ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: EVOLUTION AND ETERNITY IN THE LANDSCAPE OF DEFEAT: YOKOYAMA TAIKAN AND MT. FUJI

Magdalena Frances Mastrandrea, Master of Arts, 2023

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The end of the Fifteen Year War in August 1945 abruptly dismantled the ideology of art in service of the empire that established Japanese painters had worked under for over a decade. During this time, Yokoyama Taikan, a figurehead of the Nihonga painting genre who infamously called on artists to support the war effort, displayed hyper-nationalist paintings of Mt. Fuji, an icon synonymous with the nation of Japan. As droves of American Occupiers entered the country following Japan's surrender, artists like Taikan quickly began to adjust their public image to avoid consequences. Yet only two years later, Taikan painted and displayed *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, an 88-foot-long scroll painting progressing through scenes of mountains, forests, rivers, and most notably, beginning with Mt. Fuji. Although painted in the midst of the Allied Occupation of Japan, when all Japanese media was subjected to strict censorship, Taikan's use of Fuji at the beginning of this composition blatantly recalls his wartime paintings of the mountain. Despite this, he successfully exhibited *Landscape of Four Seasons* at the 1947 Japan Visual Arts Academy exhibition, or Inten, the first full-scale Inten since Japan's surrender.

In my analysis of this image, I begin by introducing compositionally similar Mt. Fuji paintings from before the war's end to establish Taikan as a vehemently nationalistic artist who glorified the empire in the image of Fuji. Through examining the iconography and display of *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, painted in the dramatically shifted political climate of 1947, I argue that the image of Mt. Fuji, only recently associated with extreme nationalism and

militarism, evolved rapidly after Japan's surrender into a symbol of hope and resilience. The idealistic, symbolic nature of Nihonga painting allowed Taikan to exploit Fuji's new meaning in defense of his wartime endeavors. Therefore, his Occupation era landscapes of the exact same subject matter evaded suspicion. *Landscape of the Four Seasons* is evidence of this phenomenon and of Taikan's full reentry into the mainstream Japanese art world because of its display in the Inten, where it attracted significant attention. In addressing this, I explore the evolution of Mt. Fuji as an icon in the eyes of the Japanese and Americans alike, defining its new symbolism in the postwar period.

EVOLUTION AND ETERNITY IN THE LANDSCAPE OF DEFEAT: YOKOYAMA TAIKAN AND MT. FUJI

by

Magdalena Frances Mastrandrea

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Alicia Volk, Chair
Associate Professor Abigail McEwen
Assistant Professor Tess Korobkin

Dedication

For Dr. Sarita Heer, in recognition of her invaluable mentorship and dedication to her students.

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Introduction

In September 1947, at the first full-scale Japan Art Academy Exhibition, or Inten, since before Japan's surrender, Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) exhibited *Landscape of the Four Seasons* (Figure 1), considered a monumental work of art by exhibition audiences. Viewers were shocked that Taikan, at the age of seventy-nine, managed to complete such a massive artistic undertaking. The remarkable result, *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* unravels from right to left, revealing seemingly endless yards of landscape scenes that transition through mountains, rivers, forests, and most notably, beginning with Mt. Fuji. The vignettes evolve through a full cycle of the four seasons, beginning and ending with winter.

In Japanese, *山水四季*, read *Sansui Shiki,* "*sansui"* translates to "mountains and rivers" and refers to a genre of Japanese landscape painting specifically of mountains and rivers. Throughout the scroll, mountains and rivers maintain a strong presence and provide continuity. "*Shiki*" translates to the four seasons, a motif deeply rooted within Japanese cultural tradition since ancient times, and an established theme in Japanese *sansui* painting.[1] Through the scroll's name, Taikan contextualizes himself within this painting tradition. Typical of Japanese scrolls, brushed characters in ink commence *Landscape of the Four Seasons.*[2] The calligraphy "彡無窮" read "*mukiyū o ō*" means "eternity" or "to pursue something without limits".[3] After the text, the scroll's narrative begins with a rising sun, followed immediately by the main panel, Mt. Fuji in clouds. To the left, snowy winter hills initiate the seasonal landscapes. A large white mountain rises in the distance while barren trees populate the scroll's foreground. Spring blooms in the

[1] Shirane Haruo, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 1-24.
[2] Toda Kenji, *Japanese Scroll Painting,* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 6.
[3] Yokoyama, Taikan (1868-1958), Henshū Kokuritsushin Bijutsukan (Tokyo, Japan), Yokoyama Taikan Kinen-kan, Asahishinbunsha. *Botsugo 50-nen yokoyama taikan: Aratanaru-den Shō he*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2008, 86.

Figure 1, Yokoyama Taikan, *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* 1947, Yokoyama Taikan Memorial Hall, Tokyo

following vignette, where a brilliant blue stream flows through a mountainous terrain filled with cherry blossom trees, emblematic of springtime in Japan. Summer assumes the form of a bamboo gracefully blowing in the breeze. The brightest colors within the entire scroll appear within the autumn vignette, where layers of red-orange ink blur into a fiery fog of colorful leaves. Finally, the optimistic, bright colors fade. To conclude the image, Taikan included a final, somber winter landscape, fully completing the seasonal cycle and indicating the genesis of a new one.

The scroll culminates in a hazy moon rising into the dark night sky, complementing the blazing red sun at the beginning of the scroll. The celestial bodies open and close the evolving imagery, setting the narrative in cyclical time. On either end of a lengthy object, the sun and moon bring the scroll to life, transforming the still imagery into a narrative about the changing of the seasons, the consistent and unstopping passage of time. Though the scroll concludes with the rising moon, the imagery preceding this establishes the hope that spring will bloom once again.

Landscape of the Four Seasons's somber depiction of beginnings and endings corresponds with the historical events of 1947, two years into the Allied Occupation of Japan, which began only a few short weeks after the end of the Fifteen Year War (1931-1945) in August 1945. The last years of the war left Japan demolished and the population destitute. Many remained in poverty and hungry through the late 1940s and early 50s. At the Occupation's beginning, Allied personnel promptly extinguished visible traces of empire and militarism, forcing the Japanese, with mixed success, to abandon their deeply rooted fascist ideologies.[4] The simultaneous feelings of both hope and despair present in the scroll illustrate the frustration of Taikan and those who had been vocal proponents of the empire. The iconography, particularly Mt. Fuji, reveals remnants of persisting nationalism.

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[4] John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, 1st ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 19-30.

Mt. Fuji, located approximately sixty-two miles southwest of Tokyo, recurs as a visual motif throughout Japanese cultural and religious history. The sublime, iconic form of the inactive volcano has awed observers since the ancient period. At the height of 12,388 ft., Mt. Fuji's peak is the tallest point in Japan, situated between the main island of Honshū and the heavens. One legend states that boulders fell from the sky and completed the mountain's peak, thereby making Fuji the physical conjunction of earth and the realm of the gods.[5] For centuries, Japanese artists have depicted the magnificent mountain in various states and scenes. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, partly due to the perception of Westerners, Mt. Fuji came to symbolize Japan as a nation. In wartime, this icon evolved again into a hyper-nationalized, deified body meant to embody the glory of Japan and mobilize the homefront populace. Fuji became associated with the fascist idea of the *kokutai*, the belief that all Japanese people shared a connection with each other and ultimately with the emperor, the leader and protector of the national body.[6]

During the war, Taikan established himself as a prolific painter of Fuji. As a part of the Total Mobilization Law of 1938, which stripped Japanese citizens of their remaining freedoms, the Cabinet Information Bureau restructured the national art world similarly to that of Nazi Germany.[7] This forced actively practicing artists to produce art that fully supported their nation. However, Taikan incorporated fascist messages in his wartime paintings out of his own free will. By painting the image of Mt. Fuji in Nihonga,[8] a painting genre that specifically uses traditional

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[5] Royall Tyler, "A Glimpse of Mt. Fuji in Legend and Cult," *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 16, no. 2 (1981): 141.

[6] Ikeda Asato. *The Politics of Painting: Fascism and Japanese Art during the Second World War*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 29.

[7] M. H. Sandler, "The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke's Reply to the State," *Art Journal -New York-* 55, no. 3 (1996): 75.

[8] Nihonga, meaning "Japanese painting", is an amorphous painting genre that does not conform to one vision. It broadly includes styles, aesthetics, and subject matter derived from thousands of years of Japanese painting tradition rather than from Western influence.

Japanese materials and techniques, Taikan aimed to produce quintessentially Japanese art. Through the deified mountain, Taikan glorified the emperor and the nation of Japan.

The war's end abruptly dismantled the systems of art in service of the empire that forcibly engaged established Japanese painters. Though most working artists participated in the war effort, Taikan was viewed by many as the leader of the movement to produce art in service of the nation. During the war, he served as a cultural ambassador for imperial Japan, donated money from the sale of his art work to the army, acted as the chair of the Japan Patriotic Art Society, a governmental organization that ensured artists expressed loyalty to the empire, and painted hundreds of hyper-nationalist images of Mt. Fuji.[9] However, only two years following defeat, Taikan painted *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* a massive scroll featuring Fuji at the very beginning, and displayed the full work at the fiftieth Inten with no issue. While the American military seized dozens of *sensō-ga*, or oil paintings realistically documenting battle scenes,[10] Taikan's wartime Fuji paintings seemingly went unnoticed by the Occupiers.

How did Taikan, known on an international scale and seen by many as the leader of Japanese wartime artists, manage to avoid facing consequences from the Allied Occupiers for his unwavering support of the empire through his art? Moreover, how did he manage to continue painting in the exact same subject matter that only recently promoted fascism and Japanese ultranationalism? Existing literature on Taikan in both English and Japanese concentrates primarily on his early career in the late Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) periods. It consists mainly of formal analysis, focusing on the visual elements of Taikan's artwork and his

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[9] Ellen P. Conant, Steven D. Owyoung, J. Thomas Rimer, the Japan Foundation, St. Louis Art Museum, and Kokusai Kōryū Kikin, *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968*, (Firsted. St. Louis, Mo.: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995), 333.

10 Ikeda Asato, "Japan's Haunting War Art: Contested War Memories and Art Museums," DisClosure 18 (April 2009): 5.

contribution to the genre of Nihonga rather than offering a critical reading of his works in a sociopolitical context. Very little writing covers Taikan's Occupation era artwork, and the minimal existing writing provides sparse detail on his endeavors immediately following surrender. In response, my study expands on this under-researched period by focusing specifically on the years 1945-1947 and in particular on the success of *Landscape of the Four Seasons* in the 1947 Inten.

Through examining the iconography of and display context for *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, painted two years into the Allied Occupation of Japan, I argue that the image of Mt. Fuji, only recently associated with ultranationalism and militarism, evolved rapidly after Japan's surrender into a symbol of hope and resilience. Numerous visual culture materials incorporated into this study particularly underscore this transformation. The idealistic, symbolic nature of Nihonga painting allowed Taikan to hide behind Fuji's new meaning in defense of his wartime endeavors. Taikan claimed that because he spent the war simply painting Mt. Fuji rather than battle scenes like many of his colleagues in the art world, he could not be complicit in war crime**s.**[11] Many were satisfied with his explanation and his Occupation era paintings of the same subject were generally well-received. *La**n**dscape of the Four Seasons* evidences Taikan's full reentry into the mainstream Japanese art world because of its display in the Inten, an institution led and founded by Taikan, where it attracted significant attention.

This project brings together scholarship on Japanese art history, the Allied Occupation of Japan, and the cultural and symbolic significance of Mt. Fuji. By focusing intently on this short period of time following Japan's surrender, my study provides thorough insight into two tumultuous years of Taikan's career. Additionally, it suggests how the political events of the

[11] Satō Shino, "'Bijutsu Shisetsu' to shite no Yokoyama Taikan: Shōwa-ki o Chūshin ni," *Lotus: Nihon Fenorosa gakkai kikan-shi* 42, no. 42 (2022): 32-33.

Occupation affected the mainstream Japanese artworld. I examine both the individual and national circumstances that allowed Taikan to display *Landscape of the Four Seasons* with no issue.

Foremost, this project stems from evidence drawn from critical visual analysis of the works of art discussed. I primarily focus on the Fuji vignette and seasonal iconography within *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* using the scroll as evidence of Fuji's evolving meaning and Taikan's full reentry into the Japanese art world. My visual analysis of related Taikan paintings that predate this scroll underscores my argument. These paintings include *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods* (Figure 2) from 1932*, Japan, Where the Sun Rises* (Figure 3) from 1940, and *Light in Spring (Sea of Trees)* from 1946 (Figure 4). These examples establish a visual narrative of Taikan's Fuji paintings. Furthermore, comparison with other artists' renditions of the four seasons theme contextualizes Taikan's paintings within Japanese painting history.

Because of the limitations of the existing secondary research on Taikan's activities and the Japanese art world directly following surrender, this project relies largely on primary materials from the wartime and Occupation period. These materials include postwar art magazines and catalogs published contemporaneously with the artworks and exhibitions they describe. These periodicals and pamphlets, circulated among the Japanese art world and general public, firstly describe the art world in the years directly following surrender while also providing insight into public opinion concerning Taikan. Moreover, my incorporation of a variety of graphic images from everyday and popular culture objects strongly supports my argument. I use these materials to establish the visual cultures of war and postwar within which Taikan worked. In the following writing, I offer evidence of how the icon of Fuji remained and evolved following the war's end.

Figure 2, Yokoyama Taikan, *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods,* 1932, Adachi Museum of Art, Yasugi, Shimane Prefecture

Figure 3, Yokoyama Taikan, *Japan, Where the Sun Rises,* 1940, Museum of the Imperial Collections, Tokyo

Figure 4, Yokoyama Taikan, *Light in Spring (Sea of Trees)*, 1946, Hiroshima Museum of Art

Yokoyama Taikan

Born in 1868, the first year of the Meiji period and the official beginning of modern Japanese history, Taikan lived 90 years and remained involved in the Japanese art world for decades. His earliest notable works date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but he continued producing high profile paintings into the 1950s.[12] Taikan's early life and initial artistic development coincided with the conceptualization of the Nihonga painting genre, in the development of which he played an instrumental role, and the establishment of the Japan Art Association, or *Nihon Bijutsuin*, the premier Nihonga organization in Tokyo.[13] Okakura Tenshin, a Japanese scholar, philosopher, and art critic who became a mentor to Taikan early in his artistic training, and Ernest Fenollosa, an American philosopher teaching in Japan, primarily conceptualized Nihonga in an effort to construct a modern national painting style for Japan by synthesizing selected elements of Japanese painting history with Western spatial and shading techniques.

Nihonga was developed in an extremely calculated manner in reaction to the sudden influx of Western artistic styles and materials. Until the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the many schools of Japanese painting, such as the Kanō school, the Maruyama-Shijō school, and the Tosa school, did not replace each other over time, but coexisted.[14] In the modern era, Nihonga essentialized and brought together the highlights of various existing Japanese painting genres. As a part of the Restoration, the Meiji government enacted extensive political, social, economic, and militaristic reforms. In recognition of the value of art in promoting the greatness of Japanese

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[12] Henshū Kokuritsushin Bijutsukan et. al, *Botsugo 50-Nen Tokoyama Taikan*, 2.
[13] John M. Rosenfield, "Nihonga and Its Resistance to 'the Scorching Drought of Modern Vulgarity,'" *Births and Rebirths in Japanese Art: Essays Celebrating the Inauguration of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures*, [European Studies on Japan], v. 1 (Leiden: Hotei Pub., 2001), 163.
[14] Conant et. al, 15.

culture globally, the Ministry of Education opened the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1889 under the direction of Tenshin and Fenollosa. Because the school initially only offered training in Nihonga rather than Western style painting, many prominent painters of the Nihonga genre, most notably Taikan, emerged from this program.[15]

By the end of the Meiji period, Nihonga was almost fully conceived of as a unified school defined by naturalism, originality, refined color, and use of specific subject matter.[16] At this time, Taikan had already greatly contributed to the genre through the production of a variety of figural and landscape paintings. In 1898, fighting within the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and mounting criticism against Tenshin led to his expulsion from his high-ranking teaching position. In response, Tenshin, Taikan, and fellow Nihonga painters who shared their ideals founded the Japan Art Academy and corresponding biannual Japan Art Academy Exhibition, or Inten. After this group initially disbanded, Taikan himself revived the organization and the corresponding Inten the year after Tenshin's death, in 1914.[17]

According to Tenshin, because of the strong presence of Buddhism within Japanese culture, Japan uniquely served as the "spiritual repository of Asia". Because he firmly believed that Japanese art embodied the spiritual essence of Asia, Tenshin promoted these ideals while affiliated with the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.[18] As an artist who trained directly under Tenshin, a scholar whose political and philosophical writing notably contributed to early ideas of pan-Asianism, Taikan foremost sought to maintain Japanese spirit and tradition within his artworks.

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[15] Victoria Weston, "Institutionalizing Talent and the Kanō Legacy at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts 1889-1893," in *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. Jordan, Brenda G., and Victoria L. Weston, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 150.
[16] Chelsea Foxwell, *Making Modern Japanese-Style Painting: Kano Hōgai and the Search for Images*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 110.
[17] Rosenfield, 173.
[18] F. G. Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16, no. 2 (1990): 310-34.

Though Taikan borrowed spatial, shading, and realism techniques from Western art practice, he thoroughly rooted his works in Japanese visual tradition. He focused on subjects found in Japanese paintings dating decades and centuries from before the beginning of the Meiji Restoration. Moreover, Taikan developed *moro-tai*, or "hazy style" painting by applying layers of wide, washed out brush strokes to create forms with gradation and depth rather than with outlines. Though the Japanese art establishment originally rejected this new, innovative style, *moro-tai* was immediately successful overseas and eventually became popular in Japan, as well.[19]

Taikan's dedication to maintaining and promoting the traditions of Japanese art made him into a cultural ambassador of Japan. In 1930, Taikan traveled to Rome for the Japanese art exhibition, where he met Mussolini,[20] and in 1938, he delivered a speech on Japanese culture to visiting Hitler youth. He outspokenly supported imperial Japan's war efforts through his artwork and essays. His most iconic wartime painting, *Japan, Where the Sun Rises* debuted at the 2600th Imperial Anniversary Art Exhibition as a main feature in 1940, the year of its creation. The sale of Taikan's corresponding painting series *Ten Mountain Views* and *Ten Ocean Views* raised 500,000 yen for the Japanese military.[21]

Taikan experienced the peak of his painting career during the Fifteen Year War, when he achieved great national and international fame for his landscape paintings of Mt. Fuji. He glorified the Japanese people, land, and emperor in the image of the deified mountain. On August 15, 1945, when Emperor Hirohito's radio announcement broadcasted the news of Japan's full surrender to the Allied Powers, Japanese artists were forced to abandon the ideologies of

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[19] Ellen P. Conant et al., 333.
[20] *Kingu*, 1930.
[21] Conant et al., 333.

Japanese exceptionalism that they had operated under for decades. Stunned and confused, they progressed forward, adapting to new life under the Allied Occupiers, mostly American, who flooded into their country through the end of that year.[22] Taikan, clouded by an air of gloom and defeat, continued to paint, expressing both his hopes and sorrows for the future of his country through his brush.

[22] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 19-30.

Reading Mt. Fuji in *Landscape of the Four Seasons*

Though the art world temporarily halted, interwar and wartime art institutions and written publications quickly revived, and after only two short years, Taikan was once again the star of the fall Inten exhibition. *Landscape of the Four Seasons* was one of Taikan's first colored images on display after the war's end.[23] However, other than some patches of bright ink, the image as a whole appears gray and melancholic. Even after 1947 and into the 1950s, as art supplies became more widely available, Taikan maintained this somber palette.

For this work, Taikan intentionally chose to produce an *emaki*, or handscroll painting held in the hands like a book. The *emaki* specifically originated within yamato-e, a native Japanese painting genre with origins dating back to ancient times. Rather than producing landscapes in the typical format of tall, vertical scenes best suited for display on a wall, Japanese artists painted horizontal, sometimes lengthy *emaki* to accentuate narrative or transitional scenes.[24] Within a few feet or meters, artists painted the same subject or scene in different states. This wide compositional format, continuing forward seemingly endlessly as the scroll unfurls from right to left, creates the illusion of the passage of time or change of location within a single painted object. The *emaki* format particularly suits the depiction of the evolution of the four seasons, as both the subject matter and the scroll's form create the illusion of the passage of time within one confined space.

Taikan viewed himself as a steward of authentic Japanese art. As the art and technology of Japan continuously evolved forward, Taikan increasingly felt a responsibility to preserve the spirit of old Japan in his Nihonga painting. He turned to historically significant Japanese

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[23] Henshū Kokuritsushin Bijutsukan et. al, *Botsugo 50-Nen Tokoyama Taikan*, 86.
[24] Ruth Starr, "Emaki Innovation: The Scroll as a Medium for Depicting Time & Motion," *Building Material*, no. 15 (2006).

iconography for visual inspiration and as a means of contextualizing himself within the history of Japanese art. His groundbreaking 1947 *Landscape of the Four Seasons* recalls the *emaki* of the same subject matter and name produced by Sesshū Tōyō in the Muromachi period (1336-1573) nearly five hundred years earlier. Sesshū, who painted mostly in black ink, established himself as one of the greatest painters of Japanese history through his mastery of both Chinese and Japanese painting styles in his landscapes. At nearly seventy years old, Sesshū painted *Landscape Scrolls of the Four Seasons* (Figure 5)*,* an *emaki* considered to be his masterpiece. Extending almost sixty feet in length, Sesshū's scroll, like Taikan's, progresses through an evolution of spring, summer, fall and winter.[25] Rendered entirely in black ink, harmonies of thick outlines and realistically shaded values smoothly integrate within the lengthy composition. Small, distant figures populate each scene, meandering across bridges and crowding in front of small wooden homes. Like the few figures in Taian's *emaki,* their small scale accentuates the vastness of the landscape that surrounds them.

Figure 5, Sesshu Tōyō, *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* 1486, Mori Museum, Hōfu, Yamaguchi Prefecture

[25] Nakamura Tanio and Elise Grilli, *Sesshū Toyo, 1420-1506*, [1st English ed.], (Kodansha Library of Japanese Art, no.10 (Tokyo ; C.E. Tuttle Co., 1957), 17.

In the same manner, Taikan painted his *Landscape of the Four Season*s at seventy-nine, mimicking Sesshū's production of his lengthy masterpiece near the close of his prolific painting career. At eighty-eight feet in length, Taikan's scroll reaches well beyond Sesshū's already lengthy composition. Like Sesshū's scroll, Taikan's seasonal transitions are facilitated by water in some form. This water represents emptiness, a profound concept in Zen Buddhism and in some ways also synonymous with infiniteness. Emptiness implies the eventual fading of impermanent objects through cosmic eternity.[26] Though the traditionally established seasonal progression of seasons within Japanese art typically includes one vignette of each season beginning with spring and then cycling through summer, fall, and then winter, Taikan's *emaki* begins and ends in the winter time. The same season at each end of the composition emphasizes the full completion of a cycle and the beginning of a new one, giving the artwork a sense of continuation. The cycle of the seasons, unfolding between the rising sun and waning moon on either end, implies the endlessness of this process. The beginning of the next winter expresses anticipation for the next cycle.

When Sesshū produced his scroll, he decided that rather than simply recycling the same visual motifs and vignettes that Chinese and Japanese artists typically utilized in their seasonal landscape paintings, he would incorporate his own, unique imagery.[27] Similarly, in Taikan's scroll, Mt. Fuji floating atop of a sea of golden clouds commences the sequence, an artistic reimagining unique to Taikan. Nearly engulfed by clouds, the black-and-white peak of Fuji emerges through the fog, almost appearing to materialize from the golden daytime sky. Only preceded by the red sun and a small island of mountains, this initial drawing of Fuji does not correspond with any of the seasons. Though the golden clouds eventually flow into the fog of

[26] Nakamura and Grilli, 19.
[27] Nakamura and Grilli, 8.

winter, Fuji's separation marks the mountain as apart from the natural cycle of the seasons, secure in its own, eternal realm. The visual elements of this vignette reinforce Fuji's sense of placelessness; other than a few faint brushstrokes that form the blanket of clouds, the gold background representing the daytime sky contains no distinctive detail. This nondescript gold recalls the *rinpa* style of painting, a colorful revival of yamato-e genre painting that took place in the Edo period (1603-1867).[28] The thick clouds at the forefront effectively sever the mountain from any land beneath the heavenly realm of the sun and skies.

For centuries, Japanese artists have depicted the theme of the four seasons. Sesshū painted his scroll in the Muromachi period at the end of the fifteenth century, and like Taikan, employed a lengthy surface area to bring his theme to life. In the Momoyama period (1573-1603), Unkoku Tōgan painted his *Landscape of the Four Seasons* (Figure 6) on a six-panel folding screen in black ink, drawing inspiration from Sesshū's image. Unkoku's narrative begins on the far right with a town in spring, and it eventually culminates in a sparse, snowy mountain in the background on the far left. Around this same time, Tosa Mitsunobu presented the four seasons on a pair of six-panel folding screens using only bamboo (Figure 7).

Contemporaries of Taikan also reimagined this historic subject matter in Nihonga. Morikawa Sobun divided his *Landscape of the Four Season*s (Figure 8) across four separate silk screen panels in the late 1890s, and in 1932, Matsubayashi Keigetsu (Figure 9) painted his rendition as one continuous image across six panels. Notably, Sobun, who chose famous places in Japan to feature in each season, included Mt. Fuji in the summer panel of his series.[29] In this scene, the giant mountain rises from a mist in the background and towers over the foliage and a

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[28] Henshū Kokuritsushin Bijutsukan et. al, *Botsugo 50-Nen Tokoyama Taikan*, 75.
[29] Morioka Michiyo et al., *Modern Masters of Kyoto: The Transformation of Japanese Painting Traditions, Nihonga from the Griffith and Patricia Way Collection,* (Seattle, WA: Seattle Art Museum, 1999), 86-87.

stream. However, Taikan's use of Fuji in his 1947 *Landscape in the Four Seasons* differs from Sobun's Meiji period image in which Fuji, an essential component of Japan's natural landscapes, is fully included within the seasonal vignettes. Though Taikan's blazing red sun initiates the

Figure 6, Unkoku Tōgan, *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, Momoyama period, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 7, Tosa Mitsunobu, *Bamboo in the Four Seasons,* Momoyama period, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

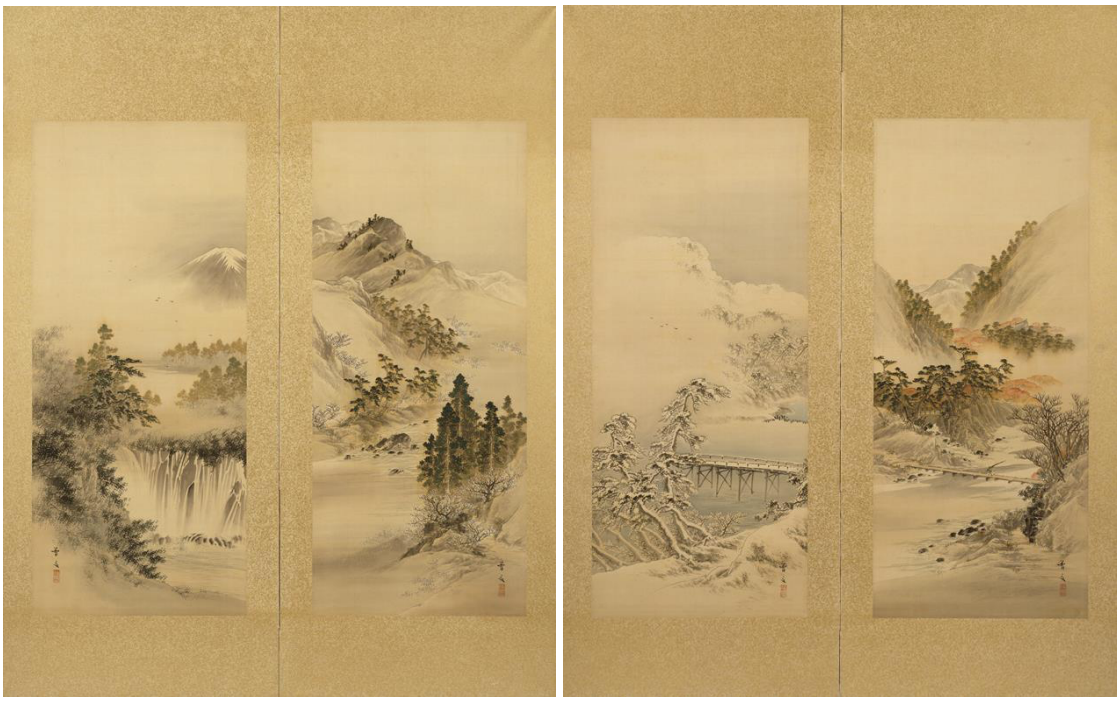

Figure 8, Morikawa Sobun, *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* late 1890s, Seattle Art Museum

Figure 9, Matsubayashi Keigetsu, *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* 1932, St. Louis Art Museum

scroll, placing Fuji within the rest of the narrative, there is no connection between Taikan's Fuji and the rest of the scenery. The mountain exists fully separately from the narratives that unfold,

unscathed by the relentless forces of nature. Taikan's powerful Mt. Fuji, an eternal force, transcends the cycle of the seasons.

Fuji in War

Occupation officials surely knew about Taikan's inclusion of Fuji in this scroll and its similarities to the hundreds of politically charged wartime landscapes of the same mountain Taikan produced only a few years prior. However, his 1947 display of the mountain in the Inten was permitted and moreover, celebrated. Mt. Fuji in *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, floating on a blanket of clouds below the red sun, appears strikingly similar to Taikan's wartime compositions such as *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods*, two six-panel folding screens from 1932, and *Japan, Where the Sun Rises* from 1940.

Taikan focused on Mt. Fuji for decades, well before 1947, painting the mountain in a constant, almost ritualistic manner. East Asian philosophy and Buddhism greatly informed Taikan's artistic practice and understanding of spirituality; many of these beliefs were originally Tenshin's.[30] Taikan's ritualistic practice of painting Fuji repetitively invoked the Buddhist tradition of writing sutras by hand for meditative purposes and religious merit. He especially hoped to imbue his Fuji with a spiritual quality through his refusal to paint the mountain from life. He relied on the image in his own mind in an attempt to capture a spiritual essence.[31] Taikan's practice of painting the mountain obsessively from memory resulted in the similar depiction of Mt. Fuji across his portfolio, particularly as the war progressed. The influence of Buddhism, particularly Zen Buddhism, persists in his works produced after the war. *Landscape of the Four Seasons* particularly reinforces this through its emphasis on infiniteness and the impermanence of earthly matter. The characters that begin the scroll translate to "eternity" or "to pursue something without limits" and come directly from Zen Buddhist philosophy. The

[30] Pekka Korhonen, "The Geography of Okakura Tenshin," *Japan Review*, no. 13 (2001): 115.
[31] Ikeda, *The Politics of Painting,* 45.

meaning of this loose calligraphy particularly invokes the steadfast, permanent form of Mt. Fuji that immediately follows.

Taikan's wartime paintings of Fuji at first appear innocuous, but he carefully selected and placed certain symbols to convey his strong nationalist ideologies. The materials of Nihonga, such as sumi ink and mineral pigments, lend themselves to simplified, symbolic images. This iconographic emphasis allowed for the easy incorporation of personal ideals into Nihonga. Taikan's domestic landscapes promote the fascist idea of Japan's forgotten prime of the era prior to Western influence. In his compositions of Mt. Fuji, Taikan presented the mountain in total perfection, a vision of the wonder and subliminality of timeless old Japan. In painting Mt. Fuji, he focused on capturing a certain spirit that he associated with Japan and its people. Taikan took this concept directly from Tenshin, who believed that the essence of Eastern art was to portray the spirit of the subject rather than the precise subject itself.[32]

Although the understanding of Mt. Fuji as a national icon arose only during the Meiji period, partly from the perception of Westerners, Fuji appears consistently throughout Japanese visual history. Over centuries, the mountain assumed religious symbolism in both Shintō and Buddhism, and in the Heian period (794-1185), Fuji began to be seen as a sacred place. During the wartime era of the 1930s and 40s, Mt. Fuji, like many other Japanese icons, assumed a new context. Taikan and other artists employed this immediately recognizable site as a celebratory symbol of nationalism, a sign of support for the Japanese Empire.[33] Taikan's 1932 composition, *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods* (Figure 2), exemplifies his use of Fuji as a charged symbol; the juxtaposition of Mt. Fuji with the rising sun remained a favorite subject through the remainder of his painting career.

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[32] Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin," 16.
[33] Ikeda, *The Politics of Painting,* 28-32.

Around the time Taikan painted this composition, the Shanghai Incident initiated founding of the Japanese colony Manchukuo, which effectively began Japan's Fifteen Year War.[34] Already in the title, *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods*, Taikan imagines Fuji, synonymous with the empire of Japan, as a heavenly body in the realm of the gods, beyond the reach of men. The only representational content on the dual screens includes Mt. Fuji, a circular red sun, and distant mountains. This simple scene mirrors the assortment of icons found in the Fuji vignette of *Landscape of the Four Seasons* painted sixteen years later. In both images, Mt. Fuji, placed on the upper left end of a long, horizontal composition, is balanced by the mountain range on the lower right. Fuji's shadowed, black base rises from the thick clouds and tapers into a glowing white peak. The straight outlines and distinct form of the mountain contrast with the shapeless, soft clouds that it rises from. Moreover, the texture of the mountainous land on the right panel differs from both the flattened Fuji and the clouds. On the indistinct mountain range, Taikan's brushstrokes appear much more loose and expressive, mirroring the work of Sesshū. The clouds function purely as empty space, like the water in Sesshū and Taikan's lengthy scrolls, and establish distance between Mt. Fuji and the other mountains. This negative space places Fuji far from the reach of humans. The separation of these subjects across two six-panel folding screens exaggerates the chasm between them.

To Taikan, the image of the magnificent mountain embodied the ideology of the *kokutai no hongi*, or body of the Japanese people as a country, directly related to *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* from 1937, the official fascist document that justified Japan's war effort in a fallacious analysis of the inherent unique spirit within the Japanese people. His vocal support of imperial Japan, particularly in his writings, reinforces the unquestionable nationalism

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[34] Henshū Adachi Bijutsukan Gakugei-bu**,** Yokoyama Taikan and Adachi Bijutsukan, *Adachi bijutsukan shozō taikan meihin 100-sen, (*Shimane-ken Yasugi-shi: Adachi Bijutsukan, 1990).

within his artwork. In “The Spirit of Japanese Art", published in 1939, Taikan urged artists to understand the spiritual quality of an object in order to truly capture its essence, and in “The Artistic New Order”, published in 1941, Taikan called for art in support of the nation.[35] Even before he published these writings, he already embedded his nationalist ideologies into his early paintings of Mt. Fuji.

His iconic 1940 painting *Japan, Where the Sun Rises* recalls the composition of his 1932 Fuji painting from several years earlier. Taikan created this stunning image by building up layers of faint brushstrokes that naturalistically capture the formless, misty clouds dissipating at the base of Mt. Fuji. The mountain emerges from a soft fog, floating in the sky like a heavenly body. Taikan painted this Fuji with much more regard for realism and detail than the same subject in *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods.* In *Japan, Where the Sun Rises,* the stark white mountaintop glows against the mountain’s base and the brown-gold background. The careful attention to the mountain’s crevices and the delicate gradient in the white peak accentuate its textured, protruding shape, especially in comparison to the Fuji in *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods*, flattened into a two-dimensional form by the stark outlines. Taikan clearly devoted a significant amount of time to this image, carefully building up detail through countless layers of mineral pigments and sumi ink. Through his masterful Mt. Fuji, Taikan honored the nation of Japan and the imperial family. The mountain in all of its glory embodies the emperor and his people, deifying them in this timeless Japanese form.

The only other subject matter, the vibrant sun, rises to the east of Mt. Fuji. In *First Peak of the Mountain of the Gods*, the red circle only begins to peak out from the horizon line behind the dense clouds. In *Japan, Where the Sun Rises*, Taikan enlarged the sun’s scale and placed it

[35] Ikeda, *The Politics of Painting,* 28.

near the top of the mountain, where it shines boldly in synchronization with Fuji and the powerful, then expansive Japanese empire. The creation, display, and eventual gifting of this painting to the imperial family fully encapsulates Taikan interest in capturing the unique Japanese spirit through painting purely Japanese imagery.[36] He chose the most quintessentially Japanese icons, Mt. Fuji and the round sun, leaving the image devoid of all other unnecessary detail.

Knowledge of *Japan, Where the Sun Rises* and Taikan's related wartime paintings reached a massive audience. All of the art world and a significant portion of the general population of Japan knew of Taikan's wartime endeavors, of his role as an international art ambassador, and his outspoken loyalty to the empire. The December 1940 issue of *Kingu* published a segment within the first few pages summarizing the events that commemorated the 2600th Imperial Anniversary celebration that year (Figure 10). This early Shōwa period (1926-1989) general magazine became the first publication in Japan to surpass a circulation of over one million people.[37] *Kingu's* picture montage summarizing this event, printed across three full pages, includes several photographs of the various celebratory events, highlighting different populations and individuals who supported the war effort. Notably, the only non-photographic image in this montage is *Japan, Where the Sun Rises*, speaking to the recognizability of this painting and its ability to stand in for the hyper-nationalist art exhibition at large. The corresponding caption states, "The Nihonga section of the exhibition displayed master Yokoyama Taikan's Japan, *Where the Sun Rises*", clearly naming both the artist and the image to

[36] Kawata Akihisa, *Gaka to Sensō: Nihonbijutsushi no Kūhaku*, Shohaned, Bessatsu Taiyō, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), 46-47.
[37] Amy Bliss Marshall, *Magazines and the Making of Mass Culture in Japan*, Studies in Book and Print Culture, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 81-96.

the massive population of readers.[38] Though integrated within a collage of photos, Taikan's painting stands out, firstly, as the only non-photographic image, but also as the only image without a person. In this collage, Mt. Fuji is the only image that is symbolic rather than literal, underscoring its symbolic value and association with Japan's imperial body.

Figure 10, "Hōshuku Kigen Nisen Roppyaku Nen." *Kingu*, October 1940, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

[38] "Hōshuku Kigen Nisen Roppyaku Nen," *Kingu*, 1940.

Evolution of Fuji as Icon

How did Mt. Fuji, synonymous with the Japanese empire, continue to remain an icon after the war's end, especially with the onset of the Occupation that censored all printed media? Fuji functioned the same way in Taikan's pristine, wartime Nihonga paintings as in wartime visual culture, where it appeared constantly as a signifier of the empire's power. For example, the illustration on the front cover of the book *Nihon no Kakkū Hikō*, or *Japan's Gliding Flight* (Figure 11) shows an A1033 Japanese glider plane soaring through the blue sky past Fuji's elegant peak. The mountain emphasizes both the great heights reached by aircraft and the lofty aspirations of Japan's imperial mission.[39] *Kingu* magazine frequently incorporated photos and illustrations of the mountain, such as the November 1942 illustration of two adolescent boys crouching on the ground within the vicinity of Mt. Fuji, which rises in the background behind them. They point a gun and a sword forward in imitation of soldiers, paired fittingly with the accompanying article, titled "Students' Wartime Training" (Figure 12).[40] Moreover, in 1943, *Kingu* magazine changed their name to *Fuji* in a sign of support for the empire.[41] *Fuji* frequently featured images of the famed mountain on the front cover, such as the January 1944 issue of Mt. Fuji against a cloudy blue sky, captioned "The Japanese Empire is a Divine Country" (Figure 13).[42] In an effort to militarize the Japanese populace, Fuji in juxtaposition with symbols of war and imperialism appeared incessantly across visual culture.

The period following Japan's defeat was a time of chaos within the country, as the majority of the population lived in destitute conditions and endured hardships through the end of the 1940s. Following defeat in late 1945, the strain of the war's final years left a significant

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[39] Kiyomizu Rokonosuke, *Nihon no Kakkū Hikō,* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kaiseikan, 1942), cover.
[40] "Gakusei no Senji Kunren," *Kingu*, November 1942, 1.
[41] Marshall, 81-96.
[42] *Fuji*, January 1944, cover.

Figure 11, *Nihon no Kakkū Hikō,* 1937, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Figure 12, “Gakusei no Senji Kunren”, *Kingu*, November 1942, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Figure 13, *Fuji*, January 1944, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

portion of the population impoverished. Starvation was common as food prices skyrocketed while few opportunities for employment remained. Necessities like clothing, shoes and everyday materials such as paper became scarce. Moreover, Allied air raids had completely razed major cities like Tokyo, rendering countless homeless. This homeless population included a huge percentage of young children, orphaned by the horrors of war and forced to live among the rubble of the decimated city.

In his comprehensive work on the Occupation, *Embracing Defeat,* historian John Dower emphasizes the battered state of the Japanese mainland and the dramatic altering of society that occurred following Emperor Hirohito's announcement of defeat on August 15. In explaining how the shocked population scrambled to rationalize this dramatic change and adjust to their newly altered lives, Dower argues that familiar language and everyday phrases from the wartime era were quickly adapted to create a psychological bridge between war and defeat, allowing the Japanese to mentally justify their circumstances and embrace a bleak new reality. Dower continues, "many totemic words, catchphrases, even texts that had been popular during the war proved perfectly adaptable to radically altered interpretations and objectives in the postwar years."[43] The ideologies of empire that had become fragile over time as hardships increasingly intensified over the final years of war easily evolved during the equally trying years of the war's aftermath. In the desperate establishment of a new normal, symbols once associated with nationalism and militarism changed rapidly into signifiers of peace and resilience. These familiar words and phrases eased the shock of defeat by helping the mind accept the war's end and Occupation's beginning in an attempt to begin rationalizing intense hardship and change.

[43] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 30.

Wartime visuals, particularly Mt. Fuji, functioned in this same way. The mountain was reinvented as a familiar, comforting icon of peace. In wartime, the Japanese claimed that they were fighting for peace and security, so the mental adjustment of understanding Fuji as a symbol of peace was not totally strained.[44] The basis of these ideologies remained intact as the American Occupiers entered the country and rapidly began the process of "demilitarization and democratization" in their former enemy nation.[45] In the years directly following defeat, Mt. Fuji, instantaneously recognizable to the Japanese people, became a symbol of hope, a sign of the permanence of the homeland of Japan. While the Occupiers fully suppressed other wartime icons and graphics, Fuji was able to be rehabilitated into a symbol of peace and democracy. The image of the iconic mountain easily melded into the American mission to transform Japan from a nation of war to a nation of peace and democracy.

In the first days of September 1945, the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Occupation issued a press code for Japanese communications and media of all types to abide by. This official document demanded truth in media, prohibiting any subject that may disturb public tranquility or invite criticism of the Allied troops.[46] This implementation of strict censorship forcibly ended the militaristic hold that plagued wartime media. Consequently, words and graphics relating to weapons, battlefronts, and bombs disappeared completely. Japanese publishers abandoned the image of the noble Japanese soldier, replacing him with the friendly American G.I. (Figure 14).[47] However, the image of Fuji, only recently juxtaposed with strictly prohibited icons of warfare, continued appearing regularly across widely distributed publications and pop culture materials.

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[44] H. Byron Earhart, *Mount Fuji: Icon of Japan. Studies in Comparative Religion,* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 128-130.
[45] John W. Dower, "Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia" in *The Truman Presidency*, Woodrow Wilson Center Series, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1989), 368.
[46] *Code for Japanese Press*, 1945.
[47] "Shinchu no Heitai-san", *Yōnen Kurabu*, November 1945.

Not explicitly associated with war and militarism, Mt. Fuji easily transferred to a new age. The illustrated book *Hashireyo Jeepu*, or *Run, Jeep, Run,* written in Japanese and marketed to Japanese children and families, tells the story of two G.I.'s cruising through Japan in their jeep, a vehicle symbolizing the United States and the Occupiers. In one scene, the men drive through Hakone Park, famous for its views of Mt. Fuji, which rises out of the background of this image (Figure 15).[48] Materials like this moved the mountain into the present era of Occupation. Mt. Fuji also continued to appear on covers of magazines, like the cover of *Shuppan Jōhō* (Figure 16) in April of 1947,[49] where it was juxtaposed with the cherry blossom, and on national stamp designs, such as a series from 1949 commemorating Japan's national parks (Figure 17).[50]

Moreover, Mt. Fuji charmed the Occupiers themselves, and the icon of the mountain became synonymous with sightseeing throughout Japan. To Americans living in Japan as well as those at home, the magnificent, tranquil image of Mt. Fuji affirmed an idealized vision of Japan as a delightful, spiritual place. These associations displaced recent memories of war and reframed Japan as a peaceful ally.[51] In a 1947 travel brochure marketed to foreign tourists, the contents details the natural and cultural sights of Shizuoka prefecture, where Mt. Fuji is located. The English language writing describes Fuji as "known in every corner of the world as the symbol of fair Japan"[52] (Figure 18). Similarly, a black-and-white photograph of Fuji consumes nearly the entire cover page of the Japanese Government Railways' Condensed Timetables from November 1947, published in English specifically for American G.I.s and their families stationed

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[48] Ishioka Tomio, *Hashireyo Jeepu*. Tokyo: Minori Shobō, 1946.
[49] *Shuppan Jōhō*, April 1947.
[50] Philatelic periodical *Kitte no Tomo,* Vol. 4, No.1. Tokyo: Gakusei Yubin Kittekai, 1949.
[51] Kendall H. Brown, "Out of the Dark Valley: Japanese Woodblock Prints and War, 1937-1945," *Impressions*, no. 23 (2001): 82.
[52] *How to See Shizuoka & Hamamatsu*, Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1947.

in Japan who wished to sightsee in their leisure time[53] (Figure 19). This booklet details the complete list of train arrivals and departures throughout the newly shrunken nation of Japan, the homeland islands of Hokkaidō, Honshū, Kyūshū, and Shikoku, equating the image of Fuji with Japan as a nation. The Americans grew fond of the mountain, and this international interest helped in making Fuji more popular than ever before.

Figure 14, “Shinchu no Heitai-san”, Yōnen Kurabu, November 1945, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

[53] *JGR Condensed Timetables November 1947*, compiled by M. Kanematsu, JGR Liaison Office, Ministry of Transportation, Tokyo.

Figure 15, Tomio Ishioka, *Hashireyo Jeepu*, Tokyo: Minori Shobō, 1946, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Figure 16, Cover, *Shuppan Jōhō*, April 1947, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Figure 17, Philatelic periodical *Kitte no Tomo*, Vol. 4, No.1. Tokyo: Gakusei Yubin Kittekai, 1949, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

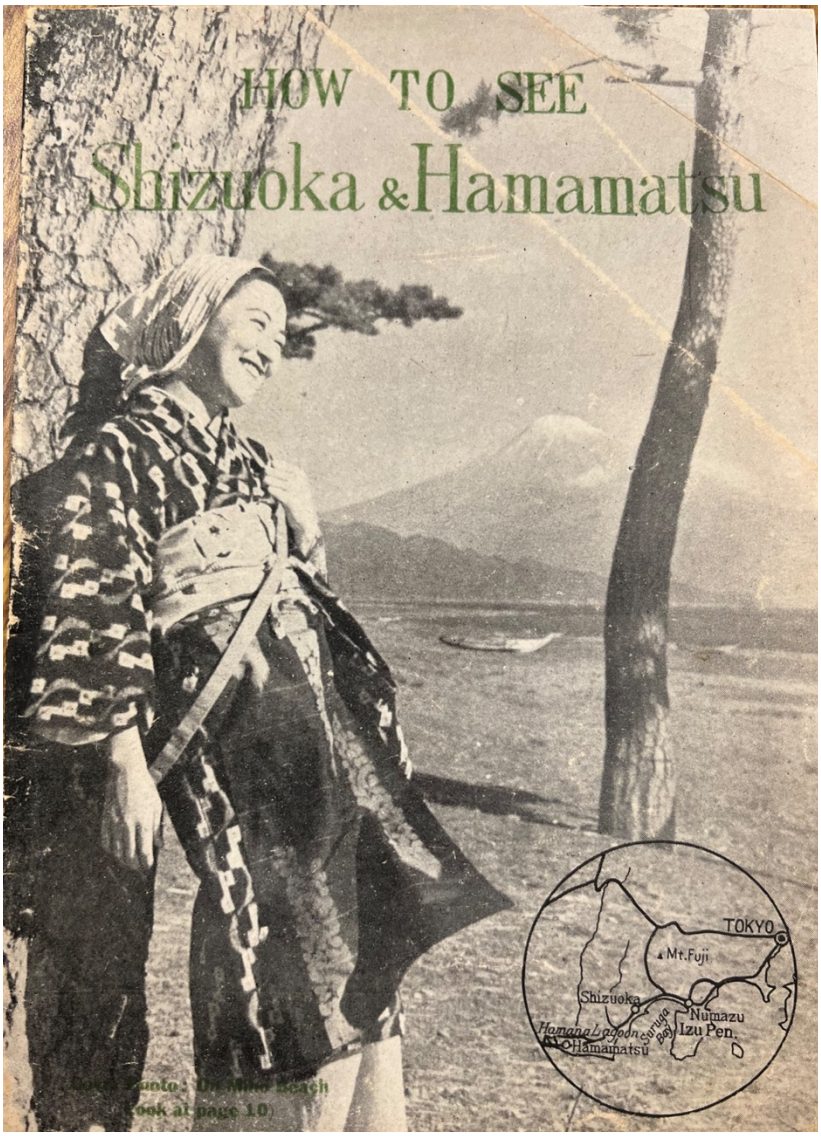

Figure 18, *How to See Shizuoka & Hamamatsu*. Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1947, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Figure 19, *JGR Condensed Timetables November 1947*, compiled by M. Kanematsu, JGR Liaison Office, Ministry of Transportation, Tokyo, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Taikan, Fuji and War Crime

The war's end completely dismantled the hyper-nationalist belief system that Taikan and other artists had worked under for decades. President Truman appointed General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), and American Occupiers immediately flooded into Japan in a mission to implement peace and democracy, to purge any remnants of militarism and overt nationalism. On August 28, 1945, MacArthur arrived in Yokohama, and on September 2, he led the surrender ceremony aboard the battleship *Missouri*. One month later, the GHQ was officially instituted in Tokyo.[54] Already by the beginning of September, the formidable presence of troops throughout the country made ignoring the reality of defeat impossible. On September 11, MacArthur ordered the arrest of forty people, intensifying fear of war responsibility charges. Artists who participated in cultivating a wartime visual culture panicked when they learned three of these arrestees were radio personalities, popular cultural figures like themselves. In the early days of SCAP'S democratization program, 200,000 alleged militarists were purged from public life.[55] As the International Military Tribunal for the Far East grew nearer, tensions grew over war crime, responsibility, and guilt.

When Occupiers announced that artists would also be subject to GHQ investigation, heads turned to Taikan, who fell under the GHQ designation "other militarists and extreme nationalists". Discourse on the topic of artistic responsibility unfolded in numerous newspaper articles and art magazines beginning in fall 1945 and lasted for months following.[56] Though most artists had participated, to some degree, in promoting the imperial mission through their art, the

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[54] Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution: Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (224) (2010): 9-10.
[55] Dower, "Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia," 368.
[56] Charlotte D. Eubanks, "5.Artistic Wartime Responsibility and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East" in *The Art of Persistence: Akamatsu Toshiko and the Visual Cultures of Transwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), 160.

art world first turned to Taikan, seen by many as the leader of the movement for Japanese artists to support the war. Taikan publicly and vehemently reinforced his support of art in the service of imperial Japan from early on, through both his writings and his charged images. Moreover, Taikan acted on the beliefs that his artistic compositions embodied, such as in 1943, when he became the chair of the Japan Art Patriotic Society.[57] Through this role, Taikan outspokenly coerced other artists to support the war effort. Only a few years before this, Taikan's series *Ten Mountain Views* and the corresponding series *Ten Ocean Views,* supported the war financially when the sale of these popular images raised 500,000 yen for the Japanese army, enough to fund four fighter planes.[58] These activities particularly attracted the GHQ's attention following defeat.

In conversation with his colleague, author Junichiro Tanizaki, Taikan remarked "'During the war, I was forced to take on various roles. I didn't fight in the war and instead was always painting Mt. Fuji and cherry blossoms, so I thought I wouldn't be banished'".[59] The implicit meaning of Mt. Fuji, while always outwardly fully devoid of war and violence, had already significantly changed in late 1945. Though Fuji was used in wartime to mobilize the population into intense nationalism and defense of the homeland, Fuji's new identity as an icon of peace and democracy dominated common postwar perception of the mountain. The Occupiers, fond of Mt. Fuji themselves, permitted the reproduction of this image across popular culture and news media. The easily malleable mountain's new associations with peace, democracy, and security thoroughly displaced associations of militarism. Fuji, bearing no obvious relationship to war or fascism, appeared to be an acceptable, undisruptive subject. When faced with criticism, Taikan did not stifle information about his hundreds of Mt. Fuji paintings. Rather, he volunteered this

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[57] Sandler, "The Living Artist," 81.
[58] Bert Winther-Tamaki,"From Resplendent Signs to Heavy Hands: Japanese Painting in War and Defeat" in *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868-2000*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 127.
[59] Satō, 32-33.

information readily, using it as a shield. He claimed that because he spent the past fifteen years simply painting images of Mt. Fuji, there is no way he participated in any war crimes.

As many anticipated, the GHQ summoned Taikan for an interview in fall of 1945. However, because of Taikan's ability to manipulate the conception of his past actions based on the current understanding of Fuji, the Americans accepted his explanation. The Occupiers clearly viewed Nihonga paintings of Mt. Fuji as posing no threat. In fact, after the investigation's conclusion, the group, which consisted of several Americans, Taikan, and a translator, all went to a restaurant and indulged in sake.[60] In addition to perceiving Fuji paintings as inconsequential, the Americans interviewing Taikan missed no opportunity to interact with one of Japan's most famous artists, and his case was dropped.

The insistence of Fuji as a mundane, peaceful mountain allowed Taikan to feign ignorance and begin cultivating a relationship with the American Occupational forces. Through this intentional networking, Taikan was eventually able to appease MacArthur himself through gifting a painting of Mt. Fuji to his wife.[61] Within that same year, the Americans permitted Taikan to display artworks in the first public art exhibition following the war's end, a small-works Inten in November 1945 intended to lift the population's spirits. Four months later, in March of 1946, the Japanese Ministry of Education sponsored the first Japan Fine Arts Exhibition, or Nitten, in which Taikan displayed *Fisherman* (Figure 20), indicative of his somber postwar works, and in September 1946, at the 31st Inten, Taikan displayed *Plum Tree and Bamboo Grove* (Figure 21) and most notably, his first public postwar Fuji painting, *Light in Spring (Sea of Trees)*.[62]

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[60] Satō, "'Bijutsu Shisetsu' to shite no Yokoyama Taikan," 33.
[61] Conant et al., *Nihonga,* 333.
[62] Henshū Adachi Bijutsukan Gakugei-bu et. al**,** *Adachi bijutsukan shozō taikan meihin 100-sen*.

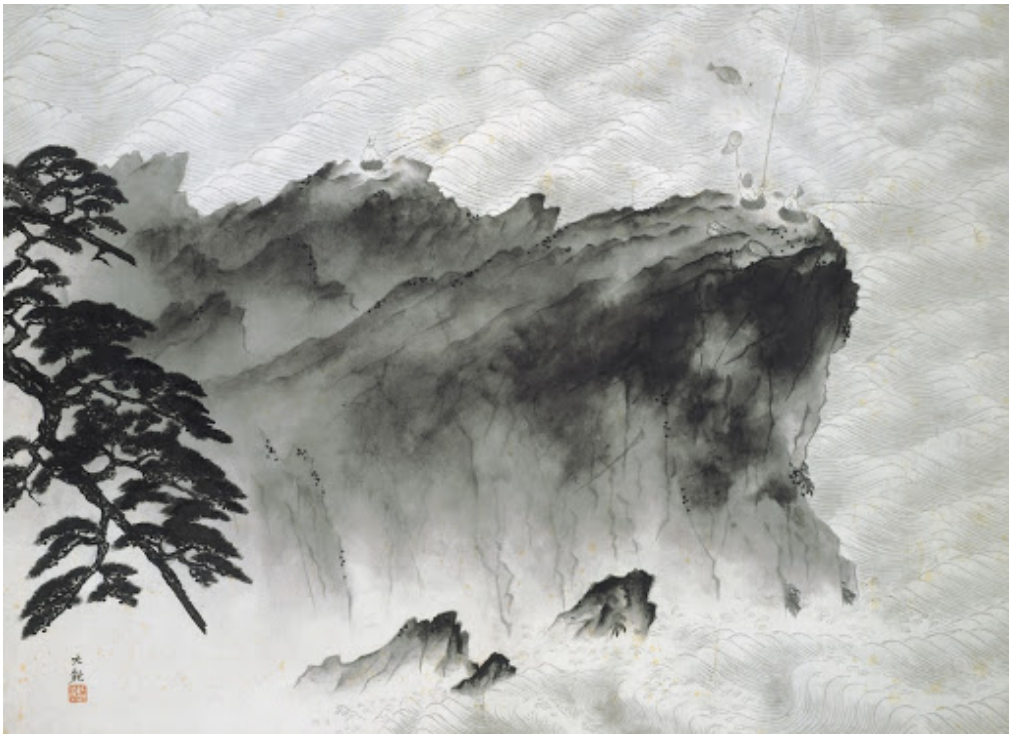

Figure 20, Yokoyama Taikan, *Fishermen*, 1946, Adachi Museum of Art, Yasugi, Shimane Prefecture

Figure 21, Yokoyama Taikan, *Plum Tree and Bamboo Grove*, 1946, Adachi Museum of Art, Yasugi, Shimane Prefecture

At the height of the empire and the low of defeat, the Japanese promoted the idea of a brighter future ahead, and Taikan's use of Fuji to signify the brightness of Japan's future continued immediately after the war. Militarism crumbled within the first few days of surrender, but the function of icons like Fuji, to promote the vitality of Japanese culture internationally, remained intact.[63] Like *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, debuted at the Inten one year later, the black-and-white ink painting *Light in Spring* positions Fuji as a symbol of light and hope in postwar Japan. In this image, Mt. Fuji rises up into the gray sky behind a dense forest of trees and shrubs. The title *Light in Spring* establishes the time frame as the transition between the long, cold winter months and the first bright spring days. The dark foliage of the wintery trees, similar to those in the winter vignette of *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* affirm this time frame. Typical of Taikan's Fuji depictions, only the snow-capped peak in *Light in Spring* is visible, while a dense line of leafy trees obscures the mountain's base. The carefully constructed value scale and the veins of white, negative space make Fuji's iconic peak appear to glow against the overcast sky. The quiet mountain, devoid of warmth, feels wintery and cool even while basking in sunlight.

Taikan took great care in differentiating each individual tree, using mostly pine trees to populate the mountainous forest. Because they maintain their green leaves year-round, transcending the ritual of life and death within the four seasons, pine trees became a popular symbol of safety, prosperity, and longevity in Japan centuries earlier. Furthermore, the pine was also thought to function as a *yoshiro,* or a place for a god to rest upon their descent to the earth.[64] In *Light in Spring,* Fuji appears to sit lightly atop the curved row of pine trees. The evergreen foliage provides a resting place for the holy mountain, still presented as a deity in Taikan's work.

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[63] Brown, 82.
[64] Shirane, 137.

Though seemingly tethered to an actual location, the dense line of pine trees intermediate contact between the mountain and the earth. The pine tree, like Mt. Fuji, remains the same through each passing season, a constant in the Japanese natural landscape.

The display of this image attracted attention in the artworld. The issuer of the very first *Bijustu Kōron* art magazine took no hesitation in featuring reproductions of works by Taikan, one of the most well-known wartime artists, in their debut issue in 1946. They printed *Light in Spring* across the full first page (Figure 22), while the magazine's final page featured *Plum Tree and Bamboo Grove* from spring of that year.[65] Japanese society still praised Taikan and he remained a valued member of the Japan Art Institute.[66] The successful exhibition of Light in Spring signaled the acceptability of Taikan's use of Fuji in the postwar era.

Figure 22, Reproduction of *Light in Spring (Sea of Trees)*, *Bijutsu Kōron*, November 1946, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

[65] *Bijutsu Kōron,* October 1946.
[66] Conant et al., *Nihonga,* 62.

Landscape of the Four Seasons in the 1947 Inten

The 32nd Inten, the first full-scale Inten after the war's end, opened to the public in Tokyo on September 1, 1947 and closed just over two weeks later.[67] This exhibition, the full resurgence of Japan Art Institute and a promising sign of growth in the art world at large, attracted significant attention from art media and the general public. The fiftieth anniversary of the first Inten connected deeply to Taikan himself, who participated in the very first exhibition in the late Meiji period under the direction of Tenshin and then revitalized the Inten in 1914.[68] In 1947, even after the events of the war, Taikan's strong association with this institution remained intact. The 1947 Inten's official catalog, consisting of black-and-white reproductions of each artwork on display, printed seven excerpts from *Landscape of the Four Seasons* across the span of the entire first two pages, speaking to the enduring significance of Taikan and his sensational new scroll painting (Figure 23).[69] Recounting the 32nd Inten would be incomplete without mentioning *Landscape of the Four Seasons.*

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[67] Henshū Kokuritsushin Bijutsukan et. al, *Botsugo 50-Nen Tokoyama Taikan*, 218.
[68] Kawahita Michiaki, *Kindai no Nihonga*, Shohaned, Genshoku Nihon No Bijutsu, 26, (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1972), 176-181.
[69] *Dai San Jū Ni-Kai Intenshu,* September 1947, 1-2.

Figure 23, Reproduction of *Landscape of the Four Seasons* excerpts, *Dai San Jū Ni Nen Intenshū*, September 1947, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

In a review of the exhibition in the November 1947 issue of *Bi no Tankyū*, when reflecting on the fiftieth anniversary of the event, art critic Ōmi Gyō began by acknowledging the remarkable changes the nation of Japan and its artists endured over the past half-century. Ōmi continued on to state that when he visited the Inten, he had initially expected to experience a new kind of beauty, a style reflective of the postwar world and distinct from the past, but the artworks, including Taikan's scroll, appeared strikingly similar to works of the previous era. However, he wrote that each work, including *Landscape of the Four Seasons*, "has its own individual light".[70] Taikan's Fuji, though painted using the exact same visual motifs and techniques as his wartime paintings, was read as a symbol of light and hope in the post surrender years. The same issue of *Bi no Tankyū* that printed this review of the Inten also featured an

[70] Ohmi Gyō, "Inten Nihonga Hyō," *Bi no Tankyū,* 1947, 8.

article on Taikan himself and used the vignette of Fuji in *Landscape of the Four Seasons* on their front cover (Figure 24).

Figure 24, Cover, *Bi no Tankyū,* November 1947, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

Taikan's inclusion of Fuji in the scroll was widely known, yet neither Taikan nor the publications that featured images of his Mt. Fuji paintings received censorship or negative attention. Though the GHQ investigation of Taikan's artistic wartime activity occurred only two years earlier, by 1947, the Americans' focus had shifted. In March 1947, MacArthur informed the press that the time had come to end the US Occupation of Japan. By this time, the aim of the Occupation had changed. Though at first the Americans implemented the Occupation to "demilitarize and democratize" Japan, the onset of the Cold War redirected the Americans'

attention to the Soviet Union, China, and Korea. Though MacArthur's remark only slowly began the process of ending the Occupation, at this time, Americans seriously began molding Japan into a Cold War ally.[71] Only a few months earlier, Japan's new, pacifist constitution, which had been promulgated in November 1946, was accepted by the US and officially took effect on May 3, 1947, a strong step toward this goal.[72] Fuji's evolving symbolism and the subsequent onset of the Cold War allowed Taikan to entirely evade trouble entirely.

For the fiftieth anniversary of the Inten, the Japan Art Association displayed the full, eighty-eight-foot artwork in the third room of the exhibition space, where *Landscape of the Four Seasons* assumed nearly the entire room. Though most of the rooms of the Inten contained six or seven works of art, due to the massive size of Taikan's composition, the third room only included the scroll and two other pieces.[73] Like *Light in Spring* from the smaller Inten in the previous year, *Landscape of the Four Seasons* embodied the combination of despair and hope that Taikan and other Japanese experienced during this time.

Taikan included minute traces of human and wildlife activity. Tiny yet detailed buildings appear occasionally, dwarfed by the expansive forests and mountains surrounding them. A few small figures roam the landscape, their minute size rendering them nearly invisible. Their presence mainly serves to accentuate the vastness of the landscapes and the scroll itself. Distant birds dot the spring, summer, and fall skies, flying forward through the scroll. Notably, the birds and figures all gesture left, typically symbolic of departure in Japanese scrolls.[74] This sense of departure, of the closing of an era, is highlighted firstly by the full cycle of the seasons, but also by the faint moon rising above the sea at the scroll's end. The nearly perfect circle with just one

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[71] Dower, "Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia," 385.
[72] Berkofsky, 8-9.
[73] Kōshi Izumi, "Kōritsu Go Jū Shūnen Inten Nihonga Hyō," *O-ru Bijutsu,* November 1947.
[74] Toda, 6.

edge sliced away represents a waning gibbous, the moon phase directly following the full moon. After the bright lunar phase preceding, the moon's brilliance has slightly dimmed. This imagery acknowledges the woe of the years following the empire's fall.

Because the Inten displayed the full composition, the scroll's massive size engulfed viewers into the extensive narrative. Viewers at the Inten, literally moving along with the lengthy composition, advanced through multiple lengths of time in a matter of seconds or minutes. The scroll's iconography, moving through hours and days all at once, transcends the constraints of time. The progression through the duration of both one full day and one full year emphasizes the Fifteen Year War's emotional conclusion and the mournful sentiment that an era of Japanese history had concluded. The blending of the diurnal and annual cycles heightens the viewer's awareness of the concept of time, but ultimately extinguishes it.

This combination of timelessness and endless time, nothingness and everything at once, is evident in the initial characters. The calligraphy at the very onset of the composition reveals Taikan's unchanging attitude toward art and life, an embodiment of various recollections and emotions regarding the fiftieth anniversary of the Inten, the war's recent end, and his nearing 80th birthday.[75] After defeat, Taikan embraced this mantra, originally coined by Tenshin.[76] The art object itself, a scroll of seemingly unending progressions of mountains, trees, and streams, conveys Taikan's message of endlessness. The notion of nature as a constant, endless transformation dates to ancient Japanese poetry and visual culture. Moreover, since the Heian period, the Buddhist belief in the impermanence of all earthly life and pleasures heightened this attention to the transience of nature and passage of seasons.[77] All times, good and bad, eventually

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[75] Keitaro Kondo, Susumu Suzuki et al., *Yokoyama Taikan, Nihon no Meiga 7*, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1976), 119.
[76] Arakawa Masaaki, Kōno Motoaki, et. al., *Bi Japan: Fuji-san*, (Tokyo: Shiki Shuppan, 2005), 341-342.
[77] Shirane, 133.

fade away. Even through the dark and empty winters, *Landscape of the Four Season*'s iconography promises the return of spring. The imagery of the seasons' steady change prompts reflection on the past while also manifesting a brighter future, encouraging endurance through present hardships.

The icon of Mt. Fuji directly following the calligraphy foremost embodies the message of endlessness. In placing the mountain at the scroll's beginning, Taikan clearly separated it from the overlapping cycles of time and seasons, underscoring its intended role as the primary focus. Untouched by the relentless forces of nature, Mt. Fuji, still synonymous with Japan, emphasizes the endurance of the nation and its people through the hardships of surrender and Occupation. The image of eternal Mt. Fuji contrasts with the impermanence of the changing seasons. This juxtaposition of evolution and eternity dates back to ancient Japan, where oftentimes, the motif of the four seasons would be accompanied by a talismanic, trans-seasonal natural icon or iconography that functioned as a counter to the seasons' ephemerality.[78] In Taikan's *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* Fuji functions in this way. Unlike earthly wonders, which fade over time, Mt. Fuji, created from both heaven and earth, supersedes the rules of nature. The omnipresent mountain's existence dates to the beginning of time, and the mountain, like Japan, will endure centuries to come. Fuji's proximity to transient natural imagery in Taikan's composition highlights both its permanence and its otherworldly qualities.

Later in life, when commenting on the practice of painting Mt. Fuji, Taikan remarked, "'The beauty of Mt. Fuji remains unmatched through seasons and time. Spring, summer, fall, winter—morning afternoon, evening—Mt. Fuji's appearance changes through time, but it is always beautiful. You could say that this is because it is the form of eternity and immortality. My

[78] Shirane, 134.

art also follows that eternity.’”[79] Though time passes, seasons change, empires rise and fall, Mt. Fuji transcends the constraints of time. *Landscape of the Four Seasons* asserts that the eternal, indestructible mountain will never fade with the passing of the seasons. Fuji, a permanent aspect of the Japanese natural and cultural landscape, evolves only in symbolic meaning to meet the needs of the Japanese people.

[79] Adachi Bijutsukan,“Taikan no Kotoba,” *Adachi bijutsukan shozō taikan meihin 100-sen.*

Conclusion

Landscape of the Four Seasons, an iconographic expression of the endurance of the nation of Japan over time, did not hinder Taikan's status within the postwar art world, but rather, solidified his iconic status. In the fall of 1948, one year after the 1947 Inten, the general magazine *Nikkō* printed a pensive image of Taikan with an accompanying article appropriately titled "The Face of Japan", praising Taikan's mastery of Nihonga, his striking Mt. Fuji landscapes, and his international promotion of Japanese culture (Figure 25).[80] Even after the empire's fall, Taikan's public acceptability never dwindled, and he remained the face of Japanese art through the duration of his lifetime.

Fuji's perennial presence in art and the Japanese landscape mirrors Taikan's longstanding career and commitment to preserving Japanese tradition. He served as a leader in the Nihonga world from the genre's conception through his death in 1958. To this day, Taikan is considered by many to be the most widely known Nihonga painter.[81] Moreover, Taikan's name immediately brings to mind Mt. Fuji. Through his incessant painting of the mountain for decades, Taikan solidified a connection between himself and this national icon.

Though the physical form of Fuji is indestructible, the mountain's meaning evolves over time. This easy adaptability led to the transformation of Fuji into the embodiment of militarism during the Fifteen Year War, when it evolved into a symbol of empire's power. However, amidst the suffering and despair of the war's end and the early Occupation years, Fuji quickly evolved into a symbol of hope and resilience. The GHQ imposed strict censorship across all types of Japanese media, banning explicit reminders of war like soldiers and weaponry. In contrast, Mt. Fuji remained acceptable, and the image of the mountain charmed the Occupiers themselves.

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[80] "Nihon no Kao: Nihonga no Sōshi Yokoyama Taikan-Shi," *Nikkō,* November 1948, 5.
[81] Conant et al., *Nihonga,* 333.

Though the GHQ summoned Taikan for questioning in the months following the war's end, he successfully feigned innocence by using Fuji's new meaning as a shield. Not only did Taikan successfully avoid serious consequences, but he continued painting and displaying images of Fuji, remarkably similar to those he produced during the war, for the remainder of his life.

Fuji's evolution ultimately allowed the successful display of *Landscape of the Four Seasons* in the 1947 Inten, only two years after the Occupation's beginning, where the eighty-eight foot scroll's initial scenery showed Mt. Fuji in the main panel. The success of this display marked the full acceptability of Taikan's Fuji images in the new era even after the events of the war. In *Landscape of the Four Seasons,* Taikan, once again, equated Fuji with the nation of Japan. Though days pass and seasons change, Mt. Fuji will endure infinitely.

Taikan tirelessly promoted the ideals of Okakura Tenshin and Japanese tradition. Like Fuji, through the tumultuous years of the empire's rise and fall, Taikan never changed. Though he drew on symbols and themes from his wartime works during the Occupation, Taikan remained relevant through each passing era. Both Taikan, the "Face of Japan" and Mt. Fuji, the physical conjunction of heaven and earth, embody eternity through life's changing seasons.

Figure 25, “Nihon no Kao: Nihonga no Sōshi Yokoyama Taikan-Shi.” *Nikkō,* November 1948, Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries

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