Embracing Islam: Okakura Tenshin at the Limits of His Alternative Orientalism*

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> Islam itself may be described as Confucianism on horseback, sword in hand. For it is quite possible to distinguish, in the hoary communism of the Yellow Valley, traces of a purely pastoral element, such as we see abstracted and self-realised in the Musslumân races.[1]

At the Vienna World's Fair in 1873, the architecture of proto-national pavilions from the Ottoman-occupied lands of the Middle East and North Africa made acutely apparent the representational practices of European imperial power.[2] Minarets dominated the cityscape on one side of the Danube, centuries-old and revival-style churches on the other. While these spectacular structures are no longer extant, Vienna's cityscape at the time is recorded in rich visual sources, such as drawings and photographs.[3] One such example is found in Kume Kunitake's 久米邦武 (1839–1931) *Tokumei zenken taishi Bei-ō kairan jikki* 特命全権大使米欧回覧実記 (A true account of the plenipotentiary diplomatic commission to Europe and America) (1878), an illustrated travelogue of his journey through the United States and Europe in 1871–1873. Within the travelogue is a lithographic version of a photograph published by the Vienna Photographic Association, which shows the Japanese garden with a Shinto shrine, flanked by two mosque-like buildings located in the neighboring Egyptian Pavilion (see Figs. 1–2).[4] Japan's integration into

1 Kakasu (*sic*) Okakura, *The Ideals of the East: With Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (London: John Murray, 1903), 4. Unless otherwise stated, translations of Japanese terms are my own.

2 See Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 63–67.

3 The photographic documentation of the 1873 fair is now digitized and available online at the Wien Museum website. "Wien Museum: Online Sammlung," *Wien Museum*, accessed December 30, 2021, https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/.

4 For an overview of Japan's participation in the World's expositions, see Ellen P. Conant, "Refractions of the Rising Sun: Japan's Participation in International Exhibitions, 1862–1910," in *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue, 1850–1930*, ed. Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1991), 79–92.

the Oriental landscape of this landmark event signals not only the Western appropriation of the Orient in the nineteenth century, but also Japan's gradual adoption of Western Orientalism. As defined by the Palestinian literary critic Edward W. Said, Orientalism is a "way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience."[5] In subsequent scholarship, the term was inversely applied to the Eastern reappropriation of the Western-made oppositional binary system—the birth of Japan's Orient.[6]

Fig. 1. Japanese House, Vienna World's Fair, 1873. Frame Number 34, National Diet Library, Japan. Illustration from Kume Kunitake, Tokumei zenken taishi Bei-ō kairan jikki (1878).

5   Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1. Much has been said about this influential cultural theory, as is reflected by the vast literature on Saidian post-colonialism. For a retrospect of Orientalism debates on the eve of the 9/11 attacks, see Alexander Lyon Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (New York: NYU Press, 2000).

6   For an absorbing study of Japanese Orientalism, see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Tanaka suggests that Orientalism was not only a result of Western colonialism, but also the consequence of over-Westernization among Eastern imperial powers. See also François Pouillion and Jean-Claude Vatin, ed., *After Orientalism: Critical Perspectives on Western Agency and Eastern Re-appropriations* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
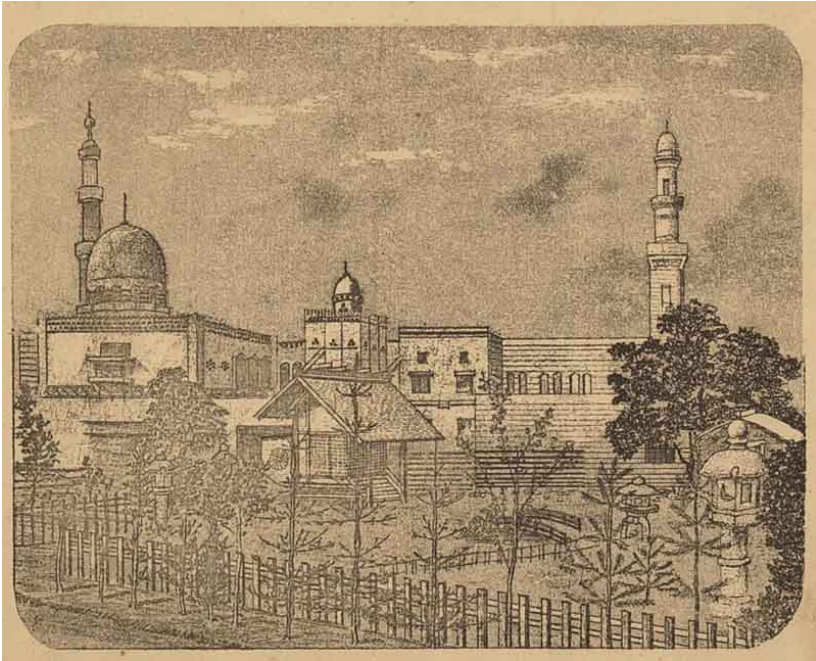
Fig. 2. Weltausstellung 1873: Ägyptische Baugruppe und japanischer Garten (Nr. 422).
Wienmuseum, Vienna (Inv. No. 78080/254). Photo: Oscar Kramer.

One of the few cultural critics who may have sensed these tensions was the early twentieth-century Japanese cultural theorist Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (Tenshin 天心, 1863–1913), who visited Vienna as part of his grand tour through the United States of America and Europe from October 1886 to October 1887, some fifteen years after the Vienna fair.[7] Although the pavilions had been demolished by the time of his visit, the integration of Oriental decorative elements into Vienna's cityscape must have caught his eye, and he witnessed the Euro-American appropriation of non-Western visual cultures with mixed feelings. Having already absorbed Western cultural values through his education, Okakura began to seriously re-evaluate the international position of Japan during his stay in the West. Writing from Vienna to Helena Watson Gilder (1846–1916), wife of the American poet Richard Watson Gilder (1844–1909), Okakura reflected on Japan's

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7   Okakura Kakuzō continues to awaken interest among scholars of Asian art, particularly cultural dialogues between Japan and South Asia at the beginning of the twentieth century. For an exhaustive survey of Okakura's legacy up to the early 2010s, see Noriko Murai and Yukio Lippit, "Okakura Kakuzō: A Reintroduction," in "*Beyond Tenshin: Okakura Kakuzō's Multiple Legacies,*" ed. Noriko Murai and Yukio Lippit, special issue, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (2012): 1–14.

peculiar position in the East, and the attendant need to maintain authenticity: "Our duty to Asia must be in the preservation of our national character in literature, in Art and in everything which constitutes Yamato."[8] He also developed a perspective that resembles what is now called post-colonial criticism. That is, he doubted the hegemonic proposition that "non-Western" visual and material production should have an oppositional, inferior position within the grand narrative of Western civilization, and the dichotomous differentiation between the exploiting colonizer and the condescendingly regarded colonized.[9]

The aim of this paper is to scrutinize Okakura's entangled encounters with Euro-American Orientalist traditions and cultural norms, and by extension his encounters with Islam. I argue that he embraced Islam indirectly through his overinterpretation of Western ideologies, a major ingredient of his discourse on Asia's shared religio-cultural heritage in *The Ideals of the East* (1903) and other lesser-cited essays.[10] While his well-known slogan "Asia is One" has often been acclaimed as a manifesto for the spiritual unification of Greater Asia against Western materialism around 1900, it can be critically recontextualized against the backdrop of Okakura's limited understanding of Islam as a major world religion, and particularly the dominant religion in Asia. While questioning the existential justification of Japanese visual culture and its ambiguous position between East and West at the zenith of representational crises worldwide at the turn of the twentieth century, he could only grasp Islam through a Christian ideological lens, and in turn position it in binary opposition to polytheistic beliefs in Asia, chiefly Buddhism. He failed to embrace Islam as a religion of Asia because Islam only emerged as part of the universal category of world religions in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and yet in the age of Imperialism, it was not properly understood or further articulated as an indigenous tradition of the non-Western world in a much wider geographical context, alongside Buddhism and Hinduism.[11]

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8 Okakura Kakuzō, *Okakura Kakuzō: Collected English Writings*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984), 31.

9 Besides Said's eponymous book, see Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé précédé de Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Éditions Corréa, 1957). Memmi's classic work was translated into English in 1965: Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).

10 *The Ideals of the East* was the first book of his English trilogy, followed by *The Awakening of Japan* (1904) and *The Book of Tea* (1906). It was only in 1938, twenty-five years after Okakura's death, that the original English version of *The Ideals of the East* was translated into Japanese, entitled *Tōyō no risō* 東洋の理想.

11 See Brannon Ingram, "Is Islam a 'Religion'? Contesting Din-Religion Equivalence in Twentieth Century Islamist Discourse," in *Words of Experience: Translating Islam with Carl W. Ernst*, ed. Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst and Brannon Wheeler (Sheffield: Equinox, 2021), 19–20.

The following biographical discussion is structured according to Okakura's crucial encounters with English literary traditions over the course of his education, as well as his cultural stereotyping and hierarchizing while traveling through the United States and Europe. As will become clear, these transcultural encounters were to become a cornerstone of both Okakura's own identity transformation and, crucially, his intellectual development. In order to highlight this process, I have opted in my title for his sobriquet Tenshin, which he primarily used in his writing, rather than his given name Kakuzō.

So it begins: An odyssey through the West's Orient

Okakura's life was poised at diverse transcultural interstices from birth.[12] He was born on the eve of the Meiji Restoration (1868) and grew up in Yokohama. His birth name was Kakuzō 角蔵 (literally "warehouse at the corner"), a description of the circumstances of his birth, and he later adopted different characters, Kakuzō 覚三 (literally "awakened boy").[13] In the midst of Japan's unprecedented socio-political transition, Okakura started learning English at nine years of age, but also took private lessons in Chinese classics. This combination infused him with a multilingual, and multicultural, outlook.[14] Okakura's Western acculturation was accelerated after he met Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), an American pioneer of the study of Japanese art who taught philosophy at the Imperial University of Tokyo, today the University of Tokyo.[15] His interactions with Fenollosa and other Western "honorable guest professors" (often sarcastically called *oyatoi-kyōshi* お雇い教師, "hireling instructors," or *okakae-kyōshi* お抱え教師, "retainer instructors") facilitated a development of Westernized views— particularly influenced by Hegelian philosophy—which crafted the image of Japan as the idealized stronghold of Eastern spirituality, vis-à-vis the West as a materialistically oriented world of realism.[16] Yet Okakura was more than

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12   Okukura's biographical data is sourced from Yasuko Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō: Author of* The Book of Tea (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1963); Arai Emiko 新井恵美子, *Okakura Tenshin monogatari* 岡倉天心物語 [The tale of Okakura Tenshin] (Kanagawa: Kanagawa shimbun, 2004). According to the Japanese calendar at the time, he was born on the 26th day of the 12th month, Bunkyū 2, which converts to February 14, 1863.

13   Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō*, 3.

14   Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō*, 6–7.

15   Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō*, 10–11. For a discussion on the collaboration between Okakura and Fenollosa, see Arthur Mitteau, "L'universalisme de l'esthétique chez Okakura Kakuzō (dit Tenshin) et Ernest Fenollosa: critique et actualité," *Ebisu: Études japonaises* 50 (2013): 95–133.

16   Michael F. Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," in *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 65–78. See also Fred G. Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16, no. 2 (1990): 309–355.

just a blind imitator brainwashed by Western ideals: he actively questioned the encroachment of Westernization and collaborated with Fenollosa to rediscover the cultural heritage of his birthplace. While Fenollosa, an American living in Japan, was intrinsically Easternized by virtue of his neo-Buddhist stance and died as an idealized pre-1865 Japanese heritage conservationist,[17] Okakura dwelt in the spaces between East and West so as to sustain a balanced, modern, and secular persona. It should be noted that Okakura grew up during a period of drastic shifts in Japan's social and cultural systems, with the reintroduction of monotheisms, chiefly Christianity, as well as the reformulation of polytheisms, namely the separation of Shintō 神道 (literally "path of divinities") from Buddhism 仏教 (literally "teaching of the Buddha") through the process of *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離, literally "the separation of divinities [*shin/kami* 神] from the Buddha [*butsu* 仏]."[18] This state-sponsored secularization policy, beginning in 1868, placed Buddhism—long dominant in the social structure of Japan—at risk of eradication (a process known as *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈, literally "abolishing Buddhism and destroying Śākyamuni").[19] At the expense of pre-Restoration cultural memories, Japan reshaped its own indigenous belief—Shintō—into a secular, modern, and national religion.[20]

In many ways, Okakura's journey of 1886–1887 marked a turning point in his career and his cultural entanglements. When he set off to the United States of America and Europe with Fenollosa, prior to his sojourn in Asia, Okakura was already more mature and advanced than most of the other members of the Meiji Japanese elite who were paid by the government to study in the West. He traveled first to the United States and then to Europe to study art education, museum management, and cultural preservation in the Euro-American world.[21] Instead of attempting to ascertain the genesis of Western art, he sensed a crisis of representation in *fin de siècle* Euro-American visual culture, discerning the derivativeness of Western art and its desperate attempt to seek originality by appropriating non-Western pictorial and decorative features. Uncomfortable about visual (and racial) stereotyping, and his developing linguistic identity with English, Okakura sent a stark warning to his son: "From my first trip

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17   On Fenollosa's neo-Buddhist stance, see Jonathan Stalling, *Poetics of Emptiness: Transformations of Asian Thought in American Poetry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021), 33–96.

18   On the shaping of the concept "religion" in Japan, see Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

19   For further discussion of the state-sponsored secularization policy, see James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

20   See Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 132–163.

21   On Fenollosa's and Okakura's Euro-American tour, see Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism," 325–326; and Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō*, 24–26.

to Europe, I wore kimono most of the time. I suggest you to travel abroad in kimono if you think that your English is good enough. But never wear Japanese costume if you talk broken English."[22]

Okakura's unease with binary cultural identification was echoed in his lecture delivered on November 6, 1887, one month after the Japanese government established the Tokyo School of Art (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校), today Tokyo Art University (Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku 東京藝術大学).[23] Using the metaphor of two streams originating from the same wellspring to illustrate the interrelationship between Eastern and Western artistic practice, Okakura outlined the four dominant positions regarding the relationship between Japanese and Western art:

> 1. Those who argue in favor of a pure Western art;
> 2. Those who argue in favor of a pure Japanese art;
> 3. Those who argue in favor of an equal status of Eastern and Western art—in other words, eclecticism;
> 4. Those who argue in favor of a natural development of the arts.[24]

He was particularly critical of eclecticism: "A combination of Eastern and Western art can only be imperfect, since, taken individually, each element is already useless: doubling them would only increase the damage,"[25] favoring rather the lattermost proposition, because "natural development does not make any distinction between East and West."[26]

The 1873 Vienna World's Fair was a key juncture in the growth of Central European interest in non-Western cultures and Japanese art in particular. This resulted in an interest in Japan among local artists and designers, who borrowed from *ukiyoe* 浮世絵 prints and everyday *mingei* 民芸 (literally "folk crafts") objects—an artistic movement widely known as Japonisme[27]—and also the conceptual adoption of art (*bijutsu* 美術, literally "act pertaining to beauty") in Japanese exhibits so as to fit them within the Western canon of fine art.[28] From

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22   Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō*, 24.

23   A full English translation of this lecture is available in Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 71–78. The original Japanese text appears in Aoki Shigeru 青木茂 and Sakai Tadayasu 酒井忠泰, ed., *Bijutsu* 美術 [Art] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989), 85–91.

24   Okakura in Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 72.

25   Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 77.

26   Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 78.

27   Much has been written about this nineteenth-century Euro-American movement—see, for one example, Helen Burnham, Sarah E. Thompson, and Jane E. Braun, *Looking East: Western Artists and the Allure of Japan* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2014).

28   Michael Marra*, Essays on Japan: Between Aesthetics and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 45–

Okakura's point of view, arriving in the capital fifteen years later, this landmark public presentation, which marked the international debut of Japanese cultural exports, had left both a positive and negative legacy. The Westernized label of art (*bijutsu*) made a clear distinction from traditional crafts (*geijutsu* 芸術, literally "act pertaining to technical skills"), serving to elevate Japanese art against other non-Western arts and, in turn, allowing it to escape the ethnographic gaze under which Africa and Oceania suffered. On the other hand, Japanese art was no longer appreciated abroad in its original form, but rather, had already been fully appropriated and remade as a derivative product for a Western audience.[29]

However disappointing *fin de siècle* Europe may have been for Okakura, it was nevertheless fertile intellectual ground, which inspired his education in certain aspects of Western thought. Okakura's travels were a self-awakening, and he apprehended cultural dichotomization in the Euro-American world through encounters with European scholars and artists. In Vienna, Okakura met Lorenz von Stein (1815–1890, see Fig. 3), Professor of Public Administration at the University of Vienna, who advised the Meiji Government in establishing a codified constitution.[30] While their exact topic of conversation is unknown, their very meeting is evidence of Okakura's exceptionality. By his mid-twenties, he had become Tenshin 天心 (see Fig. 4), "the heart of heaven": a kimono-clad, English-speaking East Asian who was the apparent equal of Stein, an authoritative European academic in his early seventies.

Okakura's aforementioned 1887 lecture provides some glimpses of the bitter yet enlightening lessons he learnt from the European establishment concerning national self-confidence and identity:

> I once paid a visit to a famous European painter … At the end of our discussion he turned to me and said: "According to what I hear lately, everything in Japan is an imitation of English and German landscapes. Even in the field of religion, I hear that they have embraced the Christian faith. Well, now that I am face-to-face with a Japanese, I would like to recommend a type of faith: faith in self-confidence. Without such a faith, you will do no more than just imitate the outward look of others, and it will be hard to assume an absolutely outstanding national style."[31]

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46. The original Japanese text for the classification of exhibitions at the Vienna Fair is found in Aoki and Sakai, *Bijutsu*, 403–405.

29   On the definition of *geijutsu*, see Marra, *Essays on Japan*, 46. For further discussion on ethnographic gaze at the Vienna fair, see Matthew Rampley, "Peasants in Vienna: Ethnographic Display and the 1873 World's Fair," *Austrian History Yearbook* 42 (2011): 110–132.
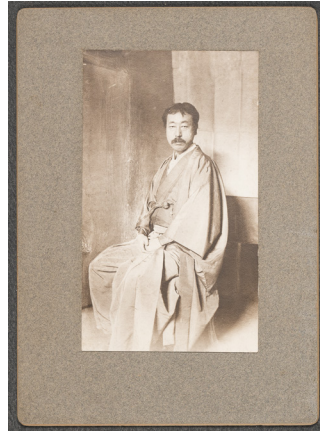
30   On Stein, see Robert M. Spaulding Jr., *Imperial Japan's Higher Civil Service Examinations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 43–50.

31   Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 78.

Fig. 3. Lorenz von Stein (1815-1890).
© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,
Bildarchiv (8017546 / Pf 180528:B (1)).

Fig. 4. Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin),
ca. 1903. © Isabella Stewart Gardner
Museum, Boston (ARC.006280).

Okakura was acutely aware of the limits of imitation in the identity formation of an individual without such faith. The European painter, on the other hand, was not fully aware of the unique type of faith Okakura's culture possessed in the pre-Restoration period. It was not a Western over-confidence or arrogance with contempt for other cultures, nor was it a dialectical measure of self-esteem, a set of East Asian beliefs characterized by tolerance for contradiction. On the contrary, Japan's centuries-long geographical isolation (*sakoku* 鎖国, literally "seclusion of the nation") provided an opportunity to develop an independent alter-ego.[32] Japan's unique self-identification in the pre-Restoration period—neither Eastern, Asian, nor ethno-nationally "Japanese" in the modern sense—was radically changed once its confederation of autonomous states opened its gates to the world as a unified body of inhabitants, on the basis of what were viewed from the outside as "shared cultural traits."[33] This categorical view stemmed from stereotypical ethnic idiosyncrasies such as language, history, and custom, and as physical and behavioral attributes, as well as Western-defined binaries such as Orient and Occident, or East and West.[34]

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32   This process has been articulated in Ronald P. Toby, *Engaging the Other: 'Japan' and Its Alter-Egos, 1550–1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

33   There were, however, a variety of nationalisms, ranging from economic to cultural, that already existed in Japan prior to the nineteenth century. See B. J. McVeigh, *Nationalisms of Japan: Managing and Mystifying Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

34   For further discussion of the problematics of binary classifications, see Victor Lieberman, "Transcending East–West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 463–546.

Mapping out Japan's Orient

Contemporary to Okakura's visit to the USA and Europe, the concept of Japan's Orient—Tōyō 東洋 (literally "east ocean")—became embedded as a geo-cultural notion that signified a kind of equivalence or parallel to the West's Orient.[35] As Tanaka has shown, Tōyō differed from the West's Orient in that it did not imply an inherent backwardness, but rather a genuine cultural difference. The emergence of Tōyōshi 東洋史 (literally "east ocean history") as a discipline in 1890s Japan represents Japan's complex views towards Asia and Europe with singular clarity. This new discipline entailed the rereading of Chinese classics in order to historicize Japan's Eastern cultural roots and to highlight its contrasts and similarities to Western culture.[36] It should be noted that the background to the foundation of Tōyōshi was slightly different from that of Oriental Studies in Europe; Tōyōshi entailed the acceptance of Western enlightenment history and problematized Japan's historical failure to adequately integrate this intellectual movement. Tōyōshi thus created its own Orient in explicit contrast to the Orient of the West, while simultaneously inventing a parallel to Western history (Seiyōshi 西洋史, literally "west ocean history").[37] Seiyōshi arose in the early modern period, initially as a study of Semitic languages in the Mediterranean region, namely Hebrew and Arabic, to interpret Jewish and Muslim doctrines from Christocentric viewpoints; it was later extended to include Turkish and Persian languages and cultures in the Middle East.

Unlike the West's Orient—a cultural nonentity derived from the European sense of cultural and intellectual superiority towards the Other—Tōyō was an idealized yet existent cultural entity from which Japan was destined to emerge prior to modernization. Moreover, different from Kangaku 漢学, a pre-Meiji tradition of studying China through philological readings of the classics, Tōyōshi was the study of Shina 支那, one of the historic names for China that regained popularity during the Meiji period. Shina became a geo-historical topos of Japan's pre-Restoration (i.e., pre-modern) Eastern past, as opposed to Japan's post-Restoration (i.e., modern) Western present.[38] In this respect, too, Japanese Tōyōshi and European Oriental studies fundamentally differed from each other: the former intended to discover, if not to reinvent, Japan's hidden

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35   Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 4.

36   Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 12. For detailed discussion on Tōyōshi, see also Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 68–104. There were two central figures in the foundation of Tōyōshi: Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥倉吉 (1865–1942) in Tokyo and Naitō Torajirō, commonly known as Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866–1934), in Kyoto.

37   Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 45–48. Seiyōshi is primarily concerned with European history and does not include American history.

38   See Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 17–19, 31–67.

and essential Eastern quality in order to legitimize its Eastern origin, while the latter functioned to codify European intellectual elitisms, institutional dogmatisms, and racial exceptionalisms. Another difference lies in the geographical coverage of scholarship within European Orientalist traditions. *Orientalistik* in the German-speaking world, for instance, which had played a foundational role prior to the rise of Anglo-French imperialism, was the result of the philhellenic movement in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century.[39] This led to the development of philological studies within the framework of classical antiquity, encompassing the Mediterranean region up to the extent of the Roman Empire and its vicinity in West Asia.[40]

Okakura was an early proponent of Tōyō, a term that he used interchangeably with Asia and to some extent with the Western notion of the Orient.[41] This is particularly evident in *The Ideals of the East*, in which Okakura uses the concept of Tōyō to historicize Japanese art. Following the Western approach of identifying the Greek and Latin origins of European art, this book outlines the development of Japan's cultural productions without any visual aids, and argues for their classification according to the degree of kinship between the classical heritage of Japan and Asia, namely the Confucian and Daoist spheres of Central China and the Buddhist realm of South and Central Asia. Okakura's history of Japanese art is chronologically divided into three periods, paralleling the classification of European art according to different phases of Christianization: ancient (*kodai* 古代), i.e., proto-Tōyō, proto-Buddhification and proto-Eastern spiritualization; medieval (*chūsei* 中世), i.e., high Tōyō, high Buddhification, and high Eastern spiritualization; and modern (*kindai* 近代), i.e., de-Tōyō-ization, de-Buddhification, and the rejection of Eastern spiritualization in favor of Western materialization.[42] This binary framing around Eastern spirituality and Western materiality is a reminder of Japan's attempts to maintain a delicate balance of Easternization and Westernization during the transitional period of acculturation in the late nineteenth century. This cultural duality is particularly well encapsulated in the phase: "Eastern ethics, Western technical learning" (*Tōyō dōtoku, Seiyō gakugei* 東洋道徳一

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39   On German Orientalism, see Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

40   According to Marchand, "The study of East Asian languages, history, art, and literature was one of the few fields of *Orientalistik* in which the Germans, it was universally agreed, lagged behind the other Europeans. There are, I think, a number of reasons for this … Most crucial, however, was the irrelevance of Japanese and Chinese to the interpretation of the Old Testament and to the history of classical antiquity, which placed the study of the Far East outside the perimeter defined by the humanist tradition." Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 367.

41   Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 13.

42   The peculiarities of this table of contents have been also pointed out in Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 68n1.

西洋学芸), which was later reconceptualized as "Japanese spirit, Western technique" (*wakon yōsai* 和魂洋才), thus replacing the collective Eastern contribution with a distinctively Japanese one.[43]

Although it was an attempt at a specifically Japanese work, Okakura's art history was consciously or unconsciously derived from contemporary Western sources that were widely circulated in Japan at the beginning of the Meiji period. William Swinton's *Outlines of the World's History* was particularly influential (though it is worth mentioning that Herbert Baynes' identically titled *Ideals of the East*, published five years prior, might have also been influential).[44] Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥倉吉 (1865–1942), the founder of the Tokyo School of Tōyōshi, was wary of such overreliance on world histories like Swinton's, which, he believed, "asserted that non-Caucasian peoples do not have true history."[45] This tendency fundamentally undermined the movement to differentially Orientalize Japan, since it was tantamount to voluntarily submitting to the position of the classically Oriental subaltern.

Locating Islam in the lands of Buddhism

While Okakura's dependency on Buddhism as the core of Asia's shared Eastern spirituality is self-evident, it is worth investigating the extent to which he considered other religious traditions in Asia, specifically Islam, as one of the dominating socio-political systems in the region—and, if so, what view of Islam he embraced, be it belief, literary topos, or culture. Apart from a few instances of indirect contact with Muslim culture,[46] Islam was largely unknown in Japan

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43   See Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川 祐弘, *Wakon Yōsai no Keifu: Uchi to soto karano Meiji Nihon* 和魂洋才の系譜: 内と外からの明治日本 [The roots of "Japanese spirit, Western technique": Meiji Japan from inside and outside] (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1971). Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山, a neo-Confucian, coined the former phrase as a description of the way that Japan sought to handle modernization. The slogan *wakon yōsai* was coined by Yoshikawa Tadayasu 吉川忠安 in *Kaika sakuron* 開花策論 [Essays on enlightenment] (1867), and was derived from an older concept of acculturation, *wakon kansai* 和魂漢才 (literally "Japanese spirit, Chinese technique").

44   William Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Knoxville, TN: American Book Company, 1874). Okakura's dependency on this book has been pointed out in Marra, "Hegelian Reversal: Okakura Kakuzō," 68. Herbert Baynes, *Ideals of the East* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1898). Little is known about the life and career of Herbert Baynes, apart from his membership of the Royal Asiatic Society. The main focus of this book is India, and it refers to Japan only once.

45   According to Shiratori, "Our country [Japan] earnestly imitated Western countries and rapidly imported their culture without sufficient time for assimilation. Even history courses directly used the textbooks written in those countries … at one time some books that were well received in our schools, such as Swinton's *Outlines of the World's History*, asserted that non-Caucasian peoples do not have true history. Without doubt this seriously misrepresents our countrymen," quoted in Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 48.

46   For a history of Islam in Japan, see Komura Fujio 小村不二男, *Nihon Isurāmu shi* 日本イスラーム史 [History of Islam in Japan] (Tokyo: Nihon Isurāmu yūkō renmei, 1988).

until the middle of the nineteenth century. It was introduced in 1878 by Kume Kunitake 久米邦武, who described Islam as a combination of heathenism and Christianity practiced by Turks.[47] The initial understanding of Islam in Japan was thus filtered through a Christian ideological lens, reproducing a bias that originated in medieval Europe, depicting it as "heresy".[48] The initial 1920 Japanese translation of the Qur'an by Sakamoto Kenichi 坂本健一, for instance, was made from an English translation, rather than from the Arabic. Sakamoto also authored a biography of Muhammad in 1899, in which he portrayed the Prophet as a major figure in world history rather than a principal messenger of God.[49] Islam therefore did not make serious inroads into the newly formulated religious landscape of Japan during the Meiji (1868–1912), Taishō (1912–1926), and pre-war Shōwa (1926–1989) periods, not even after the arrival of Muslim migrants and expatriates from Russia and South Asia around 1900 and the subsequent construction of mosques in Tokyo, Kobe, and Nagoya by the 1930s.[50]

Okakura's journey through Asia (1900–1902) was mostly restricted to the Hindu and Confucian-majority cultural spheres, although this does not mean that he disregarded the presence of Muslims in Asia. On the contrary, Okakura's "The Awakening of the East," which was drafted during his stay in India, demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the cultural conflicts that embroiled Islam.[51] Here he locates Islam as a political entity, comprising different sects, within Asia's religious plurality, and as such, subject to European political interests:

> They [Europeans] have always taken care that the Sunni and the Shia should be antagonistic, that the Sultan and the Shah shall be embroiled in boundary disputes and adverse diplomacy, and they were more than eager to stir up war between China and Japan. They encourage the

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47   Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 203.

48   Islam was considered as both heresy and paganism in medieval Europe; Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 62. For further discussion, see John Victor Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

49   Hans Martin Krämer, "Pan-Asianism's Religious Undercurrents: The Reception of Islam and Translation of the Qur'ān in Twentieth-century Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 3 (2014): 619–640; 621–622.

50   For a detailed art-historical investigation of Japan's modern mosques, see Yuka Kadoi, "The Rising Sun Meets the Crescent: Japan's Modern Mosques and Their Entanglements," in *Meaning in Islamic Art: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Bernard O'Kane*, ed. Heba Mostafa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

51   Okakura Kakuzō, "The Awakening of the East," in *Okakura Kakuzō: Collected English Writings*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1982), 133–168. The Japanese translation of this essay is available in Kamei Katsuichirō 亀井勝一郎 and Miyagawa Torao 宮川寅雄, ed., *Okakura Tenshin shū* 岡倉天心集 [Collected writings of Okakura Tenshin] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1968), 65–83. The original English version was not published during his lifetime, probably due to its radical content; it first appeared in 1940.

divisions between the Hindus and Mohammedans in India as they incite discords between the Manchus and the Southern Chinese with plausible impartiality … little by little our citadel of unity is demolished, one by one we see our brethren fall unmindful of the fate that awaits ourselves.[52]

However, Okakura did not develop a deep and earnest interest in Islam as a religion of Asia. On the Indian subcontinent, the Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), who established an intellectual kinship with Okakura,[53] expanded his intellectual horizon into Indo-Persia in search of a common Eastern spirituality, particularly Sufism.[54] Yet there is no credible evidence that Okakura appreciated nor understood any forms of Islam, including mysticism, nor that he made any discernible attempts to connect Islam with Japanese culture. In Muslim-majority parts of South Asia, he may have seen working mosques and madrasas from the outside, with his own eyes, or perhaps even enter them. By contrast, Buddhism was virtually extinct in the region, apart from in Sri Lanka. In architectural terms, however, he is more likely to have been exposed to revivalist-inspired, colonial buildings that dominated the skyline across South Asia at the turn of the century.[55] The uneasy visual co-existence of originality and derivativeness could have been a reminder of his Euro-American tour, during which Okakura cemented his view of Western art as mere mimicry, writing that the West is "still unable to discern that creating is not imitation."[56]

Okakura was evidently aware of Hinduism and its role in the construction of India's national identity.[57] By contrast, he was silent about the Muslim

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52   Okakura, "The Awakening of the East," 158–159.

53   See Partha Mitter, "Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin in Calcutta: The Creation of a Regional Asian Avant-garde Art," in *Arrival Cities: Migrating Artists and New Metropolitan Topographies in the 20th Century*, ed. Burcu Dogramaci, Mareike Hetschold, Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee, and Helene Roth (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 147–158.

54   See Afshin Marashi, "Imagining Hāfez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 3 (2010): 46–77; Leonard Lewisohn, "Rabindranath Tagore's Syncretistic Philosophy and the Persian Sufi Tradition," *International Journal of Persian Literature* 2 (2017): 2–41.

55   For a recent reassessment of this architectural phenomenon, see Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash, ed., *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling, and Architecture in British India and Ceylon* (London: Routledge, 2007).

56   "In art, the West is still unable to discern that creating is not imitation … Europe is young—the Renaissance is a matter of yesterday. She can afford to learn—or to re-learn," in Okakura, "The Awakening of the East," 155–156.

57   See Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, 80; Shigemi Inaga, "Okakura Kakuzō and India: The Trajectory of Modern National Consciousness and Pan-Asian Ideology Across Borders," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (2012): 39–57.

visual culture of South Asia, thus presenting an interesting contrast with the architect and architectural theorist Itō Chūta 伊東忠太(1867–1954), one of his protégées. Itō vocally praised several architectural masterpieces of the Indian subcontinent and Anatolia under Ottoman control, including Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and Taj Mahal in Agra, using them to speculate about the possible ancient Greek origin of Japanese Buddhist buildings.[58] While Itō devised a culturally and religiously diverse narrative of Japanese architecture,[59] Okakura could not find a suitable place for Islam in his grand narratives of Asian and Japanese art.

Okakura's other destination in Asia, China, which he first visited in 1893, did not offer many opportunities for him to reflect on Islam as one of the major foreign-born religions that became domesticated in pre-modern China. Regardless of what was visible to him *in situ,* amidst the zenith of its existential crises in *fin de siècle* China under dysfunctional Qing rulership, Okakura clearly parsed Chinese visual culture through the lens of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, rather than through other world religions (such as Eastern Christianity, Manicheanism, and Islam), a prejudice that was founded in his classical Chinese education. When discerning the differences and similarities between the Southern and Northern regions, for instance, he set the borderline between North China as the lands of Confucianism and South China as those of Daoism.[60] Okakura's understanding of the visual indicators of Islam was influenced by his prior travels across South Asia. These indicators—geometric and arabesque patterns, pointed arches, onion-shaped domes—were virtually absent in China due to the architectural Sinicization of Muslim places of worship, which camouflaged them in stylistic features taken from Buddhist and Daoist temples.[61]

India and China thus served as topologies of nostalgia for Okakura and other contemporary Japanese intellectuals, reaffirming their stance that

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58   Itō Chūta 伊東忠太, "Kenchiku shinka no gensoku yori mitaru waga kuni kenchiku no zento" 建築進化の原則より見たる我邦建築の前途 [The future of Japanese architecture from the viewpoint of architectural evolution], *Kenchiku zasshi* 建築雑誌 23, no. 265 (1909): 4–36. For a recent study of Itō's world tours in search of the Greek origin of Japanese Buddhist architecture, see Sebastian Conrad, "Greek in Their Own Way: Writing India and Japan into the World History of Architecture at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 125, no. 1 (2020): 19–53.

59   See Alice Y. Tseng, "In Defense of Kenchiku: Itō Chūta's Theorization of Architecture as a Fine Art in the Meiji Period," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (2012): 155–167.

60   Murata Yūjirō 村田雄二郎, "Okakura Tenshin no Chūgoku nanboku idōron" 岡倉天心の中国南北異同論 [Okakura Tenshin's theory of differences between North and South China], *Odysseus: Tōkyō Daigaku Daigakuin Sōgōbunka Kenkyūka Chiikibunka Kenkyūsenkō Kiyō* 東京大学大学院総合文化研究科地域文化研究専攻紀要 22 (2018): 37–50; 44–45.

61   See Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *China's Early Mosques* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1–33.

Buddhism—not Islam—was the historical tether between Japan and Asia at large. Conversely, it was modernized Japan that served as the meeting point for young revolutionaries from China and India to develop an ideological foundation of Asian unity,[62] even as it also took the position of the satellite center of pan-Islamism, where Muslim intellectuals from the Middle East and South Asia politicized their anti-colonial, anti-Western sentiments.[63]

Rather than through his experience in India and China, Okakura's understanding of Islam was clearly formulated through English literature. This is suggested by the unspecific usage of "Mohammedan," "Musslumân," and "Islam" throughout the introductory chapter of *The Ideals of the East*, in tandem with other old-fashioned historical terms to describe nomadic people living outside Christendom or in generally non-Western cultures, such as "Saracenic," "Cathay," and "Tatar."[64] Although his familiarity with such terms was impressive in a non-native English speaker, none of them conveyed any real meaning. Instead of proving his eloquence in English, Okakura rather overcommitted to the role of Victorian-era author, a performance that could almost be dismissed as charlatanism, with the preface reminding the reader that he was not in fact English but Japanese.[65] Moreover, Okakura's narrative of "the fanatical iconoclasm of the Musslumân" as one of the factors that almost effaced "the sublime attainments of Indian art"[66] is reminiscent of Baynes' chapter on "Islâm's Allâh" in his eponymous work, in which the Prophet and his followers are described as those who "overran Arabia, destroying heathendom and its worship of idols and enforcing fire and sword as the essential tenets of Islam."[67]

Okakura's Islam as a metaphoric iconoclasm does not differ markedly from Japan's indirect encounter with Muslim culture in the sixteenth century, when Christian missionaries brought to Japan their own representations of this other

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62   See Tansen Sen, "China–India Studies: Emergence, Development, and State of the Field," *Journal of Asian Studies* 80, no. 2 (2021): 363–387.

63   See Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World-Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Nile Green, "Anti-Colonial Japanophilia and the Constraints of an Islamic Japanology: Information and Affect in the Indian Encounter with Japan," *Journal of South Asian History and Culture* 4, no. 3 (2013): 1–23.

64   Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, 1–6.

65   Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, v. It has been argued that Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda), an Irish nun who was in close contact with Okakura, provided considerable editorial assistance. See John Rosenfield, "Okakura Kakuzō and Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita): A Brief Episode," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (2012): 58–69; 58. See also Okakura, *Collected English Writings*, vol. 1, 433.

66   Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, 6.

67   Baynes, *Ideals of the East*, 84.

world, a Saracendom that stood in opposition to Christendom. Painted by a Japanese Christian convert trained in the Jesuit seminary in the late sixteenth century, and drawing on Christian iconography of four equestrians in combat to symbolize the Christians fighting against the Muslims, a four-panel screen from approximately the 1610s entitled *Taiseiōkō kibazu* 泰西王侯騎馬図 ("Four equestrians in combat"; see Fig. 5) embodies Japan's enduring practice of cultural imitation and emulation.[68] Reframed as a traditional Japanese-style folding screen (*byōbu* 屏風) in a manner that renders it an artifact of visual hybridity, this painting is a reminder of Japan's previous experiment, if not pretension, to assimilate Western culture with skillful mimicry. On the other hand, this screen painting mirrors the Christian perception of Japan at the time: despite some religious affinities in terms of saint veneration and monasticism, the confusing mixture of similarity and difference between Japan and Christendom led to the assumption among missionaries that Japan may have lost its true faith due to Islamization or heteticization.[69] In other words, the imagery of the Muslim could be viewed as an allegory for Japan's contemporary resistance to Christianity.

Fig. 5. Four Equestrians in Combat*, Japan, ca. 1610s. Color and gold on paper. 166.2 x 460.4cm. © Kobe City Museum.*

Any attempt to draw a line connecting this early seventeenth-century painting to Okakura's mindset would be unwise. Nonetheless, similar judgments circulated amongst twentieth-century Anglophone writers, such as

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68   See Grace A. H. Vlam, "Kings and Heroes: Western-Style Painting in Momoyama Japan," *Artibus Asiae* 39, no. 3–4 (1977): 220–250. The four equestrians depicted in the Kobe painting appear to symbolize the following political entities, possibly identified with the following rulers of the time (from left to right): Holy Roman Empire (Rudolf II), Ottoman Empire (either Murad III or Mehmed III), Tsardom of Muscovy (Peter the Great), Kingdom of Tartary (Ğazı II Giray of the Crimean Khanate). There is another screen painting in the Suntory Museum of Art in Tokyo, representing four equestrians at rest; see Vlam, "Kings and Heroes," 232, Fig. 26. These two screens originally formed a pair.

69   Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 61.

the art historian Ernest Binfield Havell (1861–1934). In concluding his *Ideals of Indian Art* (1920), Havell makes a statement that resembles Okakura's on Islam and iconoclasm: "The fierce iconoclasm of the first Muhammadan invaders of Hindustan was renewed, and the fine arts, including music, were placed under a fanatical priestly interdict, more detrimental to Indian art than all the asceticism of Hinduism."[70]

Was Okakura then merely mimicking Western Orientalism, or was he the architect of a distinct theory of Japanese Orientalism? An interesting parallel can be drawn between Okakura and his contemporaries from Asia and the Middle East, such as the late Ottoman administrator Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910), who represented his self-Orientalizing ideology pictorially,[71] and the Sri Lankan-born philosopher Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), who drew on Neoplatonic ideas to convince a European readership of the "true spiritual value" of Indian art.[72] Although Okakura himself did not paint self-Orientalizing artworks, his vision of Japanese visual culture was realized by Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観 (1868–1958), his protégée and the founder of Nihonga 日本画 (literally "Japanese painting"), a pictorial genre that was formulated during the Meiji period in opposition to Yōga 洋画 (literally "overseas painting," used to denote "Western-style painting").[73] With a tendency for subtle abstraction, *Nihonga* was intended to conform to Eurocentric taxonomies of cultural difference and, in turn, to cement an art-historical position for "Nihon"—not the exonym "Japan"—as a triumph of experimental modernity, ahead of the West, situated somewhere between "Eastern" and "Western" art. As curators of Oriental collections at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Okakura and Coomaraswamy both contributed to the historicization of Asian art.[74] Both emphasized the trajectory

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70   Ernest Binfield Havell, *Ideals of Indian Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920), 142. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing this to my attention.

71   The life and career of Osman Hamdi Bey has been thoroughly analyzed by Edhem Eldem. On his paintings, see Edhem Eldem, "Making Sense of Osman Hamdi Bey and His Paintings," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 339–383; on his museological career, see Edhem Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," in *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Simon Rettig (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2016), 119–139. See also Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

72   For criticisms of Coomaraswamy's scholarship, see Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 277–278.

73   On *Nihonga*, see Ellen P. Conant, J. Thomas Rimer, and Stephen D. Owyoung, *Nihonga, Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968* (St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995).

74   Coomaraswamy served as curator in 1917. It is noteworthy that in his 1919 essay "The Significance of Oriental Art" there is not a single reference to Muslim cultural heritage in Asia. Ananda Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," *The Art Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (1919): 17–22.

of Buddhist heritage from South Asia to Japan via Central Asia, albeit through a diffusionist perspective, so as to present Buddhist art in the East as equal to that of Christian art in the West, marginalizing other religious traditions in Asia and de-Islamicizing its cultural fabric in the process.[75] Having lost its position in the canonical narrative of Asian art, the Muslim heritage of South and Central Asia was excluded from what is now broadly yet misleadingly categorized as "Islamic art," a category that essentially denotes the art, architecture, and material culture of Muslim-majority societies of the Middle East and North Africa after the seventh century.[76] Taken together, all of these early exponents of cultural identity from the non-Western world unavoidably revealed their ultimate dependence on Euro-American standards for evaluating their respective proto-national art histories and canons, while articulating the idea of the "West" as an inferior counterpart of their idealized "East," thus replicating the essence of Orientalism.[77]

"Islam" in Okakura's mind: An epilogue

Clearly, Okakura embraced a Western-defined understanding of Islam. This does not contradict the fact that "religion" in general and "Islam" in particular were essentially Western concepts, with non-Western cultures during the modern period struggling to translate the notion, and find equivalents to it.[78] The term "Islam" in Okakura's mind thus refers to an Orientalized, Westernized construct, rather than the faith and practices of actual Muslims.

Could it be the case that Okakura would have been able to cultivate his own ideas of Islam further, if he had lived longer and witnessed the rise of pan-Islamism across Asia around the outbreak of the Pacific War?[79] Judging by "Religions in East Asiatic Art," which was based on a report that he delivered

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75   For further discussion on Indo-Japanese interactions regarding Buddhist heritage, see Madhu Bhalla, ed., *Culture as Power: Buddhist Heritage and the Indo-Japanese Dialogue* (London: Routledge, 2020).

76   For early discussion on this misattribution, see Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1–2.

77   For further discussion, see Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics and History* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

78   Ingram, "Is Islam a 'Religion'?", 20. See also Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Islamic Dīn as an Alternative to Western Models of 'Religion,'" in *Religion, Theory, Critique: Classic and Contemporary Approaches and Methodologies*, ed. Richard King (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 163–171. For the case of "religion" in Japan, see Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*; for China, see Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

79   See Michael Laffan, "The Forgotten Jihad under Japan: Muslim Reformism and the Promise of Indonesian Independence," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 64, no. 1–2 (2021): 125–161, on the political ramifications of pan-Islamism in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia.

at the Museum of Fine Arts research forum in Boston, it is difficult to believe that his view of Islam and its fundamental stance on iconoclasm would have changed.[80] Declaring that "religion is not necessarily conductive to the development of art. It has been antagonistic, in some instances … You will recollect how Mohammedanism limited the range of Arabian art,"[81] Okakura seems to have stuck to the image of sword-bearing iconoclast Muslims as a parallel to the destructive effects of Puritanism on art. "In the East also the same thing happened," he admits, while aestheticizing the Japanese sword as a Shinto-inspired cultural product of peacemaking to symbolize the spiritual unification of Asia against monotheist intolerance:[82] "Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism exist in Eastern Asia side by side. There is a spiritual and mutual tolerance that enables them to flourish together. There have been, except in a very few instances, no such bloody persecutions as mark the history of the Mohammedan and other churches."[83] Okakura's rhetorical emphasis on the ruinous, forgotten state of Muslim cultural heritage in East Turkestan was intended not only to contain the religious plurality of Inner Eurasia, but also to reinforce the rebirth of Buddhism as Asia's collective "Renaissance."[84]

Okakura's limited understanding or acceptance of one of the great religious traditions of Asia is not surprising, however: his theorization of the trans-regional convergence of Asian culture was ahead of its time, and entailed an arguably necessary dependency on Western sources, which naturally colored his apprehension of Islam. Seeking a faith to valorize, Okakura, as a cosmopolitan urbanite from the rapidly modernized insular state at the fringe of the Pacific Ocean, opted for what his culture abandoned at the expense of modernization and Westernization—Buddhism—in order to rationalize the unity of Asia and to foreground the existence of Japan.

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80   Okakura Kakuzō, "Religions in East Asiatic Art," in *Okakura Kakuzō: Collected English Writings*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984), 133–144. The Japanese translation of this essay is available in Kamei and Miyagawa, *Okakura Tenshin shū*, 358–363.

81   Okakura, "Religions in East Asiatic Art," 133.

82   Okakura, "Religions in East Asiatic Art," 142–144. See his panegyric poem "The Sword" in Okakura, "The Awakening of the East," 166.

83   Okakura, "Religions in East Asiatic Art," 144. "Church" here is ostensibly a direct translation of the Japanese *kyōkai* 教会, which broadly means religious organizations, predominantly referring to Christianity.

84   Okakura, "Religions in East Asiatic Art," 143. For further discussion on the notion of "Renaissance" in non-Western art historical discourse, particularly concerning Persian art, see Yuka Kadoi, "The (Re-)Birth of Ilkhanid Art," in *The Mongol Empire in Global History and Art History*, ed. Anne Dunlop (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023), 239–263.