



CHINA
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ART

Yasuda Rozan 安田老山 (1830-1883) was born in Mino, Japan. Yasuda Rozan did not adopt his father's medical career and instead traveled to Nagasaki to study literati painting under Hidaka Tetsuo 日高鉄翁 (1791-1871) and Xu Yuting 徐雨亭 (1824-?). Disguised as a Chinese merchant, he traveled to Shanghai in early 1867, becoming one of the first Japanese artists to study art techniques in China, a dangerous undertaking since he could have been executed for defying the exclusionary policies of Shogunate rule. In Shanghai, he committed himself to his studies with Hu Gongshou 胡公壽 (1823-1886), soon becoming his top disciple. After six years of study, Rozan returned to Japan in 1873 (Meiji 6) where he achieved almost instantaneous acclaim and wealth in Tokyo as one of the most important painters of the early Meiji period, even requested to paint in front of the Meiji emperor. After his early death in 1883, at the age of 53, his reputation eventually diminished due to the nationalistic fervor beginning to permeate Japanese society in the Taisho and early Showa eras. His works were criticized for their 'contemporary Chinese style' partially derived from the Shanghai school (Haipai) with its bold, casual quality. Still a figure of controversy, Rozan's paintings have recently been the subject of reassessment by numerous scholars of Japanese literati painting in Japan and the West.

Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 (1881-1963), original name Nishimura Wasaku 西村和作, was born in Oda City in Shimane prefecture, Japan. He moved to Kyoto where he studied Nanga (Southern school of Chinese painting) under Yoshitsugu Haizan 吉嗣拝山 (1846-1915) in Japan. In 1914, Nishi went to China to study painting. First, he studied with Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864-1957). After meeting Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844-1927), he moved to Shanghai and studied with Wu. In 1930, he founded the Shanghai Nan art studio. In 1946, he returned home to Japan after the war, and continued painting. In 1958, he painted a mural for the Chofukuji temple in his hometown.