

The Making of a Mnemonic Space: Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery 1912–1936

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This paper argues that Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery (Meiji Jingū Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan) was constructed as a mnemonic space, and that its construction concerned the making of history. The purpose of the gallery was to provide a historical narration of the Meiji period through 80 paintings depicting Emperor Meiji's life. It took over 20 years from the initial planning of the gallery to its completion in 1936 and, throughout the course of its creation, different acts of remembering took place both inside and outside the space of the gallery. It was the lengthy *process* of gallery construction, rather than the *place* itself that shaped what was to be remembered. Historiographers and painters strove to portray “real” history in the gallery's paintings. Historiographers investigated historical facts and determined the gallery's picture topics. Importantly, most of them were responsible for compiling two national historiographies, *Dai Nihon ishin shiryō* in the Ministry of Education and *Meiji tennōki* in the Imperial Household Agency. For the painters, the challenge lay in determining “realistic” styles of painting adequate to the representation of “real” history. Furthermore, physical constructors of the gallery played a part in perfecting its narrative structure, such as spatial arrangement of the pictures. The contrast between the expectations of the gallery's creators and the experience of the visitors, in terms of how the gallery was viewed as well as how it was to be viewed, is also the subject of this paper.

Keywords: Meiji Shrine 明治神宮, *gaien* 外苑, Kaigakan 絵画館, Emperor Meiji 明治天皇, historiography 歴史編纂, *Dai Nihon ishin shiryō* 大日本維新史料, *Meiji tennōki* 明治天皇紀, *rekishiga* 歴史画, memory 記憶, museum 博物館

This paper argues that Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery (Meiji Jingū Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan 明治神宮聖徳記念絵画館) was constructed as a mnemonic space, and that its construction concerned the making of history. While the shrine's inner precinct (*naien* 内苑) was built between 1912 and 1920 with central governmental funds, the outer precinct (*gaien*

外苑), which includes the gallery, was funded by public donations.¹ The Meiji Shrine Support Committee (Meiji Jingū Hōsankai 明治神宮奉賛会) was established in September 1915 by interested Tokyo parties in order to attract money and to facilitate the planning of the outer precinct. In their plan, the gallery was to be the core of the outer precinct, and to provide a historical narration of the Meiji period through the medium of paintings depicting Emperor Meiji's life. This study focuses on the creation of what was to be remembered there, a process through which the gallery was constructed as a mnemonic space for the emperor and his era.

I examine the process from two aspects, historiographical and spatial. The former concerns the processes of selection and historical investigation behind each painting topic, and the latter is the process through which the place for exhibiting history was activated. My approach treats both aspects as practices of commemoration. The gallery creation took over 20 years from the establishment of the support committee to its completion in 1936. It was, I shall argue, the lengthy *process* of formation of the gallery, rather than the *place* itself, that was critical to memory construction.

1. The Practice of History and Memory

The questions of how history was exhibited in the gallery and how it was shaped as a mnemonic space necessarily concern the contradictory relationship of history and memory, or of individual and collective memory. However, it is important not to deal with such relationships as binary oppositions. Attention to the historiographical process as the practice of history and to commemorative activities as practices of memory enables us to overcome such dichotomous problems.² Both practices are in fact inseparable.

The Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery includes 80 different paintings. These range from number 1, “The Birth of Emperor Meiji 御降誕,” on 3 November 1852, through to number 80, “The Imperial Funeral of the Emperor 大葬,” which took place on 14 September 1912. The first 40 paintings are in a Japanese style, whilst the last 40 are Western style.

I divide the historiographical practices in creating the gallery into the following three phases: 1) a documentary phase, meaning the collecting, categorising and selecting of topics for the paintings; 2) an explanation/understanding phase of investigating the legitimacy of the subjects for the paintings; and 3) a representation phase, or the act of painting itself.³ These phases are not necessarily in a fixed chronological order; in the gallery's case they sometimes operated together and sometimes reacted with one another. Furthermore, all phases involved practices of interpretation and of writing (painting).

1) Documentary phase: Topic selection

The Meiji Shrine Support Committee first broached the subject of the selection of painting topics on 10 January 1916. On that day, the vice-chief director of the committee, Sakatani Yoshirō 阪谷芳郎, visited Kaneko Kentarō 金子堅太郎 seeking topic proposals. On 4 March, Sakatani made a speech explaining the gallery project as follows:

1 The major sources cited for descriptions of the Meiji Shrine, its inner and outer precincts, are Meiji Jingū 1923; 1937a; 1979; 1998. For recent discussions of the shrine creation, see Yamaguchi 2005; Satō 2010.

2 De Certeau 1986, 1999, 2000; Ricoeur 2004; Connerton 1922.

3 De Certeau 1999, p. 57; Ricoeur 2004, pp. 136–80.

When we enter into the memorial hall, we must be able to understand how the achievements of the Meiji period were made possible through the late emperor's great effort. Nowadays Japan can be proud of herself as an advanced nation; however we should not forget the hardship which the emperor endured. The Memorial Art Gallery is to be created in order for the Japanese nation to commemorate his achievements.⁴

Although at this time Sakatani suggested some topics, such as “Commodore Perry's Arrival at Uruga” and “the Russo-Japanese War,” the fundamental questions of who was to determine the topics and of how many paintings would be needed were still under consideration.⁵ It was only later that the ten members of the Gallery Committee (Kaigakan Inkaikai 絵画館委員会), convened within the support committee on 25 May 1917, was charged with responsibility for determining the topics; the new committee's chairman was Kaneko Kentarō.⁶ On 25 January 1918, the 11th meeting of the gallery committee selected 85 possible topics. On 4 August 1921, Kaneko submitted the final 80 choices to the support committee, which finally gave its approval on 17 July 1922.⁷ The six and a half years spent on this phase, from Sakatani's visit to Kaneko through to the final approval of the picture topics, demonstrates the importance of topic selection in the creation of the gallery.

2) The explanation/understanding phase: Investigation of topics

The historiographical practices constituting this phase were several: the validity of historical events had to be investigated, their appropriateness as topics had to be examined, and explanatory notes had to be made. Following the determination of the initial proposal in January 1918, the gallery committee organized its five member special sub-committee on 20 September.⁸ The purpose was to visit the location of each event, to collect local documents and evidence, to create a set of provisional paintings based on local investigations, to compose explanatory text for each, and finally to establish the veracity and suitability of the topics. In order to make the provisional paintings, the sub-committee invited the painter, Goseda Hōryū II 二世五姓田芳柳, to become a member. Goseda and other members of the sub-committee travelled widely throughout Japan, including to Kyushu, Tōhoku and Hokkaido. Their investigation also required them to consider the temporal and spatial distribution of the topics, and to place them in an “appropriate” order.

Composing explanatory texts led to the compilation of a reference book for historical topics; both the action, and its product, were nothing if not historiography. By the summer of 1918, the first explanatory notes for 85 proposed topics were completed and submitted to the members of the gallery and support committees.⁹ The original purpose of writing these was to display them in the gallery as explanation boards. However, the support committee soon determined to print the collected notes with a view to distributing them, insisting that “painting commentary was not only for visitors, but should record precise facts in order to

4 Meiji Jingū 1916, pp. 9–14.

5 In the early stages, it seems that about 50 paintings were planned; Minakami 1921.

6 Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 18 (10 June 1917).

7 Ibid., vol. 27 (10 March 1918), pp. 3–6; vol. 66 (10 November 1921), p. 2; vol. 69 (10 August 1922), p. 1.

8 Ibid., vol. 34 (10 October 1918).

9 Kunaishō 1918.

clarify uncertainties of history and to offer a comprehensive guideline to painters.”¹⁰ The sets of provisional paintings and explanatory notes were submitted to the support committee when the final list of picture topics was proposed in August 1921, and later printed and supplied to painters and others.¹¹ We need to reconsider these published historical references, as well as the paintings, as outputs of the historiographical operation in the gallery.

3) Representation phase: Act of painting

Even though the topics for pictures had now been determined, painting was not ready to begin. The selection of artists and the regulations for those sponsoring the paintings and guidelines relating to painting materials were still in abeyance. A Picture Selection Consultative Committee (Senga Kyōgi Iinkai 撰画協議委員会) was convened in October 1922, and in July the next year was divided into two groups.¹² There was a Picture Committee (Kaiga Iinkai 絵画委員会) which included eight members, and coordinated painters with picture sponsors and Committee for Selecting Painters (Hekiga Chōsei Iinkai 壁画調製委員会), which was mainly composed of representative painters from both Western and Japanese schools. The fact that the support committee needed so many different sub-committees implied that procedures did not go smoothly. There were various conflicts between the picture regulation committee and the artists and, indeed, among the artists themselves. The conflicts became one of the major causes of the delay in the creation of the gallery, which was not completed until 1936.

In the act of painting, artists worked as historiographers; they themselves carried out historical investigations for the purpose of reproducing past events in their pictures, thus interpreting the past at two stages of its representation. The final stage of representation concerns the question of how the paintings were exhibited in the gallery place.

2. Searching for a Legitimate National History

Let me focus on the first and second historiographical operations at play in the gallery: those of documentation and explanation/understanding. These operations constituted a process through which discussions regarding “history” were initiated, carried forward and concluded, historical “correctness” was determined, and the relative importance of events was judged. The particular virtues of Emperor Meiji deserving of remembrance were not self-evident. Rather, the practice of recording and representing history, in creating the gallery itself, determined what and how to remember. No methodological research has yet been carried out on these paintings from an historiographically analytical perspective, despite the fact they were not painted before the gallery’s construction or at the time of the events they depict, but later, as a crucial part of the process of gallery formation. Even more significantly, the creation of the paintings began with the selection of topics.

There were strong historiographical relations between the Memorial Art Gallery and the nation state, and so the creation of the gallery and the writing of national historiographies were closely intertwined. Two large-scale compilation projects of national history were initiated at the end of the Meiji period. One was entitled *Dainihon ishin shiryō* 大日本維新

10 Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 35 (10 November 1918), p. 7.

11 Meiji Jingū 1921, pp. 99–180, 366–84.

12 Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 70 (10 November 1922), p. 97 and vol. 73 (10 December 1923), pp. 5, 18–19.

史料, begun on 10 May 1911 by the Editorial Bureau for the same records, and located in the Ministry of Education (Ishin Shiryō Hensankai 維新史料編纂会). The other was *Meiji tennōki* 明治天皇紀, undertaken by the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau (Rinji Teishitsu Henshūkyoku 臨時帝室編修局) of the Imperial Household Agency (1 December 1914). I argue that these both played a part in determining picture topics for the gallery, and suggest that their interaction legitimated the “history” that was to be recorded.

Table 1, below, lists the members of the gallery committee and its sub-committees. It seems that topic selection and its investigation were mainly entrusted to members of the two editorial bureaux. Furthermore, the chairman and council member of the gallery committee, Kaneko Kentarō, wielded great influence in both bureaux, and I shall discuss his role in some detail later.¹³ Kaneko became vice-governor of both bureaux on 7 July 1915 and was later designated Governor of the Editorial Bureau (for *Dainihon ishin shiryō*) (October 1915) and Governor of the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau (for *Meiji tennōki*) (April 1922). This was because the support committee wished the members of the national bureaux to join the gallery project.

Table 1. Members of Gallery Committees and Editorial Bureaux

| <i>Members</i> | <i>Organisations</i> | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Gallery Committee | Sub-committee of Gallery Committee | Editorial Bureau for <i>Dai Nihon ishin shiryō</i> | Extraordinary Editorial Bureau for <i>Meiji tennōki</i> |
| Kaneko Kentarō 金子堅太郎 | Chairman/ Council member | | Governor | Vice-governor (later governor) |
| Fujinami Kototada 藤波言忠 | Council member | Committee member | | Commission member |
| Mikami Sanji 三上参次 | Committee member | | Committee member | |
| Akatsukasa Takaichirō 赤司鷹一郎 | Committee member | | Director general | |
| Tokugawa Yorimichi 徳川頼倫 | Committee member | | | |
| Masaki Naohiko 正木直彦 | Committee member | | | |
| Hagino Yoshiyuki 萩野由之 | Committee member | | Committee member | |
| Komaki Masanari 小牧昌業 | Committee member | | Committee member | Commission member |
| Nakahara Kunihei 中原邦平 | Committee member | | Committee member | Commission member |

13 For Kaneko and historiography, see Horiguchi 2003.

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Ikebe Yoshikata 池辺義象 | Committee member | Committee member | | Editorial officer |
| Minakami Hiromi 水上弘躬 | | Committee member | | |
| Kurosawa Tsuguhisa 黒澤次久 | | Committee member | Director general | Commission member |

Sources: Meiji Jingū 1937a, pp. 718–19; Konishi 1983, pp. 70–79; Iwakabe 2004, pp. 13–27.

Sakatani, who was to become the chief director of the support committee, visited Akatsukasa, the director general of the board of the editorial bureau for *Dainihon ishin shiryō*, on 20 August 1915.¹⁴ The purpose of his visit is unclear, but it is perhaps significant that it was made two months before the establishment of the support committee. Sakatani followed this up by meeting Kaneko on 10 January 1916, asking for the submission of topic proposals.¹⁵ This was over one year before the organization of the gallery committee. It is obvious that the support committee intended from the very beginning to make contact and build relationships with the national bureaux.

Certain individuals participating both in the historiographical project and in selection of pictures clearly wielded some influence. It would be rash, however, to conclude that their opinions were directly reflected in the process of topic selection because the national trajectory being followed in the compilation of “national history” was in itself an intricate process. Topic selection became embroiled in the negotiations over perceptions of “national history.” This in turn demands an examination of the context of, and the positions adopted by, the editorial bureaux of the Imperial Household Agency and the Ministry of Education.

In the middle of the Meiji period (1868–1912), the government began to review the general history of the late Edo period and the Meiji Restoration.¹⁶ It has been suggested that the formation of historical views in modern Japan was the product of an antagonism between two opposite perspectives, that of former domain lords, whose political influence had waned (*kyūhan shikan* 旧藩史観), and that particular to the new generation of leaders, who played important roles in the Meiji Restoration (*hanbatsu shikan* 藩閥史観).¹⁷ It was from the late 1880s that the former domain lords began to put forward their views of history. The new leaders, on the other hand, did not seek to promulgate their own interpretations of history until the end of Meiji, when their supremacy, in turn, began to decline. For both groups, historiography, as the process of synthesising particulars into narratives which they hoped would withstand the test of time, presented a chance to inscribe their achievements in the “public” history of the Meiji Restoration.¹⁸

In July 1890, after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution, Kaneko Kentarō proposed to the Prime Minister the establishment of an editorial bureau of national history.¹⁹ Kaneko

14 Sakatani 1912–1941, 20 August 1915.

15 Ibid., 10 January 1916.

16 Konishi 1983, p. 19.

17 In Satsuma domain, for example, Ōkubo Toshimichi and Kuroda Kiyotaka were among the new leaders, whereas Shimazu Hisamitsu’s power had declined; in Chōshū, Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru were in the ascendant, but Mori Motonori had lost power. (See Ōkubo 1988, pp. 346–75.)

18 Tanaka 1987, pp. 236–43.

19 Kaneko 1997, p. 32.

had made several research trips to the West and elsewhere, and wanted the West to understand what kind of a country Japan was. The creation of an “authorized” national history would be, for Kaneko, the purpose of the bureau; without it, “Western people could never pay respect to our nation.” It is interesting to reflect on the reaction of government leaders towards Kaneko’s proposal. Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文, whose chief concern in 1890 was to ensure the smooth launch of a constitutional government, wrote back to Kaneko suggesting that the time was not yet ripe. He was particularly concerned to avoid rupturing the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, a distinct possibility if their long-term historical rivalry and recent conflict became issues: “How can we portray the clash between Satsuma and Chōshū in July 1864?” he wrote.²⁰ It was therefore former domain leaders who were responsible for the first wave of historical compilation in Japan; it was they who institutionalized historiographical associations, during this mid Meiji period, rather than the new leaders of government. The Shidankai 史談会, established in April 1888, was one such association. The Shidankai was an association for historical investigation of the end of the Edo period and the Meiji Restoration, and was organized by such former daimyo domain leaders as Shimazu Hisamitsu 島津久光 and Mōri Sadahiro 毛利定広. Their declared aim was to judge the past “with justice” and to describe it “as it was.”²¹ In the opinions of such leaders, the past had not previously received such treatment.

From around 1907, the “new” leaders of government, by now in power for several decades, initiated the second wave of the national history compilation. This resulted in the establishment of two national editorial bureaux. In June 1910, leading government figures formed an historical investigation association called the Shōmeikai 彰明会. This led in 1911 to the foundation of an editorial bureau for *Dai Nihon ishin shiryō*. According to Konishi, Miyachi and others, two major factors contributed to the establishment of the bureau at this time. Firstly, members of the government such as Itō and Yamagata 山縣, who were now over 65 years old, wished to record the history of their achievements. Secondly, these same members sought to counter the activities of radical movements and associations, such as the Shidankai, and the “excessive” commemoration plans for Ii Naosuke 井伊直弼.²² Members of the Shidankai group presented a proposal to the upper and lower houses of the Diet in 1907, insisting that the government enshrine certain individuals in Yasukuni Shrine and, by so doing, improve their reputations in the eyes of the public.²³ Candidates for enshrinement proposed by the Shidankai included those who had assassinated Ōkubo Toshimichi 大久保利通 and Mori Arinori 森有礼. Elder government members opposed the proposal, arguing that it would profane national history. Similarly, the 1909 plan of Ii Naosuke’s former vassals, to erect a statue of him to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the port of Yokohama, caused great controversy.²⁴ The Shidankai issue and the Ii statue were both problems that centred around commemoration and the validity of “history.” The editorial bureau was established to create one authorised history.

However, the attitudes of government members were not always uniform. The question for them was whether it was “governmental” history or “imperial” history that should be

20 Konishi 1983, pp. 21–23.

21 Ōkubo 1988, p. 363.

22 Konishi 1983, p. 24; Miyachi 1987, pp. 114–8; Hakoishi 2001, pp. 48–86.

23 Miyachi 1987, pp. 114–15.

24 Ibid., p. 116.

commemorated.²⁵ This distinction was crucial, as it would determine the location of the editorial bureau charged with the compilation of recorded history. Inoue Kaoru 井上馨 suggested that the editorial bureau should belong to the Imperial Household Agency. Yamagata Aritomo on the other hand insisted that the Ministry of Education should control the bureau, arguing that if the Imperial Household Agency compiled such a history its readers would suspect that Satsuma-Chōshū members had made use of the emperor to laud their own achievements.²⁶ This view ultimately triumphed, and the editorial bureau was established within the Ministry of Education.²⁷ The other bureau, the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau, would later be established within the Imperial Household Agency.

The relation between the two editorial bureaux was inevitably both cooperative and competitive. Integrating the great national historiographical projects often caused arguments which, at one stage, resulted in Inoue Kaoru threatening to resign as the first president of the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau.²⁸ Inoue's repeated proposals to unify the bureaux were never entirely accepted by either the agency or the ministry, although partial agreements between the two bureaux were later made, firstly in July 1915 and again in October 1917.²⁹ Horiguchi, examining the history of the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau, suggests that what Inoue sought was "consistency" in carrying out the process of national historiography.³⁰

Disputes relating to the production and content of the one authorised national history were duplicated in the making of the gallery. I suggest here three points of importance to be considered regarding the process of topic selection and its negotiations. The first concerns unsolved problems of coherence to the process of historiography and how they influenced the determination of picture topics. Significantly, members of different editorial bureaux were initially united into one gallery committee for the purposes of topic selection. Further examination needs to be made of Kaneko's attempts to integrate the various strands and versions of national history, as he concurrently held governmental posts in both bureaux when the first partial agreement between them was made in 1915, and the timing of further agreements up to 1917 coincided with the selection of topics by the gallery committee.

The second point to make regarding the process of topic selection and its negotiations is that the differences in the expected historical outputs of the gallery project and the editorial bureaux demand consideration. The latter originally had no intentions of making their work available to the public, in contrast to the former, whose goal was a public exhibition. It has been argued that one reason why the Minister of Education suddenly required the publication of a general history in 1935 was in order to cope with the "radical" organ-theory of the imperial institution.³¹ However, the Editorial Bureau for *Dai Nihon ishin shiryō*, which finally completed 4,215 volumes of manuscripts in 1938, did not intend to publish them. Similarly, the original 260 volumes of *Meiji tennōki*, completed in 1933, existed in only three copies; one was offered to Emperor Shōwa, one to the director general of the Imperial Household Agency and the other to the Editorial Bureau.³² Indeed, it was not until 1967 that

25 Hakoishi 2001, p. 66.

26 Ibid., pp. 66–7.

27 Tanaka 1987, p. 242.

28 Inoue 1914 and 1915. See also, Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 2001.

29 For detailed discussions on this issue, see Horiguchi 2001, pp. 84–88; Horiguchi 2003, pp. 1–19.

30 Horiguchi 2001, p. 87.

31 Ōkubo et al. 1968, pp. 1–29; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 2001, p. 769.

32 Horiguchi 2004, p. 493.

Meiji tennōki was first published. In brief, the historical paintings in the gallery (completed in 1936) represented the first form of national historiographical output made available to the public. The third and last point is that we should not neglect the differences between history as painted pictures and history as written texts. In other words, an examination is needed of how different ways of publishing history influence the very compilation of history.

3. The Discursive Construction of the “History of Meiji”

There were at least eight different lists of topic proposals made between Sakatani’s first visit to Kaneko in January 1916 and the presidential approval of topic selection in July 1922 [Table 2].³³ Among those, only lists ⑥ and ⑧ were publicly disseminated: the former was approved by the Gallery Committee as a first and provisional list; the latter was the list that finally received Support Committee approval. Here I explore the various agendas behind the process of historiography as they involved the selection and investigation of picture topics, and illuminate the criteria used for choosing topics.

Table 2. Variations in Topic Proposals

| List no. and date | Topics | Proposals and notes |
|-------------------|--------|---|
| ① 27/01/1917 | 54 | Submitted by Fujinami Kototada on behalf of the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau |
| ② 25/06/1917 | 64 | Later submitted by the editorial bureau for <i>Dai Nihon ishin shiryō</i> at the gallery committee’s first meeting (20 July), after three bureau meetings and consideration of list ① |
| ③ 28/11/1917 | 75 | Topics categorized by theme and region, during the Editorial Bureau process of selection |
| ④ Jan 1918 | 105 | Proposal of topics for paintings, made at the gallery committee’s 13th meeting; hand-written notes |
| ⑤ Jan 1918 | 123 | Bound book of explanatory text; handwritten commentary by various writers; several topics not included in ①–④ |
| ⑥ 25/01/1918 | 85 | First publicly-released proposal; same as list ④, plus modified notes |
| ⑦ Spring 1918 | 85 | Draft of picture commentary; two volumes, supervised by Ikebe |
| ⑧ 05/08/1921 | 80 | Second, and final, publicly released proposal |

Sources: ①–④ Sakatani 1917–1923; ⑤ Meiji Jingū 1918; ⑥ and ⑧ Meiji Jingū 1937a, pp. 675–80, 682–86; ⑦ Kunaishō 1918.

There are several trends apparent in topic selection. Firstly, the main theme shifted from the life history of Emperor Meiji to the history of his age, the Meiji period. To be more specific, more importance was attached to matters of state than to the emperor himself, moving the project from a bio-narrative to a national history narrative. For example, topics such as “The Emperor Hunting Rabbits” (in lists ① and ⑤), “The Emperor’s First Reading of Texts” (② and ④) and “The Empress’s Dream of Sakamoto Ryōma” (④) featured in some proposals but were subsequently eliminated. Similarly, topics which portrayed close ties between the emperor and the wider public were preferred to topics which stressed his

33 It seems that Kaneko Kentarō submitted a proposal of 55 topics, although the contents are as yet unknown.

relation to particular government leaders. Over time, therefore, the emperor for elderly statesmen became an emperor for his subjects. Topics such as “The Emperor’s Visit to Sanjō Sanetomi” (lists ① to ⑥ inclusive) and “The Imperial Legation Visiting the Graves of Elderly Statesmen during the Imperial Diet Opening Session” (① and ⑤) were excluded.

In addition to the first trend mentioned above, a second was the concern of the gallery committee to produce paintings showing a sufficiently wide range of topics that every citizen could find a point of contact with the exhibition and with the emperor. The topics were sorted by region and theme. For example, list ③ categorised topics according to government ministry: Palace and Imperial Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Financial Affairs; Army; Navy; Juridical Affairs; Education; Commerce; and Transportation. The final candidates for inclusion were further thematically divided: Home Affairs, for example, was separated into worship, patriotism, benefaction, virtue and literature. Sub-committee member Minakami Hiromi reflected that the gallery committee was committed to include paintings depicting events of a varied nature that had occurred across the length of the country, and beyond to the new colonies.³⁴ Furthermore, in order to emphasise matters of national importance, the committee sanctioned the inclusion of topics illustrating the national achievements of the Meiji period even if the resultant pictures did not always feature the figure of the emperor.³⁵ The committee’s desire to serve the wider public with a more comprehensive history can be seen in the attitude they took with regard to domestic historical conflicts. From an early meeting in 1917 onwards, the committee discussed whether such conflicts were admissible.³⁶ Ultimately the fighting at Toba Fushimi in 1868 was adopted as a representation of the development of national fortunes, while the civil war in Aizu was eliminated. As for the Satsuma Rebellion, the siege of Kumamoto castle was selected but the battle at Tabaruzaka hill was omitted. Careful consideration was given by the committee in order to achieve a “less violent” representation of domestic conflict.³⁷

How then did the historiographical operation undertaken by the gallery committee relate to the editorial bureaux in the national projects? The shift in Kaneko’s position from 1916 to 1918 offers some clues. It was Kaneko and Fujinami who made the fundamental shift in the editorial principle governing *Meiji tennōki*. Kaneko insisted that the chronicles be compiled as a record of the Meiji age, rather than as a mere biography of Emperor Meiji.³⁸ This is exactly the same shift that occurred with regards to topic selection for pictures; it is not hard to see the influence of both bureaux filtering through the medium of Kaneko and others and affecting the decisions made by the committees and its members.

The Extraordinary Editorial Bureau made at least three major modifications in editorial principle. Initially, in 1915, the bureau set out to compose a life history of Emperor Meiji. They specifically stated that it was not to be a national historical compilation, but in October 1918 Kaneko partially overturned this. Kaneko finally established the general principle governing the compilation of *Meiji tennōki* in 1920, insisting that the emperor’s

34 Minakami 1921, pp. 12–18.

35 Some scholars (e.g., Hayashi 1994; Yamamoto 2001) have argued that this guideline may reflect the taboo relating to imperial portraits. However, this instruction seems to be more simply concerned with justifying the nomination of picture topics whose main object is not the emperor. For discussions of the emperor’s portraits, see Kashiwagi 2000, Taki 2002.

36 Sakatani 1912–1941, 28 September 1917.

37 This was one of the guidelines for determining topics for list ②.

38 Takebe 1986, p. 68.

biography should necessarily be a record not only of events directly involving the emperor but also of his age and his realm, since the state itself could be regarded as his “house.”³⁹ The consistency of Kaneko’s desire is apparent in his repeated suggestion for publication of a general Japanese history to be available to foreign countries.⁴⁰ In 1918, he asked his friend, Theodore Roosevelt, for suggestions for institutionalising the ideal editorial principle. In his reply on 6 November 1918 Roosevelt wrote that “emperors are so important when they amount to anything at all that the life worth reading must necessarily be a study of all the social phenomena of their times.”⁴¹ It can be assumed that this response further encouraged Kaneko’s eagerness for a comprehensive history.

The national narrative of history portrayed in the 80 topics and their pictures was a product of the unceasing quest for the legitimacy of their past by various historiographical actors. I believe that the relentless desire for a “fair” history itself worked as the motivational force behind the construction of institutional groups and the determination of the gallery’s historical appearance. Historiographical work should not be reduced simply to the artefacts which it finally turns out (books, papers, programs and so on), but should rather be envisaged as an ongoing process of social practice.⁴²

4. Between “Real” History and “Realistic” Painting

So what then of the third practice of history, the representation phase? It is in this phase that attempts to visualise history and constitute a space for history were most dynamically combined with the practice of memory. Again, there is a need to appreciate that the three operations of historiography present in the gallery’s formation often took place together. For example, soon after historical investigation started into provisional picture topics, an art journal published a critical editorial of the gallery project, claiming that “the procedure for making the gallery is akin to a cook preparing dishes before determining which styles of food he will serve, *sashimi*, Western or Chinese food.”⁴³ The writer argued that it was unreasonable to discuss possible topics for pictures without determining which styles they would be painted in, Western or Japanese. Similar complaints were aired even after the picture topics were finally determined.⁴⁴

One of the reasons why the creation of the Memorial Art Gallery attracted so much attention was that the gallery was expected to become the first museum to display permanent exhibitions of modern pictures by Japanese artists. There were indeed only a few public museums of arts built in pre-war Japan, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum (1916), Kyoto City Museum (1931) and Osaka City Museum (1936), while most private museums were not interested in modern pictures painted by Japanese.⁴⁵ It was against this background that further actors were motivated to participate in the creation of the gallery. In this section I

39 Horiguchi 2004, p. 487.

40 Indeed, the Support Committee realized the English publication of the explanatory notes for the 80 gallery paintings in 1933 (Meiji Jingū 1933b). In the same year, the 260 volumes of *Meiji tennōki* were completed; they were in the Japanese language, and existed in only three copies.

41 Roosevelt 1918.

42 Ahearne 1995, p. 22.

43 Nakajō 1918a.

44 “Meiji Jingū hekiga mondai,” *Hōchi shinbun* (11 August 1920); Sakai 1923.

45 Satō 1996, p. 213; Saitō 1987–1989 and 1999–2000.

investigate 1) how the effort of making history visible impacted on the forms of pictures and ultimately of history in itself; 2) how the physical space of the gallery was constructed to “commemorate the virtues of Emperor Meiji”; and finally 3) how audiences experienced the time-space, in other words, how the gallery was used.

Scholars of art history have discussed individual paintings in the gallery as “emperor’s portraits” or as “war paintings.” Some scholars also categorize the gallery pictures as “history paintings.”⁴⁶ Kawata and Tan’o importantly point out the distorted interpretation of Japanese art history by Japanese scholars. They note, for example, with regard to the development of Western-style painting in Japan, that students tend to focus on new artistic trends, such as the Hakuba school; and that history paintings and war paintings, mainly produced by old schools, have long been disregarded.⁴⁷ This is also the case with Japanese-style paintings. Works by “conservative” groups, which after all dominated most state sponsored exhibitions before and during wartime, have yet to be evaluated.⁴⁸ The great majority of paintings in the gallery fall into this neglected category. Research needs to go beyond this distorted interpretation of art history, and to examine more closely why this period required the production of paintings belonging to such neglected categories.

Hayashi argues that the Memorial Art Gallery is *the* place which demonstrates the history of the Meiji period, and in which the history of Meiji-style paintings, those that survived the Meiji period, finally came to an end. In the same manner, Takayanagi concludes that the gallery reveals Japanese history painting to have come to a premature end.⁴⁹ Rather than repositioning the gallery paintings within art history, I aim to uncover the expectations of those who created the gallery and what they could or could not achieve by displaying history paintings, paintings which had developed in a context that demanded historiography.

According to Kitazawa and Satō, scholars of the politics of fine arts, the categorization of art into Japanese-style painting (*nihonga* 日本画), Western-style painting (*seiyōga* 西洋画) and history painting (*rekishiga* 歴史画) developed around the Meiji 20s (1887–1896).⁵⁰ This point becomes crucial when it is noted that demands for historiographical yield also grew from the late 1880s into the 1890s, and that the very terms used as categories for paintings were re-examined in the process of gallery creation. The word *nihonga* was first used in a speech in 1882 by the American educator, Ernest Fenollosa, as a Japanese equivalent of the English phrase “Japanese painting.” Prior to this there had been no standard Japanese term used to denote Japanese painting.⁵¹ Knowledge of Western oil painting and then of Western history painting in turn inspired the creation of new concepts of painting in Japan. According to Satō, classifications such as “Japanese paintings” and “history paintings” appeared within the context of the Meiji 20s, at the same time that Japanese national identity was coming into existence.⁵²

46 For discussions of the emperor’s portraits, see n. 35 above. For the gallery and war paintings, see for example Tanaka 1985, pp. 90–100. Kawata and Tan’o discuss war paintings in Japan in general: Kawata 1995, pp. 78–85; Tan’o and Kawata 1996. As for the gallery and history paintings, see Hayashi 2003; Takayanagi 2001; Kobori 1997. For the development of history painting in Japan, see also Satō 1999, pp. 235–41; Hyōgo Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan and Kanagawa Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1993; Yamanashi 2005.

47 Tan’o and Kawata 1996, p. 26.

48 Kunaichō 2005, p. 4.

49 Hayashi 1994, p. 101; Takayanagi 2001, p. 26. See also Kawai 1997.

50 Kitazawa 2003, pp. 9–10; Satō 1999, p. 239.

51 Kitazawa 2003, p. 37.

52 Satō 1999, p. 239.

Although large-scale historical compilations finally began at the end of the Meiji period, it was earlier, in the Meiji 30s, that history paintings were in full flourish.⁵³ Yamanashi interestingly points out why Japanese artists came to feel estranged from history painting (especially that done in a Western-style), suggesting that “there is no history sufficient for realistic reproduction in art.”⁵⁴ For Yamanashi, it was a lack not of the painters’ abilities to produce “realistic” history, but of the historians’ skills to supply “real” history.

The difference in definition of the “real” employed in the fields of history and the arts surfaced in a well known controversy over history painting around the turn of the century, and was later also one of the reasons for the declining reputation of history painting around the end of the Meiji period. Disagreement over what was “real” ultimately caused discord between those involved in the creation of the gallery. The first of the above points, the history painting controversy, comprised a series of disputes between Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 and Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 which centred upon whether history should be subordinate to the arts or not.⁵⁵ The idea of “real” was common to their arguments: for them the problem was how “real” history can be represented as “realistic” painting. Furthermore, to be “real” became the key factor in overcoming the ambivalent difference between Western and Japanese painting: “To serve the idea of realism is one’s duty as a citizen” for both Western-style and Japanese-style painters.⁵⁶ What the gallery revealed was not so much the “demise of history painting,” as Takayanagi put it, but the eternal problem of representing history as “real.”⁵⁷

On 4 May 1918 the National Fine Art Society, whose membership consisted of Western-style painters, met to discuss the Memorial Art Gallery.⁵⁸ Nakajō Seiichirō 中條精一郎 and Sakai Saisui 坂井犀水, respectively the president and a director of the society, subsequently visited Sakatani and submitted a proposal on behalf of the society. Their view was that all paintings in the gallery should be Western-style; for them, Western-style was superior to Japanese-style because its “exact” expression could exactly represent what Emperor Meiji achieved, and because its up-to-date and long-lasting materials would enable pictures to commemorate the emperor “permanently.”⁵⁹

However, it was not only Western-style painters who were lobbying for their interests. On 22 February 1923, thirty two Japanese-style painters submitted a joint proposal, as the gallery committee began to draw up a candidates’ short list.⁶⁰ Among them were leading painters such as Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観, Shimomura Kanzan 下村観山, Kawai Gyokudō 川合玉堂 and Kobori Tomoto 小堀鞆音. Surprisingly, they recommended discontinuing the project and insisted that an outstanding collection of fine art of the Meiji and Taishō periods should instead be exhibited in the gallery so as to demonstrate permanently the development of Japanese fine arts. For them, the current plans for the gallery would disgrace the emperor’s honour, as well as the painters themselves, because it was impossible to depict the emperor’s great deeds “precisely.” Although their detailed intentions were unclear, their demands were

53 Takashina 1991–1993, pp. 106–109.

54 Yamanashi 2005, pp. 341–43.

55 Their essays are reprinted in *Nihon Bijutsuin* 1990, pp. 486–543. As for their disputes, see Kobori 1986.

56 Kitazawa 2003, p. 40.

57 Takayanagi 2001, p. 26.

58 *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* (6 May 1918).

59 Nakajō 1918a and 1918b.

60 Sakatani 1917–1923.

not met; Sakatani rejected their proposal in his reply on 12 March 1923.⁶¹ The problem of historical “realness” was often discursively appropriated and applied to problems of degree of precision or accuracy: painters’ attitudes toward “realness” were sometimes used by them as a practical and expedient means of defending their own methods of representation.

The importance of the various painters’ recommendations was that they brought about an urgent change of the decision-making system in the gallery committee. The committee was worried by the painters’ charge that they (the committee) had unilaterally agreed on the topics for paintings and a short list of painters, and that some picture sponsors favoured employing “unskilled” painters. It was because of the painters’ lobbying that the committee established the Committee for Selecting Painters (Hekiga Chōsei Iinkai), comprised of both Western-style and Japanese-style painters. Unfortunately, this solution produced further complications in painter selection, ultimately leading to the resignation on 23 April 1925 of several painters, including Yokoyama and Kawai. It was indeed highly embarrassing for all concerned that there were only five pictures on exhibition in the gallery (four Western, one Japanese) when the dedication ceremony of the outer precinct to Meiji Shrine was held on 22 October 1926.⁶² The rupture in relations between the painters and those committee members who were concerned with historiographical procedures was one of the major causes of the delay in the project, which was not finally completed until 1936.

A great variety of forms of historical “realness” were mobilised in the space of the 80 framed tableaux. As a matter of course, the pursuit of a “precise” description of “proper” history was carried out by both painters and historical investigators. In order to generate provisional pictures and commentary, Goseda, Minakami and other members spent around three years making research trips around the country. Goseda’s sketches provided blueprints in minute detail for painters, who then undertook their own investigations.⁶³ The gallery committee advised them to examine actual settings and authentic materials, such as the costumes worn. Painters’ interpretations were modified over and over again at meetings in which committee members and painters discussed their rough sketches.

How then did negotiations over the portrayal of “real” history constitute the forms both of painting *and* of history? Many painters adhered to the spatial reconstruction of things as they were. For Omura Taiun 小村大雲, the painter who took charge of a tableau of the emperor attending the opening ceremony of the Tokyo-Yokohama railway line (no. 25), an obvious difficulty was that Shinbashi Station no longer existed.⁶⁴ He resolved to collect as much evidence as possible of the station’s appearance, such as photographs and plans of the building, and to create a miniature in clay scaled down to a tenth of its original size which even included participants and horse carriages. Furthermore, Omura ordered full-size copies to be made of all the clothes worn by participants at the ceremony and took photographs of models wearing them. He testified as follows: “I did not put any of my imagination into the represented reality.”⁶⁵ The obsession of another painter, Kojima Torajirō 児島虎次郎, charged with reproducing the “Council Held in the Presence of the Emperor to Discuss the Declaration of War with Russia 対露宣戦布告御前会議” (no. 68), ultimately led to a

61 Ibid.

62 Meiji Jingū 1979, p. 65.

63 For Goseda, see Aoki 2003; Yoneda 1990; Yamaguchi 1987.

64 Meiji Jingū 1934–1945, pp. 576–79.

65 Ibid., p. 579.

tragedy.⁶⁶ With the permission of the Imperial Household Agency, Kojima replicated the Emperor's Office (Omote Gozasho 表御座所) in full-scale on his premises, with fittings such as fan lights carved in minute detail, but sadly his great efforts ended in his death from exhaustion; he was succeeded by another painter.

Disagreement between painters and those concerned with historical research sometimes resulted in “reality” as compromise. For instance, in his painting of the imperial funeral (no. 80), Wada Sanzō's 和田三造 idea of historical exactitude was to symbolise atmospherically the nation's mourning.⁶⁷ Wada's “objective” expression was totally at variance with the committee members' preference for a “direct” description of reality, and so the two parties were obliged, as Wada put it, to “blend realistic and objective styles together” [Figure 1].



Figure 1. Paintings of the imperial funeral. Left: The provisional painting by Goseda Hōryū II, 1921. (Reprinted from Meiji Jingū 2000, p. 180.) Right: The final painting by Wada Sanzō, 1933. (Reprinted from Meiji Jingū 2000, p. 96)

A second example of the way in which negotiations over “real” history influenced the final form of the gallery was the decisive role of the picture sponsors, who chose a particular topic and paid for all the fees essential to its production. For picture no. 43, “The Emperor's Visit to a Silver Mine during the Imperial Tour of Yamagata and Akita 山形秋田巡幸銀山御覽,” the composition was modified following a request from the mine owners, the Furukawa family, who also became the sponsors of the painting.⁶⁸ If we compare Goseda's provisional plan, which depicted miners working outside the tunnels, with Gomi Seikichi's 五味清吉 final solution, which focused on the emperor entering the tunnels, the purpose of this modification is apparent. According to Gomi, the Furukawa family preferred the close-up picture of the emperor because it was a great honour for the miners themselves that he had bothered to enter the mine at all [Figure 2].

“The Promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education” (no. 55) was similar.⁶⁹ The final version of this tableau shows the prime minister and the Minister of Education leaving the Imperial Office after a meeting with the emperor. The painter, Ataka Yasugorō 安宅安五郎, had earlier tried to show a head teacher reading the prescript to the students of Tokyo Imperial

66 Ibid., pp. 825–7.

67 Ibid., pp. 894–901.

68 Ibid., pp. 656–64.

69 Ibid., pp. 762–63.



Figure 2. Paintings of the imperial visit to a silver mine. Left: The provisional painting by Goseda Hōryū II, 1921. (Reprinted from *Meiji Jingū* 2000, p. 143.) Right: The final painting by Gomi Seikichi, 1926. (Reprinted from *Meiji Jingū* 2000, p. 59)

University, but the setting was eventually changed due to a protest from the alumni association of the teachers college which had sponsored the picture. They failed to understand why “a teachers college should sponsor a painting which depicted Tokyo Imperial University,” an institution which was their rival.⁷⁰

Finally, in order to understand how the process of historiography and history painting are co-generative, let us examine an example which reveals that two conflicting “realities” about one particular event were placed before the public. This is the “Empress Viewing the Planting of Rice Seedlings 皇后宮田植御覽” (no. 32), a depiction of Empress Shōken’s visit to the imperial rice fields to see farmers planting rice on 18 June 1875. The commentary, composed in 1921, went as follows: “[.....] Because it was cloudy and began to rain when the empress arrived, court ladies suggested that they return to the Imperial Palace. The empress, however, replied that ‘It was rather pleasurable to see farmers working hard regardless of the rain, as it is often said they do,’ and Her Majesty was willing to continue the visit and to get wet herself.”⁷¹ Both Goseda’s blueprint and the provisional plan (by Kondō Shōsen 近藤樵仙, the artist appointed to paint the final work) showed the empress viewing the planting while holding her umbrella.⁷² However, when Kondō brought his draft to the meeting on 20 May 1926, he was surprised at the modifications that had been made to the history of the event. Investigations by members of the Extraordinary Editorial Bureau had clarified that it had stopped raining by noon, so that it was not raining when the empress visited at 2 p.m.⁷³ An earlier draft of the explanatory notes, made by the same bureau before the first topic proposal had been determined, had certainly recorded rain

70 Ibid., p. 763.

71 *Meiji Jingū* 1921, p. 373.

72 Ibid., p. 132; *Meiji Jingū* 1934–1945, p. 607.

73 Ibid., pp. 607–8.

when the empress visited.⁷⁴ Furthermore, this earlier version added that “court ladies were moved to tears by the empress’s benevolence.” Considering that this earlier version had yet to identify the precise date of the event, we can surmise that the practices of pictorial and epistemological historic citation developed together.

After consultation with committee members on the issue, Kondō finally submitted the painting on 29 January 1927. Although rain was no longer visible, the empress and others still held on to umbrellas, and the explanatory comment noted that “the rain, that had been falling since the previous night, stopped by noon.”⁷⁵ In the meantime the description in *Meiji tennōki*, completed in 1933, no longer mentioned rain itself, even though the sources for this event were the same as those used for the final commentary.⁷⁶ Interestingly, a variety of pictures both with and without rain had already been published before the gallery was opened in 1937. For example, *Meiji Jingū hekiga shi* 明治神宮壁画史, a book published around 1933 by the Aichi Shinbunsha, offered the “rainy” version of history. The publisher adopted the 1921 commentary, along with the draft painting which Kondō produced for the preparation stage of the painting.⁷⁷ By emphasising that the imperial couple carried out their duties regardless of rain, the publisher sought to highlight their devotion to duty.

5. The Pursuit of the Eternal

The painters strove to integrate historical balance into “realistic” pictures, but another frequently mentioned quality was “the eternal.” This desire for the eternal also played an important role in the construction of the gallery itself. I consider here how the physical space of the gallery was constructed as a mnemonic space in which to remember the emperor forever.

Why was a picture gallery, in the first place, considered to be an important monument to Emperor Meiji? When the emperor died, innumerable ideas were proposed for his commemoration, in addition to the aforementioned plan of establishing a shrine. As Yamaguchi has skilfully argued, the coexistence of a number of memorial plans was now feasible, due to the fact that the argument had shifted from whether to establish a shrine or memorials to that of establishing both.⁷⁸ The shrine, particularly its outer precinct, became a receptacle for the accommodation of various monuments and memorials. For example, the original plan for the outer precinct submitted by the Meiji Shrine support committee did not include memorial sports facilities like the swimming pool and baseball stadium; these were added later, in response to the proposals of interested parties. Conversely, a proposal to create a music hall in the outer precinct was not realised quite as its supporters intended. Watanabe Tetsuzō 渡辺鉄蔵, amongst others, submitted a plan to the committee in March 1920 for a music hall along the lines of Queen Elizabeth Hall, with a 6000-person capacity.⁷⁹ However, the music hall plan was merged with the proposal for a Japan Youth Centre (Nihon

74 Meiji Jingū 1918.

75 Meiji Jingū 1933a.

76 Kunaichō 1971, p. 460.

77 Aichi Shinbunsha 1933.

78 Yamaguchi 2005, pp. 72–74.

79 “Meiji Jingū no gaien ni daiongakudō no kensetsu, 明治神宮の外苑に大音楽堂の建設,” *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* (16 January 1920).

Seinenkan日本青年館), which was duly established within the grounds of the outer precinct.⁸⁰

What made the gallery unusual or even unique amongst the great variety of memorials in the outer precinct was its spatial identification. According to Sakatani, because the outer precinct was the site of the funeral at which the people had mourned the Emperor Meiji, the support committee primarily wanted a monumental statue or building to remind the Japanese nation that they had bid the emperor farewell there.⁸¹ The earliest layout plan for the outer precinct, which was made in March 1917, located a monumental column on the very point where the emperor's mortal remains had lain during his funeral [Figure 3].

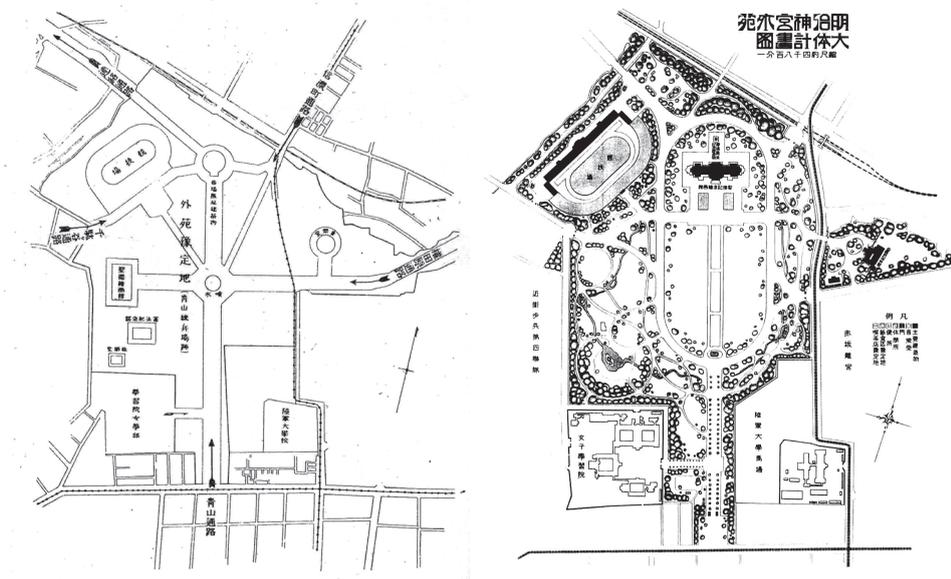


Figure 3. The Memorial Art Gallery in the outer precinct. The earlier plan made in 1917 (*left*) and the final plan in 1918 (*right*). The Memorial Art Gallery would have been built in the rectangular area on the left, directly to the left of the main central roundabout. The memorial tower to Emperor Meiji was to be sited to the north of this roundabout, on the “island” at the centre of the other main roundabout. This was the area where the emperor’s funeral took place, and was therefore seen as the most sacred in the outer precinct. The map on the right shows the outer precinct as it was finally constructed. The gallery occupies the funeral site. (Left picture: Reprinted from Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 10 [10 April 1917], 5. Right picture: Reprinted from Meiji Jingū 1937a, unpaginated)

Sakatani insisted that the committee should establish the outer precinct site itself as a monument, and “make the site speak for itself.”⁸² The issue was settled with the next draft plan (October 1917), which proposed siting the gallery over the prospective site for the monumental column; this eventually became the basis for the final construction [see also Figure 6]. The gallery was intended to be a representative monument, capable of speaking by, and for, itself.

I have discussed above what the committee members and others sought to make the gallery “speak” of. Here, then, let us see how they planned to achieve this. How could they

80 Sakatani 1912–1941, 7 February 1920.

81 Meiji Jingū 1916, pp. 9–10.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

construct the gallery so as to exhibit efficiently a sequence of 80 history paintings? Duncan's idea of "the art museum as ritual" is useful here.⁸³ For Duncan, the museum's narrative structure, such as its sequenced spaces and arrangements of objects, and its lighting and architectural details, "stands as a frame and gives meaning to individual works." The structure itself tells the visitor how to see the arts, learn from them and behave in the museum. In Duncan's words, the museum provides the visitors with a "ritual task."⁸⁴

I approach the question of how the gallery's narrative structure was formed through a consideration of the role of a Western-style painter, Terasaki Takeo 寺崎武男. The reason for focusing here on Terasaki is that he was despatched abroad as a contracted staff member of the Support Committee in order to inspect foreign ways of constructing museums and of conserving fine arts.⁸⁵ Although his opinions were not adopted in their entirety, a careful analysis of Terasaki's proposals, and his reaction to their partial adoption, can suggest the manner in which the gallery's narrative structure aimed to provide visitors with the ritual task to be enacted.⁸⁶ For Terasaki, the pursuit of "the eternal" was most closely unified with the quest for durability, of the history paintings themselves and their materials, and of the gallery. After graduating from Tokyo Art College in 1907, Terasaki studied fine art in Venice for eight years, where he was inspired by Renaissance mural painters. He dedicated his artistic life to Japanese history painting, both to his own work and to the study and development of the genre. Even after the expiry of his contract with the support committee, he continued to produce history paintings for places as various as Awa Shrine and Hōryūji. As an inspector for the gallery, Terasaki submitted detailed surveys to the support committee on at least eight occasions. It can be assumed that Terasaki's suggestions influenced the decision making of the committee, since his reports were reprinted each time in the support committee journal *Meiji Jingū Hōsankai tsūshin* 明治神宮奉賛会通信.⁸⁷

I take up three points that emerge from a comparison of his reports with the gallery as it actually materialized. The first concerns the spatial arrangement of pictures. The opening page in issue 66 of the support committee journal, published 10 November 1921, showed two photos: The Galerie des Batailles in the Palace of Versailles and the Galerie des Rubens in the Louvre, both of which formed part of the Terasaki report [Figure 4].

It is apparent that the interior arrangement of the two exhibition rooms in the gallery followed that employed in these rooms. The Terasaki report in the same issue suggested that mural paintings started in Greece and climaxed in France, where Napoleon the first triumphantly appropriated them as an instrument to arouse national identity.⁸⁸ Terasaki thus argued that the gallery, if it was created in the French manner, could establish a national art to enlighten citizens. Clearly Terasaki was well aware of the ritual efficacy of museum space, and to some extent the attention he paid to the art spaces in the Palace of Versailles and the Louvre was shared by others involved with the gallery, such as Minakami Hiromi and Itō Chūta 伊東忠太.⁸⁹

The ultimate aim of Terasaki's investigation was to understand fully the construction of

83 Duncan 1995, p. 7.

84 Ibid., pp. 12, 27.

85 Tateyama Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 2003.

86 Terasaki 1928.

87 Terasaki 1920–1923.

88 Ibid (66), p. 21.

89 Duncan 1995, p. 12; Minakami 1925, p. 3; Itō 1918, p. 1.



Figure 4. Exhibition rooms. The Galerie des Batailles in the Palace of Versailles (*top*) and the Galerie des Rubens in the Louvre Museum (*bottom left*). (Both reprinted from Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 66 [10 November 1921], p. 5.) The Japanese painting room of the Memorial Art Gallery (*upper*). (Reprinted from Meiji Jingū 1937a, unpaginated)

“model” museums, including such details as the size of paintings relative to their “containers,” that is, the museums themselves. For example, when comparing the Galerie des Batailles with the Galerie des Rubens, Terasaki pointed out that the latter, which developed out of the former, was superior to it and was, furthermore, the most outstanding exhibition room in Paris.⁹⁰ For Terasaki, the narrowly spaced arrangement of similarly sized paintings in the Galerie des Batailles made differentiation of one picture from another somewhat challenging, and consequently reduced their impact on visitors. The pictures were displayed in such a long and narrow corridor like room that it was difficult for visitors to keep sufficient distance from a painting to view it as a whole. Moreover, the showy colours of the walls in the Galerie des Batailles overpowered the tones used in the pictures, further detracting from their value. In the Galerie des Rubens, by contrast, the ratios of the picture, viewer and room were carefully harmonized.

Terasaki’s suggestions were pioneering indeed, considering the relative dearth of museums in Japan, although it must be noted that despite his influence, the final word remained with the committee. For example, Terasaki proposed that “the importance of the picture topic” determine whether a picture should be small, medium or large. This suggestion met with the strong approval of the committee, to the extent that they later added a fourth category for particularly wide paintings.⁹¹ Most notably, the materials for picture frames and for walls were chosen with reference to Terasaki’s suggestions on standardization and differentiation.⁹² The committee members and painters prepared samples of various

90 Terasaki 1920–1923 (66), pp. 21–25.

91 Meiji Jingū 1979, p. 63.

92 Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 82, pp. 4–6.

materials and experimented with them in order to achieve a satisfactory combination of picture, frame and surrounding. The ceiling colours in the gallery's two exhibition rooms, for example, were determined in accordance with the tones of the pictures, yellow for the Japanese-style paintings room and grey for the Western-style paintings room.

The second point that arises from a comparison of his reports with the gallery relates to the durability of the picture materials. Terasaki's intention was that "the gallery pictures should 'forever' teach the emperor's virtue, so the gallery's pictures should be made with durable materials."⁹³ He conducted his own experiments on the durability of colourings and canvas, and made model paintings with selected materials sent from abroad. The committee studied Terasaki's models in order to find "eternally unchangeable materials and colourings," and they consulted directors and relevant experts for advice.⁹⁴ The development of a particular type of drawing paper was, for Terasaki, "one of the outcomes of his great hardships."⁹⁵ This Tosa *washi* paper was specially ordered by the committee as the official material, although not all painters chose to use it. The committee later proudly recorded their efforts to preserve the gallery's pictures for eternity.⁹⁶ In this way, the durability of the painting materials used became associated with the perpetuity of the emperor's deeds.

The third matter for consideration is the attention paid to the preservation of the paintings, as part of the overall quest for eternity for the gallery and its contents. It was no coincidence that when in Venice, Terasaki inspected the ongoing restoration of paintings there. With the permission of the Venetian authorities, Terasaki earned the opportunity to join restoration projects and to study the techniques used.⁹⁷ The problem of how to sustain in perpetuity "everlasting" paintings displayed in the "model" manner was a perennial one. In fact, as early as April 1928 the gallery was ashamed to discover that some of its paintings had already become mouldy, and this at a stage when less than 30 paintings were on exhibition: "Masterpieces covered with mould, in forever splendid gallery" reported the *Hōchi shinbun* on 28 December 1928. This must have infuriated Terasaki, as the mouldy pictures were those using French canvas in preference to his painstakingly developed made-to-order Japanese paper. Terasaki lodged protests with the committee several times, pleading for adequate maintenance. It was following this that yet another committee was established, the Gallery Maintenance Committee (Kaiga Hozon Iinkai 絵画保存委員会), by the gallery and the painters concerned.⁹⁸

The empty space in the central hall of the gallery tells us of another never accomplished commemorative space. There was in fact a plan to erect here statues of the emperor, the empress and senior government members. This plan had been backed by several members of the support committee as well as by non-members ever since the decision to construct the gallery was first taken. On 11 October 1917, members of the committee decided to commission statues of ten senior leaders; Sanjō Sanetomi 三条実美, Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視, Ōkubo Toshimichi and Kido Takayoshi 木戸孝允 were among those chosen in February 1921.⁹⁹

93 Meiji Jingū 1934–1945, p. 684. See also Terasaki 1918.

94 Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 65, p. 32; "Kohekiga, Itarī kara Hōsankai e 古壁画、イタリーから奉賛会へ," *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* (20 July 1921).

95 Terasaki 1928, p. 9.

96 Meiji Jingū 1937a, pp. 736–45.

97 Terasaki 1920–1923 (58), p. 7.

98 Terasaki 1928–1929, pp. 52–53.

99 Sakatani 1912–1941, 11 October 1917.

As already discussed, the selection and commemoration of elderly government leaders often caused disagreement, and such was the case in this instance. The plan was consequently abandoned, and this un-materialized statue space was instead represented in a picture scroll, depicting a variety of statues erected in the central hall of the gallery [Figure 5].

This episode shows how the actual gallery was only realized through ceaseless negotiation and compromise. The devotion of the gallery’s creators to such ideals as “the real” and “the eternal” somewhat perversely only highlighted their difficulties in realizing those ideals.

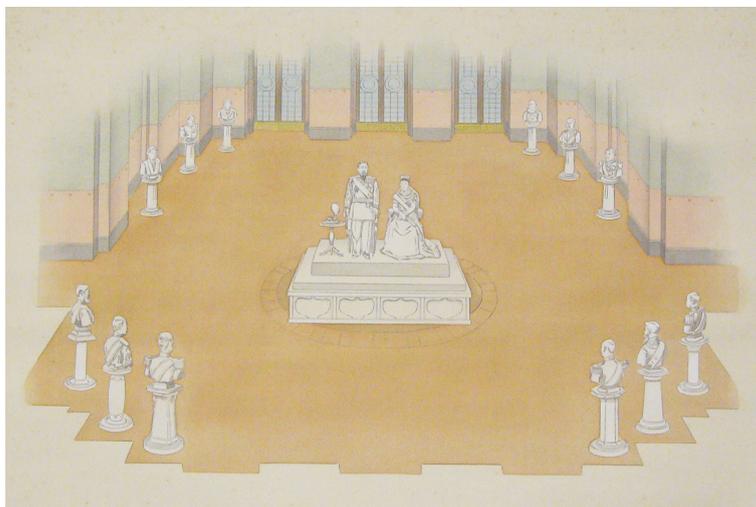


Figure 5. Memorial statues depicted in a picture scroll. Itō Kōun 伊藤紅雲, 1935. 59 × 71 cm, watercolour on paper, hanging scroll. (Collection of Meiji Jingū)

6. Acts of Remembering and Objects of Remembrance

What did people “remember” through and from their visits to the gallery? Duncan’s “museum as ritual” analysis is outstanding in its dissection of visitor’s practice in museums, but unfortunately does not explore the problem of the visitor’s experience; her study concludes with a discussion of how museum creators expect visitors to behave.¹⁰⁰ Kawai has suggested that gallery audiences were presented with the paintings as “linear history,” but this is questionable because the gallery did not admit “ordinary” people on a full-time basis until it was officially opened to the public on 21 April 1937.¹⁰¹ How did people sense the space during the 22 year period stretching from the inauguration of the support committee in 1915 to the official opening day?

Following the single open day of 23 October 1926, one day after the dedication of the outer precinct and with only five paintings included, the next public admission was 1 October 1927, with a preview the evening before. From this date, the gallery was open on Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays. Furthermore, only around one eighth of the eighty paintings were exhibited at the time this admission scheme started [Figure 6].

100 Duncan 1995.

101 Kawai 1997, p. 47; Meiji Jingū 1998, pp. 57–58.

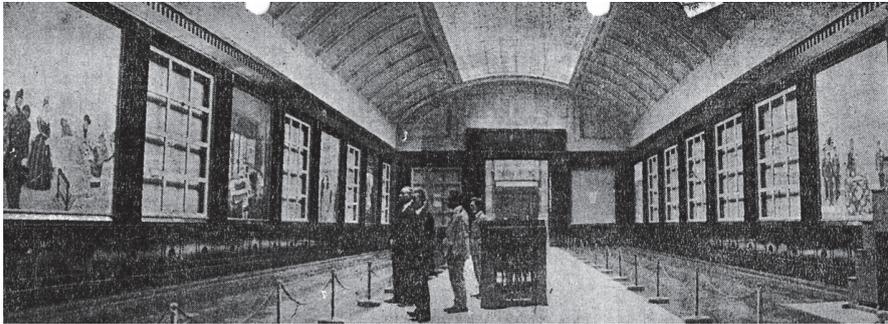


Figure 6. A preview of the gallery. Although weekend opening commenced soon after, the gallery’s walls were still largely bare. (*Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun*, 31 September 1927)

The fact that there were still less than 40 paintings completed even in Meiji Shrine’s 10th anniversary year (1930) was the subject of criticism by various newspapers: “An empty gallery” wrote the *Tōkyō shinbun* in its evening edition of 30 July 1930; “A lonely gallery” reported the *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* on 14 October 1930. The question is, how could people view a “proper linear history” when the paintings were so irregularly viewable and when so few of them were on display? A further issue to be explored is the relationship of ordinary people with the gallery during the 22 years they were unable to gain free access.

First of all, it is clear that even though the gallery may have appeared “empty” or “lonely,” people nonetheless visited the exhibition in large numbers during the years it was only open on a part time basis (see Table 3). The outer precinct and its gallery were major tourist attractions, as was the inner precinct of Meiji Shrine. From around 1920, the outer precinct was listed as one of the most popular tourist sites in Tokyo in tourist handbooks such as *Yūran Tōkyō annai* 遊覧東京案内.¹⁰²

Table 3. Visitors to the Meiji Shrine Memorial Art Gallery

| Fiscal year | Visitors | Fiscal year | Visitors |
|-------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|
| 1927* | 97,371 | 1933** | 221,734 |
| 1928 | 121,750 | 1934 | 268,789 |
| 1929 | 142,095 | 1935 | 308,765 |
| 1930 | 150,299 | 1936*** | 456,824 |
| 1931 | 166,769 | Part of fiscal 1937**** | 141,053 |
| 1932 | 183,750 | | |

The Japanese fiscal year runs from 1 April to 31 March; “Fiscal 1930” thus runs from 1 April 1930 to 31 March 1931.

* 1 October 1927 Open at weekends/national holidays from this date

** December 1933 Distribution of “picture commentary” booklet

*** 21 April 1936 Ceremony for the completion and hanging of all 80 paintings

**** 21 April 1937 Officially open

Source: Meiji Jingū 1937b.

102 Daitōsha 1922.

The Tokyo Travel Bureau's *Dai Tōkyō annai* 大東京案内 (1936) offers tourists sightseeing courses according to the length of time available for a visit, all of which included the gallery.¹⁰³ The handbook presents all its model tours as being “convenient, economical and interesting.” For example, one tour consisted of the following route: Imperial Palace → Meiji Shrine → outer precinct of Meiji Shrine → Nogi Shrine (where Admiral Nogi committed suicide) → Sengakuji (where the forty seven masterless samurai of Akō [Akō rōshi 赤穂浪士] were buried) → Ginza Matsuzakaya department store. *Shinpan dai Tōkyō annai* 新版大東京案内, by Kon Wajirō, indicates in its inclusion of Nogi Shrine how the death place of a famous person could become a popular place to visit, and such was the case with the outer precinct.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, a popular Tokyo tour bus (the Blue Bus) operated a route to the capital and the gallery from the provinces, visiting around thirty typical tourist sights in the space of eight hours. According to Kon, around ninety to 100,000 people used this bus service per year; many of them were students on excursions and other groups from the provinces.¹⁰⁵

Although the number of history paintings on view constituted less than half of the total commissioned, the pictures which the sightseers encountered in the gallery were not completely “new,” as they had “already” seen some of them. As various scholars have pointed out, this was due to the close connections between painting and history education. Especially since the 1931 Manchurian incident, history paintings were expected to be effective tools in the teaching of national history. History paintings in the gallery were inserted into school textbooks and some of the paintings were even used in their draft stages, before the gallery had been opened to the public.¹⁰⁶

Various entertainment media played significant roles in the interpretation of the history presented in the gallery, both before and after the gallery opened its doors to the public. Goseda Hōryū II was a significant figure here.¹⁰⁷ He had originally been engaged in the painting of panoramic pictures, an art form which was highly popular during the Meiji period. His approach to history was not only to draw it as if it were a museum painting, but also to perform it in the form of travelling picture shows, which exhibited his own pictorial adaptations of Emperor Meiji's life. As Kinoshita conclusively shows, the viewing of paintings was for ordinary people a kind of spectacle, as indeed was the panoramic show.¹⁰⁸ Goseda encouraged and enabled people to encounter two editions of history, a more popularised account in their home region or town on the one hand and the gallery version in Tokyo on the other.

The historical narration in the gallery had also become familiar to people through popular publications, sometimes before the gallery's official opening, albeit often in abbreviated or simplified form. Even six years before the opening, a pictorial magazine for girls called *Shōjo kurabu* 少女倶楽部 issued a supplement featuring the gallery paintings, including most of them in full colour (1 April 1931). The popular picture magazine, *Kōdansha no ehon* 講談社の絵本, entitled one of its issues “Pictorial History of Emperor Meiji *Meiji tennō on emaki*

103 Tōkyō Shiyakusho 1936, pp. 16–20.

104 Kon 2001, p. 314.

105 Ibid., pp. 66–73. See also Tōkyō Shiyakusho 1936, p. 20.

106 “The Union of Korea and Japan 日韓合邦” (no. 77), used in a government-approved elementary school textbook from 1935. As for history paintings during the 15 year wartime period (1931–1945), see Tan'o and Kawata 1996.

107 Yamaguchi 2005, pp. 23–36; Yokota 1999, pp. 104–106.

108 Kinoshita 1999, pp. 174–79.

明治天皇御繪卷” to coincide with the public opening of the gallery in November 1937. The full colour paintings in this work were all by Goseda, with different pictorial adaptations from those of the gallery. Both *Shōjo kurabu* and *Kōdansha no ehon* were issued by Kōdansha, the publisher responsible for a great variety of entertainment magazines. They were particularly popular amongst young people, and the total circulation of the *Kōdansha no ehon* series rose to 70 million by 1969 (first published December 1936).¹⁰⁹ Even if history paintings had been somewhat devalued by the end of the Meiji period in the field of fine arts, they nonetheless played a crucial role in building the popularity of various forms of popular entertainment, and they were used extensively as educative tools. When people entered the gallery, they “remembered” familiar pictures with “already acquainted” historical interpretations, although the images and stories had originally emanated from that same gallery [Figure 7].



Figure 7. Left: The color supplement of *Shōjo kurabu*, 9:4 (1931). Right: The issue of *Kōdansha no ehon*, entitled “Pictorial History of Emperor Meiji,” November 1937. (Both from the collection of Meiji Jingū)

The familiarity felt by ordinary people with the gallery’s narration of history was not only visual; it was auditory. The output of the gallery’s historiographical investigations was occasionally made available to the public, in the form of public lectures. Tokyo City sponsored a lecture in 1921 in celebration of the first anniversary of Meiji Shrine, in which Kaneko Kentarō and Fujinami Kototada spoke about the progress of their historiographical research and the Emperor Meiji’s life story.¹¹⁰ The support committee attempted to establish a regular lecture series on the emperor, stressing it would serve not only to make the picture themes more widely known but also to develop national education.¹¹¹ Remarkably, these

¹⁰⁹ Karino 2005, pp. 229–41.

¹¹⁰ Fujinami 1922.

¹¹¹ Meiji Jingū 1916–1927, vol. 68 (10 May 1922), pp. 20–26.

lectures were even delivered to two emperors. Kaneko, Fujinami, and Mikami Sanji, who had succeeded Kaneko as Governor of the Extraordinary Editorial Committee, taught both Emperor Taishō and Emperor Shōwa about Emperor Meiji, telling them just what their father and grandfather respectively had really accomplished.¹¹²

Finally, I turn to the “Siege of Kumamoto castle during the Satsuma Rebellion 西南役熊本籠城” (no. 37) as an example of how the painter’s quest for “reality” was interrelated with local practices of commemoration. In order to aid Kondō Shōsen, the painter, to deliver a “really” historical representation, Kumamoto citizens took part in a mock battle on 1 December 1922.¹¹³ This project was assisted by the army’s Kumamoto division as well as by the picture sponsor, Hosokawa Moritatsu 細川護立. Some of those who had actually been among the besieged testified to their experiences. Troops as well as artillery (some of which was used in the original battle) were set “as they were,” even firing guns using blanks for effect. The further importance of this “authentic event” is that people took documentary photographs of it as “historical record,” and that a tremendous number of locals viewed the battle, including over one thousand school children and students. This young audience, who had obviously not been there when the battle occurred forty five years earlier, were able to experience, view and memorize an “exact” copy of the Satsuma rebellion at its precise original location.

The process of historical investigation for the gallery pictures, in other words the historiographical operation itself, was one with which the prospective audiences of the paintings became intimately associated, as witnesses, recorders and historiographers. Memory in the space of the gallery emerged from the interrelation of local places where the events illustrated had taken place.

Conclusion

This paper contended that the Art Gallery was constructed as a mnemonic space and that its construction concerned the making of history. The gallery project took over 20 years before its completion in 1936, its aim being to exhibit historical paintings depicting the history of Emperor Meiji and his era. I have argued that the process of rendering history visible impacted on the forms of pictures and ultimately on history itself. The main players in the creation of the art gallery were historiographers and painters, as well as members of the support committee. The historiographers were responsible for compiling two national historiographies, *Dai Nihon ishin shiryō* in the Ministry of Education and *Meiji tennōki* in the Imperial Household Agency, and for investigating historical facts and determining the gallery’s picture topics. Painters’ activities were also decisive in the process of gallery creation as they, no less than the historiographers, were the interpreters of the history to be represented.

Both the historiographers and painters strove to portray “real” history in the gallery’s

112 For their lectures to emperors, see Horiguchi 1994; Takahashi 1995 and 1999; Kawata 2000; Shibata 1993.

113 General accounts of the mock battle are drawn from “Kaigakan no hekiga, Seinan Sensō: Kumamoto Jō ya Hanaokayama no shasei o shini kaetta Kondō Shōsen gahaku,” *Kyūshū shinbun* (27 November 1922); “Kondō gahaku no tame ni Seinan no eki no mogisen o raigetsu tsuitachi Fujisakidai de okonau,” *Kyūshū shinbun* (28 November 1922); “Seinan no eki no mogisen: Meiji Jōgū Kinenkan ni kishin suru senu sakusei,” *Kyūshū nichinichi shinbun* (2 December 1922); “Kondō gahaku no tame ni Seinan no eki no mogisen,” *Kyūshū shinbun* (2 December 1922); Meiji Jōgū 1934–1945, pp. 619–24.

paintings, because they believed that only such a legitimized history was worthy of exhibition and remembrance in Meiji Shrine. For historiographers, the paintings in the gallery constituted the first form of national historiography made available to the public. Their task was to choose the picture topics that would represent the national narrative of the Meiji era rather than merely narrate a biography of Emperor Meiji. For painters, a challenge lay in determining “realistic” styles of painting adequate to the representation of “real” history. The discussions and negotiations concerning procedures continued among the historiographers and painters, as the latter lobbied the former to oppose the appointment of particular painters to the project, and the ensuing ruptures became a major cause of the delay in the project.

The contrast between the expectations of the gallery’s creators and the experience of the visitors, in terms of how the gallery was viewed as well as how it was to be viewed, was also the subject of this paper. During its ten years of limited opening, from 1927 to 1937, a large number of people visited the gallery. However, what they saw, and perhaps what they went to see, was not the structured linear history the creators wanted them to view, because during this period the gallery exhibited less than half of the history paintings. Rather, visitors flocked to the gallery simply because it had become one of the most popular sightseeing sites in Tokyo.

Exploring memory construction is to understand the mechanism by which past events were passed on to the present through constant use, misuse and appropriation of what really happened. It is thus essential to take account of the processes and practices through which memories were formed and sustained.

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