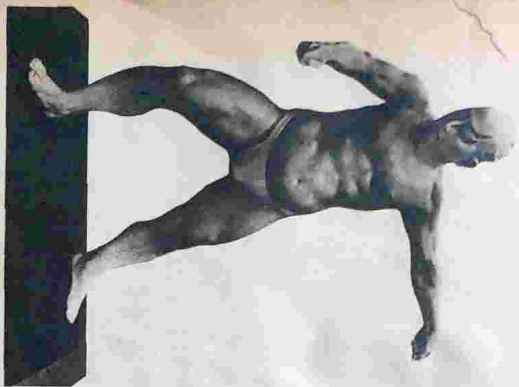


JAPANESE FINE ARTS TO-DAY

AT THE AUTUMN EXHIBITIONS

Even at this time, when the Japanese artists are fighting before Hankow, the fine arts exhibitions are being opened in Tokyo just the same as in times of peace. Also that the exhibitions of the Nihakai and of the Academy of Fine Arts are preceding the opening of the official autumn exhibition sponsored by The Department of Education, is in conformity with the practice of former years. When the Nihakai was founded, the object was to foster new artistic tendencies in opposition to the official Academy. At present, however, it is the works by the oldest mem-



Kegonijishi, Eve, by Densho Hirakoshi



Evening in the Mountains, by Chiyuki Gakura



Fragrant Plum Blossoms, by Takan Yokoyama

bers which are most worthwhile seeing, whereas the new attempts by the newer members show little more than skilful imitation. But what is the use for an oil-painter to seize the brush at all if in the end neither individual nor national qualities are to be found in the resulting paintings?

Tsugui Fujita is almost exclusively attracting all the attention, but his exhibits this time made us long for the simple paintings he used to send back to Japan from Paris, depicting a clock on a kitchen table, or a majolica plate against the plain background of a white wall. His genre pictures of people and customs of the Loochoo Islands are interesting genre pictures as such, but they lack both the passion



Islander's Departure for the Front, by Tsugui Fujita



End of war, by Kenzo Okada

and the melancholy that are found, for instance, in Gauguin's paintings of Tahiti.

War pictures were allotted a special room in this year's exhibition. But there is hardly one among them that would impress the spectator any deeper than a patriotic poster. Some of them, such as 'The Battlefield,' 'The Departure of the Nurses,' and 'Snatch of a Group of Soldiers,' were really dull. If against the realities of war where the soldiers are fighting at the risk of their lives, the painters have nothing to offer but dull artistry void of any life, there is not much remaining to their credit.

It was relieving to see again the exhibition of the Academy, after a long time. The quiet tone of the Japanese-style paintings, beautiful



After the Bath, by Tei Nakamura



At the Beach, by Tone Shimizu



es ever, dominated the atmosphere of the gallery. Takan Yokoyama, the most famous of this school, is again displaying one of his always problematical masterpieces. 'Fragrant Plum Blossoms,' is the subject of this year's painting, a monochrome, full of quiet elegance; it is not exactly one of his usual ambitious great works.

Abroad, the Japanese woodblock prints are valued very highly, but there seems to be little appreciation for, and knowledge of, the Japanese-style paintings. Would not more understanding for this art naturally help to make also Japan herself better understood abroad.

HIDEMI KON



After the Bath, by Tei Nakamura