**History of Rise and Fall - Manabu Ikeda**

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The *History of Rise and Fall* by Manabu Ikeda is a monumental drawing. At approximately 6.5 by 6.5 feet, the work bursts with detail. From the bottom to the top there are Japanese pagodas and other Japanese structures stacked on top of one another. In-between these numerous layers of structure is an abundant amount of detail. From the battles of armies on some roofs, to the leaves of cherry blossoms over others. Every inch of the drawing introduces something new to the viewer that they would not encounter without looking at the details a bit more closely.

Upon standing back and taking in the piece as a whole, the overall composition is easy to recognize. The large structure emerges from surrounding farmland at the bottom of the piece. As we move from the there to top, the building tapers to a point and there is a strong change from dissonance to consonance. The bottom presents viewers with an extraordinary amount of variety. Each eye movement provides a change in shape and color. There is a stark contrast to this as we approach the top. Up there, the extreme variety is replaced with more unity. The walls of structures, faced with unique stone arrangements at the bottom, become simple white facades. The roofs at the bottom are rotated in a multitude of directions, but this is replaced with structures that share the same orientation at the top. Along the entire vertical axis of the painting, there is a gradient from variety to unity. Though the top still presents an extreme amount of detail, the differences between elements lower on the drawing are more pronounced than those that appear above.

Another important quality to observe in Ikeda's work is the prominence of both geometric and organic forms. A large amount of the piece is covered with structures, but the massive tree on the right is still a figure in the piece. Its roots intertwine with the structure and the branches give rise to cherry blossoms that cover some of the white facades near the center. In addition to the tree, the organic forms of men are performing different actions on top of many of the roofs. Some are at war with each other. Others appear to be working at the industrialized section in the lower right. On top of this, certain organic forms will pop out as one looks at the details more, such as the creature emerging from behind a stone wall at the bottom of the image.

This drawing does not serve one purpose. Instead, it presents a multitude of ideas. Some ideas contemplate the development of society and others dramatise the relationship between industrialization and nature. One might think it shows the building of Japanese society and civilization over time as our eyes move to from the bottom to the top of the drawing. Upon further investigation, this does not seem to be true. There is a highly developed region in the bottom right. It is filled with interweaving train tracks and even some much more modern buildings at the edge of the structure’s base. At the top, cranes appear to continue the construction of this large building. If this were to show the growth of civilization over time, these two elements would not appear on opposite sides. Instead of showing time linearly, the drawing alludes to multiple different events that may have occurred within Japan's history all over different sections of the piece. This may act as an explanation for the name *History of Rise and Fall*, as the drawn events are both grim and hopeful. As we move from the bottom to the top of the piece, Ikeda might be trying to represent the gradient that exists between chaos and order, not the history of a civilization.

Nature and civilization also appear to play a crucial role in the piece. When observing all of the details in the work, it becomes clear that the large man made structure is intertwined with different forms of nature in every section of the drawing. In the bottom right, a tornado lifts men into the sky. At the bottom left, greenery and water dominate many sections of the drawing. This relationship expresses the power of nature and civilization working in conjugation with one another. It is that coordination that may have given rise to the tower dawn by Ikeda.