

THE CULT OF RODIN:
WORDS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND COLONIAL HISTORY
IN THE SPREAD OF AUGUSTE RODIN'S REPUTATION
IN NORTHEAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the growth of Auguste Rodin's phenomenal acclaim in Northeast Asia, where he was introduced in the early 20th century, when China, Japan, and Korea were undergoing social, political, and cultural turmoil caused by colonial intrusions of the West, and became established largely through pictures and textual accounts before actual works by the sculptor were exhibited. By carefully examining printed materials circulated in the three countries from the early 1900s to the first Rodin exhibition in Japan, Korea, and China held in 1966, 1985, and 1993, respectively, this study argues that wide dissemination of images and written accounts of the sculptor's works, fueled by each country's urge to emulate the culture of the West, created a powerful version of the Rodin myth in the Far East.