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### **KATANO, Michiko. *Triptych of the Apocalypse* by Léonard Foujita**

This paper examines *Triptych of the Apocalypse* (*The Triptych*) painted by Léonard Foujita (Tsuguharu Foujita, 藤田嗣治, 1886–1968). *The Triptych*, composed of three watercolor paintings on parchment, was created as illustrations for the deluxe edition of *L'Apocalypse*, commissioned by Joseph Forêt (1901–1991). Foujita began working on them in 1959 and completed the next year. These paintings are some of the first religious works that Foujita produced after his baptism on October 14th, 1959. However, in previous studies of Foujita's artwork, little consideration has been given to *The Triptych*. Recently, his book collection and writings, such as diaries and letters, have been made available to the public. They reveal his state of mind and the background of his work. This new information leads us to further examine his works, especially those of his later years.

This paper will first address his work process. In his diary, Foujita expressed his enthusiasm for painting, and recorded his daily work schedule. In order to depict episodes from the Bible, Foujita studied the iconography of the Apocalypse from prints and paintings created by great masters such as Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), Jean Duvet (1485?–1570?), and others. He also referred to an old Bible and an annotation book published in the eighteenth century. Foujita copied many figures of the copperplate prints in these old works and painted them in *The Triptych*. In addition, he emulated the compositions of Dürer's works. In this way, Foujita characterized himself as one of the successors of the European religious painting tradition. His paintings of nude women, which he produced in the 1920's, show stylistic similarities.

Next, I discuss the importance of *The Triptych* in Foujita's oeuvre. Before painting *The Triptych*, Foujita had begun to encounter classic European religious paintings. It can be interpreted as preparation for working for a chapel that he built in Reims in 1966. The idea came to him in the early 1950's, and in this context he received the order of *L'Apocalypse*. Through painting *The Triptych*, he got more interested in great masters, especially the works of the Northern European Renaissance. As a result, the preference towards classical works that he had already indicated was grown. At this point, *The Triptych* played an important role as one of the religious paintings by Foujita. Another significant point about *The Triptych* is that it inspired Foujita to approach the theme of the Apocalypse, which might have been unfamiliar to him, and let him understand its essence.

Third, I examine the influence of *The Triptych* on Foujita's later work. In the chapel (*Chapelle Notre-Dame de la Paix*), Foujita included a series of stained glass that reminds us the Hell scene depicted in *The Triptych*. Since it shows Foujita's recognition of the Apocalypse as an important religious theme, it is possible that he figured his greatest religious artwork should incorporate the Apocalypse.

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