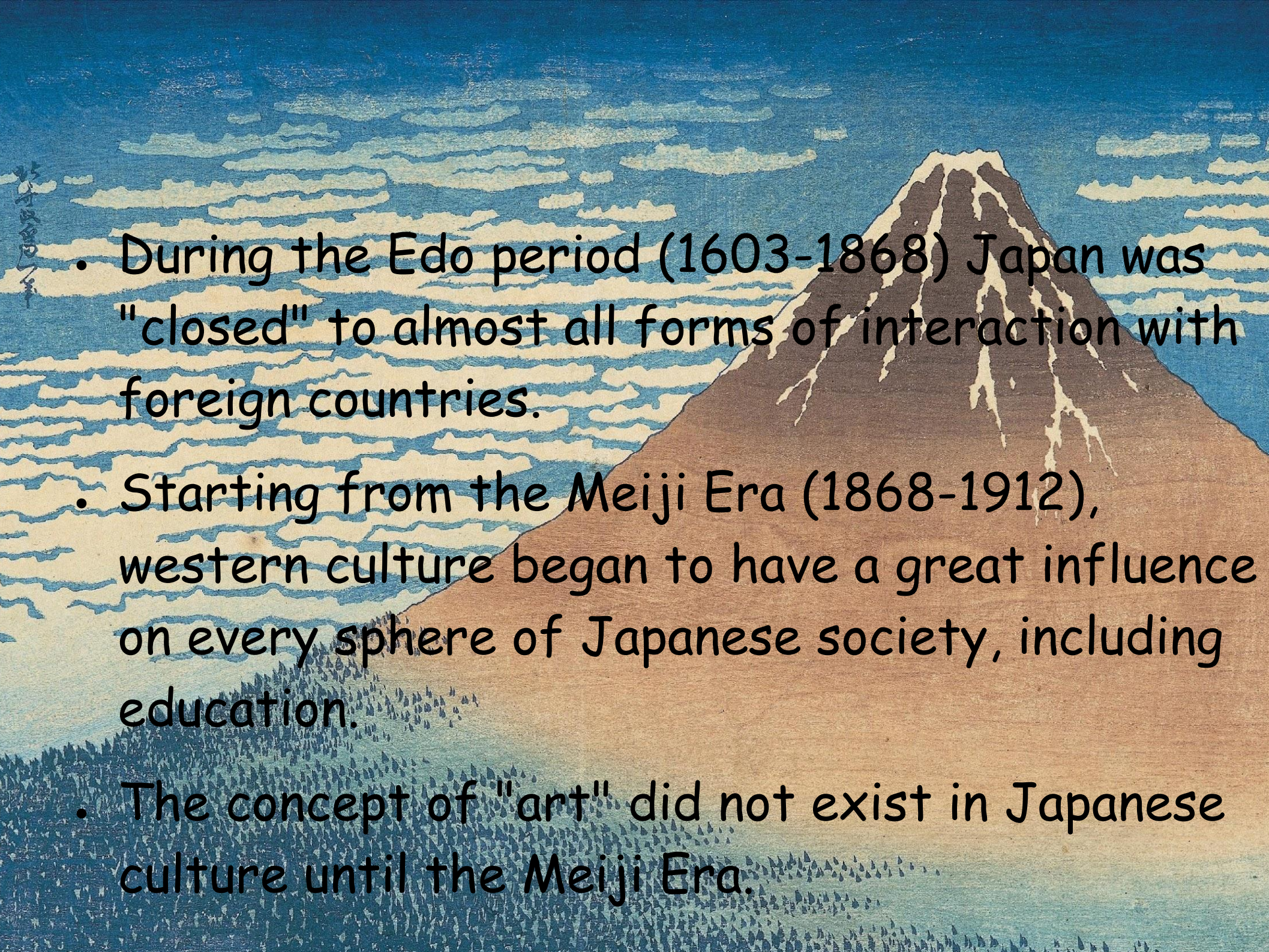
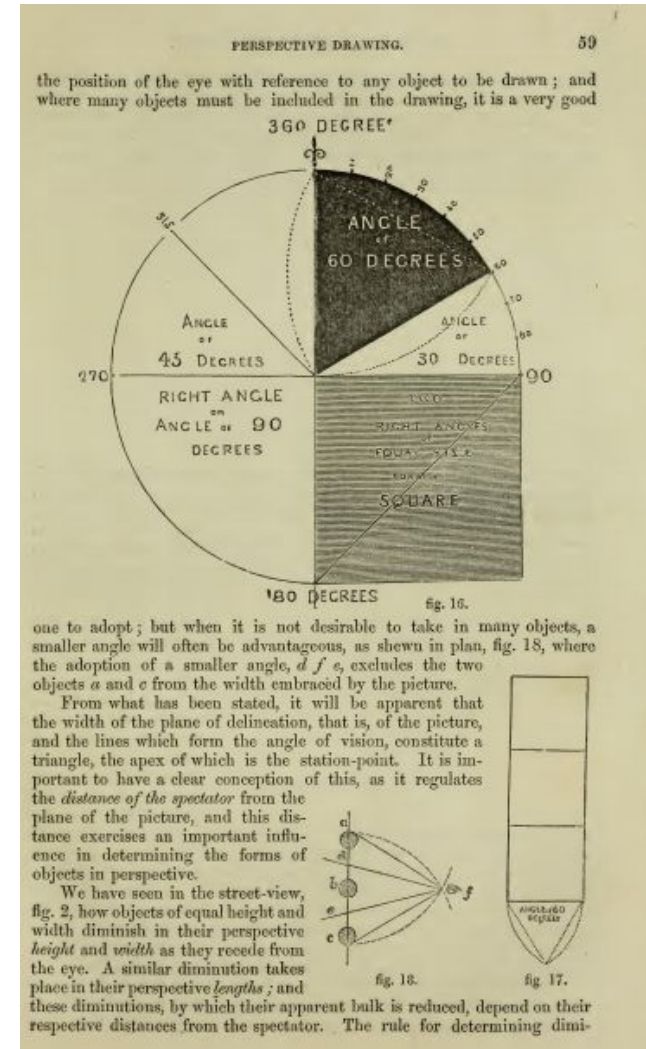
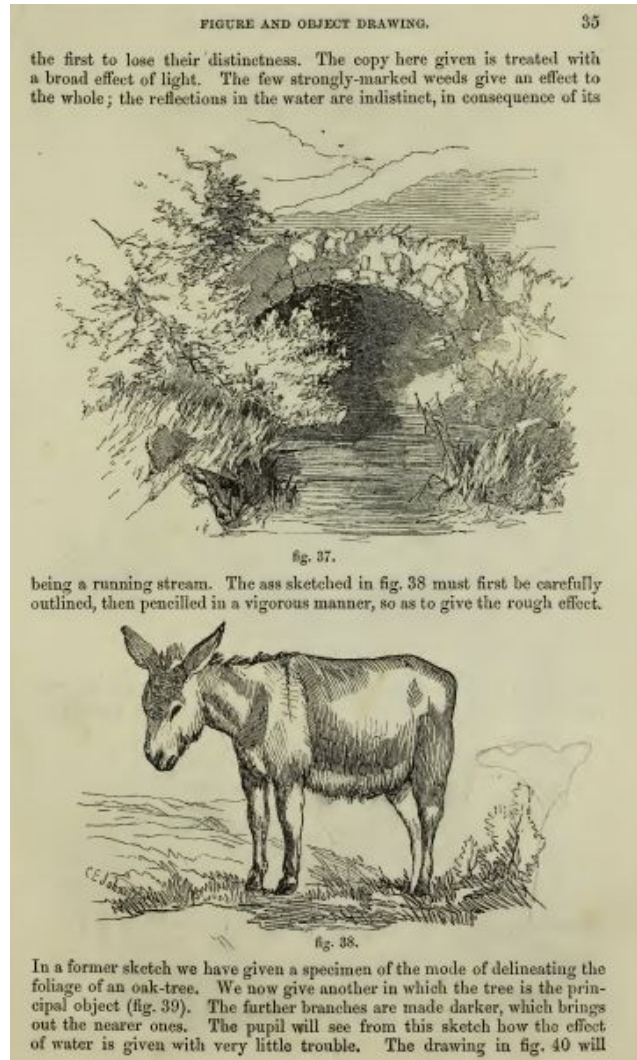
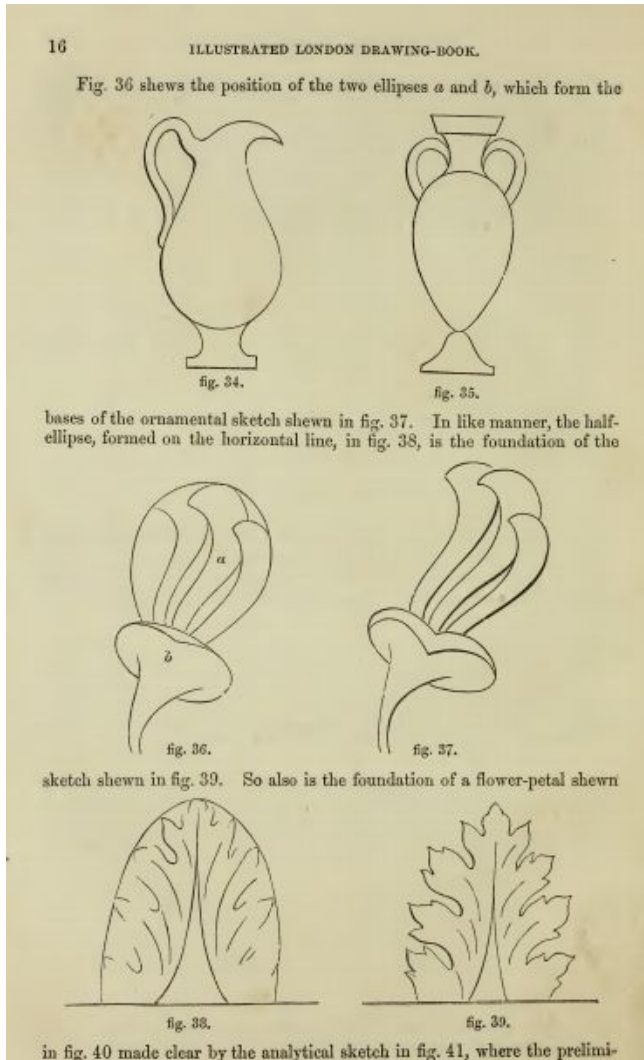


The history of art education in Japan

Smolkina Elizaveta

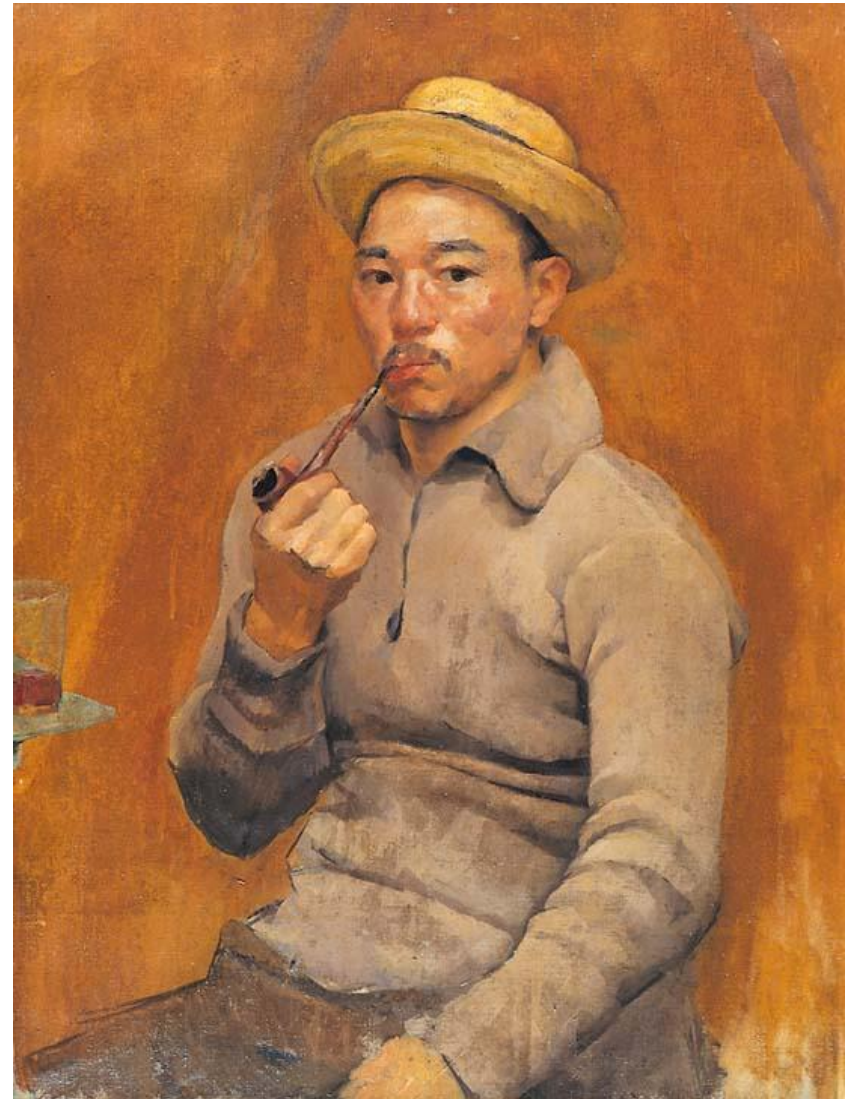
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- A stylized illustration of Mount Fuji, the iconic Japanese volcano. The mountain is depicted in shades of brown and tan, with white snow or ash on its peak and down its ridges. The sky is a deep blue with horizontal, wavy bands of lighter blue and white, suggesting clouds or mist. In the foreground, there is a dense, dark blue forest of small trees. The overall style is reminiscent of a woodblock print or a traditional Japanese ink wash painting with a modern color palette.
- During the Edo period (1603-1868) Japan was "closed" to almost all forms of interaction with foreign countries.
 - Starting from the Meiji Era (1868-1912), western culture began to have a great influence on every sphere of Japanese society, including education.
 - The concept of "art" did not exist in Japanese culture until the Meiji Era.

"The Illustrated London Drawing Book" by Robert Scott Burns, 1853



- In 1910 "New Textbook of Drawing" (*Shintei Gacho*) was edited by Akira Shirahama.
- It was the first Japanese art textbook to consider the psychological development of the child.
- The book covered both brush and pencil drawings.

- In the Taisho Era (1912-1926) - the so-called "Taisho Democracy" influenced many parts of Japanese life including education.
- The Free-Drawing Education Movement (*Jiyuga Kyouiku Undo*) was started by Kanae Yamamoto.



Self-portrait by K. Yamamoto,
1915



The rural school Yamamoto visited at Tolstoy's home Yasnaya Polyana (pictured) inspired him to bring democratic education to Japan.



K. Yamamoto guiding a group of children sketching as part of the Children's Free Drawing movement in Ueda, Nagano

- **1919:** The first exhibition of children's free painting in Japan;
- Establishing of Japan Children's Free Drawing Association.
- **1921:** Yamamoto's book "Free Drawing Education" was published.

Our education of freedom is not to educate as teachers like. It is not a worship of freedom showing the model of freedom but to teach freedom itself....In my belief, the essence of human beings will never be improved if their freedom is restrained. At least those who don't know freedom will never grow. To enrich individual freedom is our idea of education.⁵

Quote from K. Yamamoto

- Yamamoto's idea of the importance of freedom was revived after World War II.
- In 1952 "Society for Creative Aesthetic Education" was established. It urged teachers to change their old opinion of art education.
- The leaders of this movement were Sadajiro Kubo (1909-1996) and Tamiji Kitagawa (1894-1989).

Regarding the seminar of the Society for Aesthetic Education for teachers Kubo stated:

When Japanese people go to Europe or America, they feel the very free atmosphere of the democratic society which releases their minds. However, all Japanese art teachers cannot go to Europe or America. So we tried to reproduce a similar environment inside Japan to give teachers the opportunity to experience a free atmosphere even a little bit.²¹

- Association of Innovating Children's Painting (1959)
- Plastic Art Education Center (1955)
- InSEA's 17th International Conference was held in Tokyo in 1965.
- 1998, Tokyo - InSEA's Asia Regional Meeting

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Visual culture in Japanese art education



Newly emerged issues in art education:

- To cultivate critical attitude toward visual culture;
- Not to neglect student's keen interest in comics;
- To work on various points such as the purposes of artwork, the artistic backgrounds, etc.

Conclusion

- In the beginning of the 20th century the Japanese art education was influenced by the ideas from the western countries, which included the concept of freedom and creativity.
- A strong impact was made by such movements as the Free-Expression Movement in 1920s and the Creative Aesthetic Education Movement in the 1950-1960s.
- From around 1965 Japan began to develop its own perspective in art education.
- Recently the major issues of art education have been concentrated on visual culture. Appropriate understanding of popular culture is taught.

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