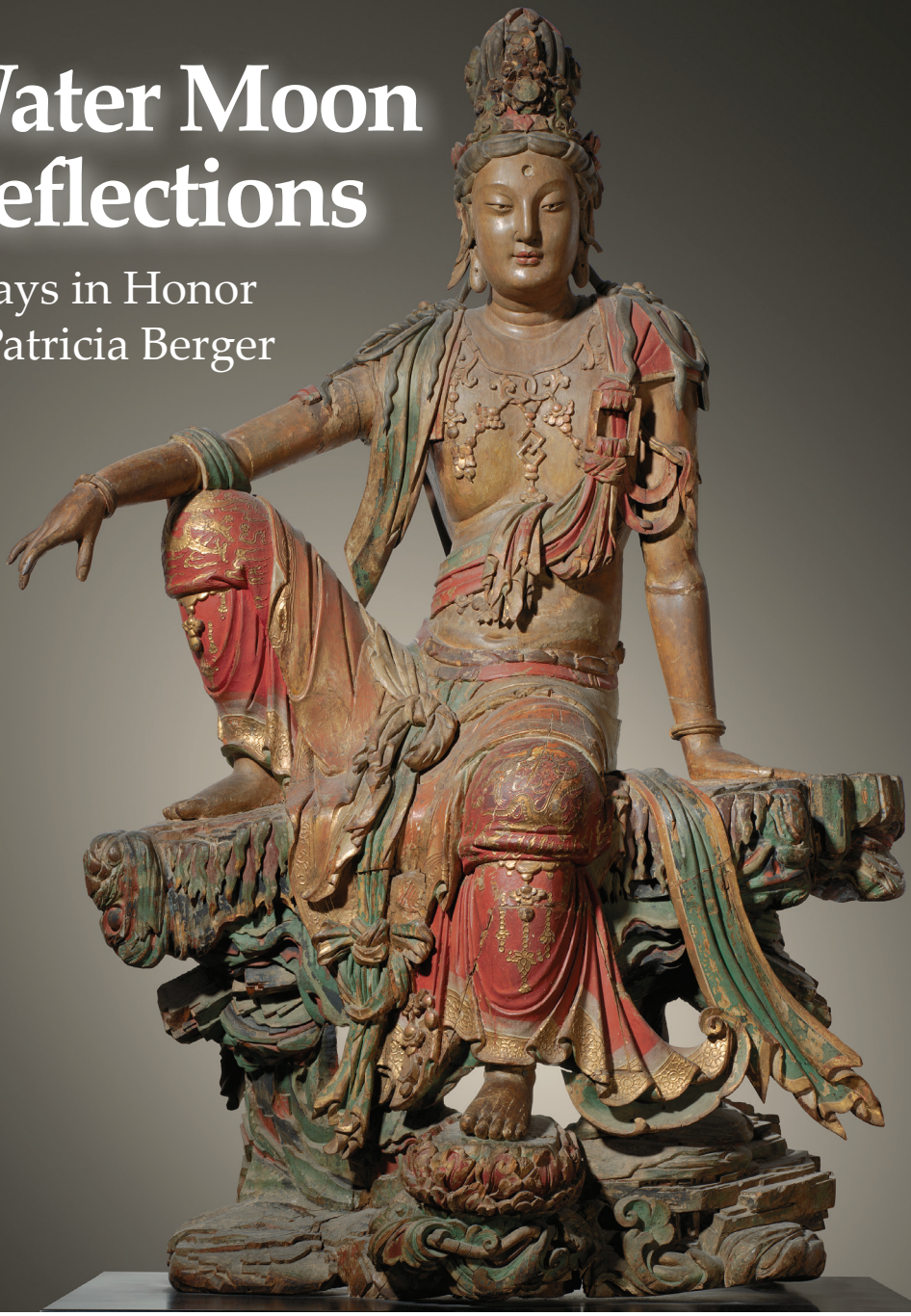
Water Moon Reflections

Essays in Honor of Patricia Berger



Edited by Ellen Huang, Nancy G. Lin, Michelle McCoy, and Michelle H. Wang

CHINA RESEARCH MONOGRAPH 77

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Acknowledgments

Water Moon Reflections is a collection of essays that grew out of "Return of Ten Thousand Dharmas," a symposium held in May 2017 at the University of California, Berkeley, to honor Patricia Berger's distinguished career of research, leadership, and education in the humanities. The two-day event was primarily sponsored by Berkeley's Department of History of Art, Center for Buddhist Studies, Center for Chinese Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, Jay D. McEvoy Chair, Mongolia Initiative, and Townsend Center for the Humanities. The generosity of these institutions allowed a diverse group of scholars whose work spans the entirety of Asian art history to assemble in a festive demonstration of Pat's impact on the field. Gifts donated to the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Pat's honor were presented by Terese and Bruce Bartholomew, and by Alfreda and Christian Murck, commemorating Pat's longstanding collaboration with this campus institution and enhancing the celebration. The symposium was primarily organized by Wen-shing Chou, Uranchimeg Tsultemin, Ellen Huang, and Nancy G. Lin, with the assistance of many others. Special thanks go to Elinor Levine, who guided the process from beginning to end, as well as to Linda Fitzgerald and Julia White for their vital support.

This publication was likewise only possible with the support of numerous institutions and individuals. We are grateful to Berkeley's Tang Center for Silk Road Studies, Center for Buddhist Studies, Department of History of Art, and Mongolia Initiative. We extend our gratitude to the thirteen authors who contributed essays to this volume, and for the support of many of their institutions, including CUNY–Hunter College, Dartmouth College, Herron School of Art and Design at Indiana University, the Ohio State University, and the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona. The volume received assistance from many others, including Wen-shing Chou, Linda J. Lin, and Margaretta Lovell. Staff at IEAS shepherded this project through a global pandemic. Katherine Lawn Chouta,

in particular, worked with us graciously, tirelessly, and meticulously throughout the process of publication. We thank her and Daniel Ureste, as well as our anonymous reviewers, our compositor, and our cover designer, for bringing the volume to its present form.

Finally, we acknowledge that UC Berkeley occupies land within *xučyun* (Huichin), the ancestral and unceded territory of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, successors of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. We acknowledge that the authors and coeditors of this volume have benefitted from this occupation and recognize the importance of this land to Ohlone tribes and other descendants of the Verona Band, who have survived and continue to flourish in the region and beyond. In recognition of our obligation and in support of Sogorea Te's work of rematriation, we have made a contribution to their Land Trust on behalf of this volume.[1]

[1] This acknowledgment is based on a statement of the UC Berkeley Native American Student Development office, with reference to information provided on the Sogorea Te' Land Trust website. See https://cejce.berkeley.edu/ohloneland and https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/.

Introduction

ELLEN HUANG, NANCY G. LIN, MICHELLE McCOY,
AND MICHELLE H. WANG

For many years, a poster depicting a celebrated Avalokiteśvara sculpture hung outside Pat Berger's office on the top floor of Doe Library at the University of California, Berkeley, arresting visitors with its regal languor and hinting at many layers of meaning. As Pat's students we would inevitably bring our own developing interests to each passing encounter with the image—the significance of the type of wood used for the sculpture, for example, or its position within an underexamined network of diverse Buddhist cultures, or the bodhisattva's possible original setting at water's edge, framed by a moon-like aureole as a figure of illusion and emptiness.[1] Such lines of inquiry, brought into Pat's office, would fit comfortably under her broad umbrella of scholarship and mentoring, and we would invariably leave with inspiration to study a new language or technology, critical perspective on area studies, or respect for the powerful if seemingly ineffable ability of art to instantiate sophisticated Buddhist teachings. Whichever approach we might end up using—materiality, transculturalism, the interplay of word and image, or another—Pat would challenge us to let our sources do the leading. Though each approach might foster its own commitments and communities, Pat has consistently shown us that the worthiest forms of complexity are to be found in the sources themselves. Our job is to do them justice.

This volume takes its title from the moon aureole and watery surround that may have constituted the original setting of the sculpture in the poster, thus identifying it as a Water-Moon Guanyin, a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara that emerged in China and subsequently had a vibrant career across East and Inner Asia. Sensuously evocative, the image of the

[1] In this context, emptiness may be understood as the lack of intrinsic nature in any and all phenomena. For an examination of emptiness in visual culture, see Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 1–4.

moon and its reflection carries a built-in reminder of its own mutability and contingency. While this poetic trope signifies, for us, the subtlety of Pat's pedagogy and scholarship, it is a second hypothetically original component of the sculpture that speaks best to our appreciation for our mentor, namely, the figure of Sudhana, the boy who frequently appears in the lower register of Water-Moon Guanyin compositions to seek teaching at the master's feet. This is less because we liken ourselves to Sudhana himself (though one could aspire to such a rebirth) than because his presence introduces the element of narrative, and along with it a point of subjective entry. Through the encounter, the bodhisattva's distant, idealized realm focalizes momentarily into the young pilgrim's here-and-now. Structurally linked on multiple possible levels, our own encounters with the poster in that Doe hallway now seem not an arbitrary break or solipsistic preoccupation but instead further iterations in an unfolding history whose causes we are called, both academically and ethically, to identify and study. We get the feeling that we were one day meant to "discover" these seeds of inquiry from the very beginning.

In our effort, as coeditors of this volume produced in Pat's honor, to articulate the defining methodological features of her work, we return again and again to the importance of narrative. From the brief anecdote to epochal imperial lineages, each of us carries around a set of "Pat stories" that, due to the way they encapsulate truth or model practice, call for vivid recounting. The political stakes of this investment are clear. Her *Empire of Emptiness* (2003) issued a field-wide challenge to the casual dismissal of Qing (1636–1912) courtly art in large part by reconstructing, synthesizing, and analyzing events and episodes in terms intended to speak to their original audiences and in textures often omitted from scholarly writing. This work, building on Pat's many years as curator at a major museum, helped to disrupt generations of normative aesthetic consensus between the elite Han patriarchal tradition and its modern interpreters in elite white patriarchal spaces, a dynamic that once marginalized or erased large swaths of the visual and material record of what is now China. In conversation and in writing, Pat's narratives convey the importance of recognizing that everyone and everything has a story that can teach us something. From the initial identification of that story to its publication, our task is to listen diligently and with a commitment to understanding, in order to make space for voices that have been silenced or ignored because they do not fit into a normative Western conception of the artist, art, or history. By failing to listen we acquiesce to distortion and erasure, to our collective peril.

A deceptively simple device in Pat's hands, narrative joins with her investments in material culture and Buddhist thought to challenge

ONE

The Economics of Myth:

Historicizing Discourses on Metal, Soil, and Ritual under Han Wudi

FILIPPO MARSILI

Prologue: The Weight of Moral Authority

In the spring of 605 BCE, as the *Commentary of Zuo* (*Zuozhuan* 左轉) reports, the power of the Zhou 周 dynasty (1046–256 BCE) was in decline.[1] When news arrived at the court of Luoyang 洛陽 that Chu 楚 had defeated a barbarian tribe by relying solely on its local army, the Zhou swiftly sent an envoy to the South to ensure that this increasingly powerful vassal was not planning rebellion.[2] As the Zhou had feared, Chu's self-confidence was turning into defiance. Indeed, as soon as the envoy arrived, the Chu ruler questioned the legitimacy of the Zhou's imperial mandate. He did so openly but indirectly. In mentioning to the envoy rumors, according to which the wondrous tripods possessed by the house of Zhou were shrinking, the Chu ruler insinuated that the Zhou's authority was waning as well.

The bronze vessels in question were the famous Nine Tripods (*jiu ding* 九鼎) that once belonged to Yu 禹 the Great, founder of the legendary Xia 夏, the first of the Three Dynasties (Xia, Shang, and Zhou). Yu had cast them with the metal he had received in gratitude from local leaders upon saving the country from the flooding of the Yellow River. Since they also

With this essay I wish to express my gratitude to Patricia Berger, whose mentorship, scholarship, and compassion will represent a model throughout my career.

[1] This essay expands on portions of my monograph *Heaven Is Empty: A Cross-Cultural Approach to "Religion" and Empire in Ancient China* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2018).

[2] Duke Xuan 宣, Third Year, Spring. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 75. On the problematic dating of the *Commentary of Zuo*, which is probably later than conventionally held, see Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 253–289.

TWO

The Portrait of Chinggis Khaan: Revisiting the Ancestral Connections

URANCHIMEG TSULTEMIN

Introduction

The most famous portrait of Chinggis Khaan (Qaġan, ca. 1160–1227) from the Yuan dynasty has been published in numerous historical books,[1] making it practically the sole image the world has of the Mongol emperor, the founder of the Mongol court (fig. 2.1). However, there has been little in-depth research on this painting. In recent years, only two scholars have studied this portrait in depth: a French scholar, Isabelle Charleux, and a Chinese historian of Yuan dynasty art, Shang Gang 尚刚.[2] The portrait is

I do not have enough words to express my immense gratitude to Pat Berger for her mentorship, teaching, guidance, and support throughout my graduate study and my years of service as a lecturer and as a co-chair of the Mongolia Initiative at UC Berkeley. She continues to be the scholar I look up to as a role model. I hope to be as effective a mentor and a teacher as Pat was, and remains, for me. Many thanks to her. I would also like to thank Christopher Atwood (University of Pennsylvania), N. Saruul (Renmin University, Beijing), Chen Yunru (National Palace Museum, Taipei), and Dr. Liu Xiao and other scholars at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing for their generous assistance and consultation during my research and writing of this paper. Any errors remain mine.

[1] In this paper, I distinguish between Khaan (Qaġan) and Khan (Qan). I am aware that Qaġan was a later title adopted and used by Ögedei Khaan and was not used by Chinggis during his lifetime. However, since the title Khaan was also posthumously applied to Chinggis in its basic meaning from the old Turkic "great khan," I chose to use it in my paper. I use the term "great Khaan" in this particular meaning throughout the paper. See also Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Title Činggis qan/qaghan Re-Examined," in Walter Heissig and Klaus Sagaster, eds., *Gedanke und Wirkung* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrossowitz, 1989), 281–298.

[2] Isabelle Charleux, "From Ongon to Icon: Legitimization, Glorification and Divinisation of Power in Mongol Portraits from the 13th to the Early 17th Centuries," in Roberte Hamayon, Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, and Scott Pearce, eds., *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred* (Bellingham: Western Washington University Center for East Asian Studies, 2010), 209–261; Isabelle Charleux, "Chinggis Khaan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman?," *Mongolian Studies* [Indiana University, Bloomington] 30/31 (2009): 207–258; Shang Gang 尚刚, "Meng, Yuan yu rong" 蒙、元御容 [Imperial

THREE

A Life in Pictures: Landscape Biography in a Seventeenth-Century Parting Painting

ELIZABETH KINDALL

This essay examines how a set of landscape paintings of specific places may be read as unique reorganizations of the established physical and metaphorical imagery of the self to portray the progression of an individuated life. "Late imperial" (Ming-Qing, 1368–1911) paintings of identifiable places lend themselves to this reading because the layered histories of their topography offered painters, writers, and recipients a menu of qualities from which they could select to pictorialize a particular life. In this study, I join the term "landscape," to connote the focal, site-specific features of these paintings, with the term "biography," implying the life course of an individual according to late imperial constructs of personhood. "Landscape biography," then, may be seen to distinguish a landscape painting created to convey a section or the complete trajectory of an individual's life.

Works such as these divide the multifaceted persona and life trajectory of an individual into culturally resonant pictorial and textual landscape components to relate a person's life. These paintings do not seek to differentiate the person from his familial, topographic, political, cultural, or social surroundings, but rather to define him in relation to them. Educated people in the national, regional, and subelite strata of the late imperial period used paintings of this type to honor individuals, affirm relationships, assert political values, and strengthen regional networks, as well as to construct and reconstruct the cultural capital of local sites.[1]

Many thanks to our tireless editors, Ellen Huang, Nancy G. Lin, Michelle McCoy, and Michelle H. Wang, and to the volume reviewers, but most importantly to our beloved teacher, Pat Berger.

[1] Tobie Meyer-Fong discusses this process in detail in *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

FOUR

Ineffable Gloss: Qing Ornament on Porcelain

ELLEN HUANG AND MARY LEWINE

Qing dynasty porcelain, particularly over the course of the flourishing reigns of the Kangxi 康熙 (1662–1722), Yongzheng 雍正 (1722–1735), and Qianlong 乾隆 (1735–1795) emperors, displayed an ever-increasing penchant for elaborate ornamental design and technical precision. For example, imperial household officials sent from the Qing court oversaw the daring experiments with copper suspensions undertaken by ceramic makers to produce new shades and varieties of monochrome red during the Kangxi emperor's reign.[1] During the Yongzheng reign, the discovery of a new palette of glass-inspired enamels heralded hitherto unattainable nuanced pictorial designs that evinced painterly effects. Under the Qianlong emperor, complicated shapes and confident constructions gave way to complexly luted forms and multilayered vases, sometimes with perforated openwork so detailed that the objectness of the underlying porcelain became sublimated to material ornament.

Existing scholarly accounts about Qing dynasty porcelain have focused either on its international allure in collections or on its technical achievements. As a result, the ornament on, or even within, its surface has been glossed as unworthy of study in its own right. Students of porcelain history have yet to gain a full understanding of the various roles ornament might have played, particularly in the case of material culture objects whose making does not express a single artist's vision, and in the absence of textual correspondences about their creation. As such, the history of porcelain from China remains a linear teleology, at times confusing (and

We dedicate this essay to our mentor, Patricia Berger, whose wit, compassion, and expansive intellectual range are a continuing source of inspiration that no work of porcelain can match.

[1] For a history of copper-red suspensions and the incommensurability of their material and textual translations during the Qing period, see Ellen Huang, "An Art of Transformation: Reproducing *Yaobian* Glazes in Qing Dynasty Porcelain," *Archives of Asian Art* 68, no. 2 (2018): 133–156.

FIVE

The Bejeweled Ascetic: Envisioning Tantric Embodiment in an Album from the Qing Court

RAE ERIN DACHILLE

Sādhanas, or rites of accomplishment, are a defining feature of tantric thought and practice, and they are crucial for the soteriological goal of liberation. By using the body as an instrument, the tantric practitioner contemplates divine beings and ultimately realizes divine identity. Yet despite the rich array of human practitioners and deities that have appeared throughout Tibetan Buddhist visual culture, depictions of sādhana—the transformative process itself—are rare. A Qing album depicting esoteric Buddhist practices, now in the collection of the Library of the National Palace Museum in Beijing (figs. 5.1–5.4, 5.12, 5.16), presents a unique opportunity to explore modes of representing the human body in a liberative process of transformation. I argue that among known examples of sādhana illustration, the Beijing album places distinctive emphasis on the human body of the practitioner as a solitary and spiritually advanced being. Situated within a landscape of self-cultivation, the practitioner is a figure caught between worlds, navigating productive tensions between the fabricated and the natural, the wild and the cultivated, the worldly and the ascetic.

Previous scholarship on the Beijing album has focused on its texts and origins; my work builds on these valuable studies while proposing a fresh approach that focuses on the album's images. Delving into the semiotics of

This essay is inspired by Patricia Berger's groundbreaking work on the semiotics of images at the Qing court. It is a tribute to her mentorship of my journey with modes of representation, a journey that has included the Dunhuang caves, the world of the maṇḍala, the lineage portraits of fifteenth-century Tibetan Buddhism, and the culture of Buddhist image production at Qianlong's court. It is also an offering of thanks for the spirit of collaboration she has fostered in her students. I would like to acknowledge Nancy Lin and Michelle McCoy for the generous feedback they have provided in refining this essay and also Wen-shing Chou for her encouragement at various phases of the project.

SIX

Karmic Affinities: Rethinking Relations among Tibetan Lamas and the Qing Emperor

WEN-SHING CHOU AND NANCY G. LIN

> That day, in a clear sky, marvelous rainbow clouds from the direction of Mount Wutai gathered into a dome. With such auspicious signs coming to pass, the Supreme Lord Lama joined his palms together, gazed for a long time, and said, "This is Venerable Mañjughoṣa's compassionate regard." Proportionate to his utterance, at that moment an extraordinary vision indubitably emerged.[1]
>
> —Second Jamyang Zhepa, *Biography of Paṇchen Pelden Yeshé*

One summer day in 1780, rainbow clouds auspiciously formed in a clear sky for the Sixth Paṇchen Lobzang Pelden Yeshé (1738–1780) and his

We dedicate this reflection on interdependence to our teacher Patricia Berger, without whose insights into the luminous world of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism and material culture this study would not have been possible. We also thank Gedun Rabsal, Nicole Willock, Michelle McCoy, Pema Bhum, and our anonymous reviewers for invaluable comments on earlier drafts. In addition, we are grateful to our wonderful families for giving us the space to revise this essay and prepare images while sheltering in place together.

[1] *nyin der nam mkha' g.ya' dag par ri bo rtse lnga phyogs nas 'ja' sprin ngo mtshar ba'i gur 'khrigs pa sogs rten 'brel legs par byung bar rje bla ma mchog nas phyag thal mo sbyar te rgyun ring po'i bar du gzigs nas rje btsun 'jam dpa'i dbyangs kyis thugs rjes gzigs pa yin 'dug ces bka' phebs pa la dpags na skabs der gzigs snang khyad par can zhig byung ba gor ma chag* (['Jam dbyangs bzhad pa II] Dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, *Paṇ chen dpal ldan ye shes kyi rnam thar* [Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2002], 2:892. The entry is dated to the third day of the sixth month of the iron mouse year (ca. July 5, 1780), and notes that the group had left Lake Taika (Mong. Dayikha Nuur, Ch. Daiga 岱噶) earlier that day. Gregorian equivalents to Tibetan dates are approximated according to Dieter Schuh, *Untersuchungen zur geschichte der tibetischen kalenderrechnung* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1973). Our sources may have been following alternative calendrical systems, such as that of Sumpa Khenpo Yeshé Peljor, which feature slight differences but have not been documented in detail.

SEVEN

Family and Nation: Qing and Meiji Imperial Family Portraits

WILLIAM MA AND RYOSUKE UEDA

This essay focuses on a series of early twentieth-century Japanese chromolithographic prints depicting the imperial families of Meiji Japan (1868–1912) and Qing China (1644–1911). Printed at various publishing houses in neighboring districts, Shitaya-ku 下谷区 and Kanda-ku 神田区 in Tokyo, these prints share more than stylistic and compositional similarities—both are deeply indebted to the photographic medium, take as their subject the previously visually unavailable imperial families, and contribute to a national rhetoric of modernity. This essay will explore each of these features and contextualize them within the visual and political environment of early twentieth-century Japan and reexamine the changing nature of imperial/national images at the intersection of two of the new modern media in East Asia in this period: photography and chromolithography.

Portraiture of a singular monarch in East Asia has been a popular topic for academic inquiry in recent decades, especially as photography. Focusing mainly on Japan's Emperor Meiji 明治 (1852–1912) and Qing China's Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835–1908), this body of work has highlighted these monarchs' savvy exploitation of the immediate and productive power of the photographic medium to communicate and to construct a particular facade for the domestic and international public in the service of their own political condition.[1] Indeed, this function of the imperial

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[1] For Emperor Meiji, see Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Taki Kōji 多木浩二, *Tennō no shōzō* 天皇の肖像 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002); Maki Fukuoka, "Handle with Care: Shaping the Official Image of the Emperor in Early Meiji Japan," *Ars Orientalis* 43 (2013): 108–124; Donald Keene, "Portraits of the Emperor Meiji," *Impressions* 21 (1999): 16–29; Mikiko Hirayama, "The

EIGHT

Ruth St. Denis as Bodhisattva: An Art Historical Perspective on the Appropriation of Buddhist Imagery

JON SORIANO

Introduction

An iconic form occupies the central column of a glossy black-and-white photograph (fig. 8.1). Ruth St. Denis (1879–1968) stands atop a double-lotus pedestal and in front of a petal-shaped mandorla. Only some parquet flooring and two stylized potted lotus plants mitigate the shadowy void beyond. In contrast to the amorphous darkness, St. Denis and her adornments are clearly lit and legible. The stark composition highlights the details of her iconographical array and suggests the figure is somehow not simply this dancer from New Jersey.[1] Something like gilding can be intuited. Multiple surfaces and their varied textures reflect light in the manner of gold, such as the lotus blossoms' diffusion and their stems' rigidity, the light bouncing from the vine-like scrolls and rays of the mandorla, and the shimmering folds of the Mongol *nasij*-style outer robe draped over the figure's arms and skirt. This array combined with the figure's centrally tethered pendant, circular earrings, and other jewelry suggest that the figure is a bodhisattva, one who takes a vow of deferred enlightenment for the sake of others. Meanwhile, symbolic hand gestures signal the figure of a buddha: down-turned fingers with a revealed palm in

In addition to my indebtedness to Patricia Berger as a model for writing and thinking about art history, I would also like to acknowledge the reviewers who contributed to the improvement of this essay: Micki McCoy, Nancy Lin, Linda Lin, and the publisher's anonymous reviewers.

[1] Accounts of St. Denis's life are available in her autobiography, Ruth St. Denis, *Ruth St. Denis, An Unfinished Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1939), and two biographies: Suzanne Shelton, *Divine Dancer: A Biography of Ruth St. Denis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), and Elizabeth Kendall, *Where She Danced: The Birth of American Art-Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

NINE

Katsura Yuki and the Allegorical Impulse

NAMIKO KUNIMOTO

This essay will consider the work of Japanese artist Katsura Yuki(ko) 桂ゆき, who lived from 1913 to 1991, and became one of the most recognized female artists in the avant-garde.[1] When Katsura began her career in the 1930s, she was one among a handful of women exhibiting in the prestigious, juried Nika Association (二科会) exhibitions alongside figures such as Gutai Art Association (具体美術協会) leader Yoshihara Jirō 吉原治良. Her prolific career lasted until the 1990s. Katsura enjoyed near-celebrity status: she was featured as a discussant on television shows, appeared in newspaper columns, was invited to represent Japan on a boating trip to Russia, and wrote a best-selling memoir. Surprisingly, she has rarely been discussed in English-language scholarship. This absence, as I see it, is due to her resistance to the avant-garde trends of abstraction and performance art that were dominating postwar art in both Japan and North America. This essay argues that Katsura's collage and multimedia work were revealing of gender politics and challenged the dominant modes of transnational art practice in Japan and beyond.

To fully understand the stakes of her work, we might first consider the dominant modes of art practice that Katsura did not pursue. A common interpretive framework posits that Japanese postwar cultural production sought to emphasize bodily carnality as an antidote to wartime propaganda that gave primacy to the union of the state rather than to the individual. During the fifteen-year war, the government officially promulgated terms such as *kokutai* 国体 (national body), which referred to

I thank Patricia Berger for helping me get through graduate school; I could not have done it without her kindness. Few people can match Pat's warmth, intelligence, and energy, and those of us in her orbit count ourselves very lucky indeed.

[1] Kokatsu Reiko 小勝禮子, *Zen'ei no josei, 1950–75* 前衛の女性, 1950–75 [Japanese women artists in avant-garde movements, 1950–75] (Utsunomiya: Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, 2005), 201.

TEN

Chun Kyung-ja and the Scandal of *Beautiful Woman*

SUNGLIM KIM

On April 18, 2017, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Gwacheon, Korea, opened a special exhibition called "Cracks in the Concrete from the MMCA Collection," with ninety-four artworks from its collection that were selected in part for being provocative, controversial, or both. The exhibit description explains the theme:

> *Cracks* refers to a core value of many modern and contemporary artists, who continuously revolt against rigid authority and the dominant social order. The works created by this group of artists disturb the fixed ideas possessed by the viewers and create cracks in the concrete foundation of their world views. . . . It is not always a pleasurable experience, however, to witness the cracks emerging from the world that one has been pursuing and to see unfamiliarity rising from the world that one has been acquainted with. It is, in fact, an awkward and upsetting experience.

The works in the exhibit included Roh Jinah's *Geppetto's Dream* (*Jepeto ui Kkum*), a human-sized robotic doll, which interacted with viewers by responding to questions they typed. Geppetto continuously sent out the message that it wanted to be a human being. Another provocative work was a set of nude photographs by art teacher Kim In-gyu. Kim posted nude photos of himself and his wife on his home page and was convicted of obscenity by the Supreme Court of Korea. His photographs make viewers question the boundary between art and obscenity. The controversy generated by these thought-provoking and potentially disturbing works, however, paled in comparison to the furor over a single, unremarkable painting.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my teacher and mentor, Patricia Berger, whose continuing faith and support have enabled all her students to go far. As a passionate scholar and compassionate teacher, Pat truly is a role model for me.