**Asai, Chû (浅井忠) (1856 - 1907)**

Asai Chû was a leading Yôga (Western-style painting) artist during the Meiji Period. Asai began learning Kachô-ga (花鳥画 Japanese Bird and flower paintings) from age 13, but turned to Western-style painting after entering Kunisawa Shinkurô’s (国沢新九郎) private school. In 1876, Asai was among the first group of students to study at the Technical Art School. There, he trained under the Italian painter, Antonio Fontanesi who was hired by the Meiji government to teach drawing and Western painting techniques. Under Fontanesi’s tutelage, Asai started painting landscapes with a darker palette similar to the Barbizon school. In 1889, Asai established the Meiji Art Society (明治美術会) aimed at promoting Yôga. In 1900, wanting to further develop his skills, Asai left for France where he studied for two years at an Impressionist school. Upon his return to Japan, it was noted that his dark palette had lightened up as a result of his time in France. In the same year, Asai took up a post as professor at the Kyoto Municipal Painting College and also inaugurated the Kansai Art Institute (関西美術院) . A leading expert on Yôga, Asai held various teaching positions and served at the country’s first government-sponsored exhibition, the Bunten.

**References and Further Reading**

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