

JAPANESE ART AT THE 1909 EXHIBITION OF FAR EASTERN ART IN MUNICH

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1. INTRODUCTION

In modern era France and England had the opportunity of seeing Japanese art at World Exhibitions. In Germany such an exhibition did not take place, so they had to find their own way of organizing an exhibition of Japanese art. It is generally believed that the first such large exhibition was the "Far Eastern Old Arts" exhibition organized by the Berlin Museum in 1912.

Three years earlier, however, in 1909, the exhibition "Japan and Far Eastern Asia in Art 1909" took place in Munich. It was on an equally large scale as the Berlin exhibition but it has become almost forgotten.

In my presentation I would first like to describe the circumstances in which the Munich exhibition took place and introduce the exhibits. Then I will discuss the reasons for which the exhibition became forgotten. Finally I shall argue that the Munich exhibition is a turning point in understanding Japanese art in Germany. The main sources for my presentation are the official catalogue of the Munich exhibition and a paper that was published the same year in "Muenchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst", which I both checked at the Central Institute for History of Fine Arts in Munich.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE EXHIBITION

Exhibitions of Japanese art before 1909 were on a small scale and were dedicated to a particular topic, like Ukiyoe etc. The exhibition "Japan and Far Eastern Asia in Art 1909" was planned to change that and present a more comprehensive picture of Japanese art. An official catalogue of the exhibition was published, as well as some articles in magazines, but none of these gives an exact date and place of the exhibition. The description in the catalogue goes like this: "Planning began in May. The works on display were collected in two months". This means that the exhibition most probably took place in the summer of 1909. The fact that its patron was Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria also indicates that it must have been a large exhibition.

To organize the exhibition, a board of directors and a consultative committee were formed. There were two types of members in the board of directors, those coming from different companies and those with academic or artistic background. The mayor of Munich served as the honorary president and the director of the Bavarian Agricultural Bank was its vice president. Members from the artistic and academic world were university professors or painters, for example Franz von Stuck. From this we see that prominent members of the society were engaged in the organization of the exhibition.

One of the aims of the exhibition was to present a comprehensive picture of Far Eastern art. Japanese, Korean and Chinese works on display were classified into two groups in the catalogue. Works from the first group were on display only, whereas works from the second one were on sale. In total there were 1276 works on display and 276 works on sale, of which 740 Japanese works were on display and 18 on sale. This means that the number of Japanese exhibits was close to 800, which was the number of Japanese items at the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris. These numbers show that the majority of works came from Japan and that the emphasis of the exhibition was put on display rather than the sale of exhibits.

3.WORKS ON DISPLAY

The oldest piece of art at the exhibition was a Buddhist painting from the Heian period, Monju Bosatsu Buddha from the 11th century. Other works were from the Kamakura, Muromachi and Edo period. Works from the Ashikaga period were not on display.

The displayed works came mostly from different collections of German museums and of some individual collectors. There were the following three main sources :

- _ The collection of the Kingdom of Bavaria ; these were works in the possession of prince Ruprecht.
- _ Official museums such as the Far East Asian Department at the Berlin Folk Museum, Far East Asian Department at the Berlin Museum, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery, Numismatic Collection in Munich, Munich National Museum, Arts and Crafts Museum at Leipzig, Stuttgart State Museum ;
- _ Private collections of those, who visited Japan, such as scholar Naumann or painter Orlik.

The exhibits were displayed in two halls. Next I would like to show some slides of works that were on display.

First hall

- _ Ryu-mou-bosatsu, Buddhist painting, Berlin Folk Museum ;
- _ Fusuma-e from Momoyama castle, Japanese painting on sliding doors from Kano school, late 16th century, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery ;
- _ Landscape by Sesson, Japanese painting, Far East Asian Department, Berlin Museum ;
- _ Fusuma-e, Japanese painting on sliding doors, 17th century, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery ;
- _ Portrait of the founder of the Shingon school of Buddhism, Japanese painting ;
- _ Portrait of Hideyoshi wearing a korean ceremonial dress, Japanese painting, 17th century, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery, Fischer collection ;
- _ Ghost, Japanese painting by Ukiyoe painter Kuniyoshi Utagawa, Kuemmel's collection ;
- _ She-dog with puppies, Japanese painting by Rosetsu Nagasawa, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery, Fischer collection ;
- _ Jizo, wooden sculpture, 11th century, Tuebingen, Fucks collection ;
- _ Jizo, wooden sculpture, 12th century, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery ;
- _ Nio, wooden sculpture, Cologne Far East Asian Gallery, Fischer collection ;
- _ 5 Noh-men masks, 5 Gigaku-men masks, Berlin Museum, Far East Asian Department, Berlin Museum ;

Second hall

- _ Satsuma elephant and a man, ceramic figures, Bernheimer collection

From this we can see that the exhibition of 1909 was a large-scale exhibition of Japanese art with high-quality works on display. Taking into account the fact that after 1900 Paris World Exhibition there was no comparable exhibition of Japanese art in Europe, I believe that the 1909 Munich exhibition should be regarded as one of the most important early exhibitions of Japanese art in the old continent.

4.REASONS FOR FALLING INTO OBLIVION

Next I would like to talk about the reasons for which the 1909 exhibition became forgotten. In order to do that I will compare it with the 1912 Berlin exhibition. As already mentioned, the 1912 exhibition is generally regarded as the most important early exhibition of Japanese arts in Germany. Its chief curator was Otto Kuemmel, the head of the Far East Asian Department at the Berlin Museum. He had a collection of Japanese arts, which he bought in Japan for the collection of his museum, but he had put a part of it on display already at the 1909 Munich exhibition. In the catalogue of the 1909 exhibition, there are more than 4 pages of explanation about the works on lease from the Berlin museum under the title "Far East Asian art collection from the Berlin museum under the director Kuemmel". The explanation says that the Berlin collection is of very

high quality, as it gives the first opportunity to see original Japanese works of art and not just copies, which used to be the practice before that. The Japanese fine arts exhibits from the Kuemmel collection were thus first officially put on display at the 1909 exhibition. Three years later, however, at the Berlin Far Eastern Old Arts Exhibition, that was not mentioned at all.

To continue the comparison, let's have a look at the titles of both exhibitions. The 1909 exhibition was titled "Japan and Far Eastern Asia in Art", while the 1912 exhibition had the title "Far East Asian Old Arts". Here I would like to make the following two points.

_ The title of the Munich exhibition puts emphasis on the presentation of Japanese arts, whereas the only Far Eastern arts are mentioned in the title of the Berlin exhibition. As seen from graph1, however, 70% of the works on display in Berlin were Japanese pieces of art, which means that the Japanese art played a central role at this exhibition too.

_ Another difference is that the 1912 exhibition was about "old arts", which were not mentioned in the title of the 1909 exhibition. But again, if we compare the works on display, we see that there is no big difference in this respect either. There were 6 works on display dating to the period from the 11th to the 15th century in Berlin, as well as in Munich.

The real difference between the two exhibitions is not related to the titles. While the works on display at the 1912 exhibition belonged only to the Far East Asian Department of the Berlin Museum, the exhibits at the 1909 exhibition came also from other collections, such as the collection at the Cologne Far East Asian Gallery or the private collection of the painter Orlik.

Thus it can be safely said that the 1909 exhibition was a more representative presentation of the Japanese art from German collections.

The reason for different evaluation of both exhibition must therefore lie elsewhere. One possible answer may be that the organizers took a different approach to Japanese art. It is very interesting to note that Kuemmel lent high-quality works from the Berlin Museum to the 1909 Munich exhibition, but did not talk about it afterwards. There is probably no simple explanation for that, but the difference in the approaches taken may be part of it. In the following, I shall discuss this difference.

First let me introduce the key person of the 1912 exhibition, Otto Kuemmel. At the time he was the foremost expert in the history of Japanese art and Far East Asian art in Germany. He served as the vice chairman of the Association of Far East Asian Art History and was later to become the general director of the Berlin museums.

Kuemmel visited Japan when he was the chief curator at the Berlin Museum. The director at the time was Wilhelm Bode. Kuemmel knew many top Japanese researchers and was able to purchase

high-quality pieces of art for the collection of the Berlin museum. The whole collection was first shown to public at the 1912 Berlin exhibition. One of the most famous pieces he purchased was the "Portrait of Emperor Saga", currently belonging to the House of the Emperor.

Kuemmel was an art historian who did a lot of research and had interest in Japanese art as a scholar. He treated Japanese art as fine art and believed that it should be studied in the same way as European fine art. The exhibition of 1912 was a proof of that, although he did not state it explicitly at the time. It was much later in 1939, on the occasion of the "Old Japanese Fine Arts Exhibition" in Berlin, that he realized how important the works on display in 1912 were.

Next I will discuss the role of Caecille Graf-Pfaff, a painter and the key person of the 1909 Munich exhibition. She was not only a painter but also a researcher of Japanese art. She was a member of the organizing committee for the 1909 exhibition, as well as the editor of the catalogue for the exhibition in which she wrote the introduction, explanation of the collection from the Berlin museum, and an article titled "From the World of Far East Asian Art Forms". In addition, she published an article in the Bulletin of Munich Visual Arts. Its title was "Japan and Far East Asia in Arts in Munich 1909".

We can understand from her writings that her aim was the same as Kuemmel's, that is to put on display "original" works of Japanese art. However, she was more interested in Japanese art as a reflection of Japanese culture than in analyzing it from the point of view of an art historian. For example, she completely fails to mention Shinto arts, ink paintings, illustrated handscrolls, paintings from the Kano school, architecture etc. In her article "From the World of Far East Asian Art Forms" the focus is rather on the history of Japanese culture than the history of Japanese art.

Daibutsu, for example, is presented as the most important work from the Nara period, although sculptures from the Todai-ji temple Hokke-doh are usually regarded as being the most representative of that period. In addition, Graf-Pfaff's doesn't explain the stylistic features of Daibutsu but rather focuses on the fact that Buddha represents permanent yearning and eternal peace. Jizo is given as another example from the Nara period, again the explanation focusing on its role as a patron of young mothers and children and a merciful guard of dead children's souls, protecting them from falling into hell with his coat. Again she fails to present the basic data, which were not known at the time in Germany, but rather puts the emphasis on the subject matter of the works in question.

So what was important to her? It seems she was most interested in Japanese art as a reflection of a rich and mysterious spiritual world that had its origins in China. She wrote that Far East Asian arts were mysterious arts closely related to Buddhism. For her Far East Asia was a new mental world and the history of its arts was the same as the history of its religion. She emphasized the close link between the art and the spiritual world and said that art is an expression of thought.

From this we can understand that Graf-Pfaff had Japanese art in high esteem because it was a reflection of a rich and mysterious spiritual world. As an example from the Edo period, she tells the story of Yamuba about a samurai's widow who took her children and went into hiding in mountains. More than in the presentation, she was interested in the story as a reflection of the spiritual world. To her Japanese art meant Japanese spirit and culture.

From the above we can see that Kuemmel's understanding of Japanese art was quite different from that of Graf-Pfaff. Kuemmel took the same approach as to European art and had interest in Japanese art as an art historian. Graf-Pfaff understood Japanese art as a symbol of the Japanese spirit and thought. In my opinion this basic difference may had influence on the fact that the 1909 exhibition fell into oblivion.

Kuemmel probably did not regard Graf-Pfaff as an art historian but rather as a "Japonist" in the tradition of Siebold's interest in folklore, although part of her evaluation was made on the basis of knowledge about art history. For Kuemmel it was important that the Japanese works of art were ranked and presented in a historical order. In addition, he put great emphasis on explaining the stylistic features. In short, the difference between Kuemmel and Graf-Pfaff is the difference between an art historian and a painter.

If we look back we see that in Germany Kuemmel's approach to Japanese art eventually prevailed. Graf-Pfaff's approach became forgotten, although she published a book on Ukiyoe 16 years after the 1909 exhibition. Its title was "Japanese Ghost Book". As I have talked about it in detail on another occasion, I shall here only briefly sum up the points directly related to the topic of today's presentation.

The subject matter of the book is the Japanese spirit. Pictures depicting ghosts are introduced as the best example of the Japanese spirit. Although many Ukiyoe paintings in the book are of great value as pieces of art, she puts emphasis on the subject matter. Graf-Pfaff analyzes ghost stories from the point of view of literature, culture and folklore. She had enough knowledge about Japanese art and at first I could not understand why she chose the topic of ghosts to play the central role in her presentation of Japanese art. After studying the circumstances of the 1909 Munich exhibition, however, I have come to understand her point of view better. To her Japanese art was important as a reflection of Japanese spirit. Her "Japanese Ghost Book" is quite unique in the field of Japanese arts, but it failed to attract much attention and soon become forgotten. I believe that this was also related to the conflict of approaches towards the study of Japanese art that took place since 1912.

5.CONCLUSION

At the end of today's presentation I would like to sum up. The 1909 Munich exhibition "Japan and Far Eastern Asia in Art" became forgotten without a clear reason, whereas the 1912 Berlin exhibition "Far East Asian Old Arts" was highly valued. This has been attributed to the difference in works put on display, but after a close examination it can be said that the quality of exhibits was very similar at both exhibitions. One possible reason may be the difference in approaches taken at the displayed art. The key person of the 1912 Berlin exhibition, Otto Kuemmel, was an art historian specializing in Japanese and Far East Asian arts who took a scholarly approach at the exhibits. The central person of the 1909 Munich exhibition, Caccille Graf-Pfaff, was a painter who did also some research into Japanese art and who regarded Japanese art as a reflection of Japanese spirit. The difference in these two approaches may be the reason that one exhibition was to be considered of great value, whereas the other one fell into oblivion.

Here I would like to add some of my own thoughts about the 1909 exhibition. In Germany Kuemmel and other researchers took a scholarly approach to Japanese art. That was different from other countries where for a long time Japanese art had been regarded merely as something exotic. Graf-Pfaff's approach was less scholarly than Kuemmel's, and she was undeniably interested in the exotic, but I believe that in fact she mixed both positions. That is to say, she put emphasis on analyzing the Japanese spirit, but there was more to her explanations. For example, in her article in the 1909 catalogue, we can see that her description is not that far from an art historic approach and that she is describing sculptures with words similar to those that Winckelmann used when talking about Greek sculpture. This means that she did not look at Japanese art as something completely exotic in the juxtaposition of civilized world versus non-civilized world. A considerable part of her presentation is close to what an art historian would write. She may not be all that different from Kuemmel, after all.

Regarding the quality of the 1909 exhibition, it has to be said that its level was not that much different from the 1900 World exhibition in Paris. However its purpose was. While the objective of the Paris exhibition was to promote the sale of fine art copies, the Munich exhibition was simply aimed at introducing Japanese art.

And although there were more crafts works than pieces of art at the Munich exhibition, it is very important to notice that the fine art pieces were original. I believe that the 1909 exhibition was the turning point in changing the attitude towards Japanese art from admiring exotic objects to looking at the exhibits with scholarly interest. Therefore it is important to pay more attention to this exhibition in the future.

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要 旨

本発表では、1909年にミュンヘンで開催された「美術における日本と東洋展」の解釈を試みるものである。ドイツにおいて日本美術の比較的規模の大きな最初の展覧会は、一般に1912年のベルリン芸術アカデミーが主催した「東洋古美術展覧会」と理解されている。しかし、それよりもわずか3年前に、ミュンヘンでも規模的に1912年と見劣りしない展覧会の「美術における日本と東洋美術展」が開催されていた。奇妙なことにこの展覧会は、その開催事実すら指摘されることはほとんどない。そうした状況に置かれた1909年の展覧会をとりあげて、特に評価されなかった要因を模索するかたちで検討をすすめながら、この展覧会の実情を確認し、最終的に、この展覧会が日本美術を純粹美術として注目した点で、「異国趣味としての日本美術」から「学問としての日本美術」へと移行する重要な転機を示す展覧会であったという私見を提示したい。

【Short chronological table】

1900 Paris World Exhibition

1902 Old Japanese Arts, Collection of Georg Oeder in Düsseldorf

1904 The exhibition of Far East Asian Arts from private collection in Hamburg

1906 Selection from Japan and China, Collection of Freiherrn von Gutschmid, Köln

1908 Japanese Collection of Ernst Bretschneider, Köln

Collection of Hofer, München

1909 ***Japan und Far Eastern Asia in Art in Munich***

1912 *Far East Asian Old Arts in Berlin*

1925 *Japanese Ghost book by Cäcilie Graf Pfaff*

1939 *Old Japanese Arts in Berlin,*

Works that were on display

First hall(on display only)

exhibits	collection
Ryu-mou-bosatsu, Buddhist painting	Berlin Folk Museum
Fusuma-e from Momoyama castle, from Kano school, late 16th century	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
Landscape by Sesson, Japanese painting	Far East Asian Department Berlin Museum
Fusuma-e, 17th century	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
Portrait of the founder of the Shingon school of Buddhism, Japanese painting	Berlin Folk Museum
Portrait of Hideyoshi wearing a Korean cere- monial dress, Japanese painting, 17th century	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
Ghost by Ukiyoe painter Kuniyoshi	Berlin, Otto Kuemmel
She-dog with puppies, Japanese painting by Rosetsu Nagasawa	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
Jizo, wooden sculpture, 11th century	Tuebingen, C. Fucks
Jizo, wooden sculpture, 12th century	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
Nio, wooden sculpture	Cologne Far East Asian Museum
5Noh-men masks, 5 Gigaku-men masks	Far East Asian Department, Berlin Museum

Second hall(on sale)

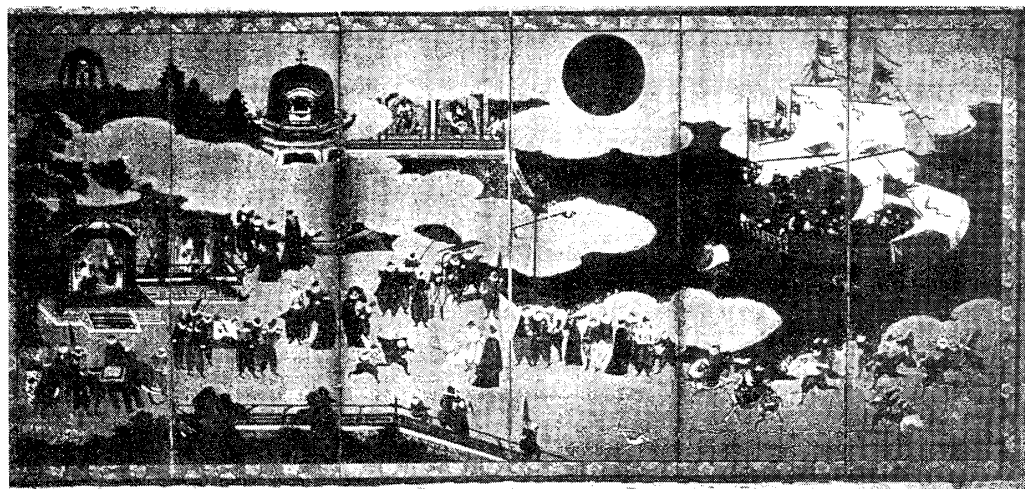
exhibits	collection
Satsuma elephant and a man, ceramic figure	Bernheimer

Comparison between the 1909 exhibition and the 1912 exhibition

	The 1909 exhibition in Munich	the 1912 exhibition in Berlin
title	Japan and Far East Asia in Art	Far East Asian Old Arts
central works	Japanese arts ca 800=60%	Japanese arts 326=70%
Old Japanese arts	6 works from the 11th to the 15th century	6 works from the 11th to the 15th century
key person	Cäcile Graf Pfaff	Otto Kümmel



Exhibition's Catalogue



BIOBU from Naisenosuke K. belong to S.K.Hoheit Prinz Rupprecht von Bayern