

Object

Stag 74.1.141

Mori Tetsuzan, 1775-1841

c. 1815

Edo Period

***NOTE:** Image not available. See similar paintings by this artist and his contemporaries attached to the end of this document. Also see link to the British Museum, LA County Museum of Art and Indianapolis Museum of Art.*

Stag: Gallery Label - Current

The Chinese believe that deer live for hundreds of years and thus use them as symbols of longevity. In traditional pharmacology, powdered stag horn can be used as a restorative medicine or even an aphrodisiac. The Japanese consider deer to be messengers of gods and as such keep them within shrine precincts. The artist, Mori Tetsuzan, was adopted by his uncle, Mori Sosen, Japan's most famous painter of monkeys. He was also a pupil of Maruyama Okyo, founder of the Maruyama School and champion of a new naturalistic style.

Questions

- Imagine that you are viewing this magnificent animal in person. Where are you?
- How would you describe the scenery?
- If you could touch him how would it feel?
- What do you notice about the position and size of the hind end vs. his head?
- What effect do you think the artist's use of color and shading has on the mood?

Key Points and Notes

- Tetsuzan, Mori. Maruyama School. Pupil of Okyo. Painted in Western style, later. Lived in Kyoto. Son-in-law of Sosen. Sp. figures, flowers and birds. Represents successful fusion of styles of Okyo and Sosen
- Son of Mori Shuho, Adopted by his uncle, Mori Sosen, famous painter of monkeys. One of Maruyama Okyo's 10 best pupils. Moved to Edo, bringing the Maruyama style to the Kanto region. Many paintings of tall colorful "bijin" or of skillfully rendered birds, animals.
- Maruyama Okyo and his followers the only truly new school to appear during the Edo period. Okyo 1733-95 open to all artistic influences of the 18th century.
 - Matsumura Goshun to Okyo's studio. Later established his own studio, the Shijo School. Widespread appeal, important commissions.
 - Both Okyo and Goshun many talented followers, lead to emergence of Western style of art during Meiji period 1868-1912
- Deer occur frequently in the art of both China and Japan. Since the Chinese believed that deer lived to a very great age, they became a symbol of long life,

and the God of Longevity is often shown accompanied by a deer. It is said that it was the only animal that was able to find the sacred fungus that insured immortality. Part of the horns of deer, dried and pulverized, were made into pills and taken as medicine. Imperial parks often contained herds of deer, as is depicted in a famous pair of paintings dating from the 10th century. In Japan, too, the deer was considered a sacred and auspicious animal, associated with Shinto shrines, notably the Kasuga Shrine in Nara, which was surrounded by a famous deer park. Many paintings depict these sacred deer, notably Sotatsu's "Deer Scroll." From Dictionary of Chinese And Japanese Art. Ref N 7340 M78 1981

- From Wikipedia:
 - The **sika deer**, *Cervus nippon*, also known as the **spotted deer** or the **Japanese deer**, is a [species](#) of [deer](#) native to much of East Asia, and introduced to various other parts of the world. Previously found from northern [Vietnam](#) in the south to the [Russian Far East](#) in the north,[1] it is now uncommon in these areas, excluding [Japan](#), where the species is overabundant.[2] Its name comes from *shika* (鹿?), the Japanese word for "deer".
 - The sika deer is one of the few deer species that does not lose its spots upon reaching maturity. Spot patterns vary with region.
 - Japanese sika deer (*C. n. nippon*), males weigh 40–70 kg (88–150 lb) and females weigh 30–40 kg (66–88 lb).[6][7] All sikas are compact and dainty-legged, with short, trim, wedge-shaped heads and a boisterous disposition. When alarmed, they will often display a distinctive flared [rump](#), much like the American [elk](#).
 - Japan has by far the largest native sika population in the world. Though the exact population is uncertain, it is likely to be in the hundred thousand range and is still increasing,[*citation needed*] mainly due to recent conservation efforts and the extinction of its main predator, the [wolf](#), over a century ago.
 - China used to have the largest population of sika, but thousands of years of hunting and habitat loss have reduced the population to less than 1,000.
 - [Velvet antler](#) (dried immature [antlers](#)) is a popular ingredient in [traditional Chinese medicine](#), and sika in China were domesticated long ago for the antler trade, along with several other species. In Taiwan, both Formosan sika deer and Formosan [sambar deer](#) (*Cervus unicolor swinhoei*) have been farmed for velvet antlers. Japan is the only country in eastern Asia where sika deer were not farmed for velvet antlers.

Lynn Brofman
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See p.87 Deer in an Autumn Mountain Landscape

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zoom (Image Viewer)

Mori Tesson (Tetsuzan) (Japan, 1775 - 1841)

Deer in an Autumn Landscape, early 19th century

Screen/scroll, Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk,
Image: 31 3/4 x 13 in. (80.6 x 33.02 cm); Mount: 77 x
17 7/8 in. (195.5 x 45.4 cm)

Gift of the participants of the 1998 Far Eastern Art
Council trip to the exhibition *Edo: Art in Japan, 1615-
1868*, National Gallery of Art, Washington
(AC1999.155.1)

Japanese Art Department.

Not currently on public view

Click here for a [list of artworks on display](#) in this curatorial collection

Gallery Label

A pair of deer stand in an autumnal landscape; the season is indicated by the presence of pampas grass, a symbol of fall. The male perks up his ears, gazing with alert expression at a distant mountain. His pose is protective of the female, who stands grazing amid deep grass. A small stream cascades down at the lower left. Paintings showing a pair of deer were frequently used as wedding gifts.

The painting is a masterly study of exquisitely modulated ink tones, evoking the clear air and coolness of autumn. It is superbly composed, the contrasting positions of the deer and use of dark accents emphasizing the intimacy of the foreground and the great distance of the far mountain.

Mori Tetsuzan (also called Tesson) was a Maruyama School painter who was adopted by his uncle, Mori Sosen (1747-1821). Sosen is considered the greatest Japanese painter of deer and monkeys, particularly for the delicacy of their fur and the accuracy of their poses, proportions, and anatomy. His tutelage is obvious here in Tetsuzan's marvelous handling of the deer coats, their stance, and their volume. Tetsuzan also studied under the founder of the Maruyama School, the legendary Maruyama Okyo (1733-1795), and is considered one of his ten best pupils.

Subject Groupings

[Japanese Art -- Screens and Scrolls](#)

Image on Following Page:

The painting by a contemporary of Mori Tetsuzan depicts the Stag in a similar style:

Stag, Doe and Pampas Grass, artist Kameoka Kirei, Japanese, 1770-1835, Edo, Ink and color on silk. Indianapolis Museum of Art 1987.46

Gallery Label:

Sosetsu was a grandson of Mori Sosen (1747-1821), Japan's best-known painter of monkeys, and he followed the latter's painting style. Sosetsu's father, Mori Tetsuzan (1775-1841), like Kirei, who did the neighboring painting, was one of the ten top pupils of the great Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), an advocate of painting based on close observation of nature. The composition depicts the idea: "Hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil." It is one of only a few verifiable existing works by Sosetsu.



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