireplace whose mantel and every ornament are Japanese likewise. For the window, looking on to Fifth Avenue, Lafarge has executed a stained glass compartment representing birds and flowers. The tail of a peacock is rendered with marvellous splendour and faithfulness to nature.

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It was for settings like this that most of the expensive "Japanese" items in the 1878 exhibition whether real or imitation were destined.

Reiber, another artist working for Christophle, designed some beautiful enamel ware based on Japanese designs. Other French manufacturers such as Falize and Rousseau also showed pieces with Japanese designs.

Among foreigner metalworkers the most conspicuous user of Japanese motifs was Tiffany, making his first international appearance. Unfortunately no illustrations can be found of the work displayed in the American pavillion. Tiffany had made good use of the Japanese goods shipped to him in 1876 by Christopher Dresser to make what Bergerat called "silverware for dreamers".

Tiffany came to Paris for the exhibition and it was the occasion for his first contact with Bing. Their mutual interest in Japanese art grew into full commitment to Art Nouveau as it developed in the late 1880's and 1890's.

The French ceramics with Japanese motifs were legion. Rousseau showed the service which Bracquemond had designed for him ten years before. Chesneau commended this as a fine example of how to use Japanese motifs in his article "Le Japon à Paris". He pointed to the asymmetry and delicate balance achieved by Bracquemond, who he claimed, made a free selection from the various Japanese motifs. Chesneau, no doubt, disapproved of the ignorant misuse of the identical Hokusai motifs by Dammouse in his Japanese service. Dammouse has over-

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elaborated the design with fruits and a rising sun in a manner more appropriate for the European motifs. He has "rationalised" the decoration and deprived it of its free asymmetrical quality. Other manufacturers and designers using Japanese motifs included Deck, Viellard, Beaumont and Collinot, and the English firms of Worcester and Wedgwood. In some cases Japanese motifs were mixed with Near Eastern patterns or painted on eighteenth century European forms to produce the most peculiar results.

Japanese motifs turned up on almost everything in the exhibition. The firm of Baccarat showed some excellent glassware with motifs from Japanese prints engraved on it. The oddest item of Japonaiserie was probably the Erard grand piano which was lacquered all over with Japanese motifs from prints and paintings, showing geishas by the river shore, storks wading, and various plants and flowers.

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Cheap industrial products, such as tin biscuit boxes also carried Japanese designs. As a whole the decorative arts at the 1878 exhibition provide evidence for the general acceptance of Japanese motifs in Western design. However one must not lay too much stress on this since Western design itself was without original ideas and turned to Persia, Arabia, Renaissance Italy and even to the Red Indians to provide it with decorative ideas. Japanese art was just one of many sources used by decorative designers. Nonetheless it did have an appealing simplicity, an uncomplicated charm which set the best Western pastiches of it apart from their Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Arabian rivals. In the long term, through men like Bing and Tiffany the Japanese example was to affect the future of design in a unique manner.

### Conclusion

The Far Eastern appearance in the 1878 exhibition did not have the exciting quality of first discovery of the 1867 exhibition. Nor did it have the showmanship of that exhibition or that of Vienna in 1873.

The "official" Japanese and Chinese exhibitions appear to have consisted mainly of export wares, many of a wildly fantastic kind. Nonetheless they were received with rapturous enthusiasm, not only by the general public but by amateurs such as De Goncourt, Furty and Christopher Dresser. They therefore deserve careful study as indicators of the state of European attitudes to Far Eastern art in 1878.

Paintings and prints were given less attention than other items, as usual. It is therefore difficult to assess their standard.

The exhibition of "ancient" art in the Trocadéro Palace made it clear that the finest pieces of Japanese work in Europe were already in the hands of French collectors. This exhibition stimulated much interest in Japanese art and began the process of refining Western scholarly discrimination which was to continue until the turn of the century.

This process was greatly helped by the enormous educational effort made by the Japanese commissioners and the artists and scholars on their staff. This flood of immediate information and demonstrations was probably the most significant part of the exhibition for the effect of Japanese art on the West. No similar effort was made by the Chinese whose work was of a much poorer quality. The Chinese were felt to be completely decadent by the critics despite the grand Chinese architecture.

Nonetheless they, like the Japanese, had a resounding popular success.

The 1878 exhibition was undoubtedly the apogee of Japanese enthusiasm in France and in Europe. The tremendous popular response to everything Japanese was balanced by the first showing of the Guimet collection and of the great collections of Furty, Bing, Sichel and others. "Japonisme" was soon to turn to scholarship and the consolidation of discoveries already made. The popular vogue was to turn elsewhere for its subject.

The exhibition of Japanese and Chinese works of art in London, 1878.

Concurrent with the Paris exhibition the Burlington Fine Arts Club held an "Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese works of Art", in the premises of the Royal Academy.

Sixty collectors loaned over two thousand works ranging from netsuke to screens. Most of the collectors were unimportant members of the wealthy middle-class civil servants and manufacturers that made up the body of Japanese enthusiasts in England. Even the organiser, Edward Dillon, was a civil servant, although he did write occasional monographs on Far Eastern art. 222

The exhibition catalogue is of no real help in identifying the individual pieces in detail, however some general conclusions about the state of collecting in England may be drawn from it.

The catalogue confirms the view that the great majority of the Japanese work in European hands was made in the nineteenth century. Moreover, although several signatures have been read by the compiler of the exhibition, none of them are of major artists or craftsmen. No artist is particularised in the catalogue, not even Hokusai. Indeed only the collection of Dillon and his brother Frank contained any quantity of paintings and prints. Most of the exhibits were ceramics though there were a large number of netsukes and inro on show.

This indicates that in England, as in France, Japanese visual art was the last work to be taken up by most European collectors. Although it would be tedious to examine the whole of this exhibition in detail, it is worth looking more closely at the visual items which are the largest document collection in Europe at the time.

E. Dillon showed four screens. One was an eight-leaved "Mahura Byobu" or "Pillow Screen" painted with birds and flowers, and three were "small Japanese Screens on gold ground; two depicting scenes from court life in Japan in the style called Goshō-ye, the other Screen gold

ground with a weeping cherry blossom". A Mr. Waterfield showed a pair of embroidered screens showing birds of all kinds, on a willow tree on one screen and a fir on the other. These were the only large paintings in the exhibition.

The Dillon brothers showed a large collection of kakemonos, hanging scroll paintings, over sixty in all. Most were bird and flower subjects but some stand out as more interesting. There were three large Buddhist paintings - one of Amida Buddha, one of the Buddha Dainichi and one of the Death of Buddha. The death of Buddha is described;

In the centre is a large golden figure of Buddha reposing in the condition of nirvana. In front of this Shaka (a white figure with a shaven head) lies dead on the ground. Two of his disciples are weeping over the body, the one on the right holds the rice bowl which Shaka carried when alive. Around the central gilt figure are grouped, in various attitudes of affliction, first the remaining fourteen fourteen Rakkan or disciples and behind eight Bodhisattwa (gilt figures) and various Temban or angels from various heavens and hells.

The painting is completed with the traditional assembly of all living things and the four living and four withered trees. All three religious paintings had been acquired from a Japanese temple. Several smaller religious kakemonos were also on show. Another interesting work was "a waterfall, with a dragon appearing from amidst a thunder cloud. Painted in Indian ink (Sumi-ye) on paper. Signature illegible but probably a work of the sixteenth century".

There were many Sumi-ye works in the show.

Prints were even less well-documented than paintings. Mr. R. Phene Spiers showed "The Hundred Views of Fuji-no-yama; two volumes of woodcuts", which is immediately recognisable as Hokusai's work, but he failed to identify it.

The Dillon brothers showed several groups of prints but they were nearly all simply described as prints or as "Yedo-ye". Some prints are described however, such as "Yaburi-Gasa" "a broken umbrella" from a

collection of songs published in Yedo in 1808, or "The burning of opium at Canton, before the opium war of 1842. From a Japanese work describing the war Published at Yedo in 1853".

The Dillon brothers also showed several Makimono or painted scrolls. One showed the nations of the world in twelve paintings, another showed a fire in Tokyo and a third the amusements of the people there.

The overall impression is that little was known about Japanese visual art in England in 1878, and that most material in the Dillon collection, the major collection of visual art, was made in the nineteenth century. This confirms the general pattern we have observed in the development of Japanese enthusiasm in England and in France.

The 1883 "retrospective" exhibition of Japanese art in Paris

If the 1878 Paris exhibition marked the peak of popular enthusiasm for Japanese art, the 1883 "Exposition retrospectif de l'Art Japonais" organised by Louis Gonse at the George Petit Galleries, 6 Rue de Sèze, 223 was the consummation of serious private collecting in Paris which had taken place in the 1870's.

Gonse, the editor of the "Gazette des Beaux Arts", managed to persuade several major collectors to lend work for the show. These included Bing, Burty and Duret. Wakai the Japanese dealer also loaned some works as also did the Japanese company, Kosha-Kaisha. Gonse himself also made a major loan to the collection.

Among other collectors of interest were Antonin Proust, the friend and long-term enthusiast of Manet and future Minister for the Arts, De Nittis, the painter and Sarah Bernhardt. There was also an exhibition of a hundred and one paintings made in Japan by the American painter Allan Gay who had been living there for eight years. These paintings were regarded as the most accurate impression of Japan to be seen in Europe.

Gonse wrote;

C'est la première représentation vraiment exacte et scrupuleuse du Japon qui nous soit offerte. Lorsqu'on a vu les études - nous pourrions dire les tableaux - d'un caractère si juste si fin, d'une coloration si intense, que M. Gay a peinte sur nature, on a réellement fait un voyage au pays du soleil levant. On a vu Kioto, la cité impériale, que ses temples en laque rouge et ses magnifiques ombrages enveloppent d'une parure incomparable; Tokio, la ville moderne, avec l'admirable rideau de fond formé par le Fousiyama et ses paysages rizières; Yokohama avec ses collines; ses bois, ses fermes, ses plages ensoleillées; on a vu Kobe, Mionishita et le lac d'Hakone: les points les plus pittoresques et les plus célèbres.

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I have not yet been able to locate any of these paintings. The catalogue does not even give the medium in which they were executed. However one could reasonably guess that they were small, highly coloured watercolours, similar to those made by Menpes, Conder and other visitors to Japan.

The exhibition itself was well-organised; the exhibits were dated and labelled with the help of Wakai. It was the first exhibition in which this had been done. There were over 6,000 exhibits altogether. As in the 1878 Trocadero exhibition the visual arts took a small place among the large numbers of ceramics and bronzes on show. Nonetheless they are worth looking at.

A large proportion of all the collections was still composed of nineteenth century work though a good number of earlier works were also included. Wakai showed a kakemono, "Djizo le dieu de bienfaisance", which he claimed to be one of two surviving works by Tose no Kanaoka, who was the founder of the first Japanese school of painting, the Yamato-e, in the ninth century. He is known only by literary records. The painting was described by Paul Mantz in his review;

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C'est de l'art monumental encore tout pénétré de l'austerité des âges anciens. Un millier d'années a passé sur le précieuse kakemono de Kanoaka. Sous l'influence du temps; les colorations ont pu perdre un peu de leur éclat mais la grande intention de l'artiste n'en reste pas moins visible. L'ensemble s'enferme dans

une gamme brune que viennent aviver des rouges  
sombres et des ors éteints. Les carnations sont  
relativement claires, le modèle est très simple,  
il existe à peine et cependant la forme générale  
est suffisamment indiquée.....  
Il y a là une touchant inexpérience. Mais le  
sentiment moral est parfait.

Mantz's reaction shows that there was still a tendency to invoke Western notions of art, of moral sentiment, when dealing with Japanese art. Wakai showed four other painters, two from the fifteenth century, two from the seventeenth century, all of doubtful attribution. The Kosha-Kaisha Company also showed an early religious painting showing the Buddha Sakya Mouni talking to Confucius, attributed to the fifteenth century painter, Kano Masonobu.

Bing also showed several old kakemonos including a goddess attributed to a fourteenth century mythical painter, Meisho. More important was a landscape painting by Sesshu, the fifteenth century painter, who brought the Chinese ink style to its Japanese expression as sumi-ye. Bing also showed work attributed to Sesshun and Kano Yeitoku, fifteenth century painters, and 26 others, ranging from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century, including a group of four by Sosen.

This group of paintings shows that new discrimination had entered into Bing's collecting. Bing also showed three eighteenth century screens. One in two leaves was signed by Sosen, and showed monkeys in a tree in Chinese ink. The other two, also two-leaved, were a pair showing white cranes on a gold background. The paintings of birds in the exhibition were noted for their excellence by Mantz. In particular he admired a painting of peacocks owned by Bing, an eagle and a falcon owned by Bing, an eagle and a falcon owned by Gonse, and a stork in the snow owned by Wakai.

Duret also showed one important earlier painting, a kakemono of the sage Dharma signed by Korin, the most important seventeenth century artist. Similarly Gonse showed one by the fifteenth century artist,

Tosa Mitsonobu, the traditionally accepted founder of the Tosa school of painters. Gonse showed several watercolours by Korin, of flowers and trees, and also a later print album showing his collected works. He also showed watercolours by his pupil Ritsuo. Gonse's collection was by far the largest in the exhibition; over 1,123 items in all, many of them of the highest quality. The accuracy of these attributions is doubtful, as Wakai who was largely responsible for them was not scrupulous, and often seems to have attached the most famous names he could think of to the works. However the accuracy is of less importance for this thesis than the increasing complexity of knowledge about Japanese art available in the West, which is an indication of an increasing degree of stylistic discrimination, of sensitivity to differences within the Japanese tradition.

Duret's collection of scroll paintings and prints provides us with a very good measure of the current state of knowledge about them and of the work available in Europe.

He showed 28 albums of prints by Hokusai. These included the complete "Mangwa" in the first edition, "The 100 Views of Fuji" in an edition of three volumes in black and rose only, and "The Stations of the Tokaido". He also showed 13 items of "Grandes Impressions en Couleur", presumably of one print each, although the one eighteenth century item is labelled "Katsoukava Shounstio et son ecole". The remainder of the prints are by nineteenth century artists, Toyokuni I, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, Toyokuni II, Hiroshige, "Ecole de Hokousai", Hokei and the collaboration work of Toyokuni II, Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi. He also showed illustrated books by Kuniyoshi, Hokei and other nineteenth century authors. There were also twenty albums of paintings, mainly of subjects from history or legend such as the Genji Monogatori, or simple sketchbooks. Again there were nineteenth century works. One exception was the "Histoire du géant Hoiyama miniature de l'école de

Tosa", which was dated to the early fifteenth century by Wakai. This showed the slaying of the giant while asleep by a group of Japanese heroes.

On the whole Duret's exhibition confirms the view that a knowledge of paintings and prints earlier than 1800 was only just beginning in the early 1880's.

The decorative arts, which occupied the majority, of the exhibition cannot be fully discussed here. Mantz selected a ninth century bronze and another early vase inlaid with silver as the most attractive archaic pieces in the exhibition. A large seventeenth century incense burner loaned by Abraham Camondo was also outstanding;

un grand brûle-parfûms forme d'une sphère que  
soutiennent deux animaux chimériques.

In lacquer work Mantz selected a round box owned by Gonse with a landscape in gold lacquer and mother-of-pearl attributed to Shunso, and three pieces by Ritsuo. These were an intro owned by Burty, a box with insets in ivory owned by Gonse, and a box owned by Hirsch with a design of a crab in gold lacquer.

The majority of Mantz's review is concerned with discussing the painting in the exhibition and this is a considerable change from previous articles in which decorative art was given far more importance. Gonse's book, "L'Art Japonais", was written with the knowledge he gained from compiling this exhibition and working with the catalogue and his book. I have made a selection of illustrations of pieces which were on show which give a good impression of the quality of the exhibition. I(132)

The 1883 exhibition was the last great manifestation of serious enthusiasm for Japanese art in Paris before it became a matter of scholarship. It marks the point at which the great Japanese collectors ceased to be pioneers. It is therefore the last exhibition of interest for this thesis. The work of consolidation which followed can be traced quite freely in contemporary works; there is no need for detailed

discussion of it.

The next large Japanese exhibition took place in February 1885 in Humphrey's Hall, 45, Knightsbridge, and then at Hyde Park Gate. It consisted of a series of stalls manned by specially imported Japanese, some of which gave demonstrations of crafts such as enamel making, umbrella making and screen painting, other included reconstructions of a teahouse, a temple and a street corner.

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It is significant that that dissolution of Japanese enthusiasm in England took the form of a popular fair and of the triumph of popular myth in "The Mikado". Whereas in France the interest in Japanese art became predominantly scholarly, in England the popular aspect of Japanese enthusiasm took the foremost position.

#### Conclusion

The exhibitions in London and Paris in 1878 and the Paris exhibition of 1883, provide considerable evidence that Japanese enthusiasm reached its peak during the period framed by these two dates. The division between "ancient" and "modern" Japanese work in the 1878 show marks the beginning of serious discrimination about the quality and age of Japanese art, as does the London exhibition of that year. The 1883 exhibition in Paris continued this process as it was the first to be arranged on a scholarly historical basis. The content of all three exhibitions supports the view that a full awareness of the different styles of pre-nineteenth century art only appeared in Europe after 1880. For instance no mention of eighteenth century painters and printmakers can be found before the 1883 exhibition and even there the great majority of the exhibits on show were made in the nineteenth century.

These exhibitions form a fitting conclusion to a discussion of the discovery of Far Eastern art in England and France since 1867.