

**THE IDEALS OF THE EAST,  
WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO THE ART OF  
JAPAN. [LONDON-1903]**

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The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan. [London-1903] by Kakuzo Okakura

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PREFATORY NOTE

*Mr. Murray wishes to point out that  
this book is written in English by a  
native of Japan.*

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## INTRODUCTION

KAKASU OKAKURA, the author of this work on Japanese Art Ideals—and the future author, as we hope, of a longer and completely illustrated book on the same subject—has been long known to his own people and to others as the foremost living authority on Oriental Archæology and Art.

Although then young, he was made a member of the Imperial Art Commission which was sent out by the Japanese Government in the year 1886 to study the art history and movements of Europe and the United States. Far from being overwhelmed by this experience, Mr. Okakura only found his appreciation of Asiatic art deepened and intensified by his travels, and since that time he has

made his influence felt increasingly in the direction of a strong re-nationalising of Japanese art in opposition to that pseudo-Europeanising tendency now so fashionable throughout the East.

On his return from the West, the Government of Japan showed its appreciation of Mr. Okakura's services and convictions by making him Director of their New Art School at Ueno, Tokyo. But political changes brought fresh waves of so-called Europeanism to bear on the school, and in the year 1897 it was insisted that European methods should become increasingly prominent. Mr. Okakura now resigned. Six months later thirty-nine of the strongest young artists in Japan had grouped themselves about him, and they had opened the Nippon Bijitsuin, or Hall of Fine Arts, at Yanaka, in the suburbs of Tokyo, to which reference is made in chapter xiv. of this book.

If we say that Mr. Okakura is in some

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sense the William Morris of his country, we may also be permitted to explain that the Nippon Bijitsuin is a sort of Japanese Merton Abbey. Here various decorative arts, such as lacquer and metal work, bronze casting, and porcelain, are carried on, besides Japanese painting and sculpture. The members attempt to possess themselves of a deep sympathy and understanding of all that is best in the contemporary art movements of the West, at the same time that they aim at conserving and extending their national inspiration. They hold proudly that their work will compare favourably with any in the world. And their names include those of Hashimoto Gaho, Kanzan, Taikan, Sessei, Kozn, and others equally famous. Besides the work of the Nippon Bijitsuin, however, Mr. Okakura has found time to aid his Government in classifying the art treasures of Japan, and to visit and study the antiquities of China and India. With regard to the latter country, this is the first instance