

***Chouhou* by Yokoyama Taikan and “Expression”: Expressions of the character’s emotion in His Art**

UEDA Sayoko

Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo

Introduction

In my previous research [1], I considered why *Qu Yuan*, which Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) exhibited at the first Nihon Bijutsuin (Japan Art Academy) Exhibition in 1898, attracted so much attention at that time. I revealed that it was not because the painting implicitly portrayed Okakura Kakuzo (Tenshin) as the Chinese poet Qu Yuan, but rather because Qu Yuan was regarded as an excellent example of “Expression”, one of the three main themes Okakura had chosen for the Exhibition. These three main themes were described as follows:

“Moreover, as our now position, the following three objectives must be the aims for young painters: we must develop our technique more and more following traditional rules, we must place importance on order and not make outrageous paintings, and we must represent “Expression.”[2]

It was pointed out by Kinoshita Nagahiro that the meaning of this “Expression”, mentioned by Okakura, was quite vague [3]. However, after the autumn of 1897, the word “Expression” became a common in feature in critiques of Japanese-style paintings, but before spring 1897 this word was hardly seen at all. What were the reasons for this change? Answering this question is one the main objectives of this article.

As will be discussed later, “Expression” in 1898 referred to the expression of the emotions of the characters in paintings. As Shioya Jun has already mentioned in his research [4], in history painting in the mid Meiji era, what was sought after was a psychological portrait of the painting’s subject. However, Shioya didn’t discuss “Expression” in great detail. It has been speculated that the word “Expression” had a European influence because it was written in katakana, and furthermore, “Expression” had been an important notion in Western Art since the Renaissance [5]. So what kind of meaning did “Expression” have for Japanese-style paintings in the mid Meiji Era?

At that time, the painting that obtained a high appraisal regarding “Expression” was *Chouhou* (Fig. 1), exhibited by



Fig. 1 Yokoyama Taikan, *Chouhou*, destroyed by fire, 1897, (Saito Ryuzo, ed., *Taikan Sakuhin shu*, Otsuka Kogei sha, 1925)

Yokoyama Taikan in autumn of 1897 [6]. This painting no longer survives so there has been little research into it. However, it was a masterpiece, released between *Selfless* (Spring 1887, Tokyo National Museum) and *Qu Yuan* (autumn 1898, Itsukushima Shrine), two of the most important early works of Yokoyama Taikan, so *Chouhou* occupies an important place when tracing Taikan's history.

In this article, taking Yokoyama Taikan's *Chouhou* as a starting point, I consider the problem of "Expression" from the following viewpoints: First, I explain clearly what "Expression" meant at that time. Secondly, I examine the reasons why "Expression" came to be the focus of so much attention. Thirdly, concentrating mainly on *Chouhou*, I consider how Taikan depicted "Expression" in his paintings. By doing so, I want to make clear Taikan's characteristic of reacting sensitively to new forms of expression.

1. Yokoyama Taikan's *Chouhou*

First of all, I want to talk about *Chouhou*. This work was exhibited in the third Nihon Kaiga Kyokai Kaiga Kyoshinkai (Japanese painting society painting competitive exhibition) in the autumn of 1897. It received the copper medal at this exhibition. The Agriculture Department of Commerce then purchased it for 140 yen, and *Chouhou* was exhibited in the Paris Expo in 1900, receiving the copper prize [7]. However, it later perished in a fire and no longer exists. It is said that this fire was caused by the Big Kanto Earthquake [8].

Taikan published an explanation of *Chouhou* in a magazine in February 1898, immediately after the exhibition [9].

"When people gather in a temple to listen to the same Buddhist sermon, the meaning is different from person to person. Depicting this was one of my principle objectives when I painted *Chouhou*, I wanted to show the difference. Even if various people, for example, a woman, a farmer or a samurai, listen to the same preaching, one person will listen with faith, another incredulously and another without understanding. I planned to depict these various states in the guise of contemporary people. ...(Omission)... it was my purpose to show these characters' emotions..."

When depicting "Expression," I am afraid it might become flat and monotonous if we use ordinary methods, so I try to pay attention to shadow, light and darkness, and want to paint as thoroughly as possible..."

This explanation shows that Taikan's intention in *Chouhou* was to depict the different emotions and states of various people as they listened to a Buddhist sermon. In other words, he wanted to depict "Expression". Here we can understand that "Expression" meant the expression of the emotions of the characters in paintings.

Chouhou was very well-received when it was exhibited and it was evaluated highly regarding Taikan's special objective, "Expression"[10]. Based on Taikan's explanation, many previous researchers paid attention to how Taikan tried to express shadow and how he depicted the various attitudes of the people listening to the sermon [11].

Looking at the critiques made during the third Nihon Kaiga Kyoshinkai exhibition in the

autumn of 1897, “Expression” is discussed regarding other works besides *Chouhou*. For instance, it is lamented how Shimomura Kanzan’s *Death of Tsugunobu* (Fig. 2), which received the special silver medal [12], lacked “Expression”. It was also said about Kobori Tomoto’s *Tsuneyo*, which received the silver medal, that its “Expression” was insufficient [13]. In contrast, Taikan’s *Chouhou*, which depicted the emotions of the people in an audience, and Shimada Bokusen’s *Chijou Kito* [14], which depicted Oishi Yoshio with features full of indignation, both received high acclaim because they were excellent examples of “Expression.”



Fig. 2 Shimomura Kanzan, *Death of Tsugunobu*, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, 1897

2. “Expression”

Next, I want to confirm the meaning of “Expression.” As we can see from the use of katakana, the word has a similar meaning to the European word ‘expression’. This word has been known in Japan for quite a long time.

Since ‘Eiwa Taiyaku Shuchuin Jiten (English-Japanese translation dictionary)’ [15], published in 1862 by the shogunal department Yosho Shirabesho, a number of high-quality English-Japanese dictionaries have appeared in Japan. As for the translation of the word “Expression” in the main English-Japanese dictionaries from the end of shogunate to the mid Meiji era, please refer to the table. From the table, we can see that there are various translations for “Expression.” ‘Fuon Sozu Wayaku Eijii (An English and Japanese Lexicon: explanation, pronunciation and etymology, containing all English words in present use, with an appendix)’ and ‘Webster’s unabridged dictionary of the English language’ (both published the late 1880’s) are known as the most widespread English-Japanese dictionaries from the late 1880’s to the 1900’s [16]. The table tells us that after the publication of ‘Tetsugaku Jii (Dictionary of philosophy)’ in 1881, the meaning of “Expression” in the late 1880s came to mean ‘face color’ or ‘facial expression’ [17].

The original meaning of the word ‘expression’ in the West is “to give a visible shape to something invisible” [18]. For this reason, the word has a wide range of meanings and translations. This is why the word “Expression” was used in so many different ways in the 1880’s and 1900’s [19]. In this article, I don’t just focus on the word “Expression” but also pay attention to the problem of expressing the emotions of characters in paintings.

In particular I want to note how the “Expression” that I use in this article differs from the “Expression” used to refer to the depiction of feelings by modern artists or, in other words, the artist’s expression of their own feelings. The latter meaning of the word “Expression” was given prominence at the end of the Meiji era by, amongst others, the Shirakaba school’s Kaiga no Yakusoku Ronsou (debate about the promises of paintings) [20].

In critiques of Western-style painting, the use of the word “Expression” to denote the depiction of the emotions of the characters in paintings was often used in discussions. For

instance, in the critique concerning Yamamoto Housui's *The twelve zodiacal signs* in 1892, the characters of the *Horse* and *Sheep* were appraised in terms of the "Expression" of their appearance [21]. Moreover, the *Talk on Ancient Romance* sketches that Kuroda Seiki had exhibited in the autumn of 1896 were also evaluated in terms of their "Expression" [22]. However, "Expression" in this sense of the word was rarely seen in critiques of Japanese-style painting until after the autumn of 1897.

It would not be true to say though that the depiction in paintings of the expressions and feelings of people was never considered before then. In early 1882, Okakura Tenshin wrote about the importance of depicting the emotions of the characters in paintings in his "Sho ha Bijutsu narazuno Ron wo Yomu (Reading the theory that calligraphy is not art)" [23]. But it wasn't considered very often [24]. In 1895, Fukuchi Fukuichi published "Menbo no Setsu (The Theory of Faces)" [25]. Though the word "Expression" was not used in the theory, Fukuchi insisted that it was necessary, taking into account the physiognomy of the Orient, and the phrenology and the psychology of the West, to depict the feelings of the characters in paintings. In addition, in September of the same year Suematsu Kenchou described how "the faces of the characters in Japanese-style paintings look strange when seen from European eyes" [26]. Furthermore, the facial expression of a painting's characters became a topic (though the word "Expression" was not used) in the first Nihon Kaiga Kyokai exhibition in the autumn of 1896 and the second Nihon Kaiga Kyokai exhibition in spring the following year [27].

<Table> Translation list of "Expression" from the middle of Meiji to the end of Edo

year	Dictionary's name	Expression's translation
1862	<i>Eiwa taiyaku shuchin jiten</i>	Kai-suru youni iu koto.
1869	<i>Satsuma jisho (Wayaku ei jisho)</i>	Oshitsukeru koto. Genshutsu suru koto. Arawasu koto.
1869	<i>Eika jii</i>	Jigen. Ji. Shi. Menshoku.
1872	<i>Eiwa jiten</i>	Ku. Gohou. Gen. Ku. Go.
1881	<i>Tetsugaku Jii</i>	Bunji, Gohou, Hyoushutsu, Menshoku.
1887	<i>Fuon sozu wayaku ei jii (An English and Japanese Lexicon: explanation, pronunciation and etymology, containing all English words in present use, with an appendix)</i>	Sakushutsu suru koto, Kyousaku suru koto, Meikoku suru koto, Sen-yo suru koto, Hyoushutsu, Taido, Menshoku, Soubou, Kesiki, On-you, Fusai, Gohou, Genji, Bunri
1888	<i>Webster's unabridged dictionary of the English language</i>	Sakushutsu, Genshutsu, Meikoku, Hyoushutsu, Bunri, Gohou, Oncho, Menshoku, Keiyo

※**Menshoku** means facial expression.

Hori Tatsunosuke and Horikoshi Kamenosuke, ed., *Eiwa Taiyaku Shuchuin Jiten*, Yoshio Shirabejo, 1862 (Sugimoto Tsutomu, ed., *Edo Jidai Hon-yaku Nihongo Jiten*, Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1981, included).

Fukkoku Satsuma Jisho (1869 first edition *Wayaku ei jisho*) Takagi shobo, 1997.

Eika jii, Shosokan, 1869.

Eiwa jiten, chishinkansha, 1872.

Tetsugaku Jii (Dictionary of philosophy), Tokyo daigaku sangakubu, 1881.

Shimada yutaka, ed., *Fuon sozu wayaku ei jii (An English and Japanese Lexicon: explanation, pronunciation and etymology, containing all English words in present use, with an appendix)*, Okura shoten, 1887 first edition, 1898 17 edition.

Webster's unabridged dictionary of the English language, Sanseido, 1888 first edition, 1897 32 edition.

Against the background of such discussions, in critiques during the third Nihon Kaiga Kyokai in Autumn 1897 the criticism word “Expression” came to be used in various ways, and the expression of a character’s feelings and personality garnered a lot of attention. So what was the immediate reason for the sudden attention to the word “Expression”?

After researching the newspapers and magazines of the day, I think the reason for this change can be seen in two articles published at the same time in mid-July 1897. Both these articles discussed the facial expressions of people in Japanese paintings, and these subsequently became the start of the interest in “Expression”. These articles were “Nihonga no Ichi Gimon (One doubt about Japanese-style painting)” by Suematsu Kenchou and “Nihon Kaiga Ron (Japanese painting theory)” by Lafcadio Hearn, both published in July, 1897.

3. The reason why “Expression” garnered attention in 1897

First of all, I want to consider the article by Suematsu. This article, “Nihonga no Ichi Gimon (One doubt about Japanese-style painting)”, was published in The Yomiuri newspaper by Suematsu Kenchou on July 19, 1897.

The content of the article that Suematsu published is as follows. When Suematsu presented some copies of old Japanese pictures to the child of a British scholar he knew, the British scholar expressed the following doubts to Suematsu. The scholar wondered why the person’s face in the old picture was so flat and conventional even though the tree and the animal were expressed using shadows. Suematsu had no answer so he said he wanted to request the opinion of a specialist.

In reply to this, three articles were published in the Yomiuri newspaper. The three replies were: “Nihonga no Ichi Gimon ni tsuite Seiheiujin ni yosu (To Dr. Suematsu regarding his ‘One doubt about Japanese-style painting’) by the Mukian master (Omura Seigai) on July 26, “Nihonga no Ichi Gimon ni tsuite Seihei Hakase ni teisu (To Dr. Suematsu regarding ‘One doubt about Japanese-style painting’)” by Tatematsu Kiseki on August 2, and “Nihon Jimbutsuga ni In-ei naki Riyuu tehu Suematsu Hakase ga Gimon ni tsuite (Dr. Suematsu’s question about the Japanese portrait without shadow)” by Inahata Shotaro on August 9. In these reports, the lack of the depiction shadow in Japanese traditional pictures was discussed along with the facial expressions of people in Japanese paintings. This enthusiastic discussion attracted a lot of attention.

The day after Suematsu’s report was carried, on July 20 1897, the magazine “Taiyo (the sun)” vol.3, no.15 carried an article by Lafcadio Hearn entitled “Nihon Kaiga Ron (Japanese painting theory)”.

First, I want to consider the background of this article. At the beginning of “Nihon Kaiga Ron (Japanese painting theory),” Hearn describes the incident that led him to write his argument. It was a presentation by Edward F. Strange at the convention of The Japan Society of London [28], held in London in November 13, 1895. Strange described the collection of Japanese fine art in the Royal Museum and during the questions and answers section of the presentation, the British people there voiced an opinion that the facial expressions in Japanese pictures were strange.

Three plates were published alongside Strange's essay in "Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society, London" [29], but only one of these plates depicted a person. This was an ukiyo-e picture by Kitagawa Utamaro – '*Edo Meibutsu Nishiki-e Kousaku*'. This shows that the argument was premised on Utamaro's beauty picture.

Lafcadio Hearn wrote his "Nihon Kaiga Ron (Japanese painting theory)" in response to the argument at The Japan Society of London. Though ukiyo-e was the target of the argument on "Expression" at The Japan Society of London, Hearn extended and developed the debate to include traditional Japanese pictures in general. As his conclusion, Hearn claimed that Japanese portraits depicted the 'ideal' form of Japanese people. In other words, the painter painted an abstract and idealized form of the Japanese figure. On this point, Hearn claimed that Japanese portraiture had a lot in common with Greek fine arts:

"I think when we look at a cricket, a butterfly or a honeybee, it is not that we scrutinize its limbs or frame and know it is a cricket, a butterfly or a honeybee, but rather that we only need to look at it to tell what it is. In other words, we don't pay attention to the individual characteristics but rather notice the common features of the species. Therefore the Japanese painter always draws only the common features and copies out a natural ideal, rather than depicting a realistic shape."

The word "Expression" appears quite often throughout Hearn's argument. The kanji "Hyoyo" was written alongside the Kana "Expression" to show what the latter word meant. It seems that this argument of Hearn led to an increasing attention to the word "Expression" in critiques of Japanese-style painting from autumn 1897 onwards.

The "Nihon Kaiga Ron (Japanese painting theory)" by Hearn aroused lots of interest [30], and was discussed by Tsunashima Ryosen [31] and others alongside a similar argument, "Nihonga no Ichi Gimon (One doubt about Japanese-style painting)" by Suematsu.

Furthermore, Omura Seigai's counter-argument to Hearn's argument was serialized 7 times in the Yomiuri newspaper from the end of August to the beginning of September [32]. If we analyse the points of discussion between Lafcadio Hearn and Omura Seigai, as the following diagram shows, it becomes clear that there is a clash of concepts over whether a picture should depict commonality or whether it should depict individuality and specificity.

Commonality and Generality : The special features arrived at after abstracting from numerous individuals, the common features shared by numerous individuals



Individuality and specificity : The special, specific characteristics pertaining to each separate individual

Commonality and generality are the concepts Lafcadio Hearn considered to be special features of Japanese paintings. These concepts basically refer to the special features arrived at after abstracting from numerous individuals and the common features shared by numerous

individuals. Hearn said that the reason the faces of the ukiyo-e beauties were so stereotyped was because it was considered proper to capture the commonality of the beauties.

Contrary to Hearn, Omura Seigai thought individuality and specificity were important, in other words the special, specific characteristics pertaining to each separate individual. It was Omura’s counter-argument that it was not a good thing that Japanese painters tended to draw only the ‘commonality’ without depicting the ‘individuality’. You could say that this was a direct example of the confrontation between idealism and naturalism that occurred in those days [33].

So, the subject of facial expressions in Japanese traditional pictures became a hot topic of debate in July 1897, but the background to this debate was the fact that the British had felt a sense of incongruity regarding “Expression” in Japanese portraits. And this argument over facial expression spread to cover the expression of shadow in Japanese traditional pictures, and also grew to include the argument regarding the special features of Japanese paintings and whether the most important thing was not ‘individuality’ but ‘commonality’.

In the background of this argument, the word “Expression” appeared several times in critiques of the autumn exhibition, and even when they did not use the word “Expression,” many critiques paid attention to the expression of the character and feelings of the people in paintings.

The article “Hakurankai no Jumbi (Preparation for an exposition)” [34], carried by the “Waseda Bungaku” magazine in December of the same year, described the facial expressions in Japanese portraits as follows:

“In particular, our Japanese portraits are regarded as lacking facial expression and only showing a stereotypical beauty to foreigners, who hold this in low regard, so our Japanese painters should try to elaborate and use their skill to contrive to depict characters with expressive faces and expressive actions.”

The exposition mentioned here was the Paris expo of 1900. The article stated that in order for Japanese paintings to be accepted by Europeans, at the Paris expo painters should take care when depicting the expression of a character’s face. From this report we can tell that, with the Paris expo looming, the Japanese were conscious of how Europeans would react. Moreover, we can also tell that the debate about “Expression”, first raised regarding old paintings and ukiyo-e, had now spread to take in the subject of Meiji Japanese-style painting.

4. The attempt at “Expression” in Yokoyama Taikan’s *Chouhou*

(1) The theme and composition

Now I want to consider how Yokoyama Taikan tried to depict “Expression” in *Chouhou*.

“Chouhou” is a Buddhist term meaning “listening to Buddha’s law” [35]. This “listening” to Buddha’s law was one of the most important practices (*Juppou-gyō*) in Buddhism, and the depiction of the practice of people ‘listening’ was the main theme of *Chouhou*.

Let’s take a look at *Chouhou* (Fig.1). In this painting, four people are depicted indoors and ten people outdoors. Three aristocrat women sit at the front. The person at the back is an old woman and next to these women a child is taking a nap. From the right, consider the people

outside. On the right edge a woman is shown leaning forward. Next, separated by a pillar, is a samurai yawning into his hand, then a man with Chonmage-hair resting his chin on his hands, then a crouching samurai concentrating on the talk. Behind him are an aristocrat man and woman and in front of them, a samurai looking down and a samurai leaning on a latticework window. Shown on the left are a man with Chonmage-hair and folded arms and a commoner leaning on a stick.

The main feature of this picture, as Nagao Masanori has pointed out [36], is that it's only the audience that has been depicted, not the preaching priest. As Nagao said, scenes featuring people listening to Buddha's law were often seen in the scrolls of shrines and temples – *Chouhou* is special because Taikan depicted a close-up view of just the audience. Because in *Chouhou* the preaching priest is not drawn, the “listening”, which is the theme of the painting, is emphasized by the composition, which depicts the audience close-up.

Furthermore, various people are depicted in the painting, such as aristocrats, samurai and commoners, along with various poses and expressions such as yawning or taking a nap. In his themes, composition and depiction of the crowd, Taikan tried to grapple with this “Expression” which was attracting so much attention in those days.

(2) The attempt at expressing shadow

When painting *Chouhou*, Taikan was also conscious of trying to express shadow.

In critiques at the time, it was pointed out about *Chouhou* that: “In this picture, the painter depicts the inside of the temple darkly lit with the glow of the sacred light, and the painter has tried an interesting experiment regarding the depiction of sunbeams, drawing them so they fill with sunlight the other section of the crowd outside in the background” [37]. Even if you look at a monochrome plate of the picture, the front right of the painting, inside the temple, is dark, as is the right side of the latticework window visible behind the people indoors, or the under area of the pillar. This shows that the shadow has been drawn whilst conscious of the light coming from the inside and outside. If we look at the three men (Fig. 3) standing on the left outside, we can see shadow by the side of a nose, the cheek, and the neck, and we can tell that Taikan has tried to express the shadow in relation to light coming from the left. Although Taikan said himself that he had tried experimenting with shadow and light, he claimed that he wasn't so successful in his attempts to depict the contrasting light and darkness inside and outside the temple. But from these critiques and from the plates themselves, it could be that this was certainly a work strongly concerned with the depiction of shadow.

About his attempts to depict shadow and “Expression,” Taikan said the following in his above-quoted explanation:

“When depicting “Expression,” I am afraid it might become flat and monotonous if we use ordinary methods, so I try to pay attention to shadow, light and darkness, and want to paint as thoroughly as possible...”



Fig. 3 Yokoyama Taikan, *Chouhou*, portion

In other words, Taikan thought that when it comes to attempting “Expression”, there was a danger of monotony if the old methods were followed, so he paid particular attention to the depiction of shadow. However, Taikan went on to say the following:

“Anyway, while representing the “Expression” of the characters in the painting, if possible I also wanted to try drawing shadow and also express the changes in the air.”

If we read this section, it seems that the attempt to depict “Expression” and the attempt to depict shadow were separate matters. However, these two separate experiments do seem to be related.

As already stated, in the replies to “Nihonga no Ichi Gimon (One doubt about Japanese-style painting)” by Suematsu, published in July 1897, some arguments claimed that the reason faces in Japanese portraits were so flat and strange was because of the lack of shadow depiction. Tsunashima Ryosen also mentioned the necessity for a realistic depiction of shadow. It’s quite possible that these arguments were the background to Taikan’s attempts to depict shadow in order to depict “Expression”.

I will now compare Taikan’s *Selfless* (Fig.4), exhibited in spring of 1897, and *Qu Yuan* (Fig. 5), exhibited in autumn of 1898. On the whole, and in the depiction of the clothes in particular, *Selfless* uses lines and flat surfaces quite strongly. In contrast to this, the depiction in *Qu Yuan* is more three-dimensional and, compared to *Selfless*, the consciousness of light and shadow has become more pronounced [38]. *Chouhou* is the transitional stage of this change. Thus, *Chouhou* is an early example of Taikan’s attempts to tackle the problem of light and shadow [39].

It seems that the depiction of “Expression” and of shadow were both attempted at the same time. It also appears that in the middle of the debate about “Expression”, several arguments were made pointing out the lack of depictions of shadow in traditional Japanese paintings. If we consider these two facts together, we can see that perhaps one of the reasons why Taikan attempted to depict shadow in portraits was because he had a consciousness of “Expression”.

(3) The meaning of Yokoyama Taikan’s attempts to depict “Expression”

Taikan’s attempts to depict shadow and “Expression” were quite advanced when compared to other similar contemporary attempts by Shimomura Kanzan and Hishida Shunso. In



Fig. 4 Yokoyama Taikan, *Selfless*, Tokyo National Museum, 1897



Fig. 5 Yokoyama Taikan, *Qu Yuan*, portion, Itsukushima Shrine, 1898

Death of Tsugunobu (Fig.2), which Shimomura Kanzan exhibited at the same third Nihon Kaiga Kyokai exhibition as *Chouhou*, of the several characters depicted in the painting, three of the character's faces are not visible and it is only the three figures in the center of the painting whose faces have been clearly drawn. Compared to *Chouhou*, Kanzan's consciousness of shadow is generally lacking. Moreover, if we look at the depiction of the characters and hydrangea of *Refelection in the Water* (Fig.6), which Hishida Shunso exhibited at the same exhibition, the consciousness of expression and shadow is also weak.

Shimomura Kanzan gave the following explanation about his work, published immediately after the exhibition of *Death of Tsugunobu* [40]:

“The “Expression” of people in Japanese-style paintings is very imperfect, and in their lack of shadow and tone they simply cannot match European paintings. Japanese-style painters have to depict characteristics using lines.”

Kanzan here hesitated to attempt “Expression” and instead placed emphasis on line-drawing. This is similar to the attempt in *Death of Tsugunobu*, with faces left undrawn and a lack in the depiction of shadow.

Moreover, Hishida Shunso gave the following explanation about his work, published immediately after the exhibition of *Refelection in the Water* [41]:

“Japanese-style paintings need lines...(Omission)...When the painter tries to draw Buddha's harmonious face, the one thing that can reflect the character's feelings are lines.”

Although Shunso did not use the word “Expression,” he insisted on the importance of lines when depicting a character's facial expressions. In these statements, both Shunso and Kanzan show a contrasting position to Taikan's – they placed emphasis on line-drawing whereas Taikan attempted to depict shadow.

This difference was explored notably in the magazine “Bijutsu Hyoron (Fine-arts criticism)” in February 1898 [42]. In this magazine, Bankoen, Chouonken, and Mukian-master (Omura Seigai) discussed Taikan's self-explanation and judged that Taikan “doesn't have the wrong idea,” and “Taikan does not misunderstand things”. In contrast, they criticized Kanzan and Shunso sharply. Taikan's experiments with “Expression” show an early attempt to introduce Western styles of expression, earlier than Kanzan and Shunso with their emphasis on line-drawing, and showed Taikan's sensitive reaction to new things.

However, as has already been mentioned, it was Kanzan's *Death of Tsugunobu* that was received the highest medal in autumn 1897, the time when “Expression” became the center of attention. As Shioya had already pointed out [43], depictions of delicate and controlled emotions



Fig. 6 Hishida Shunso, *Refelection in the Water*, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, 1897

were often seen in Japanese-style history paintings of that era. In contrast, Taikan’s *Qu Yuan* attracted attention because of its very strong depiction of emotions [44]. Thus, it could be said that Taikan’s attempts at “Expression” in *Chouhou* and *Qu Yuan* were quite at odds with what other painters at that time were doing.

For example, Takayama Chogyu published a long article [45] regarding the “Expression” of *Qu Yuan*. He wrote that Taikan shouldn’t have drawn *Qu Yuan* in a great rage but rather should have depicted *Qu Yuan* in a state of anguish and worry.

This became the start of the *Rekishi-ga Ronsou* (the history painting dispute). Probably because of such reactions, when Taikan drew *Mulan* (Fig. 7), exhibited at the fourth Nihon Bijutsuin exhibition in 1900, he represented *Mulan* anguishing over whether to continue on or go back home [46]. In this way, Taikan came to try a style featuring depictions of quiet and controlled emotions, a style quite different from the expression seen in *Qu Yuan*.



Fig. 7 Yokoyama Taikan, *Mulan, the whereabouts* – unknown, 1900, (Saito Ryuzo, ed., *Taikan Sakuhin shu*, Otsuka Kogei sha, 1925)

Conclusion

As mentioned above, in this article I examined what “Expression” means, why it attracted attention in 1897, and how Yokoyama Taikan depicted it.

The “Expression” which attracted attention around 1897 meant the facial and emotional expression of the characters in a painting. From 1895 onwards, interest grew in the topic of facial expressions in Japanese-style paintings, and the depiction of feelings in Japanese portraits was raised by Lafcadio Hearn in an argument in July 1897. The debate gradually spread from *ukiyo-e* to contemporary Japanese-style painting. These arguments were the background to Taikan’s attempts to grapple with the problem of “Expression”, and perhaps this grappling led him to devise a new form of depicting shadow. Taikan’s attempt at “Expression” was an early attempt to move closer to Western paintings, earlier than other Japanese-style painters such as Kanzan and Shunso. On this point, it could be said that in the problem of depicting “Expression” in *Chouhou* and *Qu Yuan*, we can see Taikan’s special characteristic of reacting sensitively to new forms of expression.

Notes

- [1] Ueda Sayoko “A consideration of Yokoyama Taikan’s *Qu Yuan*.” *Bijutsushi Ronso* no.21, (Tokyo: the department of art history, the University of Tokyo), 2005.
- [2] Okakura Tenshin “Nihon Bijutsuin dai1kai ten dampen,” *Kokumin Shinbun*, November 9, 1898.
- [3] Kinoshita Nagahiro, *Okakura Tenshin*, (Tokyo: Minerva Shobo), 2005.
- [4] see, Shioya Jun “Kobori Tomoto, Onshi no Gyoi,” *Kokka*, no.1234, 1998. Shioya Jun “Kutsugen (*Qu Yuan*) Shuui,” *Yokoyama Taikan -- sono kokoro to geijutsu exhibition catalogue*, Tokyo National Museum, 2002. Shioya Jun “Danjuro no ‘Hara gei,’ Gahou no ‘kokoro-mochi,’” *Bijutsushi-ka Oini*

Warau -- Kono Motoaki sensei no tame no Nihon Bijutsushi ronshu, (Tokyo: Bryucke), 2006.

- [5] see, for example, Sasaki Ken-ichi, *Bigaku Jiten* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press), 1995. Moreover, Rensselaer W. Lee (translation: Morita Yoshiyuki and Shinozuka Fumio), “Shi ha e no gotoku -- Jinbun shugi kaiga ron,” Nakamori Yoshimune ed., *Kaiga to bungaku*, (Tokyo: Chuo University Press), 1984. Osano Shigetoshi, “bibliography: Charles Le Blun “Conference sur l’expression des passions,” *Seiyo Bijutsu Kenkyu*, no.2, (Tokyo: Sangensha), 1999.
- [6] *Chouhou* was exhibited at the third Nihon Kaiga kyokai Kaiga Kyoshinkai exhibition (October 25 to December 7, 1897).
- [7] Tan-o Yasunori “Paris Bankoku Hakurankai to Nihon Bijutsu,” *Nihon Bijutsuin Hyakunen shi*, No.2-jou, (Tokyo: Nihon bijutsuin), 1990.
- [8] see, Saito Ryuzo.,ed, *Taikan Sakuhin shu*, (Tokyo: Otsuka Kogeisha), 1925. According to this book, *Chouhou*’s size is length 272.7 cm and width 151.5cm.
- [9] Yokoyama Taikan, “Gakai Shinsai,” *Waseda Bungaku*, February, 1898.
- [10] Kyokugaisei, “Kaiga Kyoshinkai Hyouban (2),” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 17, 1897. “Bijutsu kore miruga gotoshi,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.25, December 20, 1897. “Muhimon,” *Bijutsu Hyoron*, no.6, January, 1898.
- [11] When *Chouhou* existed, it wasn’t published in *Taikan gashu* (Tokyo: Geisodo) in 1912 nor *Taikan gashu* (Tokyo: Seikasha) in 1916. In 1925, after being destroyed by fire, it was published for the first time by Saito Ryuzo.,ed. *Taikan Sakuhin shu* (Tokyo: Otsuka Kogeisha).
- There are the following references to *Chouhou*. Ishii Hakutei, *Nihon Kaiga Sandaishi*, (Tokyo: Sogen Sha), 1942. Saito Ryuzo, *Yokoyama Taikan*, (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Bijutsu Shuppan), 1958. Yoshizawa Tadashi, *Yokoyama Taikan no Geijutsu -- Nihonga Kindaika no Tatakai*, (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan Sha), 1958. Nagao Masanori.,ed. “*Chouhou* ni tsuite no Kaisetsu,” *Taikan no Garon*, (Tokyo: Yokoyama Taikan Kinenkan), 1993. Shioya Jun (2002, 2006) above-shown notes 4.
- Although Nagao and Shioya (2006) have related “Expression” to “Kokoro mochi”, as Hashimoto Gaho claimed, there is no data from those days correlating “Expression” with “Kokoro mochi.” I think “Kokoro mochi” is relevant to a painter’s own personal expression, and “Expression” means the expression of the emotions of the painting’s characters, so those are not necessarily associated. Therefore, I have a different opinion to the above.
- [12] Hakugansei, “Kaiga shokan hyo (1),” *Waseda Bungaku*, January, 1898. “Bijutsukyoku Gaikan,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.24, December 5, 1897. “Bijutsu kore miruga gotoshi,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.25, December 20, 1897.
- [13] “Bijutsukyoku Gaikan,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.24, December 5, 1897.
- [14] “Bijutsu kore miruga gotoshi,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.25, December 20, 1897. See Shioya Jun (2006) above-shown notes 4.
- [15] Hori Tatsunosuke and Horikoshi Kamenosuke.,ed., *Eiwa Taiyaku Shuchuin Jiten*, Yoshio Shirabejo,1862 (Sugimoto Tsutomu, ed., *Edo Jidai Hon-yaku Nihongo Jiten*, Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1981, included).
- [16] Nagashima Daiten, “Gogaku 2, Eigo Jisho no Hattatsu (1) Eiwa Jisho,” *Nihon no Eigaku 100nen Henshubu*,ed., *Nihon no Eigaku 100nen Meiji-hen*, Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1968.
- [17] see, Kitayama Koji, “Ryuko-ron 6. Bijin wo soseisuru no yoken chu,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 29, 1888. It defines Expression as the change in facial expressions due to joy, anger, humor and pathos.
- [18] Sasaki Ken-ichi, *Bigaku Jiten*, above-shown notes 5.
- [19] For example, see Gakyosei, “Shasei,” *Nippon*, February, 1896, saying “It is natural that a painting demonstrates ‘Expression’, just like poetry.” Here “Expression” generally meant “expression,” but a question mark is attached behind “Expression” in the article “Shasei kahi” (*Waseda Bungaku*, March, 1896), from which the above sentence is quoted, so it seems that the meaning of that particular example of ‘expression’ was not clearly understood.

- [20] see, Yamawaki Shintoku, “Kinoshita Mokutaro kun ni,” *Shirakaba*, vol.2, no.11, November, 1911. Nakamura Yoshikazu, “‘Shirakaba’ Kindai Shugi no Soten,” *Zoku Nihon Kindai Bijutsu Ronsoshi*, Tokyo: Kyurudo, 1982. Thanks to Tanaka Atsushi (National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo) for instruction on this matter.
- [21] Kyogasei, Ohara Shoichiro, “Yamamoto Hosui-shi no Junishi-ga to Kuroda Seiki-shi no Shozoga (2)(3),” *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 18,19, 1892.
- [22] “Yogaka Hyobanki Bobo Taika no Kaidan,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.5, March 5, 1897.
- [23] Okakura Kakuzo, “Sho ha Bijutsu narazuno Ron wo Yomu,” *Toyo Gakugei Zasshi*, August, September, and December, 1882.
- [24] Regarding the aesthetics of the Edo period, Nakabayashi Chikudo, who was a literati-artist in the late Edo period, wrote “Gakugasha kanarazu utsushi terasu bekikoto” (*Chikudo Garon*, 1802, Sakazaki Tan,ed., *Nihon Kaigaron Taikei*, vol.1, Tokyo: Meicho fukyukai, 1980, included), dealing with the facial expressions of the characters in paintings. However, it seems that it didn’t attract much attention. Moreover, under the influence of physiognomy studies brought over from China during the Edo period, we can see a concern with a person’s looks (the relation between face and character) in the *Kaishi-en Gaden* vol.4 and Kitagawa Utamaro’s *Fujin Sogaku Juttai* series or 100-menso etc. However, it can be said that the “Expression” which attracted attention in 1897 meant a temporary facial expression of joy, anger, humor and pathos, and was different from physiognomy, which deals with the underlying characteristics of a face.
- [25] Fukuchi Fukuichi sensei koujutsu, “Menbo no Setsu,” *Kinko Zatsuso*, vol.5 and vol.6, June 26 and October 30, 1895.
- [26] Suematsu Kencho, “Nihonga no Isho (Shozen),” *Taiyo*, vol.1 no.9, September 5, 1895.
- [27] for example, in the first Nihon Kaiga Kyokai Kyoshinkai exhibition in critiques of Okakura Shusui’s *Shin-nyo So-un*, Terasaki Kogyo’s *Shidda Tenshi ni kataru zu*, and Hashimoto Gaho’s *Kokei Sansho*, in the second Nihon Kaiga Kyokai Kyoshinkai exhibition in critiques of Otake Kokkan’s *Saigyō Hoshi*, Kawai Gyokudo’s *Mobo Danki*, Kobori Tomoto’s *Bushi (Minamoto no Tametomo)*, Terasaki Kogyo’s *Genshiryo*, Honda Tenjo’s *Sobu*, and Yamada Keichu’s *Bion*. (see, “Sakuhinhyo,” *Nihon Bijutsuin 100nen shi*, vol.1 jo, Tokyo: Nihon Bijutsuin, 1989.)
- [28] About the Japan Society of London, see Nagaoka Shozo “Nihon Kyokai no Soritsusha Arthur Diosy,” *Eigakushi Kenkyu*, no.29, 1996.
- [29] Edward F. Strange, “The Japanese Collections in The National Art Library, South Kensington Museum,” *Transactions and Proceedings of The Japan Society, London*, vol.4, London, 1900.
- [30] see, for example, “Nihon no Bijutsu ni taisuru Gaikokujin no Kansatsu ni san,” *Taiyo*, vol.3 no.16, August 5, 1897.
- [31] Tsunashima Ryosen, “Suematsu hakase no teishutsu seru nihonga no ichi gimon nitsukite (Tsuki Hearn shi no nihon kaiga ron),” August, 1897 and *Ryosen Bunshu*, (first apparance unknown) Hidaka Yurindo, July, 1905, included. “Bijutsukai Nihonga no ichi gimon ukiyo-e no jimbutsu,” *Waseda Bungaku*, no.40, August, 1897. These two articles have overlapping portions with similar contents and conclusions, so it is highly possible that both writers are Tsunashima Ryosen.
- [32] Mukian Master (Omura Seigai), “Koizumi Yakumo shi no ‘Nihon kaiga ron’ ni tsuite (1)--(7),” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 30 to September 3, 5 and 6, 1897. This counter-argument by Omura was introduced also by “Shuho,” *Waseda Bungaku*, vol.7 no.1, October, 1897.
- [33] see, Shioya Jun, “‘Risoga heno dotei -- Hashimoto Gaho Ryuko igo,” *Bijutsu Kenkyu*, no. 377, 2003.
- [34] “Shuho Hakurankai no junbi,” *Waseda Bungaku*, vol.7 no.3, December, 1897.
- [35] Nakamura Hajime, *Kosetsu Bukkyogo dai jiten*, vol.2, Tokyo Shoseki, 2001.
- [36] Nagao Masanori,ed., *Taikan no Garon*, above-shown note 11.
- [37] “Bo nihonga gahaku hyo,” *Mainichi Shimbun*, December 5, 1897.
- [38] Taikan’s *Autumn Thinking* was exhibited at the first Nihon Bijutsuin exhibition with *Qu Yuan*. *Autumn Thinking* is deficient in modeling in comparison with Qu Yuan. The lower half of a

character's face is in dark shadows in *Autumn Thinking*. In the painting, Taikan is conscious of the light from the upper-left direction.

- [39] *Rain of Four Seasons* (Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music) was exhibited at the second Nihon Kaiga Kyoshinkai exhibition in the spring of 1897 with *Selfless*. Although the consciousness of the expression of air and rain is strong in *Rain of Four Seasons*, the consciousness of light and shadow is weak.
- [40] Shimomura Kanzan "Gakaishinsai," *Waseda Bungaku*, February, 1898.
- [41] Hishida Shunso, "Gakai shinsai," *Waseda Bungaku*, February, 1898.
- [42] Bankoen, Cho-onken, and Mukian, "Zatsu kan," *Bijutsu Hyoron*, no.8, February 20, 1898.
- [43] see, Shioya Jun, 1998, the above-shown note 4.
- [44] see, Ueda Sayoko, the above-shown note 1.
- [45] Takayama Chogyu, "Rekishu gadai ron," *Taiyo*, vol.4 no.21, October 20, 1898.
- [46] Mushokusai Shujin, "Bijutsuin kaiga kyoshinkai no sakuhin (11)," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 30, 1900.

[Additional remark] When I translated this manuscript, I recieved the cooperation of Daniel Moran.