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Nationalized Bodies: Kuroda Seiki and the Birth of the Nude in Meiji Japan

Ziyan Wang
Bard College

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Nationalized Bodies

Kuroda Seiki and the Birth of the Nude in Meiji Japan

Senior Project Submitted to
The Divisions of the Arts and Languages and Literatures
of
Bard College

By
Ziyan Wang

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Dedication

To my Father, Wang Weijun, and my Mother, Feng Mei,
whose love, understanding, and support have allowed me to pursue my passion fearlessly.

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Kuroda Seiki, *Jigazō* (Self-Portrait), 1889

Introduction: Kuroda Seiki, Western-Style Painting, and Meiji Japan¹

In the summer of 1893, the painter Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924) returned to Japan after almost ten years of study in France. Among the things that he brought back with him was a painting featuring a naked female figure standing in front of a full-length mirror, titled *Chōshō* (*Morning Toilette*, 1893, Figures 1 and 2). The painting would stir up ongoing debates over nude paintings and the exhibition of nude paintings in public following its 1895 exhibition at the National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai) in Kyoto. Critics writing in 1895 deemed *Chōshō* and nude paintings offensive to public morality (*fūzoku*).² However, Kuroda was neither the first Japanese Western-style painter (*yōgaka*) to depict the female nude, nor does he seem to be the first one to exhibit nude paintings in public venues. Neither were depictions of nakedness completely alien to past Japanese artistic traditions – the popular traditions of *shunga* and *bijinga* woodblock prints, illustrated books, and paintings persisted into the Meiji period.³ So how and why did nude painting come to be perceived as a problem for Japanese viewers in the 1890s? What did Meiji critics see and say about *Chōshō* and other nude paintings, and how did Kuroda and the intellectuals and officials who defended the painting and the genre respond to these negative reactions? By focusing on Kuroda's first two major nude paintings, *Chōshō* and *Chi Kan Jō* (*Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, 1899, Figure 9), my thesis demonstrates that although Kuroda was not the first Japanese Western-style painter (*yōgaka*) to depict nakedness or nudity, he was the first to ascribe to the nude a new set of nationalist meanings and to stress its importance in relation to the field of Japanese artistic expression.

¹ In my project, all the Japanese names are written with their family names first. All the Japanese scholars' names in the footnotes, when referenced for the first time, are written with their first name first.

² Masato Matsushima, Emiko Yamanashi, et.al ed. *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting: The 150th Anniversary of His Birth*, [*Seitan 150-nen: Kuroda Seiki: Nihon Kindai Kaiga no Kyoshō*] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, March 23, 2016), Exhibition Catalogue, 147.

³ See Rosina Buckland, *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*, (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 158-165, and Penelope Mason, "Forging A New Identity: The Meiji Restoration and Japan's Entry into the Modern World," in *History of Japanese Art*. 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 382-387.

In my project, through examining Kuroda's nude paintings, the specific exhibition and viewing contexts of each work, and the critical discourses surrounding them, I explore how various meanings and values were produced by and projected onto the naked female bodies depicted in the paintings in concert with the dynamic concept of the "nude" (*ratai*, *rafu*, *hadaka*, *rabijin*). The project asks how the cultural concept of the "nude," in the sense of an ideal form in the European artistic tradition, was brought by Kuroda into Japan, where it contrasted with existing domestic ideas and artistic representations of "nakedness" (*rataiga*, *ratai bijinga*, *jinbutsu sekiraga*, *shunga*). I ask – what kinds of meaning were produced as the concept of the "nude" was incorporated into the context of discourse on art in Meiji Japan? Further, how did the valences of meaning of the "nude" change as Kuroda's career in Japan advanced, and as he became more intimately involved with Meiji political institutions? In the pages that follow, I show that the female figure in Kuroda's nude paintings was transformed from a "naked woman" (*onna no hadaka*) that Kuroda saw as a personal souvenir (*omiyage*) from Paris into a "nude" (*ratai*) with the potential to represent the progress of the expanding modern Japanese empire.

In the two main chapters of my project, I closely examine Kuroda's *Chōshō* and *Chi Kan Jō* respectively. While Kuroda painted *Chōshō* in Paris in 1893 and exhibited it at the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts first before he brought it back to Japan to exhibit at the 1894 Meiji Fine Arts Society (Meiji Bijutsukai) in Tokyo and the 1895 National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai) in Kyoto, he painted *Chi Kan Jō* in Japan and exhibited the work at the 1897 White Horse Society (Hakubakai) before he made several changes

to it and brought it to Paris to exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. An examination of the exhibition histories of the two paintings demonstrates how the concept of the nude circulated from Paris, to Japan, and back to Paris. I argue that in this process, the nude, both as the concrete representation of naked female figures in Kuroda's paintings and as an abstract concept, was imagined to have the capacity to advance the development of Japanese art and to embody Meiji Japan's successful progress into "civilization" (*bunmei*). Endowed with such potential, in various exhibition and viewing contexts both domestically and internationally, the nude functioned as a sign to signify not only the painter's but also Meiji Japan's assimilation into the register of modern Western culture. The nude's imagined capacity to signify Meiji Japan's assimilation is important because, as Kuroda and his circle of intellectuals argued during the controversy that *Chōshō* had provoked, embracing the nude in modern Japanese art could together with Japan's victory in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) demonstrate to the Western powers that the expanding empire of Japan was advanced not only technologically, but culturally as well. Incorporating the nude, perceived as the foundation of European art, into Japanese art could show that Japan had successfully integrated European artistic culture and created its own unique and sophisticated expression.

Like many of the political leaders and intellectuals during the Meiji period (1868-1912), Kuroda was conscious of Japan's image and place in the global geo-political order, a consciousness linked to both the Meiji state's effort to "catch up" with the West to obtain an equitable political relationship with the latter, and from Meiji Japan's imperial agenda to expand its empire. Ever since the first unequal treaty signed between the Tokugawa Bakufu and the United States in 1854, there had been continuous effort of the Meiji government to open

negotiations with the Western powers to revise the unequal terms.⁴ The Iwakura Mission of 1871-1873, during which several dozen people, including some of the most powerful figures in the new government such as Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883), Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), and historian Kume Kunitake (1839-1931) spent eighteenth months travelling through the United States and Europe to observe all manner of institutions and practices and contributed greatly to the subsequent transformation of Japanese social and political institutions. The primary reason for sending the embassy in the first place was to revise the terms of the unequal treaties of 1858. However, during the embassy, the prospect to revise unequal treaties was slapped down by the Americans and Europeans, and the Japanese were told that they had to bring their legal and political system up to European standards before treaty revision could even be considered. The following several attempts in the 1880s by the Meiji government at treaty revision achieved only partial results, and it would be in the early 1890s when Japan was in the midst of empire-building that the Meiji government finally achieved this goal.⁵

As Meiji Japan was endeavoring to “catch up” with Western powers in order to gain equal recognition, it was also an expanding empire. In 1869, the northern island known to the Tokugawa rulers as Ezo, home to the Ainu people, was formally incorporated into the Meiji state as the prefecture of Hokkaido, and in 1879, Japan forced the Ryūkyū king to abdicate and incorporated the Ryūkyū islands as the prefecture of Okinawa.⁶ The most important focus of Japanese overseas activity in the 1870s and 1880s was the Korean peninsula. In 1876, Japan employed gunboat diplomacy to force the Treaty of Kanghwa in Korea and opened the latter for trade. In the 1880s, the Meiji government sought to forge a close political relationship to Korea

⁴ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 50-54.

⁵ Gordon, 73, 89-90, and, 117.

⁶ Gordon, 74.

that promote a regime in the latter that was independent of both China and Russia and deferential to Japan. In the strategic thinking of Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922), the most important geopolitical strategist among the Meiji leaders, Korea was to be part of a buffer, which he later came to call a “zone of advantage” protecting Japan’s home-island “zone of sovereignty.”⁷ In the following years, Japan interfered with Korea’s politics, and this competition with Qing China and Russia to exert influence over Korea eventually led to the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and later the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Especially relevant to the scope of my project is the first Sino-Japanese War, which Japan won and received both an extraordinary indemnity of 360 million yen from Qing China and control over Taiwan and nearby islands, as well as the Liaodong Peninsula.⁸ Japan’s victory in the war with Qing China had a huge impact both around the world and in Japan. The Western powers and their publics had expected the Chinese to prevail, therefore, after the war, Japan was perceived by the West with vastly increased prestige as the model for modernization of the non-Western world. Domestically, the war inspired a huge outpouring of nationalist pride. In December 1894, the journalist Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957) gushed that “now we are no longer ashamed to stand before the world as Japanese... Before we did not know ourselves, and the world did not yet know us. But now that we have tested our strength, we know ourselves and we are known by the world. More over, we *know* we are known by the world!”⁹ Thus, by 1895 when Kuroda’s exhibition of *Chōshō* at the National Industrial Exhibition in Kyoto incited the debates over the nude, Kuroda and his circle of intellectuals’ rhetoric to connect the importance of the nude with Japan’s nation and empire

⁷ Gordon, 113-114.

⁸ Gordon, 116-117. However, while Taiwan indeed became a colony of Japan, Japan was forced to return the Liaodong Peninsula in a tripartite intervention of Russia, France, and Germany in 1895, still indicating unequal political recognitions between Japan and the Western powers.

⁹ Gordon, 116-117. The quote by Tokutomi Sohō is from Kenneth Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 175.

building project both fit in line with broader nationalistic discourse and appealed to official and public support.

Meiji Japan was also a progressive period in which ideas from the West were eagerly imported and consumed by domestic audience. However, the rapid pace of change in the early Meiji era provoked varied reactions among government leaders, intellectuals, and the populace in general. While for some, change offered liberation, personal opportunity, and a chance to achieve collective, national glory, for others (or for these same people at other times), change meant danger, decadence, and loss of moral virtue. Such fears broke to the surface in at least three arenas of discussion and policy: fear of political disorder, fear of gender disorder, and cultural concern to define and affirm a unique Japanese identity.¹⁰ Relevant to the scope of my project is the last concern. To be sure, discussions on a distinct Japanese identity had its origins from before the Meiji period, in relation to both the influence of China and Chinese culture, and the European “barbarians,” who would poison the souls of Japanese people, convert them to Christianity, and demolish their true identity. But increasingly during the 1880s, intellectuals and politicians raised such questions in reaction against what they feared as a wholesale Westernization that might destroy the national character and all elements of Japanese society. Beginning in the 1880s through the turn of the century, people such as Okakura Kakuzō, commonly known as Tenshin (1863-1913), Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), and the writers in the magazine *The Japanese* (*Nihon oyobi Nihonjin*) began to define “Japanese culture” as the essence of their identity. The men in the Society for Political Education (Seikyōsha), founded in 1888, agreed that Japan’s government should build national economic and military strength by using Western technology, but they further developed an idea of particular “Japanese” values that should be cultivated in the process. Perhaps the most powerful value that they singled out

¹⁰ Gordon, 110.

was a unique conception of beauty, an aesthetic sense rooted in art and the natural environment. For these men, a special aesthetic and moral sense could serve as a cultural anchor in a time of great change.¹¹ Thus, together with a conscious awareness of Japan's image and place in the larger geo-political world, the negotiation of a unique Japanese identity formed an intellectual context in which Kuroda was working from in the 1890s.

In my first chapter, I begin by contextualizing ideas about “nakedness” and “nudity” in Meiji Japan and compare these ideas and their depictions in art with those in Europe. While in the latter there was a longstanding tradition that distinguished between nakedness and nudity in art, and the differences between the two concepts were theorized by artists and philosophers alike, in Meiji Japan there was not a comparable tradition. During the early Meiji decades, when ideas about nakedness or nudity were imported into Japan and translated into the Japanese language, most of the newly coined words were based on the same Chinese character, *hadaka* (裸), supposedly the only word through which people talked about and conceptualized nakedness before new ideas entered their everyday discourse. I then move on to an analysis of the so-called first nude painting in modern Japanese art, *Chōshō*, which Kuroda painted and exhibited in Paris in 1893 before he brought it back to Japan and exhibited it at both the 1894 Meiji Fine Arts Society Exhibition in Tokyo and the 1895 Fourth National Industrial Exhibition in Kyoto. While the painting received positive receptions at the first two exhibitions, it caused a scandal at the last, and critics attacked it using phrases such as “disturbing public morals” (*fūzoku wo midasu*) and

¹¹ Gordon, 3-9, 110-112.

“a scandalous painting” (*shūga*).¹² By depicting an unidealized naked female figure standing in front of a full-length mirror in a natural setting – her private bedroom – unaware of any gazes of outside viewers or voyeurs, Kuroda participated in the contemporary European modernist trends of breaking away from the established tradition of depicting idealized female nudes with stylized poses in European academism, as well as objectifying naked female bodies for the consumption of the male gaze. In addition to looking at the visual details of the painting itself, I examine writings by Kuroda and his supporters concerning the painting, including diary entries, letters, and essays published in newspapers and journals, and I argue that across the production process and exhibition and reception history of *Chōshō*, the naked female figure depicted is a sign that shifted its meanings as it travelled from France to Japan. In Paris and Tokyo, she served to demonstrate Kuroda’s familiarity with and assimilation into modern European artistic culture and discourse. Her role gained more significance in Paris, since Kuroda’s achievement as a Japanese painter could likewise signify Japan’s achievement as a whole. After the scandal that *Chōshō* caused in Kyoto, however, the naked female figure became a “nude” and took on a more nationalistic set of meanings with the capacity to both embody Japan’s successful modernization progress and elevate the Japanese public’s aesthetic sensibilities.

My second chapter focuses on Kuroda’s next nude composition, *Chi Kan Jō*. The work features three Japanese-looking female nudes with idealized body proportions standing and gesturing against golden backgrounds in a triptych of three separate canvases. By this time, Kuroda had already become a professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō), where he worked with Okakura Tenshin, who served as the principal of the School at the time, and whose philosophy of Eastern art and religion seems to have influenced Kuroda’s conception

¹² Emiko Yamanashi, “Chōshō to Rataiga Ronsō [*Morning Toilette* and the Nude Controversy]”, in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 206.

of the work. Kuroda had also established his own art association, the White Horse Society (Hakubakai), in 1896, the same year as he began teaching at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. I then begin my analysis of the triptych of *Chi Kan Jō* by deciphering the rich art historical references that Kuroda makes in this painting, to both the European and Japanese artistic traditions. I argue that by combining Japanese and European sources into one work, especially in the portrayal of the three nudes, Kuroda not only attempted to create a form of ostensibly universal artistic expression, but also expressed a vision of a unique, modern Japanese culture that could both incorporate and embody the ideals and aesthetics of the East and West at the turn of the century.

Significantly, Kuroda finished painting in 1897 and exhibited the work at the second White Horse Society exhibition, where it perplexed the viewers and received negative reviews. However, he made several modifications to the canvases and changed the name of the work to *Etudes de Femmes (Studies of Women)* before he brought it to the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, where the work received a silver medal from the jury, the highest prize awarded to any of the Western-style painting submissions from Japan. Through reviewing *Chi Kan Jō*'s exhibition and reception history, I further argue that while in Tokyo, the painting served to demonstrate nude paintings' importance to advance both the development of Japanese art and the conception of fine art (*bijutsu*), and to elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibilities. However, at the 1900 Paris Exposition, facing an international audience, the nudes and the work itself illustrated Japan's success in preserving its own tradition, or in other words, maintaining a unique "Japaneseness," in spite of the nation's rapid modernization progress towards "civilization" that integrated Western institutions and cultures into its society.

In my epilogue, I present a brief overview of Kuroda's later nude paintings that he painted after the 1900 Paris Exposition, with a focus on his 1901 painting, *Ratai Fujinzō* (*Female Nude*, Figure 33), his 1903 paintings, *Aki* (*Autumn*, Figure 35) and *Haru* (*Spring*, Figure 36), and his 1907 painting, *Nobe* (*The Fields*, Figure 39). Seeing a tendency in Kuroda's later nude paintings to draw inspiration from his teacher at Paris, Raphaël Collin's paintings, I speculate that Kuroda still perceived the nude to be necessary for the future development of Japanese art, manifested in his persistent effort to establish the nude in the Japanese *yōga* tradition. Further, the nationalist set of meanings that Kuroda imparted to the nude seemed to surface when Kuroda painted *Ratai Fujinzō* during his stay in Paris after the Paris Exposition, in an effort to gain recognition from his teacher Collin, who was reported to view Kuroda's creative work in Japan negatively. To conclude, I suggest that Kuroda's responses to the police or state authorities' intervention at the exhibitions of his later nude paintings and to the criticisms be a subject for future research. In addition, since Kuroda indeed succeeded in establishing a nude tradition in Japanese *yōga*, the shifting meanings of the nude in Kuroda's students' work and other later generations of *yōga* painters' remain another potential field for future study.

Kuroda Seiki was born in 1866 to a samurai family of the Shimazu clan in the Satsuma domain, present-day Kagoshima prefecture, located on the island of Kyūshū. Soon after his birth, Kuroda was adopted by his father's older brother, Kuroda Kiyotsuna (1830-1917), and went to live and spent most of his childhood years in Tokyo with his adopted family.¹³ Thus, from birth,

¹³ Atsushi Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki," *Kuroda Memorial Hall* website, https://www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/gallery/english/life_e.html (Accessed April 18, 2019).

Kuroda already had an intimate connection with the new Meiji government, as the samurai from the Satsuma Domain were some of the key actors in the overthrow of the Tokugawa Bakufu during the Meiji Restoration, and played a critical role in constituting new political institutions.¹⁴ Kuroda's uncle was also a retainer of the Satsuma Domain, and his numerous military deeds towards the end of Tokugawa rule led him to be named to a number of important government positions in the Tokyo Metropolitan and national governments after the Restoration. In 1887, Kiyotsuna was awarded the rank of Viscount, and remained a high official during Japan's period of modernization in the early Meiji years.¹⁵

Kuroda thus grew up in an elite ruling family and was groomed to become his adopted father's heir. In 1884, at the age of eighteen, Kuroda moved to Paris to pursue the study of law. However, in 1886, Kuroda decided to drop his study of law to become a painter, after he met the painter Yamamoto Hōsui (1850-1906), who was studying with the academic painter Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), the painter Fuji Masazō (1853-1916), who was studying under Kuroda's future teacher Raphaël Collin (1850-1916) through the sponsorship of the Ministry of Industry (Kōbushō), and Hayashi Tadamasa (1851-1906), an art dealer active in the export of *ukiyo-e* prints.¹⁶ Under these three men's encouragement and through Fuji's connections, Kuroda joined Collin's studio at the Académie Colarossi. Although on the surface Kuroda's decision to take up painting appeared arbitrary, his decision to change his course of study was in fact linked with his concern for the development of Japan, as evident in a letter that Kuroda sent to his adopted father dated February 10, 1886, in which he wrote,

Everyone says that Japanese art does not equal Western art, and are strongly urging me to study painting. In addition, I have also been told that I have the fundamental skills to take up painting, and that if I were to study painting, I would

¹⁴ See Gordon, 51-59.

¹⁵ Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki."

¹⁶ Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki."

become a very good painter, and that my study of painting would be more meaningful for Japan, than my study of the law.¹⁷

Not only Kuroda, but also Yamamoto, Fuji, and Hayashi were consciously thinking about how their study of painting could meaningfully contribute to the development of their country. Moreover, the mention of the “inferiority” of Japanese art to Western art foreshadowed Kuroda’s later conception of the nude’s ability to advance the development of Japanese art and to elevate the Japanese public’s aesthetic sensibilities in 1895.

Kuroda’s teacher, Raphaël Collin, was an academic painter, a regular Salon exhibitor, and a highly successful art educator whose career peaked in the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁸ Collin followed a professional trajectory that was standard for ambitious artists of his generation: in 1868, he enrolled at the École Nationale des Beaux-arts in Paris. He first studied in the studio of William Bouguereau (1825-1905) from 1869-1870, and soon thereafter became a student at the studio of Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889).¹⁹ However, Collin soon left Cabanel’s studio to pursue his own style in order to succeed at the Salon.²⁰ Collin is one of the typical salon painters in the second half of the 19th century who derived an eclectic style by mixing and matching several different artistic trends to create his own.²¹ He derived his artistic expression from his academic training, the naturalistic *plein air* expression from his peer Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884), and the various trends in Impressionism that had become dominant in the Parisian

¹⁷ Letter from Kuroda to his father dated February 10, 1886. Kumamoto Kenjirō eds. *Kuroda Seiki Nikki [Diaries of Kuroda Seiki]*, (Tokyo, Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1966-1968). Digitalized version on Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property website. <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1886/page/2> (Accessed April 19, 2019). Translation taken from Tanaka, “The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki.”

¹⁸ Sharon Parker, “The Crisis of the Salon Nude and a Search for its Resolution: Raphaël Collin’s *Au Bord de la mer*,” in *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, Issue 1, (London, Thousand Oaks, CA, and New Delhi, SAGE publications, February 2007), 6.

¹⁹ Parker, 6 and 27, originally from Atsushi Miura eds., *Raphaël Collin*, Fukuoka Museum of Fine Arts, 1999.

²⁰ Tetsurō Kagesato, Nobuo Abe, and Jacques Thuiller, “Koron to Nihon no Deshi-tachi,” in *Nihon Kindai Yōga no Kyōshō to Furansu [Masters of Modern Japanese Western-style Painting and France]*, (Tokyo: Bridgestone Museum of Art, 1983-84) Exhibition Catalogue, 17.

²¹ Kagesato, Abe, and Thuiller, 17.

art scene by 1886.²² At the time of Kuroda's entrance into Collin's studio in 1886, Collin's fame was rising among the newer members who painted in the academic style; the Salon had already accepted a number of Collin's works, and the French government purchased his 1886 submission, *Floréal* (1886, Figure 21), and deposited it in the Musée du Luxembourg.²³ On the other hand, Collin was known in Paris as an enthusiastic Japanese art collector, and his collections included *ukiyo-e* prints by artists such as Suzuki Harunobu (ca.1725-1770), Tori Kiyonaga (1752-1815), Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), Japanese ceramics, and screen paintings (*byōbu*).²⁴ Therefore, the consciousness of Japan as a country of fine arts (*bijutsu koku*) that Kuroda later displayed in his defense of nude painting perhaps derived from his interaction with Collin and the latter's collection of Japanese art objects during his student years in Paris.

In Paris, Kuroda met another main actor of my project, Kume Keiichirō (1866-1934), who entered Collin's studio in 1886 as well. Kume was the oldest son of the historian Kume Kunitake who participated in the Iwakura Embassy, and he had studied drawing under Fuji Masazō in Japan previously. Of the same age, Kuroda and Kume soon became close and remained lifelong friends. After the two returned to Japan, Kume also became a firm supporter of nude painting. He and Kuroda would work together as the directors of the private art school that they took over from Yamamoto Hōsui in 1894 and renamed Tenshin Dōjō, the first generation of professors teaching Western-style painting (*yōga*) at the newly established *yōga* department at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and as co-founders of White Horse Society (Hakubakai), the art association.

In the larger context of the history of Western-style painting in Japan, Kuroda and Kume's act of naming their private art school as Tenshin Dōjō (天真道場) is significant. While

²² Kagesato, Abe, and Thuiller, 17, and Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki."

²³ Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki."

²⁴ Kagesato, Abe, and Thuiller, 17.

tenshin (天真) refers to the pure and natural state of a person, *dōjō* (道場) means the room or hall in which people practiced traditional martial arts such as *jūdō* (judo). Further, *dōjō* connotes a space in which a process of self-cultivation took place through the training of martial arts. Thus, naming the art school as Tenshin Dōjō suggests that Kuroda and Kume perceived the process of learning to paint not as a simple and mechanical process of mastering the techniques, but as a mental training that entails self-cultivation. In Japan, European artistic practices were known as early as the 16th century, from both the Christian missionaries and Portuguese and Dutch traders, but they never gained wide support from the ruling elites across the country.²⁵ In the late Tokugawa period, facing European and American aggression, the Tokugawa Bakufu identified Western-style paintings (*yōga*) as a potentially useful tool for government purposes; because *yōga* represented the natural world more “accurately” than traditional Japanese art forms, it appeared to be more scientific and utilitarian. In 1855, the Bakufu established the Institute for Western Learning (Yōgakusho), and renamed it the Institute for the Study of Barbarian Documents (Bansho Shirabesho) the following year, to support the study of Western-style art along with other practical subjects. Here, the artists were able to examine reproductions of Western works of art in an institutional setting, but without guidance or instruction.²⁶ The value of Western-style painting also resided in its practicality for the Bakufu to protect the country from European and American “barbarians” and to save its crumbling rule.

Along the same line of thinking, the Meiji government established the Technological Art School (Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō) in 1876 as the first official art school in Japan for the study of *yōga*, and hired three Italian artists to teach at the new art school: Antonio Fontanesi (painting, 1818-

²⁵ See Michael Sullivan, “Japan: The First Phase, 1550-1850,” in *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989), 7-39.

²⁶ Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Western-style Painting in Japan: Mimesis, Individualism, and Japanese Nationhood,” in *Mavo: Japanese Artists and the Avant-Garde: 1905-1931*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), 12.

1882), Vincenzo Ragusa (sculpture, 1841-1927), and Giovanni Cappelletti (drawing and the principles of geometry and perspectives, dates unknown).²⁷ However, although at the Technological Art School, the artists received training with instructors, the perception of Western-style painting as a practical tool for technological development did not change. Fuji Masazō was sent to Paris to study painting through the sponsorship of the Ministry of Industry (Kōbushō), whereas in 1900, Kuroda would be sent to Paris to attend the 1900 Paris Exposition and to study for one more year by the Ministry of Education (Monbushō).²⁸ Moreover, the driving force behind the curriculum of the Technological Art School, Fontanesi, specialized in landscape painting and admired the Barbizon School, particularly Jean-Baptiste Corot (1796-1875). Fontanesi emphasized naturalism, like that in the works of Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) and Jules Breton (1827-1906), along with conventional portraiture and landscape painting.²⁹ At Tenshin Dōjō, by contrast, Kuroda and Kume specified that the basis of the curriculum consisted of “copying from plaster images and live models.”³⁰ In this context, the name Tenshin Dōjō signified a break from the past perception of Western-style painting as a practical tool for technological advancement by proposing that the study of painting embodies a higher purpose of mental self-cultivation, thereby elevating the status of Western-style painting. Furthermore, the establishment of life drawing as the basis of education at the Tenshin Dōjō foreshadowed Kuroda and Kume’s later argument that nude paintings can serve to elevate the Japanese public’s aesthetic sensibility. Naming his art school that teaches Western-style painting as a *dōjō* also seems to anticipate Kuroda’s later conception of the capacity of nude painting and Western-style painting in general to express a universal and hybrid Japanese artistic culture.

²⁷ Weisenfeld, 12

²⁸ Jun Shioya, “*Ratai Fujinzō [Female Nude]*” catalogue entry in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 208.

²⁹ Weisenfeld, 12-13.

³⁰ Tanaka, “The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki.”

Therefore, before the return of Kuroda and Kume from Paris in 1893, *yōga* artists working in Japan had limited training in the depiction of naked human figures and nudes at the institutional level, and likely did not consider those depictions to belong to the realm of fine arts. At Tenshin Dōjō, during the 1895 *Chōshō* controversy, and eventually at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Kuroda and Kume would reform the Japanese public's perception of nude painting and Western-style painting at large.

At the same moment as the Tokugawa Bakufu recognized the utilitarian value in Western-style painting, Japanese art, especially *ukiyo-e* prints, began to flow into Europe after the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854 that opened Japan to international trade. The influence of Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints on the conception of painting in terms of subjects, colors, perspectives, and so forth for modernist painters including Édouard Manet (1832-1883), Claude Monet (1840-1926), Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), and Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), and on the development of various art movements in Europe in the second half of the 19th century is known to many. However, the influence of modern European art, after itself being influenced by Japanese art, especially French, on the development of art in Japan in the late 19th century and early 20th century is less known and discussed in English scholarship other than in the subfield of Japanese Art History. The main figure of my project, Kuroda, is one of the first to bring forth this transmission of artistic practice from Paris to Japan. By focusing my project on Kuroda, I hope to contribute to the existing English scholarship on how modern European art after the

influence from Japanese art in turn influenced the landscape of modern Japanese Western-style painting (*yōga*).

In the limited English scholarship on Kuroda and his works, the painting discussed the most by the published scholars is *Chōshō*, the scandalous first nude painting that Kuroda brought back to Japan from Paris, followed by *Chi Kan Jō*. Scholars such as Michael Sullivan and John Clark present detailed surveys of the artistic landscape in Japan after the Meiji Restoration, rather than looking at Kuroda's works specifically.³¹ Norman Bryson offers a substantial analysis of women and depictions of women in Meiji *yōga*, and I owe part of my reading of *Chōshō* to his argument in "Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji *Yōga*."³² However, while Bryson is interested in the gender and power dynamics displayed in the Western-style paintings during the Meiji era, I look more specifically at Kuroda's female nudes and the meanings accorded to them. Jaqueline Berndt discusses the domestication, or "Japanization" of the female nude, and closely examines Kuroda's *Chōshō* and *Chi Kan Jō*.³³ However, Berndt is interested in how female bodies mediated representations of nationality – under what circumstances pictorial presentations of Japanese bodies looked Japanese, and what invited viewers to "read" them as particularly Japanese.³⁴ In my project, I look at how nationalist meanings were bestowed upon the female nudes in different exhibition contexts by the artist and critics, and how the artist then formulated his pictorial compositions to signify such meanings. Lastly, Alison Tseng presents a close analysis of *Chōshō*. Yet, despite her detailed review of the painting and the reception that it

³¹ See Sullivan, "Japan: From the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the Present Day," 119-169, and John Clark, *Modern Asian Art*. (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

³² Norman Bryson, "Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji *Yōga*" in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*. Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill eds. (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 89-118.

³³ Jaqueline Berndt, "Nationally Naked? The Female Nude in Japanese Oil Painting and Posters (1890s-1920s)", in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*. Doris Croissant, Joshua S. Mostow, and Catherine Vancey eds. (Boston, MA: BRILL, 2008), 307-345.

³⁴ Berndt, 307-308.

received in 1895, her interest lies in the painting and its relationship with the architectural space of the 1895 National Industrial Exhibition in the city of Kyoto.³⁵ In my project, I present a closer examination of the two nude paintings by Kuroda. In addition to looking at the visual details and art historical references embedded within each work, I am also interested in seeing the two nude paintings in their respective exhibition spaces, and the discourses surrounding them.

In Japanese, there is abundant scholarship and extensive research done on both Kuroda's work and the issue regarding nude paintings (*rataiga ronsō*). In my project, I utilize Kumamoto Kenjirō's compilation of Kuroda's journal entries and letters, and Ueno Kenzō's compilation of all the newspaper articles on White Horse Society. Scholars such as Wakakuwa Midori, Takashina Erika, and Takashina Shūji have done comprehensive studies of Kuroda's work from the art historical perspective. Yamanashi Emiko and the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties' infrared photography study of Kuroda's *Chi Kan Jō* provides me with deeper insights into the artist's painting process. Due to my capacity in Japanese and the limitation of time, I am unable to review more studies from the existing Japanese scholarship during the course of my research. Nonetheless, thanks to these rigorous studies done by the Japanese scholars, I have deepened my knowledge about Kuroda Seiki and nude paintings in Japan, and I am able to develop my argument in this thesis.

³⁵ Alison Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, Issue 3 (September 2008), 417-440.

The Transformation of the Naked Female Body: *Chōshō* from Paris to Kyoto

In April 1892, Kuroda Seiki returned to Paris after his two-year sojourn in the village of Grez-sur-Loing and began to prepare his painting of a naked female figure.³⁶ Initially having financial difficulty in hiring a model, he was finally able to begin the process in January 1893, aided by the Japanese Minister in France, Nomura Yasushi (1842-1909), who not only paid for the model but also allowed Kuroda to work in one of the rooms of the Japanese Embassy in Paris.³⁷ The resulting painting, *Chōshō* (*Morning Toilette*, Figures 1 and 2), would eventually shake the Japanese public sensibility and reform the Japanese art world.³⁸ A life-size oil painting, *Chōshō* features a naked woman standing in front of a full-length mirror with her back to the viewer.³⁹ Both her arms are tying her hair as she concentrates on her action and reflection in the mirror, without noticing any potential onlooker or voyeur from behind. While the painting received positive reviews when Kuroda showed it at both the 1893 Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the 1894 annual exhibition at Meiji Fine Arts Society (Meiji Bijutsukai) in Tokyo, it caused a scandal when Kuroda exhibited it at the 1895 National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai) in Kyoto, a more public venue than the Meiji Fine Arts Society exhibition of the previous year.

In this chapter, I look at the visual details of *Chōshō*, examine Kuroda's thoughts about it, and trace the changes in his attitudes towards it as the painting travelled from Paris to Japan. As the painting circulated from Paris in 1893 to Kyoto in 1895, what kinds of meanings or values

³⁶ Atsushi Miura, "Kuroda Seiki to Furansu Kaiga [Kuroda Seiki and French Paintings]," in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting: The 150th Anniversary of His Birth, [Seitan 150-nen: Kuroda Seiki: Nihon Kindai Kaiga no Kyōshō]*, Masato Matsushima, Emiko Yamanashi, et.al ed. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, March 23, 2016), Exhibition Catalogue, 38-39.

³⁷ Emiko Yamanashi, "Chōshō to Rataiga Ronsō [*Morning Toilette* and the Nude Controversy]," in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 206.

³⁸ The Original painting was lost in fire during the bombings of World War II, and only black-and-white photos were preserved. However, restoration efforts in recent years have allowed us to have a glimpse of what the original colors would have looked like (See Figure 2).

³⁹ The original painting measures 178.5 x 98 cm (70.3 x 38.6 inches).

were projected onto the female figure? What were her roles in the positive receptions in Paris and Tokyo, and in the controversies in Kyoto? And how did the meanings or values projected onto her change as she travelled with Kuroda? Since depictions of nakedness were not new to Japan in 1895, I begin by contextualizing existing ideas about nakedness and nudity during the early Meiji Period (1868-1912), before moving on to the discussions of the painting and its reception. In this chapter, through looking at the visual details of the painting, as well as Kuroda's diary entries, letters, and essays published in newspapers and journals, I argue that across the production process, exhibition, and reception history of *Chōshō*, the naked female body in the painting can be understood as a sign that shifted its meanings as it travelled from France to Japan. In Paris and Tokyo, the naked female figure served to demonstrate Kuroda's familiarity with and assimilation into modern European artistic culture and discourse. However, after the scandal the painting caused in Kyoto, the figure became a "nude" and took on a more nationalist set of meanings that has the capacity to both embody Japan's successful progress towards "civilization" (*bunmei*) in the wake of the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibilities. Thus, through her journey from Paris to Kyoto, the female figure in *Chōshō* transformed from a "naked" woman into a "nude" that was endowed with explicit and implicit nationalist meanings and can be associated with the new concept of Western-style painting (*yōga*) as fine art (*bijutsu*).

Contextualizing the "Naked" and the "Nude" in Meiji Japan

In the studies of Kuroda Seiki and *Chōshō*, scholars such as Jaqueline Berndt and Alison Tseng use both "naked" and "nude" to refer to the female figure in the painting without addressing the nude as a concept in the European artistic tradition or further explaining the

meanings of the words in the context of Meiji Japan.⁴⁰ They recount how first *Chōshō* then Kuroda in his later artistic career elevated the status of Western-style painting to the realm of fine art as an important modern institution, focusing on the artist's "missionary zeal" in reforming the art world in Japan, but they do not delineate how the "nude" functioned or what it signified in such a process.⁴¹ Using the word "nude" to describe the naked female figure in *Chōshō* can be misleading, as it connotes the European artistic tradition and form that date back to the ancient Greeks, which Kuroda saw the past Japanese traditions as lacking. In addition, the female figure in *Chōshō* is not a nude if judged according to Western standards. The single word "nude" also fails, strictly speaking, to convey the nuances between the various words coined in Japanese to describe paintings that depict human nakedness during the 1880s and 1890s. In this chapter, I use both "naked" and "nude" in my discussion of the female figure in *Chōshō*, but in a particular way. Specifically, I use the word "naked" when I refer to the figure before the scandal in Kyoto, and "nude" during and after the scandal. I have resolved to use both terms not only for practical reasons, but also to indicate that she was elevated to a higher status than either the naked females depicted in the traditional genres in Japanese art, or her own status as a personal souvenir (*omiyage*) to Kuroda before the Kyoto exhibition. Thus, prior to my discussion of the painting and its reception history, I believe it is important to differentiate the concepts of nakedness and nudity in the European artistic tradition and those in the context of Meiji Japan.

In the Western artistic tradition and the English language, there are substantial differences between the "naked" and the "nude." As Kenneth Clark has argued, while to be

⁴⁰ See, for example, Jaqueline Berndt, "Nationally Naked? The Female Nude in Japanese Oil Painting and Posters (1890s-1920s)", in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*. Doris Croissant, Joshua S. Mostow, and Catherine Vancey eds. (Boston, MA: BRILL, 2008), 307-345, and Alison Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, Issue 3 (September 2008), 417-440.

⁴¹ See, for example, Atsushi Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki," *Kuroda Memorial Hall* website. http://www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/gallery/english/life_e.html (Accessed November 10, 2018).

naked is to be deprived of our clothes, the word also implies some of the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition; the word “nude,” however, carries no uncomfortable overtone in educated usage.⁴² The vague image that the word “nude” projects into the mind is not of a huddled and defenseless body, but of a balanced, prosperous, and confident body: the body reformed and idealized.⁴³ In the European artistic tradition, the presence of nudity is often justified by references to biblical accounts, classical literature and mythology, and by pursuits of an ideal beauty theorized by artists and philosophers alike.⁴⁴ Moreover, in the early 19th century, depictions of female nude were also justified by Orientalism. One example of a nude painting done in the academic style in late nineteenth-century France is Alexandre Cabanel’s *The Birth of Venus* (Figure 3). In this painting, Cabanel took the subject from classical mythology: the moment when Venus is born of sea-foam and carried ashore. Both of her arms lifted, her face partly concealed, and her gaze seemingly turned away from the viewer, Cabanel in fact depicts her in a lascivious pose.⁴⁵ Yet, her body is generic and idealized. The waves of the sea, the putti flying around her, and the title all make it clear to the audience that the painting depicts a scene from classical mythology, thereby justifying the eroticism that Cabanel has introduced.

In the European context, therefore, Kuroda’s female figure in *Chōshō* is not a “nude;” she is neither idealized nor justified by a classical, biblical, or Orientalist guise. As the title of the painting, *Chōshō* (*Morning Toilette*, and *Le Lever* in French when it was first exhibited), suggests, she is an ordinary woman, presumably a Parisian, who just woke up in the morning and

⁴² Kenneth Clark, “The Naked and the Nude,” in *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. Vol.2, Bollingen Series XXXV. (New York, NY: Pantheon Books Inc. for Bollingen Foundation, 1956), 3.

⁴³ Clark, 3.

⁴⁴ Clark, 14.

⁴⁵ Musée d’Orsay, online entry for Alexandre Canabel, *The Birth of Venus*. https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/painting/commentaire_id/the-birth-of-venus-7137.html?cHash=3a820a6a61 (Accessed December 4, 2018).

is getting ready in front of the mirror inside her bedroom.⁴⁶ To the artist, she is just a model, hired to pose for the painting. In the Parisian context, Kuroda's *Chōshō* in fact participated in the trends of Realism and modernism initiated by painters such as Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), Édouard Manet (1832-1883), and Edgar Degas (1834-1917). The naked female body in *Chōshō* resembles the plump female nudes that Courbet depicted without idealization, such as his 1853 painting, *The Bathers* (Figure 4). On the other hand, the female figure's individualistic facial features in *Chōshō* and the natural setting of the bedroom resemble Manet's nude in his *Olympia* (Figure 5).⁴⁷ Tseng compares Kuroda's *Chōshō* with works by Manet and Degas in their shared depictions of the "commonplace denizens" of Paris, and she argues that "measured in terms of contemporary notoriety and long-term impact, this work [*Chōshō*] bears the same importance for Japanese modernism as Édouard Manet's *Olympia* does for European modernism."⁴⁸ Although it is true that *Chōshō* shared some similar circumstances with *Olympia* in its exhibition and reception history, it should be emphasized that the background from which the artists produced the two works and the debates surrounding them emerged from very different contexts. Further, the trajectory of the two artists' careers after the controversies also differed. *Olympia* rejects the established tradition of depicting idealized female nudes and their stylized poses in European academism, whereas there was no comparable academic art tradition in Japan.

Unlike in the European artistic tradition, in Japan, there were no distinctions between different kinds of nakedness prior to Kuroda and his peers' introduction of the concepts of nudity (*ratai*, *rataiga*) and Western-style paintings as fine art (*bijutsu*). While the nude did not exist as such, depictions of human nakedness did in the colorful erotic *shunga* woodblock prints that

⁴⁶ Yamanashi, "Chōshō to Rataiga Ronsō," 206.

⁴⁷ For discussions on Courbet's nudes and Manet's *Olympia*, see Clark, 162-5; For the reception on Manet's *Olympia* and its impact on late nineteenth century French art, see T.J.Clark, "Olympia's Choice" in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 79-146.

⁴⁸ Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," 417-431.

portray couples engaging in sexual interactions, as well as *bijinga*, portraits of beautiful men and women that were produced in large quantity from roughly between 1600 and 1900 (see figures 6 and 7).⁴⁹ But *shunga* and *bijinga* do not emphasize truly naked human bodies, and they were not viewed as fine art.⁵⁰ Literally meaning “spring pictures”, *shunga* during the Edo period formed part of the culture of the “Floating World” (*ukiyo*), a state of mind apart from the “fixed” world of daily life and duty but had a concrete arm in the licensed brothel areas and extra-legal “other places” of entertainment – these locales could then be brought back into the domestic world of duty via the medium of pictures.⁵¹ *Shunga* depict fantasies that were difficult to realize, rather than idealization. Further, as Timmon Screech points out, *shunga* and *bijinga* artists did not emphasize secondary sexual characteristics in their depictions of human bodies, as male and female were not polarized but were said to hold the majority of their bodily traits in common. Therefore, it was rare and of little use for *shunga* artists to depict full nakedness, as it would not help them to achieve their goal of arousing the viewer. On the other hand, they could depict partial nakedness without any equivalent need to drown out sexuality.⁵² By 1895, when Kuroda exhibited *Chōshō* at the Fourth National Industrial Exhibition in Kyoto, the popular forms of *shunga* and *bijinga* would constitute the imagery of exposed human body that the public audience would have been most familiar with, and they were indeed compared with Kuroda’s painting. It would be Kuroda and his peers’ task to set the boundary between the naked female bodies in the past traditions of *shunga* and *bijinga* and the female nudes in their Western-style oil paintings.

⁴⁹ Rosina Buckland, *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*, (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 7.

⁵⁰ For the usage of *shunga*, see Timon Screech, “Erotic Images, Pornography, *Shunga* and Their Use” in *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan, 1700-1820*. (London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1999), 13-38.

⁵¹ Screech, 8.

⁵² Screech, 104.

An examination of the words coined in Japanese in the early 1880s to describe depictions of nakedness found in Western-style paintings reveals both the ambiguous boundary between past traditions and new concepts and the lack of differentiation between concepts of the naked and the nude as one finds in the European artistic traditions. In 1881, Western-style depictions of ordinary, not-yet-idealized nakedness were first exhibited at Japan's Second National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai), and the term *jinbutsu sekiraga* (人物赤裸画, literally “pictures of naked people”) was first used to categorize them in the accompanying catalogue.⁵³ While Western-style painting was supported by the Meiji government from 1868 to early 1880s for its capability of depicting reality more accurately, the majority of Japanese Western-style painters during this time did not go abroad, but studied Western-style paintings at the Technical Art School (Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō) in Tokyo with Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882), an Italian painter hired by the Meiji government.⁵⁴ On the other hand, official attitudes towards Western-style paintings also began to shift around 1880, when Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) started his campaign for reviving traditional styles in Japanese art.⁵⁵ Thus, although it is hard to determine exactly which works were shown at the Second National Industrial Exhibition in 1881 and what the exact public reactions to them were, it was likely that the Western-style paintings depicting nakedness exhibited in the 1881 Exhibition were viewed by the Japanese audience as examples of Western-style paintings or things representing the West.

In an incident in January 1889, the writer Yamada Bimyō (1868-1910) wrote and published a short story titled *Kochō* (*The Butterfly*) in the 37th issue of *Kokumin no Tomo* (*The*

⁵³ Quoted in Berndt, 320; Originally from Kagesato Tetsurō, “Jinbutsu Sekiraga kara rataiga e,” in Shūji Takashina ed. *Nihon Bijutsu Zenshū*, vol. 22: *Kindai no Bijutsu II: Yōga to Nihonga* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992), 174.

⁵⁴ Shūji Takashina, “Eastern and Western Dynamics in the Development of Western-style Oil painting During the Meiji Era” in *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting*. Shūji Takashina, J. Thomas Rimer, and Gerald D. Bolas eds. (Tokyo and MI: The Japan Foundation and Washington University in St. Louis, 1987-88), Exhibition Catalogue, 22-24.

⁵⁵ Takashina, 24-26.

Nation's Friend) magazine, for which Watanabe Seitei (1851-1918) illustrated with a wood-cut print and rendered the female character in naked form (Figure 8). On January 15, immediately after its publication, the Ministry of Interior issued a directive to ban such illustrations, referring to them as *ratai bijinga rui* (裸体美人画類, “pictures of beauty with naked bodies and the like”).⁵⁶ In this term adopted by the government, “*bijinga*” (美人画, “pictures of beauty”) is still associated with the popular *ukiyo-e* traditions of *bijinga* and *shunga*.⁵⁷ In the August of the same year, the writer Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) wrote an essay in support of Watanabe, and used the term *rataiga* (裸体画, “nude painting”), which itself does not evoke any past traditions.⁵⁸ Later on, the new academic nude paintings in oil adopted the neutral terms of *rataiga* and *rafu* (裸婦, “female nude”), refraining from any evocations of or associations with the past at all.⁵⁹ Although all of these words possess different valences of meanings, they are all based on the same Chinese character, 裸 (*hadaka* or *ra-*), meaning nakedness, nudity, bareness, or the state of being uncovered. Thus, during the early years of the Meiji period, the idea of nudity, or rather, an alternative conception of nakedness did not yet seem to be crystalized in the Japanese audience's viewing experience of nakedness portrayed in either Western-style paintings or in mass media illustrations.

However, one should not downplay the ambiguity presented by these new words; they nonetheless suggest the formation of new concepts in Meiji Japan. If we view the development of the terms that I described above in the context of translation to Japan, it is perhaps not exaggeration to say that the travelling of Kuroda's *Chōshō* from Paris to Japan (specifically to

⁵⁶ Dōshin Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and The Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, Hiroshi Nara trans. (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2011), 260-263.

⁵⁷ Similar to *shunga*, *bijinga* was also used in pornographic context. See Screech, *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan, 1700-1820*.

⁵⁸ Satō, 263.

⁵⁹ Berndt, 320.

the 1895 Kyoto exhibition), and the subsequent discourses surrounding it resemble the process of translation. It is a translation of an image of a naked female figure done in Western-style oil painting and physically in Paris, into Japan and Japanese ideology, and through this process contested with native representations and ideas of nakedness. As Indra Levy summarizes in her introduction to *Translation in Modern Japan*, the complex history of the Japanese language suggests that “translation” can be redefined as a range of strategies for making available the meanings, values, and/or techniques of one language in another that may not be “native” to anyone in any usual sense of the term.⁶⁰ Levy proposes that in the case of literature and linguistics we should further inquire into the specifics of what a translation may mean in its own linguistic and cultural milieu, and how it affects the local linguistic, social, and cultural landscapes as well as the lives and sensibilities of its inhabitants.⁶¹ But the same applies to the importation of images and the coining of terms to describe and define such images. As this chapter will demonstrate, the introduction of the nude in Western-style oil paintings to Japan by Kuroda during and after the controversies over *Chōshō* in 1895 and the discourses surrounding the painting would serve to “expand the horizons” of concepts and ideas in modern Japanese cultural landscape.⁶²

***Chōshō* in Paris and Tokyo, 1893 and 1894**

In the previous section, I argued that the female figure in Kuroda’s *Chōshō* is a naked woman according to the standards of European artistic tradition, and that the painting can be understood as participating in the modernist trend in Paris at the time. But *Chōshō* not only takes

⁶⁰ Indra Levy, “Introduction: Modern Japan and the Trialectics of Translation,” in *Translation in Modern Japan*, Indra Levy ed. (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 3.

⁶¹ Levy, “Introduction,” 4.

⁶² I borrowed the term “expand the horizons” from Levy, “Introduction,” 11.

part in the modernist trend by not depicting an idealized naked female body, but also by presenting a voyeuristic male gaze that subjugates and objectifies the female figure.⁶³ Yet to Kuroda, this objectification of the female body will serve to empower him as a Japanese male painter, both in Paris and in Tokyo. In this section, I will look at the specific visual details of the painting, Kuroda's descriptions of it in his letters to his family from Paris, and its receptions. In doing so, I argue that in both Paris and Tokyo, the naked female figure in *Chōshō*, viewed as a souvenir (*omiyage*), was merely a personal object to Kuroda that signified his familiarity with and successful assimilation into the modern European artistic culture.⁶⁴

At first glance, *Chōshō* (Figures 1 and 2) appears to be depicting a natural scene of a contemporary European woman getting ready in the morning, in a natural pose. But in fact, Kuroda depicts a very unnatural pose to maximize her nakedness and reveal the male painter's agency over that of the female model. In the painting, Kuroda twisted the female model's body and positioned it in a way that exposes the body for the viewer. While the mirror does not directly face the viewer, Kuroda placed the lower part of the figure's body as if the viewer is positioned in a straight line behind her. The upper part of her body, however, is oriented towards the mirror at which she is looking. Portraying her upper body as facing the mirror enhances the natural appearance of the scene, but since the mirror is not facing directly towards the viewer, it would be a more natural (and comfortable) pose were her whole body to face the mirror rather

⁶³ On the male gaze and gender power in nineteenth-century French art, see Tamar Garb, "Gender and Representation" in *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Francis Frascina, Nigel Blake, Briony Fer, Tamar Garb, and Charles Harrison, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with The Open University, 1993), 219-290; and Carol Duncan, "The Aesthetics of Power in Modern Erotic Art" in *Feminist Art Criticism: An Anthology*. Arlene Raven, Cassandra L. Langer, and Joanna Frueh eds. (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1988), 59-69.

⁶⁴ I owe my argument to Norman Bryson who has substantially argued in "Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji *Yōga*," 108, that "it is through a focus on the bodies of women rather than men that proximity to and intimacy with the West are evoked." According to him, women in Meiji *yōga* served to turn their male painters into the subject of modernity, not themselves. Although I derived my argument in this section from his, I am also looking specifically at Kuroda's letters to his stepfather in addition to the pictorial details of the painting. My whole chapter looks specifically at how the meaning of the "nude" in *Morning Toilette* changed as it travelled from Paris to Kyoto.

than the lower body facing the viewer. One has the freedom of standing as one wishes in front of the mirror, but Kuroda chose to depict a scene in which the female figure's body is twisted. With her upper back facing the mirror and lower back facing the viewer, the painter provides the onlooker a maximum view of her nakedness – a full view of her back, and an almost complete frontal view of her body in the reflection. The mirror also contributes to this maximization of the view. Further, her twisted back enhances the curvy outline of her body, as already achieved through her depiction in *contrapposto*, a pose that allows the painter to emphasize the curvy outline of the model's body and naturalize the unnatural twist of her body aforementioned. Although Bryson argues that “though the mirror seems to relay the model's gaze upon her own body, from the angle of vision that structures the picture, the reflection in the looking glass is far more for the spectator than for herself.”⁶⁵ Since the original of the painting is now lost, and what preserved is only a black-and-white photograph of it, it is hard to analyze the specific technique of perspectives that Kuroda employed here. Nonetheless, in choosing to depict the naked female figure in an unnatural stance naturalized by the *contrapposto* pose, and thus providing the audience a maximum view of her naked body, Kuroda turned her into an object for the consumption of the male gaze.

Placing the female nude inside her bedroom without any awareness of the gazes of an outside viewer or voyeur further intensifies the objectification of her body and the dominance of the male painter's agency. The title of the painting, *Chōshō* (*Morning Toilette*, and *Le Lever* in French), and its bedroom setting serve to naturalize the context for the scene and indicate that the woman is in a private moment in a private space. When Kuroda first showed the finished painting at the Salon de Beaux Arts in 1893 in Paris, it was praised for rendering the naked body in an alledgedly “natural” setting which – last but not least due to the absence of plain posing –

⁶⁵ Bryson, 112.

gives the impression of a spontaneous and as such quite modern glimpse into this woman's boudoir.⁶⁶ However, this presumed intimacy is disturbed, both by her exposed back and by the intrusion of the outside gaze. As Bryson points out, in the European artistic tradition, the display of a woman's body before the male is attributed to her own desire to be beautiful, and to her vanity or narcissism, as per a power structure in which the male gaze is naturalized as voluntary by the women's presentation of herself as an object of spectacle.⁶⁷ Therefore, the disturbed intimacy depicted in *Chōshō* reflects the male painter's control of the scene – aided by the full-length mirror. No matter how the female figure moves, the male painter always has a more comprehensive view than she does.

In fact, even before beginning working on *Chōshō*, Kuroda had already assigned a special value to this “painting of a naked woman” (*onna no hadaka*) that he intended to embark on as his last work in Paris. In a letter from Paris to his stepfather on April 29, 1892, Kuroda writes,

Soon, in Paris, I will devote myself (*kokoro ni makasete*) to paint a painting of a naked woman (*onna no hadaka*) as if it will be my graduation test (*sotsugyō shiken no yō na kokoromochi nite*), and bring it back to Japan as a souvenir (*omiyage*) of a Parisian specialty (*meibutsu*). I want to show this painting to the Japanese intellectuals who are engaging in pointless arguments and pondering over trivial matters (*chīsana kangae wo shiteiru nihon no korikutsu senseikata*), see their reaction, and perhaps have a laugh about it.⁶⁸

According to this letter, it seems that this new painting of a naked woman embodies three levels of meanings to Kuroda. First, by describing the task of painting this new work as a graduation test, Kuroda leaves the impression that he wanted to seek approval from both his teacher, Raphaël Collin (1850-1916), and from the French art world at large. He was conscious that this

⁶⁶ Berndt, 313.

⁶⁷ Bryson, 114; Bryson writes “in front of male”, but the representation of women looking at themselves into the mirror is also a device often employed in European art to associate women with vanity.

⁶⁸ Letter from Kuroda to his father dated April 29, 1892. Kumamoto Kenjirō eds. *Kuroda Seiki Nikki* [*Diaries of Kuroda Seiki*], (Tokyo, Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1966-68). Digitalized version on Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property website, <http://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1892/page/8> (Accessed Nov. 9, 2018). See Appendix I for the Japanese original.

work would come to represent the culmination of his studies in Paris. Therefore, he felt he should devote himself wholeheartedly to its production so as to demonstrate his skills to his French audience. In a later letter to his stepfather on February 4, 1893, Kuroda mentions that he wanted to show the painting, still in progress, to the Salon.⁶⁹ But prior to finishing the painting, Kuroda showed it not only to Collin, his teacher, but also to Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), the director of the Salon of Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, to seek advice. He then made several changes according to their suggestions before finally submitting the finished piece to the Salon.⁷⁰

Secondly, he intended to bring the painting back to Japan as a special souvenir. Both the words “specialty (*meibutsu*)” and “souvenir (*omiyage*)” suggest that, in Kuroda’s mind, this painting of a naked woman is both something that Japan did not have and is distinct from what Japan did have, namely *shunga* and *bijinga*. The word “souvenir” further implies the personal value that Kuroda has imparted to this painting. He not only wanted to exhibit it at the Salon to prove his mastery of depicting human bodies to the French audience. Moreover, after its exhibition and recognition in the Salon, the painting would literally become a personal souvenir for Kuroda. After his return to Japan, then, the painting would serve to remind him and other Japanese audience of his success at the Salon and in the Parisian art world at large. Therefore, as a souvenir, this painting of a naked woman becomes an object that could signify Kuroda’s assimilation into the European artistic traditions and represent his pride in gaining equal recognition to other French artists from the Salon jury.

⁶⁹ Letter from Kuroda to his father dated February 4, 1893. Kumamoto eds., *Kuroda Seiki Nikki*, <http://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1893/page/2> (Accessed November 30, 2018). See Appendix II for Japanese and English translation.

⁷⁰ Yamanashi, “Chōshō to Rataiga Ronsō,” 206.

Immediately after, Kuroda expressed, almost jokingly, his desire to show this finished painting to “the intellectuals in Japan who are engaging in pointless arguments and pondering over trivial matters.” Here Kuroda seems to mock the Japanese intellectuals and make himself as superior. Kuroda wrote this letter in Paris, but it gives the impression that he is not only physically, but also metaphorically and mentally distancing himself from the Japanese intellectuals.⁷¹ No matter how respectable and knowledgeable these intellectuals were to him, they were still in Japan, and thus their outlooks were confined as such. Kuroda sees himself differently. He had left Japan, broken free from its constraints, and mastered both the techniques and theories of Western-style painting in the city that had been regarded as “the hub of civilization” in Meiji Japan ever since the Iwakura Embassy of 1871-73.⁷² To Kuroda, Japanese professors and intellectuals were conservative and merely arguing over trivial matters. This painting of a naked woman, a “specialty” of the very center of modern civilization and culture, thus represents Kuroda’s sophistication, and his knowledge of and familiarity with the world outside Japan.

As Berndt and Bryson point out, the positive reception of *Chōshō* at the 1892 Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the 1893 exhibition at the Meiji Fine Arts Society demonstrate Kuroda’s familiarity with and assimilation into the modern European artistic culture

⁷¹ The word he used in Japanese, *sensei* (先生), is used to refer to a teacher, professor, master, or someone who is more skillful and knowledgeable in a certain field. The word itself conveys respectfulness of the speaker towards the person that is referred to as *sensei*. In Kuroda’s letter, he increases the level of respectfulness by adding *-kata* after *sensei*, a suffix used to elevate the person that the speaker is referring to, which further increases the mocking tone of the sentence.

⁷² The Iwakura Embassy (1871-73) consisted of a group of delegates who set out from Japan to visit Western powers to observe and study from them in order to strengthen and modernize Japan. During this mission, Paris was recognized as the “hub of civilization” as recorded in the account of the Embassy, compiled by Kume Kunitake. See *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871-73: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary’s Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe, Volume IV, Continental Europe 2*, compiled by Kume Kunitake, translated by P.F. Kornick. (Japan: The Japan Documents, 2002).

to both the French audience and domestic Japanese *yōga* painters.⁷³ At the 1892 Salon in Paris, the French jury praised him for his accomplishment in adapting the established European artistic tradition of the nude and rendering it into a contemporary and natural scene.⁷⁴ However, in the Parisian context, Kuroda's accomplishment is significant not only as a demonstration of his skill, but also of Japan's achievement. Since the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Japan had modernized itself quickly through learning from Europe and the United States. Furthermore, since the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, the large quantity of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and other Japanese artifacts exported to Europe had captured the artistic imagination of many artists working in Paris during the 1860s and 1890s.⁷⁵ Thus, in the overall context of Meiji modernization and of the Parisian artistic environment in the second half of the 19th century, Kuroda's rendering of the naked female body in *Chōshō* and its success at the Salon signified to the French audience the processes of cultural assimilation of Japan to the West and the West to Japan.⁷⁶

Similarly, at the Meiji Fine Arts Society's October 1894 Exhibition in Tokyo, *Chōshō* represented Kuroda's familiarity with modern European artistic trends to the Japanese audience.⁷⁷ However, this positive reception at the Meiji Fine Arts Society was a limited one. Although there are few records of *Chōshō*'s reception in Tokyo and it is difficult to know just how many people visited the exhibition, the painting did not cause any scandal or catch nationwide attention when exhibited in Tokyo. The official attitude towards Western-style painting in Japan during the 1880s and early 1890s was negative either, as delineated briefly in the first section. The founding of the Meiji Fine Arts Society (Meiji Bijutsukai) itself in 1889 by

⁷³ See Tan'ō Yasunori, "Chōshō shūikō," *Waseda Daigaku Daigakuin Bungaku Kenkyūka Kiyō*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (1997): 149-163, as quoted in Berndt, 313, and Bryson, 111-4.

⁷⁴ Berndt, 313.

⁷⁵ Oliver Impey, "Japanese Export Art of the Edo Period and Its Influence on European Art," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4. Special Issue: Edo Culture and Its Modern Legacy (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 685-697.

⁷⁶ Bryson, 114.

⁷⁷ Berndt, 314.

a group of Japanese Western-style painters who studied *yōga* with Fontanesi at the Technological Art School was their response to the government's shift of attitudes against *yōga* in the 1880s.⁷⁸ In this context, in 1894, Kuroda, newly returned from Paris, was likely viewed by the group of Western-style painters at the Meiji Fine Arts Society as someone who embodied the authentic European artistic culture, and whose painting represented the current artistic trends in Europe.

Both in the production of *Chōshō* and its reception in Paris and Tokyo, the naked female figure became an indicator of Kuroda's familiarity with and assimilation into modern European artistic culture to both French and Japanese audience. As such, the work carries nationalist significance in the context of Meiji Japan's drive for modernization and progress towards "civilization" (*bunmei*), and Kuroda was aware that his recognition in France would have signified success for Japan, not just as individual. Nonetheless, in Kuroda's accounts of *Chōshō*, it seems that the naked female figure remained personal – a special souvenir. It would be in Kyoto the following year that she would take on a more explicit nationalist meaning to Kuroda and his supporters.

***Chōshō* in Kyoto, 1895**

When Kuroda exhibited *Chōshō* at the Fourth National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai), the public was aghast at the life-size portrayal of a naked female figure. As Alison Tseng points out, criticism of the painting centered on artistic and moral grounds.⁷⁹ In the major newspapers in Kyoto, Tokyo, and Osaka, critics called *Chōshō* "a scandalous painting"

⁷⁸ Takashina, 21-31.

⁷⁹ Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," 417.

(*shūga*) and “disturbing public morals” (*fūzoku wo midasu*).⁸⁰ To Japanese audiences in 1895, the most familiar images of human nakedness were those found in *shunga* and *bijinga*, and the naked female figure in *Chōshō*, standing alluringly in front of the full-length mirror, was viewed like one of the beauties found in those past traditions. But unlike *shunga* and *bijinga*, which were prints and were produced in generally small sizes, *Chōshō* was a life-size Western-style oil painting, a medium that since the introduction of Dutch paintings in the early 17th century was appreciated for its ability to render reality more accurately than traditional Japanese paintings, and was promoted in the early Meiji period to facilitate technological advancement.⁸¹ Therefore, both the size of *Chōshō* and the realism traditionally associated with Western-style paintings disturbed viewers in 1895. Moreover, exhibiting a life-size naked female figure at a public venue like the National Industrial Exhibition increased its impact on viewers, who saw her as one of the *bijin* (beauties). During the Edo period, although *shunga* was produced in large quantity and appeared in the market, the consumption of the images took place in the private realm of home, and they were hidden from sight when not in use.⁸² Thus, the exhibition of *Chōshō* in public disrupted the boundary between the private and public realms that was set up in the consumption process of *shunga*.

Faced with criticism of his work and the public outcry to remove *Chōshō* from the exhibition, despite his status as a member of the exhibition jury, Kuroda defended himself by distinguishing *Chōshō* from *shunga* and *bijinga*, and alluding to the nationalist discourses at home and international images of Japan. In a letter to his friends Kume Keiichirō (1866-1934) and Gōda Kiyoshi (1862-1938), Kuroda wrote,

⁸⁰ Yamanashi, “Chōshō to Rataiga Ronsō,” 206.

⁸¹ Satō, 245-251.

⁸² See Screech, 13-38.

No matter how you consider it, there is no reason for seeing a nude painting (*rataiga*) as a *shunga* painting. Nude paintings are not damaging to the future of Japanese art, not to mention aesthetics worldwide. On the contrary, it is necessary to have nude paintings, and we should greatly encourage it. If we keep on painting boneless dolls (*honenashi ningyō*) forever, how can we be called a country of fine arts (*bijutsu koku*)?⁸³

Unlike the letter that Kuroda wrote to his stepfather from Paris in 1892, in which he referred to *Chōshō* as a painting of a “naked woman” (*onna no hadaka*), in this letter Kuroda uses the word *rataiga* to describe it. Writing to friends with similar backgrounds, Kuroda chose to use *rataiga* – a new term that emerged in intellectual discourses in the late 1880s and early 1890s – instead of *onna no hadaka*, suggesting that at this point, Kuroda’s attitude towards the painting had changed. It was no longer a “special souvenir” that could signify Kuroda’s accomplishment and sophistication, but a genre or form which was “necessary” and “should be encouraged” in Japan.

Significantly, in the last sentence, Kuroda proposes a rhetorical question. Having finished his artistic training according to the French academic system that emphasized accurate depictions of human anatomy, Kuroda sees the naked human bodies depicted in the past traditions of *shunga* and *bijinga* as “boneless dolls.” The word “doll” (*ningyō*) suggests that Kuroda associates these depictions in the traditional genres with a sense of naiveté. Thus, according to Kuroda, accepting and encouraging nude paintings is necessary in order for Japanese art to mature, and for Japan to be called a “country of fine arts.” Referring to the idea of “Japan as a country of fine arts” also indicates that Kuroda was aware of both the domestic, nationalist sentiments of “preserving Japaneseness” and “promoting a Japanese-style painting (*nihonga*)” as opposed to Western-style painting during the 1880s, and the international view of Japan as an

⁸³ Letter from Kuroda in Kyoto to Kume Keiichirō and Gōda Kiyoshi on March 28, 1895, quoted in Emiko Yamanashi, “Kuroda Seiki no Gagyō to Legashī [Kuroda Seiki’s Artistic Career and Its Legacy],” in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 33; Originally from Kagesato Tetsurō, *Kaiga no Shōrai [The Future of Art]*, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1983). The second sentence of the translation is taken from Tseng’s translation in “Kuroda Seiki’s ‘Morning Toilette’ on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto,” 435. For Japanese original, see Appendix III.

artistic country.⁸⁴ But in both domestic and international contexts, the view of Japan as an artistic country conveyed appreciation for the old, traditional arts.⁸⁵ In this letter, however, by implying that nude painting is the next step for Japanese art to mature and for Japan to deserve the title of “the country of fine art,” Kuroda appropriates the term and reinterprets it to achieve his agenda of defending *Chōshō* and promoting nude paintings in Japan.

The implicit nationalist tone in Kuroda’s letter is more explicit in Kume Keiichirō’s article “Ratai wa Bijutsu no Kiso (The Nude is the Foundation of Fine Arts)” in the April 28, 1895 issue of the *Kokumin Shinbun* (*The People’s Newspaper*), published while the show was still going on to support Kuroda and his *Chōshō*.⁸⁶ In this essay, Kume, who studied in Paris under Raphaël Collin with Kuroda, argues that the human body is the epitome of all the vitality of nature and the highest form of beauty, and thus “nude paintings constitute the center of fine art.” He also justifies the necessity of accepting nude paintings in Japan by referring to the image of Japan in front of the world. He wrote,

Since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the military prowess of Japan has been highlighted and the whole world is paying attention to us. A small island hidden in a remote part of the Pacific Ocean became the object of an eye-opening event. Therefore, everything we do now is related to the prestige of our country...

*Our duty today...is to study the masterpieces of painting, sculpture and literature that our country brought forth in the past and know well where the uniqueness of their beauty is. At the same time, we must study European artworks in order to bring our art to completion. To this end, we must pave the way to create and develop an aesthetic appreciation of the human body since it is missing in Japanese painting and sculpture.*⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Karatani Kōjin, “Japan As Art Museum: *Okakura Tenshin and Fenollosa*,” in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, Michael F. Marra trans. and eds. (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 43-46.

⁸⁵ Chelsea Foxwell, “Japan as Museum? Encapsulating Change and Loss in Late-Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Getty Research Journal*, No.1 (2009), 39-52.

⁸⁶ Kume Keiichirō, “Ratai wa Bijutsu no Kiso [The Nude is the Foundation of Fine Arts],” *Doshisha Studies in Language and Culture*, 11 (1), Susanna Pavloska trans. (2008), 107-117

⁸⁷ Kume, 115-6. Italics as in the original.

The appreciation of nude painting is no longer only a question of taste or aesthetics, but also one related to Japanese people's presentation of their own art, culture, and sensibility to the international audience, mainly to the Western powers. The Fourth National Industrial Exhibition opened in the early April 1895, just as Japan was winning the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), through which Japan first demonstrated its successful process of modernization and technological advancement to the level of Western powers, who initially expected China to win. In Kume's thinking, because depictions of unclothed human bodies designate the beauty of nature and are the foundation of fine arts in Europe, it is important at this moment of modernization and progress toward "civilization" for the Japanese public to appreciate such art, if they want to be fully modern and civilized. Similar to Kuroda, Kume perceives the development of Japanese art as a teleological progression that will culminate in the embrace of European art, with nude painting at its core. Citing French artists' praise of Japanese art as surpassing other forms of Asian fine art and of Japan as the "country of art" par excellence in the essay, he also argues that nude painting is necessary in order for Japanese art to mature, and for Japan to deserve the right to be called "the land of art of the world."⁸⁸

In 1892 and 1893, when Kuroda first conceived and painted *Chōshō* in Paris, the female figure in the painting was merely a naked woman, an object he considered as a special souvenir from Paris that would signify both his familiarity with and assimilation into the modern European artistic culture. However, after the public controversies that it stirred up during the Kyoto Exhibition in 1895, she transformed from being simply a naked woman to a nude, an ideal endowed with nationalist objectives of representing Japan's modernization progress and elevating Japanese public's aesthetic sensibilities. Despite the scandals that *Chōshō* caused, the painting won a second-class bronze medal at the Kyoto Exhibition for dexterous execution

⁸⁸ Kume, 115.

(*myōgi nitōshō*), a fairly high prize, considering no gold or silver medal went to any painting, Western-style or Japanese-style.⁸⁹ Kuroda himself was entrusted with the task of teaching Western-style painting at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, following the wishes of Saionji Kinmochi (1849-1940), a high-ranking Japanese nobility and statesman.⁹⁰ Having achieved a higher position in the Meiji political world than when he set out in 1893, Kuroda remained in the public view and continued painting nudes, albeit rendered in a symbolic and allegorical style distinct from the naturalistic style of *Chōshō*. In the following chapter, I will examine the next nude painting that Kuroda produced in Japan, and the shifting values being projected onto the nudes' bodies.

⁸⁹ Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," 429.

⁹⁰ Yamanashi, "*Kuroda Seiki no Gagyō to Legashī*," 33.

Moving Towards the Ideal: Visions of “Japaneseness” in *Chi Kan Jō*⁹¹

In the previous chapter, we saw Kuroda and his circle of painters and intellectuals’ efforts to associate nude paintings and the idea of the nude with an emerging awareness of a modernized Japanese nation-state and its international image. Further, Kuroda and his circle of intellectuals argued that to adopt depictions of the nude body in Western-style painting is a logical evolution for the development of Japanese art. In this chapter, I focus on Kuroda’s next major nude figure painting, *Chi Kan Jō* (*Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, Figure 9), and its exhibition and reception history in Tokyo and Paris. I argue that through incorporating references to both Japanese and European artistic traditions and depicting the nudes using Japanese models but with idealized body proportions, Kuroda not only expressed an attempt to create a universal artistic expression, but also a vision of a unique, modern Japanese culture that could both incorporate and embody the ideals and aesthetics of the East and West at the turn of the century.

After the scandal that *Chōshō* had caused in the Fourth National Industrial Exhibition (Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai), Kuroda continued to be active in the Japanese art world, both through participating on the institutional level and through his own artistic creations. In 1896, Kuroda was appointed as a professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō), an art school established in 1887 by Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) and Okakura Tenshin (1863-1913), with the goal of reviving traditional Japanese paintings and promoting *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) as opposed to *yōga* (Western-style painting) in the rivalry between the two styles during the 1880s.⁹² It should be noted here that *nihonga* as a concept was constructed during the

⁹¹ In this chapter, I choose to use the original Japanese title of the painting, *Chi Kan Jō*, throughout my discussion of the work. As this chapter demonstrates, the explanation that Kuroda gave to the title of the work after its 1897 exhibition differs from the meaning of each character, and Kuroda changed the title when he exhibited the work in Paris. Thus, *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment* appears to be a later translation based on the meaning of each character (智・感・情).

⁹² Shūji Takashina, “Eastern and Western Dynamics in the Development of Western-style Oil painting During the Meiji Era” in *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting*. Shūji Takashina, J. Thomas Rimer,

Meiji period, and is not at all equivalent to all traditional Japanese painting styles from before the Meiji period.⁹³ Fenollosa singled out the languishing Kanō School of painting as the most orthodox and legitimate heir to the ancient legacy of Greek classicism that he saw in ancient Japanese art.⁹⁴ Before Kuroda's appointment, there was no Western-style painting department at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and Kuroda became involved in both the founding of the department and the design of its curriculum.⁹⁵ At the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Kuroda also became acquainted with Okakura, who served as the principal of the school until his resignation in March 1898, and whose philosophy of Eastern art and religion seems to have influenced Kuroda's conception of *Chi Kan Jō*.⁹⁶

In 1896, Kuroda withdrew from the Meiji Fine Arts Society (Meiji Bijutsukai) and founded his own association of *yōga* painters, the White Horse Society (Hakubakai), together with Kume Keiichirō (1866-1934). The Meiji Fine Arts Society, founded in 1889 by Asai Chū (1856-1907), Koyama Shōtarō (1857-1916), and the generation of *yōga* artists in Japan who studied under Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882) at the Technical Art School, was one of the only venues for the exhibition of *yōga* before Kuroda's founding of the White Horse Society. The founding of the Meiji Fine Arts Society was the result of earlier generations of *yōga* painters' resistance to the Meiji government's shift in attitude against the domestic development and promotion of Western-style painting in the 1880s.⁹⁷ Kuroda himself had been an active

and Gerald D. Bolas eds. (Tokyo and MI: The Japan Foundation and Washington University in St. Louis, 1987-88), Exhibition Catalogue, 25.

⁹³ See Dōshin Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and The Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, Hiroshi Nara trans. (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2011).

⁹⁴ Shūji Takashina, 25.

⁹⁵ Atsushi Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki," *Kuroda Memorial Hall* website, https://www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/gallery/english/life_e.html (Accessed April 18, 2019).

⁹⁶ See Erica Takashina, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Portrait' of Okakura Tenshin: New Light on the Inspiration and Theme of *Chi Kan Jō* [Kuroda Seiki no Okakura Tenshin Zō: Chi Kan Jō no Shudai to Seiritsu wo Megutte]," in *Bijutsushi*, Vol. 139 (February 1995).

⁹⁷ Shūji Takashina, 25-26.

participant of the Meiji Fine Arts Society since before his return to Japan from Paris in 1893, and he sent his 1891 painting *Dokusho (Reading)* to the fourth Meiji Fine Arts Society exhibition in Tokyo, after showing it at the salon of the Société des Artistes Français in Paris.⁹⁸ However, by 1896, Kuroda increasingly came to perceive a gap between the bright-colored, Impressionist-influenced painting style that he learned in Paris and the dark-colored, Barbizon School painting style that the majority of the *yōga* painters at the Meiji Fine Arts Society learned from Fontanesi and practiced (see Figure 10 for an example of Asai Chū's early painting style in that period).⁹⁹ Thus, in 1896, having gained recognition from both the Meiji government and the Japanese art world, and having consolidated a group of followers from the Tenshin Dōjō, Kuroda and Kume established their own art society.¹⁰⁰

As Takashina Shūji suggests, Kuroda's impact on Western-style painting in Japan went far beyond the introduction of techniques for suggesting the play of light through the use of bright colors. He wished not only to propagate the Impressionist-influenced style of Collin but also to transplant the underlying artistic principles of European academism. These principles, collectively referred to as *ut picture poesis* aesthetics, revolved around the notion that the purpose of painting is not simply to represent the visual world but to convey some story, idea, or philosophy. This aesthetics, as embodied in the concept of classicism, had crystallized in the Renaissance and prevailed through the first half of the 19th century.¹⁰¹ With this goal in mind, Kuroda set out to create both history painting and allegory painting in Japan, and *Chi Kan Jō* was one of the works created for this project.

⁹⁸ Alison Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, Issue 3 (September 2008), 427.

⁹⁹ Shūji Takashina, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Kuroda and Kume established the White Horse Society together with their students at the Tenshin Dōjō in 1896. For more information on Tenshin Dōjō see Introduction. After Kuroda and Kume became the professors at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, their students from Tenshin Dōjō also followed them to the newly established *Yōga* Department. See Tanaka, "The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki."

¹⁰¹ Shūji Takashina, 27-28.

Perhaps the first nude in modern Japanese oil painting that was painted and exhibited in Japan and deployed Japanese models, Kuroda Seiki's *Chi Kan Jō* features three nudes standing and gesturing against a golden background in three separate panels done in oil on canvases.¹⁰² From right to left, the three nudes are dubbed *Chi* (智, Wisdom), *Kan* (感, Impression), and *Jō* (情, Sentiment) respectively. An over-life-size work, *Chi Kan Jō* evokes both Eastern- and Western- appearances to the viewers with its realistic shading on the bodies of the female nudes, the flat golden background, the Asian figures with European-looking bodies, their mysterious poses, and the three individual panels.¹⁰³ In 1897, Kuroda exhibited the work at the Second White Horse Society Exhibition (*Hakubakai-ten*) in Tokyo, but the contemporary viewers in Japan were puzzled by both the gestures of the three nudes and the relationship between their poses and the titles of the work. For this reason, *Chi Kan Jō* did not receive a favorable reception.¹⁰⁴ However, at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, Kuroda exhibited a slightly revised version of the work and renamed it simply *Etudes de Femmes* (*Studies of Women*) for the occasion, and the work received a silver medal from the jury, the highest prize awarded to any Western-style painting submissions from Japan.¹⁰⁵

A particularly rich painting, *Chi Kan Jō* invites many speculations and interpretations on the meanings and symbols of the gestures of the nudes, and their relationship with the title. However, since the goal of my project is to explore and examine how various meanings and cultural values were projected onto the naked female bodies and the “nude,” and how these

¹⁰² Jaqueline Berndt, “Nationally Naked? The Female Nude in Japanese Oil Painting and Posters (1890s-1920s)”, in *Performing “Nation”: Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*. Doris Croissant, Joshua S. Mostow, and Catherine Vancey eds. (Boston, MA: BRILL, 2008), 323.

¹⁰³ Each panel measures 180.6 x 99.8cm (71.1 x 39.3 inches).

¹⁰⁴ Emiko Yamanashi, “*Chi Kan Jō*,” catalogue entry in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting: The 150th Anniversary of His Birth [Seitan 150-nen: Kuroda Seiki: Nihon Kindai Kaiga no Kyoshō]*, Masato Matsushima, Emiko Yamanashi, et.al ed. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, March 23, 2016) Exhibition Catalogue, 205.

¹⁰⁵ Masato Matsushima, “Kuroda Seiki no Yumemita Mono – *Chi Kan Jō* to Nihon Kaiga no Yukue,” in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 26.

meanings and values changed or transformed both as the exhibitions spaces and audience changed, and as Kuroda's career changed, I focus on Kuroda's decision, conception, and action of creating this work. What was he trying to do and convey through painting and exhibiting this work? In *Chi Kan Jō*, through incorporating references to both Japanese and European artistic traditions, Kuroda attempted a universal form of artistic expression and envisioned a unique and modern Japanese culture. Further, I argue that at the 1897 Second White Horse Society Exhibition in Tokyo, *Chi Kan Jō* served to demonstrate nude paintings' importance to advance both the development of Japanese art and the conception of fine art (*bijutsu*), and to elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibilities. However, at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, facing an international audience, the nudes and the work itself illustrated Japan's achievement in preserving its own tradition, or in other words, maintaining a unique "Japaneseness," despite its rapid modernization that integrated Western institutions and cultures into its society.

***Chi Kan Jō* as the Embodiment of East and West**

Although at first glance, *Chi Kan Jō* appears deceptively simple with its composition of three female nudes standing against a golden background in their respective panels, it is a work that contains rich details in a number of aspects that make references to both European and Japanese artistic traditions. In this section, I mainly examine the different shading techniques applied to the female nudes' bodies and the flat, golden background, and the significance of the color gold. In the succeeding sections, I integrate my analyses of the three nudes' idealized body proportions and their gestures with those of the painting's exhibition contexts.

In *Chi Kan Jō*, Kuroda uses different shading styles for the bodies and for the golden backgrounds, and in doing so, the work evokes influences from not only the European and

Japanese artistic traditions, but also from the late 19th-century French paintings that were influenced by Japonisme. Across the three panels, Kuroda rendered the nude bodies in realistic shading. In *Chi*, the right panel, the light seems to be streaming in from a slightly upper left angle of the painting, casting shadows of *Chi*'s raised right arms and hands onto her right shoulder and her face. Her slightly lowered head also forms a small area of shadow on her neck. Standing in a *contrapposto* pose with her right leg slightly stepping forward and her body facing towards her right, where the light comes from, *Chi* has most of her upper body and thighs bathed in light, while her legs and the outer part of her left thigh are in shadow. In the middle panel of *Kan*, Kuroda depicted faint shadows cast by the raised left arm of the nude and her head, indicating that light enters from a slight right angle of the painting. Most of *Kan*'s body is highlighted, while the right side of her body and most of her legs are relatively darkened. Similarly, in *Jō*, the light comes in from the left side of the painting behind the standing nude, thus highlighting the right waist, hip, and thigh while leaving the rest of her body in shadow. Although we can identify a possible light source in each of the three panels, the nudes do not cast any shadows onto their respective backgrounds, which remain flat and golden.

By depicting the three figures using lightning and shading techniques, Kuroda departs from the Japanese tradition of rendering the human body that most often appeared in popular *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, such as the *Beauty Entering the Bath* (*Nyūyoku Bijinzu*, Figure 11) by the Edo period artist, Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806). Utamaro's print, unlike Kuroda's *Chi Kan Jō*, does not portray the naked female beauty's body with shading or lighting technique, but uses differences in the tones of colors to create a sense of volume. In the background, too, the beauty does not cast her shadows on the wooden bathtub that she is about to enter. In *Chi Kan Jō*, Kuroda thus utilizes the European tradition of rendering the human body that he had learned

during his study with Raphaël Collin (1850-1916) in his portrayal of the three nudes' bodies to create a three-dimensional illusion, as one can see in the studies of human figures that Kuroda did while in Paris (Figures 12 and 13). In both of the studies, the viewers can identify a source of light, and the shadows cast by the models on the floor are carefully depicted.

Refraining to show the shadows cast by the models on the background not only indicates Kuroda's reference back to the Japanese artistic tradition, but also suggests a "reverse influence" of the same tradition – the influence of contemporary avant-garde French paintings, which were in fact inspired by the Japanese woodblock prints that began to enter Europe after the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854.¹⁰⁶ In Édouard Manet's 1866 painting, *The Fifer* (Figure 14), the artist juxtaposes the fife player against a plain, neutral background. Other than the shadow of the instrument on the right hand of the player, and a tiny trace of his shadow on the ground, we barely see any other lighting or shading devices that Manet had used in this painting. Depicting space without using the perspective techniques most familiar to the European audiences, such as the one-point perspective as shown in Pietro Perugino's Sistine Chapel fresco, *The Delivery of the Keys to Saint Peter* (Figure 15), and portraying human figures without lighting or shading to create volume were two of the influences that Japanese woodblock prints had had on 19th-century modernist French paintings. Collin also produced paintings that demonstrate influences from Japanese woodblock prints. In his 1885 work, *Portrait of the Young Elise G* (Figure 16), Collin juxtaposed the girl against a background on which she barely casts any shadows.

In addition to applying different shading techniques to the nudes and the background, the gold color also signifies Kuroda's reference to both the golden background of Christian religious

¹⁰⁶ Oliver Impey, "Japanese Export Art of the Edo Period and Its Influence on European Art," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4. Special Issue: Edo Culture and Its Modern Legacy (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 685-697.

art and that of Japanese folding screens.¹⁰⁷ During the medieval period and early Renaissance, golden background had been used widely in Christian art mainly in the forms of Church mosaics, religious manuscripts and books, and altarpiece, as seen in an apse mosaic of the Virgin (Theotokos) and Child enthroned in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Figure 17) and Cimabue's altarpiece for Basilica di Santa Trinità in Florence (Figure 18). In early Christian imagery, the golden background signifies the sacred space of the heavenly realm; the material of gold not only reflects light but also emphasizes the flatness and thus immateriality of the sacred figures depicted.¹⁰⁸ In Japan, the folding screens, *byōbu*, had been an integral part of Japanese life since the 9th century and originally functioned as a type of room divider to block unwanted gazes and instantly create a private or intimate area.¹⁰⁹ During the Muromachi period (1333-1573), gold-leaf-covered *byōbu* first appeared in relation to the popular practice of Pure Land Buddhism. For adherents of the Pure Land Buddhism sect, gold-embellished pictorial depictions of the Amida Buddha in his Western Paradise came into high demand to serve as vehicles by which the dying soul of the devotee could enter into Amida's paradise. In the succeeding Momoyama period (1573-1615), the ruling samurai class continued to support the production of gold-leaf *byōbu*, but as commodities for the ostentatious display of wealth, power, and aesthetic sensibilities (Figure 19). The folding screens reached their height of sumptuousness during the Momoyama and early Edo periods (1603-1868).¹¹⁰ Throughout Kuroda's career in Japan, these folding screens with golden backgrounds continued to be one of the major art forms, as many of the contemporary artists working in the *nihonga* style (Japanese-style painting) looked back to the screen painting

¹⁰⁷ Matsushima, "Kuroda Seiki no Yumemita Mono," 26-27.

¹⁰⁸ See Fred S. Kleiner, "Byzantium" and "Italy 1200 - 1400" in *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: A Global History*, enhanced 13th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011), 310- 339, 496-517.

¹⁰⁹ See Yale University Art Gallery, *Byōbu: The Grandeur of Japanese Screens*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2014). https://artgallery.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Exh_2014_byobu_brochure.pdf (Accessed February 25, 2019.), and Philippe de Montebello, "Forward" to Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Twelve Japanese Screens: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 37, No.2, (Fall, 1979), 1.

¹¹⁰ Yale University Art Gallery, *Byōbu: The Grandeur of Japanese Screens*.

traditions during the Momoyama period and developed their own styles (Figure 20).¹¹¹ Therefore, unlike Christian art in the European tradition, in Japan, both religious and secular themes had been the subjects of gold *byōbu* by the time Kuroda painted *Chi Kan Jō*.

In only the shading techniques and the depictions of the background, Kuroda embedded into *Chi Kan Jō* numerous references to both Japanese and European artistic traditions. But in addition to these references that I mentioned above, his depictions of the nudes' gestures and body proportions, his choice of the title of the work, and his changes to the painting after the 1897 exhibition signified both Japanese and European traditions and contributed to the production of meanings domestically and internationally. In the following sections, I examine these details along with writings by Kuroda concerning the painting.

***Chi Kan Jō* at the 1897 Second White Horse Society Exhibition, Tokyo**

After shaking the sensibilities of the Japanese intellectuals and public with his exhibition of *Chōshō* at the 1895 exhibition at Kyoto, Kuroda, being praised as the leader of the new *yōga* school by the critics, proposed another visual challenge to the Japanese viewers with a new nude painting. In late October of 1897, Kuroda exhibited *Chi Kan Jō* at the Second White Horse Society Exhibition, but the work perplexed the viewers and critics, who could decipher neither the meanings of the title nor the nudes' gestures, nor the relationship between the two. Yet, the viewers' confusion seems to indicate that what Kuroda portrayed in *Chi Kan Jō* did not have any precedence in the Japanese artistic tradition – in other words, Kuroda was attempting to create a new painting form. In one article on the November 11, 1897 issue of the *Jiji Shinpō* (*Times Newspaper*), one reviewer commented, “I indeed wanted to praise this work at the beginning, but

¹¹¹ Penelope Mason, “Forging a New Identity: The Meiji Restoration and Japan’s Entry into the Modern World” in *History of Japanese Art*. 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 343 – 391.

I was dumbfounded (*ninoku ga denai*)... The thing that I dislike the most about this work is its title; although it is divided three parts into Chi, Kan, and Jō, I cannot tell where in the work implies such meanings ... It is absurd that the artist himself would attach such a title to this work.”¹¹² This reviewer’s voice summarized the audience’s general reaction to Kuroda’s new nude painting at the 1897 White Horse Society Exhibition – *Chi Kan Jō* simply struck the visitors with its three Japanese-looking nudes and their mysterious gestures that did not seem to correspond to the concepts proposed in the title. In this review, it is significant that the writer wanted to appreciate and praise the work at first, but could not find words with which to begin. His speechlessness attests to the visual novelty that Kuroda’s new nude painting presented to the viewers, suggesting that what the viewers had seen or experienced with *Chi Kan Jō* was something that they had not come across before. In the end, the reviewer in *Jiji Shinpō* simply resolved to blame his confusion on the abstract title of the work.

The abstract concepts conveyed through the title and the nudes puzzled the viewers. As mentioned earlier, Kuroda worked untiringly to introduce the form of nude painting and the underlying artistic principles of European academism into the Japanese art world following the controversy caused by the exhibition of *Chōshō* in Kyoto in 1895.¹¹³ Through his study in Paris, Kuroda had learned that the highest purpose of painting was not to simply represent the visual world, but to convey an abstract concept or idea through the depiction of living beings, of which the naked human body was considered to be the purest and most beautiful.¹¹⁴ In a letter from

¹¹² November 11, 1897 issue of *Jiji Shinpō*. Ueno Kenzō eds. *Hakubakai Kankei Shinbun Kiji Ichiran* [An Overview of News and Articles Related to the White Horse Society], digitalized database based on Ueno Kenzō, *Nihon Kindai Yōga no Seiritsu: Hakubakai*, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2005) on Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property website. <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/hakuba/201621.html> (Accessed on March 12, 2019).

¹¹³ Tokyo National Museum et.al., eds., *Seiki no Saiten: Bankoku Hakurankai no Bijutsu / Arts of East and West from World Expositions 1855-1900: Paris, Vienna, and Chicago*. Exhibition Catalogue. (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2004), 299.

¹¹⁴ Shūji Takashina, 28, and Kume, “Ratai wa Bijutsu no Kiso [The Nude is the Foundation of Fine Arts],” in

Kuroda to his father dated April 17, 1890, while he was still in Paris, Kuroda explains his understanding of this principle to his father using a painting by his teacher, Collin, as an example.

He wrote,

Here [in France] the human figure is used to present a given idea. In a painting of my teacher's titled *Spring*, for example, a plump, beautiful woman is depicted lying down in a meadow full of flowers, casually chewing on a blade of grass... Ignorant people viewing this painting of a beautiful woman, which my teacher had titled *Spring*, would think it nothing but a picture of a naked woman lying in the grass... They would subject it to absurd criticisms, arguing that in Europe women do not really lie naked in meadows, and so forth. My teacher, however, in order to represent the feeling of spring, borrowed the figure of a woman as lovely as a flower beginning to bloom. In other words, this spring is a spring that exists only within the human heart. Anyone possessed of the same sensibility as my teacher will be filled with inexpressible joy upon viewing this work.¹¹⁵

According to Takashina, the work that Kuroda refers to in this passage is probably Collin's 1886 painting, *Floréal* (Figure 21).¹¹⁶ Kuroda's interpretation of Collin's work in this letter demonstrated his grasp of the idea of using female nudes to convey an abstract concept – in this case, the feeling of spring. Further, he distinguishes the reactions to *Floréal* between ignorant people and people who possess the same level of sensibility as his teacher's in this letter – ignorant people only see at the superficial level and became concerned with issues related to public morality, while people with higher sensibilities can truly appreciate the work and empathize with the artist.

Seen retrospectively from 1897, Kuroda's remark about the two kinds of reactions in his 1890 letter call to mind the criticism that *Chōshō*'s exhibition at Kyoto in 1895 had caused, as well as Kuroda's circles' defense of the value of nude painting. The memory of the controversy surrounding the nude was still fresh to both the viewers of *Chi Kan Jō* and to Kuroda himself.

Dshisha Studies in Language and Culture, 11 (1), Susanna Pavloska trans. (2008) 110-111.

¹¹⁵ Letter from Kuroda to his father dated April 17, 1890. Kumamoto Kenjiro eds. *Kuroda Seiki Nikki [Diaries of Kuroda Seiki]*, (Tokyo, Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1966-1968). Digitalized version on Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property website. <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1890/page/2> (Accessed March 12, 2019). Translation taken from Shūji Takashina, 28.

¹¹⁶ Shūji Takashina, 28.

During the controversy, Kuroda and his circles argued that nude painting could serve to elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibility. Based on the content of the 1890 letter, after the 1895 controversy and by 1897, Kuroda had come to understand that in order to demonstrate nude painting's ability to elevate public sensibility, he needed to produce an allegory painting like Collin's *Floréal*. *Chi Kan Jō*, then, can be viewed as a product of Kuroda's project to bring into Japan the genre of allegory painting and the idea that abstract concepts and feelings can be conveyed through the depictions of nude bodies.¹¹⁷ In each panel of *Chi Kan Jō*, Kuroda depicted one nude in front of a flat and golden background; only the nudes' gestures and expressions seem to be expressive. Seen from the perspective of the painting, the nude on the right, *Chi*, or *Wisdom*, points to her head while looking as if she is in deep thought, symbolically representing the idea of wisdom. *Kan*, or *Impression*, in the middle, looks out at the viewer with both her arms raised and wide open, perhaps to receive impressions of the external world. *Jō*, or *Sentiment*, on the left, looks away from the viewer. Her left hand tries to cover her crotch, while her right hand combs away her untied hair, seemingly representing the feeling of sentiment.

However, to Kuroda, the three nudes and the concepts of *chi* (智), *kan* (感), and *jō* (情) that they represent also carry another level of meaning pertaining to the styles of painting. In the November 29, 1897 issue of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, Kuroda himself stated that the nude in the middle called *Kan* means "Impression," the nude on the right called *Chi* means "Ideal," and the nude on the left called *Jō* means "Real."¹¹⁸ In another article from the December 12, 1897 issue of *Jiji Shinpō*, Kuroda is quoted as saying,

Even though the names given to the three nudes (*bijin*) in the work that Kuroda exhibited at the White Horse Society, *Chi*, *Kan*, *Jō*, may perhaps look like *ateji*,¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ After the scandal caused by *Chōshō* and after he gained more power and recognition in the Meiji art world, Kuroda tried his hands at both history painting and allegory painting. See Shūji Takashina, 27-31.

¹¹⁸ November 29, 1897 issue of *Yomiuri Shinbun*, quoted in Matsushima, "Kuroda Seiki no Yumemita Mono," 26.

¹¹⁹ *Ateji* refers to words in Japanese that utilize Chinese characters for their pronunciation rather than actual

at the beginning, the artist only decided to express the three styles in painting – namely, Idealism, Impressionism, and Realism – when he began to paint. There are no deep meanings in [the three nudes], until he changed Idealism to Chi, Impressionism to Kan, and Realism to Jō.¹²⁰

Even though Kuroda claimed that he did not impart any deep meanings to the three nudes, he clearly conceived the work with the goal of conveying the three painting styles – Idealism, Impressionism, and Realism – in mind, and the abstract concepts of Chi, Kan, Jō that he added onto the nudes later when he decided to name the nudes as such. Nevertheless, regardless of what each nude really represent or meant, the significance of the nudes in *Chi Kan Jō* lies in Kuroda's decision to paint such a painting. We not only see his attempt to follow his teacher Collin's practice in designing a pictorial composition that expresses an abstract idea through the depiction of female nudes. But more importantly, having conceived, painted, and exhibited *Chi Kan Jō* in Japan, Kuroda was actively striving to bring this form of painting that he had seen and learned in Paris into the Japanese art world, and in doing so, to demonstrate to the Japanese public the nude and nude paintings' capacity to elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibility.

It is interesting to note that the author of this article, despite seemingly sympathizing with Kuroda's opinion, uses the term *bijin* (literally “beauties”) to describe the nudes in *Chi Kan Jō*. Recalling the genres of *shunga* and *bijinga* in the *ukiyo-e* tradition, the word *bijin* here was probably still a signifying word at the time and thus reveals the complexity of reasons behind the negative reception of Kuroda's *Chi Kan Jō* at the Second White Horse Society's exhibition in Tokyo. On the one hand, similar to Takashina's insight on Kuroda's attempt to introduce the genre of history painting into Japan, the highest form of painting considered by the French academy during the 18th- and 19th-centuries and embodiment of the *ut pictura poesis* aesthetics,

meanings.

¹²⁰ December 12, 1897 issue of *Jiji Shinpō*, “Kuroda Seiki shi no Rabijindan [Kuroda Seiki on Female Nudes],” in *Kuroda Seiki Chojutsushū*, Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property eds., (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2007), 50. See Appendix IV for the Japanese original of the extract.

perhaps both the Japanese audience and painters of the time found it difficult to shake free from the emphasis on realistic representation of the visual world that characterized *yōga* in its early phases of development in Japan.¹²¹ Therefore, a sudden shift from presenting *yōga* as a vehicle of realistic representation to *yōga* as a vehicle for expression of abstract concepts perhaps requires some time for the Japanese audience to digest. Moreover, perhaps Kuroda, as Takashina claims, lacked the imagination to create a grand composition that could more effectively convey the abstract ideas and concepts through depictions of human body despite his superb expressive technique.¹²² On the other hand, as the wording of the journalist of *Jiji Shinpō* suggests, the combination of three naked female figures and the simple and plain backgrounds in *Chi Kan Jō* perhaps still evoke the *bijinga* tradition, such as the earlier example of Utamaro's *Beauty Entering the Bath* (*Nyūyoku Bijinzu*, Figure 11), and by extension, to the *shunga* tradition and the issues regarding morality and propriety in the public.¹²³ While Satō Dōshin claims that the debate about paintings of female nudes was about social ethics and public morals from the beginning to end, there is the possibility that the author of the article merely used the word *bijin* without consciously thinking about or connecting this work to issues regarding public morals or the *bijinga* traditions.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, using *bijin* to refer to the three female nudes depicted in *Chi Kan Jō* suggests that these issues were still looming in the background of the discussion.

During the *Chōshō* controversy, Kuroda and Kume made another major argument that the Japanese artists now “must study European artworks in order to bring our [Japanese] art to completion.”¹²⁵ From this perspective, *Chi Kan Jō* can be understood as an innovative artwork that Kuroda had envisioned to incorporate and embody the artistic traditions and ideals from both

¹²¹ Shūji Takashina, 28.

¹²² Shūji Takashina, 28.

¹²³ Recall the discussion in the first chapter that *bijinga* sometimes functioned the same as *shunga* in arousing the viewers.

¹²⁴ Satō, 264.

¹²⁵ Kume, 115-6.

Japan and Europe. In addition to the different shading techniques applied to the nudes' bodies and to the flat background, and the gold color of the background that references both Christian art and Japanese *byōbu* traditions, the three nudes depicted in *Chi Kan Jō* – with their black hair, yellow skin, and idealized body proportions – are embodiments of Kuroda's vision of the development for the future of Japanese art. According to Kuroda's journal entries, he employed two Japanese models to pose for *Chi Kan Jō*, the Ogawa sisters.¹²⁶ Although there are neither sketches nor photographs of the models in preparation for *Chi Kan Jō* found, one contemporary reviewer in 1897 commented that the bodies of the nudes in *Chi Kan Jō* resemble an anatomical graph that looks like a drawing based on a plaster figure, thereby suggesting that the body proportion depicted in *Chi Kan Jō* did not represent the Japanese women's body proportions in real life.¹²⁷ On the other hand, art historian Oki Yukiko points out that in *Chi Kan Jō*, the proportion of the three nudes is based on the concept of the Vitruvian man, that "if a man be placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended, and a pair of compasses centered at his naval, the fingers and toes of his two hands and feet will touch the circumference of a circle described therefrom" (See Figure 22 for Leonardo da Vinci's rendering of the Vitruvian Man).¹²⁸ In his depiction of the three female nudes, Kuroda referred to the ideal body proportion proposed by Vitruvius during the ancient Roman times but became crucial to the development of European art during the Renaissance. The three nudes in *Chi Kan Jō*, therefore, with their Japanese

¹²⁶ See Kuroda's journal entries on March 4, March 5, 1897, for example.

<https://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1897/page/3>

¹²⁷ Yamanashi, "Chi Kan Jō," 205; the contemporary review is quoted in this article from the November 11, 1897 issue of the newspaper *Nippon*.

¹²⁸ Yukiko Oki, "Kuroda Seiki wo Meguru Yōga Reimeiki no Rataizō" in *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō*, 28, (January 1997), as quoted in Emiko Yamanashi, "Sekigaisen no Gan de Miru Kuroda Seiki *Chi Kan Jō* [Kuroda Seiki's *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment* as seen through Infrared Photography]," in *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*, Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties eds. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2002), 60. Marcus Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, Book III, Chapter 1. Morris Hicky Morgan trans. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914). Digitalized version on Project Gutenberg. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20239/20239-h/20239-h.htm#Page_72 (Accessed on April 6, 2019).

appearance – black hair and yellow-toned skin – and their Europeanized ideal body proportions became the embodiment of a hybrid artistic expression that encompasses the East and the West, the future direction for the development of Japanese art that Kuroda and Kume envisioned in 1895.

***Chi Kan Jō* at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle**

At the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, Kuroda submitted his *Chi Kan Jō* for exhibition, and the work received a silver medal from the jury, the highest prize awarded to the Japanese Western-style paintings submitted for exhibition.¹²⁹ Facing an international, mainly European and American audience, *Chi Kan Jō*'s positive recognition contrasted with its negative domestic reception in 1897. Moreover, the change from a domestic viewing context to an international one meant that Kuroda was confronted with his position as a Japanese artist, and how his work might affect Japan's international image. In his preparation for the 1900 Paris Exposition, Kuroda added the crimson outlines outside the three female figures and more volume to *Jo*'s thighs, changed the title of the work to *Etudes de Femmes (Studies of Women)*, and formally signed the date of the work as 1899.¹³⁰ These changes and the numerous references in *Chi Kan Jō* to both the Japanese and European artistic traditions that I have outlined in the previous sections seem to evoke Okakura Tenshin's view of Japan as the "museum of Asiatic civilization" that he articulated in his 1903 book, *The Ideals of the East*.¹³¹ In this section, I further examine the various references that *Chi Kan Jō* makes to both Japanese and European artistic traditions in relation to Okakura's thought.

¹²⁹ Yamanashi, "*Chi Kan Jō*," 205.

¹³⁰ Yamanashi, "*Chi Kan Jō*," 205.

¹³¹ Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann comps., "Okakura Kakuzō: Aesthetic Pan-Asianism," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II: 1600-2000*, 2nd ed., (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 811-816.

As mentioned above, Okakura and Kuroda worked together at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts between 1896 and 1898, and the two shared deeper concerns for the development of Japanese art. Christopher Benfey points out that even though Fenellosa and Okakura worked together to preserve traditional Japanese artifacts, their ultimate aims were different.¹³² While Fenellosa worked closely with Japanese experts, in the end he wished to preserve Japanese art as a resource for Western exploitation.¹³³ Even in his objective to establish the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Fenellosa, who had glimpsed the heritage of Greek classicism in ancient Japanese art, hoped to witness the birth of a modern Japanese painting idiom informed with that same spirit.¹³⁴ By contrast, for Okakura, Japanese art was a vital national tradition, the roots of which needed cultivating in order to keep the living tree healthy, and he rejected a narrow commitment to preserving and duplicating Japanese national traditions in art. According to Benfey, Okakura said in a lecture that, “Art is a product of past history combined with present conditions. It develops from this fusion of past and present.” In this quote, Okakura seemed to view Japanese art or Japanese artistic traditions as a dynamic development that began in the past but continues into the present. Further, he views the development of Japanese art not as a narrow, teleological process, but rather, an organic and evolving one that can expand and subsume contemporary trends. Therefore, to Okakura, even the adoption of European media and techniques, such as oil paint and naturalistic perspective, was acceptable so long as it was consistent with what he called the “natural development” of Japanese art.¹³⁵ In this respect, Okakura recalls Kuroda and Kume’s argument for the incorporation of nude paintings and Western artistic traditions into Japanese art in order for the latter to mature, a step they perceived as the logical development for

¹³² Christopher Benfey. “The Boston Tea Party,” in *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003), 84.

¹³³ Benfey, 84.

¹³⁴ Shūji Takashina, 26.

¹³⁵ Benfey, 85.

Japanese art in the contemporary situation in which Japan was striving to “catch up” with the Western powers. While Kuroda and Kume were certainly arguing for the acceptance of Western-style painting and nude painting in Japan, they evoked Japan’s past artistic traditions and stressed the need for Japanese art to advance. Despite Okakura’s advocacy of *nihonga* and Kuroda’s mission to promote *yōga*, the two found common ground in their view regarding the future development of Japanese art and the presentation of Japan on the world stage.

After the establishment of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Okakura went beyond Fenollosa’s outlook to argue for the incorporation of Western techniques for suggesting spatial depth and rendering light and shadow into *nihonga*. Okakura’s students, the artists Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1930), Hishida Shunsō (1874-1911), and Shimomura Kanzan (1873-1930), responded by boldly forging modes of expression previously unknown in Japanese painting (see for example, Hishida Shunsō’s 1909 work, *Ochiba*, [*Fallen Leaves*], Figure 23). As a result, Okakura and his progressive students found themselves locked in bitter confrontation with the more conservative *nihonga* painters. By the end of the 19th century, parallel to the situation in the *yōga* world between the Meiji Fine Arts Society and Kuroda’s White Horse Society, *nihonga* had split into two opposing camps, consisting on the one hand of the more conservative Japanese-style painters and, on the other hand, of Okakura’s protégés at the Japan Fine Arts Academy (Nihon Bijutsuin), founded in 1898.¹³⁶ Thus, in the 1890s, the dynamics of the Meiji art scene shifted from the confrontation between *yōga* and *nihonga* in the 1880s to that between the conservative and progressive forces in both schools. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising to see collaborative efforts between Okakura, the foremost advocate of the new *nihonga*, and Kuroda and Kume, the leaders of the new *yōga*, in defense of their shared outlook on the development of Japanese art. In fact, as Kuroda prepared for the establishment of his White

¹³⁶ Shūji Takashina, 26-27.

Horse Society, the Nihon Kaiga Kyōkai (Japanese Painting Society), Okakura's art association, also contributed to the effort.¹³⁷ Moreover, according to Takashina Shūji, the first White Horse Society exhibition in 1896 was held jointly with Okakura's pupils primarily at the Nihon Kaiga Kyōkai.¹³⁸

Therefore, both highly conscious of the future development of Japanese art and of Japan's image in front of the Western powers, Kuroda and Okakura indeed seemed to have collaborated on the conceptions of *Chi Kan Jō*, and Okakura's philosophy adds a new dimension to the understandings of Kuroda's work in the context of the 1900 Paris Exposition. In her recent study, Takashina Erika notes that around the time *Chi Kan Jō* was being created, Okakura Tenshin jotted down the ideograms *chi*, *kan*, and *jō*, and paired them with the English words "philosophy," "art," and "religion," respectively.¹³⁹ According to Takashina, preparations for the 1900 Paris Exposition were underway when Kuroda began thinking about *Chi Kan Jō*, and the two met often at that time. Both Kuroda and Okakura realized that the only way to ensure a fair appraisal of Japanese Western-style painting at the exposition was to display works imbued with a uniquely Japanese quality while firmly eschewing exoticism.¹⁴⁰ Thus, if we consider *Chi Kan Jō* as a work that Kuroda created with the Paris Exposition in mind, the references to both Japanese and European artistic traditions in *Chi Kan Jō* outlined in the previous sections – the meticulous rendering of the three nudes' bodies with light and shading, the ideal proportions of their bodies that look to the Vitruvian Man, and the flatness and golden color of the backgrounds – can be viewed as manifestations of Kuroda and Okakura's concern of how to best present Japanese art in an international competition such as the Paris Exposition. While the golden

¹³⁷ March 20, 1911 issue of *Jiji Shinpō*. Seiki Kuroda, "Hakubakai no Kaisan [The Dissolution of the White Horse Society]," in *Kaiga no Shōrai [The Future of Painting]*, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1983), 87.

¹³⁸ Shūji Takashina, 27.

¹³⁹ Erika Takashina, "Kuroda Seiki no Okakura Tenshin Zō."

¹⁴⁰ Erika Takashina, "Kuroda Seiki no Okakura Tenshin Zō."

background and the flattening of space behind the three nudes signify Kuroda's knowledge of Japan's past traditions, the rendering of the three nudes demonstrates the artist's mastery of European artistic skills and techniques, and indicates his familiarity with both European academism that emphasizes the depictions of human figures and the contemporary modernist trend to flatten pictorial space. Thus, shown as a representative of the current trends in Japanese Western-style painting, *Chi Kan Jō* and the three nudes presented to the viewers at the 1900 Paris Exposition as an example of a unique "Japaneseness" that was both Japanese and modern – Japanese in the sense that it entailed references to the past Japanese artistic traditions, and modern in that it incorporated into itself the European artistic culture.

Taking Okakura's idea about Japanese artistic traditions into consideration, the three panels and the three nudes's gestures in *Chi Kan Jō* can be read as references to both Japanese Buddhist art traditions and European art traditions. In a Japanese context, the three panels might call to mind the Shaka Triad, one of the favorite themes of Japanese Buddhist art; in a European context, the three panels might recall the Christian religious triptych and the Holy Trinity. The three nudes recall the three goddesses in the mythological Judgment of Paris or the Three Graces, another subject from Greek mythology and a major theme in Renaissance, Baroque, and later Neo-classical painting and sculpture. In notes and lectures, Okakura held that in addition to representing philosophy, art, and religion, *chi*, *kan*, and *jō* corresponded to Monju (the bodhisattva Manjushri), Shaka (the Buddha Shakyamuni), and Fugen (the bodhisattva Samantabhadra), the three figures of the Shaka Triad (Figure 24).¹⁴¹ At the same time, the gesture of *Jō* calls to mind the gesture of Eve in numerous depictions of Christian art, such as Eve in the upper right corner of the Ghent Altarpiece when it is open by Jan van Eyck in the fifteenth century (Figure 25) and in Masaccio's fresco, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden*

¹⁴¹ Erika Takashina, "Kuroda Seiki no Okakura Tenshin Zō."

(Figure 26).¹⁴² The gesture of *Kan* in the middle also seemed to find its counterpart in Christian imagery in Raphael's *Transfiguration* (Figure 27).¹⁴³

Moreover, besides the numerous references embedded in *Chi Kan Jō*, the addition of the crimson outlines outside the human figures further demonstrates that Kuroda consciously perceived his work as a presentation of Japan's image to the Western powers at the 1900 Paris Exposition. According to Matsushima Masato and Yamanashi Emiko, prior to exhibiting the work at Paris, Kuroda both added the crimson outlines to the three nudes that we see now (Figures 28 and 29) and more volume to the nudes' bodies (Figures 30 and 31).¹⁴⁴ Significantly, Matsushima points out that the practice of outlining the figures with crimson lines is reminiscent of the *ukiyo-e* tradition, and would be an obvious sign of the Japanese way of portraying human figures to Europeans who knew *ukiyo-e*.¹⁴⁵ Thus, in adding the crimson lines, Kuroda seems to be consciously working to remind his European and American viewers of the Japanese artistic tradition in his work, despite the European artistic techniques that he applied in shading and proportions of the bodies. On the other hand, the infrared photograph of *Jō* (Figure 30) and a close-up view of the same part (Figure 31) show that unlike the crimson outlines which Kuroda added to the figures, he only added volume to *Jō*'s thighs.¹⁴⁶ Although more infrared photographs show that there are similar traces around the nudes' bodies in the other two panels, Yamanashi concludes that, "Kuroda gradually worked to increase the volume of the nudes'

¹⁴² Midori Wakakuwa, *Iwanami Kindai Nihon Bijutsu 2: Kakuresareta Shisen: Ukiyoe Yōga no Josei Rataizō* [The Hidden Gaze: Depictions of Female Nakedness and Nudity in Ukiyo-e and Western-style Paintings]. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 69-71.

¹⁴³ Wakakuwa, 71-72.

¹⁴⁴ Matsushima, 26, and the Infrared Photography Studies of *Chi Kan Jō* as documented in Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties eds. *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*.

¹⁴⁵ Matsushima, 27.

¹⁴⁶ Matsushima, 26.

bodies.”¹⁴⁷ In other infrared photographs, we do not see clear lines that seem to define the outlines of the nudes before Kuroda made changes to them, as we see in the lower part of *Jō*’s body in Figure 30, making it difficult to judge whether these traces reflect Kuroda’s painting process before he submitted it to the Second White Horse Society in 1897, or if he did so after 1897 but before the 1900 Paris Exposition. Nevertheless, the fact that Kuroda made conscious changes to his work suggests that he was aware of his painting’s role as a first-hand representation of the current Japanese artistic trends to the viewers at the Paris Exposition. Thus, what he depicted in his work and how he depicted it mattered.

It is then interesting to note that at the 1900 Paris Exposition, Kuroda also exhibited his 1897 work, *Kohan* (*Lakeside*, Figure 32), which he submitted to the Second White Horse Society Exhibition in 1897 as well. However, unlike *Chi Kan Jō*, *Kohan* was well received by the Japanese audience and has remained a favorite work by Kuroda since its debut, though the jury at the 1900 Paris Exposition did not recognize it.¹⁴⁸ The contrast in reception that the two works received at the same exhibition venues in Tokyo and Paris reveals the different values and meanings accorded to the nudes in these two places. In Tokyo, *Kohan* probably succeeded because the painting, done in the bright colors that characterized the new *yōga* style of Kuroda, depicts a Japanese theme; moreover, the sitter is not a nude, but a Japanese woman dressed in traditional kimono. Thus, *Kohan* not only avoids transgression of public morality but also portrays the gender roles in accordance with the Meiji male ideology that posits women as the “repositories of the past.”¹⁴⁹ In contrast, when *Chi Kan Jō* was shown in Tokyo in 1897, the viewers were unable to understand it and thus dismissed the work for both its mysteriousness and

¹⁴⁷ Yamanashi, “Sekigaisen no Gan de Miru Kuroda Seiki *Chi Kan Jō*,” 64.

¹⁴⁸ See Jun Shioya, “*Lakeside*,” catalogue entry, in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 198, and “*Lakeside*,” Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties website <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/gallery/japanese/kohan01.html> (Accessed on March 29, 2019).

¹⁴⁹ Sharon L. Sievers, “The Early Meiji Debate on Women” in *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983), 15.

its nudity. To Kuroda, however, *Chi Kan Jō* and the nudes served to introduce allegory painting into the Japanese art world to demonstrate nude and nude painting's capacity to elevate the Japanese public's aesthetic sensibility and to facilitate the development of Japanese art.

In Paris, however, the reception of the two works was reversed. As Karatani Kōjin points out, even before anyone had speculated what “Japanese art” was about, Japan itself came to be perceived as an aesthetic object domestically and abroad.¹⁵⁰ In Paris, and in the West in general, Japanese Western-style paintings were seen as simple reproductions however they appeared avant-gardist to the domestic audience. On the contrary, the “traditionalist school” such as the *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) and the *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints that the Western viewers were familiar with and perceived as “Japanese” were in fact viewed as avant-garde.¹⁵¹ Seen in this context, *Kohan* was most likely perceived as a common work that looked like recent European art, as more progressive artistic movements replaced the kind of Impressionist style that Kuroda learned in the 1880s and practiced in *Kohan*. *Chi Kan Jō*, however, was an innovative mixture that both evoked past Japanese modes of painting and modern European artistic trends to the viewers at the 1900 Paris Exposition. Thus, in the context of Meiji Japan's progress towards “civilization,” the work and the nudes served to demonstrate the future development of Japanese art to both the domestic and international audience. More importantly, the incorporation of both Japanese and European artistic traditions served to indicate how adequately Japan had adopted Western technology and cultural practices but at the same time maintained its own history and traditions. The center of focus in *Chi Kan Jō*, the three nudes, with their Japanese facial features and the crimson outlines combined with the idealized

¹⁵⁰ Kōjin, Karatani. “Japan as Art Museum: *Okakura Tenshin and Fenollosa*,” in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, Michael F. Marra trans. And eds. (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 44-45.

¹⁵¹ Karatani, 45.

European body proportions, thus became an embodiment of a unique “Japaneseness” that Kuroda envisioned at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century.

Epilogue: Kuroda Seiki's Late Nude Paintings

After the 1900 Paris Exposition, Kuroda stayed in Paris for another year to study under the instruction of the Ministry of Education (Monbushō), and painted *Ratai Fujinzō* (*Female Nude*, 1901, Figure 33). Instead of exhibiting it at an exhibition venue in Paris, Kuroda showed it to his teacher, Raphaël Collin (1850-1916).¹⁵² He then brought the painting back to Japan and exhibited it at the Sixth White Horse Society Exhibition in 1901, when it triggered debates and intervention from the state. This incident, the so-called Koshimaki Jiken (The Undergarment Incident, as Satō Dōshin translates it), characterized the general reception of Kuroda's later nude paintings in Japan. Indeed, despite Kuroda's effort to disassociate nude paintings from the erotic images of *shunga*, in the first decades of the 20th century, this connection between the two remained powerful at least to the police or other state authorities. Controversies and debates surrounding Kuroda's late nude paintings still remained in the realm of public morals. On the other hand, despite the controversies, Kuroda demonstrated persistent effort to establish the nude as an artistic tradition in Japan by continuing to produce nude paintings after the 1900 Paris Exposition, albeit with less inventive energy that he displayed with the conception and execution of *Chi Kan Jō*. His later nude paintings differed both formally and stylistically to either *Chōshō* or *Chi Kan Jō*, and resembled his teacher Collin's work.

In this epilogue, I look at the nude paintings that Kuroda did after the 1900 Paris Exposition, with a focus on his 1901 painting, *Ratai Fujinzō*, his 1903 paintings, *Aki* (*Autumn*, Figure 35) and *Haru* (*Spring*, Figure 36), and his 1907 painting, *Nobe* (*The Fields*, Figure 39).

¹⁵² Jun Shioya, "Ratai Fujinzō" catalogue entry in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting: The 150th Anniversary of His Birth [Seitan 150-nen: Kuroda Seiki: Nihon Kindai Kaiga no Kyoshō]*, Masato Matsushima, Emiko Yamanashi, et.al ed. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, March 23, 2016), Exhibition Catalogue, 208, and see for example, Kuroda's diary entries since January 7, 190, in Kumamoto Kenjirō eds. *Kuroda Seiki Nikki [Diaries of Kuroda Seiki]*, (Tokyo, Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1966-68). Digitalized version on Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Property website, <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/kuroy/1901/page/10> (Accessed April 20, 2019).

Among these four paintings, except the 1901 *Ratai Fujinzō*, all were painted in Japan, and all of them were exhibited in Japan at Kuroda's White Horse Society exhibitions. In this section, I ask how the nudes in his later nude paintings were conceived to be capable of advancing the development of Japanese art and embodying Japan's successful modernization? Or, were they still imagined to have the same capabilities as the nudes in *Chōshō* and *Chi Kan Jō*? Seeing both the stylistic and formal resemblances between Kuroda's later nude paintings and Collin's work, I speculate that Kuroda still perceived the nude to be necessary for the future development of Japanese art. Further, the nationalist set of meanings that Kuroda imparted to the nude seemed to surface when he painted *Ratai Fujinzō* during his stay in Paris after the Paris Exposition, in an effort to regain recognition from his teacher Collin, who represented the French art world and who was reported to view Kuroda's creative work in Japan negatively.

Painted in Paris in 1901, *Ratai Fujinzō* can be seen as Kuroda's effort to regain Collin's recognition by referring to his earlier work *Chōshō* and by seeking inspirations from the latter's work. In *Ratai Fujinzō*, Kuroda depicted a female nude sitting in an ambiguous interior setting with a curtain of floral prints draping in the background. The nude's face shies away from the viewers. Compared with *Chōshō*, which was also painted in Paris, the ambiguous background in *Ratai Fujinzō* differs from the realistic bedroom in the latter. However, the treatment of the nude's body and the animal skin under her in *Ratai Fujinzō* recall the naked female figure and the bear skin rug that she stands on in *Chōshō*. Further, the contrast between the raw-looking animal skin and the smooth skin of the female nude in *Ratai Fujinzō* perhaps suggests an erotic undertone and reminds the viewer that she, like the naked female figure in *Chōshō*, is likely subjected to an outside male gaze. In Collin's 1873 painting, *Sommeil* (*Sleep*, Figure 34), he also employed the device of animal skin and the trope of objectification that was common in 19th-

century French nude paintings.¹⁵³ However, the rosy flesh of the idealized reclining nude presents a greater contrast to the animal skin lying beneath than Kuroda did for his *Ratai Fujinzō*. According to a conversation with Kuroda published in the October 25, 1901 issue of *Hōchi Shinbun*, Kuroda mentioned that when he showed *Ratai Fujinzō* to his teacher Collin in Paris in 1901, the latter remarked, “Why didn’t you exhibit this work at the Exposition?”¹⁵⁴ Collin was reported to have further commented that “Kuroda’s skill became worse after he returned to Japan (*Nihon e kaette mazukunatta*),” supposedly after seeing his submissions for the 1900 Paris Exposition.¹⁵⁵ Thus, immediately produced a nude painting that referred to both his earlier work *Chōshō*, which obtained positive reception from the 1893 Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and Collin’s work, Kuroda seemed to endeavor to gain approval from his teacher Collin with this new work.

The nude paintings followed *Ratai Fujinzō* can also find their sources in some of Collin’s works. Kuroda’s 1903 paintings *Aki* (*Autumn*) and *Haru* (*Spring*) were likely inspired by Collin’s 1899 paintings, *Music* (Figure 37) and *Poetry* (Figure 38). Moreover, in *Aki* and *Haru*, Kuroda seemed to evoke Collin’s 1886 painting, *Floréal* (Figure 21), in the artist’s attempt to express the feelings or states of mind in the seasons of autumn and spring, despite that Kuroda’s works appear more ambiguous in this respect. Nonetheless, utilizing the female nudes to suggest feelings, emotions, mystical ideas, and so forth recalls the art movement of Symbolism in late-19th-century France, and the works by one of its pioneering figures, Pierre Puvis du Chavannes (1824-1898), whom Kuroda had great respect for and to whom Kuroda showed the unfinished *Chōshō* before officially submitting it for exhibition at the Salon. According to Tadokoro,

¹⁵³ See Garb, “Gender and Representation” in *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, 219-290, and Duncan, “The Aesthetics of Power in Modern Erotic Art” in *Feminist Art Criticism: An Anthology*, 59-69.

¹⁵⁴ October 25 issue of *Hōchi Shinpō*, “Kuroda Seiki-shi no Rataiga dan” [“Kuroda Seiki on Nude Painting”], as quoted in Shioya, “*Female Nude*,” 208.

¹⁵⁵ Hakutei Ishii, *Nihon Kaiga Sandaishi*, (Sōgensha, 1942), quoted in Shioya, “*Female Nude*,” 208.

Kuroda's next painting, *Nobe* (1907, Figure 39), also found its equivalent among Collin's oeuvre – his 1873 painting, *Sleep* (Figure 40), which was exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition as well.¹⁵⁶ However, in Kuroda's *Nobe*, he depicted a Japanese-looking nude lying in the fields, rather than a European-looking nude as he did for *Ratai Fujinzō*, *Aki*, and *Haru*. In depicting a Japanese nude, Kuroda evoked *Chi Kan Jō* and his attempts to incorporate European artistic traditions into that of Japan, and to express a modern Japanese culture.

Seen in this light, Kuroda's impulse to seek recognition from Collin and to look to his works as the source of inspiration or even examples seems to reflect his desire to be recognized or approved by Collin and the French art world, a desire that he revealed while painting *Chōshō* in 1893. But moreover, seeing Kuroda as representative of the Japanese art world, this personal desire to gain approval from Collin can be extended to an eagerness to obtain recognition for the current Japanese art and culture, or in other words, for the progress of the Japanese civilization, at the turn of the century. Here, the nationalist sentiment in the imagined capacity of the nude to embody Japan's success in modernization seemed to come into play. On the other hand, as Kuroda became one of the leading figures in the Japanese academic world who was in the process of founding an equivalent academic system at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, his persistence in establishing the nude in the *yōga* tradition demonstrates a continuity in his argument for the necessity of the nude for the development of Japanese art and for elevating Japanese public's aesthetic sensibilities. Similar to one of the domestic functions of *Chi Kan Jō* to introduce the idea of allegory painting into Japan, we can perhaps argue that Kuroda was also attempting to introduce Symbolist painting into the Japanese art world, and to complicate the existing ideas about painting in the domestic discourse. Lastly, I want to remark that painting nude paintings with references to Collin's works could also serve to increase

¹⁵⁶ Tai Tadokoro, "Nobe," catalogue entry in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 226.

Kuroda's authority in arguing for the necessity of the nude in Japanese art and in continuing to produce nude paintings. He did not just insist on depicting the nude in reaction to the criticisms, but he did so with the back of Collin, and the French academic art world that Collin represented.

However, when Kuroda exhibited his late nude paintings at the White Horse Society exhibitions, like *Chōshō* but perhaps to a greater extent, they triggered debates and even interventions from the state. In comparison with *Chōshō* and *Chi Kan Jō*, which depict the female nudes standing and provide the viewers with a complete view of their bodies without any coverage, Kuroda's later nude paintings did neither of the two. In the 1901 *Ratai Fujinzō*, Kuroda does depict the female figure with complete nakedness, but she is sitting rather than standing. In the 1903 paintings of *Aki* and *Haru*, Kuroda depicted the female nudes standing, but their bodies are cropped at the bottom of the canvases and the parts below their abdomens are covered by painted cloths. Moreover, in the 1907 painting *Nobe*, the female nude is simply cropped and Kuroda only showed her upper body. As Japanese art historians such as Kuraya Mika points out, there seems to be a focus on the "lower part of the body" in the controversies and debates surrounding nude paintings in the late Meiji years.¹⁵⁷ In particular, during the Koshimaki Jiken (The Undergarment Incident) that occurred at the Sixth White Horse Society's exhibition of Kuroda's *Female Nude* in 1901, the police intervened and forced the exhibitors to put up a piece of cloth over the painting in order to cover up the lower part of the seated female nude's body (see Figure 41).¹⁵⁸ Two years later, the police intervened again at the Eighth White Horse Society exhibition and ordered Kuroda's *Aki* and *Haru*, along with a few other nude paintings, to be moved into a special room for exhibition. Whoever wished to enter the room had to have their

¹⁵⁷ See Mika Kuraya, "Kaiga no Kahanshin – 1890 Nen ~ 1945 Nen no Rataiga Mondai" in *Bijutsu Kenkyū*, No.392 (September 2007), 317-320.

¹⁵⁸ Dōshin Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and The Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, Hiroshi Nara trans. (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2011), 264.

names and addresses recorded.¹⁵⁹ Even though Kuroda painted cloths to cover up the lower part of his nudes' bodies, the police argued that he "still revealed too much [the part] below their navels."¹⁶⁰ From the Eighth White Horse Society onwards, putting nude paintings in a special exhibition room in which one needs permission to enter became a normalized practice.¹⁶¹ Kuroda's exhibition of *Nobe* at the 1907 Eleventh White Horse Society did receive positive reviews.¹⁶² However, one suspects that it was because both the painting was put inside the special exhibition room and because the nude was cropped – the painted cloth that she holds in her right hand covers her navel perfectly. As Kuraya notes further, the problem with the "lower part of the body" was still related to the connection that people could make with the erotic images of *shunga*, where the private parts of both men and women are depicted with precise and even exaggerated details, and this potential association between depictions of the nudes' lower bodies with erotic desires and fantasies was feared.¹⁶³ Therefore, despite Kuroda's effort to distinguish the nude from the naked female figures depicted in *shunga* and to position the nude as capable of elevating the public's aesthetic sensibility, the connection between the two seemed to remain powerful.

Due to the scope of this project, Kuroda's response to the police interventions and to the numerous criticisms during the exhibitions of his later nude painting, and whether in his response the imagined values accorded to the nude changed remain subjects for future research. Nonetheless, the resemblances between Kuroda's later nude paintings and the works by Collin,

¹⁵⁹ See Kuraya, 320, and Emiko Yamanashi, "Aki" and "haru" catalogue entry in *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*, 210-211.

¹⁶⁰ Hakutei Ishii, "Nihon ni okeru Rataigamondai no Hensen (Ge)," in *Chūō Bijutsu*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, (February 1917), 83, quoted in Kuraya, 320.

¹⁶¹ Kuraya, 320.

¹⁶² Tadokoro, "Nobe," 226.

¹⁶³ See Kuraya, 319-320.

and Kuroda's act to seek inspiration from his teacher, seem to suggest a continuity in Kuroda's formulation of the nude's values since the debates surrounding *Chōshō* in 1895.

Kuroda did succeed in establishing a nude tradition in the realm of Japanese Western-style painting. Both Kuroda's students and other *yōga* artists of later generations took on the subject of the nude in their artistic careers, and would soon come to reject the nude traditions set up by Kuroda (see for example, Yorozu Tetsugorō's 1913 painting, *Higasa no Rafu* [*Nude with a Parasol*], Figure 42). Influenced by European avant-garde art movements, later generations of Japanese *yōga* painters would come to perceive Kuroda's nude paintings and the institution that he had set up as the Japanese equivalent of the European academies. These nude paintings by the later generations, and the meanings accorded to their nudes, are potential fields for future study.

Figures

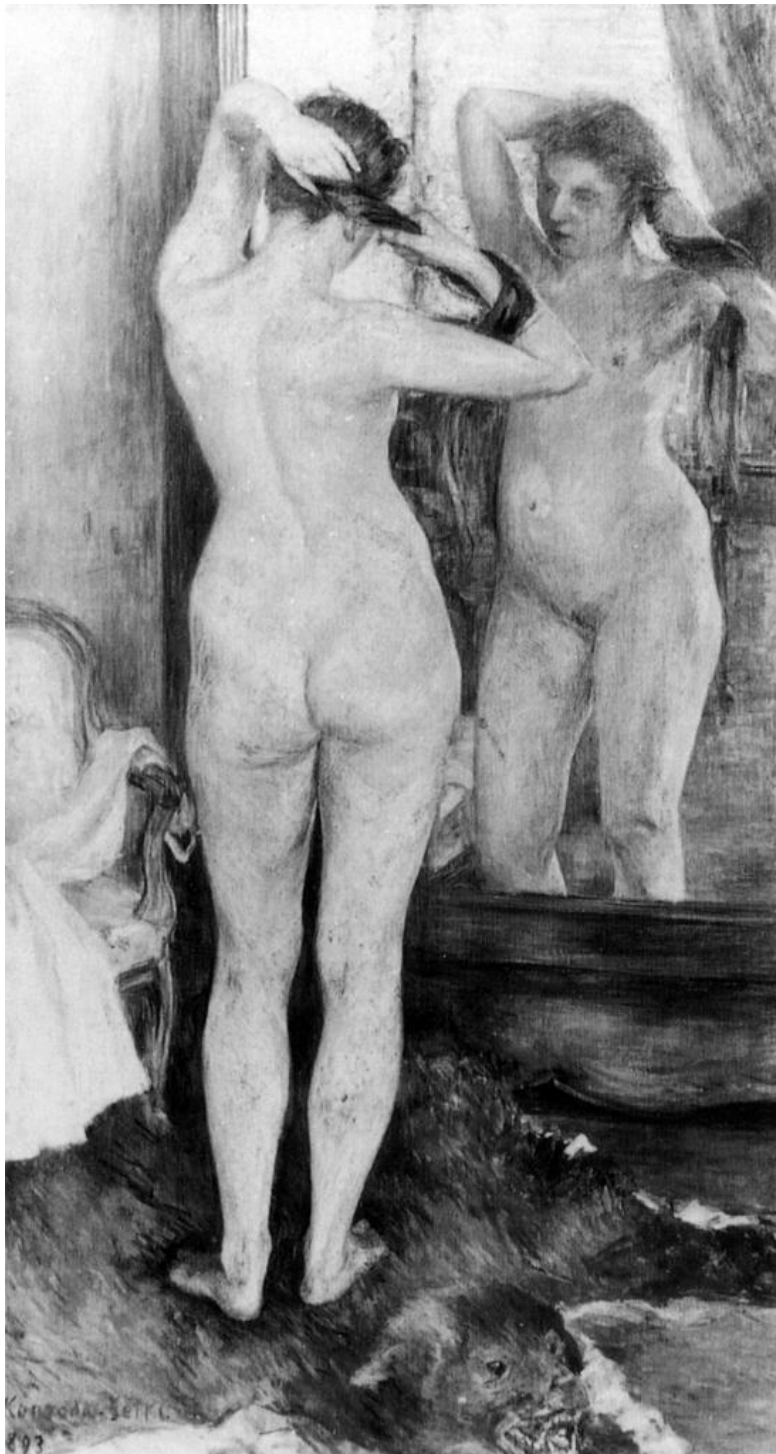


Figure 1. Kuroda Seiki, *Chōshō (Morning Toilette)*, 1893

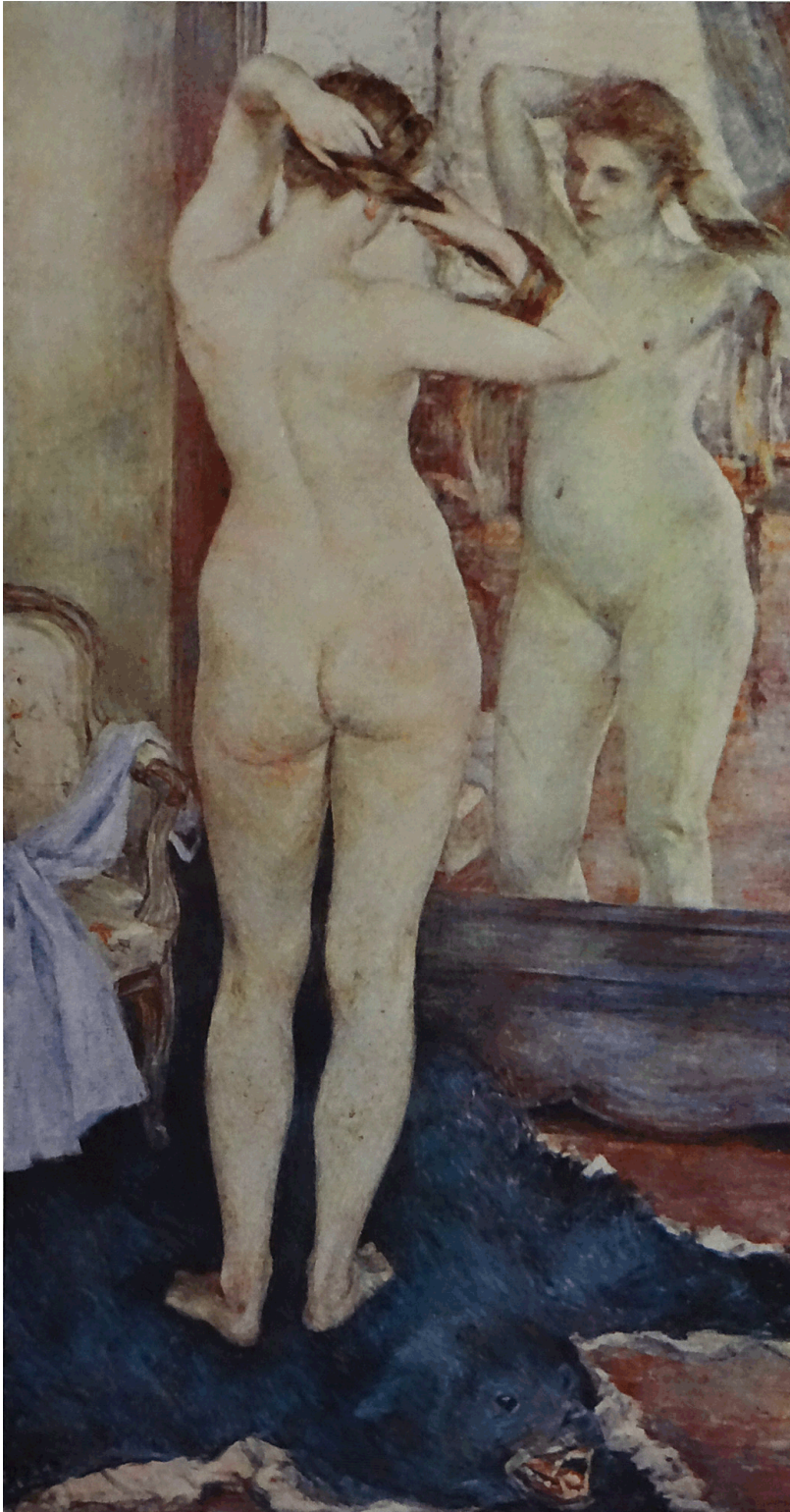


Figure 2. Kuroda Seiki, *Chōshō* (*Morning Toilette*), 1893



Figure 3. Alexandre Cabanel, *The Birth of Venus*, 1863



Figure 4. Gustave Courbet, *The Bathers*, 1853



Figure 5. Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863



Figure 6. Kitagawa Utamaro, *Needlework*, c. 1797-8, multi-colored woodblock.



Figure 7. Kitagawa Utamaro, *Lovers with Clam Shell*, multi-colored woodblock page from a *shunga* album, *Utamakura* (1788).



Figure 8. Watanabe Seitei, wood-cut print illustration for *Kochō (The Butterfly)*, a short story by Yamada Bimyō, issue 37 of *Kokumin no Tomo (People's Friend)* magazine, January 1889

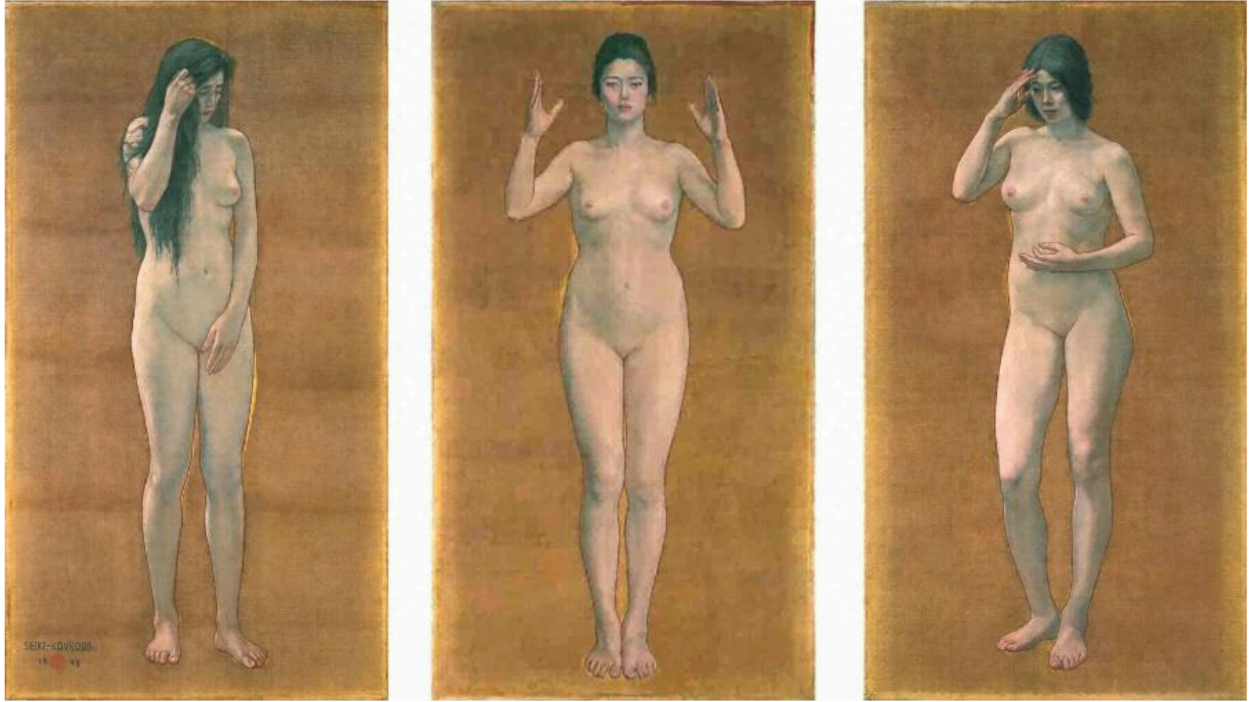


Figure 9. Kuroda Seiki, *Chi, Kan, Jō* (*Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*), 1899



Figure 10. Asai Chū, *Peasants Going Home*, 1887

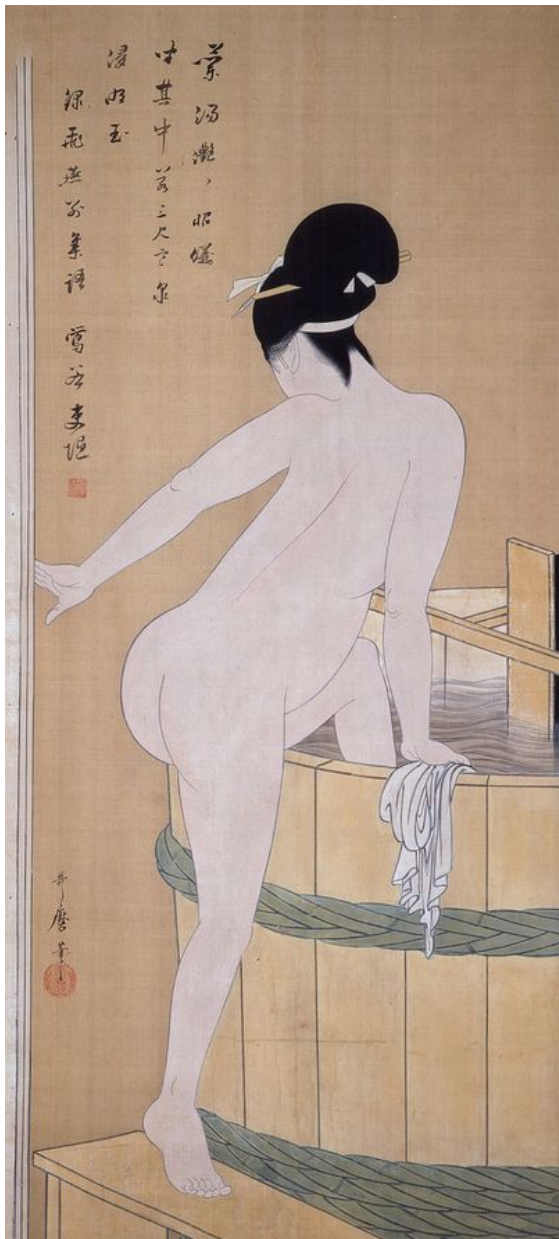


Figure 11. Kitagawa Utamaro, *Beauty Entering the Bath (Nyūyoku Bijinzu)*, 1799



Figure 12. Kuroda Seiki, *Ratai Shūsaku (Study of Naked Human Body)*, 1889

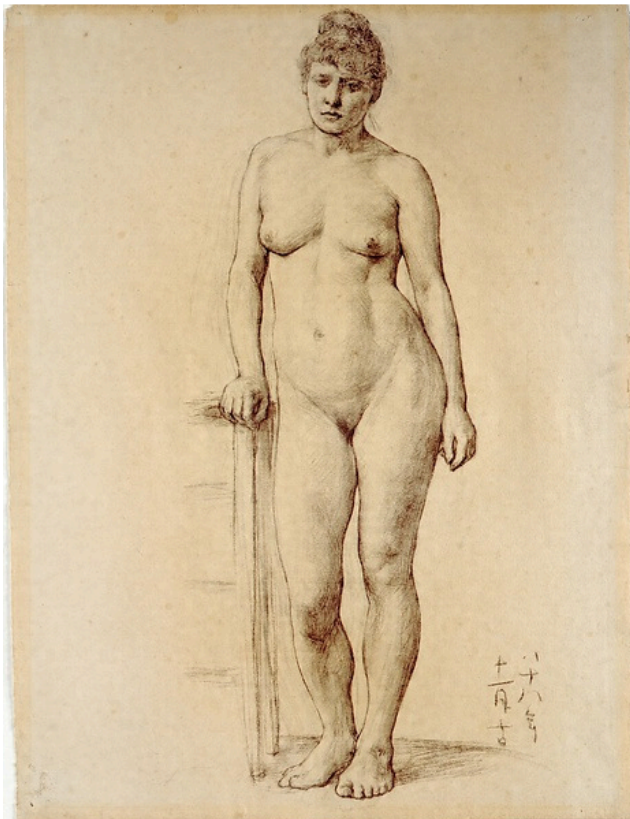


Figure 13. Kuroda Seiki, *Rafu Shūsaku (Study of Naked Woman's Body)*, 1888



Figure 14. Édouard Manet, *The Fifer*, 1866



Figure 15. Pietro Perugino (1446-1523), *The Delivery of the Keys to Saint Peter*, c. 1481-1482



Figure 16. Raphaël Collin, *Portrait of the Young Elise G*, 1885



Figure 17. Virgin (Theotokos) and Child enthroned, apse mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey, dedicated 867



Figure 18. Cimabue, *Madonna Enthroned with Angels and Prophets*, from Basilica di Santa Trinità, Florence, Italy, ca. 1280-1290. Tempera and gold leaf on wood.



Figure 19. An Eight-panel *byōbu* attributed to Kanō Eitoku, *Cypress*, 1590. Color, ink, and gold leaf on paper.



Figure 20. Shimomura Kanzan, *Yorobōshi (The Beggar Monk)*, a pair of six-panel *byōbu*, 1915. Color and gold leaf on paper.



Figure 21. Raphaël Collin, *Floréal*, 1886

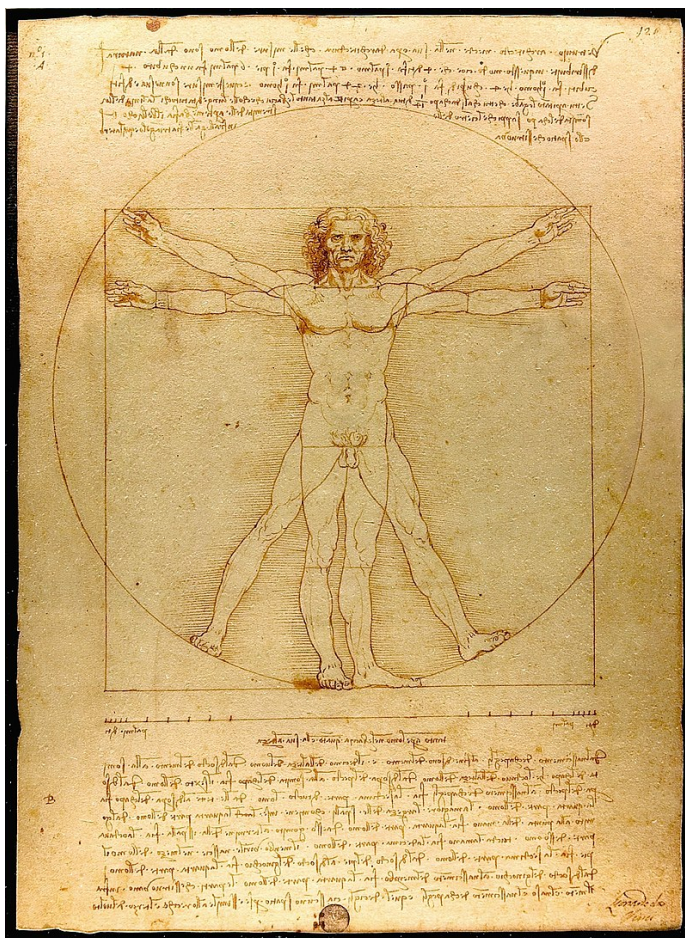


Figure 22. Leonardo da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man*, c. 1490



Figure 23. Hishida Shunsō, *Ochiba (Fallen Leaves)*, 1909

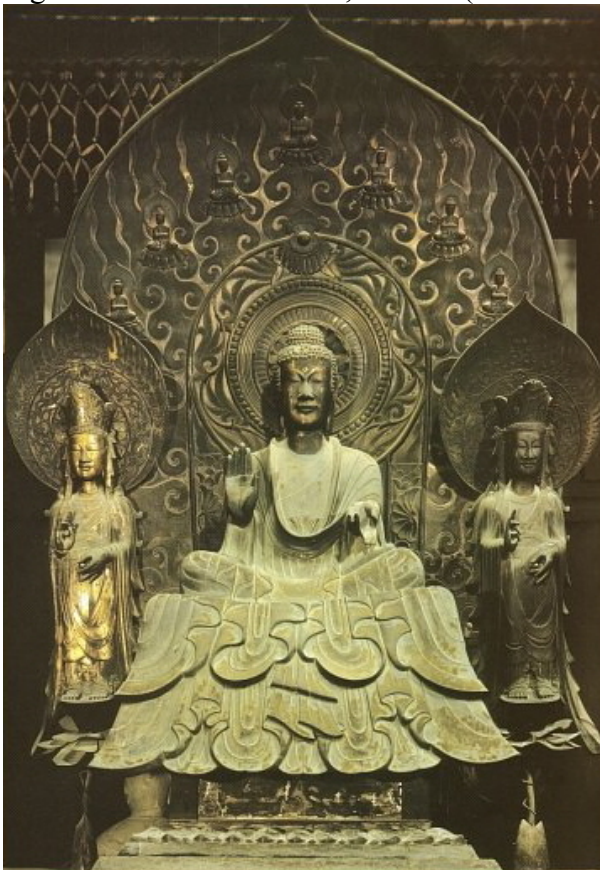


Figure 24. Tori Busshi, *Shaka Triad*, in the *Kondō* of Hōryū-ji, dated 623



Figure 25. Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece* (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Belgium, completed 1432



Figure 26. Masaccio, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden*, in Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. c. 1424-27



Figure 27. Raphael, *Transfiguration*, 1516-1520

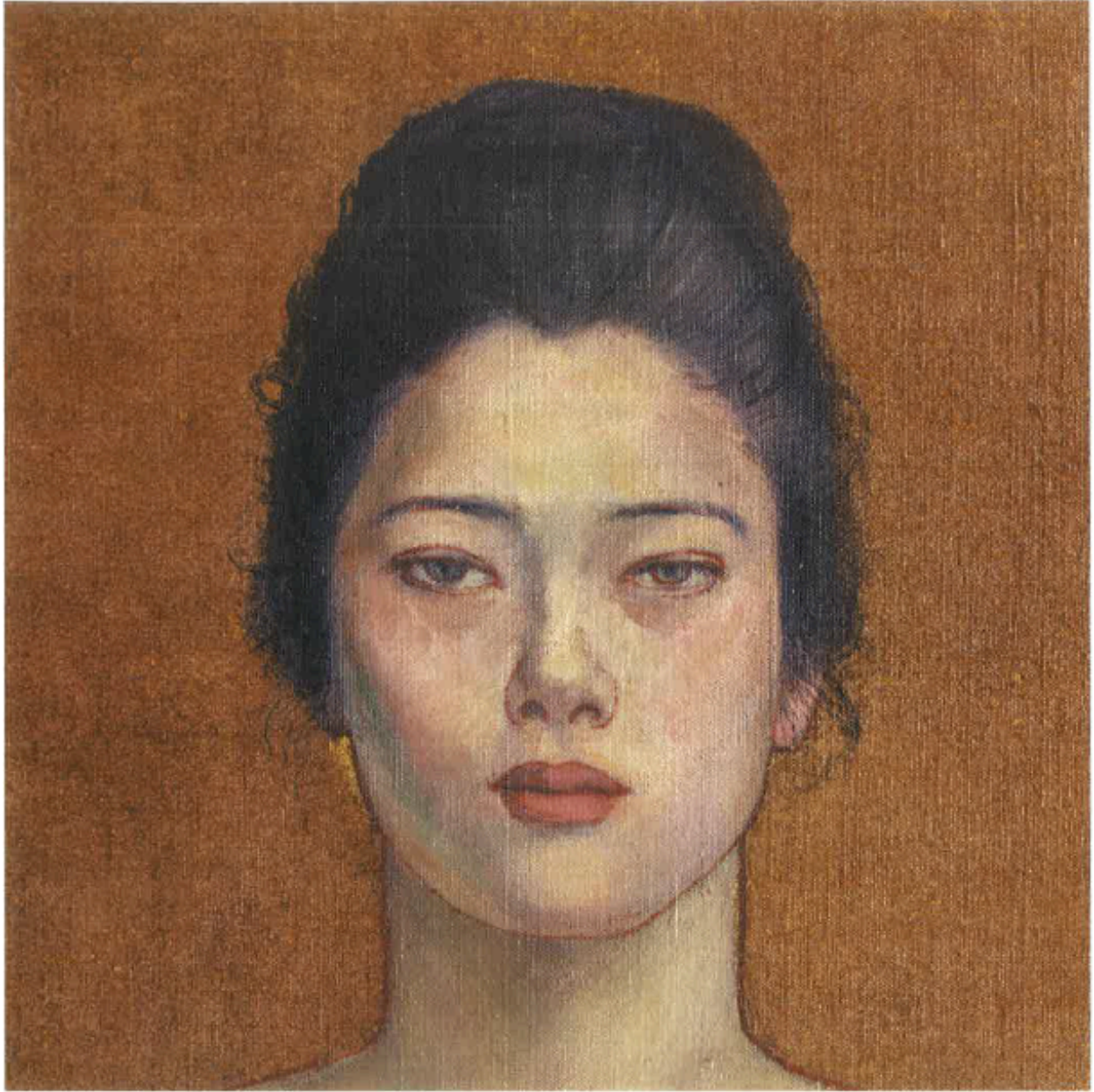


Figure 28. Kuroda Seiki, detail of *Kan* in *Chi Kan Jō*, 1899. Image from Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, eds. *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2002), 6.

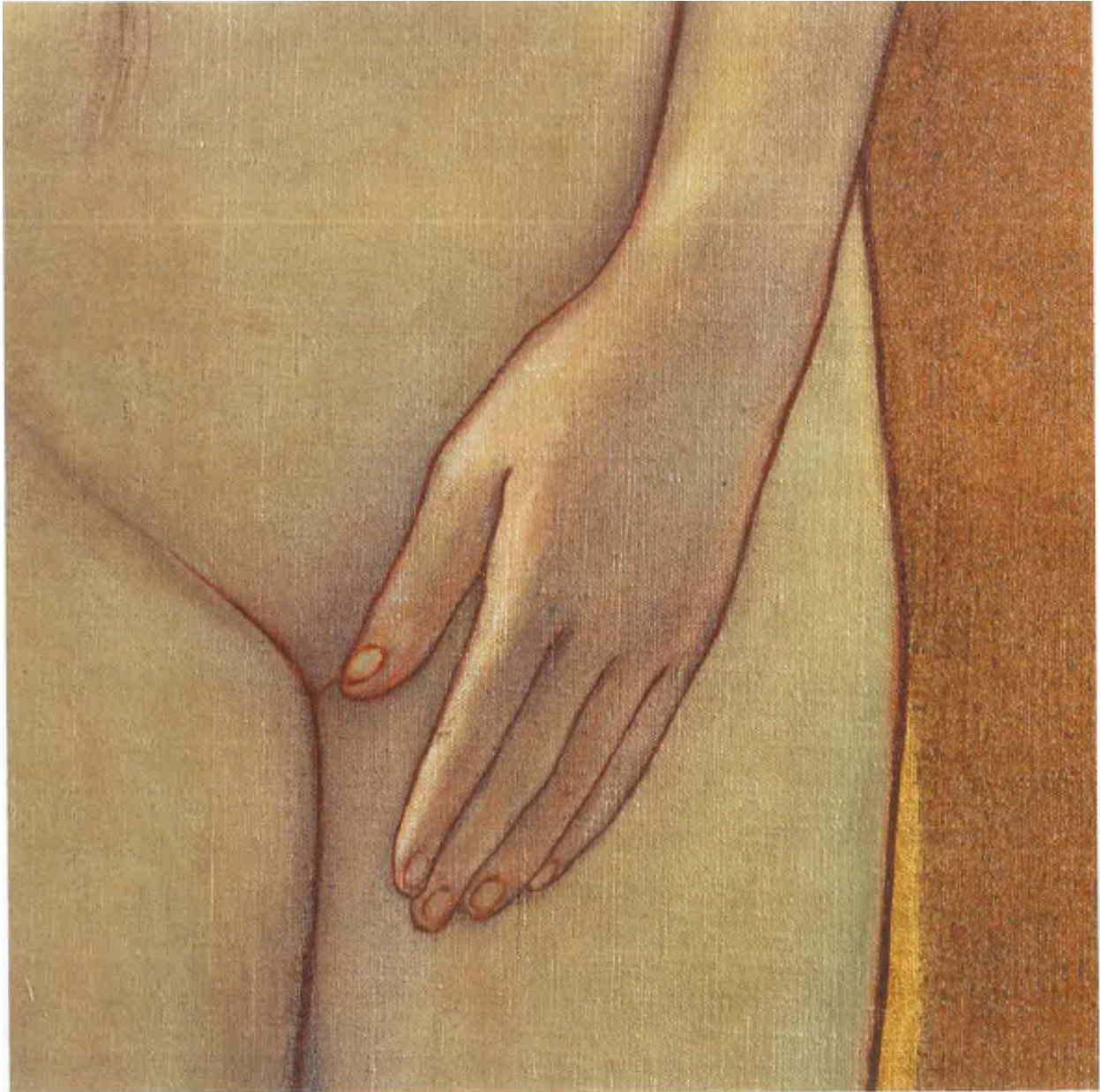


Figure 29. Kuroda Seiki, detail of *Jō* in *Chi Kan Jō*, 1899. Image from Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, eds. *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*. 10.

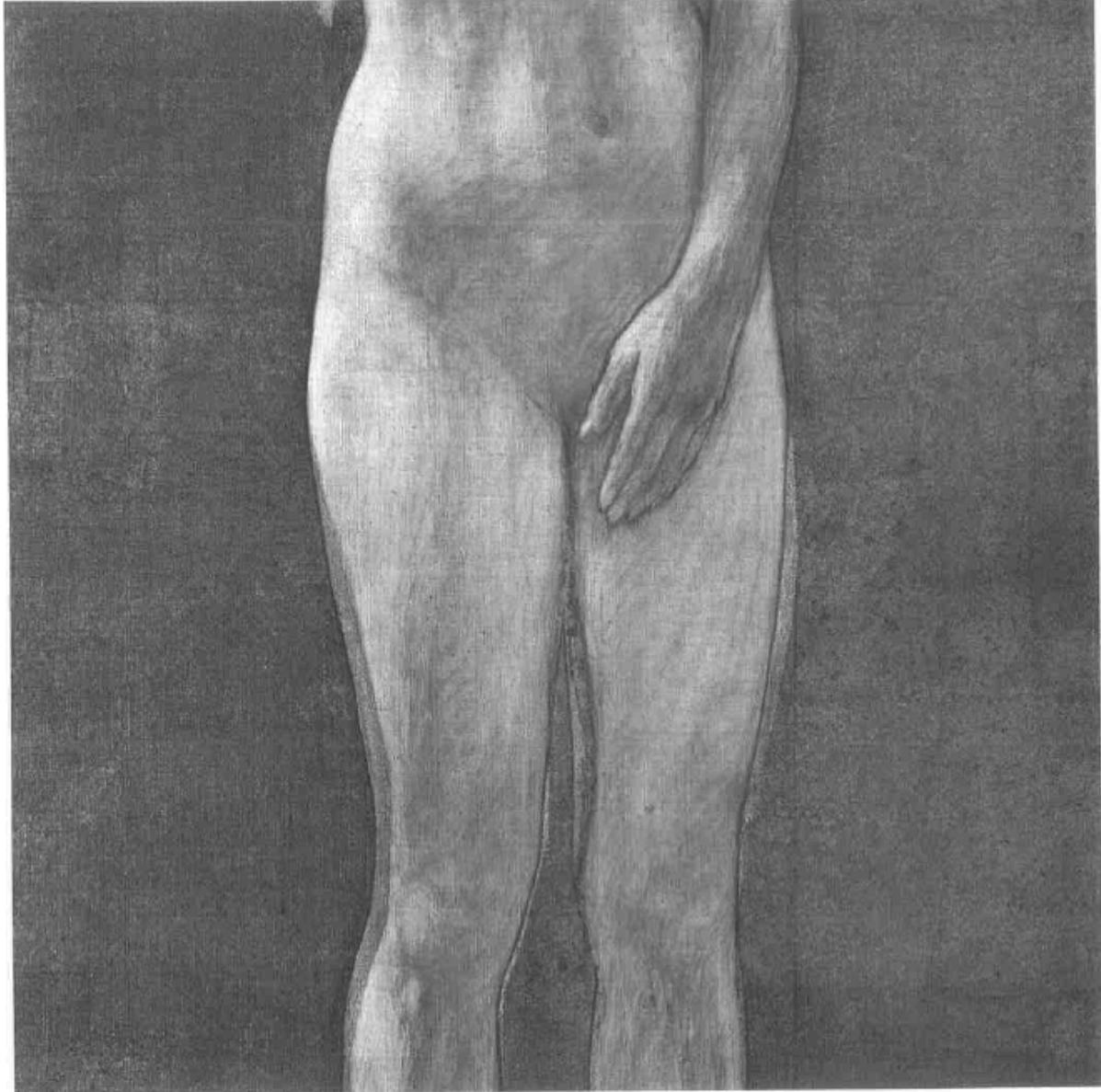


Figure 30. Kuroda Seiki, detail of *Jō* in *Chi Kan Jō*, 1899. Infrared photograph, filtered to 960nm wavelength, by reflective lighting. Image from Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, eds. *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*. 54.



Figure 31. Kuroda Seiki, detail of *Jō* in *Chi Kan Jō*, 1899. Close up image taken from Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, eds. *Kuroda Seiki, Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment, Artwork Archive for Art Studies, Volume I*. appendix image of *Chi Kan Jō*.



Figure 32. Kuroda Seiki, *Kohan (Lakeside)*, 1897



Figure 33. Kuroda Seiki, *Ratai Fujinzō (Female Nude)*, 1901



Figure 34. Raphaël Collin, *Sommeil (Sleep)*, 1873



Figure 35. Kuroda Seiki, *Aki (Autumn)*, 1903



Figure 36. Kuroda Seiki, *Haru (Spring)*, 1903



Figure 37. Raphaël Collin, *Music*, 1899



Figure 38. Raphaël Collin, *Poetry*, 1899



Figure 39. Kuroda Seiki, *Nobe (The Fields)*, 1907



Fig. 35 ラファエル・コラン《眠り》 World's Fair of 1900:
Retrospective Exhibition of Fine Arts 1889-1900より転載

Figure 40. Raphaël Collin, *Sleep*, 1873. Image from *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting: The 150th Anniversary of his Birth* [Seitan 150-nen: Kuroda Seiki: Nihon Kindai Kaiga no Kyoshō]. March 23, 2016. Exhibition Catalogue.



Figure 41. *Ratai Fujinzō* at the Sixth White Horse Society Exhibition, 1901. Image from *Kuroda Seiki: Master of Modern Japanese Painting*.



Figure 42. Yorozu Tetsugorō, *Higasa no Rafu* (*Nude with a Parasol*), 1913

Appendix

I. Extract of the letter from Kuroda Seiki to his stepfather from Paris on April 29, 1892.

今度都にてハ卒業試験の様な心持にて日本への御土産の為当地名物の女のはだかの画一枚心に任て描き申度存候 小さな考をして居る日本の小理屈先生方へ見せて一と笑ひ仕度候

II. Extract of Kuroda Seiki's letter to his stepfather from Paris on February 4, 1893.

公使野村氏の為ニ此頃描き居候女子のはだかの画ハ次第第二進み申候 今尚一月程も描き候上一と先教師へ見せ若し気ニ入候へば此の画ヲ共進会へ持ち出す様都合致し度存候 手本雇入代絵具代等は総て野村氏の引受にて私ハ只描クと云丈ニ御座候 其代りニ出来上りたる画は野村氏の物と相成事に御座候

III. Extract of Kuroda's letter to Kume Keichirō and Gōda Kiyoshi on March 28, 1895, from Kyoto to Tokyo.

どう考えても裸体画を春画と見做す理屈が何処に有る 世界普通のエステチックは勿論日本美術の将来に取っても裸体画の悪いと云事は決してない 悪いどころか必要なのだ 大に奨励す可きだ 始終骨無し人形計かいて居ていつ迄も美術国だと云って居られるか

IV. Extract of “Kuroda Seiki shi no Rabijindan” December 12, 1897 issue of *Jiji Shipō* article.

氏は白馬会に出品したる智、感、情の三美人に就きて曰く智、感、情の文字は少しく當字に似たるが當初、画家の三派なる理想、引証、写実の意を表さんとして筆を執りたるものに外ならず這是深き意味あるにあらずして理想を智、引証を感、写実を情に改めたるまでの事なりと

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