

# Ink and Gold Art of the Kano

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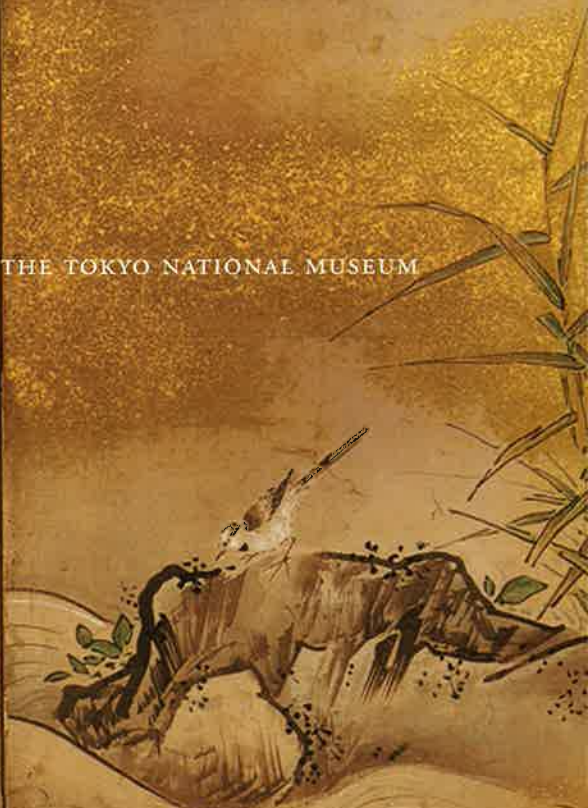
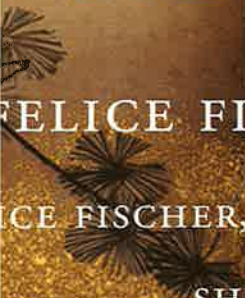
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# The Kano School: The First One Hundred Years

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The remarkable longevity of the Kano school, which flourished over some four centuries, was a product of resourceful adaptation to an ever-changing landscape of patrons and prospects. Long-term Kano practices were rooted in the experiences of the founder of the house, Kano Masanobu (1434–1530), as painter-in-attendance (*goyō eshi*) to the declining Ashikaga shogunate during the 1480s. They were systematized by the second-generation head, Kano Motonobu (1477–1559), who cultivated a wide array of sponsors in Kyoto (then Japan's capital) and beyond. By the late sixteenth century, the Kano house operated multiple ateliers that could meet the simultaneous demands of numerous constituencies. This structure allowed Motonobu's grandson Eitoku (1543–1590) to head a collateral studio that served the warlords Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), an experience that proved crucial for the later Kano artists who would pictorialize a wide-ranging iconography of kingship for the Tokugawa shogunate that held power from the early seventeenth through late nineteenth century. By firmly embedding themselves within the centralized feudal structure of the Edo period (1615–1868), the Kano school was able to establish branch lineages and satellite studios in daimyo domains throughout the country, thereby becoming closely associated with the military class as a whole. And beyond Japan, through the gifting of their screens to the kings of Korea's Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) and eventually the royal houses of Europe, Kano painting came to represent Japanese picture-making itself.

What distinguished the Kano from other artisanal houses was a combination of good fortune, masterful engineering of its lineages, and a willingness to continuously reinvent its artistic practices to suit an ever-changing world. In the case of the first two leaders of the house, Masanobu and Motonobu, who reached the

respective ages of ninety-seven and eighty-three (by East Asian reckoning), good fortune came in the form of long life. Abundant offspring were also crucial, ensuring that younger sons could assume headship of the house after an older brother's untimely death; talented disciples could do the same when male heirs went lacking. The forging of alliances through calculated intermarriage was another strategic practice of the house, as was the integration of the Kano school within larger professional networks, such as the fanmakers' guild and the Nichiren sect of Buddhism.

Ultimately, however, the factor that most enabled the school's longevity was its painting practice. Motonobu cultivated a sophisticated and diverse mode of production that was repeatable through training and well suited to large-scale projects. An absolute hierarchy within the house clarified roles and subdivided commissions.<sup>1</sup> The assimilation of the practices of other artisanal lineages, and the embrace of genre painting, radically expanded the Kano menu, allowing the house to command a dizzying array of subjects. Over time, a training regimen based upon the study of the same corpus of model paintings emerged, ensuring that any properly trained painter could reproduce works recognizably in the Kano style no matter what his talent level.<sup>2</sup> Eventually the Kano school would adopt a licensing system to credential disciples who completed a lengthy apprenticeship, many of whom went on to head their own studios, thus disseminating Kano practices over wide swaths of brush-wielding Japan.

## KANO MASANOBU

Masanobu's origins are much debated, although he appears to have hailed from a warrior family of the northern Kantō region, the area north of Edo (present-day Tokyo).<sup>3</sup> Equally mysterious is his sudden and dramatic rise in elite cultural circles. In the 1460s he

Kano Motonobu  
Detail of *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*, 1513  
(cat. 18)



Fig. A-1. Kano Masanobu. *The Monk Nisshin*, late 15th century. Ink, color, and gold on silk, hanging scroll; 36 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches (93 x 41.3 cm). Honpō-ji, Kyoto

appears in the documentary archive as a painter active in the Zen monastic milieu in Kyoto; during the 1470s he is found in Nara; and by the early 1480s he is back in Kyoto, where he serves the Ashikaga shogunate as painter-in-attendance. Although Masanobu was unusually long lived, it is probable that he ceded headship of the Kano family to his son Motonobu soon after 1500.

In 1483, Masanobu carried out the wall and panel paintings for the many buildings in the Muromachi Palace of the eighth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimasa (1436–1490). Yoshimasa had stepped down from the shogunal seat in 1473 in favor of his son Yoshihisa (1465–1489), and from 1482 until his death in 1490, he devoted all of his energies to the construction of his retirement palace in Kyoto.<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1481, Oguri Sōtan (1413–1481) had been the primary painter-in-attendance to the Ashikaga shogunate, and normally the privilege of working on palace paintings would have been passed on to his son Sōkei; Masanobu therefore must have made an extraordinary impression to be entrusted with this work. Painting for the shogunal complex required a certain set of skills, because each painting cycle followed the pictorial mode of a specific Chinese painter represented in the Ashikaga collection. Masanobu had clearly mastered the specialized protocols needed to carry out his work for Yoshimasa.

During the 1480s and 90s Masanobu was also painting portraits for members of the Ashikaga family. At the time portraiture was used almost exclusively for mortuary rituals, and Masanobu was entrusted with the likenesses of Yoshimasa, his wife Hino Tomiko (1440–1496), and his son Yoshihisa for display at their funerals (fig. A-1).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Masanobu painted religious icons for the private use of the shogunal family. His ability to strategically associate himself with powerful patrons is demonstrated in his work for the warlord Hosokawa Masamoto (1466–

1507), who was appointed deputy-shogun (*kanrei*) in 1486 and was arguably the most powerful figure in the land around the turn of the sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Masanobu was also a peddler of medicines, and it may have been in this role that he first ingratiated himself with powerful patrons in the capital. The relationship between medicines and painting is not all that surprising, given that both required the procuring of rare natural materials and the skill to grind and process them. In this capacity Masanobu even appears to have been feared among the members of the shogunal entourage. According to an entry recorded in the chronicle *Inryōken nichiroku* (Daily Record of the Inryōken Cloister), rumors were circulating in the monastic world that Masanobu's medicines had been responsible for the death of the young shogun Yoshihisa and the monk Kaiami.<sup>7</sup> Whether or not this hearsay can be given any credence, it is clear that Masanobu elicited both admiration and enmity, and was a figure of unusual will and ability.

#### KANO MOTONOBU

Masanobu's eldest son Motonobu was responsible for expanding the patronage and purview of the Kano house during a particularly challenging time, the first half of the sixteenth century, when the authority of the Ashikaga family had disintegrated and sovereignty over the land passed from one warlord to another.<sup>8</sup> Building upon Masanobu's mastery of the pictorial modes favored by the Ashikaga shoguns, Motonobu developed a highly legible pictorial style that drew upon multiple traditions of picture-making, and expanded the repertoire of the Kano house from ink-based painting into areas traditionally considered the domain of court painters: illustrated handscrolls (*emaki*), paintings on a gold-leaf ground, and newly emerging genre paintings. He mar-

ried the daughter of the court painter Tosa Mitsunobu (1434–1525), thus forging a close alliance with one of the most pedigreed painting houses of his time and gaining inroads to new sources of patronage.

Motonobu was almost certainly the head of the family studio by 1507, when he was entrusted with the important task of painting the portrait of Hosokawa Sumimoto (1489–1520), the adopted son of Hosokawa Masamoto.<sup>9</sup> Like his father, he continued to serve the Ashikaga and Hosokawa families, and produced portraits and religious icons in large numbers (fig. A-2). But he also took advantage of the political decentralization of his time to insert the Kano house into new circles and institutions, even carrying out work for the imperial palace. One prominent patron of this period was the Zen monastery Daitoku-ji in Kyoto, which was the home to many of Motonobu's largest-scale and most significant painting projects. Motonobu oversaw the decoration of a number of Daitoku-ji's sub-temples, including Daisen-in (1512; cat. 18), Kōrin-in (c. 1545), and Zuihō-in (c. 1552–53).

From Motonobu's studio north of the imperial palace, Kano artists produced numerous painted folding fans (cat. 7), a popular gift item across the social spectrum, and Motonobu even served as the co-leader of Kyoto's fanmakers' guild (*ōgi-za*).<sup>10</sup> Given Motonobu's prolific output and the scale of his commissions, it is unsurprising that his studio included many disciples, some of whom established a separate studio in the eastern castle town of Odawara. Motonobu also worked tirelessly to ensure the prominence of the Kano house after his death, carefully configuring his lineage and positioning his grandson Eitoku to become a leading painter of the Kano line. It is no wonder that later histories of the country's painters would invariably cite Motonobu as the figure most responsible for the establishment of future Kano prosperity.



Fig. A-2. Kano Motonobu. *White-Robed Kannon*, early 16th century. Ink, color, and gold on silk, hanging scroll; 62 x 30 $\frac{1}{16}$  inches (157.5 x 76.4 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

## KANO EITOKU

Despite his relatively brief career, Eitoku's imprint on the history of Japanese painting was considerable. At an early age, he began serving the warlord Oda Nobunaga almost exclusively, followed by Nobunaga's successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi, forming in effect a branch studio to attend to their prodigious painting needs. This led Eitoku toward the development of picture-making suitable to large-scale castle interiors, and to the establishment of a mode of what later histories would call "grand painting" (*taiga*) that would have a strong influence on painters of the Momoyama period (1573–1615).

According to the painting history *Honchō gashi* (History of Painting of the Realm; 1693) by Kano Einō (1631–1697), Eitoku studied painting with Motonobu.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that Eitoku was being groomed for a leading role in the Kano house, as he was taken by his grandfather to have an audience with the thirteenth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshiteru (1536–1565), at the age of ten. Early on he began a long period of service to Nobunaga, culminating in many cycles of paintings for Azuchi Castle (1576–79).<sup>12</sup> In 1580 Eitoku painted a pair of screens depicting the castle itself that was sent as a gift from Nobunaga to Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585), who received it five years later.

Upon Nobunaga's death in 1582, Eitoku's energies were redirected toward Hideyoshi, for whom he similarly oversaw painting projects of remarkable scale, the most notable of which were wall paintings for Osaka Castle (1584) and Jurakudai Castle (1587). During this same period, Eitoku produced paintings for various temples in the Kyoto area; he is said to have fallen ill while painting the dragon on the ceiling of Tōfuku-ji's Dharma Hall (*Hattō*) in the ninth month of 1590. He died soon after, overworked beyond exhaustion.

The trajectory of Eitoku's painterly development suggests a transformation engendered by the numerous



Fig. A-3. Kano Eitoku. Detail of *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*, c. early 1580s. Ink, color, and gold on paper, set of sixteen-panel sliding doors; each door 69 $\frac{1}{16}$  x 56 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches (175.5 x 142.5 cm). Central Room of Jukō-in, Kyoto. National Treasure

large-scale projects in which he was engaged during the 1580s, one that witnessed a progression from “fine painting” (*saiga*) to “grand painting” (*taiga*). The shift from the minute detail seen in his earlier works to the monumental imagery of his subsequent output began to manifest itself in the Central Room of Jukō-in, a sub-temple of Daitoku-ji, where Eitoku’s famous panel cycle *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons* appears across three walls (fig. A-3). Until this moment, the Kano approach to this subject followed a pattern standardized by Motonobu. As witnessed in his birds-and-flowers sketches, trees of modest size are situated at either end of the composition, framing the birds and beasts that form its main subject (cat. 17). In Eitoku’s Jukō-in panels, however, the plum tree on the east wall stretches out laterally across four large panels, while background elements are minimized. This radical enlargement and abbreviation of the pictorial subject altered the relationship between viewer and architecture, presenting a scene that provides a sense of immediacy for the viewer. As the 1580s advanced, Eitoku’s tree trunks essentially took over the role of pictorial protagonist, and grew larger and more majestic. By the time of his *Cypress* (sliding doors now mounted as a screen; Tokyo National Museum), the central arbooreal motif had taken on such a venerable, mannered appearance that some commentators have called it an intentionally animistic depiction (Aya Ōta essay, fig. D-4).

Eitoku’s early death initiated a period of uncer-

tainty for the Kano house, as other professional studios emerged to propose rival bids for the patronage of potentates. The Kano lineage would be led by Eitoku’s eldest son, the twenty-six-year-old Mitsunobu (1565–1608), whose painting would be characterized in negative terms in *Honchō gashi*. According to this view, it was not until the emergence of Kano Tan’yū (1602–1674)—a grandson to Eitoku and nephew to Mitsunobu—as painter-in-attendance to the Tokugawa shogunate in 1617 that the fortunes of the Kano house would be restored. Recent scholarship, however, has begun to revise this view. A number of Kano painters were active and innovative during the three decades after Eitoku’s death, and a closer examination of their work, unbiased by historiography, reveals their merit. Kano Sanraku (1559–1635), Eitoku’s son-in-law, was perhaps the true heir of Eitoku’s “grand painting,” producing some of the most dynamic large-scale works of the early seventeenth century (cat. 80); and Eitoku’s younger brother Naganobu (1577–1654) excelled at genre painting (cat. 30). Rather than an overall decline in artistry, the uncertainty of the political landscape had simply caused further subdivision of the Kano house in order to serve rival claimants to power, making it difficult to obtain an aggregate view of Kano style and status during this period.

#### KANO PAINTING PRACTICES

Four practices were particularly important to the pictorial output of the Kano house during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: modal painting, architectural painting, the stylistic amalgamation referred to here as the Kano synthesis, and genre painting.

##### *Modal Painting*

The foundation for Kano painting was formed through Masanobu’s assumption of the role of painter-in-

attendance to the Ashikaga shogunate. As with the monk-painters who held this post before him, Masanobu's pictorial output was centered upon the ability to adapt the modes of painting represented in the numerous Chinese artworks in the Ashikaga treasury. From the fourteenth century onward, the Ashikaga shoguns began to amass Chinese luxury objects—ceramics, bronzes, lacquerware, textiles, and most notably, paintings—in emulation of Chinese imperial practice. By the 1460s, when an inventory of some 280 of the most highly valued scrolls was drawn up, the collection boasted a wide array of pictorial traditions and genres.<sup>13</sup>

Within the Ashikaga cultural sphere, paintings came to be conceptualized and commissioned according to the modes of the famous Chinese masters represented in the Ashikaga collection. Each mode had generically identifiable features, such as the use of a hard outline for landscape elements and “axe-cut strokes” on rock forms in the mode of Xia Gui (active 1195–1224), or the lack of an outline—generally referred to as the “boneless” method—for landscape elements in the mode of Muqi (13th century). In historical records of painting projects, these modes appear mostly in conjunction with large-scale paintings, but surviving works indicate that they also applied to smaller-scale formats such as hanging scrolls and folding fans (cats. 1–3, 9, 10).

Painters-in-attendance to the shogunate held privileged access to the Ashikaga collection, and thus played central roles in the elaboration of Chinese pictorial modes during the fifteenth century. The Kano painters inherited this legacy, and Masanobu's ascent is almost certainly tied to his mastery of modal painting. It should be emphasized, however, that modal painting did not merely entail the imitation of the styles of continental works. Rather, it constituted a more complex and creative practice based upon the painter's ability to mix and

match a wide range of artistic habits associated with a Chinese master, and recombine them in inventive new ways for Japanese pictorial formats. In this manner, the artistry of the works contained in the Ashikaga treasury was disseminated onto countless fans, folding screens, and sliding-door panels in and around the capital. Modal painting provided a mechanism by which this rich repository of painting styles could be transposed, recombined, and reimagined onto the built environment of medieval Kyoto.

Masanobu, who had clearly mastered the practice of modal painting, was entrusted with the creative configuration of pictorial modes for the architecture of the Ashikaga family. Although his panels for the Muromachi Palace do not survive, smaller-scale works demonstrate his aptitude for this unique system of painting. *Water Buffalo and Herdboy*, one of five surviving fan paintings by Masanobu, was almost certainly understood as a work in the mode of Li Tang (c. 1050–1130), a court painter (fig. A-4). Likewise, among surviving works, *Hermit Viewing Waterfall* (cat. 2) can be identified as executed in the Xia Gui mode, while *Zhou Maoshu Admiring Lotus* and the diptych *Landscapes* (cats. 1, 3) are pitched in the mode of Ma Yuan (c. 1160–1225). In the following generation, Motonobu would continue to develop modal painting into more general styles that were based less on the modes of specific Chinese masters than on certain pictorial moods, calibrated to suit different interiors according to their degree of formality.

### *Architectural Painting*

One of the distinguishing factors that enabled the rise of the Kano house was its ability to execute cycles of large-scale paintings, namely those affixed to the walls and sliding-door panels of architectural interiors, quickly and masterfully. During the Muromachi period (1392–1573),



Fig. A-4. Kano Masanobu. *Water Buffalo and Herdboy*, late 15th century. Ink and gold on paper, folding fan; w. 18<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches (46.8 cm). Mary Griggs Burke Collection, New York

the Kyoto palaces of the Ashikaga shoguns were regularly animated with such profusely painted surfaces. It was the role of painters-in-attendance to the shoguns to carry out palace mural painting. With Masanobu's entrance into the shogunal orbit, this most privileged of assignments was assumed by the Kano house, which made the execution of architectural painting a signature specialty.

For the Kano school, two types of architectural spaces new to medieval Japan were especially important: the abbot's quarters (*hōjō*) of Zen sub-temples, and the Grand Audience Halls (*Ōhiroma*) of castles. Sub-temples emerged within large Zen monastic compounds during the fourteenth century as sites for the worship of deceased abbots, and gradually such sites were elaborated into building compounds centered upon the quarters where a retired abbot could reside. Customarily the panels and walls of each of the rooms of the abbot's quarters were painted with subjects that bore some relation to the room's status or function, a practice that likely emerged during the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>14</sup> During the sixteenth century, Kano Motonobu and his successors worked on an impressive sequence of sub-temples,

all affiliated with the Kyoto temples Daitoku-ji or Myōshin-ji, including their earliest surviving sub-temple paintings at Daitoku-ji's Daisen-in (cat. 18).<sup>15</sup>

Yet it was ultimately the emergence of castle architecture and its cavernous audience chambers that pushed Kano mural décor in new directions. Indeed, the architectural ambitions of the successive military hegemons drove the evolution of Kano picture-making in the late sixteenth century. Although military fortresses had been built for centuries throughout the country, Oda Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle (1576–79), a new architectural paradigm, inaugurated a bravura era of castle building between 1575 and 1625 that witnessed the construction of more than one hundred castles throughout Japan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi followed suit by building three large castles in succession: Osaka Castle (1584), Jurakudai (1587), and Fushimi Castle (1592), each grander than the previous example. Kano painters brushed the interiors of all of them.

Hideyoshi's Osaka Castle saw the emergence of a new architectural space that would become paradigmatic of warrior authority in early modern Japan. Typically referred to as the Grand Audience Hall, this space actually consisted of a set of large-scale rooms that were intended to be used by Hideyoshi when meeting with retainers. This chamber greatly expanded the scale of the stage on which feudal pledges were made, turning these oaths of loyalty to the hegemon into political theater. The earliest extant space of this kind is found at Kyoto's Nijō Castle, where the Grand Audience Hall of the Ninomaru Palace was painted by Kano Tan'yū between 1624 and 1626 (see Felice Fischer essay, "The Heritage and Legacy of Kano Tan'yū"). As witnessed there, the cycles of monumental pine trees employ evergreens as a symbol to evoke everlasting rule, thus asserting the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate as the eternal political order.



Kano painters would author similar symbolic programs throughout the early modern era for the interiors of Edo Castle, the base of the Tokugawa shogunate.

### *The Kano Synthesis*

The painting history *Honchō gashi* credits Kano Motonobu with the successful mastery and synthesis of two separate traditions of painting, one indigenous and the other continental. This combination was encapsulated by the traditional term *wakan*, which joined the characters *wa* (Japan) and *kan* (China); the term had been used for centuries to refer to cultural production that artfully integrated the practices of the two cultures. Although *wakan* continued to be employed as a term and cultural concept in subsequent centuries, the specific Sino-Japanese practices to which it referred were in constant flux.

Early Kano painters cultivated a wide-ranging repertoire of styles and subjects by borrowing from the practices of other established ateliers. Broadly speaking, the two most significant of these were the Tosa and Oguri lineages, which provided official painters to the imperial and shogunal courts, respectively. The Tosa school specialized in *yamato-e* (literally, “Japanese pictures”), an indigenous style derived from ancient Japanese art that was associated with the imperial court and aristocracy. During the 1470s, Kano Masanobu was apprenticed to a Tosa painter in Nara. In the next generation, the aforementioned marriage of Motonobu to the daughter of Tosa Mitsunobu further cemented the association between the two schools. Motonobu was known to have courted a working relationship with Tosa artists throughout his life. The clearest manifestation of a Kano-Tosa collaboration are the wall paintings of the Daitoku-ji subtemple Zuihō-in, which were most likely painted during the years 1552–53.<sup>16</sup> The efforts of Kano

artists to appropriate the secrets of Tosa painting were ongoing, and played a significant role in expanding the school’s artistic compass.

In visual terms, the embrace of *yamato-e* took on many forms, but two of the most significant were the mastery of illustrated handscrolls, which had long been a staple of Tosa artistry, and the adoption of a gold-leaf ground for painting. Of the many picture scrolls painted by Motonobu, *Miraculous Origins of the Shaka Hall* showcases how well the artist synthesized traditional narrative painting techniques with his own approaches (fig. A-5). On the one hand, the abundant use of gold paint and polychrome mineral pigments is in keeping with a classical court painter’s palette. On the other hand, certain landscape elements, particularly the vigorous rock forms, are faithful to established norms of Kano painting. Conventional handscroll motifs such as bands of mist are used in dynamic new ways, in this case stacked and varied in thickness to create appealing variation across the surface, and sometimes carefully situated to isolate motifs that propel the narrative.<sup>17</sup>

The indigenous practice of painting works on an all-gold ground was similarly transposed to the Kano menu. The adoption of a metallic painting support required not only the specialized ability to apply pigments to this surface, but also an unerring sense of design and composition, so that the negative space surrounding motifs could imply a ground plane or other context for the otherwise floating pictorial elements. The Kano school applied the concept of the gold-leafed canvas in innovative ways to new subjects, thereby conveying a powerful sense of the mixing of visual traditions. For example, *Jinshan-si* (J. *Kinzan-ji*; c. 1502–3), an early fan painting by Motonobu in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, depicts a storied Chan (Zen) monastery in China’s Yangtze delta with golden clouds wafting



Fig. A-5. Kano Motonobu. Detail of *Miraculous Origins of the Shaka Hall*, c. 1515. Ink, color, and gold on paper, handscroll; 13 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 573 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches (35.3 x 1456.7 cm). Seiryō-ji, Kyoto



Fig. A-6. Kano Motonobu. *Jinshan-si*, c. 1502–3. Ink, color, and gold on paper, folding fan; w. 19 $\frac{1}{6}$  inches (49.3 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

throughout the scene, dramatically cross-pollinating a new continental subject with an old courtly compositional device (fig. A-6). In *Landscape Panels Mounted on Yamato-e Screens*, a work in the Freer Gallery of Art by a sixteenth-century Kano painter, elements of *wa* and *kan* are juxtaposed starkly (fig. A-7).<sup>18</sup> The background is depicted in classical *yamato-e* fashion, with gold clouds and colorful nature imagery, while the landscapes affixed to the screens are ink-monochrome works in the Chinese tradition as adapted by medieval monk-painters.

For the most part, however, the adoption of a gold backdrop for preexisting subjects was more prevalent, as is the case with Motonobu's screens *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons* in the Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum, Kobe (cat. 16). During Eitoku's era, painting on a gold ground would become common practice, associated primarily with large-scale works and architectural interiors. Not only did the illuminated surfaces reflect upon the status and riches of their owners, but they refracted and amplified light in complex ways in otherwise dimly lit interiors. Moreover, as the sixteenth century progressed, Kano painters generated more visually complex gold surfaces in a number of ways: by mixing and matching gold foil and paint; introducing three-dimensional patterns into the gold surface by layering the gold upon raised gesso designs (*moriage*); cutting the gold leaf down to thin strips or miniature squares sprinkled across the surface; or manipulating the metallurgy of the gold to introduce yellow or reddish tints.

In addition to these and other Japanese influences, contemporary works from China provided a continuous influx of new ideas.<sup>19</sup> Motonobu and later Kano painters adopted the scale and coloration of bird-and-flower paintings by fifteenth-century Chinese court painters for their own nature scenes. Certain kinds of Buddhist paintings were also indebted to their continental counterparts. As revealed by recent scholarship, even handscrolls such as Motonobu's *Miraculous Origins of the Shaka Hall* were based upon the Chinese woodblock-printed book *Shishi yuanliu* (Origins and Evolution of Śākyamuni; c. 1425).<sup>20</sup>

While it is unclear to what degree Motonobu's painting was conceptualized in its own time as a synthesis of myriad traditions, his artistry came to represent, in at least one instance, Japanese painting as a whole. Three pairs of screens that were given to the Chinese Emperor



Fig. A-7. Kano Motonobu. *Landscape Panels Mounted on Yamato-e Screens*, 16th century. Ink, color, and gold on paper, pair of six-fold screens; each screen 69 x 147<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches (175.2 x 375.8 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Jiajing (r. 1521–67) in the eleventh month of 1541 by Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551), daimyo of Suō Province (in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture), were produced by Motonobu. They are described as “gold screens” (*kinbyōbu*) with different composites of bird-and-flower motifs.<sup>21</sup> Although no longer extant, a good sense of their visual qualities can be gleaned from surviving works, such as Motonobu’s aforementioned *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*. In their harmonization of *yamato-e* motifs with elements of ink painting and Kano compositional design, these works must have offered the best available portrait of Japan’s traditions of picture-making at the time, and they would establish a precedent for diplomatic screens produced by the Kano school for centuries to come.

### *Genre Painting*

The Kano artists were primarily responsible for one of the most significant cultural developments of the sixteenth century: the rise of genre painting (*fūzokuga*). In previous eras, painting subjects were drawn largely from the East Asian religious and literary canons, and were invariably set at a considerable historical remove from the viewer. The late medieval period, however, witnessed the emergence of a type of painting that narrowed the temporal gap between subject and viewer. Such paintings utilized contemporary visual cues, depicting fashions, objects, and customs that would have been familiar to the lived experiences of their observers.

The pictorial language of early genre painting emerged out of the tradition of classical court painting. There numerous motifs of everyday life were developed as peripheral visual props to the main subject. In illustrated handscrolls, such pictorial fillers did not directly propel the plot of a given narrative, but nevertheless provided visual appeal and enhanced the reality of the story at hand. Court artists became adept at depicting vignettes of village life or quotidian sketches of entourages to offer visual diversions to the main focus of a scene. In the sixteenth century, these vernacular episodes came to constitute the raw material for a wide array of new painting subjects. The trivial and the banal became central pictorial themes in their own right. And it was the Kano school that was most responsible for overseeing the elevation of these prosaic details to the main subject of the composition.

The subject known as “Scenes In and Around the Capital” (*rakuchū rakugai zu*) was most responsible for establishing the mode of genre painting.<sup>22</sup> Typically produced in the form of a pair of six-fold screens, these works depicted the ancient capital of Kyoto in panoramic vistas against the backdrop of the Higashiyama mountains on the right-hand screen and the Kitayama



Fig. A-8. Kano Hideyori. *Maple Viewing on Mount Takao*, 1560s. Ink, color, and gold on paper, six-fold screen; 59 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 143 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (150.2 x 365.5 cm). Tokyo National Museum. National Treasure

Fig. A-9. Kano school. *Nanban Screens*, 17th century. Ink, color, and gold on paper, pair of six-fold screens; each screen 60 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 130 $\frac{3}{16}$  inches (153 x 331 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC



mountains on the left-hand screen, respectively. Major monuments of the city were interspersed with street scenes of row houses and urban commoners, and all status groups commingled in dynamic sequences of human interaction on a minute scale. The earliest surviving works on this theme were all painted by the Kano school, and reveal important insights into the development of genre painting. The most famous example, the "Uesugi Version" of *Scenes In and Around the Capital*, was painted by Eitoku in 1565 and presented by Oda Nobunaga to the warlord Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), daimyo of Echigo Province (in present-day Niigata Prefecture), as a peace offering in 1574.

"Scenes In and Around the Capital" gave rise to other variations of genre painting, including scenes of festivals (*sairei zu*) and merrymaking (*yūroku zu*), the most famous example of which is the screen *Maple Viewing on Mount Takao* (Tokyo National Museum)

painted by Kano Hideyori (active 1565–76) sometime during the 1560s (fig. A-8). Other types were developed by transposing new subject matter onto preexisting pictorial templates. The most notable examples of such overlays were "southern barbarian" or *nanban* screens, which the Kano house began to produce during Eitoku's time (fig. A-9).<sup>23</sup> *Nanban* screens showcased the Portuguese traders and Jesuit missionaries that were active in Japan from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. Such works evolved from "Chinese ship" paintings (*Tōsen zu* or *karafune zu*), which offered a convenient precedent for the representation of overseas figures arriving in Japan by boat.<sup>24</sup> Fascination with the foreign was not, however, the only reason for the popularity of *nanban* screens. Like their earlier Chinese counterparts, these screens were primarily auspicious in nature, meant to engender prosperity and safe returns for the many merchants who commissioned them from Kano painters.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Kano school would move away from genre painting, in large part to gear their production more purposefully to patrons from the military class. Yet the legacy of Kano genre painting would provide important precedents for *ukiyo-e* (literally, "pictures of the floating world"), a genre that would flourish particularly among urban commoners from the late seventeenth through nineteenth century. Indeed, the *ukiyo-e* school would be highly indebted to the contemporaneity of Kano genre painting, as manifest in the emergence of Iwasa Matabei (1578–1650), who apprenticed under Kano Naizen (1570–1616). Matabei's genre paintings—most notably his own version of "Scenes In and Around the Capital," commonly known as the "Funaki Version"—shifted the tenor of representation from the serenely social to the rowdy and ruffian. In this respect, Matabei's work can be understood as the first genuine portrayal of the "floating world."<sup>25</sup>

1. See the discussion of Kano studio hierarchy (*jorestu*) in Takeda Tsuneo, *Kanō-ha shōheiga no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002).
2. The Kano training regimen is examined in Karen M. Gerhart, “Talent, Training, and Power: The Kano Painting Workshop in the Seventeenth Century,” and Brenda G. Jordan, “Copying from Beginning to End? Student Life in the Kano School,” in *Copying the Master and Stealing his Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. Brenda G. Jordan and Victoria Weston (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2003), pp. 9–30, 31–59.
3. For a summary of this debate, see Yamamoto Hideo, *Shoki Kanō-ha—Masanobu, Motonobu*, *Nihon no bijutsu*, no. 485 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2006), pp. 18–20.
4. Donald Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavilion: The Creation of the Soul of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
5. For Masanobu’s engagement with portraiture, see Quitman Eugene Phillips, *The Practices of Painting in Japan, 1475–1500* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 147–70.
6. Sometime between 1486 and 1491, Masanobu painted the interior partitions for Masamoto’s administrative temple, Yūshoken, in the Arashiyama district of Kyoto. The Hosokawa warlord also commissioned Masanobu to paint for his Gansei-in complex in Kyoto’s Higashiyama district.
7. Katsuno Ryūshin and Tamamura Takeji, eds., *Inryōken nichiroku*, 5 vols. (Kyoto: Shiseki Kankōkai, 1953–54). This chronicle was kept by monks of the Inryōken Cloister at the temple Shōkoku-ji in Kyoto. The particular monks who kept this diary during the mid- to late fifteenth century, Kikei Shinzui (1401–1469) and Kisen Shūshō (1424–1493), were close to Masanobu.
8. Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
9. For a thorough study of Motonobu’s activities, see Tsuji Nobuo, *Sengoku jidai Kanō-ha no kenkyū—Kanō Motonobu o chūshin to shite* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2011).
10. See Yoshiaki Shimizu, “Workshop Management of the Early Kano Painters, ca. A.D. 1530–1600,” *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 34 (1981), pp. 32–47.
11. For a modern, annotated edition of this text, see Kano Einō, *Honchō gashi: Yakuchū*, ed. Kasai Masaaki, Sasaki Susumu, and Takei Akio (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985).
12. For this painting program, see Carolyn Wheelwright, “A Visualization of Eitoku’s Lost Paintings at Azuchi Castle,” in *Warlords, Artists, and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1981), pp. 87–111.
13. For a detailed study of this shogunal inventory, see Nakamura Tanio, “Gomotsu on’e mokuroku no sensha Nōami ni kansuru ichikōsatsu,” *Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan kiyō*, vol. 7 (1971), pp. 157–250.
14. For the history of sub-temple painting, see Takeda Tsuneo, *Kinsei shoki shōheiga no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983).
15. The abbot’s quarters decorated by Motonobu include those at Daisen-in (1513), Tōfuku-ji’s Reiun-in (1543), and Daitoku-ji’s Kōrin-in (c. 1545) and Zuihō-in (c. 1552–53). Motonobu’s grandson Eitoku oversaw the painting of Jukō-in (early 1580s) and Tenzui-ji (1588), both at Daitoku-ji; the latter was built as a mortuary temple for the warlord Hideyoshi’s mother.
16. See Yamamoto Hideo, “Kano Motonobu hitsu Jōbyō tekito zu (Ryōanji zō) to Daitokuji Zuihōin shōhekiga,” *Gakusō*, vol. 33 (2011), p. 26 and n. 14.
17. Some of these visual techniques were anticipated by Tōsa Mitsunobu. For a detailed analysis, see Melissa McCormick, *Tōsa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).
18. See Tsuji Nobuo, “Landscape Panels Mounted on Yamato-e Screens Attributed to Kano Motonobu,” *Orientations*, vol. 29, no. 5 (May 1998), p. 70.
19. Works by the Japanese monk-painters Minchō (1352–1431) and Sōami (d. 1525) comprised another indigenous source of influence.
20. See Tsuchiya Maki, “‘Shakadō engi emaki’ o meguru ichikōsatsu—dai ikkan, dai nikan butsuden bubun o chūshin ni—,” *Bijutsushi*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2007), pp. 90–107.
21. On Motonobu’s screens for Emperor Jiajing, see Sakakibara Satoru, *Bi no kakehashi—ikoku ni tsukawasareta byōbutachi* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2002).
22. See Matthew McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006).
23. For an overview of *nanban* screens, see Yukio Lippit, “Japan’s Southern Barbarian Screens,” in *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, vol. 3, *Essays* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2008), pp. 244–53.
24. For precedents to *nanban* screens, see Izumi Mari, “Tōsen zu no keishō—‘Taishokkan zu byōbu’ o megutte—,” *Fiorika*, no. 5 (March 1988), pp. 102–29.
25. Satō Yasuhiro and Tsuji Nobuo, eds., *Iwasa Matabē zenshū. Kenkyū hen* (Tokyo: Geika Shoin, 2013).