Preface

The five essays contained in this volume are products of a five-year seminar conducted at the University of Chicago on "American-East Asian Cultural Relations." Through a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, we launched the seminar in 1977 to bring together some of the leading scholars in American history, Asian history, and American-Asian relations, both at the University and from other institutions. (A list of the seminar participants as well as guests is appended.) We met several times a year for five years to explore various ways of examining and understanding the highly complex phenomenon known as "inter-cultural relations." At the seminar's concluding conference in May 1982 ten papers were presented (see the list in the appendix). From these, five have been selected for inclusion here. They represent revisions of earlier essays, and while they are only a portion of the seminar's production, they will indicate the wealth of new information as well as original approaches and methods that were discussed during the course of five years.

The variety of topics covered by the five papers suggests that possibilities for scholarly inquiry into inter-cultural relations are virtually unlimited. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that "culture" itself represents a myriad of memories, ideas, and activities. The seminar participants were not interested in arriving at a unitary definition of culture, but in developing conceptual frameworks and interpretive schemes for comprehending the intellectual, aesthetic, and psychological interactions among peoples. The quest was never completed; in fact, it had only begun when the five-year project concluded. But the five papers do make substantial contributions to knowledge, and challenge the reader to come to grips with problems of conceptualization and methodology that are particularly elusive in a study of inter-cultural relations.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Henry Luce Foundation for its magnanimous support throughout the seminar; to all the participants and guests for having contributed to an exciting intellectual experience; to the succession of rapporteurs (Victor Koschmann, Jacqueline Swearingen, and Miriam Silverberg) for their invaluable assistance in transcribing seminar discussions; to Alexa Hand for a rigorous and conscientious editing of all the papers; to Anthony Cheung, Anne Ch'ien, and Marnie Veghte for help with the logistics; and to the Center for Far Eastern Studies for arranging for an expeditious publication of the volume.

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I. ART AND AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF EAST ASIAN CULTURE 1784-1900

by Warren and Janice Cohen

In July 1929, Frederick P. Keppel, President of the Carnegie Corporation and a member of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, commissioned a report on Chinese and Japanese art in American museums. Keppel contended that when mutual understanding was "hampered by political boundaries and all these imply, and by the strife of tongues," art, which "knows neither frontiers nor irregular verbs," would always provide a meeting place. In their museums, the people of America could learn to understand the Chinese and Japanese through examples of their art.¹ Edward C. Carter, in the foreword to the published version of the report, found in American museums a much needed reminder that Orientals were not "sinister barbarians, but a race founded in deep wisdom and culture."²

When the American response to East Asian art during the first century or so of American-East Asian contacts is examined, the Keppel and Carter assumptions prove naive. Most obviously, art does have its equivalent of political boundaries and irregular verbs. Aesthetic values, conventions, symbols, techniques, the choice of subjects -- and even the definition of what art is -- are culturally conditioned. And when one culture is convinced of its superiority over a second culture, it is not likely to value the art of that "other" culture. Moreover, acceptance of another nation's art does not necessarily precede or lead to cultural understanding.

Before Americans could understand and appreciate the beauty and sophistication of Chinese and Japanese art, they required some knowledge of the larger cultures of which art was a part. Progress toward obtaining that knowledge and acceptance of some expressions of East Asian aesthetics was evidenced in the last half of the nineteenth century. These are the developments on which this study focuses.

Among the questions asked are: At what point did Americans know enough about Chinese and Japanese culture to recognize the maturity and quality of the art of those two countries? When and why did American museums and individual collectors begin collecting East Asian art? When was this art widely recognized as "collectible"? What effect, if any, did East Asian art have on American perceptions of China and Japan?
How, if at all, did acceptance of art forms relate to political acceptance? Did East Asian art affect American taste, American conceptions of art? Was American culture affected by East Asian art? And, looking across the Pacific, did the American response to East Asian art have an impact on Chinese and Japanese culture?

The arts, as they were known in Europe or Asia, had little place in seventeenth century Anglo-America. The colonials were struggling for survival more often than not and lacked the leisure and wealth associated with the collections of arts. Furthermore, the arts had not been an important part of the culture from which most colonists had come. Folk art existed, and the crafts grew slowly, but these were not considered art before mid-century. Even before the end of the seventeenth century, however, some Americans accumulated wealth and, especially in the South where Calvinism had less impact, sought to live like English gentlemen. For the would-be colonial aristocrat, culture was defined in metropolitan Europe. Household goods, including art, were ordered from England and the continent.

By the mid-eighteenth century, families of great wealth existed in major ports like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston, as well as on the large plantations. And by mid-eighteenth century, the desire for chinoiserie, a romanticized European imitation of Chinese art, eventually copied by the Chinese, had swept Europe. Traders had brought Asian art objects to Europe for centuries, but it was early in the eighteenth century before they arrived in substantial quantities. As tastes changed and collectors weary of the classical tradition, Chinese and Japanese motifs won wide acclaim and became an important part of the rococo aesthetic. In addition to Chinese wallpapers, porcelains, and garden temples, furniture fashioned by Thomas Chippendale took Chinese forms and was often “japanned” -- a process imitating Japanese lacquerware. Faithfully, colonial Americans purchased “Chinese Chippendale” and Chinese wallpapers, silks, and porcelains. There was even an occasional touch of Chinese influence on colonial architecture. Less expensive crafts, especially export chinaware, spread to less mighty sectors of American society. Shards from cups, dishes, and pots have been excavated from eighteenth century American forts, taverns, and ordinary homes across the country.

Evidence that pre-revolutionary Americans were aware of and liked Chinese crafts and decorative arts is abundant. Paul Revere, the legendary patriot and silversmith, fashioned one of
his most famous silver bowls after a Chinese pot. There is little to suggest, however, that many Americans understood or cared about China or Chinese culture any more than did George Washington (who knew the Chinese were "droll" in shape and appearance and was astonished to learn years later that they were not white).

After the American revolution, trade with China became an important part of total U.S. trade. The principal cargo of ships returning from China was tea, but at least until about 1815 there was also a mass market for chinaware -- for inexpensive dishes, cups, and bowls carried as damage or saleable ballast. Tea and sometimes silk and other cloth had to be kept dry by filling the bottom of the hold with something, and nothing could be more pleasing to the merchants than if that something were salable.

There was also an American market for fine quality export china, furniture, draperies, silk fans, carvings, silverware, and scrolls. Much of this was chinoiserie: Chinese artisans attempting to satisfy Western tastes for something Chinese, but not too Chinese. Paintings were frequently commissioned of Canton scenes -- and served as substitutes for as yet unimagined picture postcards. Few of the China traders manifested any sense that the Chinese had an art or a culture beyond what they found for sale in Canton.

Indications do exist that some Chinese paintings were accepted and displayed as art. Exhibitions were held in New York in 1794 and again in 1795. A major collection of drawings (possibly watercolors) of Chinese life hung for several months in Philadelphia in 1796. An exhibit of Chinese paintings in Salem in 1805 claimed the works displayed were equal to the best of the West -- and charged twenty-five cents admission. But most of the paintings brought back to America appear to have been produced especially for export, particularly paintings on glass and oils. There was a growing market in the United States for portraits -- little else hung on early American walls -- and the country by itinerant limners who painted the merchant, his wife, and heirs. European artists were imported by the more pretentious -- and Chinese artists also profited.

It is important to remember that a strong current of American hostility to art as a luxury inappropriate to a developing country persisted well into the nineteenth century. Crafts escaped reproach but painting and sculpture did not. Nonetheless, there is ample evidence of American men and women who were determined to offer art to the people. The wealthy collected for themselves and a few museums were opened in the cities to enrich the lives of the citizenry. From 1784, to approximately 1820, art in private collections or museums meant Old Masters, the work of known European painters and sculptors.
Often copies of varying fidelity sufficed. From 1820 to about 1850, art became more widely acceptable to the American public, provided it was native art. The second quarter of the nineteenth century was an era of intense cultural nationalism, and there was a demand for democratic art to glorify American culture. All of these currents tended to flow past Chinese art.6

A number of America's merchant princes had made their fortunes in the China trade and at least two of their families contained well-known art collectors. Henry Tuckerman's classic Book of the Artist: American Artist Life, first published in 1867, mentions the collections of Thomas H. Perkins and R. M. Olyphant, both prominent names around Canton. Tuckerman focuses on American art, but refers also to European art, often comparing American and European artists. He notes no Asian paintings in the Perkins, Olyphant, or any other collections. The probability that this omission indicates the taste of the time is increased by Tuckerman's only reference to China: "In China, the very ugliness and mosaic imitation in Art is negatively eloquent of stationary civilization."7

In the days when owning a copy of a European Old Master provided status, there was little demand for Chinese art. As critics like Ralph Waldo Emerson belittled mimicry of European aristocrats and demanded an American culture, foreign art was increasingly viewed with derision. The critics and the collectors wanted American artists painting magnificent native landscapes and heroic scenes of the American past.8 Chinese art did not gain consideration as an alternative to European art. It was yet more foreign, even exotic. In 1820, a respected young American aesthete, Robert Waln, Jr., criticized Chinese painters and painting harshly. Returning from a trip to Canton, where his father traded, he faulted the painters for a lack of originality -- by which he clearly meant their inability to copy Western art skillfully. When he described what appear to have been traditional Chinese landscapes, Waln found that in the absence of what he viewed as perspective, "the background is represented in a preposterous manner by placing it above the more advanced objects in the picture." He decried the lack of color, which "to the eye accustomed to the vivid beauties of a Benjamin West or the proportioned excellence of a John Trumbull, the whole appears a mass of black marks, representing nothing." At its best, Waln thought this work was "the bare outline of an unsuccessful attempt to imitate nature."9 Possession of such work was not likely to convey status.

Nonetheless, Chinese water colors and paintings were brought into the United States. Ship manifests often listed a box of scrolls or paintings among the items picked up at Canton.10 Captain and crew occasionally purchased such items for gifts.
Regrettably, artists were never listed, subject matter was rarely indicated. There is no evidence that work of high quality crossed the Pacific before American collectors became more interested and more knowledgeable — toward the close of the nineteenth century. As evidenced by museum collections in Milton or Salem, much of the Chinese painting acquired by Americans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was, like export china, produced to order for foreigners. But whether it qualified as art, or was perceived as art, Chinese paintings provided Americans with their primary images of China and Chinese life. Some portraits were neither of George Washington nor an American merchant, but rather of Chinese merchants in Chinese clothing. Landscapes were often copies of Western landscapes, but they were more likely of Chinese vistas. Most valuable for portraying Chinese culture were sets of scenes of everyday Chinese life, of Chinese artisans at work. S. Wells Williams, in his Chinese Commercial Guide (1863), damned pictures, engravings, and Chinese landscapes with faint praise, but "outline designs in India ink, representing the crafts and possessions among the Chinese, are sold in books at a cheap price; they were designed by Tingqua of Canton, and possess considerable merit."11

From paintings, watercolors, engravings, and imagery on chinaware, Americans were left with no doubt that the Chinese were culturally different from Europeans as well as physically.12 Few urban Americans of the nineteenth century could have been as ignorant of China as Washington had been when he was president. Poor Americans were aware that the Chinese could provide crockery and fancy gimcracks otherwise unavailable to them. Not until the third decade of the nineteenth century could European artisans compete with the Chinese for quality and price. Rich Americans were aware that the Chinese could produce fine porcelains, carvings, and lacquerware — and that these items were valued by Europe's upper classes. Few Americans sought images of China, but these images were absorbed by rich and poor alike through frequent contact with Chinese objects of art — even if some of the imagery was obtained subliminally.

There were men who sought to understand China and who were eager to teach other Americans. The most important of these was probably the Philadelphia merchant, Nathan Dunn. Like Olyphant, Perkins, and others, Dunn amassed a fortune in China. Although accounts vary, he appears to have lived in Canton for approximately ten years and to have developed unusually friendly relations with hong merchants and other Chinese officials. Unlike many of his peers, Dunn developed an interest in Chinese culture and was determined to make that culture accessible to the West. His interests clearly went beyond
export art and exotica. He wanted Americans to understand how Chinese lived and to see art as wealthy Chinese perceived it. To this end, he amassed an enormous collection of thousands of items to be exhibited first in Philadelphia and then in London. He is reported to have spent $50,000 on the collection and $8,000 more installing the exhibition (as compared to what were perceived as very generous gifts by Thomas H. Perkins and his nephew of $8,000 each to launch the Boston Atheneum's collection of "Old Masters").

The entrance to the building that housed the Dunn collection was modeled after a Chinese summer house and the interior was divided into apartments in which life-sized clay figures portrayed all classes of Chinese, male and female, at work and at play. There were representations of the emperor, high-ranking military and civilian officials, hong merchants, potters, tea pickers, and boat people. A wide range of vistas and domestic interiors, complete with furnishings and art, were exhibited. The clothing worn by the figures was genuine, as were the furniture, ceramics, paintings, and implements of daily life. There were elaborate silk screens and scroll portraits of contemporary prominent Chinese, as well as landscapes and several thousand pieces of fine porcelain and lacquerware.

Estimates of American interest in the collection are not easily verified, but all of the evidence suggest a strong, favorable response. William B. Langdon, who prepared an enlarged edition of the original catalog, claimed that hundreds of thousands of people visited the museum during the three years in which it existed in Philadelphia. Langdon remarked that the original catalog had sold "upwards of 65,000 copies." His own catalog, published in London, sold an additional 15,000 copies. Langdon's figures might be discounted as advertisements for his book, but reviews and individual accounts of the exhibition support his report that the exhibition was warmly received.

Philip Hone, one of the wealthiest and most prominent New Yorkers, a man whose diary is full of references to artists and collectors, always European masters or American painters like George Catlin, stopped in Philadelphia for several days in January 1840 to see "the famous Chinese museum." Hone thought Dunn's exhibition was "an immense collection of curious things," not, apparently, art. Other contemporaries, however, discussed what they saw as art. Langdon apologized for the Chinese failure to reach, in the fine arts, "the perfection that belongs to them in the enlightened nations of Christendom," but insisted that Chinese paintings were worthy of praise: "They paint insects, birds, fishes, fruits, flowers, and portraits with great correctness and beauty; and the brilliancy and variety of their colours cannot be surpassed." Some of the work Langdon
discussed, efforts to use perspective and chiaroscuro, were presumably painted to order for foreign purchasers. Benjamin Silliman, in the most commonly cited review of the exhibit, stressed work obtained from Chinese collections of a sort never before seen by foreigners. Among the several hundred paintings hung, he called attention to portraits that would astonish Americans who had seen only the usual export quality work. Silliman was struck especially by the quality of the ceramics and thought Dunn's pieces demonstrated that "...many of the most ornamental and beautiful specimens are rarely, if ever, exported." He also noted that Ming porcelains were superior to more recent Qing work, and suggested that the Qing emperors had offered less financial reward to potters.

On Christmas day, 1838, the day after Dunn's museum opened, Sidney George Fisher, later to become an important writer on political and constitutional questions, went to see the exhibition. Quite taken by what he saw, he recorded, "...certainly nothing could be more interesting or more splendid." He had little to say about the paintings -- his taste ran to old masters -- but he liked the porcelains, finding many of them curious and beautiful. He was particularly taken by the costumes, some of which were "of the richest and most gorgeous descriptions," and the furniture, which he described as "exceedingly beautiful." The show's impact is summed up strikingly with one sentence from his diary: "I had no idea that the Chinese were so luxurious and refined."16

The comments by Silliman and Fisher in particular suggest that Dunn had successfully acquired genuine Chinese art, such as upper class Chinese collected, and not only art produced for export. Most reviewers discussed carvings, ceramics, and paintings as art, critical of some of the works, very favorably impressed by others. A few paintings, especially one of a Buddhist priest, were singled out for praise and the earlier ceramics were viewed as treasures.

Thomas Schlotterback has contended that the late 1830s were the years when American interest in Chinese culture developed. He points to the Dunn exhibition both as evidence of that interest and a stimulus to that interest. At risk of slipping into a debate over the precedence of the chicken or the egg, we would note that interest in Chinese art as exotica long predated the Dunn show. Commentary on the show, however, does seem to begin the American discourse on the work of Chinese painters and ceramists as art. The critical acclaim for Dunn's exhibition facilitated acceptance of Chinese ceramics in particular as worthy of collecting as something more than a curiosity. Over the next quarter of a century, several magnificent collections were amassed, most notably those of S. Wells Williams and Anson Burlingame, both of whom, like Dunn,
had vocational interests in China and unusual access to Chinese collectors.17

In the years before the American Civil War, there were other important exhibitions of Chinese culture. The two best known, John Peters’ in Boston and P. T. Barnum’s, are both assumed to have been built around remnants of the Dunn collection. The sustained interest in China in the 1840s was doubtless less attributable to Dunn’s stimulus than to the Opium War, which began less than a year after his show opened, and to Caleb Cushing’s mission, which led to the first American treaty with China in 1844. People may have gone to these exhibitions to escape the monotony of daily life, as Jonathan Goldstein has suggested, but it is likely that they went to exhibitions about China because China was unusually prominent in the news. By the 1850s, there is less evidence of mass interest in Chinese culture and little evidence of a new surge of interest in Chinese art. There is no indication that China was even represented in New York’s Crystal Palace exhibition which opened in 1853.18

One important question about the Dunn collection might be answered by research in Chinese sources. If, as appears likely, Dunn had the assistance of upper class Chinese in collection material, why did they help him? Were their transactions simply business matters? Were they, as Langdon suggests, acts of appreciation for Dunn’s commendable deportment toward the Chinese or his abstention from the opium trade? Is it possible that Chinese officials perceived a policy advantage in apprising Americans of Chinese culture? The story of how Dunn’s exhibition was acquired might well be worth telling and might radically revise our view of Chinese attitudes and behavior in the 1830s, the years immediately preceding the Opium War.

If the Opium War and Caleb Cushing drew attention to China in the 1840s, the mission of Commodore Matthew Perry to “open” Japan excited Americans in the mid-1850s. The visit to the United States of the first Japanese mission in 1860 sustained interest in Japan on the eve of the war between the states. Efforts to trade with Japan had failed in 1791, but American merchants were able to capitalize on Holland’s distress during the wars following the French revolution. From 1798 to 1801, ships from the United States made the annual run to Nagasaki for the Dutch East India Company. The captains of these ships, like John Devereux of Salem, purchased Japanese goods on their own accounts, much of it for speculation, but some for their own use. In particular, Japanese lacquerware was long known and admired in the United States and Devereux brought home a wide variety of fans, boxes, trays, chests, and other furniture -- much of which is displayed along with his ship’s manifest at the Essex Institute in Salem. Then, for approximately half a
American attempts to establish contact with the Japanese failed twice in the 1840s. But in this era "when the eagle screamed," pressures to assert American power and influence mounted. In 1851, President Millard Fillmore announced that he would send a naval expedition to Japan and in 1852, Perry set sail. The New York Times' editorial position was unsympathetic to manifest destiny and all other arguments for the mission and feared American action would start a war. The newspaper attempted to educate its readers about Japan and warned against efforts to "knock open a passage-way with ball, bullet, and bomb, to let in revelation and a few annual cargoes of cotton cloth." The author of "Desultory Notes about Japan" explained away Japan's anti-Christian policy, and compared the Japanese favorably to the Chinese. Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese were not filled with supercilious contempt for barbarian accomplishment. Indeed, they grasped at all knowledge, as their study of French and German scientific writings demonstrated. In addition, he wrote eloquently of Japanese furniture and enamelled work, "for the exquisite manufacture of which the Japanese are so famous," and which Europeans imitated when they saw a few examples. To support the argument against a naval expedition, the Times contended that the Japanese, as evidenced by their crafts, were an advanced culture, and in no need of a jolt from the U.S. Not even the Times, however, argued on behalf of Japanese paintings, which had been dismissed in 1800 as "totally destitute of perspective."19

Despite the Times' reservations, Perry went to China and in December 1854, the Times offered an editorial by a member of Perry's party.20 In a generally sensible discussion the writer perceived trade prospects as modest, but he was ecstatic about Japanese lacquerware, silks, cottons, and porcelains. Japan's lacquerware was superior to anything produced elsewhere in the Orient. The art of ornamenting silk had been "carried to a high degree of excellence; some of the tints are superior to those in China, and the variety of patterns stamped on cotton is great and novel." He insisted that some Japanese porcelains were unmatched for thinness and clearness. The author concluded that Japan's civilization generally ranked higher than that of China. This conception in subsequent comparisons of the arts of China and Japan persisted until at least the last years of the nineteenth century -- when Westerners began to see more pre-Qing, court quality work.

In 1860, on the occasion of the arrival of Japan's first mission to the United States, a Times article on "Japan and the Japanese" was less flattering in its reference to the
The writer was particularly critical of Japanese architecture. As an art, he contended that it "could hardly be said to have an existence." -- and he disposed of Japan's temples and palaces as being "low and temporary structures, generally of wood." He alleged that frequent earthquakes led the Japanese to "bestow less care on their buildings than they might do under other circumstances." But the author did concede to the Japanese "considerable skill in some branches of the fine arts." Despite their ignorance of anatomy and perspective -- and the resulting "barbarous" sculptures and landscapes -- they represented single objects well, with "great accuracy of detail and a truthful adherence to nature."

Evidently, mid-century America had come to prize East Asian ceramics as art and to admire other crafts, most notably Japanese lacquerware. Architecture received mixed reviews, negative more often than not. Chinese and Japanese sculpture was not perceived as art, but rather as curiosity, exotic. The response to painting was also ambivalent and even those who admired Chinese painting either apologized for its lack of perspective or admired paintings which imitated Western art. Nonetheless, there was already some perception of East Asian art as art and some indication of understanding and respect for cultures which could produce such art -- although awareness of the superiority of earlier work over contemporary, of, for example, Ming porcelains over Qing -- reinforced a sense of declining or decaying cultures.

Interest in Japanese art and culture intensified briefly following the visit of the first Japanese mission to the United States in 1860. With the exception of items obtained by Perry as gifts and articles carried by the Japanese emissaries, most of the art seen in the United States is reported to have been of modest quality, acquired in the early stages of trade -- which was limited during the American Civil War. The war and its aftermath over-shadowed interest in Japan and that country's art did not seize the imagination of Americans again until the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876.

By the last third of the nineteenth century, art collecting ceased to be a rare avocation in the United States. Philip Hone's diaries frequently refer to visits to private galleries containing European paintings of dubious attribution. Tuckerman's 1867 volume contains a catalogue of the major collections of American painting. James Jackson Jarves, one of the earliest American students of the history of art, remarked in the 1860s that private galleries in New York were almost as common as private stables. The postwar economy boomed, wealthy
Americans proliferated, and they sought the accouterments of wealth. An art collection was one of the more ennobling attributes—or symbols—of status.

In this era also, the first major art museums in the United States were opened. The museums of the prewar era had provided an alternative to the bawdy theatre for urban folk craving respectability as well as entertainment. Neil Harris has shown how Barnum and his contemporaries mixed a little art with a lot of show business. But the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Boston Museum of Fine arts—all of which opened in 1870—were dedicated to the fine arts. These museums served both to educate the unwashed and to demonstrate the largesse and taste of the private collectors who lent or donated art. In return, museum curators who were trained professionals provided previously unavailable advice on the formation of private collections.

In the 1860s and the 1870s, two Americans who spent considerable time in European capitals began major collections of Oriental art. W. T. Walters, a wealthy patron of the arts from Baltimore, was inspired by Chinese and Japanese ceramics he saw at an exhibition at the London Crystal Palace in 1861. He became an avid collector of these—as well as of European paintings touted by a fellow Baltimorian, George Lucas, a prominent art dealer. In 1864, Walters entered into a business arrangement with a friend and fellow collector, Samuel P. Avery of New York. As one of the earliest knowledgeable and honest art dealers, Avery was a key figure in the history of American art collecting. With the help of Lucas, Walters and Avery amassed enormous collections, as well as dealing profitably in art. Well-connected in Parisian art circles, Walters and Avery were both appointed “commissioners” to the Paris exhibition of 1867, the first major display of Japanese art in the West—a revelation to which they were highly responsive.

Walters not only collected Oriental ceramics but also developed an intellectual interest in the subject. He commissioned S. W. Bushell’s ten-volume Oriental Ceramic Art and wrote a more modest work himself. He was persuaded that the Chinese were “preeminent” in ceramics and assumed responsibility for explaining this to Americans. Having acquired a great fortune by refinancing railroads in the postbellum-South, Walters' interest in art ceased to be commercial. With Avery, he scoured European collections to enhance his own. Walters' son Henry, who accompanied his father to the Vienna exhibition of 1873, became a great connoisseur and added to the Walters collection after his father's death in 1894—at which time it contained nearly 2,400 pieces of Chinese ceramics. Ultimately, the collection and other Walters family acquisitions
became the holdings of what is now known as the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.  

In the postwar years, Avery was the most reputable art dealer in New York, and probably the most reputable dealer in the United States. His knowledge of European art and art markets brought all the major collectors of the 1870s and 1880s to his door. In addition to European sources, Avery was able to develop superb contacts with Chinese collectors when his brother Benjamin was appointed American minister to China by President Ulysses Grant in 1874. Avery's role easily allowed him to become a central figure in the determination of American taste in art. He influenced what was available as art in public collections. As a result, virtually every major collection in the United States, whether in New York, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati or Detroit, contained Chinese ceramics. The bulk of Avery's collection of Chinese ceramics was purchased for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1879 -- that museum's first major commitment to Oriental art.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts well illustrates the point that major museum collections derived from the activity of a few private collectors. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Boston Museum housed the West's finest collection of East Asian art. Whereas Walters and Avery had concentrated on Chinese ceramics, the Boston Museum acquired enormous quantities of Japanese ceramics, drawings, paintings, and prints. Much of this art came from the collections of Edward S. Morse, Sturgis Bigelow, Denman Ross, Charles G. Weld, and Ernest Fenollosa -- of whom more will be said below.

The European and particularly French craving for japonnerie dates back to the Paris Exhibition of 1867, the year in which artists, collectors, and critics formed the Société Japonaise du Jîng-lar -- meeting monthly for dinners complete with sake and chopsticks. Widespread American awareness of the superb quality of Japanese art is generally dated from the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. The great international fairs had popped up all over Europe since mid-century and had provided an opportunity for Asian as well as European countries to display art and other wares. The American Crystal Palace Exhibition opened in New York in 1853 with some Japanese art lent by the Dutch monarch, but apparently nothing from China. The Japanese items received little critical attention, although there was a reference to "grotesque" statues and a few items were portrayed in the New York Illustrated News. In contrast, the Centennial exhibition was an enormous success, attracting over ten million visitors -- and the Japanese exhibit drew the most favorable attention. In the United States, as in Europe, the "restive desire for a freshening of the cultural atmosphere" was emerging.
China and Japan had been invited to participate in the Centennial, but the art offerings of both were placed in the Main Building, rather than in the Art Department or Art Gallery. Nonetheless, the Japanese government, which controlled the selection of Japanese goods to be displayed, chose to stress the aesthetic rather than the commonplace, high culture rather than everyday life. The Japanese exhibit was one of the Centennials's largest and most novel display, but several reviewers insisted it was the "delicacy and perfection" of Japanese workmanship that attracted the crowds and the plaudits. In particular, the superiority of ancient Japanese works to European work of comparable age appeared to delight Americans. Although a writer for The Nation contended that the collection was an unexceptional selection of Japanese work, not equal to what they had shown in Vienna, the Atlantic Monthly's reviewer was ecstatic. Bronzes, ceramics, paintings, and screens all moved him. Everything else seemed vulgar by comparison; the chinaware of England and New England now struck him as "elaborately ugly and grotesque."26

The Chinese exhibit had been chosen primarily by Robert Hart, Inspector General of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Hart sent antique ceramics and water colors. Chinese ceramics were praised once more by the critics, but the water colors which depicted a wide range of Chinese life attracted larger crowds. But China's display aroused considerably less excitement than did Japan's. Neil Harris has noted that while Japanese art appealed to Americans thirsty for exotica, fewer visitors were attracted to the Chinese exhibits. Perhaps the relative spareness of line and decoration in Japanese art pleased Americans repelled by the ornateness of European and Chinese export art. An obvious explanation would stress the superior quality of Japanese workmanship, but it is at least possible that their displays' aesthetic appearance made the difference -- that the Japanese had a better sense of how to display their treasures than Hart had of presenting the Chinese materials.27

While it is difficult to be sure of why Japanese art proved to be the sensation of America's 1876 exhibition, there is no doubt that thereafter Japanese influence on American art and design soared, and there was awakened increased interest in collecting Japanese art. The Japanese allegedly brought truckloads of pottery to the Philadelphia Centennial and sold most of it. Soon thereafter, American kiln sites throughout the East and the Midwest were producing Japanese-influenced ceramics. The art director of Tiffany's imported Japanese craftsmen to help produce metals of various colors. Henry O. Havemeyer, the New York sugar baron, began his collecting career in Philadelphia in 1876 by buying exotic Japanese art in
volume, as he bought sugar. Havemeyer bought pots, lacquerware, sword guards, carved ivory, silks, and brocades by the dozens. He even had a Japanese ceiling installed in the "Rembrandt room" of his home.\textsuperscript{28}

Neil Harris has suggested that Americans who saw the Japanese display and who ransacked the Japanese bazaar at the Centennial exhibition came away with a heightened respect and admiration for the Japanese. The people who created such sensitive work had to be sensitive themselves. There may not have been any more understanding of Japanese culture, but there was greater respect for and interest in that culture in art circles and, conceivably among the millions who visited the fair.

Americans also had a sense of the Japanese as a people with not only a glorious past, but also a promising future. Unlike the Chinese, who seemed unresponsive to Western ideas and appeared satisfied to bask in the glories of the past, the Japanese seemed eager to learn, eager for progress. A few Americans who went to Japan to offer Western ideas, took advantage of the extraordinary opportunity to study and collect Japanese art. Morse and Feno\llosa were the most important of these.

Edward S. Morse was a self-taught New England zoologist who worked out of the Peabody Academy of Science in Salem, Massachusetts. The institution derived from a bequest from George Peabody for the purchase of the East India Marine Hall to house the collection of "natural and artificial curiosities, particularly such as are to be found beyond Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn." In 1877, Morse accepted an invitation at the Imperial University in Tokyo to help develop Japan's natural sciences. Up to that point, Morse had demonstrated no special interest in art. He was an inveterate collector, but his taste ran to seashells. Specifically, he collected brachiopods, the shells of nearly extinct molluscoid marine animals.\textsuperscript{29}

Japan, in addition to its many other attractions, was a brachiopod collector's heaven. Most of the existing members of the species had found refuge there. One day, in a china shop, Morse pounced on a shell -- which turned out not to be a shell at all, but a ceramic imitation, a saucer fashioned after a scallop-like shell. The potter's imitation of nature awakened Morse to the beauty of Japanese pottery. Soon he was collecting ceramics as he collected shells. He had to have one specimen of every kind. The more he collected, the more he came to love the richness of design and the whimsey of Japanese potters -- the deliberate distortions that offended Westerns who prized symmetry and smoothness. Morse studied the clays, glazes, and techniques of firing. Introduced to Japanese connoisseurs, he quickly mastered dating pots and identifying potters, glazes,
and kiln sites -- as well as absorbing their tastes. Within a few years, Morse had assembled the finest collection of Japanese ceramics in the Western world and knew more about that art form than anyone else in the West. On a trip through Europe in the early 1880s, he was called in to correct labels on European collections and European art dealers' stock, like Samuel Bing, Europe's leading dealer in Japanese art.

Like most teachers, Morse was a compulsive educator. What he had learned about Japanese ceramics and culture, he was determined to share. He won over Fenollosa, whose knowledge and reputation would quickly exceed his own, and Bigelow and Weld, each of whom became major collectors of Japanese art. For most of the rest of his life, Morse lectured and wrote about various aspects of Japanese culture and, of course, about brachiopods. Morse's ceramic and ethnographic collections ultimately formed the basis for the great collections at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Peabody Academy (later Peabody Museum), respectively.

Morse's interest in the culture of Japan transcended pottery. He was fascinated by Japanese architecture and many of the artifacts of daily life. He wrote an important book, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (which went through four editions and at least eight printings by 1895), and forever waxed eloquently about the sense of beauty of the "common country farmer." Morse was delighted by "the beautiful hedges along the road, the clean-swept walks before the doors, and in the houses everything so neat and the various objects in perfect taste; the dainty teacups, teapots, bronze vessels for holding the burning charcoal, beautiful grained panels, odd knots from trees, and woody fungus hollowed out to hold flowers." He also wrote a less important, privately circulated brochure, *Latrines of the East*, which included information about Chinese culture forced upon him during a brief trip to Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Canton.

Morse did not exhibit, however, any interest in the political culture of Japan or in Japanese history. History as past politics concerned him little no matter what the country in question. Perhaps more surprising was his relative lack of interest in Japanese painting or print-making. He could see and understand the beauty of objects designed to be used -- objects that could be felt, turned over, and examined in the hand -- but was less drawn to the purely visual arts. Taken to Nikkō, he was more attracted by shells he found on the shore of nearby Lake Chūzenji than by the elaborate decorations of the Tokugawa shrines. Roof tiles engaged him more than the garishly painted, elaborately carved friezes commissioned by the Tokugawas. Nonetheless, Morse valued what he saw sufficiently to remark that having seen Japanese pictorial art,
he had lost his taste for European old masters. Dorothy Wayman, his biographer, suggests that he never had any taste in Western art, that he was drawn mostly to the big bounding horses painted by Rosa Bonheur, a contemporary Frenchwoman. Indeed, Wayman argues that it was Morse's ignorance of Western culture that left him receptive to Asian culture.

The fact that Morse lacked formal education is not proof that he lacked knowledge of Western culture, even "high" culture. He would not have learned much about the fine arts in mid-nineteenth century American universities in any event. More to the point, his acquaintance with Charles Eliot Norton, America's leading advocate of the philosophy of art and the fine arts as part of a liberal education, cannot be ignored. On the other hand, Morse may have felt insecure about lacking a Harvard degree, and Norton may have convinced him of a gap in his education. The knowledge Morse gained of Japanese art would fill that gap — and would provide an advantage in his contacts with high-toned Boston society. Without benefit of psychoanalytic tools, the idea cannot be pressed, but Morse's eccentric behavior in the United States, his calculated uncouthness with Boston society matrons like Isabella Stewart Gardner, fits one possible pattern: a man with a sense of alienation from the culture into which he was born finds cultural identity abroad.

Morse clearly manifested a profound respect for and considerable understanding of Japanese culture. He understood and admired the way the Japanese people lived, especially the aesthetic values of village life. He never described oddities or curiosities in Japanese pottery as ugly or grotesque. He transmitted his appreciation of Japanese culture to a generation of New Englanders, as well as to a few wealthy collectors. Morse is also credited with inspiring the Japanese effort to preserve national treasures by controlling their sale to foreigners. Unlike most foreign collectors in developed countries, Morse expressed concern over the loss to Japan as he and others like him purchased Japanese antiquities while the Japanese, determined to be modern, hungered for what was new.

Morse also differed from men like Walters and Avery in that he acquired his taste for Asian art in Asia and not in Europe. Neither Walters nor Avery ever visited Asia or indicated any particular interest in the larger culture of the countries whose art they were purchasing. They lived in Europe and bought as a new craze for Asian art swept the continent. Sturgis Bigelow, too, developed his taste for Japanese art while living in France, the center of the late nineteenth century japonaiserie fad. In Bigelow's case, an attraction to the art of Japan led him, with the help of Morse, to Japan and a broader appreciation of Japanese culture. Bigelow became attracted to
Japanese Buddhism, taught Buddhist philosophy at Harvard, and arranged to be buried at Mt. Hiei Temple in Kyoto. Presumably, respect for a nation's culture, but clearly it is not sufficient to demonstrate understanding of that culture.

In Fenollosa's case, the love of Japanese painting which he acquired so quickly after arrival in Japan drew him into an intense, lifetime commitment to the study of East Asian culture. Larry Chisholm has presented the Fenollosa story for our generation, but American consciousness of East Asian art in the last two decades of the nineteenth century cannot be examined adequately without reviewing some of it.

Fenollosa's road to Japan began with Morse who was asked by the Japanese to recruit an American instructor of philosophy and political economy. Morse turned to Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard, who recommended Fenollosa. Fenollosa arrived in Japan in 1878 with a more finely developed understanding of aesthetics than Morse, and stayed for approximately twelve years. In 1880, he was appointed head of both the Imperial Museum and the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts. By 1884, Fenollosa's review of Louis Gonse's *L'Art japonais* had established him as the West's foremost authority on Japanese art.

Fenollosa not only admired Japanese painting and prints, he bought as extensively as his means permitted -- and perhaps then some. In 1886, he sold what he had collected to Charles Weld, whose family, like Bigelow's, had made its fortune in the China trade. Weld bought the collection at Morse's recommendation and agreed it would be called the "Fenollosa-Weld Collection." Fenollosa also advised Bigelow on his purchases -- as he later advised Charles Freer and others. Fenollosa retained a consistent interest in the entrepreneurial side of promoting Japanese art in America. Among his operations was the creation of a stable of Japanese artists who painted as Fenollosa thought suitable for the American market.

Both Weld and Bigelow placed many of their acquisitions in the Museum of Fine Arts. In 1890, a new wing had to be built to house the East Asian collection and Fenollosa returned to the United States to serve as its curator, a post which he held from 1891 to 1896. During his tenure, the Boston Museum emerged as the greatest center for the study of East Asian art in the United States and probably in the Western world. Fenollosa ran an extraordinary string of exhibitions of Japanese art. His Hokusai premier received rave notices, followed by shows of early nineteenth century *kakemono* by Kaibun and Hoyen; sixteenth century screens; prints from the collections of Samuel Bing; eleventh and twelfth century Buddhist paintings from Daitoku-ji; and pre-seventeenth century paintings. In 1892, the museum purchased Morse's collection of Japanese ceramics and Morse himself became Keeper of Japanese Pottery (while serving
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do more understand perspective than he could understand logic. Generalized contempt for Asians affected perceptions of Asian art. It was different, it was Asian, it was therefore inferior.

Certainly by the 1890s, American collectors' attitudes toward Chinese and Japanese prints and paintings had changed. For some years academic art had been under attack in Europe. Insistence upon "realism" was being challenged at home and abroad. Japanese prints had proved useful to Whistler, as well as to a host of French impressionist efforts to change artistic conventions. East Asian art became intertwined with modernism, with avant-garde Western painting. Each prepared the way for the other.

In the last years of the nineteenth century, art circles in America were receptive to new symbols and conventions. The uproar over the Armory show years later (1913) indicates that victory was far from complete in the days when Fenollosa and Morse reigned at the Boston Museum and Charles Freer committed himself to collecting Chinese and Japanese paintings. America's transition from a traditional to an industrial society was virtually complete, however, and the impact of the change in American culture was reflected in changes in taste. Indeed, the process by which a man like Sturgis Bigelow turned to Buddhism and Asian art provides a case study for Richard Hofstadter's concept of status crisis in late nineteenth century American society, as Jackson Lears has demonstrated.

As for "understanding" East Asian art, there is no evidence to indicate that more than a handful of Americans could make such a claim: Fenollosa and Freer certainly; probably Denman Ross; perhaps Morse; maybe Bigelow. What occurred involved less understanding than a respect and acceptance of Chinese and Japanese art as art. And to accept another culture's aesthetic values, artistic conventions, and symbols, to accept the work of its artists as art, as something more than exotica or curiosities, is to grant dignity to that other culture, to be less contemptuous. To accept East Asian art as real art was a step toward accepting East Asians as real people. If their art was precious, the product of sophistication, skill, and genius, then as a people, they were capable of sophistication, skill, and genius.

America's respect for East Asian art in the late nineteenth century was consonant with the contemporary view of Japan as a progressive nation. Both ancient and modern Japanese art were admired. The Japanese were a people with a great past and a great future. Attitudes toward China were more complex. Collectors valued ancient, but not contemporary, Chinese art. Americans' response to Chinese art was consonant with their prevailing perception of China as a once great civilization in rapid decline.
In the case of Japanese art, the value Americans placed on it appears to have been independent of the value they placed on Japanese political culture, but the two might have reinforced each other -- respect for one strengthening respect for the other. It is likely, however, that contempt for China as a regressive nation which resisted Westernization affected the value they placed on Chinese art. It is not inconceivable that two or three hundred years from now tastes will have changed sufficiently to class some nineteenth or early twentieth century Qing painters with the Sung or Yuan masters. Attitudes toward Chinese ceramics are changing already. Art critics and historians continue to argue that pre-Qing ceramics were superior to the work the Chinese took from their kilns in the nineteenth century, but they now acknowledge the exceptional quality of Qing glazes. To Americans at the turn of the century, however, it was apparent that China would have to be returned to classical greatness -- by the West -- before it would produce great art again.

Finally, American interest in East Asian art affected Chinese and Japanese culture. Artists in China and Japan devoted themselves to producing art for Western, sometimes specifically American, markets. The fact that so much energy and capital went into export ware may explain the alleged decline of ceramic art in China. Ceramicists and painters of both China and Japan modified their styles, their subjects, and occasionally their medium, to sell abroad. Even Fenollosa encouraged this activity. And inevitably -- in Japan more than in China -- some local collectors came to prize what Westerners prized, whether traditional or export art.

Tastes in art changed on both sides of the Pacific, most obviously in the United States. East Asian art affected and enriched American culture. The artists of China and Japan may not have won the understanding of many Americans, but they won the respect of collectors and of the millions who attended the international exhibitions and visited the art museums that spread across the United States in the last third of the nineteenth century. Without posing a substantial challenge to America's Spencerian faith in its own superiority, East Asian art raised the level of discourse between the two cultures.
NOTES for *Art and American Understanding of East Asian Culture*

20. Ibid., 1 December 1854.
21. Ibid., 16 June 1860.
23. Randall, "Masterpieces of Chinese Porcelain".
32. Fenollosa to Morse, 26 April 1884, in Wayman, Morse, 288.
33. March, China and Japan in Our Museums, 40-41.
34. Harris, "Japan at American Fairs," 4046; Leers, No Place of Grace, 60-96.
36. Sullivan, Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, 207.
37. Freer to Frederick Keppel, 17 September 1894, to Fetch Lal Mehta, 7 November 1895, to Tozo Takayanagi, 25 February 1893, Freer Letterpressbooks.
II. CHINESE VIEWS OF AMERICA, 1868-1980: A SURVEY

by R. David Arkush (The University of Iowa) and Leo O. Lee (The University of Chicago)

During his visit to the United States in 1946, the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg is said to have remarked (or is it a Russian proverb?) that to know a woman or a nation takes either thirty days or thirty years. Leaving aside the matter of women, we can see what he meant about perceiving other societies. One's first impressions of a new country are fresh and sharp, as anyone who has traveled abroad knows; and accounts by visitors of just a few months can sometimes be startlingly perceptive. It hardly needs to be mentioned that one of the best books ever written about the United States was by an aristocratic French prison inspector who spent nine months on these shores 150 years ago. Democracy in America is not, of course, a simple travel journal; after returning to France, Alexis de Tocqueville labored eight years researching and writing his two-volume opus. Still, the fact that he viewed American society from a foreign perspective has much to do with the book's merits.

The corpus of European writings about the United States is enormous and well known. Many works are still read -- Charles Dickens and Frances Trollope (the mother of novelist Anthony) are perhaps the most famous after Tocqueville -- and dozens of lesser known observers are represented in current anthologies of foreign views of the United States.¹ In contrast, Americans are almost wholly ignorant of Chinese writing about the United States. This neglect is unfortunate, for though many Chinese works are superficial and perhaps none is in a class with Tocqueville's, there are several accounts in this large literature which are well worth reading, not least because their non-Western perspective offers a view of America which differs interestingly from that of European observers.²

I

Serious writing in Chinese on the United States was first stimulated by China's defeat in the Opium War in 1842. Before that there had been little interest in Westerners, who were
thought of (if at all) as barbaric, greedy, bellicose, and physically grotesque (big noses and hairy bodies). Chinese ignorance about the West is apparent in an 1820 geography which describes America as a small island off the coast of England. A more informed attitude is reflected in two pioneering works, Wei Yuan's 1844 Haiguo tuzhi (Illustrated gazetteer of the maritime nations) and Xu Jiyu's Ying-huan zhi-lue (Short account of the oceans around us) of 1848. Compiled by officials who were in touch with foreigners at southeast coastal ports, both of these books include accurate information on American geography, history, and government taken from translations of Western works made by missionaries. It would be another quarter of a century, however, before descriptions were published by Chinese who had actually been to America. Although thousands of coolies sailed to the West coast in the years following the 1849 gold rush, most were illiterates whose horizons and American experiences were limited, and they seem to have left few published comments on the United States. (There are some poignant poems on the walls of the immigration detention center at Angel Island.) Nor do we find impressions of America by any of that extraordinary first group of 120 students who spent several years in New England in the 1870s under Rong Hong (Yung Wing). Rong Hong's 1909 autobiography (which he wrote in English), My Life in China and America, tells regrettably little about his views of his adopted country.

The earliest first-hand accounts of America were apparently written by diplomats whose responsibilities included representing the interests of Chinese coolies. China's first diplomatic mission to the United States was headed by the American Anson Burlingame in 1868. One of the officials who accompanied Burlingame, a Manchu named Zhigang, published a journal of the trip, Chu-shi tai-xi ji (an account of the first mission to the West; 1877), with several pages on American industrial and scenic sights. In the decades that followed, succeeding Chinese ministers to Washington also left official diaries, reporting in particular their conversations with American government officials. There is Shi-Mei jilue (My trip as envoy to America; 1878) by Chen Lanbin, whose 1878 mission resulted in having Rong Hong's students recalled; Zhang Yinhuan's much longer Sanzhou riji (Diary from three continents: 1896); and Cui Guoyin's Chu-shi Mei-ri-Biguo riji (My diary as Minister to the U.S., Spain, and Peru; 1894). None of these works would become as notorious as an equivalent account about Europe -- Guo Songtao's "pro-barbarian" diary of his years as the first Chinese emissary to London and Paris caused such a stir in
That Guo was forced to retire and live the rest of his life in obscurity. Still, writing about America was apparently not without risk in the nineteenth century; Zhigang's career is said to have been ruined as a result of his trip.8

Almost all Chinese official travelers took the route from Shanghai through Hong Kong and Nagasaki to San Francisco by steamer; once in the United States, they traveled mainly by train. Like the members of the huge Japanese embassy of 1860 described by Masao Miyoshi in his As We Saw Them, these Chinese officials meticulously recorded mileage traveled and, while at sea, their daily longitude and latitude. Yet this concern for trivial detail probably does not reflect, as Miyoshi has argued of the Japanese, a search for mental certitude, an anxious grasping for bearings when separated from familiar surroundings. The Chinese mental universe was not so rigidly structured as that of the Tokugawa Japanese, and by the last third of the nineteenth century the concept of the "middle kingdom" had been significantly transformed. As new maps enriched Chinese knowledge of other countries, ideas about China's relations with the outside world changed accordingly. It is significant that at the end of Zhigang's diary he cited the ancient philosopher Zou Yan's statement that China was only one of the eighty-one units of tian-xia (all under heaven). He also wrote that his travels and geographical studies had borne out the legendary Emperor Yu's concept of "nine continents" (jiu-zhou), which Zhigang now found to be northern Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet and India, Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Southeast Asia and Malacca, and China.9 This remarkably non-Sinocentric picture of the globe suggests that an awareness of the outside world had already considerably expanded Chinese horizons, both geographical and psychological.

Zhigang's trip abroad, like those of subsequent voyagers, was a series of physical trials and tribulations: he suffered from the climate, illnesses, and seasickness. But his intellectual journey seems to have been positive. Zhigang's diary rarely mentions feelings of unhappiness or disappointment; unlike the Tokugawa Japanese, he shows no lack of interest, narrowness of vision, or reluctance to engage in interpretation. His journey was a series of exciting discoveries, particularly of the "New Continent's" technological wonders. Their mission was to establish diplomatic contacts, so Zhigang may have felt constrained to omit any personal misgivings from his official recounting; but his sense of delight and wonder seems genuine. Of course, traveling with Burlingame, an American who had lived some years in China, must have done much to ease his trip.

Zhigang's preoccupation with technology clearly reflects the "ships and guns" mentality of Chinese officialdom's late
nineteenth century "self-strengthening" movement. In his short
diary he lavished his descriptions -- sometimes in great
technical and statistical detail -- on such things as the
steamship which bore the delegation across the Pacific
(complete with tonnage, measurements, and the workings of the
engine), the "fire-wheeled" train (hou-lun-che) he first rode
near San Francisco, shipyards, a mint, a printing plant, an
artillery emplacement in Boston harbor, an observatory in
Cambridge, a textile mill in Lawrence, farm tools, a steel mill
in Buffalo. He marveled not only at the scenic beauty of
Niagara Falls, which seems to have been described in virtually
all nineteenth-century Chinese (and European) travelogues, but
also at its water-powered paper mill.

Compared to his technological observations, Zhigang's
discussion of the diplomatic and political aspects of his
mission is superficial. Aside from his copious explication of
the Sino-American treaty which Burlingame signed for China,
Zhigang says very little about American politics or society.
His descriptions of dinner parties are brief and almost
formulaic, emphasizing the cordial atmosphere and the pleasure
everyone derived from the occasion. Various formal speeches
are also uniformly described as pleasant, if boring. Zhigang's
account of his meeting with the American president (the title is
phonetically transcribed as Bo-li-xi-dun and elevated to the
top of the line in the style used to refer to the Chinese
emperor) is devoid of the kind of detailed attention to protocol
and ceremonial dress found in the 1860 Japanese accounts:

On the 16th, Minister Burlingame and several of
us went to call on the Bo-li-xi-dun, which means
general-in-chief. At noon, went first to the Foreign
Ministry and then followed Grand Minister Hua
[elsewhere "Hua-er-te," a strange transliteration for
William Seward] to the [President's] residence, which
is popularly called the White House because it is
built with white stones. First went to the rotunda in
the middle to wait for the other ministers, still led
by Minister Hua. President Johnson arrived at the
rotunda and stood facing south; Minister Burlingame
read in the foreign language what was prepared for
presentation. When he had finished, Minister Hua
took the text in the foreign language which the
President had prepared and read it to Minister
Burlingame for him. When he had finished, the
National credentials were handed over to the
President, who personally unrolled and looked at
them, and then handed them to Minister Hua to be
rolled up again. Then Minister Hua one by one
introduced [us] to the President....

The evening of the 20th. The President invited [us] for a public dinner. Attending were the envoys and chief ministers of countries with diplomatic relations with China. At the dinner long tables were used; guests and hosts were seated together and socialized as usual. During the conversations [the President] inquired about the agricultural methods of Chinese farmers and said that China and America, only separated by a stretch of water, were really neighbors and that as the future relationship continued there would surely be more cordiality and harmony. The Minister respectfully made his response as appropriate, and everyone was happy.

Zhigang next proceeds with a short description of the two houses of Congress and of a visit to Washington's grave, which he had read about in Xu Jiyu's Ying-huan zhi-lue. He notes the unpretentious decor of the site: low fences, iron railings, and an inscription on the gravestone which he could not understand. He then pays this tribute to Washington:

Of his progeny there is still a female descendant who is relegated with the common people. A former military officer, he rose up at a time when people's hearts were stirred and eventually accomplished great deeds over thousands of miles. After his mission was accomplished and his reputation established, he retired, unshackled by fame or wealth. He was truly the hero of his epoch.

As the first Chinese eyewitness account of an around-the-world diplomatic tour the historical significance of Zhigang's diary is unquestionable. Beyond that, it is lively, succinctly written, and filled with personal touches as well as the kind of detailed technical information which was to characterize subsequent official diaries. Zhigang appears from this account to have been an open-minded yet soft-spoken man (less argumentative than a Guo Songtao), who managed to turn this official chore into an enriching experience for both himself and his readers.

Subsequent diaries by other diplomats are even more detailed, and some are much longer, describing the towns and cities which Chinese envoys visited in their more extensive travels across the American continent. American technology -- ships, trains, machines, mines, factories, as well as the ever-fascinating Niagara Falls -- continue to be a focus. Descriptions are stuffed with figures and statistics, as if to
show that the authors had in fact carried out a close inspection, although it is likely that many of the figures were in fact taken from American publications and other sources provided by interpreters and assistants. Why did diplomatic diarists emphasize "objective" detail over subjective and personal impressions? We believe that it was not timidity or lack of interest, but their official purpose which determined these diaries' content. The diplomatic diary was a tool of self-strengthening policy; an entry in Cui Guoyin's account, for example, indicates that the Zongli Yamen had issued instructions that all envoys abroad were to keep careful diaries which would be submitted to the Yamen for "mutual reference," "clues in negotiations," and aid in acquiring information about the "model of wealth and power." 12

There is, of course, a long tradition of writing about voyages in China. The factual emphasis of the diaries we have been discussing is traceable particularly to a tendency developed in the seventeenth century to make the travelogue a record of knowledge. Unlike earlier travel accounts in which poetic impulses -- Taoist withdrawal into nature or cultural identification with famous sites -- were more evident, in seventeenth-century Chinese diaries geographical exploration became an intellectual more than an aesthetic experience; the most famous travel writer of the late Ming, Xu Xiake, paid such meticulous attention to the physical details of the landscapes he visited that his own sense of self was totally submerged. 13 This more factual emphasis was related, too, to the intellectual tradition of the Qing "statecraft" school, which dominated the thinking of many high-ranking officials and scholars from the eighteenth century on. Particularly with the opening of China following the Opium War, "barbarian affairs" assumed increasing importance. Knowledge of maritime countries became a necessity, and studying such seminal works as Wei Yuan and Xu Jiyu was de rigueur for Chinese scholars interested in self-strengthening and diplomatic intercourse as new forms of national defense. It is natural, therefore, that the Chinese diplomatic travel diary should incorporate these paramount concerns, extending the scope of native geographical inquiry to include other lands.

In view of the self-strengtheners' search for national wealth and power, it is no wonder that in the "new continent" of America, a country which began to industrialize in the mid-nineteenth century, technological splendor appeared more remarkable than the inhabitants, who paled into insignificance. Chinese visitors were carried away by America's magnificent multi-storied buildings and speedy new trains and streetcars, and Americans seemed to them to have similarly impressive characteristics. There was frequent praise for American
efficiency and carefulness, which extended to such thoughtful
details as menus in both English and Chinese (although our
Chinese visitors uniformly refrained from discussing American
food). American high society from San Francisco to New York,
which regularly hosted social functions in honor of official
Chinese guests, was lauded for its elegance. Chinese diarists
seldom mentioned the beauty of American ladies (unlike Japanese
visitors, who expressed attraction to whites and blondes), though
they did comment on their clothing -- bared neck and upper
torsos -- and the custom of mixed company at formal banquets.
But the general impressions seem to have been favorable
despite their outlandish dresses and gowns; American women were
merely different, not "barbarian."

To the extent that Americans figure in these official
diaries, it is not as individuals but as historical or
geographical units and groups: The white man and his massacre
of American Indians; the Mormons' curious customs; the
occupations of peoples in various places. Chen Lanbin's
exceptionally detailed book provides some fascinating Chinese
equivalents of European chinoiserie, tidbits which may have
been intended not only to discharge his official duty but also
to arouse in the general Chinese reader a curiosity about
"barbarian exotica." An example is his account of Utah towns
and their Mormons, observed crossing the country on the new
transcontinental railroad (completed only a few years earlier,
in 1869, with the help of Chinese labor of course):

The religion here is different from that
practices in other states of the Flowery-Flag
country. According to Western custom a man cannot
marry two women, but this religion permits the taking
of concubines. Because the American government
considers this teaching heterodox, it has repeatedly
sent troops to restrain and reform them, but they did
not obey. On July 24, 1847, [Brigham Young] led the
followers of this religion here. Originally there
were only 293 people; now the population totals more
than 130,000. The leader died last year leaving
nineteen wives and concubines and 67 small children
(not counting those who have grown up)...

At 4:05 arrived at Men-niu [Monument?]. Total
mileage covered: 807 miles. This place borders on
the Great Salt Lake, and when the wind from the lake
blows on the face the stench is hard to bear. Once
it [the salt] gets on the skin it does not sink in; it
tastes like sea water, very salty and bitter... At
8:00 arrived at E-dun [Ogden] for a rest. Total
mileage, 881 miles. Passengers from San Francisco
stop here for half an hour to change trains. The town is located some seven miles from the railway station. Elevation, 4301 feet. Population, about 6500, mostly Mormons. On the roadside are displayed metal ores and precious gems for sale. The climate is mild, yielding rich produce. At 10:45 arrived at Yan-da [Uinta?]; total mileage, 890 miles. The elevation of this place is 4560 feet. In 1862, followers of the Mormon religion and those of Morris (who was originally a Mormon but later wanted to establish a religion of his own and hence started a war) fought each other here for three days. The followers of Morris were all killed, and some 300 women and children were captured and sent to work as coolies to construct residential areas which were tens of li wide and housed thousands. Later the American dispatched troops there and released them...14

Chen's diary continues in this vein for scores of pages. Aside from their preoccupation with geographical and technological data, these Chinese diarists were most concerned about Chinese in America. Almost all of the accounts by late-nineteenth century visitors report that they were greeted by their countrymen -- Chinese diplomatic personnel and leaders of the local Chinese community -- when they landed on American shores. The first event that Chen Lanbin describes on his arrival in San Francisco was a sumptuous welcome from local Chinese merchants who, all wearing Chinese ceremonial gowns, invited the entire diplomatic party to a lavish banquet on the ninth floor of a deluxe hotel.15 Now that their Chinese compatriots dotted the American landscape (Chen Lanbin gave a list of all American states in which there was a sizable number of Chinese immigrants), these diarists expressed particular concern about everything Chinese, from abuse of coolies to the quality of Chinese restaurants. In these passages we find a tone of emotional involvement which departs from the diaries' pervasive data-recording objectivity -- although the diarists offer curiously few suggestions about bettering the lives of their compatriots in an alien land.

As the century progressed and more official diaries appeared, they gradually became less strictly objective and matter-of-fact. In his work of 1894, for example, Cui Guoyin abandons the convention of using the third person or no personal pronoun to use his own name,16 and amidst the official data he records there are numerous personal perceptions and opinions. Observations also became more detailed and subtle. The first few pages of Cui's diary compare the cost of water control of
the Mississippi and the Yellow River; warn that foreign
countries often use tariffs as a pawn in negotiations; offer an
appreciative appraisal of Washington's streetcars; comment on
the public employment of women as copyists and clerks; compare
Chinese and American willows; and discuss the American postal
system which, unlike China's, combined both official dispatches
and regular mail. Even Cui's remarks on the weather were more
detailed: "today it was so warm that an unlined garment could
be worn"; "the weather turned cold and began to snow at noon,
the snow melting when it touched the ground."

Several visitors in the late Qing and early Republican
periods followed Cui in blending official information with
personal reflections and details. Two interesting examples
which still keep the classical form (including classical
language) but incorporate increasingly personal impressions are
Jin Shaocheng's record of his trip to America to attend the
Eighth International Congress on Prisons in America in 1913, and
the politician Tang Hualong's diary of his travels in the United
States in 1918 (just before he was assassinated in British
Columbia). Jin relates a number of humorous details,
including a speech he gave which compared his "half-dumbness"
-- he could understand but not speak English -- to the American
who mistaking the Japanese ohayo (good morning) for "Ohio,"
responded with "New York!"

II

The one who almost single-handedly changed the entire
Chinese tradition of travel diary writing, as he did several
other spheres of intellectual and political life, is Liang
Qichao. In 1903, Liang spent two months in Canada and five in
the United States and wrote one of the best Chinese books on
America there is. He was only thirty when he made his trip
(Tocqueville had been 26) but, as a political journalist writing
from exile in Japan, he was already well known for his reformist
opposition to the Qing government and advocacy of progress and
democracy for China. While here, he traveled widely, crossing
the continent twice by railroad and visiting dozens of cities.
He talked to a variety of people from socialists to President
Theodore Roosevelt as well as to many Chinese immigrants, and
learned further from what appear to have been a number of
well-chosen readings. His Xin dalu youji (Notes from a journey
to the new continent) is a remarkably informative and incisive
work, which has shaped the view of the United States held by
many twentieth-century Chinese.

In his preface and "general principles," he explains that
the book was based on the extensive notes he took daily during
his seven months in North America. This was a standard approach; but Liang’s travelogue differs from all previous works of this genre in several significant ways. Although he visited America in his capacity as leader of the (outlawed) Chinese Reform Party, Liang’s book represented his own views, which diverged radically from those of his predecessors. Departing from the typical Chinese travelogue tradition, he largely omitted scenic descriptions, which he considered “not relevant to the major theses” and “a burden to the eyes.” His focus was entirely on the political, social, and historical landscape of America, and as such he is perhaps China’s closest equivalent to Tocqueville.

The organization of Liang’s book was also new. Rather than recount a daily chronology of his visit as most Chinese officials had done, Liang charted a spatial map of his ideas and reflections. Xin dalu youji unfolds as an intellectual journey with geographical signposts. Superimposed on the forty-eight entries are the names of the cities which he traversed: “From Yokohama to Canada,” “From Canada to New York,” “From New York to Hartford and Boston,” and so on through Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, Montana, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to “Return Journey.” Although these places are in the sequence of his trip, under each heading Liang wrote thematic essays rather than notes in chronological order. Thus his discussion of New York centers on issues related to economics and immigration; Washington, the American political system; Boston, the early history of American independence; Philadelphia, the Constitutional Congress; New Orleans, the status of blacks; and San Francisco, the Chinese population in Chinatown. Under the heading “Return Journey,” Liang’s conclusions are subdivided into “sundry comments on American customs” and four “brief commentaries on American politics.”

This organization, though seemingly makeshift, amounts to a cohesive presentation of Liang’s political, social, and historical concerns.

As a promoter of political reform in China, Liang was naturally most interested in the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system. He has little to say about technology; shipyards and factories interest him as indicators of American military and economic potential rather than as models of engineering. He wrote about newspapers, public libraries, museums, universities (and their Chinese students), city parks, the giant economic “trusts” (giving a list of the largest eighty or so, their dates of founding, and total assets), immigrants and their neighborhoods, political and economic and religious leaders (in addition to Roosevelt, he met with the leader of a Christian community in Cincinnati, a socialist
journalist in New York, and the incomparable J. P. Morgan, who gave him three minutes), the trans-Pacific cable and its impact on global communications, and above all, America's history, diplomatic policy, and political organization.

For the Chinese leader unfamiliar with the United States, Liang's book is an eminently informative primer. It was based on energetic research; in addition to his daytime interviews and excursions, Liang gathered information about America from newspapers which he read in the evenings with the aid of dictionaries and interpreters. He incorporated into his book large chunks of speeches by Roosevelt and others, and scholarly analyses drawn from the many important Western source he consulted to back up his own impressions, such as the massive 1700-page The American Commonwealth (which he presumably read in Japanese translation) by James Bryce, regarded by his contemporaries as Tocqueville's successor. The result is a vivid and intellectually stimulating account.

Liang noted in his preface that the United States was a "complex civilization" and "difficult to summarize." These complexities left him with a mixed response. In general, he admired America's founding spirit and basic constitutional structure. But he was disappointed by much of what he saw in practice: corruption, the spoils system, the overwhelming economic power of the trusts, and the glaring contradiction between glittering wealth and appalling poverty in New York; he had particular misgivings about the problems caused by America's large influx of immigrants. Liang also observed that America had produced notably few distinguished presidents, and -- like Tocqueville and Bryce -- he pondered the reasons. America had never had a privileged class which could nurture great statesmen, he said; moreover, the provincialism of America's state and national capitals -- in contrast to the sophisticated European metropolises -- failed to attract talented men. Furthermore, the power of the American presidents was too limited by short tenure, checks and balances, and the party system, which in Liang's view reduced the president to a mere puppet.

Still, he believed the system worked. He attributed its success to America's peculiar dual governmental structure, Federal and state: "The American political system is truly [the most] unimaginable in the world, for the United States has two kinds of government and its people two kinds of patriotism." To Liang, the persistence of local self-government in America demonstrated Rousseau's idea of democracy as a confederation of little states and Bornhak's notion that a republic must be confined to a small territory. At the same time, he perceived in American history evidence that the centrifugal tendencies of localism need to be counterbalanced, and that in fact, the
"centrifugal" Jeffersonian forces which had dominated American politics before Lincoln's presidency had been eclipsed by the centralizing Hamiltonian tradition.

Liang viewed this centralizing tendency in America with both alarm and approval. He cited Roosevelt's speech calling on Americans to discard their provincialism (cunluo siciang, literally "village mentality") as an indication of America's centralization and its potential imperialism, the latter appearing more ominous with the completion of the transpacific cable and Roosevelt's advocacy of a more aggressive American posture in the Pacific. At the same time, Liang maintained that the United States had been fortunate to have had strong leaders like Washington, Hamilton, and Lincoln. The system had been made workable by the founding fathers, drafting the Constitution in secret: "Who says America is a nation freely formed by all the people? I see only a few great men who forced it on them. Since this is true even of Americans who are so used to self-government, others should certainly take warning."23

The lessons Liang drew from all this were that even America's unique democracy required some centralization, that the world was moving inevitably toward authoritarianism, and that compared to republican government, constitutional monarchy "has fewer defects and is more adaptable."24 Finding themselves with near-total freedom in the United States or Australia, Chinese behaved worse than they did in China or other more authoritarian nations. The American dual political structure would therefore be inappropriate for China, Liang thought, particularly given the fact that China lacked the public spirit of America's local government. Roosevelt's denunciation of provincialism, on the other hand, was exactly what China needed; China required centralization under an enlightened state leadership which could forge diverse local bodies into a cohesive whole. This inestimably influential writer thus turned to anti-liberal German statism -- the ideas of Bluntschli and Bornhak -- as a more suitable model for China.25

Liang's appraisal of the United States was by no means completely negative. "An undertone of marvel and awe" in his writings can often be detected, as Chang Hao has noted.26 But two things tilted the balance from admiration toward alarm. First, Liang correctly sensed in Roosevelt's jingoistic argument for a stronger posture in the Pacific the rising temper of American imperialism at the turn of the century. American military and economic power could easily reach across the Pacific and prey on China. More importantly, Liang was convinced that China was not ready for American-style democracy. In San Francisco's Chinatown he saw a microcosm of Chinese society, splintered in utter chaos. In spite of the enthusiastic hospitality he received in America's Chinatowns, he
was scathingly critical of Chinese in America. If Chinese immigrants had to work long hours, it was because they were so inefficient. In public gatherings they were noisy and disorderly; they spat everywhere (Europeans made the same complaint about Americans); and their hunched shuffle contrasted sharply with Americans' upright and purposeful stride. Liang cited four profound defects in the Chinese national character: Chinese were "tribal people" and not true "citizens"; they had a "village mentality," not a national outlook; they lacked lofty ideals such as beauty, public spirit, and progress; and they were fit only for authoritarianism, not freedom.27 Thus, visiting America, Liang came to see his own countrymen as unready for democracy. They needed rulers like Cromwell, Lycurgus, or the Legalists Guan Zi and Shang Yang for "twenty, thirty, even fifty years before they can be given books by Rousseau and talked to about Washington."28

Liang wrote at a time of crisis of national self-confidence, when Chinese intellectuals worried, often in social-Darwinian terms, about the very survival of their nation. At such a time, his merciless critique of his own compatriots must have caused him much painful soul-scrutiny. Perhaps it was due to this introspective turn that he saw America as a contrast and not a model for China; his predecessors, who were not psychologically hobbled by a lack of national self-confidence, could be dazzled by America's technology, but to Liang such naive wonderment seemed no longer affordable. To modern Western readers the picture he gives of America is recognizable; to Chinese, his penetrating intelligence, coupled with strong emotions -- whatever his own personal biases -- provided the first mature and systematic account of the United States.

III

In decades following Liang Qichao's visit, America rapidly became more familiar to Chinese. Between the 1911 revolution and the revolution of 1949, tens of thousands of Chinese came to study, many staying on for years and becoming quite at home in American society. Even before arriving, these visitors had at least some proficiency in English and some acquaintance with Western culture, and not a few had been educated in American missionary schools in China. Xu Zhengkeng, for example, the author of a long book about the United States, had come to this country in the 1920s after graduating from St. John's University's middle school in Shanghai and Nanking University, both Christian institutions. Culture shock was not acute for him; his initial problems here were such relatively trivial matters as Italian or French words on restaurant menus and
country in August 1978, just on the eve of diplomatic recognition. Wang Ruoshui, deputy editor-in-chief of the Party's official newspaper, Renmin ribao (People's Daily), was amazed by New York skyscrapers and the speed of their elevators, the automatic ticket machines in the Washington subway, Disneyland, Americans' bizarre clothing, open Congressional sessions, and the fact that in offices and factories everyone was working instead of standing around idle.53 Other visitors from the People's Republic in 1978 and 1979 were astonished by the size of Sunday newspapers, the ubiquity of advertising, the 50% divorce rate, and the astronomical cost of medical care.54 The friendliness of the natives was also a surprise; one newsman wrote feelingly of a warm encounter with an American he recognized from twenty-odd years before -- when they had sat on opposing sides of the table at Panmunjon.55

Even an old America hand like Fei Xiaotong, back after twenty-five years, seemed uneasy in the face of the changes he found. Fei's booklet about his brief 1979 visit suggests bewilderment and discomfort behind his important-visitor facade (to be sure, his unease must stem in part from having been only recently rehabilitated after twenty years of disgrace and enforced silence). His new account is less personal and anecdotal, and more inclined, not surprisingly, to the social abstractions of Marxism. He is impressed with American computers, airports, home appliances, and the like, but criticizes the quality of American life, describing with an air of superiority the defacement of New York subways, the dangers of visiting Times Square, and Americans' spiritual bankruptcy -- manifest in faddish religions and the Jonestown massacre -- which he says springs from the insecurity of living in capitalist society.56 Fei and his 1979 Academy of Social Sciences travel group also wrote a book of reports about the trip for "internal circulation" (neibu -- printed, however, in an edition of 49,000). In these articles the members of the delegation, with varying degrees of subtlety, reported on where they went, what they did, whom they talked with, and what was said. But as with Fei's open account, they tend to generalize about American insecurity.57

In some ways the most recent Chinese writings on the United States are reminiscent of those of the nineteenth century. Most significant is the aim, sometimes implicit but often explicit, of studying American science and technology and maybe certain organizational methods, without becoming contaminated by capitalist values. As Wang Ruoshui put it at the conclusion of his pioneering series of articles, while the Japanese had learned both computers and strip-tease from the United States, the Chinese should ignore American "philosophy" and study only science. It is hard to know to what extent such statements
reflect personal feelings or just the currently approved line, but the return to the "ships and guns" mentality of China's self-strengthening period is striking.

V

Clearly, Chinese attitudes toward the United States have been varied and changing, and it is not possible to generalize about a single common Chinese view of America. Still, it seems to us that Chinese writers have tended to emphasize different aspects of America than did Europeans, to notice and respond to different things, and in doing so they offer a new perspective of the United States, different from that which Americans have been exposed to so far.

Chinese have been less impressed than Europeans with American egalitarianism. Tocqueville took egalitarianism almost as the starting point, the basis of American political and social characteristics: "America...exhibits in her social state an extraordinary phenomenon. Men are there seen on a greater equality in point of fortune and intellect, or, in other words, more equal in their strength, than in any other country of the world, or in any age of which history has preserved the remembrance." Many other Europeans have drawn a similarly unqualified picture of absolute social equality in the United States. A Polish visitor in the 1870s, for one example, claimed flatly that, "Here the people of various walks of life...are truly each other's equals... They do not stand on different rungs of the social ladder, for the simple reason that there is no ladder here at all. Everybody here stands on the same social level..." Such an emphasis -- indeed, overemphasis -- on equality in America is strikingly absent from the Chinese accounts we have read. Liang Qichao is typical of many in hardly mentioning the word "equality," but focusing instead on the contrasts between rich and poor in New York City. Time, no doubt, is a significant factor here; European images of America took shape in the early nineteenth century, before industrialization created new divisions in American society. Well over 300 European travel accounts were written during the period from 1795 to 1865, according to the section on "Travels and Descriptions" of the Harvard Guide to American History, while only about half as many are listed for the entire time since then. Liang Qichao's America of trusts and immigrant slums was not the same country Tocqueville had visited three quarters of a century earlier. Yet even the America of Tocqueville's day was probably not as egalitarian as he thought; besides, his views on this subject remained current in Europe long after the
industrial revolution. There are factors other than historical change underlying the European tendency to exaggerate this aspect of American society and the Chinese ignore it, factors reflecting the visitors' differing national perspectives.

Equality is a Western value, one of which Europeans were especially conscious in the century following the French Revolution; they could not fail to be struck by the contrast between their own countries' feudal background and aristocratic traditions and Americans socio-economic mobility in the nineteenth century. In the Chinese tradition, however, equality is not a significant ideal. China has long been a non-aristocratic society; the Chinese aristocracy of hereditary power-holders had disappeared a millennium earlier, and the socio-political structure since the Song, and especially in Ming and Qing times, while certainly hierarchical, has been characterized by considerable social mobility. Coming from such a society, Chinese observers were perhaps less likely to mistake America's social mobility and lack of an aristocracy for classlessness.

Another consideration is that Chinese have been more sensitive than Europeans to American racism. American mistreatment of Orientals must have done much to disabuse Chinese writers of the myth of American egalitarianism. They were very concerned about the status of Chinese-Americans; a description of some American Chinatown or other is almost de rigueur in Chinese travel books, and this interest naturally extended to the problems of other racial groups in America. In addition to Zou Taofen's investigation of conditions in Alabama, there is Hu Shi, who claimed he was instrumental in helping two black girls remain in their Cornell dormitory over the objections of some white students.\textsuperscript{61} Fei Xiaotong added a whole chapter on blacks to his version of Margaret Mead's book, and took her severely to task for not giving them consideration in her synthesis of "the American character." We probably should not overemphasize Chinese concern for American blacks, however. The did not really identify with them, and though they seldom fail to mention the race problem they have generally concluded that it is on the mend. None wrote with the vehemence of a European like Dickens, for example, who in a powerful final chapter to his American Notes compiled page after page of evidence from American newspapers of brutal treatment of slaves. Indeed, occasional comments like Liang Qichao's on southern blacks lusting after white women, Italian dirtiness, or Jewish control of banking -- not to mention his little essay on the various ways in which immigrants are harmful to American morality and politics\textsuperscript{62} -- show Chinese sometimes all too ready to adopt the prejudices of the dominant group in America.
Chinese Views of America

Chinese and European views of America have diverged in other ways as well. For one, Chinese visitors have been less bothered by the uncouth manners, crudeness, vulgarity, and boastfulness, the lack of artistic and intellectual refinement which figure so prominently in European accounts. America was a Babbitt Warren, in the view of one British author; while Matthew Arnold, examining the state of Civilization in the United States, found that "a great void exists in the civilization over there, a void of what is elevated and beautiful, of what is interesting." It is the rare European account which is free of such attitudes. Chinese, on the other hand, did not judge Americans by the standards of European culture; they did not expect them to act like Confucian junzi and did not care if they neglected their Latin and Greek. Next to the less censorious Chinese views, European complaints sound a bit petulant and defensive, perhaps even tinged with envy of young America's vigor and success. To be sure, the charges of American boorishness and vulgarity were not groundless; but they reflect a preconceived view of a raw and rude America formed early in the nineteenth century and, like European fascination with American egalitarianism, seem an exaggerated stereotype to which Chinese writers offer a valuable corrective.

Other American characteristics, both positive and negative, seem to have struck Chinese more than Europeans. One is the rush, pressure, tension, and lack of leisure of American life. We have noted how Fei Xiaotong during his year in America began to long for China's bucolic peacefulness. "Fast! Faster!" is the title of one of Yin Haiguang's essays about American society. Tang Hualong, in 1918, was astonished to find restaurants advertising the speed of their meals, and other Chinese have expressed disgust at the rapidity with which Americans bold down their food. Yu Lihua, writing for a mainland Chinese newspaper in 1980, explains:

The Oriental way of life, marked by several leisurely long hours of drinking tea, has no place in America... At lunchtime, which lasts one hour at most, some people just try to fill up their empty stomachs with tasteless food at snack bars. Others feed themselves with homemade sandwiches at the office and gulp them down with a cup of coffee. Still others can eat at outside fast food stores serving sandwiches, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Those who are worried about obesity -- and this includes the majority of the working population -- can eat only yogurt. As soon as lunch is over, they rush back to the office with no time left for picking
their teeth, and continue to work until five in the afternoon.65

The theme of the loneliness of American life -- quite absent from the European literature -- is one that has come up from time to time in Chinese descriptions, conceivably a reflection of the loneliness that Chinese visitors, so many of them students, have themselves felt in America, particularly on Sundays and holidays when Americans withdraw to the privacy of their homes. They have dwelled on the abandonment of the aged by their children and on the isolation of urban living. Yang Gang in the late 1940s, for instance, penned a sad portrait of "Betty," a young American woman supporting herself in New York, living alone, without family or close friends, unable to find a husband, sinking into drink, and so forth.66 The isolation of Americans in their automobiles is another lonely image in Chinese writing.

Chinese writers have been far more interested than Europeans in the American family system, including relations between the sexes, childbearing patterns, and treatment of the elderly. Opinions have varied, though many observers have, like Hu Shi, been favorably impressed with the self-confidence and competence of American women, as well as with free marriage based on love. The nuclear family has seemed admirably cohesive to some, while others have seen it as fragile and deplored the high divorce rate. Virtually all Chinese visitors have been appalled at the way Americans treat their old. Fei Xiaotong, writing in the 1940s, explained it as characteristic of a future-oriented society based on self-reliance and the passion for novelty. He also pointed out that science, which Americans revere, reduces things to formulas which can be quickly learned -- a schoolboy can master the principles Newton took a lifetime to formulate. Where science is king, experience has little value, and it is natural to disregard tradition and ignore the aged. Fei also saw a generalized weakness of social ties in America. His critique offers a perspective absent in European accounts:

People move about like the tide, unable to form permanent ties with places, not to speak of with other people. I have written elsewhere of the gap between generations. It is an objective social fact that when children grow up they no longer need parental protection, and the reflection of this in the family is children's demand for independence. Once when I was chatting at a friend's house, his daughter sat with us chain-smoking. The father happened to remark that it was senseless to smoke
like that, but she paid no heed and afterwards told me that she was eighteen, it was none of the old man's business, that smoking was her own affair. Eighteen is an important age for a girl; after that her parents need not support her, but neither can they tell her what to do. I also know an old professor whose son teaches in the same university as he does but lives apart from him -- which might be all right but he seldom even visits. During the war they could not get a maid and it made my heart sick to see the professor's wife, old and doddering, serving coffee to a guest with shaking hands.

When I was staying at the Harvard Faculty Club, I noticed sitting at the same table every morning a white-haired old gentleman who lived upstairs and who, from the looks of him, was not long for this world. Whenever I saw him I felt outrage. He must have been a famous professor who had educated countless people and worked hard for society. Now old and failing, cast out of the world into this building, without relatives even to care for him much less give him pleasure, he might as well have been dead. One day he said softly to the waitress, "I don't know if I'll be able to make it down the stairs tomorrow." I afterwards asked her where his home was, but she knew not what to say and only shook her head. In America, when children grow up they have their own homes, where their parents are mere guests.

Outside the family there is certainly much social intercourse, but dealings with people are always in terms of appointment. On my office desk is an appointment calendar marked in fifteen-minute intervals with a space for a person's name besides each. Apart from business there are various kinds of gatherings, but if you go to one you will find it no more than social pleasantries: a few words with this person, a few words with that one -- it is hard even to remember their names. I cannot say all Americans pass their lives like this. [But] I once asked a fairly close acquaintance how many friends he had whom he could drop in on at any time without a previous engagement; counting on his fingers he did not fill one hand. In fact, unless they have business or an engagement they spend most of their time at home where they don't much like to be disturbed by guests. At any rate friends warned me not to go barging in on people all the time.
American individualism and mobility could be blamed for these sorry conditions of neglect, abandonment, and isolation; but on the other hand these very qualities are connected to America's youthful dynamism, a characteristic which most twentieth-century Chinese visitors found attractive. Yu Guangzhong, for example, was attracted to rock music precisely because of its glorification of youth, and Hu Shi and many others have praised America's youthful energy. Most everyone has been dazzled by the American skyscraper -- symbol of power, ambition, and money. Chinese have often been critical of American social practices, but the material manifestations of American culture and values have struck almost all, from Zhigang and Liang Qichao to the most recent visitors, with awe and admiration.

This sense of youthful vigor may have been part of what struck Europeans as uncouthness and lack of sophistication. The different response it elicited from late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Chinese had to do again with historical circumstances. It was a period when Social Darwinist ideas in combination with a budding nationalism had turned many conscientious intellectuals (Liang Qichao in particular) to thoughts of "renovation" and reform -- or, in the more exuberant imagery common slightly later, of revolutionary rebirth from the ashes of an old and decayed culture. For better or for worse, America was looked at as a model for emulating -- and still is by Chinese keenly aware of the success of Japanese modernization on the American model since World War II. The reports by the recent visitors from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (especially Fei Xiaotong and Zhao Fusan), while painting an ideologically correct picture of American spiritual decline brought on by the inevitable failures of capitalism, have expressed a grudging admiration for a country which, despite its many problems, is still more efficient and dynamic than China. Even in American scholarship -- aided by computerized data control -- the Chinese found empirical breadth and richness of detail, which more than compensated for what they saw as its lack of "philosophical" or theoretical depth.

An extremely important matter, especially to those who have chosen to stay and become American citizens, is individual freedom. Despite the traditional Confucian and conservative tendency to equate freedom with license, in private conversations Chinese immigrant intellectuals from both the P.R.C. and Taiwan confess to a fervent attachment to American-style freedom, especially to freedom of speech. Yet these personal sentiments seldom surface in print, though they are sometimes implicit in generalized discussions of American individualism and mobility.
Travelers' impressions are of necessity partial, contingent, even somewhat fortuitous. They depend on chance experiences, on the visitor's own concerns and comparative perspective, on the time and the place; they almost always involve the drawing of generalizations from limited observations, and that treacherous abstraction, "national character." The comments of Chinese have been also colored by their preoccupation with their own national predicaments, a preoccupation which has in fact informed the writings of Chinese intellectuals on almost any subject since the late nineteenth century; America has for Chinese visitors sometimes served as a focus for thoughts which essentially concerned China. Still, insofar as they are honest they are "true" -- true glimpses of how we look to others, and there is much that is thought-provoking in Chinese views of America with their dissimilarities with European impressions. For this reason, we have been preparing translations of selected Chinese travel writings from the past hundred years or more. We believe they provide perspectives on American life which are valid and interesting, and we hope they will give a fresh picture of themselves to Americans, who have so far seen their image only as reflected in European eyes.
NOTES for Chinese Views of America, 1868-1980: A Survey


2. Indeed, the interest in non-westerners' views of America must account for all the quite fictitious "outsider" literature. Books falsely purporting to give an Oriental's view of Western countries are virtually a genre in themselves. Montesquieu’s Lettres persanes (1721) and, Oliver Goldsmith's The Citizen of the World: or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to his Friends in the East (1762) are only the most well-known, and by no means the oldest. Readers have sometimes accepted such counterfeits as genuine. Although Dickinson, G. Loewes. 1901. Letters from John Chinaman (published in the United States as Letters from a Chinese Official: Being an Eastern View of Western Civilization was not intended really to deceive, it was taken seriously enough by William Jennings Bryan that he wrote a rebuttal called Letters to a Chinese Official. Furthermore, in 1972 Dickenson’s little book was reissued by the Omen Press of Arizona as "the work of an anonymous official of the Chinese government" and given an introduction urging that, on the occasion of Nixon’s trip to China, "in the mirror of China we may take a fresh look at ourselves"! Then there is A Chinaman’s Opinion of Us (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1927), by "Hwu-ung" "translated by J. A. Makepeace," an Australian missionary. This seems to us a fabrication, but it was excerpted by the French scholar Roger Pelissier for his collection of readings, The Awakening of China. Specifically on the United States, there is the little-known (but well-written and engaging) Gratton, Henry Pearson, pref. As a Chinaman Saw Us: Passages from his Letters to a Friend at Home, (New York: D. Appleton, 1905).


5. William Hung thoroughly searched the literature on this topic for his informative article, “Huang Tsun-hsien’s poem 'The Closure of the


7. A different sort of record may be found in two long poems by Huang Zunxian, consul general in San Francisco in the 1880s, one sadly regretting the racist Chinese Exclusion Act, the other on the chaos and dishonesty in the 1884 presidential election. See Huang, Zunzian. *Ren-jing-lu shicao jianzhu* (Shanghai, 1957), 126-35; and Kamachi, Noriko. *Reform in China: Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1981). Li Hongzhang, China's most powerful official for most of the last third of the nineteenth century, visited the United States in 1896. His impressions of this trip are purportedly related in *The Memoirs of Li Hung Chang* (1913). Unfortunately, this book is another forgery. An American journalist named W. F. Mannix wrote it (astonishingly enough, for it fooled most readers) while serving a year's sentence in a Honolulu jail. The real Li Hongzhang seems to have left little note on his trip to the United States, which is not surprising since he was here only two weeks.


9. Bi-re zhuren [i.e., Zhigang]. *Chu-shi Lai-xi ji* (An account of the first mission to the West) (Taipei: Chengwen, 1969 photo-reprint of 1877), 4.41a-b (335-36 in the Taiwan ed.).

10. Ibid., 1.26b-28a (54-57).

11. Ibid., 1.39 (59).


15. Ibid., 59a.

16. An innovation also found in Miyoshi's Japanese accounts.


18. Qichao, Liang. *Xin dalu youji jilue* (Notes from a journey to the new continent), *Yinbing-shi heji* (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1936), *Zhuangji* 22 (facicile 21), fanli. Liang said he had originally conceived of a separate monograph on American politics to be appended to the book, but he did not have time to organize his prose and chaotic notes.

19. Ibid., 15.

particularly on Bryce's, e.g., the curious analogy of state and federal
governments with small houses and a large mansion which overarches them.
21. Liang Qichao, 133.
23. Liang Qichao, 37.
24. Ibid., 64.
25. However, as Hao Chang has noted, "Liang's misgivings about democracy and his preference for political authoritarianism must not be seen merely as a sudden change of mind in consequence of his observation of a democratic system at work in the United States." Chang has further pointed out that the centralized and authoritarian tendencies of Meiji Japan "could not fail to impress Liang." A degree of tension may have arisen in Liang's mind between Japan and America as rival political models. He had lived in Japan before coming to America and had returned there after his American sojourn. It is conceivable that he was already leaning toward authoritarianism when he visited America and that he therefore sought only to compare negatively the American political system to that of Japan. See Hao Chang, 243.
26. Ibid., 245.
27. Liang Qichao, 126.
28. Ibid., 124.
31. Though the diary was presumably not originally written for publication, Hu must have considered publishing it after a friend had a few sections published in Xin qinqnian (New Youth). See Grieder, Jerome. Hu Shih and the Chinese Revolution (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 46n.
32. Hu Shih, 3:650.
33. Ibid., 4:1060.
34. Ibid., 2:442.
35. Ibid., 1:154.
36. Ibid., 1:253-54; italics added.
37. Ibid., 2:536-37.
38. Ibid., 3:806-807.
39. We take as an interrogative, with precisely the opposite meaning Grieder provides, the last sentence in the passage from Liuxue riji, 3:809. See Grieder, 54.
40. Hu Shih wencun (Shanghai: Yadong, 1921), 1:39-41.
41. There were other Chinese visitors as active and ambitious as Hu Shi, e.g., Wellington Koo, but they seem to have been in the minority.
42. Another such visitor is Bai Xianyong, whose equally depressing view, "Death in Chicago," was published in the late 1960s.
43. Wen visited his friend Liang Shiqiu for a time in Colorado Springs. The fact that Wen, Liang, a handful of other Chinese students at Colorado College kept mainly to themselves elicited in the student newspaper an anonymous poem entitled "The Sphinx," which asked what lay behind the Chinese students' expressionless faces. This enraged both Wen and Liang, who responded with their own poems to the newspaper. Two other cases of anti-Chinese racism involved a local barber who refused to cut a Chinese student's hair, and students at a graduation ceremony who would not march
with their fellow Chinese graduates (Wen was not one of them). See Liang, Shiqiu. *Tan Wen Yiduo* (Speaking of Wen Yiduo) (Taipei: zhujiang wenxue, 1967), 47-48.


45. A few Chinese were so at home in America that they used English to convey their impressions to Western audiences. The best of these accounts probably is Wu, Tingfang. *America Through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1914). After studying law in Hong Kong and London, Wu served as Chinese Minister to Washington from 1897 to 1902 and from 1907 to 1909. Wu articulately discusses the need for greater Federal powers, moral education, coeducation, and international marriage; expresses his admiration for American punctuality and "genius for organization"; and jocularly argues the superiority of Chinese over Western dress which, in the case of women's clothing, he says is "neither practical, comfortable, decent, or safe (hatpins and long skirts are dangerous). A few other examples of this genre include: Chiang, Yee. *Silent Traveler* books; and, Park, No-Yong (Bao Niurong) *An Oriental View of American Civilization* (Boston: Hale, Cushman & Flitt, 1934); and *A Squint-Eye View of America* (Boston: Meadow Publishing Company, 1952).


49. "How to understand the United States," *Shishi shouce* (Current affairs handbook) 1-2 (Nov. 1950); trans. in *Current Background* 32:1-10 (Nov. 29, 1950). 50. "Look, This is the American Way of Life," *Nanfang ribao*, Dec. 7-9, 1950; translated in *Current Background* 55:1-22. This is from the introduction to a collection of materials about the United States excerpted from American sources and from accounts by Chinese visitors, including Zou Taofen.


58. We suspect it was the political necessity of claiming to study only techniques that made Fei Xiaotong portray American social science as basically practical and untheoretical. See "Fang-Mei lue ying," sec. 14.
62. Liang Qichao, 32-34.
63. In addition to the notorious Mrs. Trollope, Tocqueville discussed the paucity of American artistic and intellectual achievement; Dickens seemed to delight in describing American dirtiness, tooth-picking, sitting with feet up on the table (even in Congress), constant tobacco-chewing and spitting (the carpets in both the Senate and the House were ruined, he claimed); Sienkiewicz spoke of the “innate crudeness” of Americans; Kipling denounced Americans’ “grand ignorance of things beyond their immediate interests,” in his American Notes (1891); Oxford don G. L. Dickenson (the inventor of John Chinaman) declared that “radically and essentially America is a barbarous country” (quoted in E. M. Forster’s Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson), 107; and so on--the examples are endless. Even a Soviet visitor in the 1940s complained that Americans were “too unceremonious” (Ehrenburg, Ilya. Post-War Years, 1945-1954 (55)).
65. Yu, Lihua. "My experience studying in the United States" Renmin ribao, Apr. 28, 1980; translated in USJPRS, no. 75878, 66-78. (We have amended the translation.)
67. Fei, Xiaotong. Chu-fang Meiquo (My first visit to America) (Shanghai: Shenghuo, 1947) 112-14.
The conceptual difficulties historians encounter when they discuss intercultural contact are often evident in the mixed metaphors they use. Japan's early Meiji encounter with the West, for example, has been referred to as "a tide of foreign influence"; a market-oriented process of "importation" or "borrowing"; and as gastronomic excess, immediately followed by an "attack of indigestion" and another "swing of the pendulum" toward nativist reaction. Such playful metaphorical mixing begs a major question: to what degree do the recipients of "foreign influence" actually exercise purposeful selectivity? The novelist Natsume Sōseki believed Japan's "civilization and enlightenment" in the 1870s had been determined largely by outside forces. Sōseki wrote in the early twentieth century that:

The Western enlightenment, that is to say, the enlightenment, was internally generated, while Japan's was generated externally. By internally generated I mean natural emergence and development from within, as a flower strains outward through a parted bud. By externally generated I mean the reluctant assumption of an outward form under pressure from outside.

More recently, Maruyama Masao seems to have attributed Japan's Meiji experience to a peculiarly Japanese form of superficiality: "Japanese intellectuals adopt new domestic, as well as new alien, ideas one after another without giving adequate reflection to their own past ideological convictions." Still others have argued that Japanese appropriations of Western thought have been purposeful and autonomous, not haphazard. They see Japanese textual sources as evidence that Japanese intellectuals' predispositions caused them to prefer some Western theories to others, and at times to (mis)construe willfully the words of Spencer, Mill, or Buckle.

Yet even scholars who argue for autonomous choice over indiscriminate "borrowing" or "influence" often have difficulty explaining why a Meiji scholar should have construed a Western text in a particular way. Such an explanation requires a theory of historical epistemologies, or thought structures, that
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is sensitive to the various constraints imposed by history on knowledge and perception. What is required is not only a degree of receptivity to the formalist/structuralist dictum that the "methodological starting point...actually creates the object of study," but also some attention to the equally important issue of how methodological starting points are themselves conditioned by (and reciprocally condition) economic, political, and legal forms of practice in society.

With the above problems in mind, I will suggest the utility for the study of cultural contact of yet another metaphor, that of "production." It should be possible to supplement the notion of "choice" with an awareness that cultural artifacts, including texts, are not merely objective wholes that thought must cognize in their essential reality, but also are raw materials for the production of knowledge in an historical context. This metaphor not only emphasizes the active role of cultural recipients, but also allows us to conceive of a determinate "mode of production" in the realm of culture and thought that is articulated with, but not reducible to, other forms of practice in the juridical, political, and economic realms. To avoid reductionism, however, we need to free the idea of a "mode of production" from simple, linear stage theory. Nicos Poulantzas and Fredric Jameson have suggested that "every social formation or historically existing society has in fact consisted in the overlay and structural coexistence of several modes of production all at once." Even individual texts might be "crisscrossed and intersected by a variety of impulses from contradictory modes of cultural production." This perspective allows Meiji Japan to emerge as the site of a "cultural revolution," wherein "the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social and historical life."7

Without doubting for a moment that a number of modes of production coexisted in Meiji Japan, I will restrict myself in this paper to only two. Moreover, for convenience, I will focus primarily on the works of the scholar and bureaucrat Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916), since different texts by Katō, written at various times during his intellectual career, provide excellent examples of both modes. After describing the central "means of production" -- objects, theory, and method -- of the two modes, I will consider the problem of how to relate them to other forms of social practice, and also to the problem of contact with Western texts.

Consideration of the first mode of intellectual production should help us answer a question regarding Japanese
appropriations of European thought that has been variously posed by social scientists such as Ishida Takeshi, Shimizu Ikutarō, Nagai Michio, Uete Michiari, and others. Uete reminds us that the earliest works read and translated in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods were by the nineteenth century authors Bentham, Mill, Guizot, Buckle, and Spencer. Apparently, the only eighteenth century European Enlightenment texts that Japanese intellectuals read widely and translated were Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* and Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Surely this is not surprising, since nineteenth century texts were the most readily available. But how, asks Uete, are we to explain that in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods, it was often natural law and natural rights, rather than the historicism and social organicism more typical of the European nineteenth century, that Japanese readers gleaned from these texts? Why did Katō Hiroyuki, for example, who seems to have intensively studied the social organicist J. K. Bluntschli's works, appropriate the idea of natural law, and yet seemingly ignore until later the more conservative elements of Bluntschli's thought?

In my view, the answer lies in the appearance during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), and survival into early Meiji, of a particular mode of intellectual production. Aspects of this mode, which formed a specific means of production, are textually accessible in an epistemological structure, or problematic, one that caused problems to be posed in the form of a paradoxical duality between value and fact, or natural essence and history. In other words, it seems that as they produced knowledge according to that mode, early-Meiji thinkers like Katō appropriated from foreign texts whatever helped them to make dualistic arguments, and ignored or overlooked the rest.

**The Dualistic Problematic**

In a manner roughly comparable to Enlightenment France, Japanese thought in the Tokugawa period may be interpreted as an uneasy combination of rationalism and empiricism. Neo-Confucianism in the Japanese milieu was analogous to Cartesian rationalism. Committed to the notion of an orderly universe ruled by moral principle (ri), this philosophy imparted a sense of the unity of man, society, and the cosmos. Since principle inhered in individuals as well as in the polity, inner moral purity, as it was manifested and reinforced in ethical action, could be socially and politically constructive. Taken
to an extreme, this meant that introspection satisfied the need for knowledge and moral self-cultivation was an appropriate response to the heavenly imperative to preserve order.

The seventeenth century Japanese philosophers Yamaga Soko and Ito Jinsai provided a counterpart to Lockean empiricism by analyzing the discrepancies between Neo-Confucian formulas and Japan's historical experience. To provide a basis for knowledge and action in the Japanese milieu Confucianism had to account for human passions, a tradition of military ethics, a skeptical attitude in popular religion, and the rapid expansion of urban culture. Therefore, it was increasingly realized that deduction from first principles, based on rational and ethical unity in the cosmos, would no longer suffice for knowledge of human affairs. Accordingly, in a development comparable to the "epistemological modesty" of European Enlightenment thought, Kaibara Ekken and others emphasized that careful observation must replace metaphysical speculation. At this time, there also appeared an increasingly instrumental interpretation of society and politics which was most radically formulated by Ogyu Sorai's successors. No longer a reflection of natural, moral order, society was now believed to have been fabricated in history for the purpose of encompassing heterogeneous parts in an adaptive, functioning whole.

When late Tokugawa syncretists combined Neo-Confucian confidence in the possibility of a natural social order with the more skeptical realization that for all its limitations, human intervention was indispensable to the production of knowledge and to governance, it became possible for them to believe that the right sort of intervention could eventually produce a state of nature. In other words, by manipulating language, institutions, and values in a voluntaristic, "unnatural" effort, man could conceivably actualize the truly "natural" order that somehow inhered in the empirical world, hidden but always accessible as the highest potential for human action. This juxtaposition of natural and unnatural, or value and fact, forms the fundamental structure of what might be simply called the "dualistic problematic."

But if natural order existed despite the disorder and confusion of daily life, why was it not more immediately knowable? And how might men attain it? Like their eighteenth century European counterparts, many Japanese thinkers considered these questions politically as well as philosophically significant. They postulated that over time the degenerative effect of accumulated human foolishness and random historical events had obscured the natural order. Man could attain the truly natural, therefore, only by rediscovering humanity and society before the "fall." Accordingly, the task of scholarship was to represent, through language and
classification systems grounded in a conception of origins, the unchanging truth beneath the flux and confusion of historical experience. The purpose of government was to extend these representations to society; it therefore emphasized reforms designed to make given realities transparent to the latent natural order.

Kokutai: Aizawa’s Version

A typical example of late Tokugawa dualism can be found in the thought and political programs of Japanese reformists of the Mito domain such as Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863). Aizawa and other Mito activists sought to rescue the existing political order from the ravages of time by reactualizing within it the mystical properties of a politico-religious archetype of origins which Aizawa called kokutai (national essence, lit. “national body”).

In Aizawa’s Shinron (A new thesis, 1825), the elements of this duality are connected in a manner that Mircea Eliade describes as typical of an “archaic mentality.” For this mentality, as for the Mito writers, time contaminates: “History...by the mere fact of its duration, provokes an erosion of all forms by exhausting their ontological substance.” Therefore, “the man of archaic cultures tolerates ‘history’ with difficulty and attempts periodically to abolish it.” This abolition of history is accomplished through repetitive rites which reenact cosmogony; “myths serve as models for ceremonies that periodically reactualize the tremendous events that occurred at the beginning of time.”

There can be little doubt Aizawa saw history as a process of erosion and decline. His reflections on the Japanese past repeatedly indicate how the vagaries of time (jisei no hen) frustrate Restorationist emperors’ attempts to preserve institutional unities among land, people, and gods. Yet it is Aizawa’s representation of the underlying essence, or kokutai, that is most “archaic.” Aizawa’s kokutai is syncretic: it combines Confucian universality with a particularistic Japanese mythohistory manifested in Japan’s unbroken line of emperors, and in the legacy of Japan’s divine genesis through the Sun Goddess Amaterasu Omikami’s primal acts. More importantly, kokutai's "natural" archetype is accessible in ritual performance, epitomized for Aizawa by the Daijosai, or Great Thanksgiving Ceremony.

The rites of the Daijosai are performed at first harvest following a new emperor’s ascension to the throne. Devoted to Amaterasu, the rites reenact mythical themes in the spirit of
"honoring the origins and returning to the source." The climax of the rites for Aizawa is a mystical epiphany in which Amaterasu appears as the symbol of communal unity and order.\textsuperscript{15}

Aizawa's emphasis on ritual as a source of social order calls attention to the important element of naturalism that infuses his notion of Japan's national essence. Kokutai is not only an escape from history, but when generalized as a model for a religious polity, it virtually eliminates the need for instrumental action: "Loyalty and filial piety become one; and the education of the people and the refinement of customs are accomplished without a word being spoken."\textsuperscript{16} Numerous quotes from the Chinese classics indicate the possibility of a self-regulating government. For example, according to The Doctrine of the Mean:

"If one understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and the meaning of the grand sacrifice and the autumn sacrifice to ancestors, it would be as easy to govern a kingdom as to look at one's palm."\textsuperscript{17}

This view of kokutai resembles Eliade's model of the "archaic mentality." However, an immediate resort to ritual is insufficient for Aizawa. The ideal of political regulation through ritual can only be attained if history is first met on its own ground, so to speak, through flexible, instrumental action. In a world of incessant change, "The secret of preventing the spread of resentment among the people is an ability to seize the moment."\textsuperscript{18} Samurai must be returned to the land from the castle towns where they have grown fat and lazy, rice should be stored in the countryside to counter the socially disruptive effects of urban markets, and a wide range of other reforms should be carried out. Aizawa's idea of "history" thus is not only a principle of decline, but also the context for timely action to reestablish a paradigmatic order.

If Shinron's Confucian idiom is translated back into eighteenth century European rationalism, one notices striking parallels with the presumed possibility of achieving a natural order through the "unnatural" means of human artifice. Keith Baker has observed that the French philosophes considered the ultimate end of political action to be an "eighteenth century version of the withering away of the state." Turgot envisioned a system of government in the realm of taxation, for example, that would enable the king to rule "like God, by general laws"; Condorcet espoused a political order that would be "a matter not of will but of reason, not as the mechanism for expressing the greatest interest of the greatest number but as the collective vehicle for the discovery and implementation of truth."\textsuperscript{19}
Eighteenth century European philosophers thus saw government institutions not as mere expedients to meet situational exigencies, but as the mediations through which the absolute could be manifested in the relative. A similar vision fueled Mito reforms during Japan's Tenpō era (1830-44) and, it is possible to argue, provided an important structural component of the Meiji Restoration.

If the analogy with the French Enlightenment is at all apt, it should help us to understand nineteenth century Japanese (mis)readings of nineteenth century European texts. The dualistic problematic, which dominated late Tokugawa and early Meiji intellectual production, predisposed Japanese intellectuals towards theories which set value (or nature in the form of natural order, natural rights, a state of nature, or human nature) against historical facts. Therefore, it attracted them to statements which made such a distinction and obscured those that did not. Accordingly it is not surprising that many of these intellectuals found in Spencer's work, for example, a vindication of dualistic theories of natural rights and liberalism rather than of monistic social organicism.20

It is, of course, somewhat ironic that Mito thought should have so closely approximated the intellectual mode of the French Enlightenment, since its categories were anything but cosmopolitan. Aizawa considered Japan the "origin of the sun and source of energy for all living things," and therefore "by nature at the head of the world, whence it sets the standard for all other nations," whereas the foreigner was a barbarian, little higher than "a dog or sheep."21 Nevertheless, as Kato Hiroyuki and other "liberal" Meiji thinkers' continued use of the concept of kokutai suggests, it can be argued that Aizawa's dualistic means of intellectual production also shaped and constrained many early Meiji thinkers' work.

Kokutai: Kato's Version

Kato Hiroyuki's early work, especially Kokutai shinron (A New Theory of the National Essence, 1875), conformed to the dualistic problematic by combining an essentialist conception of Japan's national essence with historical relativism. Kato differed from Aizawa, however, regarding the objects of discourse and the concepts and strategies that linked those objects.22 These differences indicate the range of variability within the problematic and also provide insight into one way that nineteenth century Japanese intellectuals appropriated European ideas.
First, Katō secularizes politics by explicitly rejecting the mystical notions of divine national origins and imperial loyalty that pervade Aizawa's concept of Japan's national essence. Without mentioning Aizawa, Katō criticizes those who "identify themselves with Kokugaku [national learning, or nativism]" and foster the belief "that true sincerity consists in unquestioning obedience in all matters having to do with the imperial throne." All unenlightened nations mix religion and politics by deifying their sovereigns, but in fact "the state is in the human world and therefore should conform to the logic of the human world."23

The sovereign is a mere mortal and there are limits to his arbitrary authority.

Of course, there are differences of status and quality even among members of the same species, but such differences are not the same as those between men and beasts. In view of the natural superiority of men over cattle and horses, a man may justifiably claim ownership of such animals and employ them freely for his own benefit. But since the emperor is a man just like us, no matter how vast his authority he may not treat us like beasts.24

Accordingly, land cannot be considered the emperor's private property, as the Kokugaku theorists claim. Indeed, the sovereign/subject relationship must be defined in terms of reciprocal rights and duties: "The government has no end other than to provide completely for the welfare and happiness of the people; all the rights and duties it possesses with regard to them arise from that function."25 The people share these rights and duties through their legislative representatives and an independent judiciary.

Second, Katō defines the national essence (kokutai) not in terms of divine cosmogony but in terms of human nature and natural rights.26 Rejecting a particularistic notion of national origins, Katō locates kokutai in a universal human attribute: man's natural tendency to associate and form a state.

The principle by which the state is formed and hierarchical relations are established between the sovereign and his subjects...has its origin in the nature of man. If it is clear that man has such a nature, that is, that the state exists because it is essential to man's search for welfare and happiness, then it goes without saying that the state must have a national essence that is consistent with that principle. What sort of national essence would that
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be? It would be one according to which the people are the end of the state, and the state seeks to guarantee their welfare and happiness. Sovereign and government should exist only for the purpose of attaining those objectives... What has been believed heretofore to be our national essence is directly contrary to the principle of heaven and contradicts human nature.27

A "fair and impartial" (kōmei seidai) national essence can exist only when the sovereign and subjects' mutual rights and duties are based on the principles of human nature.28

As David Abosch has observed, Katō's kokutai "transcends time in that it is related to the universal nature of man and his rights."29 Like Aizawa's more mystical vision, Katō's national essence is juxtaposed against a historical level that is mutable conditional. Katō defines this level as the seitai, or political system, which is teleologically related to the kokutai.

The national essence is fundamentally different from what may be called the political system. The essence is the end, while the system is the means for achieving that end. Hence with regard to the national essence no country may turn its back on the principles outlined...above. As regards the political system, however, uniformity is inessential. The political system is always the historical result of "a particular country's origins and development, as well as the disposition (ninjō) and ethos of its people."30

Third, in the same way that a teleological idea of progress differs from Eliade's "myth of eternal return," Katō's idea of the relationship between absolute and relative as manifest in the national essence and political system is different from Aizawa's. This difference stems from the fact that Katō views history far less negatively than does Aizawa. In place of the latter's restorationist ideal of using historical, instrumental means to overcome or "escape" from history by reactualizing an original archetype, Katō subscribes to a notion of progress. That is, instead of inexorably departing from the archetype, and therefore requiring an act of restoration or reconciliation, time carries the relative and tangible ever closer to an eternal truth which seemingly beckons from the future rather than from the past.

Finally, Katō's national essence is perhaps less a natural order than a principle of nature. His text lacks the utopian richness of Aizawa's Shinron; there is no counterpart in Kokutai
shinron to Aizawa's dream of an order in which government is completely ritualized and time, in effect, stands still.

Despite such differences, Shinron and Kokutai shinron reveal an important structural homology. Both formulate problems in terms of a paradoxical duality between value and fact, or essence and history. This paradox is implicit in Aizawa's notion that a self-regulating form of divine rule must be actualized through the purposeful creation and regulation of institutions. It is also implied in Katō's idea that man must attain through a historically conditioned political form a propensity already inherent in human nature. According to Katō, although freedom is a natural and inalienable human right, it must be historically realized by establishing and manipulating institutions.

Like Aizawa and other ideologues of the late Tokugawa period, Katō relates national essence directly to a hypothetical image of origins which embraces all states, not just Japan. He recounts some of the theories that others have put forward: that the first ruler was enthroned by a deity; that free and independent individuals originally joined together and formed the first state through a social contract; that primitive men had always lived in a community but after an idyllic era, it became necessary to submit to a virtuous leader; that the first government was established by conquest; and that patriarchal leadership in the primal clan or clans gradually was transformed into political rule. Katō considers the first two theories extremely doubtful, while the remainder are all probably partially true. Nevertheless, all of these theories obscure the fundamental fact that, as Aristotle argued, "people are by nature endowed with a propensity to associate and form a state." Man is superior to other living things precisely because he is able to form associations like the state, whereas beasts flock together but do not consciously form mutually supportive relationships. "Clearly," Katō says, "this nature was bestowed upon man according to the will of heaven."31

Like Aizawa and many eighteenth century European thinkers, Katō steps outside history to reify an archetypical origin as natural and eternal. This origin is then envisioned as a whole that not only encompasses its time-bound "parts" and thus legitimizes them as meaningful, but also provides a standard for their evaluation as a transcendent timeless essence.

Of course, Katō was not the only Meiji Japanese writer to conform to the dualistic problematic; several natural rights theorists, and others who were more skeptical, posed similar problems. For example, the Meiji newspaper editor Fukuchi Gen'ichirō espoused a concept of kokutai that was more like Aizawa's than Katō's. In Fukuchi's view, it is an "immutable principle" that a nation's essence is "established in the course
of its historical experience." Hence, kokutai is not universal but particular, rooted for Japan in the fact of imperial sovereignty which even long periods of military rule had not interrupted. Moreover, Japan's national essence is fundamentally a legal matter only indirectly related to government (seitai). Whereas kokutai is an unchanging principle of sovereignty abstracted from Japan's unique experience, government is relative to the historical era which formed it. Hence Fukuchi criticized both those who embraced the mechanics of foreign political systems while ignoring Japan's peculiar essence, and those who believed in the Japanese mystique of origins but neglected the need for an adaptable political system. Neither national essentialism nor political expediency were adequate for Japan's continued political stability.

Although the problematic did not demand it, kokutai often played a mediating role in dualistic theories. The natural rights radical Ueki Emori, for example, described the changing national essence not in terms of kokutai, but as a principle of state sovereignty (kokka shuken) which arose from the state's final purpose of preserving popular rights and freedoms. Juxtaposed against kokka shuken was the actual political system, or seitai, which was relative and changeable.

Regardless of the specific objects or theories by which it was manifested, the dualistic problematic regulated the production of a broad range of thought and action in late nineteenth century Japan. And when foreign texts provided the raw materials for that production, the problematic might be said to have caused those texts to be read selectively, in a way that highlighted dualistic oppositions and tensions. Yet, the distinctiveness of the dualistic thought structure is dramatized by the existence in modern Japan of another problematic that was radically monistic and hostile to all non-historical paradigms.

Discontinuity: The Monistic Problematic

In 1882, some eight years after the publication of Kokutai Shinron, Katō wrote Jinken shinsetsu (A Reconsideration of Natural Rights). In this work, Katō rejected dualism in favor of a theory of universal natural causality.

It is evident that the survival of the fittest as a fixed law of nature applies not only to plants and animals but to the world of human intercourse as well. There would seem to be no room for doubt.
concerning the occurrence among human beings of physical and mental differences between superior and inferior, resulting in the inevitable operation in human affairs of a law of survival of the fittest. If so, then it is very clear that the theory of natural rights, postulating the unique endowment at birth of all human beings with rights to liberty and equality, is directly counter to reality.... There is a pervasive, immutable, eternal law of the universe controlling birth and death, rise and fall, assembling and dispersal, appearance and disappearance, and all other phenomena. Even man cannot escape its force.35

Here the entire groundwork of Katō's thought has shifted; he has not merely reformulated the former discourse, or substituted some objects and theories for others. The dualistic problematic -- the fundamental contradiction between history and archetype -- has disappeared. There is now only one basic law, both natural and historical, governing life: survival of the fittest. As Foucault has evocatively remarked with regard to the rise of European historicism, philosophy is now "doomed to Time, to its flux and its returns, because it is trapped in the mode of being of History."36

A number of other shifts in the objects and relationships of discourse accompany this epistemological break. In the first place, man is no longer unique among living things by virtue of his propensity to form associations that culminate in the state. Katō now quotes anthropologists to the effect that the mental capacity of some men is "even below that of animals," and notes that while ants and bees have a highly-developed division of labor, many savage men gather only to "mill about like herds of wild boar." He concludes that these barbarians will "probably be defeated in the physically-oriented struggle for existence and sooner or later disappear from the globe completely." If they do not become extinct, they will certainly "fall under European and American domination in the power struggle that emerges from mental and spiritual competition." Obviously, granting equal rights to such creatures is pointless.37

Second, the origins of ethics and human rights are strictly historical. Regarding ethics, Katō wrote:

The early primitives were in abject bondage. However, when public morality moves toward enlightenment, an ethical sense finally appears and common folkways and customs move beyond their former savage state in the direction of civilization. A national structure is finally established, and the
division of labor progresses along with a philosophy of education. When this occurs there is a decline in domination by the mature, the male and the strong -- the pure and pristine form of survival of the fittest -- and the appearance of a new form of competition related to an awakened public morality. A corollary of that tendency toward enlightenment is the emergence, and increasing importance, of gradations or distinctions among people according to the degree of their mental powers rather than on the basis of physical strength alone.38

So-called "rights" can only result from certain historical processes and are therefore always conditional; they are not bestowed by heaven (tenpu). Rights are "natural" only insofar as they are inevitably produced by the struggle for survival. In the "communal existence of the family," where the patriarch used his authority to adjudicate disputes and admonish wrong-doers, rights flourished. To the extent that family members were protected, they began to acquire their "right" to protection. Strictly speaking, however, "rights come into existence only with the establishment of the state," when a dictatorial ruler mediates disputes to endure security and stability.39

Moreover, in Katō's view, "To take supreme state power, in order to protect the rights of the people and prevent them from affronting and interfering with each other, constitutes none other than the employment of a major operation of survival of the fittest to control a more minor one. It takes one process of struggle for existence to control another."40 Hence, "human society is a great battlefield."41

Third, Katō claims to have discovered a scientific alternative to the natural rights theorists' delusions. In accordance with his positivistic convictions, Katō substitutes causality for teleology.

In their ignorance of reality, the fantasizers imagine that man's nature sets him completely apart from the animals. They also delude themselves into thinking that the universe exists solely to serve the purposes of man. They think cattle, horses, dogs and sheep, for example, were made by the creator for the nourishment and use of mankind... The doctrine that a creator had from the outset certain objectives is not the result of experimentation. It belongs to a class of theory called teleology, and is directly at odds with the doctrine of causality, or experimentation. The latter holds that results arise from causes which are themselves caused, and so on,
without any predetermined purpose or end. That being the case, a teleological doctrine could never be espoused by anyone who is cognizant of the empirical laws governing all things in the universe.42

The paradox in Kato's earlier Kokutai shinron of a historically determined means directed toward a natural end is now resolved in a naturalistic form of historicism. "Essences" are mere illusions and government lacks goals. Man is no longer capable of abolishing, resisting, or even questioning history because he "is born and dies in a world of survival of the fittest and cannot for a minute escape its reach."43

Fourth, the political implications of Kato's new historicism clearly distinguish it from the dualistic problematic. The configuration of power in society now entirely depends upon the "trend of the times" and is understandable only within a given context. Measuring reality against timeless principles of nature and rectitude is no longer valid. Relations of domination vary in accord with:

...personal feelings, popular morality, customs, degree of advancement of civilization, and field of endeavor -- in short, with changes in the trends of the times. Those who adapt successfully are the mentality superior, and they eventually gain the reins of power. But even though they may have been superior in mental power in the first place, if they do not adapt to the times they will be unable to maintain their power and eventually will be ruled by those who do.44

Moreover, Kato argues that historical forces severely circumscribe man's capacity to improve society: "When seeking to apply human abilities to the advancement of rights we must be ever mindful of natural processes, taking care to avoid rash and precipitous action." Natural rights theorists, however, ignore such caveats; they are "mistakenly convinced that an immediate extension of human rights is dictated by a natural principle... Their argument amounts to the view that those rights which Europeans have gradually secured over the eons should be transplanted overnight to Asia. But human beings, along with plants and animals, progress only gradually and in stages." Kato therefore concludes that suffrage should remain restricted in the foreseeable future, and "conservativism and gradualism are the only ways to raise up our society and the state."45

In 1882, Kato's political conservatism and preoccupation with
social evolutionism were hardly unique. Sociologist Toyama Shōichi cited Spencer's *The Principles of Sociology* as the source of his view that man was just like other animals and plants. In 1883, Ariga Nagao published his three-volume *Shakaigaku* (Sociology), which praised the Japanese family system in the context of a Spencerian historicist argument. As Nagai Michio has observed, "Spencerian evolutionism was skillfully modified by Ariga to explain and justify Japanese statism and familism." These sociological interpretations differed greatly from the ideas advanced by dualistic Freedom and Popular Rights activists, who found in Spencer's writings a "textbook on people's rights" and a justification for laissez faire liberalism.

**Knowledge and Politics**

The most difficult challenge that must be confronted when applying the metaphor of production to the realm of knowledge is the need to delineate the relationship between modes of intellectual production and other forms of production in society. There are powerful temptations to simplify, either by ignoring the likelihood that society encompasses several modes of production, or by taking refuge in a form of "reflection theory" which assumes thought is to be directly derived from structural interests or institutional pressures.

Contextual arguments concerning Katō's ideological conversion (tenkō) to monistic evolutionism usually focus on far-reaching institutional transformations that began in Japan in the early 1880s. It was at this time, of course, that Katō wrote *Jinben shinsetsu* and debates over sovereignty and natural rights brought the contradiction between the monistic and dualistic modes of thought to its most overtly antagonistic state.

In 1881, Itō Hirobumi, who had been Japan's first Prime Minister, formed a new cabinet which heavily favored men from Satsuma and Choshu. Okuma Shigenobu, principal advocate of the English constitutional model, was forced out of government, and a new imperial edict warned that "those who may advocate sudden and violent changes...disturbing the peace of the realm" would become the objects of imperial displeasure.

Itō's 1881 appointment of Matsukata Masayoshi as finance minister brought a major financial retrenchment. Matsukata raised sake and tobacco taxes, established a central banking system, auctioned off government enterprises, and deflated prices by radically contracting the money supply. The principal result of such measures was to centralize ownership of
the means of production. The lower agricultural prices that resulted from deflation forced many small proprietors to sell their land when they failed to meet tax obligations, thereby contributing to a rise in tenancy. Deflationary pressures also forced many small business enterprises to sell out to more powerful competitors.\(^{50}\) It is estimated that some eleven percent of all peasant proprietors lost their land as a result of tax default between 1883 and 1890.\(^{51}\) A side effect of Japan's rural desperation seems to have been that local partisans of the Freedom and Popular Rights movement turned to violence.\(^{52}\)

In the field of education, Japan's liberal Education Ordinance of 1872 was replaced in 1880 by a much more conservative document inspired by the throne's Confucian adviser, Motoda Eifu. Minister of Education Tanaka Fujimaro was forced to resign, moral instruction was made the top curricular priority and several textbooks were censored. Henceforth, teachers would not be "independent scholar-educators, as Tanaka had conceived them, but rather public officers, official guardians of morality, responsible to the state."\(^{53}\)

The early 1880s also brought a trend toward bureaucracy in Japanese government administration and the eventual bureaucratization of many aspects of civil society. Bernard Silberman has argued that beginning in 1878, Japanese leaders became convinced that informal governmental structures of recruitment based on domainal origins or revolutionary credentials were inadequate. Accordingly, these officials initiated a "complete rationalization of the process of recruitment, advancement, tenure and retirement in the period 1884-1899."\(^{54}\) Given their traditional regard for private property as a social necessity, the bureaucratization of government ultimately led to a system based upon "wants" rather than "needs" in an essentially utilitarian framework. These policymakers were considered "impartial spectators" whose expertise enabled them to make rules to maximize the satisfaction of wants. In other words, they substituted administration for politics.\(^{55}\)

Finally, Japanese political rhetoric in the early 1880s changed. Matsumoto Samosuke has observed that in the first decade of the Meiji era, natural rights were considered essential to Japan's achievement of independence in the international arena. Individual and national independence were inseparable; one could not be attained without the other. Kato himself had stated in Kokutai shinron that:

It is precisely when the people gain a spirit of liberty and actually exercise their right to freedom that the state will gain stability and the national
strength will expand. Should our countrymen reject that spirit, and facilely conform to the will of the emperor; and should they consent to the loss of their right to freedom, our country's freedom and independence would be difficult to maintain. Leading Japanese bureaucrats in the early Meiji period claimed to share these views. In a July 1873 memorial, Kido Takayoshi based his call for constitutionalism on a theory of natural rights, and Okubo Toshimichi praised democracy. In the 1880s, however, as Meiji rulers increasingly turned toward absolutism, the natural rights idiom became less appealing.

Hence the dualistic structure of Kato's Kokutai shinron, written in 1875, seems to closely resemble the early Meiji oligarch's use of natural rights theories to foster public initiative and national independence. Similarly, the monistic social Darwinism of Jinken shinsetsu, written in 1882, seems entirely compatible with the Japanese leadership's increasingly conformist bureaucratic policies.

Nevertheless, recognizing such affinities need not imply the reduction of thought to an expression of institutional or political dynamics. It is important to note that the dualistic and monistic modes' respective definitions of government were quite different. In dualistic thought, politics sought to mediate between the unsavory realities of the historical moment and a normative principle of natural order. In the monistic scheme, on the other hand, where society was defined as a struggle for existence, politics had merely to control competition to ensure the survival of an organic socio-political whole.

The contrast between these definitions is analogous to Condorcet's distinction in 18th century France between a politics of reason and a politics of will. The former always sought to bring government more closely in line with natural reason and justice, ideals which stood beyond present historical experience as the highest goals and potentials of man. The latter, like Kato's monistic evolutionism, recognized nothing higher than human will itself, and thus its proponents branded "as impracticable systems all the general and precise principles, all the changes demanded by reason and justice."

It might be argued, therefore, that rather than merely reflecting political interests or priorities, the dualistic and monistic modes were autonomous to the extent that each highlighted a particular form of political thought and action and relegated other forms to a "darkness of exclusion." By prescribing the form in which any political problem would be posed, each mode facilitated political action, yet simultaneously limited it. If early Meiji leaders considered
natural rights essential to political success, they did so not merely because political priorities "demanded" a theory of natural rights, but because they had already accepted, a priori, a definition of government as a "political art" which directed action toward normative ends and thereby also validated certain institutions and practices. Similarly, if late Meiji leaders substituted administration for politics, they did so partly because the monistic problematic as revealed in Katō's Jinken shinsetsu relieved government of all non-empirical constraints by confining it to the regulation of the natural struggle for existence.

It is also unnecessary to insist on a totalistic, sequential relationship between the two modes and their corollaries in the realm of political practice. Since they may have existed at different levels, and in a different times and contexts, demonstrating that they were contemporaneously or sequentially linked proves little. In fact, the monistic mode was hardly a unique product of early 1880s politics. It seems to have co-existed with the dualistic mode for at least a decade. Fukuzawa Yukichi's Bunmeiron no gairyaku (Outline of a Theory of Civilization), for example, resembles in many ways Katō's monistic Jinken, even though it was written in 1875, when Katō's work was still thoroughly dualistic. As Tsuda Sōkichi has noted in his preface to the English translation of Fukuzawa's work, there is evidence that Fukuzawa "viewed historical development as one evolutionary process."60

Fukuzawa's monistic historicism is most evident when his conception of kokutai is compared with Katō's Kokutai shinron. Whereas Katō focuses on the need for demystification and universalization, Fukuzawa concentrates directly on the problem of cultural contact. "When people discuss the adoption of a foreign civilization," Fukuzawa writes, "the first thing that bothers them is this question of national polity [kokutai]." Accordingly, he defines national polity in a manner that is compatible with the "borrowing" necessary to "raise the level of Japan's civilization."61

Fukuzawa dissociates kokutai from both the monarch's blood lineage and the form of political legitimacy, or "seitai" in Katō's terms. His exclusion of the imperial lineage, of course, suggests a critique of Aizawa's form of kokutai, which emphasizes the "imperial line unbroken for ages eternal." Fukuzawa's kokutai is the "grouping together of a race of people of similar feelings, the creation of a distinction between fellow countrymen and foreigners, the fostering of more cordial and stronger bonds with one's countrymen than with foreigners." Moreover, "it is living under the same government, enjoying self-rule, and disliking the idea of being subject to foreign rule; it involves independence and responsibility for the
welfare of one's own country. In Western countries it is called 'nationality.'”

Fukuzawa's description tends to "historicize" the national essence. While Aizawa views kokutai as a prehistoric archetype of the Origin, and Kato defines it as a trans-historical principle for judging all historical governments, Fukuzawa defines kokutai as purely a function of a given nationality's historical togetherness and shared experience. "The most important factor," Fukuzawa writes, "is for a race of people to pass through a series of social forms and share a common past." Moreover, "the national structure (kokutai) of a nation is not something immutable. It is subject to considerable change. It can unite or divide, expand or contract, or even vanish entirely." The latter results when a people is deprived of its "political sovereignty," or national independence. As a people's collective experience of striving to preserve national sovereignty, Fukuzawa's kokutai is in history, not outside it. Neither an archetype nor a principle of human nature, the national essence is a living, changing quality of the social organism which progresses through time. It therefore cannot be seen as an end in itself. One must venerate kokutai, "not because it goes back to the origins of Japanese history, but because its preservation will help us maintain modern Japanese sovereignty and advance our civilization. A thing is not to be valued for itself, but for its function."

Not only was Fukuzawa's kokutai historical, and therefore relative, but along with all other Japanese values, it was ultimately subjected to the criterion of utility. Obviously, cultural production in this context was entirely unencumbered by considerations of origin and essence; a thing was evaluated solely with reference to its historical usefulness and adaptability. Clearly, this vision is similar to the social Darwinism of the later Kato.

One must conclude that a simple, unilinear correlation between modes of political and intellectual practice would needlessly limit the historical field's complexity. We must therefore consider Jameson's notion of "cultural revolution," in which different and sometimes violently antagonistic modes of production link not only texts, but also the intellectual and political lives of individuals like Kato. These modes are located in discursive space and possess a degree of temporal particularity. It is not clear, therefore, that the dualistic problematic gradually "changed into" the monistic one, or that it was "a great, unmoving, empty figure that interrupted one day on the surface of time, that exercised over men's thought a tyranny that none could escape, and which then suddenly disappeared in a totally unexpected, totally unprecedented
eclipse." Rather, we can claim only that the monistic and the dualistic problematics constituted tangible positivities which were reflected in the works of a number of mid-to-late nineteenth century Japanese writers, and were homologous and interlinked with certain modes of political practice. The discontinuity, then, between Katō's Kokutai shinron and his Jinken shinsetsu was less a "change" than a major segment of the structural fault line separating different modes of production expressed in different textual problematics.

Conclusion

I have suggested that a major mode of intellectual production which extended through the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods allowed the construction of paradoxical dichotomies between timeless natural archetypes (or principles) and historical flux. An important aspect of this mode was a definition of government as a constructive and somewhat "reified" art: the actualization in real historical time of non-historical, natural ideals. While this a priori definition asserted itself as a determining element in political actions and institutions, it was itself subject to the criterion of historical practicality. Moreover, as knowledge was produced out of this mode, foreign texts were processed so as to extract from them effective conceptualizations of how the national essence could be juxtaposed against concrete political and legal institutions. Dualistic aspects of Bluntschli and Spencer's thought, for example, were "seen," but evolutionist and organicist elements were "overlooked."

Alongside the dualistic problematic was the mode which derived from the evolutionist assumption of historical monism. The monistic mode was not, of course, unrelated to the dualistic framework; in fact, it may have been logically dependent upon it in the sense that monism makes sense only in contrast to some form of pluralism. Yet the monistic mode of intellectual practice defined Japanese government in a radically different way: as contingent intervention and adjustment in the face of an historical process that was considered essentially deterministic and autonomous. This definition of government excluded anything non-empirical or transcendent, and produced a type of knowledge that was oriented to bureaucratic "piecemeal engineering" rather than constructive artistry. When applied to foreign texts, the monistic mode sought to appropriate "scientific" theories which would help illuminate the historical and empirical propriety of "nature" and persuasively portray "reality" as an all-encompassing, evolutionary force.
When viewed from the perspective of competing modes of intellectual production, the Meiji period appears as an intricate dialectic of "cultural revolution." This perspective makes the task of historical understanding more rather than less difficult. It also introduces new complexity into the problem of cross-cultural intellectual encounters. But "simple" views are not always the most persuasive, particularly when they subordinate intellectual practice entirely to institutional demands, or attribute interest in foreign texts to swings of a metahistorical pendulum. Meiji intellectuals were not merely passive recipients or indiscriminate Westernizers; they were "producers."
NOTES for The Production of Enlightenment in Meiji Japan


6. "[Thought] is defined by the system of real conditions which make it, if I dare use the phrase, a determinate mode of production of knowledge. As such, it is constituted by a structure which combines...the type of object (raw material) on which it labours, the theoretical means of production available (its theory, its method and its technique, experimental or otherwise) and the historical relations (both theoretical, ideological and social) in which it produces. This definite system of conditions of theoretical practice is what assigns any given thinking subject (individual) its place and function in the production of knowledges." Althusser, Louis and Balibar, Etienne. Reading Capital, Ben Brewster trans. (London: New Left Books, 1970) pp. 41-42.


9. Louis Althusser has defined the problematic (of a science, for example) as "its absolute and definite condition of possibility, and hence the absolute determination of the forms in which all problems must be posed, at any given moment in the science." Althusser's translator, Ben Brewster, adds, "A word or concept cannot be considered in isolation; it only exists in the theoretical or ideological framework in which it is used: its problematic." Althusser and Balibar, 25, 316. Therefore, while the problematic is evident in the text, it is not necessarily put there intentionally by the author. It is rather an epistemological framework, or matrix, that controls what phenomena will be defined as "problems" and how they will be formulated.

10. According to Richard Schwab, "We may define 'rationalism' as an intellectual orientation (particularly notable in the metaphysical systems of
the late seventeenth century) which assumes the existence of certain absolute principles or truths instinctively or clearly felt to be true, through which the chief truths of phenomena can be deduced, judged, or explained. 'Empiricism' is an intellectual orientation associated with the names of Bacon and Locke, and based on the assumption that 'hard facts' of experience, experimentation, and physical sensations are the essential elements from which our valid ideas are derived and which are the source of all true knowledge." Preliminary Discourse of the Encyclopedia of Diderot, trans. Schwab, Richard (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1963), pp. xxxii. Regarding the Enlightenment's epistemological foundation as a "fusion of Cartesianism and English empiricism," see Baker, Keith Michael. Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) pp. 85-194. See also Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), chas. 1.

Ryoen Minamoto has characterized Tokugawa Confucianism as "empirical rationalism" thus suggesting that a combination between these two approaches is not contradictory in the Japanese context: "Empirical rationalism does not oppose rational principle to actual substance (or, principles to things)." Minamoto, Ryoden. "Jitsugaku' and Empirical Rationalism in the First Half of the Tokugawa Period," in de Bary, Wm. Theodore and Bloom, Irene eds., Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 376. The juxtaposition of rationalism and empiricism attempted here is very similar to Tetsuo Najita's juxtaposition of "formism" against "mechanism" in "Structure and Content in Eighteenth Century Thinking on 'Political Economy' (With Comparison in Mind)," (Paper delivered at the Chicago Seminar on American-East Asian Cultural Relations, University of Chicago, May 1982).


15. For more detail on the Daijōsai as viewed by Mito scholars, see Koschmann, J. Victor. "Discourse in Action: Representational Politics in Mito in the Late Tokugawa Period" (Ph.D. dis., University of Chicago, 1980).


18. Aizawa, pp. 75.


20. See Nagai, Michio, pp. 61-62.


22. Michel Foucault has suggested that historians abandon their appeal to the "living force of change (as if it were its own principle)" and turn to an analysis of transformations that are definable at various levels of discourse. Levels might include the objects formed, their
interrelationships, the concepts in terms of which objects and their relations are discussed, and the theories and strategies that are the "regulated ways of practicing the possibilities of discourse." The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language, Sheridan, A.M., trans. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976), pp. 70, 173.


24. Ibid., 77.

25. Ibid., 83, 84.


28. Ibid., 93: "Fair and impartial" is Abosch's translation for kōmei seidai.


31. Ibid. 80.


33. Sakamoto, Takeo, pp. 113-114.


35. Katō, Hiroyuki. "Jinken shinsetsu" (A Reconsideration of Natural Rights) in Meiji shiso shū 1, Matsumoto, Sannosuke, ed., pp. 103. Perhaps because postwar Japanese intellectuals have been preoccupied with such problems as the locus of responsibility for the Pacific War and the individual's capacity to act consistently in accord with universalistic ideals, the differences between Kokutai shinron and Jinken shinsetsu have often been discussed in terms of Katō's "ideological conversion" (tenkō) from natural rights to social Darwinism. See, for example, the essay on Katō in Matsumoto, Sannosuke. Kindai Nihon no Seiji to Ningen (Politics and Man in Modern Japanese Thought) (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1966). This approach tends to reduce intellectual issues to psychology and may obscure the socio-historical context in which ideas are produced. In contrast, this essay follows Althusser, Foucault and others' attempts to "decenter" intellectual history by analyzing discursive formations in texts as social products, not individual creations.


38. Ibid., 105.

39. Ibid., 115, 117-119.

40. Ibid., 120.

41. Ibid., 112.

42. Ibid., 104.

43. Ibid., 126.
44. Ibid., 110-111.
45. Ibid., 126-127, 129.
47. Ibid., 59.
57. Matsumoto, Sannosuke. Kindai Nihon, pp. 67-68.
61. Ibid., 23.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., 24.
65. Ibid., 33.
66. See Althusser and Balibar, pp. 94, 99.
67. Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, pp. 128.
When Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) left Japan in the fall of 1903 for the United States, he was already known as a promising young writer, with a couple of fairly well-received short novels to his credit, in addition to a series of trial pieces he had written as a self-appointed apprentice to a popular writer of the time, Hirotsubu Ryūrō (1861-1928). If, in the eyes of his literary friends who came to Yokohama to send him off, he was about to embark on an enlightening journey to the West, in reality he was far from being in a position to congratulate himself on his supposedly good luck.

As the eldest son of a high-ranking bureaucrat-turned-businessman, Kafū had been expected to follow in his father's footsteps. Born into a kambun (Chinese writing)-oriented family, with a famous sinologist as a maternal grandfather and a father who was well-known for his poems in the Chinese style, he was taught classical Chinese as a young child. But, particularly under the influence of his mother, who was an avid reader of popular novels and theater-goer, he soon felt drawn to the world of literature and the arts of the late Edo period. His interest in literature intensified in tandem with his dislike of school, which, by the time he was sixteen, had a new principal who could not have been more antipathetic to a sensitive and effeminate youth like Kafū. (Kanō Jigorō, the new principal, is well-known as the founder of the famous judo hall, Kōdōkan.) Having future high-ranking military men among his classmates certainly did not improve the situation, and his experience in failing the entrance examination to the First Higher School was all the more embittering, since he had been quite aware of his weakness in mathematics and of his general inaptitude for this prestigious school, which existed primarily for students wishing to become future bureaucrats, lawyers, or businessmen. He enrolled instead in the Chinese language department of the Tokyo Foreign Language School, but hardly attended his classes, and flunked out altogether after awhile. By then he had become immersed in the life-style of a typical Edo dilettante, frequenting the pleasure quarters, the yose (variety hall) and the Kabuki theater, taking bamboo flute
and samisen lessons, briefly becoming a pupil of a rakugoka (comic storyteller), and having an equally brief stint as an apprentice kabuki playwright.

In September 1898, he showed a short story to Hirotsu Ryūrō and was accepted as his disciple. Like many other young aspiring writers in Japan at that time, he started reading Western literature extensively, both in Japanese translation and in English. He came across Ueda Bin’s account of French literature in his "Jūkyūseiki bungeishi" (Nineteenth-century literature and arts; June 1900). Ueda (1877-1916) was the first Japanese who, in Kafū's words, "extensively introduced and interpreted modern French literature for Japanese readers."

Upon reading this piece, Kafū felt a strong inclination towards the French literary world, and decided to study French. He started attending French language classes at the night school of Gyōsei High School, while simultaneously reading English translations of French works, notably Ernest Vizetelly's fine translations of Zola's novels from the Rougon-Macguart series.

Kafū became one of the leading advocates of Zola and his "naturalism," a phase in his life which he would come to regard as a youthful aberration.

At a time when a writer was held in low esteem, young Kafū's literary achievements hardly meant anything to his father. As the son proved himself unfit for the career of a bureaucrat, the father did what many well-to-do fathers did at that time; he decided to send his son to the United States in order to let him acquire enough prestige as a kichōsha (a person who has returned from abroad; more specifically, from the West), so that he could eventually become a respectable businessman. Thus, Kafū left Japan primarily as a drop-out from an elitist course on a face-saving journey to a far-away land which held quite an uncertain future.

Kafū's first year in the United States was spent chiefly at Tacoma, with occasional visits to Seattle. He attended classes at a local high school for a while to improve his English, but being a boarder at a Japanese immigrant family's home in a Japanese neighborhood did not help much. Late in 1904, Kafū visited the world's fair at St. Louis and proceeded to Kalamazoo, Michigan, to enroll at its college as an auditor or "unclassified student." (He had hoped to go to New Orleans to meet French people and practice his French but was dissuaded from doing so for climatic reasons.)

Kalamazoo is still a peaceful and rather sleepy town today, and it is almost inconceivable that an overly-urbanized person like Kafū should have chosen to stay at such a place. Yet he did settle down in Kalamazoo, attended elementary French and English literature classes, and started writing again, something he had almost abandoned while on the West coast. He also became a member of a literary group called the "Century Forum" and attended its biweekly meetings quite conscientiously during his seven months' stay at Kalamazoo. At the same time, he
Kafū in America extensively read French works -- by Flaubert, Baudelaire, Maupassant, and Daudet, to mention a few -- and felt all the more drawn towards France and its culture. In order to raise funds for his proposed trip to France, he worked as a messenger boy at the Japanese consulate in Washington, a job he obtained in June 1905 through a cousin who was a diplomat stationed at the nation's capital. An increase in Japan's diplomatic business after the Russo-Japanese War enabled Kafū to hold his job until early October. After failing to find another job in New York City to earn more money for his travel to Europe, he returned to Kalamazoo for a few weeks, where he received a letter from his father which said that a position as a bank clerk at the New York branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank had been secured for him.

Kafū worked at the bank for one-and-a-half years, and kept trying to obtain his father's permission to proceed to France. His bank manager finally told him on July 2, 1907 that he had been appointed to a position at the Lyon branch of their bank. (It was actually his father who had made this arrangement possible.) His stay in France, however, was very brief. After working only eight months in Lyon, Kafū decided to resign from his position. He spent his last two months in France living in Paris, and returned to Japan in July 1908, never to go abroad again until his death in April 1959, at the age of 79.

* * * * *

Kafū spent altogether four years in the United States with the sole aim of learning enough French and earning enough money to go to France. Yet after he had finally reached his ultimate destination, he brought a rather abrupt end to his sojourn, which his father also protested. That life as a bank clerk had become intolerable to him even in France explains to some extent why he decided to quit his post, which automatically meant returning to Japan. Also, an inevitable sense of letdown caused by the fulfillment of a romantic and at times almost childish dream might have further contributed to his decision to leave France in less than a year. The twenty-odd short stories later published under the title Furansu monogatari (French stories) convey an overwhelming sense of dejection and disappointment. However, these factors do not seem to provide the whole answer. It is at this juncture that the importance of his stay in the United States begins to draw one's attention.

A letter Kafū wrote shortly after his arrival at Kalamazoo to Nishimura Keijirō, a literary friend back in Japan, is indicative of his views of the United States, which seem to have been shared by many other Japanese at that time:
...Basically I haven't changed a bit in spite of the change in my environment. In fact, I wasn't happy at all when I left Japan with America as my destination. All I knew about the United States was whatever I had learned while in junior high school regarding its history and geography, so naturally I couldn't feel any interest in it. As a consequence, even though I have been in this country for a year and a half, my mind hasn't been in any way affected by America... There isn't any music, art, or literature that can be considered originally American. These are less imitations than direct imports from Europe, so that all music and art students go abroad, to France, Germany, Italy, etc., in order to study. I visited Chicago the other day, but there was little that caught my eye.

His preoccupation with French literature did not leave him much time for the study of American literature. Holding Poe as the exception, partly due to Baudelaire's interest in him, he formed an extremely negative view of American authors. It appears that his sweeping denunciation of American literature was largely based on his reading of a few contemporary novels, especially The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come (1903) by John Fox, Jr., which was essentially a piece of cheap juvenile literature, a mish-mash of bits from Oliver Twist, The Little Princess, and the Bible, among other things. In his letter to Ikuta Kizan, another literary friend in Tokyo, Kafū wrote:

American novels are too naive and optimistic, nothing even remotely like French or Russian works. The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come, which has been a best seller, was heralded by the critics as a pure American novel. While its written style seems to be very skillful, the story itself is quite childish, as usual. It's a success story which deals with a young boy from the mountainside, who makes it big after a great deal of hardship. Indeed, a typical "Pure American novel." The American people who shun profound thought and set their souls and hearts in quest of worldly success are quite well described in this novel. The United States is extremely inconvenient and unsuitable for a person like myself, who wants to study literature.

Kafū's life in the United States had started when he came face-to-face with the ugly and miserable conditions of Japanese immigrants on the Pacific coast. In a letter to Mokuyōkai
(Thursday Club), a literary group to which he had belonged back in Japan, Kafu told his friends:

My original plan was to live with a Westerner's family, and as soon as I arrived here I made several inquiries, but so far in vain. The way Japanese are ostracized in this place is almost unbelievable. It will be enough to tell you that no decent house or apartment will accept Japanese or Chinese tenants...6

In a short story entitled "Yoru no kiri" (Foggy night; November 1903), the narrator is acutely reminded of the terrible life of laborers described in Zola's L'assomoir when he sees workers leave a nearby bar and disappear in the foggy night "wearily dragging their heavy shoes." He is presently accosted by a drunken laborer and wants to pass on quickly, "being aware that Japs were, along with the Chinese, the most hated enemies of [white] American laborers, who would take their jobs away by working for the lowest pay." But the drunken man talks to him anyway. The narrator is shocked to be addressed in crude Japanese and finds out that the laborer is "a man who must be in his thirties, not particularly short but bow-legged as typical of Japanese, with protruding cheek bones covered by a coarse taupe skin -- by no means pleasant-looking even to a fellow countryman." This laborer is in the last state of despair: a Japanese-organized savings association where he had saved 500 dollars after ten years of labor had gone bankrupt, and when eventually half of his savings was returned to him, he lost all of it in a single night of gambling, and was thus reduced to a life of panhandling and heavy drinking. The narrator tries to calm him down for "some American passers-by have already started to cluster behind the drunkard, looking down with a contemptuous expression as was always the case when they came upon some Japanese." Blaming the narrator for being reduced to blush in silence, the laborer gives vent to his frustration by shouting: "Don't you dare be embarrassed! Are you afraid of the Yankees? Did you forget that we are owners of yamato damashii [Japanese spirit]?” And when he notices a young and beautiful blond woman, wincing and whispering in her escort's ear, he spits in her direction, yelling, "You whore!”. All the onlookers are outraged, while the narrator feels entirely helpless. Then a giant of a policeman appears on the scene, and "with the self-assured stride of an elephant, drags away without uttering a single unnecessary word, the undersized Japanese laborer, who kicks in vain...The midnight fog covering the city becomes even heavier making things hardly visible. The crowd of sneering onlookers, my compatriot who became their prey, the formidable policeman, all were equally buried in
uncertainty .... It was after awhile that I realized I was still leaning against a chilly store wall in a daze but was unable to free myself from this frightful trance. I cannot remember through which dark streets I managed to return home."

By moving to Kalamazoo, Michigan, Kafū no longer had to be associated with Japanese immigrants. In a letter written in English to Nishimura Keijirō, Kafū wrote, "I am very happy now in Michigan because I am treated no more as a 'Jap' as in Tacoma." He also deeply appreciated Kalamazoo's peaceful and beautiful natural surroundings, which enabled him to concentrate on reading and contemplating. At the same time, the place was too provincial for his urbane tastes. In his letter to Ikuta Kizan, dated April 13, 1905, Kafū described life in Kalamazoo as follows:

My life at present is a quiet one of being a student in the countryside. My thoughts seem to get lyrical since I spend half of the day in the meadows and orchards. As I do not have any friends, nothing interesting happens. At school I am taking up English literature and French. It is my hope to be able to get some general idea regarding French literature by the time I go back home. I strongly believe that the elegance of French literature suits my taste better than English literature, which tends to be more religious. As for my limited relationship with Americans, they are hardly worth talking about. They criticize the dramatization of Tolstoy's Resurrection as being inartistic, and Daudet's Sappho is immoral from their point of view. At any rate it won't do to stay in the countryside. Since summer vacation starts in June, I'll go to New York City and see what will happen.

The religious atmosphere at Kalamazoo College, a Baptist institution, certainly did not help the situation. Even the meetings of the Century Forum opened with devotional exercises. To make matters worse, the only other Japanese male student on campus at that time, Katō Katsuji, a very serious and hardworking religion major, was its chaplain. (No wonder Kafū could not refrain from caricaturing Katō, if in a not entirely unfriendly way, in one of his short stories, "Haru to aki" [Spring and autumn].)

"Shikago no futsuka" (Two days in Chicago; March 1905) is a short story based on Kafū's visit to Chicago while he was an auditor at Kalamazoo College. He spends an evening in Hyde Park, at the home of a judge whose daughter, Stella, is engaged to James, a boarder at her home and a friend of Kafū's. The
young people have been drawn to each other through playing music together. Stella shows Kafū snapshots of herself and James, "her eyes [shining] with the belief that she [is] one of the happiest girls in the whole world."

I felt like praying for Stella's happiness from the bottom of my heart but at the same time couldn't help envying her good luck at having been born in a country of freedom. Japanese scholars steeped in Confucianism would have labelled her an immodest woman or a nymphomaniac, but in the country of freedom, no cumbersome creed exists which would go against natural feelings ....

After dinner, the young lovers play music together and make a free display of their affection toward each other, in front of Stella's approving parents. Kafū acutely feels the contrast between this American home and his own in Japan.

How do I hope that such a pleasant family scene would become a reality in our country as well! To take an example, the way I was brought up at home, it was simply impossible that music and laughter should be heard, with a father whose blood had been cooled off by the reading of Confucian classics and a mother bound by medieval morals. My father would hold drinking parties with his friends till past midnight and would criticize my worn-out mother about the way she had warmed the sake or cooked the food. My father's rude, malicious and tyrannical face as well as my mother's sad, ever-obedient and lethargic face at that time made me feel, even as a young child, that fathers were the most hateful in the whole wide world and mothers, the most unhappy. But if ever Japanese society should improve, this uncivilized Confucianism-oriented era will become a thing of the past and our new times will win the victory before long.

His experience the following morning at his boarding house was less pleasant. A female student from the University of Chicago bombards him with such typical questions as: "When did you come to this country?" "Do you like the United States? "Don't you feel homesick?" "Don't you think Japanese tea tastes good?" "Aren't Japanese kimonos beautiful?" "I am crazy about Japan...." After learning that she is an English major, Kafū asks her if she reads novels.
"Oh yes, I love reading them," answers the lady without a moment of hesitation. It seems that the cruel rule explicitly prohibiting young female students from reading novels doesn't exist in America. She rattled off numerous titles of recent publications and discussed them but, unfortunately, since I hadn't paid any attention to American literature, I couldn't particularly appreciate her learned argument. Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Henry James are about all the American authors I know. I think it was at the end of last year that a friend of mine in New York sent me some works by a few famous writers, but I never managed to read through any of them .... I wonder why it is impossible to find the likes of Daudet or Turgenev among the authors of this new continent. I guess works filled with deep pathos do not appeal to the fancy of Americans.

Kafu decides to visit downtown Chicago after breakfast and takes the commuter train during rush hour. He notices that passengers as well as people waiting on the platform are "voraciously reading the newspapers with the fierce look of one who wants to take in the maximum amount of news within the minimum length of time."

What a newspaper-loving people they are!...But don't they realize that nothing interesting or unusual will ever happen in the world; the same old muddle repeats itself again and again....

Kafu's one and a half years in New York as a bank clerk were rather a mixed experience. If life at the bank office was absolutely tedious (e.g., he was so poor at the abacus that he was assigned the job of counting war bonds), and the inevitable socializing with his Japanese colleagues and the Sunday calls upon the branch manager quite tiresome, he tried to make up for lost time by frequenting the theater, going to the opera and concerts, as well as visiting Chinatown and its female residents of dubious reputation. He also took private French lessons from an old Frenchman and became a boarder in the home of an elderly Frenchwoman to improve his spoken French.

What pleasantly surprised Kafu in New York was the existence of a "hidden world of fine music." He had shared the common view among Japanese of the time that there could not possibly exist any music or opera in a noisy commercial metropolis like New York City. Instead, he realized that New York was more like a world's fair of music whose wealth attracted great musicians, including singers from all over the
world. Furthermore, the opera-goer in New York had the advantage of being able to listen to an opera sung in its original tongue in contrast to Paris, where mostly French works were performed and Wagnerian and other foreign operas were sung in French translations. Kafū became an avid opera-goer, and occasionally attended concerts at such places as the Carnegie and Mendelsohn Halls.  

Young Kafū had started his career as a writer of short stories dealing chiefly with the Japanese demimonde in the tradition of late Edo gesaku (popular literature). And it was to this same world that he turned once again after returning from the West. During his four years in the United States Kafū wrote very little: twenty-odd short stories and essays collected and later published under the title, Amerika monogatari (American stories); and about seventy letters and an intermittent and laconic diary, Saiyū nisshi shō (Excerpts from the journal of a leisurely trip to the West) -- a semi-fictional account, as a comparison with some of his notes make clear. As shown above, Kafū was a reluctant visitor to the United States. He experienced humiliating discrimination while in the Pacific Northwest, and he never tired of condemning the United States' lack of tradition and the commercialism and overzealousness of its indigenous culture. He spent most of his spare time reading French novels and poetry, as well as trying to improve his French for his eventual visit to France. As a result, even critics who recognize Kafū's stay in the West as crucial to his artistic development and reappreciation of the Japanese tradition are hard-pressed to define the importance of his four years in America. Many tend to refer to such broad and hardly meaningful generalities, e.g., "individualism," "modernity," and "freedom," as products of his American experience; others give particular meaning to his "romance" (already overblown by the author himself) with Edyth, a Washington D.C. prostitute.  

The following account by Edward Seidensticker on the "marginal" importance of Kafū's experience regarding the United States seems, at first glance, more appropriate.  

It could be argued... however, that the United States, at least, made almost no difference to him. There are occasional expressions of delight with the American landscape and as high summer of the affair with Edyth approaches, there is a statement that he will never be able to leave, that every American tree, every blade of American grass, delights him;
but for the most part the American Stories and the [Journal] show a fondness for the demimonde and a wish to see France, both of which tendencies had been with him before he left Japan. As for the lyrical cries from the young artist's heart, they have less to do with America and the remoteness of home than with family problems by no means new, and with his reading in French literature... He went through the United States like a tourist, picking up knicknacks to be had more cheaply in Japan. The only new acquisition, perhaps, was an awareness that nature plays a more subtle part in Japanese life than in American. 18

Yet Seidensticker could not have been more mistaken in his judgement. To be sure, Kafu came to the United States reluctantly, and it was the least of his intentions to study America's culture, let alone its literature. He had started his writing career describing the pleasure quarters of Tokyo, and after his return from the West, he went back to depicting the same world.

It is possible to argue, however, that Kafu did not spend four years in the United States as a mere tourist. As Martin Turnell points out in his discussion of Stendhal's apprenticeship in Italy in contrast to Flaubert's in Africa, there is a definite difference between the traveller and the sightseer, and Kafu did not merely go about "picking up knicknacks." 19 He toured occasionally, particularly during his early days in the United States, but it was also at that time that he made a crucial observation which considerably influenced his later writing. In the above-quoted letter to Nishimura (April 1, 1905) in which he complains about the absence of "American culture," he goes on to say that perseverance and physical strength are the two factors behind the American people's success. He then talks about American women:

Since women's rights are extremely (and at times even excessively) extended, they can develop their own abilities in many directions. Society itself seems lively and colorful with their bright smile to adorn it. Since many women in the middle-class and above are as educated as men, they are not, unlike their docile Japanese counterparts, objects to be trifled with. As far as I can see, unmarried women seem to be, generally speaking, virtuous. On the other hand, there are many unfaithful ones among married women. In the papers, articles about wives
poisoning their husbands are commonplace. In other words, American women excel both in good and evil.... Nothing could intimidate them, and it seems they do whatever pleases them.... Only when Japanese women are liberated in the Western way, will novels dealing with poetic [dramatic] adultery be possible.

The prominent roles played by women in the Western literature that was introduced to Japan in the last quarter of the nineteenth century held strong fascination for aspiring Japanese writers, and a considerable number of works tried to transplant them, along with the themes of adultery and triangular love relationships, to Japanese soil. Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), for example, (twelve years Kafū's senior), made several gallant attempts -- and failed almost completely. And yet, he had also been abroad in London from 1900 to 1902 studying English literature. In Gubijinsō (The field poppy; 1907), he describes a young and beautiful modern woman whose strong will holds her male admirers at bay. She chooses to live and die after her model, Cleopatra, but the whole story in a Japanese middle-class environment of that time simply falls on its face, leaving the reader with the impression that he had witnessed a hysterical puppet fighting the void for its own sake. In the cases of Sorekara (And then; 1909), whose theme is adultery; Mon (The gate; 1910), which examines guilt feelings after an adultery; and Kokoro (The core of the matter; 1914), in which the protagonist marries his landlady's daughter after having betrayed his fellow boarder who also loves the same young woman, and thus causes his friend's suicide (and ultimately, his own), the women who are supposedly at the center of action are simply too passive and undeveloped to make their male counterparts' suffering and agonizing soul-searching plausible or effective. Arishima Takeo (1878-1923), the author of Aru onna (A woman; 1911-13), also lived in the United States at about the same time Kafū did (1903 to 1906) (before spending a year in Europe, chiefly in England). Originally entitled Aru onna no gurinpusu (A glimpse of a certain woman), this novel was clearly influenced by Madame Bovary. It deals with a beautiful and unconventional woman who follows the dictates of her sexual instinct, only to be defeated by hysteria and post-surgical complications. The "femme meconnue" (misunderstood woman) incarnated in Emma Bovary was certainly more appropriate for early twentieth century Japan, where most women played only secondary roles in social life, than were "femme fatales" like Zola's Nana, another favorite object of transplantation. However, the heroine of Arishima's novel too strongly clashes with her surroundings to be convincing and all her troubles appear to be self-inflicted and irrelevant.
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Kafū, unlike his contemporaries, clearly foresaw the problems involved in premature attempts at transplanting certain Western themes or situations, however great the temptation might be, to the typical middle- or upper middle-class settings of Japan in his time. To be sure, his observations of Western women were not all positive. It has already been seen that he did not particularly admire the pedantic female student. In an earlier cited letter to Ikuta Kizan (April 13, 1905), he refers to the less attractive sides of the "liberated" woman:

A modern woman is not bad at all but it seems to me that the attractiveness of a Japanese woman derives from the Edo ways of life. Equality of the sexes is all right as an ideal, but American women are not particularly my cup of tea in practice. When a woman has really awakened, man can no longer trifle with her as an object. Ideas such as democracy and socialism are fine as ideals, but I have come to dislike them in reality. This again is the result of my observation of the vulgar aspects of American society.

In a short story entitled "Rokugatsu no yo no yume" (A June night dream) written on an Atlantic crossing to France, Kafū sums up his view of American women; or rather, the ideal American woman. This piece is an account of an idyllic and platonic love affair between Kafū and a young American woman of British origin. (The affair is probably mere fantasy than fact, but the issue is of minor importance here.) The two young people's encounter takes place on Staten Island on a beautiful June night. On the way back to his lodging, the narrator of this story overhears a young woman singing to a piano accompaniment. Her voice comes from a lovely house atop a hill he is facing. Her singing and the sound of the piano fade away like dew drops, but shortly afterwards, the front gate of the house opens, and the narrator notices a petite woman clad in white walking just ahead of him toward the very house to which he is returning. She turns out to be an acquaintance of the narrator's landlady. His initial reaction when introduced to Rosaline is negative.

After having been in the United States for several years, I had concluded that it was impossible to carry on a conversation to my taste with American women. They were too lively and their thoughts were too healthy to indulge in any heated
discussion on art or to talk seriously about life. As a result, whenever I was introduced to one of them, I made it a rule not to expect any degree of interesting conversation, but rather to take advantage of the occasion to practice my English and make some observations. Therefore, when I met Rosaline for the first time I was prepared to talk about cars, which I loathe, or about churches or some such gentlemanly subject.

The narrator is agreeably surprised when she asks him whether he likes the opera; she goes on to talk about "Madama Butterfly," Nellie Melba, Strauss' "Symphonia Domestica" and so on, and makes him almost cry with joy. He goes so far as to say:

I have to confess I really do care for Western women. I prefer to everything else the experience of talking with a Western woman in a Western tongue, be it in English or in French, under Western skies, near Western waters, about Western art from ancient Greece onward -- that is the reason why I have judged American women in a negative way; I had expected too much of them at first.

Rosaline is described as a sensitive woman who can communicate with the narrator intelligently and with dignity. She is very small for an American woman, and combined with her resolute way there is a certain lingering sadness, "uniquely feminine and gentle, typical of the Anglo-Saxon race," making her all the more attractive.

Kafū is best known for his writings on the fast-vanishing world of Edo which still existed in Tokyo at the turn of the century; above all, on Tokyo's demimonde and the women who inhabited it. The vaudeville house dancers, barmaids, and street girls who came to dominate Tokyo's night life (and thus Kafū's), also served as heroines in his novels. "Serious" authors and critics, for whom modern literature means nothing more than drab descriptions of artists' financial and/or marital problems, have often labelled Kafū as a writer pursuing frivolous subject matters. He has frequently been criticized for being unable to describe "non-professional" women (as opposed to "professional" women such as geisha and barmaids); for treating women, both in reality and in his novels, in a pitying or patronizing way at his best, in a trifling or satirical (verging on sarcastic) way at his worst. It is true that Kafū had little patience with the typical middle-class woman of his time. He considered the traditional self-effacing, modest, and docile housewife exasperating rather than
exemplary. Take, for example Kafū's description of the wife of Koyama Kiyoshi, a protagonist in Reishō (Sneers; 1909-10): She is, in the first place, of frail constitution and childless, quite homely in looks and not educated enough to be presentable in society. She is well aware of her shortcomings and is ashamed of her being unqualified as the wife of the director of the Koyama Bank, as the spouse of a gentleman who graduated from Harvard and has travelled all over the world. She is convinced that her husband could have married any accomplished young daughter of a titled gentleman, and is genuinely feeling sorry for her husband from the bottom of her heart. And the gentler he treats her out of pity, the humbler she becomes and is satisfied with taking good care of his wellbeing like a maid.23

On the other hand, Kafū considered the modern, better educated woman (frequently the product of a missionary school for girls) "frightfully moralistic, a selfrighteous prude," as exemplified by the protagonist's wife in the short story, "Mihatenu yume" (Unfulfilled dream; 1910). When her husband insists on making an anonymous donation to charity, she not only disagrees with giving it anonymously, but also goes on to say, "'since so-and-so has contributed 100 yen, I certainly should donate 200 yen.' [And] when she noticed young couples whispering to each other sitting on benches in the Hibiya Park one summer night ... she frowned upon them and said they were doing something extremely obscene."24 In a word, the woman cherishes honor, virtue, and duty, not because she has high principles, but because she is vain.

Most readers and critics regard Kafū as a chauvinistic male author who looked down on women particularly the prudish and/or pedantic ones. Yet Kafū clearly did have his own image of the ideal woman, a woman who would be his social and intellectual equal, and still retain her feminine charm. The fact that he developed this image while he was in the United States helps explain Kafū's decision upon his return to Japan to write about the women of Tokyo's demimonde. As one of the characters in Reishō puts it, "[Japanese] society is still far from requiring a woman to be other than the good-wife-and-wise-mother type ... [and] to discuss women in these terms is a totally utilitarian attitude ...."25 It was thus quite unrealistic for the Japanese novelist to introduce more well-rounded female characters into his works. The Japanese middle-class family was simply the wrong milieu, especially for a writer like Kafū, who enjoyed French works in which adultery was a prominent
theme and flirtation was elevated almost to an art form. In contrast, the pleasure quarters at its peak in the Edo period was a place of taste and refinement where geisha -- highly-skilled musicians and dancers -- were frequently much better versed in literature than their "non-professional" counterparts. It was also a place where the discerning connoisseur (with whom Kafū identified) was preferred to the socially prominent, where men and women could exchange witty comments on literature, the kabuki theater, or music (and thus embellish the cruder realities of the place).

It is true that the pleasure quarters in Kafū's time no longer fit its description in the late Edo gesaku which Kafū particularly loved. Yet it was only in a world which closely resembled those quarters that Kafū could describe a scene distantly reminiscent of the family gathering in Chicago, where music was so much a part of life. In Reishō, the only protagonist who seems to share his wife's interests and tastes is the kabuki playwright, Nakatani. His wife, Okimi, comes from a pleasure quarters' tea house and has been brought up like a geisha. Nakatani continues to have affairs with other geisha after his marriage to Okimi, but his wife is not morally sensitive enough to feel disgusted; rather, she is proud of the fact that her husband's charm enables him to exploit women rather than be exploited by them. Okimi is also proud that her young daughter is taking dancing lessons with other apprentice geisha. While watching the little girl, Ochō, dancing to her parents' samisen and singing accompaniment, Kōu, the writer, cannot help feeling

that nothing could move one deeper than a home with music in it. After his return to Japan, it was only at the home of this kabuki playwright, infected to its root by the moribund Edo and corrupt pleasure quarters, that he was able to find a single example where music took place... From a strict, moralistic point of view, this home would be considered dirty to its core. But in the society of his native country, he was able to find the beautiful life of happiness and harmony, comparable to that he had witnessed in the healthy family life in the West only in this morally corrupt family.26

When young Kafū started frequenting the pleasure quarters in his teens, he was not out of step with Japanese males of the time. It was still acceptable for a married man to have a kept woman or a de facto second wife (frequently a geisha or a former geisha), and the pleasure quarters were the prominent milieu for socializing. Yet Kafū's father was different; he kept away
from the demimonde and remained faithful to his wife. As a result, his son felt defensive and even defiant regarding his nocturnal activities. After spending four years in the United States, where he was able to observe first-hand that a more colorful and exciting life was possible, even within the confines of a healthy home, returning to the pleasure quarters was no longer a mere act of frivolity and debauchery. Nor was it an escape into the past or an avoidance of reality. Rather, it provided the author with a medium which was lacking in the middle-class Japan of his time for reconciling, however precariously, the worlds of the late Edo period and the French salon, as he understood it. This was certainly a difficult task, considering the fact that Japan's literary scene in 1908 was still dominated by the so-called "naturalism." In its Japanese version, "naturalism" frequently meant truthfully recording one's experiences. Since the majority of self-named "naturalists" had come to Tokyo from the countryside and had to endure financial hardships, their struggles for survival provided ample and ready material for their works. However, by overestimating their own "sincerity" at the expense of style, objectivity, and creative imagination, they more often than not produced drab and insipid "true stories." As a result, while Kafū's works were hailed by those who had tired of monotonous autobiographical "novels," they were also criticized for avoiding "real life." And because Kafū enjoyed an independent income, he was stigmatized as a writer who was insufficiently serious and thus insincere. In spite of Kafū's seemingly frivolous personal life, however, his best works, especially the novels and essays written in the period between his return from the West and the beginning of World War II, as well as the diary he kept until the day before his death (which he had intended to publish), impress the reader even today with their vividness and intensity.

The special appeal of Kafū's writing is due in part to his evocative and yet simple prose style, but it is also a product of the "culture shock" he experienced in the United States and the way in which he coped with it. Although Kafū was not a very rational or profound thinker, he was gifted with an unusual sensitivity, which he cultivated and relied upon while living in the West and reading French literature. Primarily a nonreligious man, Kafū believed in being true to his sensitivity. He intuitively and almost stubbornly held to the eighteenth century French philosophes' credo, "Si je sens, je suis," (as Georges Poulet described it). At a time when the encounter with a different civilization was making an incredible and frequently chaotic impact on Japan, Kafū managed to develop his art by writing what truthfully represented his feelings and his appreciation of Western literature and
culture. He neither resented the West in spite of his experiences with discrimination in the United States nor applauded Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War. He criticized both the Japanese immigrants who preyed on their fellows, and the many Japanese visitors in the United States and France who remained aloof from contacts with Westerners. If Kafū could not quite “forgive” the United States for not being France, or more specifically, Paris, he was also grateful to the country which had enabled him to indulge in daydreams about ideal women, and to experience the world of Western music and theater. Some forty years later, Marcel Raymond would refer to the prerogatives of the ideal reader (and more broadly of the art lover) as

[entering] a state of profound receptivity through
a kind of ascetism, in which the being sensitizes
itself to the extreme, then little by little yields
to a penetrating sympathy. And finally, it is
necessary to try to raise oneself to a state of sui
generis understanding.29

It may be said that this was exactly how Kafū developed his artistic sensibility while in the United States.

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Appendix I

"Shikago no futsuka" (Two days in Chicago; March, 1905)

March 16, ________ This was the day I had set aside to visit Chicago.

People said it had been unseasonably warm; most of the snow which had accumulated from the year before had melted away after a heavy rainfall. The sky was overcast as usual but the town which had awakened from its long winter’s sleep had a completely different look. The low sleighs which used to slide over the snow had now turned into large-wheeled carriages, and the drivers’ forbidding fur coats had turned into lightweight raincoats. Young boys and girls who, in tasseled caps had been skating on ice, now ran up and down the rain-soaked cement sidewalks, clacking the heels of their new shoes. One need not be a child to dance spontaneously with joy in anticipation of a soon-to-come spring, when one notices that the dark and moist soil and the green grass of yesteryear are making their appearance in people’s gardens or orchards after having spent the winter under the snow.

To catch the 9:30 a.m. train I hastily packed my overnight bag and hopped onto a streetcar at an intersection on the outskirts of town headed for the Michigan Central station.
I was told that the distance between Kalamazoo and Chicago is about one hundred miles and that it would take exactly four hours. As soon as the train left Kalamazoo it ran through rolling, undulating hills where trees were sparse and alongside apple orchards blackened by winter's blight. The landscape and scenery were just like those in a Russian novel with white-spotted patterns created by the left-over snow in scattered pockets across the brown hills, and snow-fed streams pushing down rotten fences in the meadows.

Once the train entered Indiana, dirty little towns with numerous factories increased in number. After a while, the train reached the shores of Lake Michigan, but a dense fog completely covered the surface of the lake as well as the sky; and all one could see were huge chunks of ice floating near the shores and countless seagulls flying around. The Arctic Ocean which I have as yet to see must be something like this.

The train ran alongside the lake and soon entered the city of Chicago, reaching the Illinois Central station. Since it was 1:30 p.m. I left the platform and walked upstairs and proceeded to the restaurant which was located at one corner of the waiting room.

The inside of the restaurant was divided into two sections. One, designated "lunch counter" or the like and resembling a Japanese drinking stall, was for quick meals to be consumed while standing; the other was a regular dining room with white cloth-covered tables and chairs. The former was crowded, with almost no empty space, since it was both speedy and economical to eat there. It was strange to see some pretty, well-dressed women among the patrons.

Having finished my meal, I went down a broad flight of stairs to the street, but which way should I proceed in this unfamiliar city to find my friend's house? Since there were carriages at the foot of the stone stairway, with drivers waiting for their fares, I waved at one of them and as he approached, asked how much it was to the University of Chicago. His answer was "Two dollars." I knew my destination was fairly far away, but still it seemed a bit too expensive, and being used to making a fool of myself while abroad, I returned to the station and made inquiries of a railroad employee who happened to be there. He kindly told me that the most convenient way was to take the city train near the station's exit and get off at 55th Street. So I paid an additional ten cents for the ticket and waited for the train at the platform.

A three-car train came before long, and once it stopped, the doors opened without any help from the station employees. As soon as the train started moving, they again closed by themselves. In the cars there were few female passengers but many men who looked like merchants. Since I was planning to
visit a friend of mine who lived near the University of Chicago, I turned to the young man who was sitting next to me and asked him how to reach my friend's address. He answered by giving me detailed directions as if I had been a child and even pulled out a map from his pocket notebook. I thanked him profusely, doffing my hat in accordance with Japanese etiquette. The man looked a bit taken aback by such overly polite behavior, and said, "We are all in trouble when we go overseas, so you really needn't thank me so much." American men apparently never take off their hats to greet one another. He went on to say, "I am myself a foreigner, a Dutchman, even though I have been in this country for no less than ten years .... By the way, do you like America?"

When I replied, "How about you?" he smiled and said, "After all, the best place in the world is one’s old home. I would assume it's the same with you." He then said that he had been a clerk at a certain store and was about to start bragging about his own country when the train reached my station. I thanked him again, got off the train, and went down the street.

"55th Street," said the gaslight at the intersection. Since my destination was 58th Street, this meant I had to walk three more blocks. It is so easy to find one's way, even in a new place, because American streets are numbered consecutively or are arranged in alphabetical order. This is one of the most convenient aspects of American streets. Moreover, if the street addresses have odd numbers on the right side, they'll have even numbers on the left, so that the situation familiar to Tokyo residents who cannot find a new street number in the same city simply does not exist.

I walked leisurely, feeling at ease. The winter clouds which earlier had covered the sky were for some time moving in layers, gradually revealing blue skies and sunlight. Since the melting snow had turned the streets into marshes, I picked my way along the relatively dry sidewalks. The weather certainly was unpredictable; it seemed like a balmy day in May. Sweat started pouring down my forehead and my overcoat which had felt comfortable until this morning became terribly cumbersome.

Soon I found the address I was looking for among a row of three-storied rooming houses all of the same stone. This area didn't look like part of the bustling city of Chicago. Only a few people were on the streets, and one side of the district was a grassy open space (I was later told that it was called "the Midway" and had been part of the International Exposition ten-odd years ago, after which it had been converted into a park). To the far right, the University of Chicago's grey buildings could be seen; to the left, there were two or three skyscrapers, quite probably hotel buildings. This scenery blended harmoniously with the clouds busily moving back and
forth right after the rainfall, and drew my attention though I knew not why. I just gazed at the landscape for awhile, and stood at the door of the house that I was going to visit without ringing the doorbell.

I then heard a young woman's voice from the second floor window. I couldn't make out what she said, but soon the front door opened, following the clattering sound of somebody's coming down the stairway. "Aren't you Mr. N.?" asked a slightly-built young woman of probably seventeen or eighteen. Her blond hair was loosely swept back from her forehead, and she was wearing a white jacket and a navy-blue skirt. She had a most lovely round face and smiled in an almost artificial way, charming dimples appearing at the corners of her mouth. In the gay, innocent, candid and gentle voice, characteristic of American maidens, she said, "James hasn't come back yet from work, but he has been looking forward to your visit for some time. Do come in." And she led me to the living room.

There was only a sofa, a couple of armchairs, a desk, some lithographs and a well-worn piano which gave an almost forlorn air to the room. I was surprised by the absence of splendor which I had expected to find in a Chicago home. The master of this household was a judge, and the person who was entertaining me at that moment was his only daughter and the fiancee of my friend James, whom I had come to know in Michigan.

Yes, indeed, James had frequently told me about this young woman and had more than once shown me her beautiful picture, which he carried with him all the time pasted to the back of his pocket watch. James' parents lived in Michigan and we had become good friends while he had been back home some time ago. He had been graduated from an electrical engineering school in Boston. When he started working as an engineer at the Edison Company of Chicago, he became a boarder at this house. He was good at the piano, which he had played since his student days, while Stella, the judge's daughter, enjoyed playing the violin. They frequently played duets after dinner, and the evenings spent in this manner had drawn them so close that they became engaged. I had already heard from James that it was when they played Schumann's "Traumerei" together that they realized they had fallen in love.

When I told Stella that I really hoped they would play "that 'dream piece'" in the evening, she looked quite startled, and lightly pressing her cheek with her graceful hand, exclaimed, "Dream!" As if being overwhelmed by the remembrance of past events, she took a big breath and asked me, "Has James ever told you such things?" "Oh yes, everything..." "Oh, my!" she said and laughed with a clear voice. It felt as though I could almost hear the palpitation of her heart, this maiden who, like others in this country, felt no need to restrain her emotions.
She suddenly got up from the armchair and went briskly to the next room, and then returned in no time with a photo album. Drawing a chair quite close to me, she opened the album on her lap and said, "These are our pictures. We have taken them every Sunday." Pictures which they had taken of each other at various parks they had visited together on Sundays were pasted on the album's pages, with the dates written down under each of them. Stella identified for me in a hurried manner such places as the lakeside at Jackson Park, the embankment at Michigan Avenue, and the bower in Lincoln Park. As she did so, her deep green eyes shone with the belief that she was one of the happiest girls in the whole world. I felt like praying for Stella's happiness from the bottom of my heart, but at the same time, I couldn't help envying her good luck at having been born in a free country. Japanese scholars steeped in Confucianism would have labelled her an immodest woman or a nymphomaniac, but in the country of freedom, no cumbersome creed exists which would go against natural feelings.

That evening I had a most memorable and pleasant dinner. James, Stella's sweetheart came home, followed by her father, the elderly judge. After dinner with the whole family, including Stella's mother, the young couple complied with my wish and played "Traumerei." Under the dim light from the electric lamp with a flower-shaped lampshade, he sat at the piano with his broad-shouldered back turned in our direction, while she stood right next to him, holding her violin and almost leaning against him. The grey-haired mother and the bespectacled elderly judge with a large, bald head sat on the sofa, and beyond the windows the footsteps of someone hurriedly passing by in the slightly humid early spring night could be heard.

The young couple soon finished playing the piece, and as soon as Stella put down her instrument, she threw herself in James' arms and kissed him passionately. Her parents applauded and asked her to repeat it, but she kept her face pressed against his chest for a while and tried to calm herself. Suddenly she straightened herself, picked up her instrument and started playing that merry tune, "Dixie," which is a great favorite of the American people. Even the elderly judge started beating the time with his feet as he sat on the sofa.

Presently the clock chimed nine o'clock. James had told me earlier that since there was, unfortunately, no extra room at Stella's, he would take me to a private boarding house which was the third building down the road. So I said good-night to the whole family and went out with James. I wanted somehow to tell James that their love was blessed, but I was distracted by the violent movements of the night clouds in the sky, and I kept walking without saying a word. James whistled a popular tune
and reached the entrance to the boarding house in no time.

Even though it was a boarding house there was nothing unusual about it. It seemed that the number of rooms and their layout were almost identical to Stella's. I was taken to one of the best rooms -- a front room -- by the mistress of the house. James left after five minutes or so, and I quickly changed and quietly went to bed. Once I had put out the gaslight, I had a full view of the night sky. The window shades were up, and the moon was hiding right behind the moving clouds. Even though the sky was dark, it was somehow slightly lit and the trees on the street and the tall buildings in the distance could be distinguished like so many dark shadows. Fortunately, however, I was quite tired after the train ride, and before I could think about anything, it felt like I was sinking to the bottom of the sea. I fell soundly asleep.

March 17, _______ When I woke up, it was eight o'clock and the morning sun was shining brightly on the thoroughly wet window panes. Standing near a window while I dressed, I looked out at wind-blown twigs scattered here and there over the wet pavement. There must have been a rainstorm. I was surprised that I had been able to sleep through it without even having a dream. It is the lot of us poor humans to be endlessly tormented by various dreams in the middle of our sleep, but thanks to last night's dreamless sleep, I had managed, for the first time, to acquire comfort and happiness away from daily toil, just like those animals who lie down under shady trees in the meadows.

I went down stairs to the dining room for breakfast which was, I had been told, set for nine o'clock. There were three small tables which seated four people each. Two middle-aged men who looked like merchants were reading the Chicago Tribune at the far end table. A lady who looked like a student was at the table in the middle. The mistress of the house took me to this table, and the person who was wearily waiting for her breakfast started talking to me right away having concluded I was a foreigner. But, all of her questions were typical: "When did you come to this country? Do you like the United States? Don't you feel homesick? Don't you think Japanese tea tastes good? Aren't Japanese kimonos beautiful? I am crazy about Japan...."

I felt like switching the conversation to anything but this as soon as possible, when, fortunately, a young girl of about fourteen or fifteen whose hair was tied with a black ribbon brought over our breakfast. Grabbing the opportunity, I asked as I picked up my knife if she were a college student. Since she answered that she majored in English literature, I felt
somewhat encouraged to continue, "Literature ... then do you read novels?" "Oh yes, I love reading them" answered the lady without a moment of hesitation. It seems that the cruel rule explicitly prohibiting young female students from reading novels doesn't exist in America.

She rattled off numerous titles of recent publications and discussed them but, unfortunately, since I hadn't paid any attention to American literature, I couldn't particularly appreciate her learned argument. Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Henry James are about all the American authors I know. I think it was at the end of last year that a friend of mine in New York sent me some works by a few famous writers, but I never managed to read through any of them. I also occasionally flip through some magazines, but I wonder why it is impossible to find the likes of Daudet or Turgenev among the authors of this new continent. I guess works filled with deep pathos do not appeal to the fancy of Americans.

Breakfast was over sooner than expected. The female student said, "The spring convocation will be held tomorrow afternoon on campus at Mandel Hall, so you might be interested in attending it..." Picking up her book from the table with one hand, she left the room, smoothing out her bangs with the other. Almost at that very moment the doorbell rang, and the young girl who had been waiting on us told me that somebody had come to see me. It was James. Wearing his hat slightly tilted back, he repeatedly said, "Good morning," and asked if I would go downtown and do some sightseeing since he had to go there to work. I readily accepted his suggestion and went out to take the train to the city from the same station where I had arrived yesterday afternoon.

Since it was the time of the day when Chicagoans of all classes go to work for various firms and stores downtown, the cars were filled with men and women. They were voraciously reading the newspapers with the fierce look of one who wants to take in the maximum amount of news within the minimum length of time. At stations where the trains come every five to ten minutes there isn't a single person who is waiting for a train without a newspaper. What a newspaper-loving people they are! They would say that all people of a progressive country want to know as many world events as possible and at the earliest moment .... But don't they realize that nothing interesting or unusual will ever happen in the world; the same old muddle repeats itself again and again. In diplomacy, it is the conflict of interests between A and B; in wars, it is the stronger power who is the winner; banks going bankrupt, intrigues during elections, train derailings, thieves, murderers. Daily occurrences are always the same and monotonous to the extreme. The French writer, Maupassant, has already suffered an
unbearable pain caused by this excruciatingly boring life and says in his diary, *On the Water* [Sur l'eau; 1888]: "Blessed are those who are unaware that the same abominable things are endlessly repeated. Blessed are those who ride today and tomorrow the same carriages, drawn by the same animals, under the same sky, in front of the same horizon and have the energy to do the same work in the same way, surrounded by the same pieces of furniture. Blessed are those who do not realize with an unbearable hatred that nothing will change or happen in this weary and tired world ...." Thus, Americans who yearn to know about the events of this monotonous life as ardently as the starving crave for food, should be considered the most blessed ones.

The train kept running along the lake's shoreline. I hardly had the time to reflect that it felt somewhat like passing by the vicinities of Shinbashi and Shinagawa [in Tokyo] when the train reached the terminal and the passengers hurriedly stood up from their seats. James told me that this was Van Buren station and that it was the entrance to the busiest commercial center of Chicago. The innumerable men and women who poured out of the train went across the solid stone bridge which is connected to the platform, almost rubbing their shoulders against each other. Michigan Avenue, where many cars were coming and going as quickly as the wind, can be seen beyond the bridge, and tall buildings, all more than twenty stories high, are vying with each other on all the wide streets running westward from Michigan Avenue. The sky was overcast, which is typical of the month of March, but since these tall buildings obstructed the light from both sides of the streets, something black like darkness which was neither dust nor smoke lurked among them. And the multitudes of men and women who had just crossed the stone bridge disappeared into this darkness -- this darkness which is Chicago -- as if they were being swallowed up.

A vague sense of terror overtook me. At the same time, I felt an irresistible and irrational urge to join the destroyers of civilization. The honest Japanese farmer comes to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, as a tourist and is overwhelmed by its prosperity (if one could call it that) and goes back to his thatched-roofed hut, full of admiration and respect for the capital, whereas the young man once exposed to the ideas of the times is prone to engage in the wildest fantasies. I forgot to walk on and lingered on the bridge, when James turned back, and smiling for some reason started to say, "a great city," as if to ask me a question. I answered, "Ah! a monster." I could think of no other way to describe it, so I had to fall back to the much used word for it.
James pointed to the tall buildings on Michigan Avenue ahead of us and explained that a certain hotel was called "The Annequis"; the next building was the Auditorium Theater; the distant one was the tower of the Stock Exchange Building; etc. Then he offered, since there was still some time, to take me to a large department store called "Marshall Field's." "It is the largest in Chicago .... Since there isn't a department store as big as this one -- even in New York -- one could say it is the largest in the whole world. There are as many as 700 female employees alone."

James must have been right. A visit to this department store is almost a duty for the traveller who passes through Chicago. It sells all kinds of articles, (including clothing, furniture, notions, footwear, cosmetics) and stands like a castle at one corner of State Street, which is the main street in Chicago. I slipped through the crowd and took the elevator to the top of the building, which was close to twenty stories high, and looked down, leaning against the well-polished brass railing. The building was just like a huge tube with a hollow center. The sunlight which entered through the skylight at the top reached all the way down, so that it was possible to enjoy the rare view of people walking in and out on the stone floor several hundred feet below. Men and women were hardly as big as our thumbs, and the way they wormed their way ahead, moving their arms and legs, looked as comical as the funniest toys imaginable. But once I thought about the fact that the same small and helpless-looking people were able to build this tall building, which reached the clouds, I could not help feeling proud of the glory of humankind's progress, even though I had but a short time ago cursed civilization.

People would laugh at the frivolity of my undecided mind. But the human mind is only changing and floating according to the circumstances and surroundings of the given moment. Just as we hope for the cold weather of winter time on a summer day and long for the coolness of summer on a winter day, there is no absolute truth in Luther's Protestantism, Rousseau's liberty, or Tolstoy's peace. These were all mere voices called forth by certain times and circumstances.

James said it was time for him to go to work. We went down together by elevator and parted company at the store's entrance. I intended to go to the Art Institute on Michigan Avenue.

Appendix II

"Ochiba" (Falling leaves; October 1906)

Nothing is as frail as autumn leaves in America. In
September, even though it is unbearably hot in the afternoon and people complain about the lingering summer, dew-soaked leaves of oaks, elms, lindens and especially the large leaves of maples -- which, are like the Japanese aogiri, begin to fall heavily and languidly in the evening, even when there is no wind, without even changing their summer colors. They touch me with a much deeper sense of sadness than the sight of yellowish dead leaves flying about like a rain storm in the chilly morning and evening wind of late fall, for they somehow remind me of the premature death of a young genius.

I sat down one evening on a bench near the pond in Central Park. How quiet it was on a weekday compared with the Sunday bustle. This was around the time when everybody in this punctual country must have been having supper. Sounds of carriages, cars, even of footsteps had come to a halt and only the squealing of squirrels who had collected their last morsels of food could be heard way up in the tree tops. The gray sky which threatened to bring rain that night was darkening heavily and murkily, as if it were dreaming. The surface of the pond, vast as a lake, was shining darkly like lead, while yellow gaslights started flickering through the gradually fading shrubs surrounding it.

From the tall elm treetops nearby, small and slender leaves kept falling down, in groups of three, four, five, or six. As I listened, it was as if I could hear the sound of leaves sliding down among other leaves. They must have been whispering among themselves, preparing for the final plunge. Some landed on my hat, others on my shoulders and knees. Still others fell on the far-off waters, even though there was no wind, and were carried even further away by the stream.

Lost in thought as I sat with my elbow on the back of the bench, the "Song of Autumn" by the poet Verlaine came to mind.

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon coeur
D'une langueur
Monotone.  

"The melancholy sound of violins weeping in autumn tears my heart. When the bells toll, I turn pale, sigh heavily and cry, remembering bygone days. I am a fallen leaf and wander here and there, carried by the wind of my ill fate." This is not the first time life has been compared to fallen leaves, but precisely because of their close association, this poem never fails to move me deeply, especially when I recall my present state as a traveller. How often and in how many different
places have I watched fallen leaves being buried in this foreign land! In the fall of the year I arrived, I saw them on the Pacific coast; the following year, it was the plains of Missouri, the shores of Lake Michigan, and the streets of Washington, D.C.; and this is already the second time in New York.

Last year when I saw falling leaves for the first time in this city, how arrogant, how elated and happy I was! I assumed that I was thoroughly familiar with the social and natural variations of all the different regions of the New World. I would come to this site near the pond every Sunday and watch the hustle and bustle of passers-by, telling myself with such overconfidence that I was going to observe life in the world's second largest city. Soon all the leaves had fallen, cold blasts had broken tree branches, and snow had completely covered the grass -- the season for art and parties had arrived.

I saw various plays by Shakespeare, Racine, Ibsen and Sudermann, and felt as though I had taken in the classical and modern plays of the whole world. I not only believed that I wholly appreciated and understood Wagner's ideals and Verdi's craftsmanship; I also felt that I was to be -- had to be -- one of the founders of the new music drama in Japan. I went to orchestral performances and enjoyed the refinement and beauty of classical music and the unrestricted enthusiasm of romantic music. I admired the dissonance and formlessness of the unprecedented music of Richard Strauss. Moreover, I often visited art museums and discussed Rodin's sculpture and Manet's paintings. Programs, catalogues, and newspaper clippings piled up on my desk, but before I had time to sort them out, the season had changed: the once desolate tree-tops were now adorned with young shoots and blossoms; and people cast off their heavy coats and switched to light spring clothing. I followed their example and bought new clothes, new shoes, and new hats. But American fashion is that of a commercial country and therefore in poor taste. Just to demonstrate that I would never be influenced by American utilitarianism, I worked hard at finding the right way to groom myself and concluded that I wanted to look like the portrait of young Daudet when he wrote "L'amoureuse," or even like Byron. Accordingly, I curled my hair every morning and tied my wide cravat with a studied casualness.

People would laugh at my folly, but I myself do not think I am either foolish or out of my mind. I read in a Boston paper shortly after Ibsen died that he had an unexpected weakness; apparently he used to rumple his white hair intentionally to get a disheveled look and enjoyed watching himself in a mirror wearing the medal the King had bestowed on him.
It does not matter if the episode is true or not. Whatever Western poets have done impresses me so much that I cannot help imitating them. I would slightly tilt my hat, again in an intentionally off-hand manner, carry a cherrywood stick in one hand and a book of poetry or the like under my arm, and after scrutinizing myself thus attired in the mirror for awhile, would finally go out and proceed toward the park where people gather on a spring afternoon. After walking around the pond, as usual, I would routinely go up to the wide tree-lined avenue where the statues of Shakespeare, Scott, Burns and the rest are erected, sit down on a bench facing them, and leisurely smoke a cigarette.

As soon as I had slipped into a reverie, induced by the warm spring sun, I would end up feeling as though I had been admitted to the ranks of these great poets of immortal fame. The muscles on both sides of my mouth would loosen themselves to form deep dimples. Finally embarrassed, I would glance around furtively, then notice the beautiful young leaves of the tall trees which lined the avenue; the clear blue sky through the treetops; the deep, pleasant green of the grass spreading on both sides of the road like an ocean; the soft, sweet fragrance of flowers wafting from some unseen source. It must have been the happiest moment in my whole life.

Young women wearing light dresses kept passing me, either riding in a carriage or on horseback, and somehow it seemed that as they went by, they were all smiling in my direction.

Whenever I notice a very young and beautiful woman smiling, I find myself daydreaming about a happy love affair .... I have written something in beautiful English. A female reader who wishes to meet the author visits me. We talk about life, poetry and finally, our innermost secrets. In due time, we marry and settle down in the country -- on Long Island or the New Jersey coast, which would be within one or two hours' distance, from which one could come and go from New York City by train. We live in a small painted cottage surrounded by cherry and apple orchards. There are woods at the back of the house; beyond that is a wide pasture; further away, the ocean is visible. On a spring or summer afternoon, at dusk in autumn or at noon in winter, I doze off on the couch near the window, slightly exhausted from reading. I am awakened by the sound of piano music from the next room, something very gentle like a Liszt sonata would be my preference, played by my wife .... I would come to myself at this point, sitting on the bench, the cold evening wind blowing against my face.

The spring of my daydream, then summer have passed by .... it is already autumn. I watch the leaves falling and scattering in all directions and feel as though they are my lost love of bygone days.
The leaves will soon all be gone. With the cold north wind the theater and concert season will return. Street corners and train station walls will be adorned with theatrical posters and musicians' pictures. But will it be possible for me to remain the same bold, outrageous, happy observer of the stage as I was last year? And will I be able to indulge again in such ephemeral daydreams next spring?

Dreams, intoxication, and illusions: these are what we live for. We perpetually crave love and success but do not really wish our dreams fulfilled. We merely want to pursue the illusions which appear as though they might be realized, and intoxicate ourselves in this anticipation and expectation.

Baudelaire says: to be intoxicated -- this is the only question. If you want to avoid feeling the horrible weight of "Time" which presses on our shoulders and bends us to the ground, you must not hesitate to get drunk. Whether with liquor, poetry or with virtue, it matters not. If you occasionally awaken on the steps of a palace, in the grass of a valley, or in a lonely room and are no longer intoxicated, ask the wind, waves, stars, birds, clocks -- ask anything that flies, moves, revolves, sings, or talks -- to tell you the time. The wind, waves, stars, birds, clocks will answer: "It is time to get drunk. Whether with liquor, poetry or virtue, it does not matter. If you do not want to become miserable slaves of 'Time,' you must be intoxicated all the time...."

* * * *

All around me night has fallen. The woods are dark, the sky is dark, the water is dark. I still sat on the bench, watching the shadows of the leaves scatter themselves against the electric lights which were shining among the trees.
Notes for Kafū in America, 1903-1907


2. When Kafū later translated (in summarized form) the chapters on modern French drama and novels from Georges Pellissier's *Le mouvement littéraire contemporain* (Contemporary literary movement) (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1901), he frequently omitted and distorted original passages in order to make them conform to his by then critical view of Zola and "naturalism." He even added some unfavorable comments of his own. (Cf. Pellissier, 27, 35, 107, 109, 127, 153, and CW 18: 386, 393, 357-8, 371.) Despite his open disavowal, however, he continued to be influenced by Zola's works in subtle ways. Moreover, Kafū's early works, notably *Jigoku no Hana* (Flowers of Hell: 1902), which were heralded as typical "Zolaesque" novels, were far more than superficial imitations of the French author's works. Cf. Mitsuko Iriye, "Jigoku no hana ron" (On Flowers of Hell), *Bungaku* (Literature, Tokyo, May 1972).

4. Ibid., 96-97.
5. Ibid., 8-9.
6. Ibid., 11-12.

9. Kafū's view of English literature was biased due partly to the fact that young Japanese poets in the late nineteenth century, especially those who clustered around the magazine *Bungakukai* (Literary circle), made a big fuss about English literature. This, coupled with their superficial and emotional Christianity, was hard to swallow for Kafū, who aptly satirized them in *Jigoku no Hana*. Also, American and British Protestant missionaries and Japanese preachers frequently quoted poems of Tennyson, Browning, and Emerson in their sermons and religious writings.

12. Ibid., 637-38. This passage was eliminated in the collected work, *American Stories*.
13. Ibid., 209-10.

16. Kafū's appreciation of Western music was very impressionistic but quite outstanding among his contemporaries. Besides Wagnerian operas which were frequently performed in New York at that time, he was deeply moved by Berlioz' and Richard Strauss' works, both operatic and orchestral. Also, a performance of Debussy's prelude to "L'apres-midi d'un faune," which he heard in 1907, made a strong impression on him.

17. The Japanese literary critic, Yoshida Katsuhiko, gives a detailed description of the "whole affair," which seems to have been mainly a product of his own fantasy, in the semi-fictional *Kafū no Seishun* (Kafū's youth) (Tokyo: Mikasa shobō, 1973).

There is no evidence that he had acquired first-hand knowledge of French society during his stay in France. The language barrier seems to have been accountable for Kafū's unrequited love for that country. While overjoyed to be able to see and feel the physical surroundings of Paris and Lyon which he had read described in his favorite French works, and to reappreciate the amazing descriptive skills of the French realists, he was no longer inclined even to daydream or write about an imaginary affair with a French woman.


30. This is a literal translation of Kafū's own translation. The original text is as follows: Heureux ceux qui ne connaissent pas l'écœurement abominable des mêmes actions toujours répétées; heureux ceux qui ont la force de recommencer chaque jour les mêmes besognes, avec les mêmes gestes, autour des mêmes meubles, devant le même horizon sous le même ciel, de sortir par les mêmes rues où ils rencontrent les mêmes figures et les mêmes animaux. Heureux ceux qui ne s'aperçoivent pas avec un immense dégoût que rien ne change, que rien ne passe et que tout se lasse. (de Maupassant, Guy. *Sur l'eau* (On the water) (Paris: Librairie allendorf, 1904), pp. 53.

31. The original poem continues: "Tout suffocant/ Et bleue, quand/ Sonne l'heure,/ Je me souviens/ Des jours anciens/ Des jours anciens/ Et je pleme, quand/ Et je m'en vais/ Au vent mauvais/ Qui m'emporte/ Deca, dela/ Pareil à la/ Feuille morte." (From *Poèmes Saturniens* (Saturnian Poems), 1866).

32. This is a literal translation of Kafū's own translation. The original poem, entitled "Enivrez-vous" (Get Drunk) can be found in Baudelaire's collection of poems in prose, *Le spleen de Paris* (The spleen of Paris), 1869.
V. The "China" of the "China Hands":

The MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck Perceptions of China

by Gary R. Hess

John V. A. MacMurray, Nelson T. Johnson, and Stanley Hornbeck were among the most influential of American policymakers on the Far East during the inter-war period. While each considered the history, traditions, political, and social institutions, religion, and philosophy of China important in understanding the political and diplomatic problems facing China, MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck only occasionally discussed China in cultural terms. Yet their references to Chinese culture, however limited, tell much about their perceptions and the values on which they were based and about the culture of which they were representative.

MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck had similar and, in many ways, interrelated careers. Each was born in the 1880s and each first saw China while in his twenties or early thirties. These early experiences in China provided the basis for views of the country which spanned their careers. Johnson and Hornbeck both went to China in 1909, the twenty-two-year-old Johnson as vice consul at Mukden and Hornbeck, then twenty-six, as a teacher at Hangchow. In 1913, the thirty-two-year-old MacMurray, having held diplomatic posts in Bangkok and St. Petersburg, was appointed secretary of the American legation at Peking under Minister Paul Reinsch. Each thus witnessed the upheaval that resulted from the revolution of 1911, which impelled observers to question whether China could attain nationhood in the Western sense.

MacMurray and Hornbeck were in China four years; Johnson stayed for nine. MacMurray returned to China as minister from 1925 to 1929, to succeeded by Johnson, who held the position until 1941. Before coming minister, each man had served as chief of the Far Eastern Affairs Division and as assistant secretary of state. In 1928, Hornbeck was appointed chief of Far Eastern Affairs, an office which he held until 1937, when he was named to the newly created office of adviser on political relations.
While all three men became widely recognized as authorities on China, their expertise came not from formal training, but from experience, observations, and interests developed during their early years in China. After completing a baccalaureate degree at Princeton and a law degree at Columbia, MacMurray came under the influence, as a young diplomat, of W. W. Rockhill. Rockhill inspired an interest in the treaty system involving China, a subject on which MacMurray became a leading authority. Hornbeck, who studied at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar and then completed a doctorate in political science at the University of Wisconsin, became interested in Chinese and Japanese political and diplomatic developments while teaching in China. His book, Contemporary Politics in the Far East, was published in 1916 and established Hornbeck’s reputation as an Asian authority. Johnson had only one year of college training (at George Washington University), but while in China as a young man, became fluent in the Chinese language and intensively studied Chinese history and culture, and later as minister, encouraged American scholarship in China. Although he never achieved the scholarly reputation of Hornbeck and MacMurray, Johnson nonetheless spoke authoritatively on China and his opinions were widely respected within official circles.

John V. A. MacMurray’s upper class background influenced his attitudes toward China. Born into a secure, well-ordered world, MacMurray held "traditional values [which] perhaps accounts for [his] later fondness for old traditional China and disdain for the unstable new China of the 1920s."1 MacMurray’s first tour of duty as Secretary of the legation in Peking from 1913 to 1917 brought him into contact with a China that seemed to conform to his expectations of orderly development; during that period, "he came to hold conclusions about Chinese and American policies that he was to hold tenaciously ever afterward. But it was the China of the nineteenth century, dying in the twentieth, that impressed itself upon MacMurray's mind."2

In his later writing on the 1913-1917 period, MacMurray expressed a certain sensitivity and attachment to the nationalistic strivings of that era, but he was skeptical about China’s capacity for nation-building, and his often-expressed sympathy for Chinese aspirations bordered on paternalism. In a lengthy letter to President Woodrow Wilson, whom MacMurray had known during his student days at Princeton, the young diplomat wrote: "I am frankly sympathetic with the Chinese character as I understand it and with Chinese national aspirations, and jealous of this people's right to opportunity to develop into a
The Chinese, however, seemed incapable of meeting the challenge of nationhood. Japan's Twenty-One Demands formed the context in which MacMurray wrote:

[The Chinese] look forward to utter disillusionment in the future which they had hoped would give them a new national life... All the Chinese with whom I have come in contact or whose opinions I have quoted regard the present crisis with blank despair and a termination of all their ideals.  

MacMurray's misgivings about the Chinese extended beyond their reaction to the crisis with Japan, and indeed touched on whether the Chinese character could accommodate itself to Western concepts of republicanism. For instance, a lengthy 1915 dispatch commented on Chinese agitation favoring the restoration of a monarchy, as well as MacMurray's conversation with President Yuan Shi-kai.

He [Yuan] then offered the naive surmise that perhaps this difficulty might be avoided by simply announcing that the appropriate lawmaking body of China had determined to confer upon the President the title of Emperor, and that at some convenient time thereafter the Constitution might, as matter of purely domestic concern, be so amended as to make the presidency hereditary. Fantastic as these suggestions sound, they seem to accord with the present attitude of those in authority. It appears that the Chinese official mind accepts, without any sense of anomaly, the idea of a hereditary presidency as forming the happiest possible solution to the problem of succession...

MacMurray was disdainful not only of the "Chinese official mind" but also of the "Chinese masses."

The great bulk of the people may....be assumed to be indifferent to the form of government so long as it does not undertake to govern them too rigorously or tax them too much.  

The vastly preponderant mass of the people...are utterly ignorant of the character of the republican system of government under which they are presently governed.

MacMurray's observations in China from 1913 to 1917 reflected, above all, the influence of W. W. Rockhill. From 1909, when Rockhill arrived in St. Petersburg as the United States ambassador, until his sudden death in 1914, MacMurray venerated the well-known Sinologue and patterned his life after Rockhill's
example. Following his dismissal from the diplomatic service, Rockhill visited China in 1914 and renewed his acquaintance with MacMurray. Publicly Rockhill supported the republic, but privately he confided to MacMurray and others criticism of Chinese leadership and capacity for genuine representative institutions. Rockhill shared with MacMurray his vision of a nineteenth century China which the early years of the twentieth century had left behind. One scholar has observed:

Herein lay the significance of the MacMurray-Rockhill association. MacMurray ever afterward lived with the China that had been, rather than the one that was or would be. He was bound by nostalgia for the China of Rockhill's day, the late nineteenth century. His attitudes, opinions, even his political solutions would hark back to what he thought he knew best -- Rockhill's China.

In view of his studied effort to follow Rockhill's path, MacMurray understandably considered himself to be an established "China hand" by the end of his tour of duty in 1917. Shortly thereafter, he wrote:

It is the fact that the problems of China are more vitally interesting to me than I can realize any other problems can be.... A certain amount of specialization has made me more capable of dealing with Chinese questions than with others.... A genuine love for these people, and a deep underlying faith in their possibilities has possessed me and touched what idealism there is in me.

In the eight-year interlude between his departure from Peking in 1917 and his return in 1925 as minister, MacMurray built a substantial reputation as the foremost American diplomatic authority on China. Recalling that Rockhill during his last visit to Peking had spoken of his plan to update his well-known compilations of treaties and other international agreements and documents relating to China and Korea, MacMurray decided to undertake the project himself as a means of demonstrating his gratitude to Rockhill. This consumed much of MacMurray's time, but the results established his scholarly reputation. Published in 1921 by the Oxford University Press for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China, 1894-1914 was a monumental two-volume work which included the texts of over five hundred documents and some three hundred pages of indices. Completely updating Rockhill's compilation of the 1894-1904 period, MacMurray, in the introductory words of
Professor James Brown Scott of Columbia University, "blazes his own trail and does not tread in the path of a predecessor." MacMurray's compilation of documents relating to China's international relations, besides firmly establishing MacMurray as an expert on the Far East, also increasingly channeled his thinking on China into a legalistic framework. He considered the complex relationships which had resulted from numerous international agreements as mutually beneficial to China and the foreign powers. In his preface to Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China, 1894-1919, MacMurray spoke of the overriding importance of the treaty obligations to China's national development.

There have been periods of progress and of reaction; there has been confusion of purposes; but the process of association of foreign with Chinese interests has gone on almost without interruption or pause, China repeatedly seeking foreign assistance in the solution of its problems of industrial, economic and administrative development, and giving in return rights that carried with them in many instances at least an implication of political interests.

MacMurray considered the treaty system to be essential to the maintenance of stability in Asia. The power-sensitive Chinese would perceive any deviation by the foreign powers as an act of weakness. MacMurray wrote:

We never want to let the Chinese think that we are acting out of weakness... They and other Asiatics...are prone to misinterpret mercy or liberality as indications of weakness; and too often we Americans, in honestly seeking to be liberal or conciliatory, lay ourselves open to having our motives suspected and our actions despised.

MacMurray's reputation was further enhanced by his work as chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs from 1919 to 1925. His participation in the Washington Conference of 1921-22, when he appeared to play an important role in the widely-acclaimed treaty was particularly noteworthy. MacMurray was associated with the conference's "image of success... [and] [he] came to view himself as an authority on the conference and its treaties." These experiences reinforced MacMurray's disposition to approach China's problems within the framework of international obligations.

To MacMurray as well as to many observers in the United States and China, his appointment as minister to China seemed
appropriate recognition for the forty-four-year-old scholar-diplomat. His tenure as minister, however, proved to be the greatest disappointment of MacMurray's career; his image was permanently tarnished, both within the State Department and outside. MacMurray's mission failed in large part because of his inability to comprehend intellectually or emotionally the rising tide of the Chinese anti-imperialistic nationalism and political instability. Utterly disillusioned, MacMurray spoke frequently of his despair. In July 1925, he wrote:

I have found Chinese feeling, primarily radical, secondarily national, aroused to an emotional fervor which I was scarcely prepared to realize even after a dozen years of observing the growth of national self-consciousness in China. The Shanghai incident seems to have awakened instincts and passions hitherto dormant, and given an element of fanaticism to what were before the somewhat unsystematic and desultory aspirations of the small articulate portion of the Chinese people.15

The following year, MacMurray commented:

I do not know whether my reports have conveyed to you the sense of how completely China -- or at any rate the mind of the Chinese -- has changed since I knew it in person... It may be that I deceived myself, going on thinking under the illusion that China was the same last May as it was in 1918, and that it needed actual contact to make me aware of the fundamental character of the change that has taken place.16

MacMurray's implication that perhaps he, not China, needed to change was later contradicted in a letter which spoke of China returning to its old ways.

Poor old China. It is suffering from a terrible colic of New China. It will some day settle down again into the old course of reason and understanding. But...it is a China...wholly different from what...I have known in the past -- a China which will not reason or understand, but seeks self-realization in passionate vituperation against those who are trying to work with it but cannot consciously follow its impulse to repudiate and destroy.17
Even after two years as minister, MacMurray lamented:

We are living in a China that is absolutely incomprehensible to those who have not known it since May 1925... I had to unlearn much of what I had learned in several years of previous experience in China.18

This "absolutely incomprehensible" situation was evident in MacMurray's efforts to renew contacts with old Chinese friends. His friends were different: their candor in public situations had a new note of anti-foreign hostility. Shortly after his return in 1925, MacMurray wrote:

The individual may surprise you by the outspokenness and even by the naivete with which he expressed his views and convictions; the next day, the same individual, talking where he can be heard by other Chinese, will grow rhetorical and perhaps slightly offensive... He will know that he was...[earlier] telling you his real feeling...but he will not be abashed...and will cling with childish obstinacy to the fiction of today rather than to the admitted truth of yesterday... Dealing with the Chinese nowadays is like fighting with a ghost.19

MacMurray portrayed the Chinese as irrational, irresponsible, and unappreciative people. He attributed their reprehensible behavior to flaws in the Chinese political system and character. Especially revealing of MacMurray's attitude was a 1927 letter to Russel Mount, a fellow Princeton alumnus who had written to the Princeton Peking Gazette asking about the extent of antiforeign sentiment in China. An indignant MacMurray replied:

I think I understand and sympathize with the groping of the Chinese toward some sort of national development...I think too that I understand -- in fact, I have claimed to be something of a pioneer in spreading the belief -- that the Chinese have certain definite grievances against certain foreign powers... But the first is to the second of these conditions as the sun is to the moon... This plausible campaign that foreign oppression is the cause of the political backwardness of China has, it is true, a small basis in fact; but it is fundamentally untrue... It has brought about among the Chinese an attitude in which they want to come closer not in order to grasp an outstretched hand but
to spit it in our faces. And Princeton-in-Peking with its "holier than thou" attitude, with its gazette of mealy-mouthed liberal sounding platitudes published every month, and its encouragement of a spirit of irresponsibility has made a very considerable contribution to the present situation.  

In MacMurray's opinion, the Chinese were indeed oblivious to American efforts on their behalf. They failed to appreciate America's remission of the Boxer indemnity funds and commitment to the Open Door principles, and they ignored the achievements of the Washington Conference. These objectionable attitudes derived from China's national inferiority complex, a condition which resulted in part from foreign exploration, but more fundamentally, from the failures of the Chinese themselves. Writing in 1925, MacMurray observed:

...[T]he present crisis of feeling...is...a revulsion against what the individual Chinese feels to be the offense to his personal dignity and self-esteem implicit in the overbearing attitude of the white man toward the Chinese. It is an inferiority complex which under the stress of an almost nation-wide excitement prompts him to a hysterical self-assertion that is subjective rather than objective, and that involves anti-foreign feeling only indirectly and as incident to the assertion of self. This feeling has been further complicated by the fact that the thinking Chinese are aware of the failure they are making in the organization of their national life, and morbidly conscious of the poor showing that they made in the eyes of foreign nations. It is especially true of the Chinese human nature that it flinches from a recognition of its own deficiencies and by an instinctive subconscious process seeks excuses in the actions of others.

"Chinese human nature" had produced a serious malaise. "The Chinese," MacMurray wrote in 1929, "distrust themselves (as they well may)." He thought that "they have been growing more lax and indifferent toward such standards of honesty and responsibility as used to be traditional in this country." MacMurray thus concluded that what Chinese nationalism wants is not that we should stretch out to them the hand of fellowship but that they have the opportunity to spit in our faces, in order to satisfy a long repressed craving of their instinctive self-esteem.
Encountering changes which he could not comprehend, MacMurray clung to an image of nineteenth century China and placed more emphasis than ever on the mutual obligations of the treaty system which he had so thoroughly studied. He opposed treaty revision, thinking that it would convey weakness to the Chinese. MacMurray's strong views on the treaty issue and his overbearing attitude toward his superiors in Washington led to serious disagreements, and eventually, to his resignation. He considered the two men who served as chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs during this period, Nelson T. Johnson and Stanley K. Hornbeck, to be intellectually inferior and incapable of understanding China.26

After leaving China in late 1929, MacMurray headed the Page School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University. Although he later returned to the Foreign Service, he never again had any official responsibilities for China policy. MacMurray's views on China and the Chinese remained unchanged. Writing in 1936, he reiterated his long-standing concern with China's lack of legal order.

They are certainly not...a law-conscious people...

[T]heir political tradition is one of philosophical anarchy. In their thinking government has always been a necessary evil... In spite of pious maxims, and magnificent titles, and gorgeous ceremonial acts of homage, the Chinese...have always done reverence to the "Dragon Throne" with their tongues in their cheeks, and mental reservations about "the mandate of heaven" always in the back of their minds.27

In an earlier response to Hornbeck's request for his views on the Asian situation, MacMurray repeated his conviction that Chinese and Japanese cultures demanded a strong Western position.

Both Chinese and Japanese are Asiatics... [T]hey understand and respect intellectual and moral integrity, firmness of purpose, and the spirit of just dealing. But they normally attach to force a degree of reverence that most Western peoples do not, and they are far quicker to sense a weakness and not merely exploit it but to let themselves be tempted into reckless and unscrupulous browbeating of anyone who has thus lost their respect and esteem.28

Never recovering from the failure of his China mission of 1925-29 and facing serious personal problems as a result of his wife's emotional instability and alcoholism, MacMurray
regrettably never undertook to write his memoirs. Perhaps if he had, he might have quoted from one of his 1925 messages: "[t]he fact is that I do feel that as a 'China expert' I was 'born out of my time.'"29

Perhaps the dominant influence on Nelson Johnson's "world view" was his youthful experience in Oklahoma. Living in a frontier environment from the age of nine to thirteen left a lasting impression. Even as an adult, Johnson retained a romanticized view of his childhood, seeing himself as a product of the frontier environment. To Johnson, the frontier had shaped an "American mind" which was characterized by individualism, resourcefulness, materialism, and ingenuity. The frontier had also necessitated a concern for the welfare of others which was manifest in a national tendency toward altruism and a proselytizing spirit. American foreign policy reflected these complementary features of the frontier influence: Americans' acquisitive spirit had led to their relentless pursuit of markets and other economic interests, while their idealism inspired efforts to help less fortunate peoples. Yet Americans' selfish interests always superceded their altruistic impulses. Reflecting on this contradiction, Johnson wrote: "...the spirit is in our blood and we will forget our altruism and our idealism if and when we become convinced that our interests are at stake."30 Assessing American policy toward China as embodied in the Washington Conference treaties, Johnson urged that one remember that "...this was the altruism of a very practical, acquisitive, energetic people."31 As an exemplar of this diplomatic tradition, Johnson was, in the words of his biographer, "...both the 'idealist' and the 'realist,' a friend of the Chinese, but an American nationalist first and foremost."32

Johnson took a serious interest in Chinese culture. He attained a high level of fluency in spoken Chinese (although he never made a serious effort to master Chinese calligraphy). Drawing upon his observations and studies, Johnson wrote extended papers on such diverse topics as nature worship and the criminal code. In addition, he read extensively about all aspects of China -- its history, literature, geography, art, architecture, and geology. He was familiar with all major works on Chinese culture. Appalled by the evident deficiencies of American scholarly interest in East Asia and the American tendency to defer to European authorities, he called for new scholarship in Chinese history and linguistics in the United States. He encouraged the research interests of the few American scholars, especially archaeologists, who were working in China. Johnson came to regard himself as an authority on
China and was contemptuous of the "treaty port minds" — diplomatic colleagues who never ventured intellectually beyond the confines of a transplanted Western environment.  

To Johnson, Chinese traditions and institutions were inadequate to the challenge of building a modern state. The China he witnessed during his early years was stirred by revolution. After his return to China in 1929, Johnson tended to recall the revolutionary era in rather romantic terms. For instance, after a few months as minister, he wrote that he had found "a world... quite different from the China that I knew twenty years ago." In fact, during his earlier tour of duty, the young diplomat had been fascinated by the events of the 1911 revolution. Now, however, he was skeptical of China's capacity for nation-building. In a statement written in 1916, Johnson found Chinese nationalism constrained by historical forces: provincial independence ("from time immemorial, the Ship of State in China has been built on the principle of watertight compartments,...provinces independent and jealous of one another"); a conservative mandarinate; inexperienced and radical Western-oriented students; and the longstanding political indifference of merchants, farmers, and coolies. China's merchants and farmers, "the solid responsible mass of the Chinese people," were, in fact, "ignorant and unpatriotic, and the only interest they have taken in government in the past has been manifested in a struggle to pay no more taxes than necessary." Chinese coolies likewise were "ignorant and unpatriotic" and their "only aim in life is to gain the wherewithal to live, and to that end, they go into the labor markets to sell their labor to the highest bidder."  

Johnson never fundamentally altered these convictions; indeed, later developments only hardened his skepticism about China's capacity for nationhood. He continued to speak of the restraining influence of "states rights in China," which had "always been so dominant in their political leanings." He faulted China's civil service system for producing "laxness" and for failing to instill "civil responsibility," and criticized the "great mass of peasants and merchants, who by their tradition, are not interested in government."  

Johnson's study of China led him fault certain qualities of the "Chinese mind." His characterization of the Chinese was most fully developed in a lengthy diplomatic dispatch in 1933 which sought to provide a cultural explanation for the aftermath of the Manchurian crisis. The "Chinese mind" was essentially simple, unlike the dualistic "American mind" and the complex "Occidental mind" which drew upon the diverse cultures of the Mediterranean and European peoples. Chinese thoughts and actions were motivated by immediate needs and were not complicated by abstract ideals, although the Chinese
believed in family loyalty and personal integrity. Most notably, the Chinese (in Johnson's most frequently stated generalization) were "fatalistic" people who "reasoned intuitively," rather than logically. Their mentality was conservative and unadaptable, encompassing a "love for confusion" and a "tendency toward hysteria." These characteristics left the Chinese ill-prepared for their confrontation with the "Japanese mind," which was intensely curious, zealous in its convictions, receptive to foreign ideas, and demanding of action, even bloodshed, for fulfillment.  

Johnson contrasted the two peoples in a parable on the responses of two men working in a garden, one Chinese and the other Japanese, to whom Elijah in a flaming chariot appeared.

The Chinese...would look up and say "Oh, he has come down from heaven" and go on about his work, slowly, methodically. But the Japanese, if he failed in interviewing Elijah, "would soon be bobbing about the chariot burning his fingers, and if Elijah was absent long enough would be trying to see where the flames came from."  

Johnson's distinction between Chinese and Japanese "minds" was not a constant theme in his thinking. In general, he wrote about "Oriental" mentality and behavior, which he often related to the "need" for an Oriental renaissance. In a letter of February 1937, in which he anticipated the renewal of fighting between the Chinese and Japanese, Johnson analyzed Japanese strategy within the following framework:

The Oriental does not permit himself to forget: if he has made up his mind that he wishes to do a certain thing he will, I believe, persist until he accomplishes it, no matter how long he may have to wait. He may retreat; he may yield; but he will bide his time, and when the appropriate moment comes and the obstacle which opposed him is either removed or he has become strong enough to overcome it, he will act again. The Oriental moves slyly behind a curtain of pretended unconcern. This is because he does not like to lose face. It is the same kind of defense which a child sets up in his attempt to circumvent the opposition of his parents. It is the kind of defense that many women have established by men. The Oriental -- I include the Japanese and the Chinese under this term -- reasons intuitively, not logically.
As he reflected upon Chinese developments in the 1930s, Johnson despaired of the prospects for an effective government. China seemed imprisoned by its culture and traditions. Chinese civilian leadership lacked foresight and purpose. One cannot visit long with Chinese leaders, political as well as intellectual, without being pressed and somewhat influenced by their apparently fatalistic conception of time. The difference, I suppose, between us and them is that we live in the future while they live in the present. Why this should be so I do not know.

Johnson's hope for political unification and effective leadership rested with the military, but China's army suffered from a tradition of low status. If we observed the situation in China, we would find that the soldier occupied a peculiarly low position among the people, that he was a pariah without tradition and that now that it was so necessary that the police power of government be reestablished, the soldier and military officers brought to their task a pariah mentality of their kind, and they neither inspired nor did they receive the support of the people as a whole.

In this situation, Johnson anticipated that it would take many years before China was capable of achieving true nationhood. The experience of the Western nations offered an historic example.

It took Europe more than a hundred years to pass through the Renaissance and to produce the modern nations and modern ideas of statehood now so familiar to us. China, which represents a world as large as Europe, completely separated from Europe, and as yet untouched by any of the thought movements that brought about the change in Europe, will probably take as long. Johnson's expectation of a Chinese renaissance led him to compare twentieth century China with pre-modern Europe. For instance, Johnson commented on the civilian leadership of China's Nationalist government.

They are all likable men, but I have a feeling that conversation with them is very much like the kind of conversation I imagine would go on among.
devout religious workers in some old order of the church, who had little time for anything beyond prayer and theological discussions. They are like what I imagine the school men of medieval Europe were like.\textsuperscript{45}

Similarly the growth of education in the early years of the twentieth century pointed toward a "Renaissance...dawning in China for there is an insatiable thirst for learning that is unprecedented in history."\textsuperscript{46}

After the "China Incident," Johnson became more sanguine about the prospects for China's resistance to the Japanese. His optimistic prognosis did not derive from China's overcoming its cultural limitations; rather, Japan's ill-chosen military strategies and its mistreatment of the Chinese people had strengthened Chinese nationalism. As the Sino-Japanese conflict dragged on, however, Johnson feared its wider implications. In a letter to President Roosevelt, he wrote:

I sometimes wonder whether the East is not threatened with the kind of collapse of civilization which we have sometimes heard Europe threatened with if another European war should commence. War is on in the East.\textsuperscript{47}

Ultimately, the United States would have to preserve Anglo-American values and institutions.

History will record that the outstanding event of this decade was the end of the British Empire as a unit... The frontiers of the United States are the world. As the oldest son of the old British Empire...we must from now on share with Canada, Australia, and South Africa and England the responsibility of maintaining the ideals which characterized international intercourse during the years that the British Empire was dominant in world affairs or see those ideals lost... We must lead the world out of the chaos in which it is now struggling.\textsuperscript{48}

Johnson rarely commented on developments in China after his return to the United States, but he was deeply disturbed by the communists' victory. Convinced that communism was alien to Chinese traditions and customs, Johnson initially attributed Mao's success to fortuitous circumstances: Japan's invasion and occupation had weakened the Kuomintang, and Russian's 1945 occupation of Manchuria had enabled the Chinese communist armies to advance. Johnson sharply disagreed with John King
Fairbank's 1950 article which linked the rise of Chinese communism to the Kuomintang's failure to improve basic social and economic conditions, and to deep-seated popular antagonism against foreign influence and landlords. In a ten-page letter to Fairbank, Johnson questioned the severity of pre-revolutionary conditions in China and Fairbank's understanding of Chinese customs. He argued that

[T]he reasons of the revolution in China are to be found in a succession of defeats first suffered by the old imperial Chinese government at the hands of the foreign nations and later defeats suffered by the revolutionary Nationalist Government at the hands of the Japanese in battle, and, in August 1945, at the hands of the Russians in diplomatic negotiations which resulted in the return of Russia to Manchuria. All of this talk about landlordism, etc., etc., etc., is merely dust thrown into the eyes of people.

Before his death, Johnson modified his views on the communist's ascendancy. Johnson still attributed the Chinese revolution mainly to the effects of the Japanese invasion and Russian occupation, but he also acknowledged the importance of the internal development of Chinese communist thought and political organization and the appeal of communism to intellectuals and farmers.

Stanley K. Hornbeck was the dominant personality in the shaping of America's Far Eastern policy between 1928 and 1941. His unequivocal views on the important problems of that era often reflected, at least subtly, certain assumptions about the Chinese and Japanese. As a respected scholar, Hornbeck spoke authoritatively to both the State Department and to the general public about foreign policy.

Hornbeck's scholarly interests can be traced to his parents' respect for academic work. His father, a Methodist clergyman, served several pastorates in Massachusetts, Illinois, and Colorado, and was briefly president of a small Illinois college. His father's church in Urbana, Illinois, included several members of the University of Illinois faculty whose erudition inspired the young Hornbeck to pursue an academic career. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Denver and was chosen to be one of the first Rhodes Scholars. After studying European history at Oxford for two years, Hornbeck continued studies in political science at the University of Wisconsin, receiving his doctorate in 1911. Throughout the next several
years, he held teaching appointments (at Wisconsin from 1913 to 1917 and at Harvard from 1924 to 1928), while also pursuing government service. The publication of Hornbeck's thesis, *The Most Favored Nation Clause in Commercial Treaties*, marked the beginning of his scholarly reputation. More importantly, *Hornbeck's Contemporary Politics in the Far East*, was destined to go through four editions after its initial publication in 1916.  

Hornbeck's interest in Asia resulted from his experiences teaching in China from 1909 to 1913. During this period, his only extended stay in China, Hornbeck developed certain attitudes toward the Chinese which endured throughout his career. Hornbeck taught for three years at Chekiang Provincial College in Hangchow; his last year was spent teaching at Fengtien Law College in Mukden. For Hornbeck, teaching young Chinese men offered rewards and frustrations. He found his students to be inquisitive, eager, and respectful, but also unwilling to think deeply, and too fond of easy learning. In a letter to his parents in 1910, Hornbeck lamented the difficulty of teaching the "Near Eastern" question.

It's not an easy bit of history - and it's anything but easy to get these boys to grasp either the facts or the interpretation. Chinese can learn a lot of lessons from the history of Turkey, lessons in the folly of certain courses, lessons as to what the Powers think about some things, and lessons as to what the latter can will do in some circumstances, and - just now - lessons in progress. Hornbeck, however, was not optimistic about China's prospects for "progress." He found the "masses...densely ignorant of 'what's about' in the world," and he had little respect for the Chinese government.

Some day these sleepy and calloused officials will learn something of their responsibilities and that there are a lot of calamities which can be avoided and arrested by the use of little brains, money, and energy. Truly most of China's woes are due to her own sins - of omission. While the Chinese "despite their reputation for patience [were] in many ways an impulsive people," a revolution (he wrote in 1910) "will not take place, if it ever does, for some time." Likewise, the potential for renewed antiforeignism had been destroyed by Chinese authorities who had at last learned the powers' strength. Hornbeck's experiences in China convinced him not only of China's essential backwardness, but also reinforced his belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority. Speaking
before a meeting of the British-American community in Hangchow in 1912, he stated:

...[A]s we think of the hardships, the perplexity, and problems which hang so heavily over this land just now, does it not quicken our appreciation of the fact and our thankfulness that our ancestors both in England and America fought for the "ancient rights of Englishmen?" ...should we not feel that our countries, that the Anglo-Saxon race, have a mission? 

These remarks by the twenty-nine-year-old Hornbeck foreshadowed much of his subsequent efforts to define American's role in the world. American interests were determined by principles firmly rooted in the past: security, independence, non-intervention, and the open door. An international system based on respect for international law and arbitral procedures could achieve these objectives. Hornbeck's view of American's role in Asia thus echoed the ideas of Johnson and MacMurray. Hornbeck shared Johnson's conviction that the United States had an historically determined mission, and like MacMurray he believed that international law provided the basis for world order.

By the time he had written Contemporary Politics in the Far East, Hornbeck considered China to be the key to peace in East Asia. "The question of peace in the Far East," he wrote, "lies with the fate of China." The development of a strong Chinese nation was necessary to prevent the country's partition and the international conflict which would ensue. Measuring China's "progress" by Western standards, Hornbeck thought that Chinese culture and tradition inhibited China's nation-building. The "chaos" of the late 1920s which prevailed "in almost every field of Chinese life and thought" could be explained in terms of several factors, including:

The Chinese of Old China, lethargic and disunited, who allowed themselves 250 years ago to be conquered by a handful of Manchus... The Manchus and the Chinese Mandarins, complacent and utterly confident of the superiority of the Middle Kingdom, who got into all sorts of difficulties with foreigners, invited attack, and made no adequate provision for defense... The Chinese of New China, who have learned some things, but too often not the fundamentals, regarding foreign nations... Ignorance and emotionalism, which make it easy for agitators to incite to violence the masses, susceptible, as are
almost all Chinese, to the influence of "mob-psychology."\textsuperscript{62}

In another statement on Chinese attitudes toward government, Hornbeck again suggested tradition worked against the demands of the twentieth century.

Their genius does not run to organization and administration. They have an inborn and inbred sense of individual rights and they hate regimentation. They are laissez-faireists. [sic] They are the least governed great nation discernible anywhere in history. Their system was built from the family upward. The structure was designed for peace. It was based on conceptions of moral rather than physical force.\textsuperscript{63}

Other qualities and institutions ill-served the Chinese at this critical time in their history.

They are strikingly subject to mass compulsion and that emotional infection which is known as mob psychology. Their social organization is such that it is almost impossible for an individual to stand out in distinct opposition to the mass will... Among their greatest faults are - from the Occidental point of view - indiscipline, carelessness, and inexactness. Their climate and their food tend to develop easy-going dispositions. Their philosophies encourage yielding and compromise... Idealism, except in theory and maxim, is little to be found among them. Their standards of honesty must be measured by the criteria of Oriental theories, not those of the Anglo-Saxon...\textsuperscript{64} They make good operatives and capable mechanics. They have not, however, the inventive mind; they are rather of the plodding type.\textsuperscript{65}

Despite these problems, Hornbeck did see some signs of adaptation on the part of a handful of leaders and intellectuals.

Their civilization has for several centuries been static. But it has not become sterile. It is now going through a breaking up process. The Chinese student in this country have shown what the Chinese mind can do. Their representatives at Paris and at the Washington Conference are good examples. There is nothing inferior about the minds of a race from which these men come.\textsuperscript{66}
Hornbeck found several outstanding and positive qualities in the Chinese character.

The Chinese are, notably, a patient, industrious, stoical and fatalistic people. Endurance, both mental and physical, is perhaps their most outstanding characteristic. In the ordinary routine of life, the business of living and making a "living," they display extraordinary shrewdness... As laborers, they are the most industrious and most persistent in the world. Cheerful, good-natured, possessed of a generous sense of humor... Overall, however, Chinese progress would necessarily take much time. "China has to go on drifting," Hornbeck wrote in 1925, "it will take years, a generation at least... before there will be a real government and a condition of order." China was hindered by inadequate communication and transportation, backwards in education, and "inertia [resulting] from 4,000 years under the influence of highly conservative teachings."

Like MacMurray, Hornbeck was concerned about the breakdown of authority. He dismissed Chinese antiforeignism as: "students and silly professors going about making a noise..." Yet China's potential for widespread disorder seemed imminent because the "patient," long-suffering Chinese needed authority.

The Chinese have the reputation of being the most patient people in the world. And so, perhaps, they are. But if they are that, theirs is the patience of passivity. They are habituated to the acceptance of authority. Remove the authority to which they are accustomed, arouse them to action - they become utterly impatient.

While MacMurray looked to the Western powers as the essential "authority" in China, Hornbeck, like Johnson, assumed that the Chinese government had to independently impose order.

Like both Johnson and MacMurray, Hornbeck frequently generalized about the characteristics of Oriental peoples, thus defining American-Asian relations in terms of culture. He wrote in 1931 that "almost no Oriental considers that he is under any obligation, either moral or legal, in relation to pledges which he had made under duress -- and his definition of duress is widely comprehensive." In Contemporary Politics in the Far East, Hornbeck criticized Japan's claim to a Monroe Doctrine for Asia because, among other reasons, the Japanese lacked the
maturity to understand the open door principle which lay at the base of the United States policy in Latin America.\textsuperscript{74} 

Whereas MacMurray's disillusionment with China had come as early as 1925, Hornbeck, like Johnson, maintained his perspective on Chinese politics until the communist revolution two decades later. Serving as ambassador to the Netherlands at the end of World War II, Hornbeck longed to return to China in the same capacity; he thought an ambassadorship to China would be the appropriate capstone to his career.\textsuperscript{75} That opportunity never came and, if it had, Hornbeck would have been ill-prepared for the upheaval of 1945-49. To Hornbeck, communism was alien to Chinese culture; the communist movement was the "child of communism in Russia."\textsuperscript{76} In an unpublished article drafted in 1961, the seventy-eight-year-old Hornbeck argued that the proponents of diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic did not understand Chinese history. History had prevented China from "going communist." Traditionally, China had been a laissez-faire society with little contact between the people and government. China had never experienced a government as "completely and effectively tyrannical" as the communist regime. Glorification of the state was unknown in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Communism had therefore been "imposed" upon a people who could never "accept" its dogma.\textsuperscript{77}

Underlying MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck's respective cultural perceptions were attitudes which reflected American's historical experience. In the development of the American approach to non-Western nationalism, it became commonly assumed that a Western, and more particularly an American, model provided the appropriate means for "progress." American policy-makers traditionally have been committed to the well-defined, systematic, and gradual development of representative democratic institutions as the prerequisite for decolonization, e.g., American colonial policy in the Philippines, responses to Indian nationalism during World War II, and America's extensive wartime planning for Southeast Asia and the Middle East's postwar development. This approach fostered close ties with Western-oriented political elites who shared Americans' strong antagonism toward radical and communist groups.\textsuperscript{78} The China known by MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck fundamentally challenged American expectations of nation-building, and these men, like other early twentieth century American observers of China, assumed that American values, ideas, and institutions were the best means to China's "progress."

While Americans in China and elsewhere in Asia considered themselves free of the taint of imperialism which characterized their European counterparts, they nonetheless represented a
superior political, military, and economic power. This inequitable power relationship affected their entire range of cultural relations, including the ways by which the West sought to understand non-Western peoples. Edward Said has observed in *Orientalism:*

...[F]or a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his actuality: that he comes upon the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient...79

In the end, "[t]he Orientalist now tries to see the Orient as an imitation West which...can only improve itself when its nationalism is prepared to come to terms with the West."80 While Said's critique focuses upon the Middle East, his analysis of the relationship between power and knowledge is useful for interpreting the efforts of Western scholars, policymakers, and others to understand East Asia.

Yet even considering the extent to which this relationship between culture and power affected MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck, they never seemed seriously interested in understanding China. Despite their years of observation and contacts with a variety of Chinese and other Westerners, none of these policymakers ever thought very profoundly about Chinese culture. Johnson recognized the need for more knowledge about China, but he was no less a "treaty port mind" than were MacMurray and Hornbeck. In many ways, these individuals' perceptions of China resembled the views of the 181 American leaders from various fields whom Harold Isaacs interviewed for his 1958 book, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India.* While the majority of the Isaacs sample perceived China positively, those with unfavorable impressions saw China as "unreliable, shrewd, opportunistic, dishonest, and devious" and "inscrutable, cruel, and lacking social consciousness"81 -- observations not unlike those found in MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck's respective writings. Regarding the fact that officials held such views, Isaacs has written:

I make no categorical statement on the subject but merely report that I have never discovered any reason to credit the government policy maker as a type with superior mental discipline, any unique capacity to separate his concepts of his own and other peoples from the so-called international facts
...I think of him as quite an ordinary man...who has images floating loosely around in his head, even as you and I.\footnote{82}

In sum, MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck perceived China within the context of Western expectations of "nation-building" and each assumed that China's "progress" depended upon abandoning cultural traditions which had restrained and limited the Chinese politically, economically, intellectually, and spiritually. MacMurray's early disillusionment implicitly reflected his realization that the Chinese would not follow the American example of development, and in particular, the treaty system which he sought to promote. Johnson, on the other hand, held to his belief that eventually a gradual transformation -- a "renaissance" like that experienced by the West -- might transform the Orient. Neither Johnson nor Hornbeck could accept the communist revolution and each sought to explain it within terms which preserved their long-held assumptions about Chinese culture and history. Yet even these optimists shared MacMurray's keen sense of disappointment in the Chinese. All three men thus felt "betrayed" by China, and none recovered intellectually from his "loss."
Notes for The "China" of the "China Hands":
The MacMurray, Johnson and Hornbeck Perceptions of China


3. MacMurray to Wilson, 5 April 1915, MacMurray Papers, Princeton University.

4. MacMurray to Lansing, 7 Sept. 1915, Department of State, Papers
Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915 (Washington:

5. Ibid.


12. Ibid., xiii-xiv.

13. MacMurray to Hughes, 16 June 1921, Department of State Decimal Files 493.11/767.


15. Paraphrase of Message from MacMurray to Department of State, 28 July 1925, MacMurray Papers.


21. MacMurray to Joseph Grew, 12 Feb. 1927; MacMurray to Stimson, 15 July 1929, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929

22. Paraphrase of Message from MacMurray to Department of State, 28 July 1925, MacMurray Papers.


24. Paraphrase of Message from MacMurray to Department of State, 28 July 1925.


27. MacMurray to James Gifford, 3 Feb. 1936, MacMurray Papers.
31. Ibid.
34. Johnson to Roland Morris, 27 March 1930; Johnson, "Twenty Years" (1928).
35. Johnson, "Significance of Recent Events in China."
36. Johnson Lecture to Foreign Service Class, 26 Nov. 1925.
38. Johnson to Cordell Hull, 13 Oct. 1933; Memorandum, Division of Far Eastern Affairs, 14 Dec. 1933.
39. Buhite, Johnson, 34.
40. Johnson to Howard, 27 April 1937, Johnson Papers.
43. Memorandum of Conversation (Hornbeck), 10 June 1930, Department of State Decimal File 893.00/11050.
44. Johnson to George Moses, 8 April 1930, Johnson Papers. Johnson later discussed the need for an Oriental renaissance in response to some thoughts on that subject offered by Jawaharlal Nehru when the Indian nationalist leader visited China in 1939. See Johnson to Nehru, 29 Aug. 1939 and Nehru to Johnson, 30 Aug. 1939.
45. Johnson to Moses, 8 April 1930.
46. "Pacific and Far East" -- lecture to Foreign Service Class, 6 Nov. 1925.
47. Johnson to Roosevelt, 27 Feb. 1939.
48. Ibid.
50. Johnson to Fairbank, 24 Nov. 1950, Johnson Papers.
51. Committee for One Million to Johnson, 5 Nov. 1953; Johnson to H. O. Werner, 30 Nov. 1954.
55. Hornbeck to father, 18 Nov. 1910.
57. Hornbeck to father, 16 Nov. 1910.
58. Hornbeck to mother, 30 Oct. 1910 and to his parents, 13 Nov. 1911.
59. Hornbeck Address, 4 July 1912.

61. Hornbeck, Stanley K. *China To-Day* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1927) vol. 10, no. 5, pp. 442-43. As is evident in speeches in the Hornbeck papers, Hornbeck frequently expressed these generalizations about China during the late 1920s.


64. Hornbeck, *China To-Day*, pp. 419-20.
66. Ibid.
73. Hornbeck memorandum on Manchurian situation, 1932, Hornbeck Papers.
75. Hornbeck memorandum, 27 May 1946, Hornbeck Papers.
77. Hornbeck, "Twenty Revisionist Errors" (1961).
80. Ibid., 321.
82. Ibid., 404-05.
Appendices

I. Seminar Participants and Guests

Participants

David Arkush University of Iowa
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Edward Ch‘ien University of Chicago
Lawrence Chisolm State University of New York, Buffalo
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Warren Cohen Michigan State University
Liza Crihfield Dalby University of Chicago
Michael Dalby University of Chicago
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<th>Guests</th>
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<td>Kōbō Abe</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>Guy Alitto</td>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
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<td>Hao Chang</td>
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<td>Noam Chomsky</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Janice Cohen</td>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
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<td>Arif Dirlik</td>
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<td>Takeo Doi</td>
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<td>Nobutoshi Hagihara</td>
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<td>Nagayo Homma</td>
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<td>Frederick Jameson</td>
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<td>Susan Jones</td>
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<td>Yoichirō Nambu</td>
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<td>David Roy</td>
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<td>Edward Said</td>
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<td>Irwin Scheiner</td>
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<td>William Sibley</td>
<td>Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Yue-him Tam</td>
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II. Papers Presented at Final Conference

David Arkush and Leo Lee, "Chinese Views of America, 1783-1900"
Janice and Warren Cohen, "Art and American Understanding of East Asian Culture, 1783-1900"
Charles Cleaver, "America's Astigmatism vis-a-vis Japan"
Harry Harootunian, "'Realms Visible and Invisible, Things Seen and Unseen': Japan's Modernity and the Transformation of Nativism"
Gary Hess, "The 'China' of the 'China Hands': The MacMurray, Johnson, and Hornbeck Perceptions of China"
Akira Iriye, "Peace, War, and Culture: The Ideological Aspects of American-Japanese Relations During the 1930s"
Mitsuko Iriye, "Kafū in America"
Victor Koschmann, "The Production of Enlightenment in Meiji Japan"
Tetsuo Najita, "Structure and Content in Eighteenth-Century Thinking on 'Political Economy'"
Bernard Silberman, "On Statefulness"