LANDSCAPE DISCOURSE AND IMAGES OF NATURE IN JAPANESE VISUAL
CULTURE OF THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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Introduction

Through this research, I hope to explore the introduction and reception of the European concept of “landscape” to Japan and its subsequent impact upon the development of creative approaches to the representation of natural scenery in the visual media of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This period of Japanese history, roughly coinciding with the reign of the Meiji Emperor (1868-1912) and the decades immediately thereafter, witnessed the rapid acceleration of the dual processes of urbanization and industrialization, as well as profound cultural, political, and economic changes that would reverberate throughout the twentieth century. In the realm of the visual arts, an increasing level of interaction between various European and indigenous expressive modes would foster the development of hybrid forms of art that reflect changing Japanese attitudes toward nature, as well as a growing awareness of national identity within the public imagination. The art forms emerging out of this process simultaneously express significant stylistic and thematic continuities and divergences with previous Japanese creative responses to natural scenery.

Reflecting this phenomenon, the Japanese term ふけい (風景) was adapted in the 1890s to express the influence of the imported European concept of “landscape,” and the new perspective in art and popular culture resulting from its adaptation and reception within Japan. Though famously referred to by Karatani Kōjin as the “discovery of landscape” (ふけい no hakken 風景の発見) in his frequently cited essay from the Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, one might more accurately regard the seemingly sudden accommodation of the “modern,” European perspective toward nature within this context as the culmination of a process of interaction between European and Japanese modes of
landscape art unfolding over several centuries. Many previous studies describing the formation of the current Japanese concept of fūkei merely emphasize the influence of this conceptual framework upon the development of Western (i.e. “modern”) style paintings, yōga (洋画), specifically, and neglect or disregard its relationship with other equally significant approaches to depicting nature within contemporary Japanese visual culture. This tendency leads to the emergence of a skewed historical narrative wherein the creative perspective informing the production of landscape images maintaining a so-called “traditional” appearance remain poorly defined, and images fall into oppositional, mutually exclusive categories within rigid, binary descriptive models (i.e. traditional versus modern, East or West). This approach problematically misrepresents and dramatically simplifies art historical circumstances from both before and after the Meiji period.

**Introduction to Discourse Surrounding the European Concept of “Landscape”**

Before diving into a detailed analysis of the specific circumstances surrounding the reception and impact of the concept within the specific context of late nineteenth century Japanese art historical developments, however, it seems necessary to explore the critical discourse surrounding the European concept of “landscape” prominent within recent cultural research, and particularly relevant in any discussion of the reception of landscape as a distinctive artistic genre. Particularly from the middle of the twentieth-century onward, scholars studying landscape as an intellectual and visual cultural phenomenon have sought to track its development from origins within a European literary/art historical context to its eventual transmission across the world. As a
consequence of its complex origins, cultural scholars have developed a confusing tendency to deploy the term “landscape” to simultaneously signify several overlapping ideas. Namely, the word variously describes a particular European intellectual tradition, a genre of art-making, and a distinctive, culturally-constructed (and often politicized) framework for perceiving natural scenery. In many cases, the word often refers simply to any “artistic or literary response to the visible scene.”¹ In an art historical sense, this definition reflects the fact that an interest in depicting natural scenery transcends historical and cultural boundaries, describing accurately its enduring popularity as a source of creative inspiration to artists in Europe and Asia alike.

This description, while accurate in a broad sense, also adheres to popular understandings of landscape, problematically obscuring the historically complex circumstances surrounding the development of a concept many take for granted and the implications of its interpretation within cultural contexts outside of the immediate sphere of European cultural influence. Bearing in mind the historical bias dictating modernity as inextricably representative of European cultural values and attitudes, the origins of “landscape” as a popular genre of painting in close conjunction with the invention of a distinctive, historically unprecedented manner of perceiving the natural world has ensured that the concept of landscape, “in its pure form,” has come to represent “a Western European and modern phenomenon.”² Consequently, since at least the middle of the twentieth-century, landscape discourse has largely revolved around scholars' efforts to locate an evolution in cultural attitudes toward nature and the creative reaction toward visual scenery from a particular moment in European history, or in the case of Japanese

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¹ Denis Cosgrove. “Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea,” Transactions of the
scholars, at the historical juncture at which Japan embarked upon a period of deeper engagement with European intellectual and artistic traditions in the Meiji period.

In the middle of the twentieth century a prominent British art historian, Kenneth Clark, wrote an influential book exploring the origins of the European concept of landscape and the distinctive perspective toward nature underlying its development. Clark's argument draws from previous commentaries on landscape (namely those of the nineteenth-century art critic, John Ruskin) to present a historical narrative describing its emergence as one of the most conceptually significant innovations of visual culture over the last several centuries. Even today, many contemporary scholars agree with Clark's basic thesis, and continue to locate its origins sometime between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During this moment in European history, the gradual rise of a distinctive world-view rooted in a renewed emphasis and intellectual interest in the human experience would herald the beginning of the so-called Renaissance. As new humanistic philosophies offered a reevaluation of the status of human beings within the hierarchical structure of the universe, the subjective experience of the individual as an observer of his/her surroundings was granted a new symbolic and artistic significance. Clark specifically cites the fourteenth century Italian poet, Petrarch's (1309-74), writings on the enjoyment of landscape for its own sake rather than as “background” as a significant cultural development in the expression of this manner of perceiving the world.¹

The rise of humanist philosophy would occur in conjunction with the appearance of numerous important technical and conceptual innovations and would contribute to an

important shift in the manner in which artists approached the depiction of the natural world. Chief amongst these artistic innovations was one-point perspective, an invention whose application would prove critical to the development of European landscape art of this period and beyond. In subsequent centuries, the use of linear perspective as method of rendering space and producing the illusion of depth within compositions would become increasingly important in the creation of European landscape images.

Many European artists from the Early Renaissance onward would become increasingly preoccupied with scientific and abstract theoretical matters, embracing the application of geometrical constructs and other supposedly empirical approaches in their work. In principle, this would allow them to “accurately” achieve the measurement of space and generate images that could convincingly reproduce an individual's optical experience of a particular site as faithfully as possible. As a novel approach to constructing visual space and attempting to describe natural scenery as it appears before one's eyes, this compositional technique derives from an understanding of the external world as an object opposite humanity, possessing concrete, constant characteristics and physical properties. The attempts of artists to record reality in this manner reflect their belief in the superiority of images emerging out of a supposedly scientific and empirical understanding of nature:

[A] visual world [was] constructed according to systematized constants and from which any inconsistencies and irregularities were banished to ensure the formation of a homogeneous, unified and fully legible space.⁴

Modern perspective, as a worldview distinctive from pre-modern, so-called “traditional” modes of apprehending the natural world crucially presents the individual in a central and

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indispensable position within “the space reproduced by perspective.” The importance accorded to descriptions (both literary and artistic) of the immediate and relative visual experiences of the individual represent the most critical priority of artists according to this world-view; the systematic method of rendering space offered through the application of techniques like linear perspective seemed to offer the most efficient means of faithfully recording these experiences, allowing the artist to render and the viewer of the image to experience a “picture of reality:”

[F]orm and position in space are shown to be relative rather than absolute. The forms of what we see, of objects in space and of geometrical figures themselves, vary with the [individual's vantage]... [t]he artist, through perspective, establishes the arrangement or composition, and thus determines the 'point of view' to be taken by the observer, and controls through framing the scope of reality revealed.6

Within a European historical context, the rediscovery of linear perspective in art (believed to be lost since Classical antiquity), and its affiliated technologies (the camera obscura, etc.) coincided directly with the rise of humanist philosophy and the quintessentially modern emphasis on the individual's central role in experiencing and interpreting the world around them. Consequently, Clark indicates the rise of landscape painting to a position of preeminent artistic importance by the middle of the nineteenth century (supplanting history painting and portraiture) as evidence of the birth of a radically new approach to apprehending space and nature:

Clark . . . collapses the appreciation of nature into its representation by painting. Clark goes on to reinforce the equation of painting with seeing by citing with approval Ruskin's claim in *Modern Painters* that 'mankind acquired a new sense' along with

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6 Ibid., 48.
the invention of landscape painting.\(^7\)

This assertion, which remains largely uncontested in contemporary accounts, would suggest that in addition to simply representing a cultural or creative response to the natural scene, the concept of landscape encoded in European art from this period reveals a fundamental shift in human perception toward nature. This would lead to the birth of a conceptual paradigm that departs considerably from that which preceded it, signaling the birth of modern consciousness. Indeed, the complex and seemingly inseparable relationship between these various developments and the appearance of landscape as a distinctive genre of art suggests that the association between modern identity and this manner of perceiving the world was so powerful that “it transpired at various moments of development of the modern tradition that one way to signify the different disposition of the relatively modern viewer was to conceive of him or her as a viewer of the landscape.”\(^8\)

**The Conceptual Significance of Nature and Site in Japanese Art**

Prior to the wider reception of an engagement with the concepts informing the production of European landscape art into mainstream Japanese visual culture around the middle of the Meiji period, one can generally characterize Japanese artistic expressions of site and space as sharing many similarities with the pre-Renaissance concept of landscape in European culture:

> In both [cases], place is conceived of in transcendental terms. For a brush painter to depict a pine grove meant to depict the concept (that which is signified by) "pine grove," not an existing pine grove.

\(^7\) Mitchell, *Landscapes and Power*, 8.

\(^8\) Harrison, *Landscapes and Power*, 217.
This transcendental vision of space had to be overturned before painters could see existing pine groves as their subjects. This is when modern perspective appears.\footnote{Kōjin Karatani, Origins of Modern Japanese Literature (Duke University Press, 1993), 27.}

An image like Hasegawa Tōhaku's (1539-1610) famous ink painting, the *Pine Trees* screen (松林図屏風 fig. 1), for instance, illustrates this particular understanding of nature quite effectively. Tōhaku's work reflects a different understanding of humanity's position relative to nature—the image reveals no effort on the artist’s behalf to distinguish the conceptual representation of 'pine tree,' with all of its cultural implications, from any given actual group of pine trees existing in the world. Namely, this image and others like it ultimately express an understanding of the natural world that differs considerably from the supposedly empirical, universal one emerging in the wake of the European Renaissance and the development of the conceptual framework and visual expressions of landscape described earlier. This quality by no means betrays the artist's inability to “realistically” render natural scenery in an illusionistic manner. On the contrary, this represents a clear cultural preference, indicating a difference in creative priorities informing his work. Indeed, “[a]ny general survey of the world's pictorial and sculptural art will show the relative unimportance of optical fidelity especially as it applies to landscape.”\footnote{Yi-Fu Tuan, “Realism and Fantasy in Art, History, and Geography,” Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 80, No. 3 (Sep., 1990): 439.} Though exceptions certainly exist, the purpose and creative objectives informing the production of landscape images in a Japanese context were generally not aligned with those emerging out of Europe before the nineteenth century.

From the 1880s onward, however, a sociocultural climate conducive to experimentation and exposure to European artistic ideas would prompt a change in
attitudes toward nature, laying the foundations for gradual emergence of current understanding of the word *shizen* (自然), the meaning of which coincides with the European understanding of nature as “outside” and withdrawn from the sphere of human society. As indicated previously, this understanding of landscape crucially revolves around the presence of a human observer (subject) that necessarily exists separately from the natural world (object):

Landscape distances us from the world in critical ways, defining a particular relationship with nature and those who appear in nature, and offers us the illusion of a world in which we may participate subjectively…

In contrast with post-Renaissance European landscape art, within a Japanese cultural context natural scenery, and by extension “nature [itself] was not conceived as something opposed to or other than human activities,” and in large part, "the division between nature and human action [remained] ambiguous" in the popular consciousness of Japanese society predating the broader shift in attitudes with respect to the natural world beginning in the latter decades of the nineteenth-century. For this reason, the unique sensory experience and impressions of an individual artist within nature were not necessarily regarded as essential to the production of art to the extent they were in contemporary European art. A consensus appears to exist that after the middle of the Meiji period, the Japanese word *fūkei* would absorb the meanings affiliated with this particular European manner of perceiving the natural world, namely that the individual plays an instrumental role as a subjective viewer of landscape, and that humanity inhabits a role opposite the natural world. While the word *fūkei* would subsequently come to take on a meaning

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roughly equivalent to its current meaning in Japanese, its original meaning differed considerably from the European concept, which essentially refers to nature as it exists before the eyes of the observer.

This is not to suggest that the word was invented at this time. Originating in China, the word ふけい initially appeared in Japan in the 8th century in the poetic anthology, 万葉集 (Man'yōshū), and was used consistently throughout the middle ages until present times. Prior to the Meiji period the words し zien and even ふけい were both frequently employed within an artistic context, though they embodied conceptual connotations distinctive from those subsequently appended to them. For instance, though the creative approach taken to produce one of Hiroshige's famous landscape prints, “Landscape of Whirlpool at Awa,” (Awa naruto no ふけい, fig. 2) differs considerably from European landscapes (and therefore the perspective informing them), one can confirm that in a pre-Meiji context the term “ふけい” was already appearing within titles of artwork to signify an image of natural scenery. The critical difference here lies in the fact that it's unlikely that Hiroshige actually ever personally visited this place, basing the image on his reading of previous poetic and visual accounts of the same site.

In pre-Meiji Japanese images of natural scenery, particularly, a subject was regarded as significant and worthy of depiction largely based on its accumulated cultural and historical associations. This manner of perceiving a site as a significant or worthy subject of art based almost exclusively on its familiarity with a wider (though culturally literate) audience, presents a distinctive alternative to the tendency in contemporary

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European and American painting toward the frequent depiction of so-called “anonymous” landscapes often reflecting the directly observed experience of an individual artist. Prior to the encounter with European concepts of landscape in the late-nineteenth century it remains generally accurate to characterize artists as exhibiting a preference for the production of schematic views of famous places, or *meisho* (名所). Within this artistic tradition, an image's defining characteristic (as well as its intrinsic artistic value) lies in its connection to a site's reputation as a point of pilgrimage, a place for beautiful scenery, or the subject of literary celebration in poetry or travel literature. As a genre, *meisho-e* (“pictures of meisho”) initially emerged during the Heian period (794-1185), when artists of Japanese-style paintings, *Yamato-e* (大和絵) began producing images of famous places from throughout Japan that were largely known as the subjects of poems, and often incorporated seasonal feeling and human subjects as well.\(^{15}\)

While limiting an artist's choice of subject matter and vantage point to an extent, this artistic convention also granted access to a rich thematic and visual lexicon of poetic imagery from throughout Japanese history; a genre in which the potential to exploit the emotional impact of the myriad cultural and historical allusions inhabiting a single site exists as a tremendous boon to the artist, rather than a hindrance. Instead of rendering scenery in a style explicitly faithful to the actual appearance or geographical characteristics of these places, artists would rather place a priority on mastering the representation of certain important details that could effectively serve as visual cues, signaling to the audience that they were looking at an image of a specific place well-known within Japanese culture:

\(^{15}\) Naruse, *Nihon Kaiga no Fūkei Hyōgen*, 23.
Early meisho-e... did not depict precise geographical details of these famous places. It was sufficient to paint flowering cherry trees to indicate Mount Yoshino or autumn leaves fallen onto a river to show that this was the famous Tatsuta River.\footnote{Watanabe, Ruskin in Japan 1890-1940: Nature for Art, Art for Life, 278.}

In Sōtatsu's famous pair of folding screens, known as the Matsushima byōbu (松島屏風 fig. 3), for instance, several gnarled, dwarfish trees arranged throughout the composition immediately signify to the viewer that the work depicts a particular site along the north-east coast of Honshu in Miyagi prefecture, well-known for its pine-studded, rocky islets celebrated in numerous poems and other artistic interpretations. Aside from this key detail, however, the composition largely relies on a schematic mode of expression, in which the islands and trees, rendered in boldly colored pigment recalling earlier Yamato-e paintings, appear largely interchangeable. Though the title and inclusion of this key detail would indicate to the intended viewer the site and subject of the painting, the artist demonstrates little interest in situating the scenery within a broader, panoramic vista, nor in conveying a sensation of visual depth through the application of illusionistic techniques. Rather, the pine covered rocks simply float against a glittering golden backdrop, a hallmark of compositions made by the Japanese artists operating within the Rinpa (涇派) style of painting emerging in the seventeenth century. Previously established conventions, through the adherence to a popular, widely-accepted manner of rendering scenery dominate at the expense of the actual visual experience of an individual artist, or the mere ability to produce the illusion of optical fidelity.

While this preference for well-known scenery was a long established aspect of Japanese cultural output (reaching back to works like Man'yōshū, etc.), the dominance of meisho-e in visual culture becomes especially apparent when viewing the landscape art of...
the Edo Period (1603-1868), a period of more or less uninterrupted political stability and unity amongst the various domains when domestic travel along well-established toll roads and burgeoning trade between rapidly growing, interconnected urban areas (centers of cultural production and consumption), particularly Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka became increasingly commonplace. While creative descriptions of famous places from throughout the archipelago were long a source of inspiration for Japanese painters, substantial technological advances in wood-block printing beginning in the seventeenth-century onward would eventually lead to the proliferation of relatively affordable images that would allow urban audiences the opportunity to vicariously experience views of well-known scenery from various sites.

Especially approaching the middle of the nineteenth-century, famous print designers like Hokusai and Hiroshige would collaborate with their publishers to exploit the widespread familiarity with these various prominent sites to make a lucrative business in selling these tourist images. Indeed, by the middle of the nineteenth century, these often imaginative interpretations of famous places and scenery appear to have eclipsed bijinga (images of beauties, often courtesans) and actor prints as the most popular subject of wood-block prints, with the most successful series enjoying enduring popularity both within Japan, and following the liberalization of trade in the 1850s, Europe and America as well. In this print of Hakone (fig. 4) from the well-known series 53 Stations of the Tōkaido designed by Andō Hiroshige (1797-1858), the viewer can see how rather than realistically recreating the exact visual scenery surrounding the famous Lake Ashi witnessed from a specific vantage point, the artist instead presents an interpretation that incorporates its most well-known topographical characteristics. In this respect, rather than
relying on or attempting to replicate his personal observations of the site, Hiroshige essentially draws inspiration from the legacy of past (both visual and literary) descriptions to construct a composite image representative of the place, evoking these associations in the mind of the viewer:

stations became the subject of celebrated representations that overlaid material presence with cultural significance . . . artists projected mental images onto the realm of traveling that gave it a special role within the collective imagination of the Japanese society.  

This practice persisted beyond the end of sakoku (鎖国, “closed country”) and would continue to represent the primary approach of print artists in the depiction of Japanese scenery into the Meiji period and beyond. At the same time, however, this cultural preference by no means indicates complete ignorance or lack of engagement with Western artistic techniques and traditions surrounding the depiction of natural scenery—indeed, the notion that Japanese artists before 1853 were utterly insulated from contemporary developments in European visual culture remains one of the great historical myths surrounding the art of the Edo period, and popular understandings of Japanese artistic traditions in general:

Terms like 'Meiji culture' and 'Tokugawa tradition,' suggest rapid change in a previously stable setting, but it is important to remember that late Tokugawa culture was profoundly eclectic and that the Meiji changes represented acceleration of many trends that were already in progress.  

Many historians correctly recognize the Meiji period as particularly turbulent, transitional moment in Japanese history, distinctive for the increasing regularity and intensity of

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contact and cultural exchange between Japan and European societies. Nevertheless, the importation of European artistic ideas and visual media hardly represents an unprecedented phenomenon in Japanese art history. Though initially banned following the expulsion of most European foreigners from Japan in the early seventeenth-century, European books (excluding those of an explicitly Christian nature) were subsequently available to certain, well-connected individuals, arriving in limited quantities through trade with the Dutch permitted to remain the port of Nagasaki at the trading outpost on Dejima. While the overwhelming majority of Japanese artists would not gain exposure to European artistic techniques in this manner, the relaxation of prohibitions on the importation of books meant that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a select number of Japanese artists would possess at least an indirect link to contemporary developments in European printmaking.

Trade with the Dutch merchants established on this tiny island would continue regularly throughout the enforcement of the so-called sakoku (closed-country) policy that endured with few interruptions until the arrival of US Naval Commodore Perry in 1853, and the subsequent collapse of the Tokugawa government in the years following the reestablishment of regular trade relations with European nations and America. The development of Dutch Studies, or rangaku (蘭学) prior to this event, reflects the curiosity of Japanese scholars and artists of the time, and represents the intellectual reaction to Japanese contact with Dutch merchants throughout this interval of relative seclusion. This field of study, though strictly limited by the authorities in many cases, would eventually produce figures like Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818) and Aōdō Denzen (1748-1822), whom art
historians primarily recognize for their unique experiments in European-style landscapes and oil compositions:

[From the late eighteenth century on, a variety of artists and experiment with a diversity of effects—shadows, chiaroscuro, modeling, moonlight, lantern light, and light rays. In . . . [most] cases, however, the concern was graphic…]19

Shiba Kōkan, a notable scholar of rangaku in Edo-period Japan, however, remains one of the best-known artists to have explicitly adopted features of Western landscape art in his artwork prior to the Meiji period. Throughout the course of his prolific career, he worked with oil paints, copperplate printing, and employed light effects as well as aerial perspective to innovate a distinctive style that fused aesthetic elements of both European and Japanese art. Aōdo Denzen, a contemporary of Kōkan, was another early pioneer in the study and practical application of the stylistic techniques of Dutch landscapes working in copperplates and including the geometric perspectival constructs of Western paintings in his compositions.

While demonstrating a clear interest in the application of techniques and materials employed in European print-making (these artists would not enjoy access to actual paintings), however, both would ultimately adhere to a model of expression in their original compositions relating more to the dominant themes popular in contemporary Japanese landscape art, producing iconic views of famous places, albeit in somewhat unconventional media. This oil painting of Mt. Fuji by Shiba Kōkan (fig. 5), for instance, while a definite stylistic departure from other depictions, and distinctive for its unusual use of oil paints and application of atmospheric perspective, ultimately bears more in

common, thematically, with the similar landscape images by other Japanese painters and print artists than with the work his European contemporaries.

Experimentation with technical aspects of European art was not simply limited to scholars of Dutch studies. Prominent artistic figures, both painters and print artists alike, would also occasionally embrace the application of Western modes of expression in their landscape images. Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), a prominent painter in eighteenth-century Kyoto, well known for his adherence to a distinctive naturalistic approach incorporating sketches (animals, plants, etc.) executed from life into his compositions, would skillfully apply the technique of one point perspective in numerous prints. An image like this multi-colored print, which depicts a scene from the famous Kyoto temple entitled “Archery Contest at the Sanjusangendo,” (三十三軒堂) (fig. 6), makes use of pronounced orthogonal lines to create an exaggerated impression that the structure, an archery range, recedes into the deep distance from the (imagined) viewer's vantage point, revealing his evident mastery of the practice of one-point perspective to create an illusion of three-dimensional space. Nevertheless, despite his skill in applying this technique to convincing effect, he would ultimately not apply it within his paintings. Instead, Ōkyo, and others like him, would largely limit the use of this manner of rendering space to uki-e (“floating pictures”) and megane-e, (“lens pictures,” prints designed for the vue d’optiques). These images were not regarded with any particular esteem, and were generally marketed as a clever novelty, not likely intended to warrant serious consideration by wealthy, high class patrons. Indeed, while many other Japanese artists would produce similar prints exploiting the strange appearance of landscapes based on this Western technical invention, “the novel device of perspective, when it arrived in
Japan, convinced few with its pretensions to offer a uniquely compelling window onto the world.” This fact, while demonstrating the clear ability of Japanese artists to master and easily accommodate European influences within their compositions, also reveals their initial evaluation of Western landscape art as aesthetically inferior to Chinese and Japanese responses to natural scenery.

Landscape images made prior to this shift demonstrating a similar preoccupation with capturing the actual appearance of a particular place, namely through sketches, or shasei (写生), may similarly mislead a contemporary Western viewer to conclude that the attitudes and creative objectives of these artists were perhaps aligned to contemporary European landscape painters. In the late eighteenth century, for instance, Ike no Taiga (1723-1776), a notable painter in the so-called Southern School, or Nanga (南画) style, would produce numerous works with titles indicating that the composition presents a “true view” (shinkei, 真景) of a particular natural site. Bearing this in mind, one might look at one of his most famous shinkeizu (真景図), True View of Mount Asama (fig. 7), for instance, and conclude that his approach to painting nature, famously derived from sketches made on observational treks, reveals the kind of emphasis on the subjective gaze of the individual artist that informs the work of contemporary European landscape art. This particular composition, whose title designates it as a carefully studied reproduction of an actual (rather than imaginary) mountain in Japan, does in fact represent the fruit of the artist's personal sketches and observations. The finished painting, however, little resembles the actual appearance of the mountain, and the artist himself was unlikely to

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have considered the sketches themselves a complete work of art worthy of display. Consequently, the approach evident in this technique, and indeed in many cases in which Japanese artists would employ techniques common to European landscape art, ultimately obscures the fact that the purpose was simply not aligned with the purely descriptive, “realistic” objectives of Western landscape art work from the same time period, and in fact owes considerably more to Chinese traditions of landscape painting (and the study of painting manuals) than those of Europe.

These examples collectively contradict the assumption that it was only following the supposed advent of modernity in the Meiji period that the Japanese artists would encounter and consciously engage with European creative approaches to landscape. While seemingly predicting the inevitable adoption of Western styles by Japanese artists over the last 150 years, landscape images by well-known figures like Shiba Kōkan and Maruyama Ōkyo, revealing an apparent interest in employing and mastering stylistic trappings and illusionistic objectives of conservative European landscape art, are more accurately regarded as notable, though ultimately fitful, instances of creative experimentation. Indeed, while many Edo period landscape artists would introduce stylistic elements of foreign landscape art into their images, the mere presence of linear perspective in a composition, or an artist’s reliance on sketches rather than imagination alone in preparing a painting of a particular mountain or famous place, only appears to predict the art historical developments of the Meiji period in retrospect. Ultimately, these examples indicate that although the Japanese encounter with European landscape art was by no means limited to the late nineteenth century, the adoption of these techniques by a

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certain number of artists was too sporadic and anomalous to signal a serious challenge to dominant approaches to depicting and apprehending natural scenery, nor the sustained engagement with the intellectual perspective and the artistic culture informing the production of landscape art within a European context that would occur throughout the Meiji Period.

The predominance of *meisho* as a genre of Japanese landscape art remains evident even in cases in which artists engage with or extensively employ European creative approaches to the depiction of natural scenery. While these examples might complicate a contemporary viewer's understanding of the Japanese reception of the European concept of landscape, revealing that this phenomenon did not in fact occur in an isolated moment of “discovery,” it also serves to undermine the myth that “pre-modern” Japanese artists were either completely naive or unable to creatively engage with European artistic techniques when given the opportunity; the failure of European style landscapes to “catch on” in a pre-Meiji context is more accurately understood as a matter of stylistic and cultural preference. As previously suggested, the simplification of these complex art historical realities merely perpetuates the myth that the self-conscious differentiation of and awareness of the interplay between foreign and indigenous cultural influences within Japanese visual culture was exclusive to the Meiji period. Namely, that the social and cultural changes accompanying the first several decades of the Meiji period, and specifically, the so-called “discovery of landscape” represent a sudden creative awakening from a state of static tradition to a dynamic, self-conscious cultural modernity. This proves particularly problematic in describing the reception of the European concept of landscape and its visual expression in art within a pre-Meiji Japanese context.
Fortunately, a growing number of scholars are also beginning to acknowledge that the Japanese engagement with Western visual culture precedes the popularly recognized birth of modern Japanese culture. Despite this important distinction, it remains fair and accurate to conclude that prior to the beginning of the Meiji period and the reception of “landscape” within a Japanese historical context that Western-European cultural achievements, particularly in the arts, were not widely considered as a serious and/or desirable alternative to Chinese and Japanese expressive traditions.

“Discovery of Landscape:” Defining Tradition and Modernity in Japanese Art

In contemporary works of scholarship, many have identified certain problems underlying conventional historical accounts describing the invention of landscape and its introduction within non-European cultural contexts. Previously accepted narratives uncritically celebrate this unmistakably Western-European way of seeing/describing the world as the most truthful and scientific (faithful to reality), presenting it as a universal, self-evident and inevitable conceptual development in the progress of human cultural history. In European artistic traditions in particular, this notion "presupposes that people in the same culture, or even in different cultures, see the world in roughly the same way."\(^\text{22}\) This misguided assumption disguises the fact that its dissemination as the predominant manner of comprehending the natural world, as well as a distinctive artistic genre, represents the product of a very specific set of historical circumstances relating to the disruptive intervention of European political and cultural forces accompanying colonial expansion over the last several centuries. As a consequence, in the past several

\(^{22}\) Tuan, “Realism and Fantasy in Art, History, and Geography,” 437.
decades certain cultural scholars have pointedly observed that landscape has largely “remained part of our unexamined discourse,” revealing problematic and formerly unacknowledged “ideological assumptions inherent in our concepts of space itself.”

Nevertheless, while scholars have recently embarked to debate upon the broader sociopolitical implications of the development of the landscape concept, a broad consensus remains that this novel, so-called “modern” perspective differs critically from previous worldviews.

Japanese scholarly discourse, while often adhering to a narrative wherein Western approaches to the depiction of nature become synonymous with modernity, occasionally addresses how the Eurocentric perspective presented in historical narratives of modernization proves problematic when attempting to describe the introduction and reception of the European landscape idea within a Japanese cultural context. While it would be incorrect to say that nothing changed in the Japanese conceptualizations of nature during the Meiji period (and thus essentially to refute the majority of Japanese and English scholarship on the subject), to argue that nothing remained of Japanese cultural attitudes toward nature and their expression within visual culture appears equally misleading. Many recent works of scholarship on this subject seem merely to transpose the European and American historical narrative of modernization, and attempt to insert Japanese art historical developments to a grander, global cultural history describing humanity's linear progression from a "pre-modern," pre-industrial, naive state of existence, toward an enlightened, industrialized, self-conscious "modernism." According to this narrative, apprehending and depicting nature from a European perspective alone

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offers the achievement of a more truthful and objectively accurate understanding of reality, and represents the inevitable product of human intellectual and creative progress:

As a pseudohistorical myth . . . the discourse of landscape is a crucial means for enlisting 'Nature' in the legitimation of modernity, the claim that we moderns' are somehow different from and essentially superior to everything that preceded us . . . masters of a unified, natural language epitomized by landscape painting.  

Karatani’s seminal theoretical work, “Origins of Modern Japanese Literature,” contains a similarly critical evaluation of the fundamentally arbitrary, Eurocentric character of the prevailing historical discourse. Conventional art historical narratives surrounding the introduction of the “landscape” idea within non-Western (in this case, Japanese) cultural contexts and its seemingly inevitable acceptance fulfills the expectations of a classically Orientalist, Eurocentric interpretation of history. Karatani draws attention to this problematic aspect of landscape discourse with the argument that the concept of “history” itself represents an artificial and arbitrary invention of nineteenth-century Europeans:

History, like literature, was established and came to prominence in the nineteenth century; to view the past in a historical framework meant to take the existence of universals as self-evident

Likewise, the intellectual framework of “landscape” and the perspective it offers, while commonly presented as an unproblematic, universal intellectual development of modern cultures, is here identified as a politicized, non-neutral conceptual apparatus propagated in conjunction with European colonialism and its coercive cultural hegemony. Karatani appears to argue that fūkei is not a super-historical concept or genre of art, but an idea “discovered” within Japan in the second decade of the Meiji period. Despite his

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acknowledgement of these realities, however, Karatani's discussion of the reception of the European concept of landscape maintains the consensus that its acceptance within the cultural context of late-nineteenth century Japan and subsequent influence upon the development of artistic responses to the natural scene represented a critical transformation in perspective toward nature.

At one point in his argument, he describes ふけい as "an epistemological constellation, the origins of which were suppressed as soon as it was produced," recalling Cosgrove's argument that landscape, as an intellectual paradigm, remains part of the unexamined discourse of many contemporary cultures. Like his contemporaries, Karatani identifies how the European concept of landscape rests on an objective understanding of external space (nature) delineated by clear boundaries and physical properties, and possessing a permanence and existence separate from human activities and cultural interpretations. As previously indicated, this world-view rests on a concept of landscape as composing the external world, as a self-evident, actual object, and consistent with scientific and empirically derived efforts to define or describe it.

Countering this assumption, however, Karatani describes the emergence of landscape as a cultural phenomenon, entailing a transformation in intellectual perspective rather than the emergence of a more accurate understanding of supposedly static external realities:

[L]andscape, as I have already suggested, is not simply what is outside. A change in our way of perceiving things was necessary in order for landscape to emerge. In short, like Kenneth Clark, and indeed, many other contemporary cultural scholars, Karatani Kōjin appears to conform to the general consensus that the idea of “landscape”

27 Karatani, Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, 22.
and its absorption into the cultural mainstream in Japanese society during the second and third decades of the Meiji period signaled a distinctive shift in the manner in which people perceived their environment (in other words, their natural surroundings) and understood the role of the individual in relationship to natural scenery.

When contrasted with the more gradual importation of ideas arriving from China and Europe (albeit in a more indirect manner) throughout Japanese history, the sudden explosion of contact between Japan and the European cultural sphere coinciding with the end of the sakoku policy in 1853 was a highly disruptive event, producing a startlingly apparent historical divide between pre and post Meiji sociocultural conditions. To many figures experiencing these changes first-hand, the modernization of Japanese culture occurring during the Meiji period would come to represent an almost traumatic event necessitating a fundamental reevaluation of preexisting intellectual models:

> We Japanese witnessed with our own eyes and within a limited period of time the occurrence in condensed form of a process, which, because it had extended over many centuries, had been repressed from memory in the West.²⁹

During the first three decades following the beginning of the Meiji Period, the rate of mutual creative exchange born out of revitalized contact with Europe and America, unprecedented in scale and duration, would accelerate at a remarkable pace. This historic transformation of relations with the so-called modern nations of the world would eventually lead to the expansion of Western cultural influence upon Japanese culture and art to a previously unseen and seemingly irreversible degree. The persistence of previous categories of nature painting, as specific genres of art, even after the “discovery of landscape,” and its establishment as a separately recognized/labelled genre, namely fūkei-

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²⁹ Karatani, Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, 36.
ga, in the 1890s may reflect the perceived dissonance between indigenous attitudes toward the depiction of space and nature and the concepts encoded in European-style landscape art. Hence, as Karatani observes, a descriptive term like *sansuiga* (山水画), which originated in a fourth century treatise on painting by the Chinese painter, Gu Kazhi (顧愷之 344-406 C.E.), would remain relevant even after the advent of modern artistic movements, Western style fine arts academies, and the establishment of “landscape” as a distinctive artistic genre in the latter decades of the nineteenth century; this distinction appears to reveal a genuine and persistent “disjuncture between Japanese culture and modern Western consciousness.”

Despite the similar subject matter, within the cultural context of the middle Meiji period, the two different stylistic/thematic approaches informing these alternative perspectives toward landscape would merit the distinction between the two as belonging to two separate artistic genres (one “traditional,” the other “modern”) continuously applied to refer to landscape images in direct reaction to the introduction of Western categories of painting to a wider audience, and a tendency to define what had preceded it as fundamentally different. In the later years of the Meiji period, this unprecedented and sustained period of cultural intercourse with the West would prompt many intellectual figures to regard the rush to embrace Western culture with increasing ambivalence, even while incorporating aspects of a European, “modern” intellectual paradigm. In the arts, for instance, the debate surrounding the future of Japanese painting hinged on the perceived opposition (and relative merits) of modern *Yōga* (洋画, “Western pictures”) versus “traditional” Japanese painting, or *Nihonga* (日本画, “Japanese pictures”). Efforts to preserve Japanese cultural autonomy reflect the

historically unique circumstances of the Meiji period, and were essentially predicated on an intellectual paradox. In other words, in order to define one's own national artistic traditions, the Japanese intellectual was often compelled to do so within the “modern” (i.e. Western) framework of European historical discourse, while simultaneously attempting to establish the fundamental differences between the two:

[T]he building of a modern society requires that non-Western places forget their past in favor of alien (modern) institutions and ideas, yet that past must be celebrated to establish the commonality and goals of the nation-state as an organism distinct from others.\textsuperscript{31}

With the acceleration of wide reaching social reforms and consolidation of political power under the new imperial regime during the 1870s, the Meiji government's efforts to achieve technological and political parity with Western powers led to the initiation of a crash program in modernization, which would bear far-reaching consequences and lead to the establishment of a newly organized military, governmental bureaucracy, and educational system. By the end of the Meiji period, these efforts would contribute to considerable social and cultural change, as well.

Beginning in the early 1880s, in particular, and continuing through the end of the Meiji period in 1912, the issue of the future development of Japanese arts became an extremely contentious issue in public discourse, and "[g]iven the manner of Japan's entry into modernity” stylistic matters “became inevitably and inextricably politicized.”\textsuperscript{32} With Japan's emergence as a globally active nation-state, certain cultural figures began to feel an urgent need to preserve the political and “cultural autonomy” of their nation. In this sense, the intensification of efforts to establish a uniquely Japanese cultural identity, or

\textsuperscript{32} Jansen, “Cultural Change in Nineteenth-Century Japan,” 48.
the invention of tradition, in opposition to modern modes of expression in the arts were
initiated directly in response to the perceived threat of European and American socio-
cultural hegemony and the corrosive effects of undue deference to European artistic
models over native ones.

As a consequence of this trend, during the earliest years of the Meiji Restoration,
"traditional art objects, tied as they were to a rejected culture and its institutions, were
seen as unrelated to Japan's future," and official efforts were initiated to do away with the
supposedly “backward” artistic practices of the past.33 During the early decades of
Westernization that distinguished the Meiji period, the Japanese government, lacking
native expertise necessary to initiate these reforms, began to employ the so-called oyatoi
gaigokujin (雇い外国人, “hired foreigners”) to act as advisors and assist in technical
instruction in a variety of fields, including the arts. The government's early efforts to
sponsor the Westernization of the arts culminated in 1876 with the establishment of
Japan's first European-style, state-sponsored art school, the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakko
(工部美術学校, Technical Art School). By late 1882, however, as a result of an
increasingly volatile political climate and the rise of nationalistic sentiments in Japanese
public discourse, the Technical Art School would close a mere six years following its
establishment, and the government's efforts to promote Yōga were temporarily abandoned.

At the moment Western cultural influences appeared poised to completely overwhelm
certain Japanese cultural institutions (which were disrupted by the collapse of the feudal
system and the traditional system of patronage by temples and wealthy, regional lords),
several prominent intellectual figures, seizing upon growing anti-Western sentiment and

a nascent sense of national identity developing within Japanese society, began to fiercely advocate for a reversal of this trend. Following the closure of the Technical Art School, Yōga rapidly fell from favor among these figures, and was dropped from art curricula and exhibition spaces. In both 1882 and 1884, Western-style paintings were denied entry to the first two national painting competitions, revealing a sudden shift in the perceived status and prestige of both Western and traditional forms of art.\textsuperscript{34}

The defining art historical events of the 1880s, including Ernest Fenollosa's (1853-1908) famous lecture on the supposed aesthetics of “traditional” Japanese art at the Ryūchi-Kai (龍池会, “Dragon Pond Society”) and the closure of the Kobu Bijutsu Gakko in 1882, would effectively contribute to the polarization of Japanese art and lead to an excessive emphasis on the apparent differences between so-called Yōga and Nihonga painting in subsequent decades. While the tendency to exaggerate the stylistic differences between the two continues to complicate efforts to describe Japanese art historical developments of the Meiji period, this particular strain of cultural nationalism also demonstrates a clear desire amongst Japanese artists to engage with and critically respond to the growing presence of European artistic practices in the early decades of the Meiji period and to present indigenous artistic practices as equally worthy of respect and acknowledgement. This undermines the notion that Japanese artists of the time would passively submit to overwhelming external pressures to modernize, or essentially become Western. While the attempt to define “traditional” Japanese art forms and culture during the second decade of the Meiji period was essentially a reaction to the disjuncture perceived by many contemporary figures between European and Japanese expressive

modes, this also reflects a nostalgic and essentially artificial re-conception of the pre-
Meiji past as “an invented other in relation to which modernity posited itself.” From an
art historical perspective, this development presented a unique dilemma to intellectuals
and artists of the day. Karatani describes this conundrum as follows:

Meiji Japanese who searched for a landscape that predated
'landscape' faced the contradiction of being able to envision it only
in relation to 'landscape'. The very question 'What is a Japanese
landscape painting?' is by definition predicated on an inversion.

The problematic nature of a reductive art historical approach, whereby visual media of a
particular culture becomes simply defined by its apparent divergences and stylistic
differences from Western artistic models, reveals itself when applied to the analysis of
non-European cultures. In the case of Japan, the tendency to describe artistic tradition and
modernity in absolute terms fatally omits or ignores the complexities surrounding the
ongoing development of Japanese visual culture to conform in a crude and inaccurate
manner with a biased historical narrative that privileges European modes of expression as
progressive and inevitable (i.e. modern). This forces the interpretation of recent historical
developments as representative of a linear, irreversible trajectory toward a monolithic and
universal “modernity” borne out of European intellectual/cultural traditions, and
reflexively presented as the diametric opposite of a state of static, naive, and untainted
traditional culture. Despite considerable differences between European and Japanese
attitudes toward nature and their expression in art at this juncture, the tendency to define
through opposition was often politically motivated; obscuring the fact that rather than
marking a definite and irreversible shift in the character of Japanese culture (essentially

35 Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” in Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan,
its transformation into a Western, modern entity), Japanese artists were merely doing as they had always done when creating art, exploring and experimenting with the expressive possibilities of foreign influences and adapting certain aspects to accommodate their particular needs and interests.

Unique, however, was the fact that at this moment in history, even the so-called “traditional” modes of Japanese landscape art, (*sansuiga* for instance), were being produced within a social and historical context in which European cultural contributions (and the perspective represented by landscape art, in this case) were becoming increasingly influential. This phenomenon did not simply involve the superficial reproduction of technical aspects of European art. Rather, the reception of European attitudes toward nature and the concept of landscape is more accurately regarded as a conscious and sustained creative experiment in which Japanese artists were enthusiastic and active participants. A tendency exists in many narratives of modernization to conclude that in non-Western cultures, the mere imitation of European cultural modes and practices marks the moment at which that society “advances” into a state of cultural maturity, a patronizing attitude that proves fundamentally misleading. Indeed, it remains important to bear in mind when examining the developments of Japanese landscape art in the late nineteenth-century that in “none of these societies has modernism been the mimetic adoption of imported models.”

For this reason, we can understand the “discovery of landscape” that occurred from the second decade of the Meiji period Japanese culture as not an instance of simple stylistic imitation or mimicry of European

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37 Nestor Garcia Canclini, “Hybrid Cultures” (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 53.
visual culture, but rather a broader conceptual dialogue between indigenous and foreign creative responses to natural scenery.

This exchange would prompt many artists to participate in a broader reevaluation of humanity's position relative to the external world. The establishment of the intellectual foundations upon which this process would ultimately come to fruition unfolded over a period of many decades in reaction to the importation of not only the artistic techniques of Western European visual media (an event preceding the Meiji period by several centuries), but also as a result of the gradual shift toward incorporating aspects of the modern perspective embodied in European landscape images defined earlier in this paper. The decision of Japanese cultural historians (Karatani Kōjin establishing a precedent amongst them in this particular subject) to locate the “discovery” of landscape during the 1890s, specifically, perhaps reflects the belief that by the final decade of the nineteenth century, a more thorough and perhaps unconscious absorption of these ideas can be said to have occurred, as a generation of artists, writers, and other intellectuals came of age to whom the cultural media, and the former intimacy with which people in a pre-urbanized, agrarian society lived with their natural environments seemed increasingly alien.

Consequently, the Japanese reception of landscape during the Meiji period, insofar as it reflects the apparent accommodation of a historically unprecedented intellectual perspective in artistic interpretations of the natural scene, would ultimately manifest itself through new, hybrid forms of creative expression; art work, literature, etc. The adaptation of this new intellectual paradigm to accommodate Japanese cultural and creative concerns would eventually reveal itself in works featuring the depiction of natural scenes that would occasionally depart from the dominant model of famous sites
largely favored by Japanese artists up to this particular art historical moment, while simultaneously incorporating aspects of European landscape art to an unprecedented degree.

**Romantic European Landscapes**

Despite persistent continuities between Japanese landscape art (particularly in woodblocks, etc.) preceding and following the historical events of the Meiji period (1867-1912), at the beginning of the Meiji period "prior modes of apprehending the landscape generated 'frictions' against the new categories" that would achieve an increasingly prominent role within the spectrum of artistic production within Japan, namely those of European and American origin.\(^38\) Though artists would never completely cease to draw from the stylistic and thematic vocabulary established in the work of earlier Japanese landscape artists, the growing influence of European ways of perceiving landscape and nature, particularly those borne out of the nostalgic and intensely idealistic world view informing the Romantic artistic and literary movement, would come to play an increasingly prominent role in the development of art forms from this period onward.

While by no means immediate or absolute, the Japanese artistic reaction to this European concept of “landscape” would eventually contribute to the emergence of “a new modern view of nature” that would appear to challenge and eventually achieve parity with previously dominant modes of perceiving and depicting natural scenery over a period lasting from roughly 1880 to 1930.\(^39\) Particularly in the beginning of the third decade of the Meiji period (1868-1912), the publication of wildly successful works like

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Shiga Shigetaka's (志賀重昂,1863-1927) *Nihon Fūkeiron* ("Treatise on Japanese Landscape," 日本風景論, 1894) strongly indicates the beginning of a distinctive, though gradual shift in popular Japanese attitudes regarding humanity's relationship to nature, coinciding with the reception and absorption of the 'landscape' concept within Japanese society at large.

At this point it seems necessary to describe some important developments in contemporary European understandings of landscape and nature. By the early nineteenth century, the ascendancy of Romantic literature and art into a prominent place within the popular imagination would signal a significant shift in attitudes toward nature and its creative expression, reflecting increasing levels of urbanization, as well as the negative social consequences surrounding the process of industrialization. Consequently, it would no longer be accurate to reductively describe the European landscape tradition at this particular historical moment as representative of a pursuit of empiricism and descriptive realism in diametric contrast with the “pure” idealism of “mystical” East Asian art. Indeed, with the advent of Romantic thought in European literature and art in the latter half of the eighteenth-century, a kind of idealism that celebrated the irrational and spiritual aspects of the relationship between nature and humanity would assume an increasingly prominent position in the imaginations of many European artists.

Especially significant as a testament to this reactionary shift (a dramatic contrast to the almost fanatical pursuit of rationality and order celebrated during the so-called Age of Enlightenment) was the work of Englishman John Ruskin (1819-1900), a prominent art critic and writer in Victorian-era England. In 1843, Ruskin released a lengthy series of essays, *Modern Painters*, which proved enormously influential in the development of the
genre of landscape painting throughout the nineteenth-century, and enjoyed considerable popularity both in his home country and abroad. This work, well-remembered for its repeated praise of the painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), established Ruskin's reputation as a leading figure in the critical evaluation of Romantic nature painting, and landscape art, generally:

As the most prolific and profound commentator on art and society during the Victorian epoch, Ruskin was both identifying and facilitating the eclipse of historical painting by landscape painting, in effect signaling one of the more important transformations in nineteenth-century artistic practice.⁴⁰

Over the course of the multi-volume work, Ruskin especially emphasizes the necessity for artists to adhere to a style that most faithfully captures the spiritual “truth in nature.” Also significant is the fact that in this work, Ruskin extensively extols the aesthetic virtues of visually dramatic and rugged landscapes (he expresses a particular fondness for mountains), and the spiritually elevating significance of personally embarking into these environments. Ruskin's approach to an understanding of landscape was inspired by “the stimulation of romantic thought” expressed in contemporary works, literature, and poetry, and crucially “enhanced by early travel through mountain scenery, [and] a scientific self-training in accurate observation that was encouraged by his art teachers.”⁴¹

The perspective evident in Ruskin's writing undoubtedly owes a considerable debt to the work of other Romantic figures preceding him. His florid, at times impenetrable prose reveals a typical Romantic fascination with the overwhelming emotional encounter between the individual and the sublime landscape, in keeping with his literary

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contemporaries' enthusiasm for the decidedly remote and inhospitable expanses of countryside, like the famous rocky scenery of the Lake District, or the rugged expanses of the Scottish highlands. In an early example of this trend from Goethe's famous novella, “The Sorrows of Young Werther” (1774) the titular protagonist, a melancholic young painter, describes his enthusiasm for long walks within these sorts of landscapes, where the individual's appreciation of the visual experience assumes a quasi-religious and rapturous quality:

The full and ardent sentiment which animated my heart with the love of nature, overwhelming me with a torrent of delight . . . when in bygone days I gazed from these rocks upon yonder mountains across the river, and upon the green, flowery valley before me . . . I felt myself exalted by this overflowing fullness to the perception of...the glorious forms of an infinite universe...[s]tupendous mountains encompassed me, abysses yawned at my feet, and cataracts fell headlong down before me; impetuous rivers rolled through the plain, and rocks and mountains resounded from afar...

The emergence of German Romantic landscape artists in the early nineteenth century demonstrates the expression of this kind of thinking in visual media, and seemingly predicts the perspective toward nature and landscape expressed in the writings of Ruskin, and signaling a broader phenomenon within the European expressive culture of the period. This shift in attitudes toward nature would principally manifest itself in a growing preference in artistic circles for images of frightening, visually imposing landscapes. One of the most famous artists to emerge from this Northern Romantic tradition of painting, Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), reveals a similar preoccupation with evoking the sensory and emotional experiences of isolated individuals immersed completely in the midst of overwhelming, often threatening landscapes. Inarguably his most famous

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painting, “Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog” (fig. 8), perfectly encapsulates this aesthetic and thematic preference, with its dramatic appearance and literal expression of the ideals of Romantic attitudes toward nature. One may look to this image as a crystallization of the central ideas of European Romanticism (particularly the notion of the sublime and the overwhelming beauty of nature), and Romantic landscape painting generally. The composition itself very explicitly reveals the conceptual paradigm surrounding the European attitudes toward landscape at this time and its expression in art. The titular “wanderer” inhabits a central position in the work—Friedrich, establishing a vantage point immediately behind this faceless figure, essentially invites the audience to imagine themselves in his position, standing above this stunning vista. The artist skillfully reproduces for the viewer the emotionally overwhelming experience of reaching the pinnacle of the rocky peak after a treacherous climb up arduous heights, to gaze down in amazement and satisfaction upon the terrifying grandeur of the distant mountain vista. In so doing, he invites his audience to envision themselves not as viewers of a painting of mountains or nature, but to mentally project themselves into the visual space of the composition as viewers of landscape.

Though increasingly evident in landscape art beginning in the early nineteenth-century, this love of the rugged terrain was by no means unprecedented in European literary and artistic traditions. Already by the late-eighteenth century, figures like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) had initiated a reappraisal of the aesthetic qualities of Alpine terrain, in particular. While these terrifying, inhospitable mountains were formerly regarded with aversion and avoided (or endured) by travelers, Rousseau would celebrate the dramatic vistas revealed in often treacherous mountain passes as the very pinnacle of
natural beauty, expressing a previously unheard of pleasure in opportunities to explore the terrain. In describing the beauty of an ideal landscape, for instance, he expresses delight in the visual and emotional power of the precipitous mountainous terrain of the Alps, near Annecy:

It is already understood what I mean by a fine country; never can a flat one, though ever so beautiful, appear such in my eyes: I must have torrents, fir trees, black woods, mountains to climb or descend, and rugged roads with precipices on either side to alarm me.\(^43\)

His love of the frightening and remote diverges considerably from the contemporary artistic preference for picturesque, pastoral landscapes that largely dominated popular landscape imagery in the late eighteenth century.

As an early pioneer of the celebration of alpine landscapes in European art, the British landscape artist and watercolor painter John Robert Cozens (1752-1797) would pave the way for other, better known figures like J.M.W. Turner, who exhibited a similar fascination with the emotionally moving spectacle of the Swiss Alps. In compositions like *Chamonix and Martigny* (Fig. 9), Cozens seems to project the internal, subjective sensations and emotions one might feel standing in isolation before an utterly intimidating, yet aesthetically magnificent mountain landscape, evoking the seemingly infinite scale and overwhelming power of nature. As the viewer beholds the towering mountains before him or her, Cozens produces an image firmly rooted in the subjective, direct sensory experience of nature. Ruskin, in keeping with the prevailing aesthetic and literary enthusiasm for this manner of apprehending and expressing the individual’s subjective experience of landscape would also repeatedly praise the aesthetic qualities of

mountains in particular, which he concludes possess the “highest beauty” and a potential for creative inspiration unique amongst all natural forms.\textsuperscript{44}

At the same time, Ruskin's recommended approach to the painting of landscape images demands adherence to a strict creative methodology that entails careful observation, a degree of objective detachment, and an acute attention to visual detail. According to this view, only extended fieldwork, backed by scientific study and meticulous observation, would allow the artist to capture the grandeur of mountain scenery on canvas.\textsuperscript{45} This aspect of Ruskin's writing reveals the seeming contradiction inherent in the view toward nature evident in his work—indeed, “[t]his admixture of one of observational detachment and personal investiture is often recognized as being fundamental to the achievement” of Romantic expression in landscape painting of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{46} Though he argues for the scientific, disciplined observation of landscape in the creation of “truthful” art, however, in his essays Ruskin most frequently champions Turner, who remains famous to this day for his highly unusual and feverishly imaginative landscape paintings. The artist, a famously temperamental and idiosyncratic figure, would produce oil paintings that by the final years of his artistic career depict natural vistas that frequently verge on complete abstraction. With a later work like \textit{Shade and Darkness: the Evening of the Deluge} (fig. 10), for instance, (completed the same year as Ruskin's \textit{Modern Painters}), the title alone reveals the subject as a natural landscape. Despite his unconventional approach to the composition of landscapes, however, Turner would still draw his initial inspiration from his careful studies of natural phenomena.

\textsuperscript{44} John Ruskin, \textit{Modern Painters}, 41.
\textsuperscript{45} Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” 20.
Numerous examples of his preparatory sketches survive in museum collections today, reflecting a continuous effort to record his observations of various types of landscapes from both the United Kingdom and continental Europe. The highly expressive, imprecise landscapes of Turner's paintings (particularly his later work) obscure the fact that rather than reflecting the undisciplined creative outbursts of an idiot savant, his work was ultimately shaped by a highly deliberate approach that combines the subjectivity of his uniquely imaginative perspective with the meticulous discipline of a naturalist:

An indefatigable traveler with an encyclopedic interest in . . . the sciences (from optics to geology), Turner constantly required stimulation of seeing the natural world under changing conditions, always bringing associative forms of knowledge to his interpretation of nature.\(^\text{47}\)

In a watercolor and graphite study of a view of an Alpine valley from 1843 (fig. 11), for example, one can recognize, in contrast to the deliberately vague and often cacophonous arrangement of forms within his oil paintings, a coherent, and topographically precise reproduction of a specific view of a mountain landscape.

Ruskin's professed enthusiasm for Turner reveals a preference for the wildly expressive (a decided departure from the picturesque landscape paintings that largely dominated European tastes before the advent of Romanticism), and an apparent distaste for the straightforward, realistic depiction of any given landscape. This marks a distinctive shift away from the previously dominant preference within European culture for picturesque, illusionistic landscape images, and the tendency of artists since the Renaissance to approach the genre with an overriding emphasis on the application of stylistic techniques meant to achieve the illusionistic replication of natural scenery based

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 131-132.
on the mathematical (specifically, geometric) construction of visual space established through one-point perspective. In contrast, Ruskin advocates a starkly different creative approach to the depiction of landscapes and visual space, arguing that the artistic value of a landscape image crucially lies in the emotional verity of the creator's vision, imagination, and interpretation rather than any superficial adherence to a place's actual appearance. To look at a landscape and to render it successfully, the artist must possess, above all else, an appreciation of nature:

I believe that the sight is a more important thing than the drawing; and I would rather teach drawing that my pupils may learn to love Nature, than teach looking at Nature that they may learn to draw.48

This argument advances the belief that although the ability to convincingly depict a landscape through technical ingenuity and careful observation represents an important aspect of an artist's craft and training, the best landscape paintings ultimately express the artist's ability to excite the viewer's imagination and shared love of natural beauty. The successful landscape painting must evoke the subjective, idiosyncratic gaze of the impassioned artist, recording his or her creative reaction to the feeling nature inspires through its grandeur and beauty (unaltered by human artifice), rather than merely record its external visual and physical properties. Again, the reader might recognize the emphasis on a particular manner of perceiving nature that critically centers on the unique interpretation and personal emotional experience of the individual. In visual media, the invention of photography in the middle of the nineteenth-century, a technology and medium that would appear ideally suited to record the actual appearance of any given space, would prompt figures like Ruskin to vigorously defend the interpretive abilities of the creative human intellect in rendering nature's innate beauty:

48 Ruskin, qtd. in Cosgrove, 53.
the discrepancy between the photographic image and an effective painting continued to be best explained as a deeper truth discovered by the imagination…”

Within the Romantic conception of creative expression, the artist inhabits a central role as an interpretive medium, translating or adapting the lived realities of direct visual experience. The artist is a special individual with the unique ability to perceive and express that which a mere machine, the camera, with its faithful reproduction of real world conditions, cannot. This belief would remain central to understandings of visual representations of landscape well into the twentieth century, and contribute directly to the emergence of movements like Impressionism, Abstract Expressionism, etc, which depart from this conceptual emphasis on the importance of imagination and subjectivity in the apprehension and creative reaction to landscape toward stylistic extremes.

**Shiga Shigetaka, “The Japanese Ruskin”**

Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, the influence of this Ruskinian (essentially Romantic European) view of nature would prove tremendously popular with artists and intellectuals in Japan, embodying an approach to understanding and representing landscape distinctive for its simultaneous and seemingly paradoxical emphasis on the discipline of empiricism and the celebration of emotional rapture one experiences in the presence of the spectacle of nature. Just as stylistic techniques employed in European art to render natural scenery (linear perspective, sketching, rendering atmosphere etc.) were encountered by increasingly wider audiences over a period of many years before the beginning of the Meiji period, the Japanese reception and creative response to contemporary Romantic European attitudes toward nature (namely

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the unique encounter between specific individuals and their natural surroundings as the fundamental basis of creative descriptions of landscape) would emerge gradually and fitfully over a period of decades, rather than immediately in a moment of cultural awakening, as conventional historical narratives have argued.

Indeed, Ruskin's most widely influential collection of critical essays, *Modern Painters*, was not even initially translated into Japanese in its entirety. In the 27th year of the Meiji period (1894), the author Tōson Shimazaki (1872-1943), a pioneering advocate of literary Romanticism in Japan, completed a partial translation of the work.\(^{50}\) Nevertheless, several decades after the beginning of the Meiji period this Ruskinian view of nature would eventually prove its influence upon the development of Japanese visual culture, albeit in an irregular and often gradual manner, operating alongside and often in interaction with preexisting approaches to the perception and depiction of natural scenery. While it remains fair to question the extent to which a single individual's work could influence the development of something as profound as an entire culture's attitude toward nature itself, many scholars have recently pointed to the reception of Ruskin's writing in a Japanese context as an important event in this process. Even today, a figure almost universally identified as the most important player in the popularization of the modern notions of landscape and nature in Japan, Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), is famously referred to as the “Japanese Ruskin.” This moniker, apparently devised by the Reverend Walter Weston, an influential pioneer in Japanese mountain climbing, remains popular to present times (in scholarly essays, anyway) and underscores the influence of European

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Romantic thought in the development of Japan's modern understanding of landscape and nature.51

Although he would ultimately emerge as a vocal opponent of Westernization, Shiga, like his fellow cultural nationalist, Okakura Tenshin (1862-1913), was very well-acquainted with European culture, and received early instruction at the Sapporo Agricultural School, where courses were taught almost exclusively in English. Like many other educated members of elite society, Shiga also had the opportunity to travel abroad. In 1886, two years following his graduation, he was invited as a passenger on a Japanese naval observation ship that toured the South Pacific, visiting Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, and Hawaii, and would draw from his observations to write his first book, Nanyū jiji (南洋時事, “Conditions in the South Sea”).52 His Ruskinian view of nature, likely the product of his educational background and familiarity with English, was significant in Japan at the time for its decidedly “modern” character. Without a doubt his most endurably popular book, Nihon Fūkeiron (Treatise on Japanese Landscape), was unique amongst other literary works of Meiji period in its largely unprecedented emphasis upon the scientific, particularly geological, aspects of the country's terrain. The book proved so popular, in fact, that following its initial publication in 1894, it quickly became one of the best selling books of the era, “which is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that the book is addressed to 'literati, poets and writers, artists, sculptors and high-minded gentleman.”53 By the end of the Meiji period in 1912, the treatise would go through

52 Ibid. 372.
53 Traganou, The Tokaido Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan, 130.
fourteen print editions, each one including numerous supplementary illustrations and commentaries.

This is not to say that the work is utterly divorced from or devoid of cultural concerns—on the contrary, despite its obvious pretense toward scientific objectivity, the content of the book is thoroughly infused with a deep awareness and desire to emphasize Japanese cultural attitudes toward nature, drawing heavily upon motifs of literati painting, classical poetry, and popular geographical knowledge. Perhaps this sensitivity to Japanese sentiments, and the adaptation of European Romantic thought for a Japanese audience was an important contributing factor in the book's considerable success. Above all else, Shiga seems to present the book as a geological study of the Japanese archipelago and some of its recent colonial acquisitions. With its distinctive combination of extensive, unapologetically non-scientific passages profusely praising the unique aesthetic qualities and superiority of the Japanese landscape alongside meticulously observed scientific discourse on the geological composition of the nation's various mountains, caves, and rivers, however, one might recognize a striking resemblance to the Romantic perspective of a figure like John Ruskin. Namely, especially in *Nihon Fūkeiron*, Shiga's often poetic style of writing reveals that despite his scientific training and interest in topographical issues, he remained "deeply involved with the aesthetic aspect of nature."\(^{54}\)

Throughout the work, the author reveals a preoccupation with the description of the unique beauty of Japanese landscapes, interweaving geological facts and figures with lengthy passages written in a poetic, literati style. Specifically, in the opening chapters of

his treatise, Shiga systematically introduces a vocabulary intended to clarify the distinctive aesthetic qualities of the Japanese landscape. The author lists the most important of these qualities as follows: elegance (shōsha 潇洒), beauty (bi 美), and wildness (tetto 跌宕). While the first two seem somewhat imprecise, and perhaps more in keeping with the Chinese, literati writing style (kanbun 漢文) informing the majority of contemporary Japanese academic discourse, the third is often identified as a significant and peculiar departure from previous Japanese descriptions of nature:

of these three [principles], shōsha, bi, and tetto, the term tetto in particular (which refers to the magnificence or grandeur of landscape), in contrast with the ideas of "elegance" and "beauty" that were part of Japan's traditional aesthetic feelings/attitudes, expresses a novel perspective toward landscape, and compared to the other two, features overwhelmingly in the examples employed in this book.55

The introduction of this term, tetto, strongly suggests that Shiga has taken a cue from Ruskin's theories regarding landscape painting by incorporating an aesthetic concept similar to "the sublime." Shiga subsequently explains how the nation's natural scenery plays a constant, indispensable role in fostering the production of art and inspiring the creative spirit of Japanese artists, presenting "the mountains, forests, valleys, and streams, as the 'original forces that nurture the Japanese sense of aesthetics have nurtured it in the past, and will nurture it in the future'."56 The introduction of decidedly subjective, aesthetic terminology more commonly found in an artistic treatise or poetic verses than a scientifically-motivated (geological), topographical study seems closely aligned with

55 Arayama, “Space, Landscape, and Representation in Meiji Japan,” 64.
contemporary Romantic European values and attitudes toward landscape, suggesting a similar interest in the emotional experience of viewing landscape.

Indeed, in his writings on the so-called Japanese Alps, Shiga expresses, in a manner strikingly similar to John Ruskin, his strong appreciation for the terrifying beauty of the rugged, dangerously inhospitable mountain ranges of Japan, which until the late-nineteenth century remained largely unexplored. Much like Ruskin, Shiga's geographical imagination also demonstrates a seemingly paradoxical interest in both the scientific, objective observation of landscape, while celebrating a subjective and unabashedly Romantic appreciation of nature as a central preoccupation of the artist, and a necessary component in the production of successful landscape images. While the celebration of natural beauty informs a great deal of Japanese painting and poetic output before this point in history, Shiga's work also notably insists on the importance of apprehending the spectacle of nature on a first hand basis, going so far as to devote an entire chapter, entitled “Preparations for Climbing Mountains” (登山の準備 Tozan no junbi) offering practical advice to (presumably urban, educated) readers embarking on recreational trips to the often inhospitable terrain of the Japanese Alps, a practice that was previously the domain of religious pilgrims and eccentric hermits. In a time in which expanding rail service would vastly increase people's ability to travel to formerly distant locales, the possibility of viewing the various landscapes and mountains described in Shiga's treatise would become an increasingly realistic objective for many artists.

Ironically, Shiga would never personally climb mountains. For this reason, though fiercely advocating the importance of viewing the landscape on a firsthand basis, he

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would rely heavily on the descriptive accounts of other, more adventurous souls. The
careful research of recent Japanese scholars reveals that he principally relied on
previously published English language travel journals (chiefly “A Handbook for
Travelers in Japan,” by H. and W.B. Mason), and often employs almost identical
expressions to describe the magnificence of the view from numerous mountain peaks in
his treatise. Though this aspect has earned Shiga numerous accusations of plagiarism in
academic writing, these should not undermine the significance of his contribution to the
emergence of a new understanding of nature and landscape in the Japanese popular
imagination:

While endorsing the descriptions offered in this handbook of
various mountains word for word, this, in reality, had no basis in
Shiga's personal experience. Nevertheless, what Shiga did was not
simply translating various Western works (like the handbook), but
was rather the adaptation of the concept of the singularity of the
gaze at landscape introduced to our country.\footnote{Arayama, “Space, Landscape, and Representation in Meiji Japan,” 72.}

The gradual elevation of the gaze of the individual (subject) to a position of paramount
importance inspiring artistic records of natural scenery (object) reveals a similar
perspective to Romantic European attitudes and creative approaches toward landscape. In
repeatedly extolling the virtues of mountain climbing, and namely, beholding first hand
the unfolding landscape before the climber as the “reward” or purpose of the journey to
the mountain's peak, Shiga, like “Ruskin had evoked . . . the Romantic ideals of
originality through sincerity of inspiration.”\footnote{Woodring, “Nature and Art in the Nineteenth Century,” 199.} Shiga's repeated exhortations to artists to
climb mountains to apprehend the beauty of nature first hand demonstrates his apparent
engagement with or understanding of contemporary European attitudes toward the
appreciation of landscape, namely the importance and value placed on records reflecting the subjective experience of an individual (sensitive to the aesthetic and scientific qualities of natural scenery) embarking alone into the wilderness to personally gaze upon a beautiful, emotionally uplifting landscape or natural vista.

Also distinctive was Shiga's framing of landscape and natural space as representative of national identity, reflecting the contemporary emergence of increasing political consciousness and patriotic sentiment in Japan. The unabashedly nationalistic tone of this treatise would prove enormously appealing to his fellow countrymen, who were growing fiercely enthusiastic in embracing a national identity born out of the political climate of the day, particularly in the wake of the promulgation of the new Meiji constitution in 1888 signaling the birth of the Japanese Empire, and the events surrounding the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Eager to believe that Japan was an exceptional and great nation in the world (and an equal to the colonial powers of Europe), many readers were quick to embrace the book's central message of the unique and visually superior quality of their nation’s landscapes. Sections in the book regarding the various aesthetic qualities of the landscapes of the Japanese archipelago include boastful declarations of the relative excellence of Japan's mountainous geography and natural scenery, including, for instance, the decidedly unscientific claim that “日本の秋色は英国の秋色に優る,” or the (beauty of) autumn colors of Japan exceed those of England.60

By prominently relying on the supposedly unbiased, objective rhetoric of scientific discourse, Shiga sought to grant his writing an air of indisputable legitimacy, supporting the book's underlying nationalistic agenda. In the end, despite his pretenses to

60 Shiga, Nihon Fūeiron, 16.
scientific objectivity, however, Shiga had effectively "turn[ed] his Western education into a tool for articulating and advancing Japan's national interests." In this sense, his public rejection of Westernizing influences notwithstanding, the perspective underlying Shiga's written work demonstrates the undeniable influence of and, indeed, an enthusiasm for the aesthetic values espoused in European works like Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, demonstrating a similar interest in the quintessentially Romantic celebration of the individual's encounter with the spectacle of nature, while presenting these landscapes within the framing context of a national tradition of the appreciation of natural beauty. Like the German Romantic painters earlier in the nineteenth-century, Shiga would similarly mobilize his Romantic vision of Japanese landscapes, with its unique emphasis on the scientific as well as aesthetic qualities of the country's topography, in a clear attempt to define and establish the unique character of Japanese culture through locating the spiritual essence of the nation in natural forms:

> Fostering a mystical pantheism in their often ethereal evocation of the natural world, these German Romantic landscapists saw their art as one of highly subjective self-expression—fragmented, unfulfilled, and yearning in both theory and practise; and yet this art was also to serve as a nationalistic fulcrum of collective hope for political and spiritual unity.  

This represents a shift from an adherence to the insular, *meisho* mode of perception toward the accommodation of an understanding of 'landscape' within a global context, along European lines, whereby “landscape is portrayed as determining [or reflecting]  

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'national character'.”

The rise of nationalistic sentiment following the promulgation of the Meiji constitution in 1888, and the subsequent expansion of Japanese colonial ambitions to challenge (and eventually rival) European and American interference in the region, would serve as a dramatic backdrop to a debate to map and visually define the cultural identity of the nascent nation-state. The relationship between Japan's rise as a colonial empire and the so-called “discovery of landscape” also warrants consideration, given the critical role of images of landscape and geographical consciousness in the formation of notions of national identity:

[Landscape Images] naturalize a cultural and social construction [nation], representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpolating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation.

Thus, during this moment in Japanese history, images of nature (be they paintings, prints, or photographs) also begin to be received by their audiences as representations of the nation, existing within the cultural and political “sphere” of Japan asserted and represented within the artificial sociopolitical framework of “Japan,” celebrated with nationalistic zeal in works like Nihon Fūkeiron.

As previously suggested, while the author's writing reflects a (supposedly) objective interest in describing the topographical aspects of the archipelago, the treatise still employs numerous cultural references evoking the artistic and poetic legacy of previous Japanese descriptions of nature, offering copious allusions to the religious and

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cultural concerns that conventionally informed Japanese views of nature. Nevertheless, with the publication of *Nihon Fūkeiron* in 1894, one sees the clearest evidence of a distinct shift toward a more receptive attitude toward ideas associated with contemporary thinking about nature encoded in European landscape art. Specifically, Shiga's use of aesthetics in the service of nationalism, his adaptation of the European concept of the sublime within a Japanese context, collectively indicate a deeper engagement with this imported perspective toward nature in Japanese culture:

[Shiga] pioneered a new view of Japanese landscape and a new view of nature as such, though he tries to legitimate this "modern" view of nature by selective quoting from the classics of Japanese literature. [Nevertheless,] His views are more Western than traditionally Japanese.  

While it remains difficult to deny the “modern” perspective he espouses in his written work, however, it is unfair to argue that the incorporation of aspects of European thinking represents an irreversible, progressive cultural development undertaken by inhabitants of a backward or primitive culture toward the intellectual enlightenment of modernity.

**Japanese Romantic Landscapes: The Persistence of *Meisho*, the Role of Nostalgia**

Though many scholars identify Shiga’s work as a transformative cultural event in the aesthetic consideration of landscape and nature within a Japanese context, the extent to which its ideas would immediately or directly impact the development of landscape imagery remains difficult to precisely evaluate. Many accurately regard its publication and subsequent popularity as an indication of an emergent, nascent trend within Japanese art toward a more intensive engagement with the European conceptual paradigm and

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perspective toward nature that would inform the production of landscape images.

Nevertheless, despite numerous scholarly accounts emphasizing the treatise's profound influence and relationship to the ascension of a new view of nature and modern artistic attitudes toward landscape (particularly within the context of Yōga), looking at works of art produced after its publication in the mid-1890s one might not clearly recognize the direct influence of the “modern” ideas expressed in Nihon Fūkeiron on the development of Japanese visual culture. One might more fairly conclude that this book, despite its clear evidence of the absorption or adaptation of contemporary European attitudes toward nature and the conceptual framework of “landscape,” simultaneously demonstrates the lingering presence of pre-Meiji Japanese attitudes toward nature, reflecting the author's genuine attempt to reconcile or synthesize two decidedly different world views during a time of profound cultural change. In fact, despite its much-touted reputation as a historically significant work marking the advent of a new consciousness and perspective toward nature and landscape within Japanese culture, the book itself contains numerous continuities with previous descriptions (artistic and literary) of Japanese landscapes.

In many instances, Shiga's decision to focus extensively on particular famous mountains reveals their residual cultural significance, recalling the themes informing the production of meisho-e prints and other popular imagery relating to Japan's most celebrated sites and scenery. Indeed, a systematic comparison between the mountains depicted and referred to in a collection of illustrations by the literati painter, Tani Bunchō (1763-1841), titled Nihon Meizan Zufu (Illustrated Volume of Japan's Famous Mountains, 1804), and the supposedly revolutionary treatise by Shiga reveals a
distinctive alignment in the list of mountains described and illustrated. Both works, for instance, include site-specific descriptions of Mt. Asama, seen earlier in this paper in Taiga's famous *shinkeizu*—far from rejecting this understanding of landscape, Shiga appears to promote and celebrate it, contributing to the preservation of an ongoing legacy of depictions surrounding a canon of famous mountains and natural sites exemplifying a timeless Japanese tradition. Despite being published nearly a century apart, the status of famous sites as a subject of fascination and an enduring subject of literary and visual accounts (and therefore the *meisho* genre), would not vanish or collapse following the introduction of aspects of the modern, European perspective toward landscape often celebrated as the hallmark of Shiga's views toward nature. This would remain true even following the 1890s, and well into the twentieth-century.

In the latter years of the Meiji period artists like Kawase Hasui (川瀬巴水 1883-1957) and Hiroshi Yoshida (吉田博 1876-1950), would participate in a deliberate revival of the production of woodblock landscape prints (both were later associated with the *shinhanga*, or “new prints” movement), which had fallen into a period of relative decline as a commercial genre in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. While incorporating perspectival and lighting techniques broadly associated with European landscape art, the work of these print designers ultimately adheres rather closely to the generic conventions of pre-Meiji landscape prints, and thus exhibits a clear tendency toward images of scenery from specific famous sites from throughout Japan. A look at one of Hasui’s prints, which depicts a nocturnal scene from the rocky coast at Cape Hinomisaki around Izumo (*Fig. 12*), reveals this fusion of European technique and the conventional subject matter.

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of *meisho*. While Hasui incorporates the shading techniques around the tree trunks and the subtle manipulation of color throughout the composition to reproduce the appearance of coastal scenery and distant clouds under a moonlight sky, the theme centers around a familiar site from within Japan. Artists perpetuating the motif of *meisho*, who were largely engaged in collaborative, commercial ventures, would exploit their audience's existing preference for famous views, as well as their increasing familiarity with the sites portrayed in the images, enhanced by the increasing ease of travel across Japan via rail and the availability of information through magazines, newspapers, and other affordable print media.

One may recognize additional evidence of this trend in the distinctive landscape prints of Hiroshi Yoshida. As a one time member of the *Meiji Bijutsukai* (明治美術会 “Meiji Art Society,” founded 1889), Yoshida's work demonstrates his training in a Western style academic context, as well as his skillful use of watercolors and sketched landscape studies. Despite his early background in artistic circles associated with *Yōga*, however, his most famous work reveals an ongoing interest in an approach to depicting natural scenery that, far from vanishing following the beginning of the Meiji period, would enjoy global popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, Yoshida would increasingly turn to the medium of multi-color wood block printing, creating a style owing a simultaneous stylistic debt to European and Japanese traditions of landscape art. In one wood block series dating from the early twentieth century, *Twelve Views of the Japanese Alps (Nihon no Arupusu Jū-ni kei, 日本のアルプス十二景)* the artist, an avid mountain climber, demonstrates this fusion of traditional media and novel perspective in his romanticized, yet photographically
precise images of the views witnessed atop the peaks of various famous mountains in the Japanese Alps (fig. 13). Rather than relying on previous archetypal images of the mountains or basing the landscape on a single, iconic view, Yoshida creates a fairly realistic composition that celebrates the individual's direct visual encounter with the mountains, the overwhelming emotional power of their visual grandeur and beauty. This interest in expressing the “sublime” quality of a mountain landscape recalls the contemporary enthusiasm for Japanese mountain climbing and landscape appreciation expressed in Shiga's *Nihon Fūkeiron*. The perspective Yoshida presents in his alpine images additionally suggests the influence of photographic compositions of similar landscapes, while reflecting the singular perspective of an individual regarding the visual scene in person. Though his images draw clear inspiration from the work of ukiyo-e artists of the previous century (particularly in the artist's decision to abandon the oil paints of his early career to adopt wood-block prints as his preferred medium), the prints also seem to reflect a sensitivity to the aesthetic values and the celebration of subjective, emotionally charged encounters with nature associated with paintings by European Romantic landscape artists like Turner, Friedrich, etc. and championed within the critical essays of influential figures like Ruskin. Nevertheless, despite a clear engagement with the European concept of landscape, this image and others like it largely adhere to the generic conventions of *meisho*, informed by the public's preference for views depicting famous sites and scenery within Japan.

The illustrations in Shiga's treatise provide additional evidence of the persistence of previous Japanese approaches to the depiction and conceptualization of natural scenery, while granting further insight into the varying stylistic approaches to which Japanese
artists would render national landscapes after the 1890s. While providing a visual interpretation to a literary work commonly cited as an important indication of shifting attitudes toward nature in Japanese culture, these images also reveal the persistence of former approaches to the depiction of Japan's natural scenery, particularly the preference for sites well known through other works of art and literature. Though five of the book's illustrations provide descriptive, Western-style visual supplements to Shiga's discussion of various particular places within Japan, the remaining twelve full-sized woodblock prints, included until the fifteenth edition of the book, remain unabashedly old-fashioned in style and appearance, owing much more of a stylistic debt to the Ukiyo-e landscapes of artists like Hiroshige and Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) than the landscape paintings of contemporary Yōga artists or European print artists. The designer of the majority of the illustrations, Hibata Sekko (穂畑瀧湖, 1858-1943) largely operates within the conventional meisho-e model of landscape expression. While the carving technique employed by both artists reveals the wider implementation of the Western approach of cut-end woodblock printing (in contrast with older Japanese prints), the themes of each design still largely revolve around iconic views of various famous places within Japan, drawing more from preexisting visual cultural interpretations of the natural scenery than the personal encounter between the artist and the site. Take for instance an illustration of the well-known waterfall, Ono no Taki (小野の滝), in Nagano prefecture near Matsumoto—In Sekko's print, one recognizes (fig. 14) a close adherence to earlier, so-called “pre-modern” depictions of the same place, including this woodblock (fig. 15) by

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69 Usui, 380.
Hokusai from earlier in the nineteenth-century. Indeed, a photograph (Fig. 16) from Walter Weston's roughly contemporaneous travel accounts of his mountain climbing expeditions through the Japanese Alps reveals an almost identical view of the site. A side by side comparison of photograph against the two woodblock prints (representative of “traditional” media) significantly reveals that despite its association with the technologically advanced media of photography, it remains nearly identical both in composition and appearance to other, earlier images of the same waterfall, demonstrating that the introduction of novel technologies and expressive techniques alone does little to erode long extant forms of landscape expression within a Japanese context. The influence of popular understandings and expectations regarding natural sites and their depiction in visual media would continue to inform the Japanese reception of landscape. This would also reveal itself explicitly in a chapter of Shiga's *Nihon Fūkeiron* that argues for the need to implement methods of conserving Japan's famous places (and preserving the cultural memory of) from the encroaching threat of human interference.\(^70\)

Oshita Tōjirō (大下藤次郎 1870-1911), an influential artist primarily known for his work in watercolors, would exhibit additional evidence of an engagement with the ideas expressed in *Nihon Fūkeiron*, while simultaneously demonstrating the persistence of previous categories of painting mountains and other natural forms. His relationship with the treatise was in fact quite literal. In addition to meeting Shiga Shigetaka in 1898, Oshita subsequently joined the Japanese Alpine Society in 1906 along with the famous watercolor painter, Maruyama Banka (丸山晚霞 1867-1942), after making the

\(^{70}\) Shiga, *Nihon Fūkeiron*, 322.
acquaintance of one of the group's founding members, Kojima Usui. His painting, *The Foot of Hotakadake* (fig. 17), with its unusually tight framing and compositional focus on the base of the mountain rather than its distinctive peak, suggests the artist is reproducing a scene he observed in person, rather than providing the kind of all-encompassing, iconic view typifying conventional *meisho-e*. Nevertheless, though the work presents a unique perspective (cropping out visual elements that might help the audience identify it as one of Japan's so-called 100 famous mountains), its subject matter (mountains and water) still largely adheres to an approach to landscape painting embodied in the traditional descriptive label of *Sansuiga*. Indeed, in this respect many contemporary Japanese landscape images reveal echoes of the traditional *Sansuiga* in their form and adherence to this conventional subject matter.

While artists like Yoshida and Tōjirō approach the depiction of mountains and other natural scenery in a manner that immediately betrays their familiarity with European traditions of landscape art, however, artists operating within more “traditional” styles would also begin to operate within an expressive mode in which new approaches to comprehending landscape became increasingly notable. Take, for instance the artist, Takashima Hokkai (高島北海 1850-1930). Though commonly identified as a *Nihonga* painter specializing in Chinese-style landscapes, his biography and artistic approach also reveal a significant engagement with the conceptual attitudes informing the production of European landscape art. After receiving early training in geology, Takashima would participate in geological surveys throughout Japan during the 1880s, and would eventually travel extensively on behalf of the Japanese government throughout Europe.

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72 Matsumoto, “Fūkeiga no Seiritsu,” 58.
producing *Nanga* style paintings (fig. 18) based on his carefully observed sketches.\(^7_3\) His background in the natural sciences would strongly inform his artwork, particularly his images of mountains, revealing a synthesis of the scientific gaze of European landscape art while maintaining a stylistic approach adhering to techniques of previous Japanese artists. Takashima could be said to be specifically involved in the self-conscious revival of the artistic tradition of the sort of *shinkeizu* created by Ike no Taiga in the eighteenth century. Like Shiga, the painter also expressed admiration for the work of Tani Bunchō, particularly his work, *Nihon Meizan Zufu*.\(^7_4\)

While these examples collectively serve to challenge the conventional narrative of modernization that continues to dominate popular understandings of Japanese art historical developments, it also seems likely that by the 1890s, Japanese artists’ understanding of the art and creative motives of their predecessors would become at least partially distorted by the passage of time and the profound socio-cultural changes of the Meiji period. By this point in history, the perceived distance and foreignness caused by intervening cultural phenomena (namely a more intense absorption of European cultural influences) contributed to the idealistic, Romantic re-imagining of the past as a period of cultural purity untainted by the perceived threat of European modes of expression. The presence of this nostalgic perspective toward pre-Meiji Japanese culture remains one of the defining characteristics of *Nihon Fūkeiron*. “Shiga's work, while preserving the pre-modern perspective toward landscape, simultaneously mixes up these traditional feelings about landscape with a certain exoticism,” expressive of his longing for an idyllic, imaginary past underlying his enthusiastic promotion of native landscapes, likely born of

\(^7_3\) Nishida, “Meiji Kouki no Gakka Takashima Hokkai ni Miru Sangakukei e no Manazashi no Tokushitsu,” 419.

\(^7_4\) Ibid. 420.
a sense of alienation from pre-Meiji Japanese culture, and perhaps an uneasiness with the increasing degree of interaction between Westernization of Japanese cultural institutions.\textsuperscript{75}

The element of nostalgia evident in this work importantly distinguishes Shiga's worldview as an important indication of an emergent attitude toward nature at least partially inspired by his encounter with Romantic European thinking, and would resonate with many of his contemporaries. Romanticism's central celebration of the aesthetic superiority of landscapes unaltered by human intervention and the simplicity of rural life in harmony with one's natural environment represents a clear creative reaction against the dual forces of urbanization and technological progress that would come to define the nineteenth century. For this reason, Romantic landscape images often demonstrate an intense, though ultimately futile, yearning for a highly idealized past in which humans were imagined to have existed in closer physical and spiritual proximity to the natural spaces they represent. Artists living during this period of history, Japanese and European alike, would bear witness to explosive technological innovation and the transformation of societies through the interconnected processes of urbanization and industrialization, which would contribute to fundamental changes to the human experience.

Simultaneously, the ruthless rapidity and unsparing character of modernization would become increasingly apparent to figures like Shiga and Ruskin, revealing how humanity's encroachments upon natural landscapes could also often lead to environmental blight and human alienation. In a famous lecture, "Modern Manufacture

\textsuperscript{75} Arayama, “Space, Landscape, and Representation in Meiji Japan,” 64.
and Design,” for instance, Ruskin paints an unrelentingly bleak portrait of the threat to his country’s natural landscapes at the height of British industrialization:

the garden, blighted utterly into a field of ashes, not even a weed taking root there; the roof torn into shapeless rents; the shutters hanging about the windows in rags of rotten wood; before its gate, the stream which had gladened it now soaking slowly by, black as ebony, and thick with curdling scum; the bank above it trodden into unctuous, sooty slime: far in front of it, between it and the old hills, the furnaces of the city foaming forth perpetual plague of sulfurous darkness; the volumes of their storm clouds coiling low over a waste of grassless fields, fenced from each other, not by hedges, but by slabs of square stone, like gravestones, riveted together with iron.  

In this vivid passage, the reader sees an almost satanic inversion of the idyllic, peaceful English countryside celebrated in a landscape painting like John Constable's (1776-1837) *The Haywain* (1821). The rustic landscapes championed by British figures like Constable and Ruskin, embodied in images of pastoral scenery dotted with simple cottages and winding creeks, also present the crisis of modernity as a national crisis, threatening the spiritual integrity of the nation—these landscapes, received as literal, topographical representations of the nation, effectively form an invented aesthetic tradition that supposedly exemplifies the inseparable relationship between the viewer as a citizen, and nature itself. This would prove no less appealing to Japanese audiences, and would inspire the emergence of a unique kind of Japanese Romanticism based on the celebration of dramatic mountains scenery and country villages in art.

Indeed, to an audience increasingly coping with the pressures of urban living, the book's celebration of the quintessentially Japanese landscapes of provincial farming villages and areas supposedly untouched by the disruptive influence of modernity, and an

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imperiled traditional manner of life, would bear considerable appeal to his reading audience and Japanese artists alike. This work is significant in its repeated expressions of the longing for the countryside landscapes of *furusato* (故郷), meaning hometown, birthplace, or native place. This attitude likely represents a reaction to the consequences of migration to urban centers like Edo (subsequently Tokyo), Kyoto, Osaka, etc. This process began initially in the seventeenth century and accelerated over the subsequent centuries to reach new heights during the Meiji period:

> In many cases, the "hometown" is expressed as the landscape of a mountain village encircled by nature. Following the Russo-Japanese War, owing to an increasing concentration of the population in cities, the lifestyle of the provincial farming village was showing signs of decline. Simultaneously, abrupt urbanization would give rise to numerous social problems, which were collectively referred to as the diseases of civilization.\(^77\)

In a European context, the advent of modern technologies and the negative effects of rapid industrialization would produce similar anxieties. Namely, this fear manifests itself in and the belief in the loss of intimacy with one's past, and an irreversible alienation from nature. These concerns likely play an important role in motivating the production of landscape images, particularly those of uncultivated wilderness. The parallel, almost simultaneous emergence of this tendency in Japanese cultural discourse (and the subsequent proliferation of landscape compositions celebrating the country's untouched, rugged natural terrain and provincial villages) reveals similarities with the quintessentially Romantic belief that “[i]t is *because* nature in us has disappeared from humanity [that] we discover her in her truth only outside it.”\(^78\) Perhaps Japanese artists of the time found similar solace in areas removed from the chaos of city life after centuries

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\(^77\) Satow, *Topugurafi no Nihon Kindai* 183.
of increasing urbanization.

One can similarly interpret Japanese landscape images made during this period as a creative reaction to the process of modernization. One particularly influential Japanese artist to receive training with a European artist was the Yōga painter, Asai Chū (浅井中 1856-1907), whose pastoral landscape compositions of Japanese village life reveal a stylistic affinity with the work of the Barbizon school of painters. The muted tones (browns predominate the work), horizontally oriented compositions, and interest in the depiction of anonymous provincial landscapes and rustic villages seem similar in many respects. Some critics might consider his work as derivative of conservative French landscape artists like Theodore Rousseau (1812-1867) and therefore conclude that his style is somehow less “authentically” Japanese than other contemporary artists working in “traditional,” Japanese styles, problematically overlooking the fact (previously argued in this paper) that stylistically “pure,” pre-Meiji art represents a complex amalgamation of foreign and indigenous artistic practices. Indeed, as one of the most prominent early Japanese artists to make extensive use of oil paints and produce the kinds of convincingly illusionistic landscapes long associated with European and American traditions of depicting natural scenery, most studies continue to primarily focus exclusively on the significance of the painter's mastery of foreign painting and compositional techniques, while disregarding his apparently exclusive interest in the depiction of quintessentially Japanese landscapes. In this composition, *Spring Ridge* (fig. 19), one recognizes an emphasis of seasonal themes, depicting humble peasants sowing the seeds for the autumn harvest, suggesting the simplicity and proximity to nature with which farmers live, and betraying a nostalgic yearning for the countryside described earlier. This theme
transcends the conventional labels of Yōga and Nihonga, as well. The work by the painter Kawai Gyokudo (川合玉堂 1873-1957), well known for the “traditional” appearance of his compositions, often revolves around similar themes. This painting of provincial scenery, entitled Morning Mist (Asa no Moya, 朝の霧, Fig. 20) enshrouded in mist, evokes the rustic beauty of country life, in contrast to the bustling speed and congestion of contemporary urban life.

These examples help to illustrate that while critics commonly cite Shiga's treatise as a ground-breaking work in transforming Japanese attitudes toward the perception and expression of nature, its role in driving the development of new approaches to depicting natural scenery was by no means immediate or absolute. Japanese artists would ultimately encounter the ideas represented in it and innovate their own distinctive kind of Japanese Romantic landscape, equally informed by adherence to previous traditions of art making as well as a nostalgic reaction against the forces of modernization. Over the decades, the cumulative influence of this work and its celebration of Japan's sublime mountain scenery and rugged natural beauty would prove substantial, and indicates a significant shift in the reception of the European concept of “landscape” within a Japanese cultural context. Nevertheless, its impact on the stylistic and thematic character of Japanese landscape images would not necessarily overturn or erase previous artistic approaches to the creative depiction of natural scenery. While considerable continuities would persist between pre and post Meiji creative responses to natural scenery, works of visual and literary culture emerging in the wake of this intellectual shift and proceeding further into the twentieth century often represent a distinctly individualistic, subjective encounter between the artists producing them and their natural surroundings. This reflects
a reassessment of the artist's purpose and identity within Japanese culture, and reveals an accommodation of certain aspects of the European culture of artistic production, wherein the artist is conceived as a special individual possessing the unique ability and creative genius to interpret and imaginatively recreate the physical experience of directly gazing upon a landscape.

By the second and third decades of the twentieth century in particular, a younger generation of Japanese artists had largely abandoned the kinds of conservative, picturesque landscapes of the initial wave of Yōga artists (represented in the work of the so-called kyūha 旧派, or “old-school,” artists like Asai Chū) and would embrace increasingly experimental approaches to the expression of landscapes with the same enthusiasm and creative restlessness as their European contemporaries, who were similarly interested in the introduction of novel compositional and stylistic techniques in their work. Just as European and American artists (most famously the Impressionists) would begin to experiment with styles and thematic motifs exposed to them through woodblock prints and other Japanese visual media in the late nineteenth century, Japanese artists similarly absorbed creative influences through the increasing regularity of encounters with European teachers both at home and abroad, or indirectly through exposure to print media, photographs, etc.

The development of Japanese landscape art following the Meiji period fact underlines the complexities of describing art historical realities within cultural contexts in which stylistic and conceptual developments rarely proceed in a straight line, from one monolithic mode of expression to another. Rather, numerous differing modes often inhabit the same chronological and cultural space, overlapping, interacting with one
another in a way that defies classification or description. For this reason, while many scholars continue to identify the emergence of a new landscape consciousness and perspective toward nature in Japanese art in the 1890s, it seems more useful to view this as just one point in a longer process of change extending well into the twentieth century. Although the absorption of this understanding of “landscape” into the cultural mainstream would not occur immediately or in a uniform fashion, over the forty years between 1890 to 1930, this manner of perceiving the world (derived around the artist's personal, subjective encounter with landscape) would eventually come to represent a significant representational current informing the production of Japanese visual culture.

The persistence of previous creative approaches to the depiction of scenery within Japanese culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries additionally reveals the inaccuracy of applying arbitrary and often politicized descriptive labels to categorize works of art as either culturally genuine, or insincere, inferior examples of child-like mimicry. Ironically, when figures like Okakura Tenshin championed “traditional” Japanese painting over Western alternatives, he did so in a way that reveals an interesting intellectual paradox. Though famously “he advocated anti-modernism...his position was” undeniably “that of a modernist,” revealing that those self-consciously seeking to preserve tradition ultimately do so from a remote and often deliberately retrospective position; in Okakura's case, his belief in the superiority of pre-industrial Japanese forms of art was interpreted through a perspective inspired through his various encounters with European intellectual traditions and a distance from artistic modes seemingly threatened by the increasingly prominent influence of European art and literature.79

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construction of tradition from this perspective, “modernity, then, is seen as a mask, a simulacrum conjured up by elites and the state apparatuses, above all those concerned with art and culture, but which for that very reason makes them unrepresentative” of the creative attitudes motivating their production and the complex realities surrounding art historical phenomena.\(^8\) This tendency reveals a selective bias (a seemingly unfortunate inevitability of art historical writing) that distorts the ongoing interaction between foreign and indigenous expressive modes in favor of a constructed narrative of oppositional “tradition” and “modernity” that preferences certain works or artists as representative of an entire culture's artistic output, while omitting or obscuring the contributions of other artists as historically inconsequential and unworthy of remembrance. Likewise, according to this reductive approach, modernity in the arts becomes merely synonymous with stylistic Westernization. Both generalizations problematically polarize or obscure the diversity of coexisting creative currents simultaneously interacting within the art historical record. Ultimately, while these figures promote themselves as saviors of static national traditions (visual ideals), the narratives they advance erroneously insist that the differences between foreign and indigenous expressive modes preclude true synthesis.

What constitutes modern Japanese landscape art? At what point does the “authentic” expression of traditional attitudes toward nature cease to exist in art and the supposedly irreversible, absolute entry into self-conscious modernity begin? These questions remain extremely difficult to respond to in a meaningful way, and perhaps eclipse a more useful discussion of the often mutual interactions between Japanese and European artists, who were just as likely unconcerned with these ideological questions.

\(^8\) Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 7.
Fig. 1: Hasegawa Tōhaku (長谷川等伯). “Pine Tree Screens” (right panel top, left panel bottom) (松林図). Ink on paper (c. 1593).
Fig. 2: Utagawa Hiroshige (歌川広重). “Landscape of Whirlpool at Awa,” Awa naruto no fūkei (阿波鳴門之風景). Multi-color woodblock print (c. 1830s).
Fig. 3: Tawaraya Sōtatsu (俵屋宗達), Matsushima-zu (松島図).
Ink, color, silver and gold on paper (c. 1630).
Fig. 4: Utagawa Hiroshige, “Lake Ashi at Hakone” from “The 53 Stations of the Tokaido” (箱根湖水図). Multi-color woodblock print (1832).
Fig. 5: **Shiba Kōkan** (司馬江漢), “Distant View of Mt. Fuji from Suruga Bay” *Surugawan Fuji enbō zu* (駿河湾富士遠望図). Oil on silk (1799).
Fig. 6: Maruyama Ōkyo (丸山応挙), “Archery Contest at the Sanjūsangendō” (三十三軒堂). Woodblock print with hand applied color (c. 1759).
Fig. 7: Ike no Taiga (池大雅). “True View of Mt. Asama,” *Asamayama shinkeizu* (浅間山真景図). Ink and light colors on paper (c. 1753-62).
Fig. 8: Caspar David von Friedrich, “Traveler Above the Sea of Fog.” Oil on canvas (1818).
Fig. 9: **John Robert Cozens**, “Between Chamonix and Martigny.” Watercolor and graphite on paper (1776).
Fig. 10: J.M.W. Turner, “Shade and Darkness—Evening before the Deluge.” Oil on canvas (1843).
Fig. 11: J.M.W. Turner, “A Swiss Alpine Valley.” Watercolor and graphite on paper (1843).
Fig. 12: *Kawase Hasui* (川瀬巴水). “Cape Hinomisaki around Izumo.” Woodblock print (Early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century).
Fig. 13: Yoshida Hiroshi (吉田博). “Tateyama Bessan” Tateyama bessan (立山別山) from Twelve Views of the Japanese Alps. Woodblock print (1926).
Fig. 14: Hibata Sekko (橆畑雪湖). Ono no Taki. Woodblock print (1894).
Fig. 15: Katsuhika Hokusai (葛飾北斎). "Ono Falls on the Kisokaidō Road" Kōsokaido Ono no bakufu. Color woodblock print (c. 1833).
*Fig. 16: Uncredited photographer.* “Ono no Taki (Waterfall) on Nakasendo.” Photograph (1896).
Fig. 17: Oshita Tōjirō 大下藤次郎. “The Foot of Mt. Hotakadake,” Hotakadake no Fumoto 糀高山の麓. Water color, (1907).
Fig. 18: Takashima Hokkai (高島北海). “Deep Ravine.” Ink and colors on silk (1916).
Fig. 19: Asai Chū (浅井忠). “Spring Ridge.” Oil on canvas (1889).
Fig. 20: Kawai Gyokudō (川合玉堂). “Morning Mist” Asa Moya (朝もや).
Ink and color on silk (1938).
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