Mukai Junkichi’s Transformation from a War to Minka (Folk House) Painter

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Introduction

Mukai Junkichi 向井潤吉 (1901–1995) was a Japanese oil painter, and the stark differences between his wartime works and those of the immediate postwar period, from the 1940s to the mid-1950s, are the focus of this article. Relatively unknown outside Japan, Mukai continues to be well regarded within the country. In particular his paintings featuring minka (lit., “commoner’s house”; often more specifically folk or farmhouses built with methods and materials that predate the age of industrialization) set in rural landscapes still enjoy immense popularity (Figs. 1, 2). From the mid-1950s until his death in 1995 Mukai searched for minka all over Japan, and he is supposed to have made more than two thousand pictures of minka in oil on canvas. This almost obsessive attachment to minka got Mukai the nickname “Minka no gaka (Painter of Minka),” which is how Mukai is mostly remembered today.

Before engaging with minka as his lifelong theme, however, Mukai was an active propaganda painter during the Asia-Pacific War (1937–1945). His seemingly sudden shift from glorifier of war to idyllic landscape painter has puzzled many art historians and critics. One common explanation given for Mukai’s transformation is colored by the so-called dark valley discourse, which regards Mukai’s contributions to Japan’s war effort as a deviation from the rest of his career. Another common hypothesis emphasizes a continuity to be found in his prewar, wartime, and immediate postwar paintings. Based on some of Mukai’s wartime pictures that do not seem to fit into the dominant mode of war propaganda paintings, proponents of that hypothesis argue that Mukai sustained his “interest in people’s various lives” or focused his “warm eyes on people” even during wartime.

It is true that from the onset of his career rural landscape was one of Mukai’s favorite themes, and thus his wartime paintings, which are almost exclusively of battle scenes, can indeed be considered exceptional in his oeuvre. I also agree with the following point in the second hypothesis: that not all of Mukai’s wartime works were fully compatible with the official discourse, a point on which I elaborate later. Neither hypothesis takes into account, however, that Mukai was not necessarily manipulated by or forced to adopt the military view. Rather, he went to the front voluntarily, produced a number of vigorous works featuring war imagery both for propaganda and as aesthetic exercises, and remained active as a war propaganda artist until the day of Japan’s surrender on 15 August 1945. Given Mukai’s proactive participation in the war effort, one must question the art-historical scholarship that emphasizes his humanism as a thread linking his wartime and postwar works.

This study reexamines the emergence of Mukai’s minka paintings by way of a close investigation of his artistic trajectory from wartime to immediate postwar works. First we shall study Mukai’s prewar activities, which might shed light on his motives in celebrating Japan’s military and its spur to conquest. Next, Mukai’s paintings of the immediate postwar years, relating their two dominant subjects, war veterans and Japanese rural landscape, to his personal experiences of war and his postwar redirection of his art. In conclusion, we shall discuss Mukai’s postwar painting centering on minka, with reference to the contemporary nationwide effort to reconstruct Japanese identity. Taken together, this sequence attempts to demonstrate that, rather than a simple return to his prewar interests, or an embodiment of his unchanging “warm eyes on the people,” Mukai’s devotion to minka was part of the process of reconciling his wartime past with postwar reality.

Mukai’s Early Career

The era of the Asia-Pacific War is known today as Japan’s totalitarian period, during which every sector of society came under the supervision of a militaristic government organized to mobilize all available human and material resources for its unprecedented military campaigns. Punitive sanctions, censorship, and group pressure ensured
the collective subordination of artists. In the later years of the war two quasi-official art organizations, the Patriotic Association of Japanese Art (Nihon Bijutsu Hōkokukai) and the Regulatory Association of Japanese Art and Crafts (Nihon Bijutsu Oyobi Kōgei Tōsei Kyōkai), had exclusive control of the supply of art materials. In addition, in September 1944 exhibition venues were severely limited in accordance with the Guidelines for the Management of Art Exhibitions (Bijutsu Tenrankai Toriatsukai Yōkō); no art group could exhibit without government permission. In return for art materials or exhibition permits the government exacted cooperation. Accordingly almost all artistic activities became impossible without cooperating with the government. Artists were required to feature scenes of war or of some form of war effort; otherwise they were either sent to the front as combatants or simply deprived of materials and exhibitions.

Given the severity of political oppression, the wartime period was undoubtedly a “dark valley” for the majority of Japanese. Still, especially in the early stages of the war, when Japan was enjoying sweeping victories, not a few people passionately supported the war and voluntarily participated in the war effort. In the fine arts too, in the early stages of the conflict so many artists sought to enlist as war painters or correspondents that the military could not find places for all of them. Mukai Junkichi was one such eager volunteer. It is

Fig. 1. Mukai Junkichi (1901–1995). A House in Grass [Kamiminochi-gun, Togakushi Village, Nakashiro, Nagano Pref.]. 1961. Oil on canvas; h. 91 cm, w. 116.6 cm. Nagano Prefectural Shinano Art Museum, Nagano City, Nagano Prefecture.
therefore not enough to point out that the Japanese government was becoming increasingly oppressive and coercive even before hostilities began; we need to investigate how Mukai’s artistic and political aspirations had developed in the prewar period.

Mukai Junkichi was born in Kyoto in 1901. His father was a shrine and temple carpenter and ran a conventional craft studio. As the heir to this family business, Mukai entered the Kyoto City Art and Craft School (Kyoto Shiritsu Bijutsu Kōgei Gakkō) in 1914. Yet Mukai quickly found himself more interested in Western forms of art than in traditional arts and crafts. Accordingly he withdrew from the school and began to study oil painting at the Kansai Art Institute (Kansai Bijutsu-in) in 1916.

Mukai’s official debut as an oil painter occurred in 1919, when one of his paintings was selected to be displayed at the Nika Society’s (Nika-kai) annual juried exhibition. Inaugurated in 1914 by a group of young modernist-inspired artists opposed to the conservative official art salon, the Nika Society was one, perhaps the most exhilarating, art venue for young oil painters at that time. Thus, Mukai’s inclusion in its annual exhibition at the age of eighteen was a significant achievement. His career, however, was interrupted by conscription. Mukai served as a reserve private first
class for two years, between 1921 and 1923. Although
details of his service are largely unknown, throughout
his life Mukai remained proud of his military service,
and insisted that the physical and mental strength
accrued during those years in the army became one of
the spurs to his later engagement with the war effort.8

In 1927 Mukai, with financial support from his
father, went to Paris seeking a breakthrough as an artist.9
His two years in Paris determined the course of his
career and painting style. While experimenting with
various modernist styles, Mukai was becoming increas-
ingly fascinated by the works of European Old Masters.
He spent most of his day in the Louvre, copying oil
painters dating from the Renaissance to the early 20th
century, including El Greco, Rubens, Rembrandt, Ingres,
Delacroix, Millet, Renoir, Corot, and Courbet.10 On his
return to Japan in 1930 Mukai brought with him twenty-
one copies of European oil paintings that he had made
in the Louvre. Unusually, at his first solo exhibition in
Japan, he displayed these copies rather than his original
works. Although this exhibition was organized mostly
for financial reasons (Mukai planned to go back to Paris
using the proceeds of the sale of these works, but during
the exhibition only two were sold), Mukai also seemed
to believe in the importance of copies for the future of
the Japanese art world, claiming that “in a country like
Japan, where European masterpieces have been accessi-
ble only through imperfect or small-size reproductions,
these masterpieces would be best introduced in copies
made by artists which should therefore be taken into

Fig. 3. Mukai Junkichi. Fighting Deer. 1934. Oil on canvas. Presumed lost.
more serious account.”

His emphasis on the practical aspect of oil painting—painting as “record”—seen in this early phase of his career, prefigures Mukai’s wartime and postwar activities. This will be addressed in more detail below.

Settled once more in Japan, Mukai continued to experiment with Expressionist-style painting, at first focusing mainly on human figures. Yet from about 1934 his themes were more often rural landscape, nature, and anonymous people’s lives, referring to the styles of European masters. His major sources of inspiration were Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) and Pieter Brueghel the Elder (ca. 1525–1569), whose influences are visible in works such as *Arasoeru shika* (Fighting Deer; 1934) and *Tōjitsu* (Freezing Day; 1937). Although the location of the former is currently unknown, even a black-and-white photograph clearly indicates Mukai’s heavy reliance on Courbet’s *Spring Rut: The Battle of the Stags* (1861) as the source of reference (Fig. 3). *Freezing Day* affords a view of an unnamed mountain, with a few huts covered by heavy snow. A lyrical distant snowy view with a tree-crowded foreground recalls the signature composition of Bruegel’s rural landscapes (Fig. 4).

The art historian Shimada Yasuhiro argues that Mukai must have been fascinated by Brueghel and Courbet because their subjects were neither intellectual nor flamboyant. The former focused on the “reality” of people’s lives, especially the lives of the workers and the lower classes, whereas the latter revealed the harshness of animal existence. The following comment by Mukai,
though made in a much later period than the above-mentioned works, confirms Shimada’s point: “People often say that my painting has no dreams. But I cannot move away from my own experience and reality. There is no way that I can go for Surrealism.” Although Mukai’s paintings of this time romanticize the hardships of rural life and the turbulence of nature, it seems true that Mukai found himself increasingly repelled by the modernist styles and themes then popular in the Japanese art community, such as female nudes and glamorous city lives painted in moderate Fauvist or newly introduced Surrealist styles. Instead, Mukai inclined to romantically tinged renderings of motifs taken from humble lives and the natural environment, the subjects for which Brueghel and Courbet are particularly famous. This preference for humble subjects depicted in a style we might describe as gentled realism underlies Mukai’s activities for the rest of his career.

“The First Military-Service Painter”: Mukai in the Asia-Pacific War

In July 1937, a year after Mukai had earned full membership in the prestigious Nika Society with Brueghel- and Courbet-inspired rural landscapes, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred. It quickly led Japan into all-out war against China (the Second Sino-Japanese War), and later against the United States and Britain (the Asia-Pacific War). As already mentioned, Mukai sought employment at the military information bureau as a war correspondent. His request eventually denied, between October and November 1937 Mukai made his way to the front in China at his own expense. Referring to this exploit, Mukai pridedfully described himself as “the first military-service painter (jūgūn gaka daiichigō 従軍画家第一号).”

Although undoubtedly a patriot, Mukai’s passionate engagement with the war cannot be explained solely by patriotism or by pride in his military service, but must also have resulted from his continuous interest in capturing reality and creating a more socially engaged form of art. In the article Mukai published after his return from China in August 1938, he explained the intent behind his voluntary trip to the front:

[I wanted to see] how much I could put myself into the extraordinary experience, and [how much] my spirit and eyes could endure [to face the reality] in the extraordinary places called battlegrounds … and I tried to make them my means, methods, fuels, and nutrition [of my artistic creativity]. Rather than seeing the war as an obstacle to or calamity for art, Mukai thus conceived it as or transformed it into an artistic opportunity. According to Mukai, moreover, gaining firsthand experience of battlegrounds was necessary not only for nurturing his own work, but also for rejuvenating the entire Japanese art world. In the same article Mukai lamented the state of the Japanese art world as follows:

Today’s Japanese artists lack the special talent and passion to engage with such a theme as war…. It somehow became common among painters to disregard and dismiss techniques, styles, and ideas necessary to meet the challenge of war themes. I wish to amend this narrow-minded, unfortunate situation.

Because artists avoided sociopolitical topics, Mukai continued, contemporary Japanese regarded them as “drifters (yūminzoku)” in Japanese society. To reverse this contemptuous view, Mukai called for the renewal of artistic energy and assumption of social responsibility that would be embodied by dealing with contemporary political affairs. Only by their doing so, Mukai concluded, would “the [Marco Polo Bridge] Incident become truly meaningful.”

On returning from China, Mukai produced a series of paintings referring to the ongoing battles, such as Totsugeki (Charge Ahead; 1938), Nankō (Difficult Path; 1939), and Somin (Reviving Folks; 1939) (Figs. 5, 6, 7). Figures 5 and 6 strongly emphasize the boldness and zeal of Japanese soldiers; Figure 7 emphasizes the traumatic exhaustion of Chinese refugees that follows a battle; together these works seem to have been Mukai’s attempt to revitalize his own art as well as to bolster the tame Japanese art world by presenting challengingly realistic subjects. Mukai’s first war imagery, Charge Ahead, exhibited at the Nika Society’s annual exhibition in the autumn of 1938, is a prime example of Mukai’s intention. It shows five Japanese soldiers charging the enemy; in the painting, they career straight toward the viewer. The rather stylized, almost caricature-like depiction of the soldiers may reflect in part the lingering influence of Brueghel. The lyricism seen in Mukai’s earlier Brueghel-inspired landscapes has given way to an atmosphere of tension, aggression, and, in the soldiers’ faces, ferocity. There is no clear narrative, and only a Japanese national flag in the painting indicates the identity of these soldiers.

Charge Ahead was neither based on an actual battle Mukai observed in China nor made as propaganda. Mukai called it his “self-portrait.” In the short essay
titled “I Am Charging Ahead,” Mukai stated the motive behind this painting:

Given the name of a military-service painter, I feel a heavy responsibility [to satisfy] people’s nasty expectation [to see the advent of real] “war painting.” Just saying that we had a precious physical and visionary experience in the highly charged atmosphere [of battlegrounds] and [surrounded by soldier’s tense] faces wouldn’t be enough to satisfy [the people at home]. I therefore charged ahead to the soldiers who were charging ahead. This is a record [of my travel to the front] as well as my self-portrait.19

“A heavy responsibility” and “people’s nasty expectation” in this passage refer to the existing uncertainty in Japan about the role of artists in wartime. Largely overshadowed by new media such as photography and film, painting was generally regarded as an outdated medium for visual reportage, that is, for capturing in pictures the real sense of war, let alone for propaganda.20 Not only did the general public dismiss any significant role for painting in the war, but also a number of artists found themselves unable to capture the real sense of war. Mukai was not alone in volunteering for front-line reportage. Many artists shared his deep concern regarding the isolation of painters and paintings from society, which became increasingly apparent after the outbreak of total war and was one of the forces that drove artists to involve themselves in the war. The majority of volunteer artists, however, found themselves outsiders at the front. The art historian Kawata Akihisa points out that in the early stage of the war actual combat scenes were conspicuous by their absence. Even in the small number of paintings that dealt with battle scenes, soldiers were frequently shown only at a distance or from behind. Kawata attributes the prevalence of such images to an actual and psychological distance from the war and combatants, which the artists would have felt as outsiders at the front.21

Mukai was clearly irritated by both the distant attitude of his fellow painters and the public indifference to fine art. Claiming the picture of fierce soldiers charging toward the viewer as his self-portrait, Mukai challenged the general perception of artists as “drifters” who chose to remain irrelevant to sociopolitical affairs even in this time of national emergency. He also responded to his colleagues’ distant representations by illustrating his charging soldiers close up and head on, which many military-service painters hesitated to do, as Kawata points out. All in all, Charge Ahead was Mukai’s forceful response to painters’ lack of engagement with military matters, and to Japanese society’s correspondingly low expectation of painters in wartime society.

Although Mukai’s illustrations of wild-eyed, aggressive Japanese soldiers were not necessarily well received, his passionate commitment to the war caught the attention of the military.22 In 1938 Mukai went again to China, but this time as an official war painter employed by the Shanghai Information Bureau (Shanhai Jōhōbu) to produce what later came to be known as campaign record painting (sakusen kirokuga). Such works constituted some of the enormous number of official war paintings made, according to the military’s official document, “to record the reality of war accurately . . . and to permanently preserve [these records], which is, needless to say, important for national security . . . as well as educational material for our nations.”23 To fulfill the purpose of this documentation and in response to the military’s conservative taste, 19th-century Neo-Classicism and Romanticism became the officially sanctioned styles for Japanese oil painters of the war. Mukai generally

![Fig. 5. Mukai Junkichi. Charge Ahead. 1938. Oil on canvas. Presumed lost.](image-url)
honored the military’s requests. In his campaign record painting titled *4gatsu 9ka no Kiroku: Batán Hantō Sokōgeki* (Record of April 9: All-Out Attack at Bataan Peninsula; 1942), for example, Mukai skillfully replaced his stylized rendering of human figures with a group portrait of captured soldiers drawn in the manner of European history painting (Fig. 8). Throughout the war Mukai was regularly appointed for this task, which was considered “honorable” at that time, as well as sometimes serving as a juror for military-sponsored war art exhibitions, which fully solidified his position in the wartime art community as a top-rated official war artist.\(^4\)

After the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Mukai was also appointed to a propaganda unit and sent to the colonized areas in Southeast Asia. Mukai stayed in the Philippines for nearly a year between 1941 and 1942 and was in Burma (present-day Myanmar) twice, in 1943 and 1944. Mukai was sent to some of the bloodiest battlefields, where he witnessed several grueling scenes, including the now infamous Bataan Death March in 1942, which claimed the lives of nearly twenty thousand Filipino and American captive soldiers in the course of their forced move to the distant prisoner-of-war camp. On his second trip to Burma Mukai’s mission was to record the devastating Imphal campaign, undertaken by the Japanese between March and June 1944. This campaign claimed thirty-eight thousand lives, both Indian and Japanese, not only as battlefield casualties but also from starvation and illness. Mukai himself became seriously ill and had to return to Japan.
in the middle of his mission. Perhaps due to his horrific experience of battlefields, Mukai’s images and texts in the last two years of the Pacific War displayed a clear shift from the earlier ones; they sometimes deviated from the official discourse and indicated war-weariness. Mukai’s images made in the last phase of the war will be further discussed in the following section. Here it suffices to say that, despite horrific experiences, Mukai participated tirelessly in the war effort until the day of Japan’s surrender. Even after many artists evacuated to the countryside and practically stopped painting due to the constant air raids and to increasing government cultural regulation, Mukai continued his service by joining the Art Unit for Promoting the Munitions Industry (Gunju Seisan Bijutsu Suishintai), which a group of volunteer artists formed in the beginning of 1945 for the purpose of boosting workers’ spirits by visiting coal mines and factories. This became practically the last and only art group to remain active until the day of Japan’s unconditional surrender, 15 August 1945. No works made by Mukai as a member of the Art Unit are known today, but it is certain that he found the Art Unit meaningful, as it became the seedbed of a postwar art collective, the Action Art Association (Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai), which he helped lead until his death.

Mukai and the Surrender of Japan

After Japan’s surrender Mukai, like many other official war painters, had to deal with his immediate past. Although no artists were prosecuted on war crimes charges, the artists co-opted by the military, especially
those who had been deeply engaged in campaign record painting, became major targets of criticism. The so-called artists’ morality debate (Bijutsuka no sessō ronsō), for example, was carried out in the Asahi newspaper immediately after Japan’s defeat. The debate was initiated by the article titled “Artists’ Morality,” written by the oil painter Miyata Shigeo (1900–1971). Miyata first pointed out that some ex-official war painters, such as Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968), cooperated with the Allied Forces in organizing an exhibition of Japanese art for the Americans; he criticized their chameleon-like transformation and called on them to refrain at least temporarily from any artistic activities.26 In response Fujita and other war painters defended themselves by saying that they were in principle liberals, who, like everyone else, simply carried out their “duty as Japanese citizens” during the state of national emergency.27

Having been an active participant in the military’s art projects and a recipient of various privileges as the most celebrated official war painter, Fujita’s (and other painters’) justification of their wartime collaboration with the military as their “duty as Japanese citizens” was hardly convincing. With no organized resistance activities and little chance to emigrate to other countries, however, no Japanese artist could effectively counter Fujita’s allegation that everyone more or less contributed to the war. Without any consensus or conclusion, the artists’ morality debate quickly waned, concurrently with Fujita’s departure from Japan to France in 1949, and remains an unresolved issue to this day.28

Although Mukai neither acknowledged war guilt nor defended himself publicly, he seemed to have felt
ambivalent about his own wartime activities. A few comments suggested his complex feelings, if not regret, regarding his engagement with the war effort, such as “[in the immediate postwar period] I had a slight sense of guilt as a war criminal,”29 and when a number of his paintings were lost in a studio fire in 1961, “[I feel] I finally have shut the war out of my life completely . . . [even when my studio caught fire] I actually felt refreshed, as if something that had stabbed in my body had left off all at once.”30 On the other hand, Mukai condemned fellow artists, especially those in the Nika Society, who had not actively engaged in the war effort and had evacuated to the countryside, as falling into “bystander’s escapism.”31 When the Nika Society, which had dissolved in response to the Guidelines of the Management of Art Exhibitions, announced its reopening immediately after the war’s end, Mukai strongly resisted this precipitate revival. Refusing to take part in the revived Nika Society, Mukai established the Action Art Association (Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai) in November 1945 with his fellow artists from the Art Unit for Promoting the Munitions Industry, who, in Mukai’s words, “sustained our self-awareness as artists until the end and never put down our brush[es] even amidst war.”32

These ambivalent feelings, a sense of guilt/exhaustion together with pride in having remained “socially engaged,” can be seen in the first two paintings Mukai

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Fig. 9. Mukai Junkichi. *Rain. 1945.* Oil on canvas; h. 38 cm, w. 45.5 cm. Private collection.
made after war’s end, *Ame* (Rain) and *Hyōjin* (Tramp) (Figs. 9, 10). Rain was painted in 1945 and came to be known as Mukai’s first *minka* painting; Tramp was presented at the first Action Art Association annual exhibition in 1946. Before examining the emergence of *minka* in Mukai’s postwar works, it is necessary to briefly study Tramp, since it was displayed at the Action Art Association and thus can be considered Mukai’s postwar manifesto to the public.

*Tramp* is a full-length portrait of a war veteran. The war veteran is huddling against the cold and stands aimlessly alone at the corner of an anonymous street. Apart from him, there is nothing but his bundle. The veteran’s figure is realistically illustrated, yet loose brush strokes blur the boundary between his body and the darker section of the wall he leans against. His darkened face does not clearly convey the identity, age, or even nationality of this model. In contrast to his indeterminate body, face, and background, his straightforward gaze, accentuated with white pigment on the eyes, and the white teeth showing in the open mouth (which may indicate his hunger) grip the onlooker.

War veterans and, more generally, suffering male figures were common subjects for Japanese oil painters in the immediate postwar years. Bert Winther-Tamaki, in his pioneering study of postwar Japanese oil paintings, points out that many artists, such as Furusawa Iwami (1912–1998) and Ebihara Kinosuke (1904–1970), concentrated on distorted, maimed, and suffering male figures at that time. Tamaki identifies both the emergence of these characteristics and their popular consumption as a necessary process by which Japanese men overcame the trauma of brutal war experiences and defeat, and recovered their subjectivity. For example, Furusawa’s nightmarish image of a crippled, blind, and almost skeletal war veteran illustrated against a background of highly eroticized female figures in *Gaki* (Hungry Ghost; 1952) transcends, according to Tamaki, the state of *kyodatsu* (exhaustion and
psychic collapse) by a “life-affirming carnality” (Fig. 11). Ebihara’s Junkyōsha (Martyr; 1951) which clearly refers to the iconography of St. Sebastian, on the other hand, served as “a noble icon of Japanese suffering,” nurturing Japanese feelings of victimization, while conveniently ignoring Japanese aggression and brutality toward those they had conquered (Fig. 12).

In the same study Tamaki briefly refers to Mukai’s Tramp, whom he describes as “cowering like a cornered animal” and interprets it, like Furusawa’s Hungry Ghost, as “an emblem of kyodatsu, a ‘state of psychic collapse’.” In Furusawa’s painting, Tamaki argues, the kyodatsu condition is ultimately redeemed by the life-affirming carnality in the background, whereas Mukai “was unable or unwilling to deliver his veteran from either the memories that haunted him or the poverty that made him homeless.” Finding no “animating principle in the expression of suffering,” Tamaki concludes that Mukai’s Tramp was one of the bleakest expressions of kyodatsu, an emblem of postwar Japan.

Solely focusing on a figure with no props, companions, or concrete setting, Tramp is indeed one of
the most desolate portraits of a vanquished warrior—perhaps recalling in his own suffering and defeat the sufferings he had inflicted. Yet Mukai has also given the figure of the war veteran a faint note of heroism. Undoubtedly the Tramp feels desperation, loss, and physical suffering (he stands huddled, presumably with cold and hunger), but compared with the horrific images of maimed returnees or distorted bodies made by such artists as Furusawa and Ebihara, Mukai’s war veteran is neither crippled nor disfigured, and his gaze is strong and direct (Fig. 10A). This direct eye contact with the viewer is the most striking contrast between Mukai’s Tramp and Furusawa’s blind cripple or Ebihara’s faceless victim. Why did Mukai choose to depict a war veteran in desolate condition yet at the same time with a strong gaze?

Not simply an unvarnished symbol of war-devastated Japan, Tramp, I would argue, conveys Mukai’s tenacity in the face of Japan’s defeat. Relatively early in the postwar period Mukai, asked why he painted returnees, stated: “Although I would not entirely deny the value of a beautiful salon art, . . . in today’s Japan of demobilized soldiers, unemployment, and hardship in the wake of the war defeat, I cannot simply paint women and flowers.”40 In other words, Mukai was determined to continue his engagement with contemporary sociopolitical affairs, rather than burying the immediate past in “beautiful salon art” or altering his artistic direction, even though Japan’s “holy war” had brought upon it nothing but disaster.

Tramp is, in fact, reminiscent of Charge Ahead in a number of ways. Both feature male figures without a concrete setting or clear narrative; the Tramp and the charging soldiers are gazing directly at the viewer; and each picture brings its figure(s) close up, as if showing the artist’s engagement with his subjects. If Charge Ahead was Mukai’s wartime self-portrait, as Mukai himself articulated, Tramp can be considered his post-war self-portrait, declaring his proactive relationship to the new political reality. Notwithstanding the heightened misery of a war veteran who has no belongings, home, or clear direction for the future, his undeviating gaze may thus reflect Mukai’s own resolve, just as the soldiers in Charge Ahead reflect his ardent wish for artists to take a more active role in the wartime society. Tramp attests the continuity of Mukai’s approach to society and art throughout the wartime and immediate postwar periods.

“Discovery” of Japanese Landscape

Rain was produced immediately after the war, in 1945, inspired by Mukai’s visit to his daughter who had evacuated to Kawaguchi City, Niigata Prefecture. Mukai imbued this rainy scene of a rural village populated by a few shadowy figures with an aura of tranquillity and melancholy. How does this seemingly benign landscape fit into Mukai’s postwar painting? Many scholars refer to the following recollection (or other similar ones) by Mukai to explain the emergence of minka as his post-war dominant theme:

Among the books that I brought into the bomb shelter, after the aerial attack [on mainland Japan] began, were the twelve volumes of Picture Book of Minka published by Ryokusokai. Various styles of old-fashioned minka printed in colloidtype mysteriously evoked a sense of affinity in my mind. . . . I was thinking whether I could manage to record the age-old minka before the country was reduced to ashes.41
Despite this oft-cited account given by the artist ten years after the war's end, it is questionable whether Mukai had such a clear sense of mission—recording the age-old minka—from the beginning. As is discussed below, it was not until the mid-1950s that minka became a central motif in Mukai's images; Mukai himself acknowledged that “it was probably around the mid-1950s when [the idea of] solely focusing on minka became clear in my mind.” I thus propose that Mukai's practice of illustrating minka fell into at least two phases: before and after the mid-1950s.

A text that Mukai published at the beginning of 1946, titled “Beauty of Japan (Nihon bi),” which relates his impression of Kawaguchi City, probably more vividly reveals his feelings immediately after Japan’s defeat:

The rural village appears truly beautiful, its long period of vexation having ended. In other words, the houses upon which layers of great tradition are inscribed and the exquisite charm of the culture embedded in this simple, rustic, yet sophisticated land are suddenly reflected in the eyes of my heart, and I, though belatedly, am completely and rather laughably taken by this everyday landscape. Now a huge surgical knife of reform is about to be inserted into all aspects of our native land from all angles. My affectionate feeling for all beings that either artificially or naturally disappear after a long time might be [evoking my sentimentality], but whatever the reason, I spent my entire day travelling to Echigo … and enjoyed the beauty of Japanese autumn from the bottom of my heart.

In this short essay Mukai finds his discovery of the beauty of the everyday landscape of the Japanese rural village to be sudden and rather belated, a surprise even to himself. Puzzling over the magical attraction of the rural village, Mukai acknowledges at least two factors that might have contributed to his sudden realization of the beauty of Japan: a sense of liberation from the war, and grief for the significant changes to be wrought on the beauty of Japan: a sense of liberation from the war, that might have contributed to his sudden realization of rural village, Mukai acknowledges at least two factors.

In this passage his war-weariness is suggested by his detachment from climate, natural environment, and landscape. Some of Mukai’s paintings made in the last phase of the war imply the detachment here expressed in words. Rokutakuko Hakuu (Shower on Lake Loktak; 1944), for example, illustrates the Imphal Campaign, one of the disastrous military campaigns described above (Fig. 13). Mukai and his lifelong friend Hino Ashihei (1907–1960), an acclaimed war novelist, witnessed a part of this campaign. According to Mukai, Hino is the figure standing in the foreground and Mukai himself is sitting on the ground (Fig. 13A). A single path extends from the position of the friends to the thick wall of the jungle, where death is everywhere. The identity of the third person remains unknown, yet since Mukai commented on this painting, “this single path, which was full of the stench of death, leads to Imphal,” the third person may be considered a collective image of Japanese soldiers about to walk to their deaths in the jungle.

The self-positioning of Mukai in this image is in stark contrast to the one in Charge Ahead. By placing himself and Hino closer to the viewer, Mukai and his fellow artist appear as mere onlookers to the spectacle of war. Mukai in particular is shown simply sitting on the ground, powerless seeing off the soldiers stepping into the jungle where death awaits them. More importantly, nature and the enemy are analogized in this image. No actual enemy figures are illustrated, but what blocks the Japanese path to Imphal is the combination of British aircraft and a severe squall over the jungle. A similar combination of war and adverse nature is also present in Mukai’s campaign record painting Mayu Sanpeki o Tsuku (Offensive Operation on Mt. Mayu, Western Burma), also from 1944, in which the soldiers’ figures are greatly diminished and appear virtually crushed by dense forest (Fig. 14). In these pictures, made in the last phase of the war, Mukai transformed himself from an eager propagandist of the war into a vulnerable onlooker, swept away by a tide.
of war embodied in the forms of uncontrollable natural forces.

Mukai’s rendering of rural Japan, especially its nature, in the postwar era can be characterized as the antithesis of his paintings of the battlegrounds in Southeast Asia (Figs. 15, 16). Neither the inexorable forces of nature, notwithstanding the famously severe weather of some of the places in Japan that Mukai painted, nor the frictions between villagers and evacuated urban dwellers, which occurred everywhere during the war, caught the artist’s attention. In his postwar paintings, people, nature, and minka harmoniously coexist, often losing their contours and merging into one another in a soft misty atmosphere. In addition, whereas his prewar and wartime paintings meticulously illustrate details of landscape, Rain and his other postwar minka
paintings employ rather loose brush strokes and a limited palette. In contrast to the threatening aspect of the natural forces Mukai encountered on the battlefields, the Japanese rural landscape Mukai envisioned appears, to borrow Tamaki’s words, “life-affirming” and warmly embracing.

Mukai’s seemingly sudden inclination to rural landscape and his rendering of it may be further illuminated by referring to Narita Ryūichi’s study of the concept of kokyō (native place or hometown), a term with a nuance similar to that of kokudo as used by Mukai.47 Narita asserts that, whereas in the prewar period kokyō was often associated with ones’ actual hometown, during the Asia-Pacific War masses of soldiers sent willy-nilly from Japan to foreign battlegrounds began to refer collectively to Japan as kokyō—an overarching “hometown.” Although Mukai’s experience at the front cannot be equated with that of a soldier (it is said that

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Fig. 14. Mukai Junkichi. *Offensive Operation on Mt. Mayu, Western Burma.* 1944. Oil on canvas; h. 268.7 cm, w. 185 cm. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (indefinite loan).
official war artists received far better treatment than noncoms), Narita’s interpretation is perhaps applicable to Mukai who, unusually for an elite artist, spent years on foreign battlegrounds and was sometimes in real danger. Rather than simply a return to the landscape painting of his prewar days, Mukai’s characterization of Japan as his “truly beautiful” “native land” seems a reaction to his horrifying experiences abroad and a reaffirmation of his survival and return home. The later Mukai was no longer a mere landscape painter; he had become a celebrant of the gracious nature of Japan that maintained a harmonious relationship with humanity. Mukai’s rendering of Japan, rather than capturing the social reality of a defeated nation, was overtly idealistic, but we should also note the melancholia that colors a number of rural scenes. This may reflect, as Mukai himself commented, his sentimental lamentation over the fate of Japan, whose beauty would all but disappear as a result of defeat and occupation. Nevertheless, it is probably misleading to consider that Mukai voiced opposition to the Occupation through his paintings. Mukai clearly did not welcome the changes, as is evident from his use of the term “a huge surgical knife,” to describe the expected operations of Occupation Force in the essay quoted above, but he did not indicate any intent to combat these changes and ended his essay with the comment “but anyway.” As we have seen in Shower on Lake Loktak, here Mukai again adopted the stance of a powerless individual (rather than an active agent of sociohistorical change) who only could grieve for what might befall the ageless beauty of Japan in the total grip of an erstwhile enemy. The Japanese landscape that Mukai envisioned lacked all concrete signs of past militarism and aggression and

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**Fig. 15.** Mukai Junkichi. *Snow [Nikkō Chūgūshi Senjōgahara].* 1948. Oil on canvas; h. 73.3 cm, w. 99.8 cm. Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Utsunomiya City, Tochigi Pref.
of present loss, despair, and hunger, which would have still been a part of the everyday scene at that time. Mukai presented it as beautiful, hospitable, politically innocent, and also vulnerable, a picture especially clear when one reads his paintings together with his sentimental account in the above essay. Above all, Mukai illustrated Japan, and possibly himself, as a victim of a foreign invasion. If Mukai’s rural landscapes in the immediate postwar period do not go so far as to indicate feelings of victimization, they at least undermined the painter’s and public’s consciousness of Japan’s imperialism, totalitarianism, and militarism that had led the country to its current pass.

Mukai’s sentimental pictures of rural Japan undeniably convey a sense of escapism and very possibly indicate a desire to reposition himself and his native land into an innocent passivity. Probably they attest his struggle to foresee, in the postwar physical and ideological confusion, what his artistic future would be. However determined he was to sustain the position of socially engaged artist that he had adopted during wartime, immersion in rural landscape probably provided

Fig. 16. Mukai Junkichi. Women in the Herring Village [Rumoi City, Hokkaidō]. 1951. Oil on canvas; h. 45.5 cm, w. 53 cm. Fukutomi Tarō collection, Tokyo.
him with an opportunity to escape the postwar political reality and the burden of new social and political responsibilities it imposed.

Concluding Remarks: The War Artist’s Postwar Reconciliation

While increasingly absorbed by Japanese rural landscape for several years after the war, Mukai continued to feature male figures as well in his painting. It was from the mid-1950s that veterans and, in fact, human figures almost completely disappeared from Mukai’s oeuvre. At the same time what is today known as Mukai’s signature style of *minka* was firmly established, and Mukai began to confirm his postwar mission “to record the age-old *minka*.”

This change, I assert, indicates that Mukai had finally transcended war and defeat and fully confirmed his postwar artistic persona. Although *Rain* and his early landscape paintings are now all recognized as part of Mukai’s lifelong *minka* series, Mukai’s *minka* pictures from the mid-1950s clearly display a shift from the ones he made in the immediate postwar years. As discussed in the previous section, not all his early images of rural Japan feature *minka* as the central motif. But in Mukai’s paintings after the mid-1950s, *minka* dominate by their sheer presence, whereas human figures or the sense of lives lived within the *minka* are minimized or absent altogether (Figs. 1, 2). Furthermore, the sense of melancholy and dilapidation that characterizes *Rain* and Mukai’s other earlier *minka* was replaced by sturdiness, often with a background of clear blue sky. This imbues his later *minka* with a sense of monumentality, a withstanding of the passage of time and of natural forces, while the subjectivity present in his earlier images is greatly and widely minimized.

Accompanying these stylistic changes, Mukai increasingly attributed a more active meaning to his paintings of rural Japan. In 1955, for example, Mukai summed up his work focusing on rural Japan of the past decade as follows:

[Through painting *minka*, it became [evidently] apparent to me how Japanese history, tradition, way of thinking, living style, custom, and climate differ from those of the West. It also made me realize how much my way of thinking and viewing were Westernized by using Western oil paints. Therefore, indigenous *minka* deeply moved me and I felt a strong attachment to them which I never, ever experienced before.]

Here, in contrast with his earlier accounts, *minka* stand alone as the symbol of Japanese culture, which is distinctive from, if not superior to, Western culture. To paint *minka* was, furthermore, no longer a sentimental lament over defeat, but an important means whereby he has recovered his Japanese identity.

This significant shift in Mukai’s attitude toward and interpretation of *minka* needs to be explained by referring to a broader political context. It was in the 1950s that a drastic change occurred in the status of *minka*. Although *minka* had been studied, evaluated, and appreciated, more or less individually, by intellectuals and urbanites, especially those at odds with the increasingly mechanized urban environments of the 1920s and 1930s, in the postwar period *minka* became a concern of both national and local governments. The first major step was made in 1951, when *minka* were for the first time designated as National Cultural Properties, alongside temples, shrines, castles, and the residences of elites, under the newly enacted Cultural Properties Protection Act (Bunkazai Hogo-ho¯). According to Peter Siegenthaler, this move was closely associated with the reconstruction of Japan’s postwar identity. For the Japanese government, attempting to reconstruct Japan as the “nation of culture (bunka kokka),” and to cleanse its image of militarism, *minka* were the best properties to invest in. Since their roots predated the modern period, they demonstrated the durability of Japan’s identity and tradition, while their function as humble houses for ordinary folk fitted well into the postwar ideal of democracy and equality.

Whether or not Mukai was particularly conscious of this nationwide direction, as *minka* gained national recognition he confirmed his mission as a recorder of age-old *minka*. In the preface of *Minka to fu¯ do* (Minka and Climate; 1957), the very first book of Mukai’s *minka* pictures, Mukai stated: “The purpose of this picture book is not to display my art, but to contemplate the root of our lives by recording *minka* as they are, long-time survivors on the soil of Japan.” From this time on Mukai increasingly fashioned himself as a defender of Japanese cultural tradition, first against the radical social shift brought on by the defeat, and later against the urbanization brought about by Japan’s miraculous economic recovery. Among his descriptions of his role: “[a journey to search for *minka* means something like] looking for Japan within Japan,” and “It is no exaggeration to say that the entire land of Japan is shaken and about to lose its roots… I sincerely wish to record their [minka’s] beauty with my poor ability.” By transforming his *minka* paintings, initially made to fill the personal vacuum resulting from scarifying wartime
experiences and ultimate defeat, into selfless homages to Japan, Mukai found a way to gain a new sense of mission and to maintain his basic standing as a socially engaged artist.

_Minka_ not only provided Mukai with a postwar mission, but also, perhaps more important, with a means to overcome his own stigmatized past. Many former war painters were hesitant to talk about their wartime experiences, but from the beginning of the 1950s Mukai began to talk about his. Referring to his production of campaign record painting, for which the military required artists to employ the 19th-century figurative style in order to create a sustainable and reliable visual record, Mukai often emphasized that his wartime experience was still valuable, because “the war provided me with an opportunity to learn how to draw things realistically.” The implication was clear: the eyes to see the war as it really was, plus the technical virtuosity to depict what he saw, had been acquired through the production of campaign record painting. And both contributed to his postwar work.

In 1967, 153 campaign record paintings, including five by Mukai, which had been confiscated by the Allied forces, were “discovered” at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio by the Japanese photographer Nakagawa Ichirō (1931–). The photographs of these paintings taken by Nakagawa were widely publicized and caused a huge sensation in Japan. The Japanese government pressured the American government to return its national property, which the United States eventually did in 1971, though in the form of an “indefinite loan.” This “discovery” and return of campaign paintings sparked a renewed debate about the artists’ war responsibility. Newspapers and journals carried articles and published special issues on this controversial topic, which provided the former war painters, including Mukai, with the chance to defend themselves twenty-some years after the war’s end. _The Weekly Yomiuri_, a conservative tabloid journal, for instance, in August 1967 organized a roundtable discussion by former war painters titled “Lost War Paintings: The Entire Account of Masterpieces of the Pacific War Hidden in the United States.”

At this roundtable discussion, Mukai, together with other former war painters, justified his wartime service; they claimed that their paintings were not propaganda, but, in Mukai’s words, “[records of] the facts of history,” and thus valuable property rightly belonging to the Japanese nation. The validity of Mukai’s characterization of campaign record painting as objective visual record is not our concern here, but the ways in which Mukai connected his wartime and postwar periods is. Mukai’s emphasis on campaign record painting as a valuable historical record for the nation uncannily echoed his postwar project of recording _minka_ to preserve Japanese cultural-historical identity. By emphasizing the generic definition of campaign record paintings as historical record and the war as a chance to enhance his painting techniques, Mukai successfully subsumed his wartime past in his lifelong “peaceful” project, recording the time-honored _minka_, a new symbol for postwar Japan.

Today, in art-historical texts and museum contexts Mukai’s _minka_ are always evaluated as pacifist in tone vis-à-vis his wartime paintings. Yet, as I hope I have demonstrated in this article, Mukai Junkichi’s transformation from a war painter to a _minka_ painter was closely associated with the processes whereby Mukai reconstructed his postwar political and artistic standing after Japan’s traumatic defeat. In these processes _minka_ appear to have been particularly instrumental for Mukai, as they provided him with a theme in which to accommodate his long-standing aspiration for the social engagement of art and his realist painting style in the postwar political and artistic context. Just as the Japanese government found _minka_ a valuable symbol to help sustain the nation’s identity while erasing its aggressive recent past, _minka_ also helped Mukai to achieve a postwar identity largely free of the taint of his wartime past.

Notes

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1. The term _minka_ had been used as early as the 10th century to mean houses of common people, but it was not until the 1920s that the term came into wide use and was for the first time recognized as a subject worthy of study. _Minka_ study was initiated by the Hakubōkai (White Thatched Society; 1917–1918?), a group of scholars, ethnographers, writers, and certain politicians (e.g., Kon Wajirō [1888–1973], Yanagita Kunio [1875–1962], Uchida Roan [1868–1929], and Ishiguro Tadaatsu [1884–1960]) whose purpose was the study and preservation of _minka_ throughout the Japanese archipelago. Although the Haku-bōkai dissolved after conducting a year-long survey of _minka_ between 1917 and 1918, Kon in particular carried on with his investigation and reevaluation of _minka_, and...
his five years of fieldwork resulted in the book *Japanese Minka* (*Nihon no minka*), published in 1922. This book had a profound impact on the popularization of the term and concept of *minka*. Kon’s study did not clearly define *minka* per se, but its meaning is apparent in the differences between *minka* and the new type of private residence that appeared in urban areas in the course of Japanese modernization. Kon, who perceived that architectural forms were largely shaped by the living patterns of their residents, argued that thanks to the development of transportation and the fragmented lifestyle in which private and public spaces were clearly segregated, urban dwellers were relatively free to organize their living spaces according to their tastes. In contrast, the form, design, and function of houses in farming and fishing villages and in remote areas—*minka*—were largely determined by local materials, climate, communal living patterns, and the requisites of daily living; see Kon Wajirō, *Nihon no minka: Denen seikatsu no sumika* (*Japanese Minka: The Residences of Country People*) (Tokyo: Suzuki shoten, 1922).


6. These two associations were sister organs organized under the supervision of the Imperial Rule Association. The former was assigned to oversee all patriotic art activities, while the latter allotted art supplies. Participation in the Patriotic Association was not mandatory, but as the Regulatory Association came exclusively to control the supply of art materials in 1944, the majority of artists had no choice but to join in order to draw a ration of art materials; Kodama Kibō, *Bitō bayawakari* (Brief Introduction to Bitō) (Tokyo: Shadanhōjin Nihon Bijutsu Oyobi Kohgei Tōsei Kyōkai, 1943).


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.


20. The dismissive attitude toward painting or, more broadly, fine art is evident in the cultural regulations and censorship imposed by the Cabinet Information Division (Naikaku Johōbu, inaugurated in 1937 and reorganized as Jōhōkyoku, the Information Bureau, in 1940); this was the major organ of cultural and information control during the Asia-Pacific War. Whereas film and print materials were quickly placed under its strict supervision, the Information Division rarely issued a regulation directly pertaining to painting or sculpture. For details of cultural regulations imposed by the Cabinet Information Division and the Information Bureau, see Ariyama Teruo and Nishiyama Takenori, eds., *Jōhōkyoku kankei shiryō* (Pertinent Materials Regarding the Information Division), vols. 1–7 (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobo, 2002); Ogino Fujio, ed., *Jōhōkyoku kankei gokuhi shiryō* (Confidential Materials of the Information Division), vols. 1–8 (Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 2003).

21. Tanō Yasunori and Kawata Akihisa, *Imeji no naka no sensō: Nisshin, Nichiro kara reisen made* (Visual...

22. Charge Ahead, together with Abe Gosei’s Miokuru bitobito (People Seeing Off Soldiers), caused a controversy, when Kokusai shashin jōbō (The International Graphic) featured photo reproductions of these works. The Japanese ambassador to Argentina objected that Mukai’s soldiers “do not look like righteous Japanese at all” and “may lead [a foreign audience] to misconstrue the meaning of Holy War.” In response to this warning the distribution of this issue of International Graphic outside Japan was cancelled; “Nikaten kazatta sensōga, kaigai hanpu o kinishi ‘seisen no ninshiki’ o ayamaru (War Paintings Displayed in the Nika Exhibition Are Banned from Distribution Abroad Since They May Prompt Misunderstanding of ‘the Meaning of Holy War’),” Asahi shinbun (Asahi Newspaper), 15 February 1939, p. 11.

23. Sasaki Shigeo, “‘Sensō to bijutsu’ kankei shiryou mokuroku (2) (List of Materials Pertinent to ‘War and Art’),” Kōzō (Structure) 12 (October 1997): 185.

24. The majority of campaign record paintings are currently housed in the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Mukai’s campaign record paintings housed in the Museum are as follows: Record of April 9: All-Out Attack at Bataan Peninsula (1942); Offensive Operation on Mt. Mayu, Western Burma (1944); Battle to the Death on the Malayon Front (1944); and Fierce Fighting of Minakami Garrison at Myitkyina (1945).


28. A more concerted effort to identify war criminals in the art world was made by the Japan Art Society (Nihon bijutsu-kai), which published a list of “people who bore war responsibility in the art world” in July 1946. The list comprised seven art groups and eight individual artists. For more details about the postwar debate over artists’ political responsibility, see Nakamura Giichi, “Bijutsushi no kūhaku to ansho: Sensōga ronsō (Blank Space and Dark Aspect of Art History: The War Painting Controversy),” in Zoku Nihon kindai bijutsu ronsōshi (History of Art Controversy in Modern Japan: The Sequel) (Tokyo: Kyūyōdō, 1982), pp. 241–271.


31. This text was published as the inaugural manifesto of Action Art Association, and may not have been written by Mukai alone. Yet since Mukai was the central figure in the establishment of the association, it is highly likely that the text and those particular words reflected his thinking; Mukai Junkichi and Nanba Kakuzō, eds., Kōdō Bijutsu sanjūgenen no shōshi (35 Years Brief History of Action Art) (Tokyo: Kōdō Bijutsu Kyōkai, 1980), p. 51.

32. Ibid., p. 25.

33. Mukai displayed a set of two large-scale paintings, Mabiru (Midday) and Yoake (Dawn), together with Tramp in the first Action Art Association annual exhibition in 1946. At this stage of research the author refrains from incorporating Dawn into the analysis, since its location is unknown and only an extremely obscure black-and-white photo reproduction is currently available. Midday, however, is a compelling image of a fishing village, in a manner most unusual for Mukai. Its spectacular description of seascape is reminiscent of Mukai’s wartime paintings such as Shower on Lake Loktak (discussed later), but all the foreground figures are highly stylized and appear faceless. Amid these ghostly figures a child with a red umbrella blazes into the center of the foreground, adding a surrealistic overtone to this picture. Although it is difficult to ascertain the meaning of these paintings without an examination of Dawn, the significant stylistic disparities seen in Midday and other paintings done by him in about the same period may indicate Mukai’s unsettled position in the immediate postwar time.


35. Ibid., p. 366.

36. Ibid., p. 367.

37. Ibid., p. 366.

38. Ibid., p. 376.

39. Ibid.


43. Mukai Junkichi, “Nihon bi (Beauty of Japan),” Hikari (Light) 2, no. 1 (1946): unpaginated.

45. The motivation behind *Shower on Lake Loktak* and the original location where it was displayed are currently unknown, yet considering that this picture was kept by Mukai himself until he gave it to Hino in 1953, *Lake Loktak* was probably not commissioned by the military but made more for a personal purpose.

46. This comment is a part of Mukai’s message (presumably to Hino) written on *shikishi* paper, which is currently preserved in the Hino Ashihei Memorial Museum together with *Shower on Lake Loktak*. Since Mukai and Hino were accompanied by the composer Koseki Yuji (1909–1989), Hashimoto Yoshiya argues that the third person could be Koseki; Hashimoto Yoshiya, “Gaka Mukai Junkichi to sensō,” p. 50.


48. The painter Hara Sei’ichi (1906–1986), who was sent to China as a soldier, met the official war painter Seikyūsha, 2005).


57. Ibid., p. 25.