



Japanese Art in Belgium in the 1920s: Hidden Treasures and Public Celebrations

Introduction

The 1920s was an important decade for the celebration and appreciation of Japan, its culture, and its art in Belgium. It manifested itself, first of all, in the imperial visit of Prince Hirohito (1901-1989) in 1921 and in the donation of a collection of 13,862 books by the Japanese government to the University of Louvain, as KU Leuven was then called.² Other events that celebrated Japanese art and culture were exhibitions in Belgium introducing Japanese artists residing in Paris at that time. At its apex came the exhibition at the Kodak gallery in Brussels (14 June-13 July 1929), set up by the French Japanese Artists Association (*Furansu Nihon Bijutsuka Kyōkai* 仏蘭西日本美術家協会). On a more institutional level it was sustained through acquisitions and donations of Japanese paintings and woodblock prints, which were added to the collections of Japanese art of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB) and Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), respectively.

When discussing the appreciation of Japanese art in Belgium at public and institutional levels, it should be noted that its groundwork had been laid several decades earlier and carefully curated by several key figures. A turning point in the spread of awareness of Japanese art among the general public was the 1889 exhibition of Japanese woodblock prints, the first of its kind in Belgium, organized by the Parisian art dealer Siegfried Bing (1838-1905) and Belgian art collector and composer Edmond Michotte (1831-1914).³ The Belgian King Leopold II (1835-1909) also contributed significantly, as he commissioned the Parisian architect Alexandre Marcel (1860-1928) to build the so-called 'Japanese Tower'.⁴ Other crucial contributions were the acquisition of Michotte's collection of Japanese art⁵ by the Belgian government

for the RMAH in 1905, and the Royal Library of Belgium amassing roughly 500 Japanese prints between 1888 and the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶

Given the foregoing groundwork,⁷ this essay explores the fascination for Japanese art in the interwar period. It explores how Japanese woodblock prints and modern paintings shared several similarities. More precisely it centres on a print series by the artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi 月岡芳年 (1839-1892) preserved in the RMAH, and on paintings by the artist Fujita Tsuguharu 藤田嗣治 (1866-1968), well known in Europe as Léonard Foujita, in the RMFAB. In what follows, the print series is interpreted in the context of its acquisition, whereas the latter is framed in the context of a series of events leading up to the Kodak exhibition of 1929. The longstanding appreciation for Japanese prints in both Europe and Belgium not only contributed to the acquisition of the above-mentioned woodcuts and paintings by Belgian institutions, but also influenced the Japanese donors to incorporate a high number of highly illustrated Edo period (1603-1868) books, such as the fifteen volumes of the *Hokusai Manga* 北斎漫画 (published 1814-1878), in the collection that was presented to the University of Louvain in the 1920s.

Yoshitoshi's hidden treasures

In the 1920s the Japanese woodblock print collection of the RMAH was expanded by several acquisitions, donations, and exchanges. Most interesting are the three exchanges taking place in 1921. Archival material indicates that a total of 200 Japanese woodblock prints entered the collection through exchanges on 20 April, 18 July, and 1 October 1921. Although the details on these



exchanges are scant, the archives confirm that a group of four people was involved in each exchange. It seems that the idea of a 'swap' originated with Jules Bommer (1872-1950), the curator of the then divisions of ethnography, folklore and the Far East. He reported the proposed swap to the chief curator of the museums, Eugène Van Overloop (1847-1926), who notified the Minister of Sciences and Arts, Jules Destrée (1863-1936)⁸. Finally, Destrée's chief of staff, Richard Dupierieux (1891-1957), was also a key figure in green-lighting these exchanges.⁹

The rationale behind the swaps was to get rid of some unwanted art objects from Michotte's collection. A certain number of these objects were considered by Bommer to be of no interest to the museums. At the time they could not be refused as the collection was purchased in one unit, even though these unwanted objects required much space, maintenance, and security.¹⁰ Especially a certain number of *netsuke* 根付 - miniature sculptures tied to their respective containers holding medicine, tobacco, or other personal items - and *okimono* 置物 - decorative objects made

for display - were judged to belong to that group of unwanted art objects. Bommer had already expressed this impetus for exchange as early as November 1919 and again in January 1920, but it took until the spring of 1921 for the swap to come to fruition.¹¹ Ultimately, Bommer exchanged 67 *netsuke* and *okimono* in April, estimated at a value of 3,120 Belgian francs, for 123 woodblock prints, one *kakemono*, one painting, and five illustrated books.¹² Among the prints was a lot of 48 prints by Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797-1858) deemed highly desirable for the collection as it would complete some of his series.¹³ In July another group of *netsuke* and *okimono*, with an estimated value of 1,550 Belgian francs, made room for a lot of 60 woodcuts.¹⁴ Here, too, Hiroshige's prints were deemed most valuable for the museums. Finally, 117 woodcuts were inventoried on October 1.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the lack of archival material on this last exchange makes it impossible to determine which objects left the collection, although it is certain that it also involved *netsuke* and *okimono* from Michotte's collection.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that a striking number of prints by artists of the Meiji period (1868-1912) were part of these swaps. From two in April to 22 in July, the total culminated in October with 51 prints. Bommer deemed these prints to be rare and believed that their value would increase over time.¹⁷ Such a positive assessment of Meiji prints is uncommon, as they had always been placed

▲ 1. *Jingū, 15th Empress* (*Dai jūgodai Jingū kōgō*
第十五代神功皇后)

Ōban triptych, 37 x 71,5 cm

Publisher: Morimoto Junzaburō 森本順三郎

Date: April 1879

Signed: Taiso Yoshitoshi 大蘇芳年 (seal. Taiso 大蘇)

Engraver: Watanabe Eizō 渡辺栄蔵

Collection: ImageStudio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, JP.05312. Creative Commons CC BY - KMKG/RMAH/MRAH.

Literature: Keyes 1982, no.418; Ing and Schaap 1992, no.38;

Kozyreff 1998, no.196; Uhlenbeck and Newland 2011, no.108



in stark contrast to the prints of the Edo period. This contrast between woodblock prints of both periods was underscored with the opening of Japanese ports in 1858 to international trade, when Japan left behind its feudal regime for modern nation-state building, a departure that came to be reflected in the woodcuts depicting the modernization and westernization of society. As a result, the Edo prints were revered for their natural coloration and treatment of traditional topics – landscapes, beautiful women, and *kabuki* actors –, whereas Meiji prints were ridiculed for their untraditional topics – such as foreigners and the modernization of society – as well as for their (often crude) application of imported Western aniline dyes. Or to put it in the words of Destrée himself: “The prints were in a state of decadence and artists had run out of inspiration, whereas we [Westerners] were to blame for precarious aniline dyes replacing the sumptuous vegetable colours.”¹⁸ Destrée was one of many in a sea of Western art collectors and critics who voiced his condemnation of Meiji prints, resulting in their exclusion from many collections.

Among the swapped prints there is an almost complete series entitled *Short Illustrated History of Great Japan* (*Dai Nihonshi ryaku zue* 大日本史略図会). Drawing on the talents of Yoshitoshi, one of today’s most celebrated woodblock print artists of the Meiji period, this series consists out of ten confirmed triptychs issued in 1879 and 1880, while involving five different publishers.¹⁹ Although once printed in large quantities, this series is considered relatively rare today. As the RMAH houses eight of its triptychs, it is therefore one of the museum’s many hidden treasures.

For Yoshitoshi this series was issued at a time of steady productivity and public acknowledgment by his contemporaries, as between 1876 and 1880 he added more than 400 prints to his corpus of work and was perceived as an authority in warrior prints.²⁰ He stretches his drawings over three sheets to introduce personae connected to Japan’s imperial history and frames them in partially unrolled *emaki* 絵巻 (scroll painting), allowing the viewer to scroll through the narrative from right to left. At the right side, the print title introduces its main character, while an explanatory text chronicles an important anecdote (Figure 2) or lists several accomplishments (Figure 1).²¹ When put together, this print series supports the original intention of *emaki* spreading out a long story over several scrolls, which is here an illustrated history of “great Japan”. In such a way, this series can be interpreted in the context

▲ 2. *Yūryaku*, 22nd Emperor (*Dai nijūnidai Yūryaku tennō* 第二十二代雄略天皇)
Ōban triptych, 37 x 71 cm
 Publisher: Tsujiokaya Kamekichi 辻岡屋亀吉
 Date: 29 April 1879
 Signed: Taiso Yoshitoshi 大蘇芳年 (seal. Taiso 大蘇)
 Engraver: Horikame 彫龜
 Collection: ImageStudio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, JP.05313. Creative Commons CC BY – KMKG/RMAH/MRAH.
 Literature: Keyes 1982, no.418; Ing and Schaap 1992, no.38; Uhlenbeck and Newland 2011, no.108

of the Japanese government recognizing the importance of promoting a national history among the general public, and especially among young children, as schoolbooks were being published on Japan's imperial history. Although no direct link can be established between Yoshitoshi's prints and these schoolbooks, it is assumed that the publishers involved were responding to the demand for educational material created by the government throughout the 1870s.

Figure 1 unravels the story of the legendary Empress Jingū 神功皇后 (r. 201-269) who, after her husband Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 (r. 192-200) was killed by the resisting Kumaso 熊襲 tribe, successfully suppressed the rebels and conquered Silla, one of the three kingdoms of ancient Korea. According to the explanatory text on the print, she carved into a rock that "the king of Silla is the dog of Japan," for which the triptychs provides the setting. Hereafter she allegedly conquered the other kingdoms of Korea and returned home. It is said that she was pregnant with her husband's child before she took off and only gave birth to an imperial prince after her return, three years later.

Figure 2 introduces Emperor Yūryaku 雄略天皇 (r. 456-479), who allegedly became emperor after successfully vanquishing the clan who killed his younger brother Emperor Ankō 安康天皇 (r. 453-456). The setting here depicts the encounter between the emperor, depicted in full military regalia, and a rampaging boar on Mt. Katsuragi 葛城. According to the explanatory text on the print, his footmen ran away, whereas the emperor, in a moment of fortitude, raised his leg and killed the boar with a kick.

The public celebration of Fujita

With Paris as its centre, Japanese woodcuts had saturated Western markets since the 1860s and continued to appeal to Western collectors and institutions throughout the interwar period, as is demonstrated above. Simultaneously, the city had also been a platform for Japanese painters to promote their artwork. Before the turn of the century, prolific painters such as Kuroda Seiki 黒田清輝 (1866-1924) and Yamamoto Hōsui 山本芳翠 (1850-1906) had come to master Western painting techniques. This cultural and artistic exchange continued in the interwar period when inspiration and training in the world's artistic capital was sought by subsequent Japanese artists like Fujita, Oka Shikanosuke 岡鹿之助 (1898-1978), and Yaza-wa Gengetsu 矢澤弦月 (1886-1952). In the early

summer of 1929, the works of these three artists, alongside other Japanese painters, were exhibited at the Kodak gallery in Brussels. It was the second exhibition organized by the French Japanese Artists Association and presented a total of 125 works by 33 artists. The association intended to spread Japanese culture and art via exhibitions in every major European city, but only managed to organize three exhibitions - two in Paris and one in Brussels - before disbanding already in 1929, the same year in which it had been established.²³ At the core of the association was the artist Fujita, as its president, and the philanthropist and writer Satsuma Jirohachi 薩摩治郎八 (1901-1976), as its founder and main benefactor. Using his family fortune that stemmed from cotton production, Satsuma purchased art works and sponsored - in addition to the association - the establishment of the Satsuma Chair to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Catholic University of Louvain in 1925, although the chair was not inaugurated until the academic year of 1928-1929.²⁴

The exhibition aroused enormous interest, for on 25 June, only a week after its opening, it was attended by the Belgian King Albert I (1875-1934) and Queen Elisabeth (1876-1965) (Figure 3). The exhibition was quite the success as it resulted in the purchase of several paintings by the queen herself, the RMFAB and the art collector Georges Hulin de Loo (1862-1945).²⁵ In contrast, the Belgian press painted a bleak picture of the exhibition. In general, newspapers lamented the loss of the "Japanese-ness" and "Oriental delicacy" in the paintings, for it left visitors wondering whether they had really attended a Japanese exhibition. Instead, they found themselves surrounded by an array of Western-style paintings "simply made by artists of Japanese nationality" and feared that the "Japanese artists living abroad had lost their originality and that the spirit of Paris subdued the spirit of Tokyo."²⁶ This fault finding was not unique to the 1929 exhibition, but had originated much earlier according to a journalist of the newspaper *Le Peuple*: "While Europe, following [Edmond de] Goncourt and [Claude] Monet, had barely discovered the old Japanese masters, we were sad to see that the sections of modern Japanese art in world's fairs were filled with paintings in the European style by artists from the Far East who settled in London or Paris."²⁷ As a result, the Belgian public harshly criticized the Japanese paintings that strayed from the Western-set assumptions and expectations.



One modern artist who did receive accolades for his works was the painter Fujita Tsuguharu, also known as Léonard Foujita.²⁸ Trained under Kuroda, he left for Paris in 1913 after being rejected from the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (*Monbushō Bijutsu Tenrankai* 文部省美術展覧会), because he was considered not to have met the classical requirements of an official painter for the Fine Arts Reviewing Committee (*Bijutsu shinsa inkai* 美術審査員会). He settled in Montparnasse and became a modernist of the *École de Paris*, which in its broadest sense included all artists working in Paris during the first half of the twentieth century. His technique of combining Western oil painting and *sumi-e* 墨絵, (lit. water-ink painting) allowed him to rise to fame in the 1920s and sell his art across Europe.

In 1929 the Belgian press judged him to be the only Japanese painter on display who kept “his fundamental personality, native originality, and respect for the artistic traditions of his country”.²⁹ Moreover, in contrast to other Japanese painters castigated for painting according to European stylistic conventions, Fujita was applauded for his portraits, nudes, Parisian landscapes in

the “pure and stripped-down style of Utamaro and Hokusai”.³⁰ The sale of one of his landscape paintings and nude drawings to Hulin de Loo attests to his continuing appraisal amongst Belgian critics and art collectors.³¹ Fujita’s success in Belgium was no exception at that time, however, but was built up over the course of the 1920s. His official debut to the Belgian public occurred in the summer of 1920 in Antwerp, where he exhibited two oil paintings and three gouaches.³² This debut inspired consecutive exhibitions, including a vernissage of eight paintings in Brussels in October of the same year, four more exhibitions and four solo-exhibitions in Brussels before the Kodak exhibition of 1929.³³

The first testimony of an accolade of Fujita’s art is the purchase of his self-portrait (Figure 4) by the RMFAB in 1922. This work was displayed at his solo-exhibition of 34 works at the gallery Le Centaure (13-29 January 1922), which was advertised at the time by three different newspapers.³⁴ Although as many as eight paintings were sold, only the acquisition by the museums was reported in the Belgian press.³⁵ In a newspaper review of this exhibition, Fujita was once more described as a “real” Japanese painter: “And here is one, Japanese from Japan ... who came to Europe, saw the things of Europe with the eyes of a Japanese and interpreted them with the soul of a fellow Hokusai and Utamaro. ... Here is a real *Nippon*.”³⁶

In this serious self-portrait, Fujita stands out with his bowl cut, round glasses, and moustache

▲ 3. The Belgian King and Queen awaiting a painting demonstration at the 1929 French Japanese Artists Association’s exhibition Photograph, 18,1 × 23,9 cm

Date: 25 June 1929

Collection: Waseda University Library—Documents Relating to Satsuma Jirohachi 早稲田大学図書館—薩摩治郎八閔連資料 (2011)
From left to right: the general director of the French Japanese Artists Association Yanagi Ryō 柳亮 (1903-1978), King Albert I, Viscount Motono Moriichi 本野盛一 (1895-1953), Queen Elizabeth, the wife of ambassador Nagai Matsuzō 永井松三 (1877-1957), and Yazawa Gengetsu.



cut into the shape of an *m*. It shows us a glimpse into his private life, as he is posing in his apartment. Surrounded by a hanging ceramic plate and two pipes, a canister of tobacco, a clock and matches, he introduces us to one of his vices: smoking tobacco.³⁷ This portrait also stands out when compared to his other self-portraits, for it is missing his pet cat and signature golden earrings.³⁸

A second testimonial came from the activities of three figures who contributed to the awareness of his art in Belgium, namely Dupierreux, Destrée, and Satsuma. Dupierreux gave a lecture on the painter at the Modern Museum of the RMFAB on 14 November 1923.³⁹ Unfortunately, it is difficult to shed light on the content of his lecture given the dearth of contemporary documentation.⁴⁰ A year later, Destrée wrote an article on the painter, identifying Fujita as one of the “descendants of Hokusai and as an artist who

succeeded in keeping the traditions of his country alive without Europeanizing too much.”⁴¹ This article, which also featured a picture of Fujita’s self-portrait acquired by the RMFAB in 1922, was published in relation to his solo exhibition at the Le Centaure gallery (25 October–5 November 1924). This exhibition proved to be another milestone in Fujita’s Belgian career, for both the Japanese ambassador to Belgium Adachi Mineichirō 安達峰一郎 (1870–1934) – who also was one of the driving forces behind the Japanese book donation – and Queen Elisabeth attended the exhibition.⁴² Fujita’s final contributor was his friend and supporter Satsuma, as he donated one of his nude paintings (Figure 5) to the RMFAB in 1928. Unfortunately, any details regarding the donation are missing from the museums’ archives.⁴³ And as Fujita produced a large number of nude paintings, it is impossible to determine in which exhibition it could have been featured.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the donation was reported by two newspapers, both featuring its picture, making even the front page in one of them.⁴⁵

▲ 4. Self-portrait 自画像

Oil on canvas, 100 x 80,5 cm

Date: 1921

Signed: T. Fujita 嗣治

Collection: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

1922 – no.4405 © Fondation Fujita/SABAM Belgium, 2022

Literature: Buisson and Buisson 2001, no.21.01



In this work, Fujita painted a nude supported by a pillow while lying on a bed draped in translucent white sheets. The muscular, voluptuous woman and her accompanying cat are posed against an all-white background. In such a way, this painting is an archetype of his famous ‘milky-white’ nudes. Reminiscent of odalisque paintings, Fujita replaced all accessories conjuring up exotic fantasies with his favourite animal: the cat.

Conclusion

In conclusion, two parallels can be drawn between the Meiji period prints and the modern paintings that found their way into Belgian collections in the 1920s. First of all, they are connected by way of Jules Destrée and Richard Dupierreux. In case of the Meiji prints, both figures were crucial for the approval of their exchange and consequently their existence in the RMAH’s collection. For Fujita’s paintings, they were essential in spreading appraisal for his art among the general public through a lecture and an article in one of Belgium’s leading newspapers. Secondly, both the Meiji prints and modern paintings were condemned for their “un-Japanese-ness” and were expected to live up to Western expectations by treading in the footsteps of Hokusai and Utamaro in depicting the “real” Japan. This expectation that Japanese artists adhere to a traditional

representation of their country and apply conventional techniques needs to be interpreted in the reopening of Japanese ports to international trade in 1858. Ever since, Western critics and collectors lamented the loss of the “old” and “real” Japan, for which they blamed themselves, as Japan was rapidly westernising. Thus, the desire was born for Japanese artists to create art free from Western influence and, as a result, any art that deviated from its Western-appointed purpose was disdained. Although Hiroshige’s prints were the main drive behind the swaps, Jules Bommer expressed hope that the prints would rise in value over time. In case of Fujita, despite being Europeanized to a certain degree, he was applauded for keeping up Japanese artistic traditions.

Finally, it should also be noted that the celebration and appreciation of Japanese art was not only sustained by several Belgian institutions and personae, but that Japan also played a decisive role. Satsuma Jirōhachi, who sponsored exhibitions on Japanese art and donated Fujita’s nude to the RMAFB, and Adachi Mineichirō, who was involved with the Japanese book donation and attended Fujita’s exhibition, were also driving forces behind the continuous Belgian interest in Japan, its art, and its culture. This particular interest in the visual aspects of Japanese culture did not go unnoticed by the Japanese book donors and is therefore also reflected in the extensive array of illustrated books in the collection donated to the University of Louvain in the 1920s.

▲ 5. Nude 裸婦
Oil on canvas, 63,5 x 98,5 cm
Date: 1927
Signed: Foujita 嗣治
Collection: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels
1928 – no.4715 © Fondation Foujita/SABAM Belgium, 2022
Literature: Buisson and Buisson 2001, no.27.²³

- Restauration (4 juillet 1958) et Lettre de Son Excellence Mgr Honoré Van Waeyenbergh, Évêque Titulaire de Gilba, Évêque Auxiliaire de Malines, Recteur Magnifique* (Louvain: UCL. Centre international de dialectologie générale, 1958, planche V). According to Mark Derez, archivist of KU Leuven, the photo was taken by Jean Schoonjans, director of the 'Service photographique de la Bibliothèque'. He was Van Cauwenbergh's amanuensis and is the author of a creditable book about the history of the Leuven/Louvain library.
- 80 See "Catholic University of Louvain Service des Assurances, Library, Relevé du 21 September 1959", in UCL Fund FI 067 Archives de la Bibliothèque central BE A4006 FI 067, folder 13.
- 81 Universiteitsarchief KU Leuven Archief Universiteitsbibliotheek KU BIB 22/11 M: Letter from Mullie to W. Dehennin, dated Korbeek, 2-3-1971.
- 82 Archives de l'Université catholique de Louvain, Archives de la Bibliothèque centrale Letter from J. Ryckmans to the Head Librarian of the University (i.e. professor Joseph Ruwet), dated February 9, 1971. It is written and signed by J. Ryckmans, who is the president at that time of the Institut Orientaliste, located at 16 Redingenstraat in Leuven.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 A total of 20,000 volumes (presumably fascicles) according to his own testimony. See Universiteitsarchief KU Leuven Archief Universiteitsbibliotheek KU BIB 22/11 M: Letter from Mullie to W. Dehennin, dated Korbeek, 2-3-1971.
- 85 Universiteitsarchief KU Leuven Archief Universiteitsbibliotheek KU BIB 22/11 M.
- 86 Gonzague Ryckmans, "Bis Diruta, Bis Restituta: Contribution à l'Histoire de la Bibliothèque de Louvain", in *Scrinium Lovaniense: Mélanges Historiques Etienne Van Cauwenbergh; Scrinium Lovaniense: Historische Opstellen Etienne van Cauwenbergh* (18-50), 50.
- 87 Willy Jonckheere & Herman Todts, *Leuven Vlaams: Splitsingsgeschiedenis van de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1979).
- 88 Archives de l'Université catholique de Louvain, Archives de la Bibliothèque centrale: Letter from J. Ryckmans to the Head Librarian of the University (i.e. Professor Joseph Ruwet), dated February 9, 1971. It is written and signed by J. Ryckmans, who is the president at that time of the Institut Orientaliste, located at 16 Redingenstraat in Leuven.
- 89 Universiteitsarchief KU Leuven Archief Universiteitsbibliotheek KU BIB 22/11 M: letter from Mullie to (unnamed) dated Leuven, 21 januari 1970 and unsigned note attached to letter from Mullie to W. Dehennin, dated Korbeek, 2-3-1971.
- 90 Universiteitsarchief KU Leuven Archief Universiteitsbibliotheek KU BIB 22/11 M: letter from J. Ryckmans to the Head Librarian of the University (i.e. Professor Joseph Ruwet), dated February 9, 1971.
- 91 See the photograph of the First International Conference on Chinese Science in September 1981, the first conference held by the section of Chinese Studies of KU Leuven in this new room.
- 92 Peter F. Kornicki, "The Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books in Europe: History and Progress", *Journal of East Asian Libraries* 1995, no. 105, art. 5 (January 2, 1995).
- 93 Koyama Noboru (Cambridge University Library, UK), "Japanese Books Donated to the University of Louvain, 1924-26".
- 94 Koyama, "Rüvan Daigaku Toshokan".
- 95 I contributed a more comprehensive article on the subject in *Higashi to Nishi no Bunka Kōryū 東と西の文化交流* ("The Cultural Exchange between the East and the West"), ed. Fujiyoshi Masumi 藤善眞澄 (Suita: Kansai daigaku shuppanbu 関西大学出版部, 2004), 191-223.
- 96 <http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/~oushu/readme.html>

Selected Books from the Japanese Donation (pp. 66-207)

- 1 See Lutz 1994. The *Recueil des voyages au Nord* comprises in total five volumes, published between 1715-1727.
- 2 Unit of gold currency, also considered equivalent to 1 *koku* of rice, i.e., the amount of rice needed to feed one person for one year.
- 3 Zhang came from the region of the present-day province of Sichuan.
- 4 Pacheco 1971, p. 441.
- 5 Toyoshima 2013, Appendix, 1-10.
- 6 Existing editions were cut up and the pages were pasted face down onto a woodblock. The engraver then cut out the block following the lines of the printed characters. Because most Chinese and Japanese paper is quite transparent, the engraver could still make out the characters through the paper. fairly well.
- 7 Sugimoto 1998, p. 28.
- 8 *The Lotus Sutra* (Takakusu/Watanabe 1924-1934, vol. 9, no. 262), translated from the Chinese of Kumārajiva by Kubo and Yuyama 2007, p. 47.
- 9 Genbun 元文 era [1736-1741] is a copyist's error. The quoted source has Genkyū 元久 (1204-1205). The Keichō 慶長 era ran from 1596 to 1615.

Japanese Art in Belgium in the 1920s: Hidden Treasures and Public Celebrations (pp. 208-215)

- 1 Freya Terryn is an art historian who specializes in Japanese visual and print culture of the nineteenth century. She holds a PhD in Japanese Studies from the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) and her research is funded by the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO). Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Adrien Carbonnet and Jan Schmidt for their comments on earlier versions of this essay.
- 2 For an in-depth discussion, see Vande Walle's essay in the present volume.
- 3 Takagi 2005, p. 194.
- 4 Together with the Chinese Pavilion, this is today one of the departments of the RMAH and is known as the Museums of the Far East. Vandepierre 2016, p. 319.
- 5 This collection of approximately 6,700 pieces consists of woodblock prints, illustrated books, *netsuke*, *tsuba*, combs, porcelain, bronzes, lacquered works, and arms. Takagi 2002, p. 68.
- 6 Takagi 2002, p. 67.
- 7 The groundwork listed here is only the tip of the

- iceberg. The craze for Japanese art was also celebrated, for example, by the painter Alfred Stevens (1823-1906) and in the Belgian Fin de Siècle literature such as Max Elskamp's *L'éventail japonais* (1886) and Emile Verhaeren's *Images japonaises* (1896).
- 8 He was the minister from 2 December 1919 until 24 October 1921. At the time, the museums were required to inform the ministry of any kind of acquisition.
 - 9 Letter Dupieurreux to Van Overloop, 20 April 1921, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 1680.
 - 10 Report Bommer, no date, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 1680.
 - 11 Letter Bommer to Van Overloop, 24 November 1919, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier Bommer and letter Bommer to Van Overloop, 12 January 1920, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier Bommer.
 - 12 Report Bommer, no date, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 1680.
 - 13 Report Bommer, no date, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 1680.
 - 14 Letter Bommer to Van Overloop, 5 July 1921, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 669.
 - 15 No files concerning this exchange remain in the archives of the RMAH. The number of prints was derived from a list composed by Ms. G. Craps on the provenance of the Japanese woodblock print collection. I am indebted to Nathalie Vandepierre, curator of the East-Asian collections of the RMAH, for providing this list.
 - 16 Another lacuna in the archival material is that Bommer never disclosed where he found the prints or who provided them.
 - 17 Letter Bommer to Van Overloop, 5 July 1921, Archives RMAH, Brussels, dossier no. 669.
 - 18 Jules Destrée, "Foujita et l'art japonais d'aujourd'hui," *Le Soir*, 24 October 1924.
 - 19 Tsujiokaya Kamekichi 辻岡屋亀吉 (Amaterasu and Emperor Yūryaku), Morimoto Junzaburō 森本順三郎 (Empress Jingū, Emperor Kameyama, Emperor Takakura, and Emperor Antoku), Maruya Tetsujirō 丸屋鉄次郎 (Emperor Sutoku and Emperor Go-Daigo), Yamaguchiya Tōbei 山口屋藤兵衛 (Emperor Jinmu), and Yamanaka Kitarō 山中喜太郎 (Emperor Keikō).
 - 20 Newland 2011, p. 29; Uhlenbeck 2011, p. 17.
 - 21 Although the RMAH holds eight prints, it is beyond the scope of this essay to provide a detailed analysis of each print. Instead, two prints are discussed.
 - 22 Keyes 1982; Ing/Schaap 1992; Kozyreff 1998; Uhlenbeck/Newland 2011.
 - 23 Vansina 2019, p. 33.
 - 24 Vansina 2019, pp. iv, 30-32.
 - 25 For an in-depth discussion, see Vansina 2019, pp. 34-35.
 - 26 Vansina 2019, p. 15.
 - 27 L.P., "La vie artistique : Un salon d'artistes japonais," *Le Peuple*, 19 June 1929.
 - 28 For a thorough analysis of Fujita, see Buisson 2011 and Buisson/Buisson 2001.
 - 29 Mestré, "Artiste japonais," *La Meuse*, 25 June 1929.
 - 30 L.P., "La vie artistique."
 - 31 Vansina 2019, p. 35 and especially footnote 125.
 - 32 Buisson 2001, p. 600.
 - 33 Buisson 2001, pp. 600-601.
 - 34 C.B., "Les expositions: T. Foujita au Centaure. Le 1er salon des artistes anciens combattants," *La Nation Belge*, 16 January 1922; "Les expositions," *Le Peuple*, 16 January 1922; "Exposition d'un peintre japonais," *Le Soir*, 12 January 1922.
 - 35 Buisson 2001, p. 600. Reports of the acquisition: 1922. "Au Musée royal des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles," *Le Peuple*, 2 July 1922; "Uit Brussel : Koninklijk Muzeum van Schoone Kunsten," *De Schelde*, 3 July 1922.
 - 36 C.B., "Les expositions."
 - 37 In 1928 he produced a series of 8 aquarelles on his vices, which were steeling, games, tobacco, gluttony, and greed. Buisson/Buisson 2001, p. 404 (catalogue no. 28.66-28.73).
 - 38 Buisson 2001, pp. 387-388 (catalogue no. 26.01-26.67), 391 (27.02-27.03), 404-405 (28.63, 29.01), 420 (31.12-31.13).
 - 39 "Chronique artistique: Au Musée royal des Beaux-Arts," *Gazette de Charleroi*, 11 November 1923; "Nos échos: Divers," *La Dernière Heure*, 12 November 1923; "Beaux-Arts," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, 13 November 1923; "La vie artistique: Au Musée des Beaux-Arts," *Le Peuple*, 14 November 1923.
 - 40 Aude Alexandre, archivist at the RMEFAB, confirmed that the museums have no documentation whatsoever.
 - 41 Destrée, "Foujita et l'art japonais d'aujourd'hui"
 - 42 "Petit gazette," *Le Soir*, 25 October 1924; "Petit gazette," *Le Soir*, 8 November 1924.
 - 43 I am indebted to Marieke Vansina for this information.
 - 44 Buisson/Buisson 2001, pp. 392-402 lists 12 nudes for 1927 and 8 for 1928, whereas Buisson 2001, pp. 238-277 lists 36 for 1927 and 58 for 1928.
 - 45 "Un don au Musées des Beaux-Arts," *Le Peuple*, 1 February 1928; "M. SATSUMO Heeft een der Schoonste Werken van FOUJITA, den Japanschen Schilder ten Geschenke Gegeven aan het Modern Museum te Brussel," *De Volksgazet*, 2 February 1928.

Japan's Sonic Modernity: Popular Music and Culture in the 1920s (pp 216-225)

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- 2 Horiuchi Keizō, preface to *Jazu Ongaku* by Shio'uri Kamesuke (Tōkyō: Keibunkan, 1929), 5; for a short introduction to a global outlook, see: Gumbrecht 1997, pp. 120-125.
- 3 For more on Japanese diplomacy, see the essay by Lieven Sommen in this volume.
- 4 For more on the Japanese book donation, see the essay by Willy Vande Walle in this volume.
- 5 Gluck 1998, pp. 270-271; Tanaka 2004, pp. 17-24.
- 6 Francks 2009, pp. 156-159.
- 7 For more on the intricacies of Japan's 1920s modernity, see: Minichiello 1998.
- 8 Harootunian 2000, p. 8; Young 2013, pp. 16-23.
- 9 Harootunian 2000, p. 7.
- 10 Sato 2003, pp. 114-151; Tipton 1997, p. 4.
- 11 Young 2013, pp. 23-32.