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# *The Dynamics Between East and West in Meiji's Japan: Hishida Shunsō, Morotai, and Nihonga Paintings*

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***Abstract:*** The phenomenon of globalization has led to a growing interconnectedness across nations and regions, giving rise to extensive cross-cultural exchanges, establishment of commercial alliances, and significant societal transformations. This paper examines the embedded dynamics between the West and the East by analyzing three paintings of Hishida Shunsō, the Morotai technique he developed, and the Nihonga movement in the Meiji Period, which opposed the dominance of Western paintings by insisting on traditional Japanese paintings and art styles. This research has identified three Nihonga paintings that Shunsō created in the three stages of his career and a text he wrote near the end of his life (during the final phase of the Nihonga movement), which explains the development of the Morotai technique and discusses the progression of the Nihonga movement in the Meiji period. In the discussion, the paper compares the West and East with respect to five aspects: the embedded Western bias in the Nihonga movement, the comparison between Nihonga and Yoga, the Western perception of the Morotai technique and the Western Gaze on the East, the shift in Japan's national identity, and the localization of the globalized West in domestic Japanese society. The paper concludes that the success of the Nihonga movement and of Morotai-style paintings show that domestic Eastern culture actively sought to maintain its position under the pressure of Western influx by integrating Western ideas and Eastern techniques.

***Keywords:*** cultural dynamics, national identity, Nihonga movement, Meiji period, Hishida Shunsō

## 1. Introduction

The process of globalization has become increasingly prevalent in the world. Cultural exchanges, economic collaboration, and social revolutions are recurring motifs observed within various nations and regions. To maintain the equitable distribution of advantages resulting from globalization, it is imperative to critically analyze the localisation of global movements and move away from a Western-centric perspective. Since the very first attempt at colonization in the late 18th Century, the West has embraced orientalizing gestures and practices [1]. This Western tendency to exoticize the East created tension between the Occident and Orient. However, the dynamic established between the two culture and political centers was not exclusively oppositional. The two likewise engaged in forms of exchange, integration, and adaptation.

During the late 19th to early 20th Century, Japan had a sequence of social reforms referred to as the Meiji Restoration, which were implemented as a reaction to the introduction of Western ideas,

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politics, and philosophies. This paper will focus on the field of art during the specified period, with particular emphasis on Hishida Shunso, Morotai, and the Nihonga movement. These artistic entities were notable for their engagement with Western artistic forms and schools. Japanese art exhibited two distinct responses to Western influence. In certain cases, Japanese painters exhibited a complete embrace of Western procedures and styles. In alternative cases, Japanese artists exhibited resistance. This paper examines the extent to which the two reactions exemplify the inexorable assimilation of Western influences and the localization of global Western culture within Japan. The discourse additionally encompasses the examination of passive integration within the context of the Nihonga movement, as well as the transformation of Japan's national identity resulting from its active or passive assimilation of Western ideas and practices.

## 2. An Era of Art Reforms

Under the rule of Emperor Meiji, Japan underwent a period of intense social and political revolution, known as the Meiji Restoration (Meiji Ishin, Meiji Period, a Japanese dynasty from 1868-1912). The Meiji period, which concluded over 110 years ago, continues to exert a lasting impact on contemporary society. The undeniable influence of the Meiji Restoration on contemporary Japan has firmly established its modernity. During the period of the Restoration, the Japanese government and political elites had assimilated ideologies, philosophies, political structures, and military methods from Western sources. The objective was to integrate Western advancements with Eastern customs. The military capacity of Japan was enhanced as a result of modifications to its political system. Moreover, the Japanese economy experienced significant gains as a result of the expansion of several industries. As a result of these aforementioned alterations, the Meiji Restoration had a profound and far-reaching influence on the arts and culture of Japan.

During the Meiji Restoration, some Japanese artists coined the term Yōga (洋画, Western-Style paintings) to refer to work that emerged under the influx of Western styles and schools of paintings. Although European paintings were introduced to Japan with Christian missionaries from Portugal as early as the mid-sixteenth century, the early paintings did not incite a large wave in the mainstream of Japanese art [2]. However, the Yōga movement gained increased prominence throughout the Meiji period. A significant number of Japanese artists demonstrated a preference for Western norms, techniques, and materials, hence prioritizing them over the traditional Nihonga paintings. Fujishima Takeji, a prominent figure in the Yōga art movement, actively championed the adoption of Western painting techniques, particularly through the utilization of oil paints. Additionally, he advocated for the substitution of indigenous nihonga colors. Despite the growing popularity of the Yōga movement, it encountered significant opposition from numerous critics. The artists who opposed Yōga and insisted on traditional Japanese styles coined the term Nihonga (Japanese-style paintings) to refer to a mode of art that rejected the westernization of Japanese painting [3]. Nihonga was a movement in direct response to the westernized transformation of Japanese art and society. While it aimed to preserve the heritage of classical Japanese paintings and techniques, it updated the past to increase its global exposure and influence [4].

Among Nihonga artists, Hishida Shunsō was the most representative and respected during the Meiji period. His paintings reflected the process of the Nihonga movement. Through analyzing three paintings, "Reflection in the Water" (1897) [5], "Bodhisattva Kenshu" (1907) [6], and "Fallen Leaves" (1909) [7], each of which was created during a different stage of Hishida Shunsō's career, we can discern how Western ideologies unconsciously influenced domestic culture and how the national identity of Japanese people shifted.

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## 3. Hishida Shunso's Paintings, Morotai, and the Nihonga Movement

Artists created the term Nihonga as a counterpart to the rising trend of Yōga movement. Although Nihonga literally means "Japanese paintings", it is not equivalent to traditional Japanese painting. In fact, Nihonga is an art movement that resisted the rapid westernization of Japanese art and to diminish the negative influence of the anti-Buddhist (廃仏毀釈) movement—A movement to expel Buddhism in order to reinforce the status of Shindo religion as the National Religion In Meiji period—happening along with the Westernization of Japanese society, which resulted in the destruction of many Japanese artworks. The Nihonga movement was founded by American art historian and philosopher Ernest Fenollosa. In a speech given in 1882, Fenollosa enumerated several characteristics of Nihonga: "It doesn't aim to be realistic as a photograph. It doesn't have shadows. It has an outline. The color tone isn't rich. The expressions are simple" [8]. His definition of Nihonga aligns effectively with the majority of conventional Japanese painting, including Chinese-style paintings. Nevertheless, it omits two prominent styles, namely Nanga and Ukiyo-e, due to their utilization of vivid colors and the intricacies inherent in their artistic expressions. Fenollosa's conclusion may be construed as a stereotyped anticipation of the visual characteristics that Eastern paintings ought to embody, particularly when juxtaposed against the widely recognized Western painting techniques, such as impressionism, which employ vibrant hues to convey intricate real-world environments.

The absence of an outline in the case of Morotai can be seen as a daring innovation [9]. The overall progression of Morotai's artistic growth can be observed as a manifestation of the incorporation of Western painting techniques inside the Nihonga movement. The unorthodox approach known as Morotai was given a derogatory moniker by critics [9]. Nevertheless, through time, the name gradually evolved into the official appellation for this innovative artistic method. The Morotai approach, characterized by its innovation, is the amalgamation of prevalent themes and items found in traditional Japanese arts with Western perspectives on the importance of spatial elements. Consequently, Nihonga practitioners, exemplified by the renowned Hishida Shunsō, abstained from employing conventional Western artistic techniques, such as scientific perspective and chiaroscuro shading. Instead, they pursued alternative approaches rooted in the traditions of Chinese and Japanese art.

This section will undertake a comprehensive analysis of three paintings executed by Hishida Shunsō at various junctures along his artistic career. The initial stage predates the year 1898, while the subsequent period spans from 1898 to 1908. The concluding phase include works created subsequent to 1908. In his first career stage, having recently completed his studies, Hishida Shunso produced work in traditional Japanese styles. Created in 1897, "We feature Reflection in the Water" embodies Hishida's style at the time. The publication of "Cold Woods" (寒林) in 1898 marks the start of his second career stage. During this period, Shunso started to implement lineless brushwork [10]. Over time, this technique gradually became a formal style and received a new name, "Morotai" [9]. In 1903, he was diagnosed with a serious eye disease, which slowed the frequency of both his production and the progression of the Morotai technique. "Bodhisattva Kenshu" (1907) represents his early "Morotai" style. In December of 1908, after his doctor gave permission to return to work, Shunso showed huge progress in the development of Morotai. This marks the beginning of his third and last career stage [10]. "Ochiba" or "Fallen Leaves" (1909) exemplifies the third stage of his career, during which "Morotai" was fully delveoped. In 1911, Hishida Shunso died. He had devoted his whole life to arts and paintings and contributed much to the Nihonga movement.

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### 3.1. Reflection in the Water, Traditional Japanese Paintings at the Start of Nihonga Movement

Figure 1: Reflection in the Water (水鏡), 1897 [5].

“Reflection in the Water” (figure 1) is a silk painting in traditional Chinese style. Hishida Shunsō produced it in 1897. It is 257.8cm in length and 170.8cm in width [5]. The work depicts a beautiful woman by a lake. She is wearing a delicate gauzy dress with multiple layers and a set of fine precious jewelry, including earrings, necklaces, and hair accessories. Her hair is coiled in a style that reveals her to be a Tennyo (Heavenly-woman), divine beings traditional to Buddhism. She holds a dying hydrangea, while many withered hydrangea buds and flowers populate the foreground of the image. The lakewater is cloudy, which hints that the depicted Tennyo is under the five phases of approaching death (a term in Mahayana buddhism to describe the five signs of death for the divine beings). This image illustrates the first stage of Hishida Shunso’s painting, during which his work was largely influenced by traditional Eastern and Chinese paintings. Although Hishida uses some light blue color, overall the painting is in a dark tone, and there’s not much color variation in this painting.

“Reflection in the Water” is a representative example of Chinese painting. There is a lack of information indicating that Hishida had initiated any exploration activities on Morotai. The study extensively replicates the majority of the concepts outlined in Fenollosa’s characterization of Nihonga. Similar to other works of this genre, this composition exhibits a religious theme. The discernible attributes of the artwork suggest its classification within the initial stage of the Nihonga artistic movement. The objective of the Nihonga movement was to reinvigorate and restore the traditional art of Japanese painting. During that period, there existed a lack of clarity regarding the potential for Nihonga artists to engage in innovative practices and cultivate non-traditional skills. During the initial period of the Nihonga movement, adherents held the belief that a resolute rejection would effectively prevent the proliferation of Western-style paintings.

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### 3.2. Bodhisattva Kenshu — The Development of Morotai

Figure 2: Bodhisattva Kenshu (賢首菩薩), 1907 [6].

Hishida Shunsō's "Bodhisattva Kenshu" (figure 2) is a hanging-scroll, color on silk, Nihonga-style painting with a length of 185.7cm and a width of 99.5cm. It is now preserved in The National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo [6]. Shunso used pointillism to draw patterns over the colors and applied shades of colors to express light and shadow. In this work, he moves toward his Morotai technique, which does not use lines to indicate the subjects but only shades to express three-dimensionality. This artwork by Hishida depicts the esteemed Bodhisattva Kenshu, who holds a significant position within the Kegon school of Mahayana Buddhism. The central position of the figure in the painting is occupied by a seated individual, flanked by two standing monks. From a religious standpoint, the artist creates this artwork in consideration of his individual experiences. In 1903, Shunso received a diagnosis of severe ocular and renal ailments. The individual had resided in a state of apprehension regarding the potential loss of his visual faculties [11]. However, between the years 1903-1905, he was presented with a significant opportunity to embark on a journey to Europe. During his time there, he acquired novel ideas and observed diverse artistic conceptions. The individual's apprehension regarding mortality and their appreciation for the transformative nature of their educational journey culminated in the production of a painting depicting Bodhisattva Kenshu, symbolizing their commitment to Buddhism and reverence for this esteemed religious icon. This artwork is regarded as one of the initial instances in which Hishida engaged in experimentation with his morotai technique. The creation of the artwork occurred shortly after Hishida's return to Japan subsequent to a research visit in Europe.

In an environment where the West was more celebrated and the East discarded, Nihonga sought solutions to increase its reputation and popularity. During the Meiji Restoration, which started with the anti-Buddhist movement, the emperor of Japan and the Japanese government embraced Westernization to strengthen its national power. Some extreme progressives viewed traditional East Asian culture as an encumbrance. Encouraged by the trends in Japan's social environment, Western paintings almost predominated in the art field. The Nihonga artists, known for their creation of traditional Japanese paintings, faced challenges in preserving their dominant position within the Japanese art sphere, as they represented the essence of traditional culture. Hishida Shunso and Yokoyama Taikan collaborated in the development of morotai with the aim of promoting the wider acceptance and appreciation of traditional Japanese paintings [10]. By employing it, Nihonga artists would be able to enhance their influence and elevate their social standing.

Although Morotai was developed for the future of traditional Japanese art, it faced many challenges from the conservative side. Many buyers of traditional Nihonga paintings were reluctant to embrace this new attempt to preserve the legacy of traditional paintings. As previously noted, the

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initial name of the movement was meant to denigrate its approach [12]. However, the Western audience found these Japanese paintings more acceptable than the domestic audience [9]. In the exhibitions in New York and Boston in 1904, paintings using Morotai techniques received praise.

Simultaneously, the emergence of Morotai signified a novel stage in the progression of the Nihonga artistic movement. Rather than solely focusing on the conservation of traditional Japanese paintings, artists involved in this movement, including Hishida Shunsō, took proactive measures to revive indigenous arts in response to the increasing Western influence. The evolution and adaptation of traditional art aimed to challenge the prevailing perception that it was flat and rudimentary when compared to Western perspectival art.

### 3.3. Ochiba ("Fallen Leaves")—The Mature Stage of Morotai

Figure 3: Ochiba (落葉, "Fallen Leaves"), 1909 [7].

Hishida Shunsō's Ochiba ("Fallen Leaves") shown in figure 3, is a color painting on paper in the Nihonga-style. It has a height of 157 cm and a width of 362 cm. It is now preserved in Fukui Fine Arts Museum in Fukui, Japan [7]. In this painting, Hishida portrays a visual representation of a woodland setting during the autumn season. A diverse array of trees belonging to distinct species exhibit a range of postures. Certain leaves undergo a transformation, transitioning into hues of red and yellow, while others, though still green, exhibit a wilting demeanor indicative of their impending demise. The remaining leaves have already descended upon the forest floor, providing a protective layer over the terrestrial surface. The painting exhibits a distinct contrast in the coloration of the trees, with those in the foreground rendered in darker hues in comparison to the trees situated in the background. This deliberate artistic choice effectively imparts a perception of depth and spatiality within the composition. Furthermore, Hishida employed a more sophisticated approach known as the Morotai Blurred Style, thereby enhancing the perception of a well-defined three-dimensional environment. The artist refrained from providing a preliminary outline of the objects depicted in the painting prior to applying color. Instead, the artist employed wash techniques to achieve a visual effect where the colors and tones seamlessly blend together. This was accomplished by delicately applying pigments in a manner that creates the illusion of melting transitions between different hues [13]. The painting lacks distinct transitions, lines, or boundaries.

In this stage, the Japanese domestic audience appeared to be more open to this technique. Hishida's "Fall Leaves" received many positive reviews from Japanese artists, reviewers, and critics after its presence in the third national Japanese art exhibition in 1909 [7]. This marks the acceptance of

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Morotai among the domestic community. The painting marks the modernization of traditional Japanese painting. In the later phase of the Nihonga movement, artists successfully evolved traditional Japanese art into forms and styles that were more receivable among the domestic audience, which embraced the West and discounted indigenous culture, and among international audiences. In general, Nihonga was lifted by the success of Morotai and gained more attention. The attempt to integrate the West and the East successfully saved the East from the oppression of the West. The traditional arts thrived again under the efforts of many Nihonga artists.

### 3.4. Nihonga Movement Post Meiji Period

In 1910, at the end of the Meiji Period, Hishida Shunsō redefine Nihonga:

*I firmly believe that the day will come—Of course not in the near future—when all the painting we know today by the different names of yōga, watercolor, and Nihonga will be regarded as Nihonga, that is, painting conceived and produced by Japanese people. There will be no difference between what we call Nihonga and yōga, except on one point: their different painting materials [14].*

Within the text, Hishida Shunsō articulates his aspiration for the integration of Yōga and Nihonga. He expressed a desire for Nihonga to encompass a comprehensive concept representing the entirety of Japanese art. Despite the incorporation of Western ideas in both Yoga and Nihonga, these artistic practices serve as manifestations of responses to the widespread influence of the West on a global scale. Consequently, the primary emphasis of both perspectives transitioned from outright rejection of Western styles to the gradual assimilation of Western influence into Eastern traditions. The transition of the agency occurred from Western influences, which had forced external concepts, to a more domestically-oriented approach in Japan, where external ideas were assimilated into the traditional culture. Shunso's statement is indicative of the transformations occurring in Japan. Japan was historically resistant to Western influences, but it has since undergone a process of redefining its national identity amidst tensions arising from the clash between Western ideologies and traditional Eastern cultures. Ultimately, Japan aims to assert its cultural sovereignty by gaining complete autonomy over its cultural development.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of Hishida Shunsō's paintings reveals the evolving dynamics between the West and the East. Edward Said's concepts of "othering" and "Orientalism," coupled with multiple models of Globalization and Localization can be utilized to analyze how indigenous Japan reacted to the predominance of the West during the Meiji period [15].

### 4.1. The East Against the Embedded Bias of the West

Western perspectives were embedded in the Nihonga movement. Although the movement resisted Western artistic influence and attempted to restore traditional Eastern paintings, it was defined and led by an American, Ernest Fenollosa [8]. It's hard to imagine that his definition of Nihonga was not formulated under an implicit comparison with the West. Ukio-e and Nanga, two art styles with bright tones and vibrant colors, were excluded from his generalization of Nihonga. In the end, he concluded that their "color tones" were "not rich" [8]. The Water Mirror created by Hishida Shunso exemplifies the essence of Nihonga art, adhering closely to its prescribed characteristics and principles. The generalization of Nihonga in this context exhibited a skewed perspective. Fenollosa's argument regarding the coordinates of traditional Japanese paintings lacked a comprehensive summary of all art styles. Ukiyo-e and Nanga emerged as prominent artistic genres within the realm of traditional Japanese art. Had he explored Japanese art with sincerity, he would have been unable to overlook these artistic styles. As the Nihonga movement advanced, it led to a reevaluation and subsequent

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revision of the conventional definition of Nihonga. Directly opposing Fenollosa's conclusion that Nihonga "usually has an outline" and "doesn't have shadow", the paintings using the Morotai technique created contrast between light and shadow and a sense of space without outlines. In this way, the East used Morotai as a means of challenging stereotypes that arose from Western perspectives.

### 4.2. Nihonga Versus Yoga, The East Versus the West

Even though Nihonga and Yoga used distinct approaches to increase their influence, the forms of these two concepts gradually evolved to be similar in the end. Although Nihonga insisted on maintaining its authenticity, it had to adapt itself from the previous forms which were flat and two-Dimensional into more three-dimensional and spatial forms. Nihonga and Yoga shared a commonality in their adoption of Western concepts. Despite the utilization of Morotai as a source of inspiration from ancient Chinese paintings in Nihonga, and the incorporation of various Western techniques like as chiaroscuro and scientific viewpoints in Yoga, both art forms played a pivotal role in the transition of Japanese arts from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional medium. This prevalent attribute signifies that Nihonga, despite its firm rejection of Western concepts, was indirectly influenced by Western influences. Undoubtedly, the influx of Western paintings into the art market has had adverse effects on the realm of traditional Japanese paintings. Nevertheless, Nihonga artists did not adopt or incorporate Western painting techniques or styles. Conversely, individuals engage in proactive measures aimed at enhancing their circumstances, exemplified as the cultivation of innovative artistic methodologies to counteract the prevailing prejudices associated with traditional Japanese art. When Western ideas reached traditional Japan and formed an active threat to Japanese objectivity, progressives tended to integrate external ideas with internal solutions as a defense of Japan's agency. The Nihonga artists integrated the idea of creating a sense of space in paintings and the development of Morotai from traditional art styles to defend their position under the influx of West ideologies and art styles.

### 4.3. Western Perception of Morotai and the Western Gaze on the East

The development of Morotai faced domestic challenges that cannot be denied. Conversely, it garnered popularity inside exhibitions held in Western societies. The divergent receptions of Morotai exemplify the persistent challenges encountered in the process of integrating Western and Eastern regions, as domestic stakeholders often exhibit resistance towards implementing structural reforms. Conversely, this observation also signifies the Western perspective on the East. The incorporation of Western influences in Eastern painting results in a fusion of both Oriental elements, characterized by their exotic, enigmatic, and captivating nature, and domestic elements, which render the artwork more accessible and approachable to Western viewers. The oriental aspect of these paintings is characterized by a departure from the typically brilliant and dense colors found in oil paintings. Instead, they employ the light and desaturated color palette commonly associated with traditional Japanese paintings. The depicted objects inside the paintings have a greater degree of Japanese influence. As an example, the depicted characters frequently embody historical or legendary personages, while their attire predominantly adheres to traditional Japanese fashion. These disparities are indicative of the contrasting cultural aspects between European and American societies, which may be less familiar to the intended audience. Conversely, the artistic style exhibited in these paintings bears certain resemblances to Western art movements, notably Impressionism. The depicted artworks effectively communicate a perception of spatiality through the skillful utilization of light and shadow, a technique that was indeed acquired through the study of Western artistic traditions. As a result of these adoptions, paintings from Japan that predominantly featured two-dimensional

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compositions were supplanted by their Western counterparts, thereby garnering acceptance and appreciation from Western audiences. Furthermore, the positive reception of the Morotai-style paintings serves as another evidence of the effective assimilation of external concepts within the local context. In this particular instance, the process involved the assimilation of Western methodologies and art institutions as part of a transformative movement aimed at challenging conventional Japanese artistic practices. It's worth noting that the international success of Morotai-style paintings also reinforced Edward Said's post-colonialism idea of Orientalism. For the Western audience, these paintings were the symbols of the mysterious Far East. Japanese culture was symbolized by the Buddhist figures, the ladies in Kimonos or traditional East Asian clothes, or even the color tones of these paintings. It's likely that the Morotai technique helped deconstruct the symbolization of the East, as it contradicted many presumptions and stereotypes of traditional Nihonga paintings. As previously mentioned, the paintings abandoned clear outlines, which fostered the sense of space, and although the colors weren't as vibrant as oil paintings, the color tone wasn't flat. By breaking the stereotype that Japanese traditional paintings were more primitive and less developed than Western paintings, Morotai-style painting prompted more equal interactions between East and West.

### 4.4. National Identity

As elucidated in the preceding section, the Nihonga movement endeavored to enhance the status of traditional Japanese artists. The impact of Western art and ideas on the national identity is evident, leading to a sense of loss. It is evident that the domestic sphere sought to redefine Japan's national identity in order to handle the challenges posed by the supremacy of Western powers. The domestic population experiences a state of active response in situations where they are subjected to passive oppression by the more dominant Western forces. Ultimately, the concept of national identity underwent a redefinition, resulting in Japan's transformation into a synthesis of Western and Eastern influences. The artistic approach employed Western techniques to convey the essence of the East, while simultaneously utilizing Eastern notions to imbue Western ideas with fresh interpretations.

### 4.5. Localization of the Globalized West in Domestic Japan

The examination of the success of Nihonga artists in navigating the introduction of Western concepts into Japan's art industry reveals the notable impact of Western globalization on the indigenous Japanese culture. Despite the Nihonga movement's effective preservation of Nihonga's prominence within the Japanese art sphere, the standards within this domain underwent permanent transformation due to the impact of Western influences. The abandonment of two-dimensional paintings occurred due to a movement in preference and demand towards three-dimensional painting. The Nihonga movement played a significant role in the modernization of traditional Japanese arts, but with a predominant influence from Western-based tendencies. The endeavor to establish a perception of spatiality in Nihonga paintings can be understood as a strategic response to a market that was predominantly influenced by Western artistic traditions during that period. The emergence of the Morotai technique exemplifies the process of localizing the globalized West. This localization is evident not only in the modified form of the technique but also in its social-historical background, which was influenced by the significant Western influence brought about by the Meiji Restoration policies. The Nihonga movement and Morotai serve as compelling examples that illustrate Japan's transformation of its national identity from a conventional East Asian nation to a synthesis of Eastern and Western influences. The Meiji era in Japan witnessed the country's transformation into a colonial empire, which can be seen as a manifestation of the profound impact of Western culture on Japan.

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## 5. Conclusion

The Nihonga movement was an avant-garde movement, which initially rejected the widespread Yōga in Japan during the Meiji period. However, through the analysis on Hishida Shunso's paintings in his three different career stages and a close look at the Morotai style, it's clear to see that Nihonga artists in fact were passively influenced by Western art styles. On one hand, the Nihonga artists hope to gain the agency of Japanese art society by preventing the predominance of Yōga paintings; on the other hand, in reality, the undeniable trending Yōga paintings and the overall admiration of the West in the Meiji period pushed Nihonga artists to integrate a portion of Western art styles into their revolution. This phenomenon suggests that local populations inevitably receive external cultures and ideas and integrate them into a more domestic form. From the perspective of the globalized West, this is an example of successful western-wash of local culture; from the perspective of the domestic Japanese society, it serves as evidence that the domestic cultures are constantly changing and evolving over time.

In the future, as scholarly research increasingly examines the dynamics of Japanese culture and the influence of Western-imposed ideas, as well as the study of other cultures, it would be intriguing to witness the development of a theoretical framework by future researchers that elucidates the progressive deductions made from paintings to civilizations. Furthermore, it is anticipated that further investigation will be conducted about the mechanisms via which Western cultures and ideologies have attained global prominence. It is posited that in the future, there will be a shift towards employing indigenous methodologies to examine East Asian cultures, rather than relying solely on Western techniques for deconstructing observed phenomena in Japanese culture and society. This transition is expected to result in a reduction of post-colonial approaches and an increase in domestic perspectives.

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