

Japanese Art—Fall 2016 Rotation

Arts of Japan

Throughout its history, Japan has swung between seclusion and openness, alternately embracing and spurning foreign ideas and innovations. Through a unique interplay of selective borrowing, creative modification, and its own innovations, Japan has produced artistic expressions of astonishing depth and variety.

Japan borrowed heavily from the cultural and artistic achievements of China and Korea, especially Buddhism and its associated arts. At the same time, it nurtured a long and intimate relationship with its own physical environment—in Shinto, the native belief system, natural phenomena such as towering waterfalls, massive boulders, and ancient trees and mountains are considered manifestations of divinity. Nature and seasonal change became major themes in Japanese art and literature, and artists showed great respect for the inherent qualities of their natural materials.

*****Indicates objects whose label text differs from what is currently in the gallery**

Contents

G205	Art of Prehistoric Japan
G220	Sacred Arts of Buddhism and Shinto
G219	Native Sensibilities Nabeshima Porcelain
G221, G222	The Kano House of Painters
G223	Picturing the Classics: The <i>Tale of Genji</i>
G224, G225	<i>Karamono</i> : “Chinese Things” in Japan <i>Tenmoku</i> : Chinese Jian Ware in Japan
G226, G227	The Floating World
G237	Art of the Edo Period Noh and Kyōgen
G238	Encounters with the Outside World
G251	Nanga: The Japanese Literati Tradition
G252, G253	Japanese Art after the Edo Period
G239	Modern Japanese Art Sōdeisha: Avant-Garde Ceramics

Gallery 205: Art of Prehistoric Japan

Japan's prehistory is divided into three eras, each with its own distinctive culture and artistic tradition. Not much remains of the hunters and gatherers of the Jōmon period, except for their pottery, which they decorated by pressing rough ropes into the clay. Jōmon culture endured in the Japanese islands for about ten thousand years until the agricultural Yayoi peoples arrived in the third century BCE with more sophisticated earthenware vessels to store and cook their produce. The subsequent introduction to Japan of new continental Asian mortuary practices in the third century CE marks the beginning of the Kofun period, named for the large keyhole-shaped burial mounds (kofun in Japanese) that were filled with low-fired earthenware objects.

Jōmon period (14,000–300 BCE)

*****Figurine of a Female**, 1000–800 BCE

Earthenware

The John R. Van Derlip Fund 2016.46

Over the years, archaeologists have uncovered many different kinds of clay figurines—dogū—dating to Japan's prehistoric Jōmon period. The most diverse forms have been excavated in northeastern Japan, where this figurine of a female was discovered. Some are seated, others standing, some have heart-shaped heads while others have round heads and wear headpieces, some have little or no surface decoration, and others, like this example, known as a shakōki or “goggle-eyed” type, have distinctive large eyes and are adorned with color and complex carved decorations. No one knows for sure how these figurines were used, but there are several theories. The prevailing theory holds that they served as talismans related to health and childbirth, and that after use they were purposefully broken and disposed of, which may account for the fact that dogū are often found with missing limbs or other seemingly purposeful breaks.



Kofun period (ca. 250–538 CE)

Haniwa of a Female Shrine Attendant, 6th century

Earthenware

The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund 97.38

This haniwa, or clay funerary figurine, represents a female figure. Her necklace of magatama (claw- or fang-shaped jewels of special protective power) tells us that she is a miko, or shrine attendant, a respected position in early Japanese society. Traces of red pigment on her cheeks indicate tattoos or ceremonial face paint. In her original state she most likely wore a wide, flat hairdo that extended over her forehead. Her right arm, although now broken, once held a cup, an indication that she was responsible for preparing medicinal or magical potions.



Jōmon period (14,000–300 bce)

*****Deep Bowl with Four Projections, 2500–1500 bce**

Earthenware

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund 82.9.1

Japan's first ceramic culture, the Jōmon, produced strongly tactile pottery over 3,500 years ago. This lavishly decorated bowl was probably used during religious ceremonies. Its flamboyant rim, a typical feature of the middle period of Jōmon pottery, is known as the "fire-flame" type, because the coils of clay resemble leaping flames. The word jōmon, after which the historical period is named, means "cord markings" and derives from the distinctive patterns produced by rolling a rope-wrapped stick across the surface of the clay. The lower portion of this vessel bears these markings, together with whimsical designs carved into the surface of the clay.



Yayoi period (300 BCE –250 CE)

Ritual Bell (dōtaku), 1st century BCE–1st century CE

Bronze

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund 64.1

Among the most impressive examples of early bronze casting in Japan are large, bronze bells like this one, known as dōtaku. Metallurgy, together with wet-rice cultivation, was probably first introduced to Japan by a new wave of immigrants from the Korean peninsula around 200–300 BCE. Although dōtaku resemble Chinese bells in overall shape, most lack musical resonance because of the thinness of their casting. Instead, they seem to have been ritual objects and symbols of political authority. This bell was one of fourteen excavated in 1881 on Mount Ōiwa in Shiga Prefecture.



Jōmon period (14,000–300 BCE)

Jar with Broken Rim, 11th–5th century BCE

Earthenware

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.271

This short, bulbous jar, probably used to store liquids, features several levels of decorations between the neck and shoulders, around the body, and around the base. These designs were carved into the clay when it was leather hard, but before firing. Although the rim is almost entirely missing, the remaining section reveals the protruding ornamentation that once covered it.



Yayoi period (300 BCE –250 CE)

Wide-mouthed Jar, 1st century BCE–1st century CE

Earthenware

The Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation Endowment Fund 2011.10

Earthenware vessels of the prehistoric Yayoi period are distinguished by their simple and elegant designs that emphasize the shape of the vessel rather than surface decoration. These simple vessels, with their boldly swelling bodies and flaring necks, were coil built but finished on the potter's wheel, giving them graceful symmetry. The dry clay was then rubbed with a smooth tool before firing, resulting in a smooth, slightly polished surface.



Kofun (ca. 250–538 CE) or Asuka period (538–710)

Jar, 3rd–7th century

Sue ware; stoneware with flaking ash glaze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.275

Sue ware such as this jar was shaped on a wheel and fired in kilns reaching above 1800°F. Because they are easily damaged by heat, Sue-ware vessels were primarily intended for storage or decoration rather than cooking.



Kofun period

Jar with Flared Mouth, 5th century

Sue ware; stoneware

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.274

Long-necked jars like this one, which features an opening on the side, have been excavated from sites that are generally dated to the prehistoric Kofun period (250–650). The opening was probably used as a spout for pouring liquids. This type of vessel originated in Korea and likely was adopted in Japan between 300 and 400 CE.



Asuka period (538–710)

Recumbent Vessel (*yokobe*) with Long Neck, 7th century

Sue ware; stoneware with natural ash glaze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.273

This type of vessel is known as a “recumbent vessel,” or *yokobe*. Its asymmetrical body indicates it was meant to be placed on its side—it was probably intended for storing sake (rice wine). Natural ash glaze, pooled on its surface, creates a pleasing mottled effect on its shoulders and a pattern of drips along a portion of the jar’s irregular, bulging body.



Gallery 220: Sacred Arts of Buddhism and Shintō

Japan's two major belief systems, Buddhism and Shinto, have coexisted and shaped one another for all of Japan's history. Shinto, the "way of the gods," is indigenous to Japan and refers to an array of localized beliefs and rituals, as well as the ceremonial structure of the state and emperor. Buddhism arrived from mainland Asia in the 500s, promising protection in this lifetime and salvation in the next. Through painted images and sculptures, Buddhism introduced a diverse cast of deities who were themselves already fused with religious figures found in India, China, and Korea. The Japanese applied these new ideas to Shinto gods, giving them visual form for the first time. Over time, they created an increasingly intricate system of interrelated Buddhist-Shinto deities, the complexity of whose backgrounds and identities is matched only by their staggering diversity of form.

Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392)

*****Vajra Warriors**, mid-14th century CE

Japanese cypress (hinoki) with lacquer and color

Gift of funds from the Regis Corporation 83.76.1-2

Two vajra warriors (in Japanese, Kongō rikishi), better known as the Two Kings (Niō), guard the entrances of many Japanese Buddhist temples. Befitting their role as protectors of the dharma, or Buddhist law, they are ferocious, seminude figures with exaggerated musculature and facial expressions. The extreme realism of these figures was achieved through the yosegi technique of multiple-block construction, meaning they were carved in smaller sections and then assembled into the large figure. Originally, both warriors would have been first covered in a layer of shiny black lacquer, and then colorfully painted. Years of exposure to the elements have revealed the carved cypress wood beneath. The shape of their mouths indicate that they are speaking the cosmic sounds of "ah" (open-mouthed) and "un." These are the first and last letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, symbolizing the beginning and ending of all things, thus reminding us of the brevity of life.



Heian period (794–1185)

Seated Amida Buddha, early 12th century

Japanese cypress (hinoki) with traces of color and gold leaf

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.256a-c

Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Limitless Light, is the salvific central figure of Pure Land Buddhist teachings. Believers who call on the name of Amida will be greeted by him and his retinue at the moment of death and transported to the western Pure Land. In this sculpture, which reflects the influence of the master Japanese sculptor Jōchō (d. 1057), Amida is seated with legs crossed in the full lotus position. He joins the index fingers and thumbs of both hands in a mudra (sacred gesture) of welcoming. Traces of the gold foil that once fully covered Amida's skin and the green, red, and black pigments of his clothing remain.



Kamakura period (1185-1333)

Taima Mandala, early 14th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, gold, and cut gold leaf (kirikane) on silk

Gift from Mary Griggs Burke in memory of Jackson Burke 85.9

This mandala is a representation of the Western Pure Land, the paradise of the Buddha Amida, the most important Buddha of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism. Amida appears at the very center of the mandala flanked by his attendants, the bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi. Enthroned within a vast palatial setting, they are surrounded by a retinue of dozens of other celestials. This type of mandala, now commonly known as a "Taima Mandala," was introduced to Japan from China along with Pure Land Buddhist teachings in the eighth century. The earliest Japanese example, a massive hand-woven tapestry, belongs to the Pure Land temple Taimadera, from which the name of the iconographic type is derived.



Kamakura period (1185-1333)

*****Wisdom King of Awe-Inspiring Power (Daiitoku Myōō)**, second half of 13th century

Wood with metal, color, gold, and inlaid crystal

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center in 2000 in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Sherman Lee by the Clark Family in appreciation of the Lees' friendship and help over many years 2013.29.1a-g

Daiitoku Myōō is meant to be intimidating. He is also known as the Wisdom King of Awe-Inspiring Power, and it is his job to defeat evil. This Buddhist guardian deity's intense rage is manifested by his wild appearance: six legs, six arms carrying an assortment of weapons, and six glaring faces backed by a halo of flames. Daiitoku Myōō does not act alone but is one of the Five Great Wisdom Kings (Godai Myōō). Four of the Wisdom Kings guard the cardinal directions surrounding the central fifth king. Each of them also guards its own buddha. Since Daiitoku occupies the west, he is associated with the wrath of Amida Buddha, whose abode is a paradise known as the Western Pure Land.



Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392)

Parinirvana of Sakyamuni, the Historical Buddha, 14th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

Gift of Mary Griggs Burke 94.85

Tradition holds that on a moonlit night some 2,500 years ago, the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, passed away, lying on a couch in a grove of holy sala trees in the Himalayan foothills. As this sacred painting shows, a diverse host of mourners—humans, divine beings, all variety of animal life—witnessed his passing. The Buddha had taught them that his death was not to be mourned. After all, he achieved the state of nirvana in this life, thus freeing himself from the endless cycle of rebirth and suffering. His death would mean the attainment of Parinirvana, a state of perfect bliss. Some of those in attendance could not comprehend his teaching, however, and can be seen wailing in grief.

In Japan, paintings of this type are displayed annually on the fifteenth day of the second lunar month, when the Nirvana Assembly (nehan-e) is held to commemorate the Buddha's death.



Higo Busshi Jōkei, active late 13th century

Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Guardian of the North (Bishamonten), late 13th century

Wood with color, gold leaf, metal, and inlaid crystal

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.260a-f

In Hindu mythology, each of the four directions is protected by a specific god. These four gods were incorporated into Buddhism as guardian kings at an early period and came to be known in Sanskrit as Lokapalas, or Shiten'nō in Japanese. This sculpture of a warrior represents Bishamonten, the Guardian of the North. The north was believed to be the most dangerous of the cardinal directions and so its protector, Bishamonten, is the strongest of the four guardian kings. Here, wearing heavy armor and carrying a lance and miniature stupa, Bishamonten stands atop two demons, representing threats from the North that he has overpowered.



Heian Period (794–1185)

Guardian Figure, late 10th century

Japanese cypress (hinoki)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.261

This Buddhist guardian figure, which could be a depiction of Bonten (the Hindu deity Brahma), stands at attention, wearing a suit of armor and a robe with a shawl. His hair is tied in a topknot. Although now missing both arms and ravaged by insects, this guardian dates from around 950 to 1000, when Buddhist sculptors turned away from the forceful and menacing figures of an earlier style of Buddhist sculpture in favor of a gentler demeanor such as this. Use of the *ichiboku* technique, whereby the main body of the sculpture was carved from a single block of wood, also points to this date.



Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Portrait Sculpture of the Priest Gyōki, early 17th century

Wood with gesso, lacquer, color, and gold

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund 95.85a-c

Gyōki (668–749) was one of the most celebrated Buddhist priests of the Nara period (710–794), revered as much for his spirituality as for his social and civic accomplishments. His most monumental undertaking was the casting of the colossal bronze Buddha at the temple Tōdaiji in Nara, then the capital of Japan.

This statue of Gyōki was created nearly a thousand years later, when interest in the life of the priest was rekindled during the renovation of Tōdaiji and the temple's Great Buddha sculpture. Based on an earlier portrait sculpture made in the 1200s and now owned by another temple Tōshōdaiji in Nara, Gyōki's face in this work suggests his stern personality and fierce determination. Highly accomplished priests were believed to be living deities. After such a priest died, portrait sculptures were created and placed in special worship halls where monks made ritual offerings and performed daily religious devotions.



Kamakura period (1185–1333)

***** Jizō Bosatsu**, early 13th century

Wood, lacquer, color, and gilt

Gift of funds from Anne de Uribe Echebarria in honor of her husband, Luis de Uribe Echebarria, Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Burke Foundation, Mary Griggs Burke, The Putnam Dana McMillan and William Hood Dunwoody Funds 86.7a-c

Since the 900s, the bodhisattva Jizō has been portrayed as a young traveling monk who carries a pilgrim's staff and a wish-granting jewel. He is popularly believed to assist the wayward souls of deceased children and those condemned to the torments of hell. This statue shows Jizō descending from the heavens, as suggested by the cloud bank that supports his lotus pedestal. The exquisite workmanship and extreme elegance of the figure, particularly the serene beauty of the face, are elements associated with the Kei school of sculptors active during the Kamakura period.



Heian period (794–1185)

Manifestation of Mt. Kinpu (Zaō Gongen), 12th century

Wood with traces of pigment

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.267

This unhappy-looking fellow with large pointed ears and sporting a conical cap is Zaō Gongen. He is a guardian deity of the Shugendō ascetic practice, who is said to live in the Yoshino Mountains in the rugged interior of the Kii Peninsula south of the ancient capital of Nara. A rare example of a religious figure of purely Japanese origin, Zaō Gongen is believed to have originally appeared to En no Gyōja (634?–701?), the founder of Shugendō, atop Yoshino's Mount Kinpu. Mount Kinpu itself was believed to have been formed from the merging of three Buddhist deities (the historical Buddha Shaka, the Buddha of the Future Miroku, and the bodhisattva Kannon). The figure of Zaō Gongen itself is believed to be a manifestation of the spirit of Mount Kinpu.



Heian period (794–1185) or Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Shinto God and Goddess, 12th–13th century

Wood with color

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation

2015.79.265.1a-c; 2015.79.265.2a,b

Shinto deities most commonly appear in the form of Japanese courtiers. The attire of this god and goddess, however, reflects an unusual blend of foreign and native dress. Rather than wearing the garb of a man of the court, the male deity with his exposed chest and elaborate crown appears more like a Buddhist bodhisattva. The female deity wears a robe with pleated sleeves and frilled collar, which reflects Chinese dress of the Song dynasty (960–1279) instead of the voluminous, multilayered robes of a Japanese court lady. Carved from single blocks of wood, each deity sits before separate wooden plaques with painted decorations.



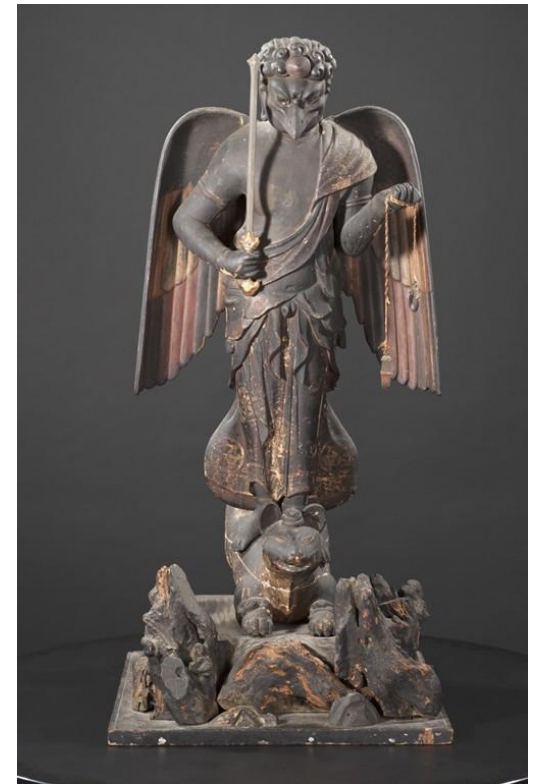
Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Manifestation of Mt. Akiba (Akiba Gongen), 17th century

Wood with color and gold leaf

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.112a-c

This deity, known as the Manifestation of Mount Akiba in Echigo Province, is worshipped as a protector against fire. Also called Akiba Gongen, the deity is commonly portrayed as a figure with elements of the Shinto tengu, the Buddhist Wisdom King Fudō Myōō, and the Hindu goddess Dakini. Shinto tengu are fierce, long-beaked, and winged goblins with a bird's face and a human body, and we can see those features here. Like the Buddhist Wisdom King Fudō Myōō, Akiba Gongen is dressed as a Buddhist monk and holds a double-edged sword and a rope. Dakini is a Hindu goddess who rides on a white fox and flies through the sky, just as Akiba Gongen does.



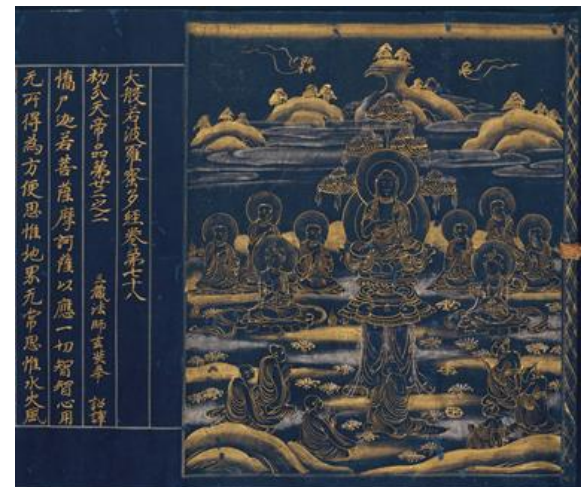
Heian period (794–1185)

Chapter 78 of the Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom, 12th century

Handscroll; gold and silver on indigo-dyed paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.20

This handscroll is a copy of a single chapter of the Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom, or Daihan'nya haramittakyō, a sacred Buddhist scripture that is the opening text of the Buddhist canon, commonly known as the Tripitaka. To create this version, a calligrapher brushed the text by hand in silver paint (a pigment created by mixing crushed silver leaf with animal-fat glue) on paper dyed with indigo. The frontispiece, painted in both silver and gold paints, shows an image of the Buddha surrounded by a host of divinities and devotees below a distinctively shaped mountain known as Vulture Peak, where the Buddha is said to have preached. For its creator (or commissioner), the production of this scroll would have meant the accumulation of merit, or good karma, essential for enjoying a higher status in the next life and, ultimately, escaping the cycle of death and rebirth entirely.



Heian period (794–1185)

Cylindrical Sutra Container, first half of the 12th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.429a,b

According to Japanese Buddhist belief, the year 1052 marked the beginning of a degenerative era known as mappō, the Latter Days of the Buddhist Law. During these so-called Latter Days, the practice of the Buddhist Law (or “dharma”) would die out, preventing anyone from gaining enlightenment and escaping the cycle of death and rebirth. The arrival of Miroku, the buddha of the future, at the end of ten thousand years would return the dharma to legitimacy. In response, Japanese Buddhists set out to preserve the dharma through the zealous copying of Buddhist scriptures (sutras), which were enclosed in sutra containers and buried in sutra burial mounds (kyōzuka).



Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Five-Pronged Vajra, late 14th century

Gilt bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.434

A vajra (thunderbolt) is a ritual implement used in Esoteric Buddhist ceremonies. Originally a weapon carried by ancient Indian gods, it was adopted into Buddhism as a symbol of the indestructible truth of the Buddha's teaching. Five-pronged vajras are said to represent the Five Wisdoms of the Five Cosmic Buddhas. This is an unusual example with its prongs positioned closely together and, in fact, attached to the tip of the central prong. This arrangement is said to suggest the nascent enlightened mind.



Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Incense Burner, 13th century

Gilt bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.431a-c

In Buddhist ritual, burning incense before a holy image is one of six devotions that enable the practitioner to accrue religious merit. The diffusion of fragrant smoke symbolizes the permeation of Buddhism throughout the universe. This elegant example consists of a middle chamber that holds hot coal, a bottom chamber for ash, and the upper portion into which a powdered incense or a piece of fragrant wood would be placed. The dome is decorated with a pierced design of drifting clouds, while the knob takes the shape of a “wish-granting jewel” or lotus bud.



Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392)

Container for Rubbing Incense, 14th century

Gilt bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.432a-c

Powdered incense is mixed with liquid to form a thick paste or rub called zukō, and it has several ritual uses in Buddhism. Practitioners apply it to their bodies and to icons to remove any uncleanness. It is also offered to the Buddha as one of the “five types of offerings” (go-kuyō), along with incense, foodstuff, candles, and adornments. Containers for rubbing incense, such as this gilt-bronze example, are thus an essential implement in Buddhist ritual, especially for sects like Shingon and Tendai that employ complex, esoteric practices.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Ritual Bell with Handle in the Shape of a Vajra, 18th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.441

In Esoteric Buddhist ritual, a priest places five bronze bells on the main altar table. Each bell's handle is a unique symbolic shape. Together they represent five manifestations of the Buddha that each represents a distinct form of wisdom, the so-called Five Wisdoms of the Five Cosmic Buddhas. The bell placed at the center of the table represents Dainichi Nyorai, the Supreme Buddha of the Cosmos and possessor of complete wisdom. Its handle is shaped like a stupa, a building that holds relics and is a place for meditation. The remaining four bells, including the five-pronged version here, are placed at the four corners of the table to represent the active/unrestricted wisdom of Fukūjōju Nyorai, the mirror wisdom of Fudō Myōō, the equality wisdom of Hōshō Nyorai, and the observational wisdom of Amida Nyorai.



Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Buddhist Reliquary in the Shape of a Wish-Granting Jewel, late 16th or early 17th century

Gilt bronze and rock crystal

The Louis W. Hill, Jr. Fund and gift of funds in memory of John Austin O'Keefe 2006.42

Keeping relics (objects of worship that contain body parts of deceased religious figures) has been an important part of Buddhism since the death of the historical sage, Sakyamuni, in the 500s BCE. Sakyamuni is the man who first spread the teachings of what would become Buddhism. He was the first person to reach enlightenment, transcend suffering, and become a buddha. According to tradition, the cremated remains of the Buddha were divided into nine groups, and memorial stupas (shrines with domed roofs topped with a spire) were created to house them as places of worship. Some 230 years later, King Asoka is said to have divided the nine groups of relics into 84,000, which he used to create stupas throughout India. This custom spread with the transmission of Buddhism throughout Asia. At some point, polished pebbles, stones, bits of sand-worn glass, and possibly bits of bone from high-ranking Buddhist priests began to serve as substitutes for actual relics from the Buddha. This Buddhist reliquary takes the shape of a wish-granting jewel (hōju). Such jewels are frequently encountered as an attribute of Buddhist deities and symbolize their ability to respond to the prayers of devotees.



Gallery 219: Native Sensibilities

Throughout history, Japanese artists borrowed heavily from neighboring cultures of the Asian mainland, but, as the works in this gallery demonstrate, they always adapted what they learned to fit their own needs and sensibilities. This often meant an abandonment of the lofty ideals and somber restraint of Chinese art in favor of more emotional responses to the intricacies of human affairs and the beauty of the natural world. In the classical Heian period (794–1185), the Japanese developed their own script, kana, and painting style, yamato-e, both ultimately derived from Chinese precedents but transformed in Japan to accommodate local tastes and tendencies. Kana script and yamato-e, or “Japanese-style painting,” thus came to be recognized as native art forms, influencing generations of artists and enduring through many successive waves of influence from the mainland.

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Mountain Valley in Autumn and Winter, 16th century

Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.28

This work—which would have been paired with a right-hand screen depicting spring and summer—is representative of folding screens painted from about 1500–1550 depicting Japanese landscapes of the four seasons in the so-called yamato-e (“Japanese painting”) style, in contrast to the Chinese-style ink paintings of nonnative scenery that were also prevalent at this time. This left-hand screen depicts a stream that meanders through the foreground from right to left, past a hill crowned by a profusion of autumn grasses—Eulalia grass, bellflower, bush clover, Patrinia—and toward another promontory, this one laden with snow and capped by a barren tree, bamboo grass, and Ardisia. A few faint lines indicate a patchwork of harvested rice fields in the middle ground. Farthest back are mountains topped with trees and snow, visually separated from the rest of the image by a bank of golden clouds.



Hasegawa School

Momoyama (1573–1603) or Edo period (1603–1868)

Cherry and Willow, first half 17th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; color, gold paint, gold leaf, and moriage on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.255.1-2

The overhanging limbs of a willow with recently sprouted leaves, branches of a cherry tree in full bloom, and the top of a clump of flowering grasses are the only painted motifs in this pair of folding screens. There is much more to be uncovered, however, when we look closely. An invisible breeze moves in from the left, causing the willow branches to reach slightly to the right. The grasses and cherry branches in the right screen, too, are in movement, seemingly lifted up by a wind from below. The missing tree trunks and the hidden base of the clump of grass suggest that we, the viewers, see all of this from some high point, looking down through the branches toward the expanse of gold foil, interrupted only by ambiguous gold forms—created by building up shell-white pigment (gofun) on the paper surface and then covering it in gold—that also appear to move across the surface, as if driven by the wind. Are they clouds? Mist? Or do they represent the shimmering, rippling surface of some body of water far below?



Tawaraya Sōsetsu, active 17th century

Edo Period (1603–1868)

Flowers of Autumn and Summer, first half 17th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.81.1-2

Colorful wildflowers of summer and autumn abound in this pair of hanging scrolls by an early painter of the Rinpa school, a lineage of painters of the Edo period (1603–1868) that engaged with classical Japanese themes and designs to create a distinctively decorative style of painting. The right scroll is dominated by large white cockscomb, blue gentians and irises, and red azaleas. At left orange lilies, red magnolia, and white clematis bloom beneath the branch of a chestnut tree.

Sōsetsu was a follower of Sōtatsu, the leader of the Tawaraya studio now seen as the progenitor of Rinpa-style painting. Sōsetsu also used his master's large, round seal (read "I'nen") that can be seen on the lower outside corners of each of the present scrolls.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Kimono (furisode), late 18th century

Gift of funds from Ellen Wells 2006.23

During Japan's Edo period, it was customary for young, unmarried women to wear *furisode*, a type of robe with long, hanging sleeves. Young women of the merchant and warrior classes preferred opulent, even somewhat flamboyant designs. The design and decoration of this robe suggest that it was once a *furisode* for a younger woman who kept wearing it after she was married but shortened its sleeves to reflect her new status. It is lavishly decorated with an overall pattern of peonies, chrysanthemums, wisteria, and *chūkei* (a type of folding fan). The underlying silk was dyed with safflower to produce the robe's reddish-orange color, often used for young women's clothing.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Wedding Robe (uchikake), 18th century

Figured satin with embroidered and dyed designs

Gift of funds from the Asian Arts Council 98.165

Toward the end of the 16th century, the fashionable wives of Japan's military elite began to wear unbelted robes, known as uchikake, over their regular robes during the autumn and winter months. As the outermost garment, uchikake were lavishly decorated and the hem was padded, thus adding the weight necessary to keep it from slipping off the shoulders. In the Edo period, uchikake were worn by wealthy women of all classes, and they became a standard part of the wedding ensemble. This example features an overall pattern of blossoming tree peonies, rendered in stencil resist, embroidery, and gold couching.

(no photo)

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

*****Writing Box with Pines, Plum, Chrysanthemums, and Paulownia, late 16th century**

Black lacquer with gold maki-e, pear-skin ground (nashiji), and pictorial pear-skin ground (e-nashiji)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.407a-f

Writing boxes (suzuribako) were used to hold an assortment of writing utensils, including an inkstone, a water dropper, brushes, and sticks of ink. On each side of the bold zigzag is a combination of auspicious floral motifs in maki-e, or “sprinkled picture,” a technique in which artists apply metallic flakes or powder on the lacquer surface before it fully dries. On the upper left are seen pine trees and plum blossoms on a black-lacquer background, and on the lower right chrysanthemums and paulownia decorate a red background created with the nashiji (pear-skin) technique. The zigzag is a unique design feature of lacquer objects created in the so-called Kōdaiji style, which developed in the late 1500s and was associated with the temple Kōdaiji in Kyoto.



Tray Box (midare bako) with Design of Peonies and Autumn Plants on a Divided Ground, 17th century

Black lacquer with sprinkled gold

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.406



Edo period (1603–1868)

Ewer with Design of Willow Boughs and Plum Blossoms, early 17th century

Mino ware, Oribe type; stoneware with underglaze iron oxide

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.309a,b

Oribe ceramics, which were made from the late 1600s to early 1700s at kilns in the area of Mino Province in central Japan, often feature colorful, sometimes abstract designs and take whimsical, asymmetrical forms. Oribe ware takes its name from Furuta Oribe (1544–1615), a famous master of the Japanese tea ceremony whose particular aesthetic taste is said to have influenced the development of these ceramics. Although the exact function of Oribe ewers remains unclear, they may have been used during the tea ceremony to replenish larger basins of water.

One side of this ewer features young willow boughs, while the other side shows falling plum blossoms. Willow and plum, both drawn in underglaze iron oxide, are classic decorative motifs that celebrate the fleeting beauty of early spring.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Set of Serving Dishes (mukōzuke) with Design of Willow Boughs, Gourds, and Geometric Patterns, c. 1610–1630

Mino ware, Yashichida-Oribe type; glazed stoneware with designs in red slip and underglaze iron oxide

Gift of funds from the Friends of the Institute 2007.43.1-5

Sets of small individual serving dishes, called mukōzuke in Japanese, are used during the elaborate meal that takes place before tea service during a Japanese tea ceremony. Seasonal delicacies would be placed on the two tiers of these plates, which are decorated with drawings of willow branches and vining gourd—motifs indicative of summer.

The thin walls of these dishes, along with the addition of intricate drawings in iron oxide and red clay slip are characteristic of Oribe pottery made by artists working at the Yashichida kiln in what is now Gifu Prefecture. This kiln was active only from around 1610 until 1630.



Gallery 219, Window Case: Nabeshima Porcelains

In the late 1600s and 1700s, the most refined Japanese porcelains were produced under the strict supervision of the lords of the powerful Nabeshima clan at a single private kiln located in Hizen Province. The Nabeshima lords sent only the very finest of their porcelains to Edo (present-day Tokyo), where they were presented to the ruling elite to be used as tableware. Nabeshima wares often depict scenes from the natural world or motifs that mirror those seen on textiles of the time in subdued tones of blue, blue-green, red, and yellow.

Edo period (1603–1868)

Plate with Folded Fans and Geometric Design, late 17th century

Nabeshima ware; porcelain with underglaze cobalt-blue and celadon glaze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.312

The blue and white medallion pattern upon which the fans appear to float was created by a technique called “resist-drawing,” whereby a design is drawn in ink and then completely covered with a layer of cobalt-blue glaze. During firing in the kiln, the ink burns away, taking the cobalt blue with it and leaving the type of white-on-blue pattern seen here.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Plate with Baskets and Cherry Blossoms, late 17th century–early 18th century

Nabeshima ware; porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.313



Edo period (1603–1868)

Plate with Autumn Grasses, 17th–18th century

Nabeshima ware; porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue and celadon glaze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.316

For this large plate, the light-green celadon glaze serves a pictorial purpose, a representation of autumn mist moving among clumps of autumn plants, including pampas grasses, bellflowers, and chrysanthemums. The same type of lozenge-shaped mist can be seen in textile design and paintings in the so-called yamato-e style, or “Japanese-style painting.”



Edo period (1603–1868)

Plate with Peonies, c. 1720

Nabeshima ware, porcelain with underglaze blue
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.315



Galleries 221 and 222: The Kano House of Painters

The paintings in this gallery were each created by an artist of the Kano house, a school of painters with its roots in a medieval family atelier. This family studio expanded into a multibranch network of painting studios, and, despite regime changes, dramatic economic shifts, and changing artistic taste, remained the most powerful force in Japanese painting until the modern period. Kano Masanobu (1434–1530) established the Kano atelier in Kyoto in the final years of the 1500s and received commissions from important Buddhist temples and the Ashikaga, Japan's military leaders. Masanobu's son Motonobu (1476–1559) greatly expanded the Kano house's repertoire, and Motonobu's grandson Eitoku (1543–90) was Japan's most influential painter during the late 1500s. When the Tokugawa clan took control of Japan at the beginning of the 1600s, the main branch of the Kano house relocated to the new capital, Edo (present-day Tokyo). Leading painters such as Kano Tan'yū (1602–74) and his successors served as painters-in-attendance to the Tokugawa. In addition to famous Kano painters like those mentioned here, many of early-modern Japan's best-known painters received their initial training in Kano studios.

Kano Yukinobu, c. 1513–1575

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Hawk, mid-16th century

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.93

Kano Yukinobu closely adhered to the ink-painting styles developed by his better-known older brother, Kano Motonobu (1476–1559), second-generation head of the Kano house. Although Yukinobu never took a leading position in the studio, he participated with his older brother and other Kano painters on numerous commissions. This painting of a hawk, perched on the branch of an old tree and possibly eyeing some prey below, might have appealed to one of the Kano house's military patrons. The hawk's feathers, meticulously rendered in fine brushwork over various shades of ink wash, are a demonstration of Yukinobu's skill in the painting of birds, a key subject in the Kano repertoire.



Kano School, mid-16th century
Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Landscape of the Four Seasons, mid-16th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper

Gift of funds from Louis W. Hill, Jr., and the John R. Van Derlip Fund 77.50.1-2

By the 1500s, Japanese painters had become adept at producing landscapes based on the imagined mountains and rivers of China. They based their works on prototypes produced by famous painters from Chinese antiquity, including Ma Yuan (c. 1160/65–1225) and Xia Gui (active c. 1195–1230). Stylistically, however, the Japanese approach—particularly that of artists associated with the Kano house—was more decorative, especially when applied to the large format of folding screens. Painters sharply outlined their trees and rocks and textured them with rhythmic patterns of dots and dashes. They also applied washes of gold for dramatic effect.

This pair of screens displays a compositional mode frequently used by Kano painters—framing a misty waterway with mountains. By varying seasonal motifs from right to left, artists could suggest the passage of the seasons, from the new leaves of spring at far right to the icy peaks of winter at far left, a technique that can be seen in this pair of screens.



Style of Kano Motonobu, 1476–1559

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Bulbul on a Plum Tree; Geese and Reeds, late 16th century

Pair of hanging scrolls; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.58.1-2

This pair of hanging scrolls juxtaposes birds associated with spring and autumn: at right a bulbul on a plum tree in full bloom (spring) and at left a family of wild geese on a beach near drying reeds (autumn). The bulbul and one of the geese appear to call out to one another, an indication that these hanging scrolls once flanked a central devotional image of a Buddhist deity or patriarch. Although each painting is impressed with the seals of the second-generation Kano leader Motonobu (1476–1559), they were probably painted by a Kano painter active a generation or two after the master's death and working in his style. The anonymous painter may even have used Motonobu's sketches as a reference. Generations of Kano painters looked to the works of earlier painters, especially Motonobu, as models for their own paintings.



Kano Tan'yū, 1602–1674

Edo period (1603–1868)

Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang, mid-17th century

Album; ink and color on silk and paper decorated with gold

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation

2015.79.65

The Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers was a popular theme in East Asian painting and poetry. It celebrated the beauty of a region in southeast China where the two rivers converge. This album consists of eight paintings by Kano Tan'yū, a central figure of the Edo-period Kano house. When he was only fifteen years old he was named goyō eshi, or painter-in-attendance, to the Tokugawa shoguns (military commanders) in the capital city of Edo. In order to produce a wide variety of paintings for the shogun, Tan'yū had to be fluent in an array of Chinese and Japanese styles. The eight paintings in this album are in the "splashed-ink" style of the Chinese painter Yujian (active late 1200s), who was beloved in Japan. Sometime after Tan'yū completed these paintings, they were inserted into this album and paired with poems brushed on elegant paper decorated with various kinds of gold.



Kano Sansetsu, 1589–1651

Edo period (1603–1868)

Moonlit Scene, first half 17th century

Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly acquired by the Center with the kind assistance of Carol Brooks and Prof. James Cahill in honor of George Schlenker 2013.29.35

Between two mountains we can see the entrance to a countryside villa tucked into a grove of pine trees. The dark, distant peak and subtle glow around the architectural structures suggest a nighttime scene.

At the beginning of the 1600s, the main branch of the Kano house relocated to the new capital, Edo (present-day Tokyo), and received the patronage of the new military rulers, the Tokugawa. One branch of the Kano remained in Kyoto and received commissions from aristocratic families and temples in the old capital. This branch, known as the Kyōgano-ke, or “Kyoto Kano house,” was led first by Sanraku and his adopted son, Sansetsu, who painted this hanging scroll.



Kano Hōgai, 1828–1888

Meiji period (1868–1912)

Eagle Threatening Monkeys, second half 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center in memory of Gail Liebes, a woman with a passion for art and a love of Japan, from her husband John, and her children Alison and Christopher 2013.29.171

A large, sharp-clawed eagle has caught sight of a family of monkeys who cower in a rocky cave, visible at the bottom right of this scroll. The eagle is about to take off, while the monkeys try desperately to avoid notice. Birds of prey such as eagles and falcons were a specialty of Kano Hōgai, who was among the last artists of the preeminent Kano house of painters. Hōgai often looked back to the subject matter and brush-styles of his Kano predecessors, but he reimagined them with unique brushwork and innovative compositions. He also incorporated painting techniques learned from study Western painting.



Attributed to Kano Naganobu, 1577–1654

Momoyama (1573–1603) or Edo period (1603–1868)

Emperor Minghuang and Yang Guifei with Attendants, early 17th century

Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.48

The poem *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* (*Changhen ge*), by Chinese poet Bai Juyi's (772–846), tells the story of Emperor Xuanzong (685–762; reigned as Emperor Minghuang) and his breathtakingly beautiful favorite concubine Yang Guifei (719–756). This painting shows Guifei dancing at right in front of the emperor and several attendants. A rebellion in 755 forced the emperor to flee the capital, and angry imperial guards—believing that Yang Guifei was responsible for Xuanzong's neglect of state affairs—demanded her execution and put her to death. Xuanzong abdicated the throne shortly thereafter, triggering the decline of the dynasty. This tragic love affair became a popular subject among Kano painters like Kano Naganobu (1577–1654), who moved his branch of the Kano House to the capital, Edo (present-day Tokyo), in 1605 and became the first Kano painter to serve as painter-in-attendance to the Tokugawa shoguns.



Muromachi period (1392-1573)

Sake Vessel, 15th century

Negoro ware; wood with red and black lacquer

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.409

The elegant shape of Negoro-ware sake (rice wine) vessels (heishi) are similar to shapes seen in ceramic wine vessels from China that were imported to medieval Japan in abundance. This heishi from the 1400s features a narrow spout, exaggerated shoulders, gracefully narrowing waist, and slightly wider base. Most heishi were produced as pairs for the ritual offering of sake. Years of use have worn away areas of the red lacquer that once covered the entire surface of this vessel to reveal a layer of black lacquer beneath.



Muromachi period (1392-1573)

Hot-water Ewer, 16th century

Negoro ware; wood with red and black lacquer

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.413a,b

This ewer for hot water exemplifies the Japanese lacquer technique known as Negoro, whereby the artist covers a carved wooden core with black lacquer, allows it to dry, and then applies red lacquer. Over time and with use, the red lacquer on the surface is worn away to reveal the black lacquer beneath, an aspect of Negoro lacquer works that is highly beloved in Japan. Although modest forms often characterize the earliest Negorolacquers, some later examples can be strikingly intricate. The design for this ewer, for example, includes multiple floral projections, repeated cord motifs, and a narrow, elegantly curved spout. An identical companion to this ewer is owned by the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art.



Muromachi period (1392-1573)

Lacquer table, 16th century

Negoro ware; red lacquer, metal fittings

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.412

This elegant table originally would have held an incense burner or other ritual object placed before icons within a Buddhist temple. This type of red lacquer, known as Negoro ware, reflects Chinese influence in its overall shape and carved decor. Negoro is made by covering a base of black lacquer with red lacquer. Eventually, areas of red are rubbed away from repeated use, revealing the black beneath. The random pattern of red and black is highly valued by connoisseurs.



Muromachi period (1392-1573)

White-Robed Kannon, 15th century

Hanging scroll; ink on silk

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.48

Painted images of the Buddhist deity Kannon wearing white robes and seated on a rocky outcropping emerged in China during the Tang dynasty (618-907) and became important in the Zen sect of Buddhism before it was introduced to Japan a few hundred years later. Such images refer to a passage from the Avatamsaka Sutra, a sacred Buddhist text that narrates the story of Zenzai Dōji, a boy who sets out on a journey of truth and consults with numerous teachers, Kannon being one of them. Kannon is a bodhisattva, an enlightened being that forgoes Buddhahood in order to assist humans on the path to enlightenment. According to the text, the boy finds Kannon in Fudaraku, the bodhisattva's paradise, seated on a boulder in a warm, misty locale. The boy's journey and his encounter with Kannon can be seen as allegories for Zen practice and the path to enlightenment, so Zen masters hung paintings of white-robed Kannon in the temple hall devoted to the training of novice monks.



Rihei, act. 15th–16th century
Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Ewer, 15th–16th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.435

Long-necked ewers, sometimes referred to by their Sanskrit name kundika, are used to sprinkle water during a variety of Buddhist rituals in East Asia. This rare example features a dragon coiling up the handle toward a supernatural chimera (an elephant-tiger-oxen hybrid known as a baku) crouching atop the lid.



Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Incense burner with Chinese lions, 16th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.436a,b

This incense burner, used in Buddhist rituals, mirrors the shape of an ancient Chinese three-legged vessel called a ding and features several Chinese lions, a semimythical animal. The lion on top rests his left paw on an orb—the wish-granting jewel of Buddhism—in a protective gesture.



Korea, Goryeo dynasty (918–1392)

Vase, 12th century

Stoneware with inlaid design under celadon glaze with gold repairs

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Donald E. Lee 96.98.4



Gallery 223: Picturing the Classics—The *Tale of Genji*

The literary masterworks of Japan's classical Heian period (794-1185)—elegant poetry, fanciful stories, and epic tales—have inspired the country's artists for more than a thousand years. The most famous of these is the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*), a novel written by Murasaki Shikibu, a lady-in-waiting at the imperial court. The fictional story chronicles the eventful life and romantic pursuits of the dashing courtier Hikaru Genji—the so-called Shining Prince—and his offspring. Less than one hundred years after it was written, a deluxe, illustrated version of the *Tale* was produced as a large set of handscrolls, combining richly pigmented illustrations with exquisitely brushed textual passages on lavishly decorated paper. The influence of this single famous set of handscrolls, which partially survives today as fragments held by two separate Japanese museums, is unparalleled in the history of Japanese art. Illustrations of the *Tale's* well-known episodes, as well as pictorial motifs alluding to specific scenes or characters, appear in numerous paintings, lacquer, ceramics, books, albums, and even clothing.

Edo period (1603-1868)

Scenes from the Tale of Genji in the Four Seasons, mid-17th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and color on gold leaf

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.14.1-2

This pair of folding screens depicts eleven scenes from the *Tale of Genji*. Rather than presenting the scenes in the order in which they appear in the *Tale*, however, the artist presents them from right to left, as East Asian viewers would read them, in seasonal order. The artist begins with mid-spring in the upper right corner, where a group of young men play kemari (a soccer-like game that was popular in classical Japan) in a grove of cherry trees in full bloom, a scene from chapter 34 of the *Tale*. Five additional scenes in the right screen take place in late spring and early summer, while autumn grasses and maple leaves announce the arrival of fall in the far right panels of the left screen. Wintry scenes from chapters 6 and 51 are depicted at far left, where trees and rooftops are blanketed in snow.



Tawaraya Sōtatsu, died c. 1640

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Nine scenes Scenes from the Tale of Genji, early 17th century

Eight-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on gilded paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.5



This screen shows nine scenes from consecutive chapters from the Tale of Genji in order from right to left. The far right panel depicts Genji sitting behind a writing desk and gazing out toward a setting sun. It is a specific moment from chapter 19 in which Genji, mourning the death of his lover, recites the following poem: “A rack of cloud across the light of evening, as if they, too, wore mourning weeds.”

Moving left, each panel of the screen depicts a single scene from chapters 20 through 25. The far left panel actually includes two scenes from chapter 26, in which Genji first tries to seduce a young woman and then is rejected by her. Because this single eight-panel screen includes scenes from eight chapters, it was probably part of a much larger set of screens depicting scenes from all fifty-four chapters of the Tale.

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

The “New Herbs, Part II” Chapter of the Tale of Genji, 16th century

Handscroll fragment, mounted as hanging scroll; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.36



The scene shown here is from chapter 35, “New Herbs, Part II.” Genji accompanies several women on a pilgrimage: his lover Lady Murasaki; his former lover Lady Akashi and her mother; and the Akashi princess, Genji and Lady Akashi’s daughter. The women remain inside while at far right two men are seated on a veranda. Each woman is identified by name.

Although it is now mounted as a hanging scroll, this painting is actually one fragment of a set of handscrolls showing scenes from the Tale of Genji. Painted only in black ink with ruler-drawn lines and an abundance of unmarked white paper, this and the several other remaining fragments of this set exemplify the hakubyō, or “white drawing,” style of painting. Hakubyō-style handscrolls of the Tale of Genji were very popular in medieval Japan.

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

The “Butterflies” Chapter of the Tale of Genji, late 16th century

Folding fan, mounted as hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.38

Now in the format of a hanging scroll, this painting’s shape and vertical creases reveal that it was once a painted folding fan. Scenes from the Tale of Genji began to appear on folding fans as early as the mid-1600s. Artists typically referred to painting manuals and commentaries on the Tale of Genji in order to choose a scene to represent an entire chapter. This painting depicts five young women dressed as butterflies dancing before an audience of men on the veranda of Genji’s residence at the time of a spring festival held in the gardens (chapter 24, “Butterflies”).



Momoyama period (1573–1603)

The “Channel Buoys” Chapter of the Tale of Genji, late 16th century

Folding fan, mounted as hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.37

The scene on this folding fan is from “Channel Buoys,” the fourteenth chapter of the Tale of Genji. Genji makes a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi Shrine—located near the coast in what is now Osaka—to thank the gods after the end of a period of exile. Here, Genji and his entourage have parked their elegant carriages near Sumiyoshi’s pine-lined beach. Look for the red torii gate, marking the entrance to the shrine’s sacred precincts, in the upper right.

Both this painting and the similar fan painting nearby are impressed with the same red artist’s seals. They are probably the work of an artist affiliated with the Tosa school of court painters, which specialized in the type of miniaturist style seen here, with fine lines, heavily applied mineral pigments, and gold leaf and paint.



Sakai Hōitsu, 1761–1828

Edo period (1603–1868)

Akikonomu, from “The Maiden” Chapter of the Tale of Genji, early 19th century

Fan; ink, color, and gold on silk (obverse); ink, color, and silver on silk (reverse); bamboo and lacquer (frame)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.45

Which is better, fall or spring? A gift of colorful maple leaves, accompanied by a poem describing the beauty of autumn, commences a debate among courtiers in the ancient Japanese novel Tale of Genji. The instigator is the empress Akikonomu. Her name literally means “loves autumn,” and it is she who appears on this silk fan, wearing the luxurious, layered robes of a court lady. In front of her, maple leaves from her garden fill the upturned lid of a lacquered box. This theme of autumnal beauty carries over to the back of the fan in the form of bush clover, a grass associated with the months before the onset of winter.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Box with Scenes from the “Morning Glory,” “Picture Contest,” and “Ivy” Chapters of the Tale of Genji, 18th century

Painted wooden writing box; ink and color on gilded wood

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.46a,b

Artists depicted iconic scenes from the ancient novel the Tale of Genji on a variety of art forms, including round and folding fans, painted hanging scrolls, folding screens, albums, and containers for personal items. This box for personal items features three scenes from the Tale: a winter scene on the lid and autumn scenes on the sides. The autumnal theme extends to the inside of the box where fringed dianthus (also known as “pinks”) and white chrysanthemums dance across an area of gold paint. The artist painted these floral motifs using a technique called moriage zaishiki, in which shell-white pigment is mixed with animal glue and applied thickly to create a raised surface.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Shell-Matching Game (Kai-awase), 19th century

Shells with color and gold

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.399.a-hhhh

These hand-painted seashells are parts of the popular game known as kai-awase, or the “shell-matching game.” Pairs of shells are decorated on their insides with the same scene from the Tale of Genji. As in Memory and other matching games, the point was to try to match shells with similar scenes. Players could enjoy the fun of the game itself, and were also entertained by the images that reminded them of the Tale’s twists and turns or of a famous poem recited by one of the characters.



Plate with Pumpkins, 1660s

Hizen ware, Kutani type, Aode Kokutani style; porcelain with overglaze enamels

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.289

The humble pumpkin takes center stage on this platter from the Kutani kilns, located in what is now the modern-day prefecture of Ishikawa. The pumpkins’ rough, deep purple rind, bright green leaves, and dark tendrils contrast with the brilliant yellow ground. Ceramics of the Kokutani (literally, “old Kutani”) style, typically large plates like this one, are characterized by bold floral and vegetal designs executed in bright, thickly applied overglaze enamels, generally in only five colors: green, yellow, red, purple, and blue. Kokutani ceramics were produced only briefly, from the 1650s until around 1730, when production stopped inexplicably, making such wares extremely rare.



Galleries 224 and 225: *Karamono*—“Chinese Things” in Japan

Beginning in ancient times and continuing for much of Japanese history, a steady stream of Chinese works of art entered Japan via trade missions and travelers between the two countries. Imported Chinese artworks—religious art, ceramics, painting, calligraphy, lacquerware, and much more—came to be known in Japan as *karamono*, a term that means literally “Chinese things.”

A significant wave of *karamono* came in the 1200s with the arrival of Zen Buddhism from China. For the next several hundred years, Chinese Zen monks visiting Japan and Japanese monks returning from visits to China brought with them not only the tenets of Zen but also an array of up-to-date Chinese artworks and cultural practices. What was current in China’s cities was suddenly in vogue in Japan.

Elites, especially the rising warrior class, fostered the development of Zen in Japan, amassed impressive collections of *karamono*, and began drinking powdered green tea (*matcha*) introduced from China. Over time, drinking *matcha* was formalized and transformed into what we know as the Japanese tea ceremony, what can be thought of as the ultimate “Chinese thing.” In the tea ceremony’s early history, the paintings and tea utensils that adorned the tearoom consisted exclusively of *karamono*, examples of which can be seen in this gallery.

Traditionally attributed to Muqi Fachang, Chinese, c. 1210–after 1269
Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain, 15th century
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke
Foundation 2015.79.55

This simple painting of a single sparrow resting on a shoot of bamboo in the rain was treasured in Japan for more than five hundred years. Over time, it accumulated numerous storage boxes, wrappings, and documents. In this gallery, you can explore the painting and its history through these accumulated objects.

In medieval Japan, the Zen monk-painter Muqi Fachang (c. 1210–after 1269) was the most beloved of all Chinese artists. Japanese Zen monks visiting China met or heard of Muqi, acquired his paintings, and brought them back home to Japan. Within a few decades, the foremost Japanese art collections all contained paintings purported to be by Muqi, although many of them were probably not by Muqi himself. But this did not seem to matter. In Japan, “Muqi pictures”—some by Muqi, others in his style—were in high demand as luxury items, and numerous Japanese painters mastered Muqi-style painting and Muqi-specific subject matter. “Muqi pictures” like this one were also sought after for display during tea ceremonies.



One of the most famous of these “Muqi pictures” showed sparrows huddled together on a bamboo shoot during rain. That painting made its way into medieval Japan’s most famous collection of Chinese art—that of the Ashikaga shoguns (Japan’s military leaders). It undoubtedly inspired this image of a sparrow on bamboo. Although it was not painted by Muqi himself, it was treasured for generations as a “Muqi picture,” as evidenced by its many boxes, wrappers, and documents, all displayed here.



Muqi Fachang, c. 1210–after 1269
China, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)
Sparrows on Bamboo, 13th century
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
Nezu Museum, Tokyo

Kano Tan'yū, 1602–1674 and Kano Tsunenobu, 1636–1713

Edo period (1603–1868)

Authentication Certificate and Title Slips for Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain and Box, mid- to late 17th century (certificates); late 19th or early 20th century (box)

This document authenticates Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain as a “genuine” work by Muqi Fachang (c. 1210–after 1269) and is accompanied by two slips of paper with the title written on them. The document and one of the title slips are by Kano Tsunenobu, while the other title slip is by Kano Tan'yū. In addition to their role as painters, artists affiliated with the Kano house also served as professional art appraisers. The owner who asked them to authenticate his painting would have treasured the documents along with the painting, not only because they authenticated the painting and thus increased its value, but because they were written by two of the foremost painters of the 1600s.

First Storage Box for Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain, 1709

This is the innermost box associated with Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain. It is within this oldest box that the rolled hanging scroll is placed for storage. The outside of the lid features an inscription in gold that reads: “Sparrow on Bamboo brushed by Muqi, one scroll.” Although we do not know who owned the painting at the time this box was created, another inscription in ink on the underside of the lid describes a previous owner, namely the fifth shogun (Japan’s military leader), Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), here called by his posthumous Buddhist name Jōken’in. The inscription says this painting, once in the collection of Tsunayoshi, was received from Edo Castle (the shogunal residence) on the final day of the sixth month of the Hōei era, a date that corresponds to May 8, 1709.

Second Storage Box for Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain, 19th century

This undated storage box is the second of the three boxes currently associated with Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain. The innermost wooden box is placed within it during storage, and it is tied with purple silk cords. The simple lid inscription notes the title and artist: “Sparrow and Bamboo by Muqi, one hanging scroll.”

Wrapping Cloth with Crest of the Tsuchiya Family, 18th or 19th century

This silk wrapper for the black lacquer box features a large white family crest, the “three ring crest,” and reads “on the side of Tsuchiura.” The crest is one of several associated with the Tsuchiya family of feudal lords, who controlled the Tsuchiura Domain in northeast Japan from 1608 until the 1850s.

Third Storage Box for Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain, late 19th or early 20th century

This is the outermost storage box for Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain. The painting, wrappings, documents, and the other two boxes all fit within it. This box was made while the painting was in the collection of Tsuchiya Masanao (1872–1938), an aristocrat and banker. Masanao’s father was the last in a long line of feudal lords who controlled the Tsuchiura Domain in northeast Japan. Masanao would have inherited the family’s art collection, which included Sparrow on Bamboo in Rain and all of its previous wrappings and storage boxes.

An inscription on this box’s lid traces the painting’s owners back to the Muromachi period (1392–1573)—from the collection of the Ashikaga shoguns in the 1500s and 1600s, to the collection of the Tokugawa shoguns in the 1700s and 1800s, and on to the Tsuchiya family in the 1900s. It also notes that the painting was recorded in Record of Named Objects for Appreciation (Ganka meibutsu ki), a compilation of heirlooms related to the tea ceremony that was published in the 1650s

Traditionally attributed to Sesson Shūkei (1504–1589)

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Five Sparrows on Bamboo, 16th century

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.32

In the 1500s and 1600s Japanese painters created works inspired by the Chinese Zen monk-painter Muqi Fachang (active c. 1210–after 1269). Sometimes they painted in his style, and other times they painted subjects associated specifically with him. This painting does both: the subject matter and the painting style hearken back to Muqi. Japan’s military rulers owned a painting of sparrows on bamboo by Muqi. This painting became well known because it was copied and distributed widely. Japanese people came to associate this subject with Muqi.

Here, a Japanese artist shows a family of sparrows on a corkscrewing shoot of bamboo. Four chicks are huddled near the ground, while their mother watches over them from above. The birds are all painted without any outlines; instead, their bodies are described using areas of diluted ink-wash on top of which small brushstrokes indicate the birds’ eyes, beaks, feathers, etc. This technique, known in China and Japan as “boneless” (i.e., without contour lines), was associated in Japan with Muqi, whose works helped introduced this technique to Japan.



Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Vase in Meiping Shape, 13th century

Seto ware, Ko-Seto type; stoneware with ash glaze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.280

The shape of this vase, produced at a Seto kiln in the 1200s, is modeled on earlier Chinese examples called “meiping” (literally, “plum vase”), characterized by wide bodies and shoulders with narrow necks. Stoneware pottery decorated with light green or yellow-green ash glazes was first produced at kilns in the Seto area of Owari Province (modern-day Aichi Prefecture) in the 1200s. Early examples of Seto ware, called “Ko-Seto,” echo celadon-glazed porcelains from Song-dynasty China and Goryeo-dynasty Korea.



Tesshū Tokusai, died 1366

Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392)

Orchids, Bamboo, Brambles, and Rocks, mid-14th century

Hanging scroll; ink on silk

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation
2015.79.56

Tokusai was not a professional painter, but rather a Zen monk and amateur artist. As was the case with many Zen monks of his day, Tokusai traveled to China to study at storied monasteries near the capital of Hangzhou. During the ten or so years Tokusai spent in China, he seems to have encountered the paintings of a Chinese painter named Xuechuang Puming (active c. 1300–1350), who specialized in paintings of orchids combined with bamboo, brambles, and rocks. Tokusai studied the Chinese master's paintings, and Puming-style orchids remained one of Tokusai's favorite painting subjects after he returned to Japan. Subsequently, Puming's paintings and Puming-style paintings by Tokusai and his followers came to be treasured in Japan.



Gyokuen Bonpō, 1348–c. 1420

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Orchids, Bamboo, Brambles, and Rocks, early 15th century

Pair of hanging scrolls; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation
2015.79.4.1-2

Epidendrum is a wild variety of orchid that grows in East Asia, where it is admired for its sweet fragrance and ability to grow even in low-quality soil. For this reason, orchids are said to be like ideal gentlemen, whose scholarly pursuits stand them in good stead even when the going is rough. In this painting, two clumps of fragrant orchids emerge from behind small boulders in the lower corner of each scroll. The orchids' leaves compete with shoots of bamboo and brambles before breaking free, ribboning up and away across the surface of the paper.

Orchids and rocks were the favorite painting subject of Gyokuen Bonpō, an elite, highly influential Zen monk who painted in his spare time. The influence of Tesshū Tokusai (d. 1366), whose painting of the same subject is displayed nearby, is clear. In fact, Bonpō probably met Tokusai in his youth and may have studied painting with him.



China, Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279)

Tea Caddy Named “Drop of Water” (Tamamizu), 13th century

Glazed stoneware (caddy); ivory, gold leaf (lid); wood, silk, lacquer (wrappings and boxes)

Gift of funds from the Friends of the Institute 2003.28.1-13

Traveling Japanese Zen monks returned to their country bearing many prized objects from Song-dynasty (960-1279) China, including artworks like this tea caddy. Small, finely crafted containers originally created to store spices and medicines, tea caddies were used by the Japanese to hold powdered tea in the tea ceremony. Tea caddies and other tea utensils were oftentimes handed down with assorted boxes, silk wrappings, and documentation. Sometimes these items were treasured alongside the object itself, because they were associated with a previous owner. An earlier owner assigned this caddy a poetic name that remains with it today: Tamamizu, or “Drop of Water.” It is inscribed in ink on the caddy’s outer box and in gold on the black lacquer case.

(no photo)

Unkoku Tōgan, 1547-1618

Momoyama (1573-1603) or Edo period (1603-1868)

Wagtail on a Rock, late 16th-early 17th century

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation
2015.79.62



Kano Gyokuraku, active late 15th–early 16th century

Muromachi period (1392–1579)

Lin Hejing Searching for Plum Blossoms, third quarter 16th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.33

The subject of this painting is the poet Lin Hejing, who lived in China during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and whose poetic works were known widely in Japan. He is seen walking below a plum tree and staring into the distance as a young attendant draws up behind him, carrying the branch of a plum tree collected earlier. Lin Hejing was renowned for his love of the plum tree, a first sign of spring that oftentimes blossoms when snow is still falling.

Kano Gyokuraku was affiliated with the preeminent Kano house of painters, whose artists dominated the Japanese painting scene for centuries beginning in the late 1500s. Although the Kano house was headquartered in Kyoto, the capital city, when Gyokuraku was active he led a regional branch of the house that was situated in Odawara, a castle town in eastern Japan.

Kaihō Yūshō, 1533–1615

Inscribed by Saishō Jōtai, 1548–1608

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

“River and Sky in Evening Snow,” from the **Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers**, circa 1602–1603

Panel of a folding screen, mounted as a hanging scroll; ink and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.61

Snow clings to the leaves of a clump of bamboo and rock. A snowy peak hangs in the distance. This wintry scene formerly functioned as one of eight panels of a folding screen, depicting the so-called “Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang,” a popular theme in East Asian painting and poetry. At right is a Chinese poem brushed by the Zen monk Saishō Jōtai (1548–1608). The poem alludes to the Daoist immortal Han Xiangzi, who predicted correctly that his exiled uncle would become stuck at Indigo Pass, a crossing in the Qin Mountains of central China:

Ten thousand miles of river and sky, ten thousand miles of thoughts,

a whirlwind of downy flowers scattering in a peaceful grove—

The bridges and roads are closed, and my horse’s hooves are slick.

Yet again, Indigo Pass is blocked!

This is an old poem by Yujian, brushed by Jōtai



Gallery 224, Window Case: *Tenmoku*—Chinese Jian Wares in Japan

During China's Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), a certain type of stoneware tea bowl featuring dark, lustrous glazes and brown or iridescent markings became popular at the imperial court in Kaifeng. The bowls were commonly known as Jian ware. They were made at kilns in the northern part of Fujian Province in an area also known for producing exceptional tea that was dried, ground to a fine powder, and whisked in bowls to create a frothy green beverage.

Not far from the Fujian kilns was a sacred mountain, Tianmu-shan, to which numerous Japanese Buddhist priests traveled in the 1200s to train at famous temples there. When they returned to Japan, they brought back powdered green tea and tea bowls from Fujian. In Japan, these tea bowls were dubbed *tenmoku*, the Japanese pronunciation of Tianmu, the sacred mountain, and were used in the earliest tea ceremonies. Long after they had fallen out of favor in China, the Japanese considered *tenmoku* to be the finest of all tea bowls and made versions of their own. Even today, Japanese potters continue to explore the potential of *tenmoku* glazes.

China, Song dynasty (960–1279)

Tea Bowl with “Hare’s Fur” (Tuhao wen) Markings, 12th–13th centuries

Jian ware; glazed stoneware

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.525



China, Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

Tea Bowl Stand with Pommel Scroll Motif, 15th–16th centuries

Carved red and black lacquer on wood

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.634



In tea ceremonies, Japanese tea masters always used tenmoku tea bowls with lacquered stands. The stands, like the tea bowls themselves, were imported from China, as with this carved lacquer example.

China, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)

Tea Bowl with “Hare’s Fur” (Tuhao wen) Markings, 12th century

Jian ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Donald E. Lee 96.98.5



Watanabe Asako, born 1930

Bowl with Tenmoku Glaze, 20th century

Glazed stoneware

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.378



Kamada Kōji, born 1948

Sake Cup (Guinomi) with Tenmoku Glaze, early 21st century

Glazed stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center

by Margaret and Harold Sims 2013.29.1179



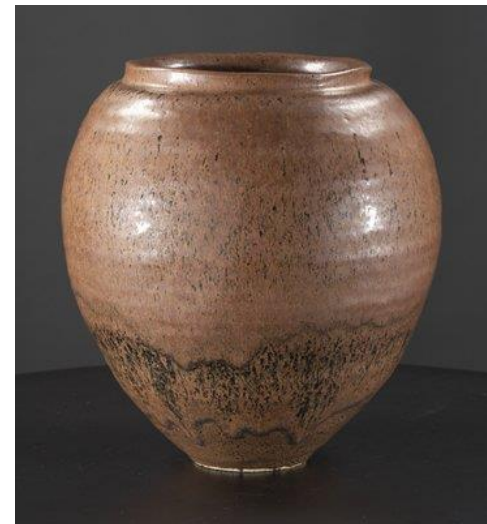
Shimizu Uichi, 1926–2004

Jar with Tenmoku Glaze, second half 20th century

Glazed stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center

by Takako and Victor Hauge 2013.29.142



Galleries 226 and 227: The Floating World

In the 1600s, a newly moneyed merchant class became the driving force of ukiyo, the “floating world” of Japan’s urban pleasure districts. The word ukiyo originally expressed the Buddhist notion of the transitory nature of life. But if ukiyo guided previous generations to focus on mortality, it now prompted a celebration of life’s fleeting pleasures. In Edo (present-day Tokyo), the Yoshiwara neighborhood teemed with actors, courtesans, and other entertainers catering to these well-to-do pleasure seekers.

The floating world inspired artists to create a new type of picture making: ukiyo-e, “pictures of the floating world.” Through paintings and woodblock prints, they depicted lively scenes from the pleasure quarters and created portraits of glamorous prostitutes and stars of the Kabuki stage. It was an art for the people, affordable depictions of popular culture that introduced the pleasure districts to a wide audience.

Isoda Koryūsai, 1735–1790?

Edo period (1603–1868)

Frontispiece, from the series *Twelve Bouts in the Way of Love*, c. 1775–77

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund, 2014.65.3.1

Twelve Bouts in the Way of Love is considered to be the first full-color shunga (erotica) series in ōban-size, double the size as earlier series. Typically the initial design in a shunga book or set was simply suggestive, but not explicitly erotic. Here, the series opens with this depiction of three couples enjoying each other’s company with food and drinks. One man is lying relaxed on the floor while another is pouring hot sake for a young woman. The third man is watching this scene while he is being offered a pipe to smoke. The room is decorated with a large standing screen, arrangements of flowers, and a hanging scroll on display in the tokonoma (alcove). The blossoming plum chosen as decoration on the table in the alcove and the closed wall panels suggest that it is a cold season.



Yashima Gakutei, c. 1786–1868

Edo period (1603–1868)

Osaka’s Aji River from the Rain Shelter on Mount Tenpō, from the supplement to the series, *Catalog of Splendid Sights on Mount Tenpō*, published by Shioya Kisuke, c. 1834

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Ruth Lathrop Sikes in memory of her brother Bruce Sikes, P.13,905

The manmade Mount Tenpō is a famous scenic spot of the city of Osaka. It was created by dredging the Aji River in 1831. Cherry trees and many restaurants covered Mount Tenpō, and this scene is intended to be from an overlook of the Aji River. Here, for entertainment, people climb through two thick pillars, each with a hole, a tradition thought to bring luck and known from the Great Buddha Hall of the temple Tōdaiji in Nara. Climbing through pillars is also portrayed in Jippensha Ikku’s (1766–1831) *Strolling along the Tōkaidō* (*Tōkaidōchū hizakurige*), a comic novel about the misadventures of two travelers.



Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797-1858

Edo period (1603-1868)

Ikenohata: Prostitutes Viewing Cherry Blossoms at the Hōraitei, from the series, **Collection of Famous Restaurants in Edo**, published by Fujiokaya Hikotarō, c. 1838-1840

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr., 81.133.244



Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797-1858

Edo period (1603-1868)

Night Scene on Yanagi-bashi Bridge and Restaurant Manhachi, from the series, **Collection of Famous Restaurants in Edo**, published by Fujiokaya Hikotarō, c. 1838-1840

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr., P.75.51.322



Yamada Hōgyoku, active c.1804-1844

Edo period (1603-1868)

Shop Sign for Daichinrō, published by Iseya Sōemon, 1842

Woodblock print (beni-e), color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr., 81.133.292

This rare fan print is probably an advertisement for a restaurant or inn named Daichinrō, or “Great Camelia Pavilion.”



Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797-1858

Edo period (1603-1868)

Mariko, from the series, Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi), published by Sanoya Kihei, c. 1840-1842

Bequest of Louis W. Hill, Jr., 96.146.48

The Tōkaidō was the main arterial road that connected Edo (present-day Tokyo) with Kyoto. As a result of the increasing travel boom in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the road and its post stations became a popular motif in literature and art. Hiroshige emerged as the foremost designer of Tōkaidō landscape series, producing over twenty different ones. The novelty of this particular series is that each scenic view is accompanied by a comic poem (<I>kyōka</I>), and the series therefore became known as the <I>Kyōka Tōkaidō</I>.

Each print focuses on a famous scenic view or a local specialty; here it is grated yam soup (<I>tororo jiru</I>), served at a popular restaurant that was used as resting stop by porters and travelers. Hiroshige cleverly inserted “product placements” inside the restaurant that would not have been there in reality. They are for the face powder Senjōko, sold by one Mr. Sakamoto in Edo, and for an array of woodblock prints presumably sold by the publisher of this print.



Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797-1858

Edo period (1603-1868)

Kuwana, Picture of the Tomita Rest Area (Kuwana, Tomita tachiba no zu), from the series, Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi), published by Sanoya Kihei, c. 1840-1842

Bequest of Louis W. Hill, Jr., 96.146.71

On the left is a restaurant that, according to the two white signs, offers grilled clams (<I>yaki hamaguri</I>) as its specialty. The sign above the seated porter dressed in a loincloth is a “product placement” for the face powder Senjōko, sold at Kyobashi in Edo, a business that probably underwrote parts of the publication costs of this print.



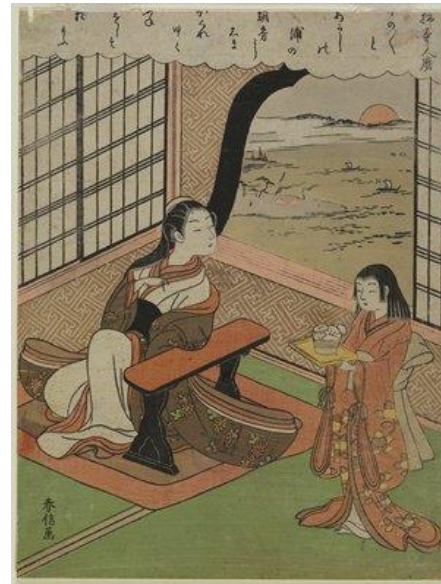
Suzuki Harunobu, 1725–1770

Edo period (1603–1868)

Poem by Kakinomoto Hitomaro, from an untitled series on the Thirty-six Poetic Immortals (Sanjūrokkasen), c. 1767–1768

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr., P.75.51.10



Isoda Koryūsai, 1735–1790?

Edo period (1603–1868)

Segawa of the Matsubaya: Returning Sails (Matsubaya Segawa, Kihan), from the series, Eight Views of Elegant Women of the Brothels (Fūryū seirō meifu hakkei), c. 1773–1775

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Ruth Lathrop Sikes in memory of her brother Bruce Sikes, P.13,935

This print is a mitate (visual parody) on the classical Chinese theme of the Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers. It is one of a series that depicts popular prostitutes in scenes that allude to the eight views. Here, the prostitute Segawa and her attendant are playing the shamisen while returning boats—the theme of one of the views—can be seen in the background.



Kitagawa Utamaro, 1753–1806

Edo period (1603–1868)

Masako from Mino Province (Mino Masako jo), from the series, Chinese and Japanese Poems by Seven-year-old Girls of the Present Day (Kindai nanasai jo shika), published by Murataya Jirōbei, c. 1804

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Ruth Lathrop Sikes in memory of her brother Bruce Sikes, P.13,964

Executed in the rare, long format (nagaban), this print depicts a prostitute and her attendant playing with a child who could be hers from a previous love affair. The poem reads:

*I rub evening primrose flower
on the cloth of the man I love,
hoping the scent of the flower
will remind him of me*

The name of the prostitute is inscribed on the print as “Masako from Mino Province,” which we can use to identify Yabe Masako, who died at age twenty-nine in 1773.



Kitagawa Utamaro, 1753–1806

Edo period (1603–1868)

Agemaki, the Ruffian Hero Sukeroku, and Hige no Ikyū (Keisei Agemaki, otokodate Sukeroku, Hige no Ikyū), from the series, Models of Love-talk: Clouds Form over the Moon (Chiwa kagami tsuki no murakumo), published by Yamaguchiya Chūsuke, c. 1798–1800

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr., 81.133.238

The game played here is kazu-ken, a numbers game that originated in China. In this game, players make numbers from zero to five with their right hands, while predicting and then calling out the combined number from all players. The loser has to drink a cup of sake.

This is a visual parody of the Kabuki play Sukeroku's Affinity for Edo Cherry Blossoms (Sukeroku yukari no Edo zakura), but none of the three figures is a Kabuki actor. The story of the play centers on the love affair between the prostitute Agemaki and the dashing dandy Sukeroku, who is playing with his rival Ikyū (left).



Kikugawa Eizan, 1787–1867

Edo period (1603–1868)

Monk Kisen (Kisen hōshi), from the series, **Elegant Figures of the Floating World (Fūryū ukiyo sugata)**, published by Izumiya Ichibei, c. 1807

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

The Margaret McMillan Webber Estate, 51.40.24

A prostitute is juxtaposed with Kisen, a mid-ninth-century Buddhist monk and poet, about whom the only thing known today is that he lived near Mount Uji. The inscribed poem, by Kisen, is cited in the Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times (Kokin wakashū), from around 905:

My hut is to the capital's southeast, and thus I live. But people call it "Uji, hill of one weary of the world," I hear.



Eisen, 1790–1848

Edo period (1603–1868)

Night Rain with a Regular Customer (Kōkyaku no yoru no ame), from the series **Eight Views in the New Yoshiwara (Shin Yoshiwara hakkei)**, c. 1821–1822

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

The Margaret McMillan Webber Estate, 51.40.27

The classical Chinese poetic and pictorial theme of the Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers is applied to the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter in this series. The inset cartouche in the upper right relates to one of these views, Night Rain over Xiaoxiang, by showing people with umbrellas walking through a street in the Yoshiwara. A prostitute has prepared the bed for a regular customer.



Kitagawa Fujimaro, active c. 1789–c. 1818

Edo period (1603–1868)

Two Oharame on the Bank of a Stream, early 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and shell white (gofun) on silk

Bequest of Richard P. Gale, 74.1.161

Oharame were girls who brought in bundles of twigs to make charcoal. They were from Ohara, a village near Kyoto. The poem above reads:

The white complexions of the oharame are more noticeable than the black brushwood they are balancing on their heads.



Utagawa Toyoharu

Edo period (1603–1868)

The Actor Segawa Kikunojo III at a Party, c. 1784

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gofun on silk

Bequest of Richard P. Gale, 74.1.168

On the right in front of an opened sliding door that provides a view into the garden sits the kabuki actor Segawa Kikunojō III (1751–1810), identified by the butterfly crest on his robe. Kikunojō III was a popular performer of female roles. The older man on the left is the host of the party and could be a kabuki lover who commissioned this painting and is portrayed here.



Inoue Setsuzan

Edo period (1603–1868)

Courtesan Plucking Daruma's Beard, first half 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.149

The courtesan is plucking the beard of Bodhidharma, known in Japan as Daruma, the founder of Zen Buddhism. Reversing the sacred and the profane in a kind of parody was a favorite motif during the Edo period—in Edo slang, to “pull out one’s nose hair” implied a man enslaved by a woman. An especially popular theme was that of the Daruma and the courtesan, a play on the familiar subjects of Daruma’s nine years of meditation facing a stone wall, which caused the loss of his arms and legs, and the courtesan’s 10 years of trial-laden life at a brothel—the word “daruma” was slang for a prostitute.



Miyagawa Chōshun, 1682–1752

Edo period (1603–1868)

Seated Prostitute and Her Attendant, first half 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and shell white (gofun) on silk

Bequest of Richard P. Gale, 74.1.44

A prostitute seated in a relaxed position on a game board watches her young attendant cut up what must be a medicinal substance or perfume before placing it in a lacquered box.



Hishikawa Moronobu, c. 1618 - 1694

Edo period (1603-1868)

Musical Party, late 17th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.103

Five fashionable courtesans and a male figure playing the shamisen gather before a folding screen painted with an autumnal scene of a red sun and white chrysanthemums. One of the elegant courtesans also plays a shamisen, while two others read books. Red and white Chinese characters on the garment of the courtesan at right read “flower” and “cherry blossoms,” age-old symbols of the ephemerality of beauty and youth. Two small red seals on the far right of the folding screen within the painting identify the artist as the early ukiyo-e master Hishikawa Moronobu.



Tsukioka Settei, 1710 - 1786

Edo period (1603-1868)

Wisteria Maiden, second half 18th century

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.154

The Wisteria Maiden was a favorite subject of Ōtsue, folk paintings made in the town of Ōtsu. The paintings were believed to have auspicious properties; those hoping for a good match in marriage might buy a picture of the Maiden. The character later appeared in kabuki theater and was so popular that an entire play was eventually written around her. This classical depiction shows the Maiden as a beautiful young woman, or bijin, dancing with a wisteria branch over her shoulder. Settei, an Osaka artist, was famous for his delicately painted bijin and erotic imagery. The calligraphic inscription, by the Osaka kyōka poet Senkatei Karitsu (1748-1789), indicates that Settei painted the beauty in the spirit of Matabei's brush, a reference to the legendary founder of Ōtsue and ukiyo-e.



Tsukioka Settei, 1710 - 1786

Edo period (1603-1868)

Courtesan Standing by a Willow Tree, c. 1775

Bequest of Richard P. Gale 74.1.124



Gallery 237: Art of the Edo Period

In the early 1600s, after an extended period of political instability, the feudal lord Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) effectively united Japan. He established his seat of power in the eastern town of Edo (present-day Tokyo), assumed the title of shogun, or military ruler, in 1603, and by 1615 defeated his remaining adversaries. The resumption of a stable government stimulated the Japanese economy and resulted in an unprecedented surge of artistic achievement. Artists, working together or individually, developed new forms, styles, and subjects of painting. As demand grew, decorative arts such as ceramics, lacquerware, textiles, and metalwork flourished as never before. Ieyasu and his descendants ruled Japan until the restoration of imperial rule in 1868.

Edo period (1603–1868)

Helmet with Ornament Bearing Seed Syllable for Fudō Myōō

Iron, gilt copper, deerskin, silk, and lacquer

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.438a-e

With its wide-spreading neck guard (shikoro) and curving face protectors (fukikaeshi), this helmet is typical of the type used with Japan's classic armor for mounted warriors, ōyoroi. This type of armor is constructed with metal and leather pieces laced together. The heraldic front pieces of this example are particularly dramatic, with stylized long blades (kuwagata). The central disk is emblazoned with the sacred Sanskrit characters (also known as "seed syllables") for the Buddhist deity Fudō Myōō, the "Immovable Wisdom King." Perhaps the owner of this helmet hoped that the unyielding strength of Fudō Myōō would accompany him into battle.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Helmet in the Shape of a Dragonfly, 17th century

Iron, lacquer, wood, leather, gold, pigments, silk, and papier-mâché

The James Ford Bell Foundation Endowment for Art Acquisition and gift of funds from Siri and Bob Marshall 2012.31.1a-c

During the 1400s and 1500s, Japan's feudal clans vied for supremacy, amassing vast armies to ensure their dominion and to conquer weaker neighbors. High-ranking lords began to embellish their helmets with sculptural forms so they could be easily located on the battlefield. These "exotic helmets" (kawari kabuto) allowed leaders to choose and display symbolic motifs that reflected some aspect of their personality or that of their collective battalions. This helmet takes the shape of a giant dragonfly, an insect symbolic of focused endeavor and vigilance because of its manner of moving up, down, and sideways while continuing to face forward.



Mihata Jōryū, act. 1830s

Edo Period (1603–1868)

Suit of Armor, 1830s

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; Purchase from the Collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark

2013.31.60



Edo period (1603–1868)

Half Face Mask with Detachable Nose Protector, 19th century

Iron, lacquer, hair, and silk

Lent by the Jon Straub Family L2006.91.5

Early paintings reveal that Japanese warriors used face armor (mengu) as early as the Heian period (794–1185), but its use became widespread beginning in the late Muromachi period (1392–1573). Face masks (menpō) not only served as protection during battle but were also used to fasten the helmet. Face masks were therefore made with hooks or rings on the cheeks and protruding studs under the chin. To drain perspiration, the masks are furnished with a sweat hole or a tube under the chin. Most masks are provided with an attached throat guard (tare), or they could be combined with a throat protector (yodarekake).

(no photo)

Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Blade with Engraved Snake for a Long-sword (koto katana), 16th century

Steel and gold paint

Edo period (1603–1868)

Mounting with Dragon Decoration and Tiger and Lion Hilt Ornaments, mid-18th century

Wood, lacquer, shakudō, shibuichi, silver, gold, ray skin, and silk

Ōmori Terumasa, 1705–1772

Edo period (1603–1868)

Sword Guard with Dragon amidst Waves, mid-18th century

Shakudō, shibuichi, and gold

Gift of Mrs. Stanley Hawks 78.69.1a-f

Sword manufacturing was introduced to Japan from the Asian mainland. The earliest known types of swords were straight and mostly 23 1/2 to 27 1/2 inches in length. They were made of bronze and used for stabbing as well as striking. Higher-ranking warriors on horseback carried tachi, swords that hung from the belt with the cutting edge facing down. The 1300s saw the development of a new type of sword called uchigatana, which warriors carried in the belt with the cutting edge facing up. Uchigatana were better suited for foot soldiers and became the sword most commonly used by the samurai, the warrior class, who needed a weapon suited to changing battle conditions. With its curvature near the tip, the blade offered a faster response time, enabling the warrior to draw and strike in a single motion. Uchigatana-type swords with a blade length of approximately 23 1/2 to 28 1/2 inches came to be known as katana, and shorter blades as wakizashi (average 20 inches). To use both swords for fighting was uncommon, and on the battlefield it was customary to carry a katana and a more practical short dagger (tantō) with a blade length between 6 and 12 inches.

(no photo)

Gallery 237: Noh and Kyōgen

Noh and Kyōgen are traditional performing arts that developed together in the Nanbokuchō (1336–1392) and early Muromachi periods (1392–1573). Noh is a highly stylized, refined dramatic performance that involves distinctive singing, dance, and instrumental music. In Noh, actors wear masks delicately carved from blocks of aged Japanese cypress and elaborate silk robes, and also commonly use props such as folding fans. Originally, series of Noh performances were punctuated by rather lighthearted spoken drama performances known as Kyōgen, a contrast to the codified movements and sounds of Noh. While Noh's subjects are drawn primarily from history and classical literature, Kyōgen takes its themes from daily life or folk literature and is more comic than Noh.

Edo period (1603–1868)

Noh Costume with Geometric Pattern for the role of Okina, 19th century

Twill-weave silk with supplementary weft patterning

Gift of the Harriet Hanley Estate and Kathryn Glessing 2002.159.3.1

A kariginu (literally, “hunting robe”) was originally an informal jacket worn by noblemen during Japan’s Heian period (794–1185). Later, elite warriors donned kariginu as their most formal garment. Since warrior-patrons expressed their appreciation for fine performances by presenting actors with articles from their own lavish wardrobes, it is likely that the first kariginu used onstage were originally worn by samurai-aristocrats. This robe is decorated with an overall pattern of octagons connected by smaller squares to the left, right, top, and bottom, a design the Japanese call shokkō (shuchiang in Chinese), after a style favored in China during the Ming dynasty. Kariginu with the shokkō pattern are reserved for the loftiest of all Noh roles, that of the godlike Okina (divine old man) whose felicitous dance bestows happiness and prosperity on the community.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Noh Flutes named “Winter Wind” (Kogarashi) with Box and Case, mid-18th century

Bamboo (flutes); Wood with black lacquer, gold, and silver (box and case)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke Foundation 2015.79.396a-h



Kano Kazunobu, 1816–1863

Edo period (1603–1868)

Triptych of Noh Roles: Senzai, Okina, and Sanbaso, mid-19th century

Triptych of hanging scrolls; ink and color on silk

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.194.1-3

This trio of actors portrays the three central roles of a Noh play known variously as Shiki-Sanban or Okina-Sanbaso: in the middle is the old white-masked man called Okina, at left a young man called Senzai, and at right the old black-masked man Sanbaso. The play involves alternating singing and dancing by the three main characters over the course of approximately one hour. In the Edo period (1603–1858) it was routinely performed at the beginning of a full day of plays. Refined and considered highly auspicious, the play actually predates the Noh theater itself and doubles as a Shinto ritual ceremony to pray for peace and prosperity.



Muromachi period (1392-1573)

Noh Mask of a Man, 16th century

Wood with color

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.269



Edo period (1603-1868)

Noh Mask of a Woman, 18th-19th century

Wood with color

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Griggs Burke

Foundation 2015.79.270



Edo period (1603-1868)

Noh Mask of Dei Kotobide, 17th-18th century

Wood with gesso, color, and gold; gilt metal

The Helen Jones Fund for Asian Art 2011.84

(no photo)

Gallery 238: Encounters with the Outside World

Portuguese ships arrived in Japan in 1543, initiating a new era of exchange in a country with few international ties beyond its neighbors. The Portuguese, followed by Spanish, English, and Dutch visitors, brought myriad goods from around the world, introduced Japan to Christianity and Christian art, and inspired a new taste for exoticism among Japan's ruling class. Artists responded by incorporating images of these curious newcomers or employing European-inspired designs and motifs in paintings, ceramics, lacquer, and even clothing. Others produced artworks, especially ceramics and lacquerware, destined for overseas markets. Although the Tokugawa shogunate adopted a seclusionist stance in the 1630s, ushering in two centuries of relative isolation, artists—both from Japan and other parts of Asia—based in the port city of Nagasaki maintained a vital window onto the outside world.

Edo period (1603–1868)

People of Many Nations, 1649

Handscroll; ink and color on paper

The Driscoll Art Accessions Endowment Fund 2015.30

In 1543, Portuguese explorers, missionaries, and merchants arrived for the first time in Japan. They were followed by the Spanish, Dutch, and British. With the establishment of trade relations, more and more information about the rest of the world entered Japan. Artists began to depict these strange-looking foreigners. This handscroll shows figures representing forty different peoples, beginning with the Chinese, who the Japanese considered to be the world's leaders. The scroll also includes pairs of figures identified as Europeans, Africans, and peoples of North and South America, images derived from a Dutch map that was circulated in Japan at this time. The handscroll goes on to describe fantastic people like giants and Lilliputians and ends with a circular map of the world.



Utagawa Yoshitora, active c. 1836–1882

Edo period (1603–1868)

Port of London, England, from the series, Collection of Famous Places in the World, 1862, 6th month

Woodblock print triptych (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Gift of Markle Karlen 2012.75e

After the opening of Japan to the West in the 1850s, pictures of foreigners became a popular motif for woodblock prints. Such images were called Yokohama-e or “Yokohama pictures,” because the major port city of Yokohama teemed with foreigners. They showed the modern world, including foreigners both in Japan and in their home countries, as Japanese artists—who did not travel there themselves—imagined them. This particular scene is supposed to illustrate the port of London with its majestic ships in the left background and a variety of people in the foreground, among them soldiers on horseback or foot. As the contemporary Japanese buyer would not have been familiar with this scene, a cartouche (written description) with information on England was integrated in the design at the top of the center sheet, written by Kanagaki Robun (1829–94), a journalist and author of humorous fiction.

(no photo)

Shen Quan, 1682–after 1758

Edo period (1603–1868)

Cats by Bamboo and Chrysanthemums, 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.188

Shen Quan, also known as Shen Nanpin, moved from his native China to Nagasaki in far western Japan in 1731. Although he only stayed for a couple of years in Nagasaki, he gained many followers to whom he taught traditional Chinese painting methods. He focused on the realistic depiction of birds and flowers. Shen's Japanese followers came to be known as the Nagasaki school, which included Kumashiro Yūhi, whose painting of magpies is displayed nearby. Shen created this painting of cats playing near bamboo and chrysanthemums while he was in residence in Nagasaki. Both cats and chrysanthemums can symbolize longevity.



Kumashiro Yūhi, 1712–1773

Edo period (1603–1868)

Magpies Report Three Joys, mid-18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton 98.18.7

Here we see magpies squabbling on a branch. The “three joys” mentioned in the title refers both to the three large fruits, probably a species of pomegranate, and to passing the three imperial examinations within China's government bureaucracy.

Kumashiro Yūhi emulated the style of Shen Quan, a Chinese academic painter who specialized in bird-and-flower subjects and who visited Nagasaki, Japan, from 1731 to 1733. This style combined traditional decorative compositions with elements of Western realism, including chiaroscuro, the contrast of light and dark in visual art. Yūhi championed Shen's style in Japan and became the earliest proponent of the Nagasaki school, which specialized in such bird-and-flower paintings.



Nakayama Toshitsugu , 1840–1890

Meiji period (1868–1912)

Portraits of a Western Woman and Man, late 19th century

Pair of hanging scrolls; ink and color on silk

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.662-663

In this pair of portraits of an unidentified Western couple, Nakayama Toshitsugu employs traditional Japanese media—ink and light mineral pigments on a hanging silk scroll—with Western painting techniques that create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface.

Toshitsugu studied under Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892), two artists widely recognized as great geniuses of Japanese ukiyo-e style painting and prints. Ukiyo-e means “pictures of the floating world,” and the subject matter included leisure activities and idealized, beautiful people. Toshitsugu created works in a variety of media, not only paintings in the ukiyo-e style but also Western-style watercolors, oil paintings, and paintings and drawings based on photographs. Some of his works are known to have been produced specifically for visiting foreigners.



Momoyama period (1573–1603)

*****Portable desk**, late 16th or early 17th century

Wood with black lacquer, mother-of-pearl, gold, silver, and brass fittings

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.382a–k

European merchants and missionaries in Japan discovered the beauty of lacquer in 1543 and began commissioning artists to create furnishings for European homes and churches soon thereafter. By 1610, an import company was established in Amsterdam to meet demand. This portable desk has a drop front and small drawers inside for storing writing supplies, making it a *bargueño*, a style of desk that emerged in Spain during the Renaissance. Its surfaces are richly decorated with traditional Japanese motifs executed in lacquer and inlaid metals and mother-of-pearl. Cartouches on the front and top show deer and a small hut in a grove of trees. Morning glories decorate the rear panel and the inside of the drop front, while the interior drawers feature auspicious motifs also commonly seen in Japanese paintings and textiles: fish among waterweeds, geese and reeds, birds among blossoming trees, and wheels partially submerged in a flowing stream.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Writing Box with Portuguese Figures, 1633

Black lacquer with gold and silver maki-e, polychrome lacquer, and gold and silver foil inlay

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.386a–e

Fallen cherry blossoms, rendered in gold and silver, adorn the outside surface of the lid of this black lacquered writing box. A writing box contains the tools necessary for the brush arts of calligraphy and ink painting, including an inkstone and water dropper. The underside of the lid and the interior of the box feature a group of Portuguese men, with their distinctive pantaloons and hats. The dark-skinned individuals may be African or Indian. The figural group appears on a black lacquer and silver foil checkered background inspired by European designs. After nearly four hundred years of use and display, some of the inlaid silver squares have fallen off.



Momoyama (1573–1603) or Edo period (1603–1868)

Candlestick in the Shape of a European Man, 17th century

Mino ware, Oribe type; glazed stoneware

The Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation Endowment 2016.47.1

This stoneware candlestick takes the shape of a so-called nanban, or “southern barbarian,” a word used historically in Japan to refer to Europeans. His red bushy eyebrows and a beard, a prominent nose, large eyes, and collared shirt all point to his foreignness. The green glaze that covers the jar he carries as well as part of his shirt is characteristic in Oribe type ceramics, which were made in the Mino region and demonstrated more diversity of form and surface decoration than most other Japanese ceramics of the time. The bowl-shaped plate on top of his head would have once had a metal spike onto which a candle would have been placed.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Nanban Bowl with Cross Design, 17th century

Glazed stoneware with inlaid designs

The Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation Endowment 2016.47.2

The first Christian missionaries, namely Portuguese Catholics, arrived in Japan in the 1540s and achieved some success converting Japanese in some areas of the country. Christians were subject to authorized persecution by Japan’s military leaders on and off through the 1630s, by which time all adherents of Christianity had renounced their faith or moved underground. Stoneware bowls bearing Christian crosses began to be made in the late 1500s, but it remains unclear who might have used these bowls. Were they intended for practicing Christians? Or did potters simply borrow a motif—the cross—that they saw on the many Christian works of art entering Japan during this time?



Gallery 251: Nanga: The Japanese Literati Tradition

Nanga, or “Southern school,” refers to an artistic movement inspired by Chinese literati painting that flourished in Japan in the Edo period (1603–1868). In China, the Southern school was a historical lineage of amateur painters whose more personally expressive, avocational painting style was seen by later generations as being in opposition to that of professional painters of the so-called Northern school. In Japan, early Nanga artists shared an interest in Confucianism, Chinese learning, Chinese poetry, and, of course, Chinese painting. Through printed illustrated manuals of painting imported from China, Japanese Nanga artists studied the brushwork and techniques of famous Chinese amateur painters, incorporating and synthesizing these styles in their own work. Yet despite their admiration for the ideal of the amateur literati painting, most Japanese Nanga painters were actually professionals who made their livings selling paintings.

Gion Nankai, 1677–1749

Edo period (1603–1868)

Landscape after Solitary Fishing in a Ravine of Flowers by Wang Meng, 1749

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Gifts of funds from the Surdna Foundation in honor of Libby Andrus and her board service, Nivin MacMillan, Mary Crosby Dolan, Carol Burton Gray and Steven Gray, Beverly N. Grossman, Ruth and John Huss, Sheila Morgan, and members of the Director’s Circle 2015 trip to Japan in honor of Dr. Matthew Welch 2016.11

Mighty, gnarled pine trees command the lower half of this enormous landscape, the largest known painting by Gion Nankai, a pioneer of the Nanga movement in Japan. Beneath the trees is a cliffside path with a gate leading to a small hut tucked away in a grove of bamboo. We find the hut’s tenant in a covered boat on the river, being poled by a servant, offering us a viewpoint of and a pathway toward a dramatic landscape of precipitous cliffs, misty valleys, waterfalls, and distant layered peaks.

In an inscription at upper right, Nankai describes his work as being based on *Solitary Fishing in a Ravine of Flowers*, a painting by one of China’s most revered scholar-painters, Wang Meng (1308–85). Nankai also took inspiration from Wang Wei (699–759), the ancient scholar, poet, and painter who was regarded in China, and later in Japan, as the forefather of Nanga.



Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1783–1856

Edo period (1603–1868)

Three Friends of Winter, first half 19th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and gold on paper

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.30.16.1-2

In literati culture, pine, bamboo, and plum are known as the “three friends of winter,” as they offer color in an otherwise lifeless landscape. Among other auspicious connotations, the plants together suggest endurance and faithfulness in the face of adversity.

Yamamoto Baiitsu’s paintings show his familiarity with the Nanpin school, a colorful, detailed mode of birds-and-flowers painting popularized by Chinese painter Shen Quan (1682–1758), whose work you can see in Gallery 238. In this pair of screens, decorative qualities are balanced with a sense of order and clarity: the rough bark of the plum tree provides a textural contrast to the blossoms, while the arching form of the pine is mirrored in the flow of the stream.



Ike Taiga, 1723–1776

Edo period (1603–1868)

Landscape with River View, c. 1770

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.130

This painting, with its clusters of pine needles and profuse twigs on leafless trees, exhibits Ike Taiga's penchant for decoratively patterned brushwork. Typical of his playfully eccentric compositions are the impossibly tall pines and curiously bulging foreground rocks.

Taiga became a professional painter at the age of fifteen when he opened a fan shop in Kyoto in order to support his widowed mother. He studied imported woodblock books featuring Chinese literati-style painting, but he also sought out other artists—including émigré Chinese monks—for painting instruction. Taiga's artistic brilliance lay in his ability to free himself from the narrow confines of the Chinese scholar painting tradition, although it served as his fundamental inspiration.



Yosa Buson, 1716–1783

Three Laughers of Tiger Ravine, mid-18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark 2015.114.21

The scene depicted here—three Chinese men laughing heartily—represents the climax of an ancient Chinese Buddhist parable known as “Three Laughers of Tiger Ravine,” which teaches that one must push boundaries in the pursuit of understanding. The story tells of an imagined meeting of three Chinese religious and cultural luminaries. The man with a large walking staff at left is Huiyuan (334–416), a Buddhist monk who established the famed Donglin Monastery on Mount Lu in 386. Huiyuan had taken a vow to never cross over a certain bridge spanning a gully known as Tiger Ravine, a symbolic barrier between the sacred space of his mountain monastery and the mundane world beyond. One day he invited two friends to Donglin—that's the celebrated Confucian poet Tao Yuanming (365–427) in the middle and the Daoist priest Lu Xiuqing (406–477) at right. When Huiyuan went to see his friends off at the end of a long day of talking and drinking wine, he inadvertently crossed over the bridge at Tiger Ravine—part of the bridge can be seen in the lower right corner of this picture. Realizing that Huiyuan had broken his vow, the three men broke into laughter.

(no photo)

Tanabe Chikuunsai, 1877–1937

Chinese-Style (Karamono) Flower Basket, 1921

Bamboo and lacquer

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.119a,b



Yamamoto Baiitsu, 1783–1856

Edo period (1603–1868)

Snowy Landscape, mid-19th century

Folding fan with bamboo ribs; ink and color on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.150

This fan painting by Yamamoto Baiitsu shows travelers crossing a bridge near an icy riverbank and a snow-covered mountain village. Now best known as a painter of bird and flower subjects, Baiitsu—along with his lifelong companion, Nakabayashi Chikutō (1776–1853), whose fan painting can be seen nearby—began studying old Chinese paintings as a child in his native Nagoya. After the death of their teacher in 1802, Baiitsu and Chikutō both set out for Kyoto to establish independent careers, though Baiitsu was less successful than Chikutō. After Chikutō's death in 1853, Baiitsu returned to Nagoya to take up a position as Painter in Attendance to the Tokugawa-Owari family, lords of famous Nagoya Castle.



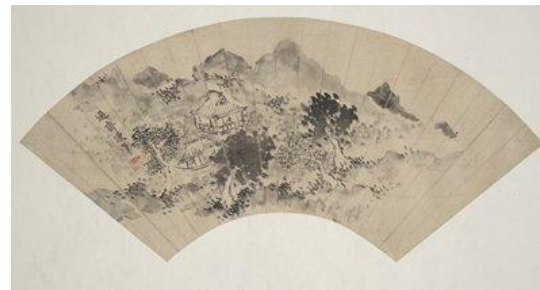
Kimura Kenkadō, 1736–1802

Edo period (1603–1868)

Landscape

Folding fan; ink on paper sized with mica

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Dr and Mrs Robert Feinberg 2013.29.676



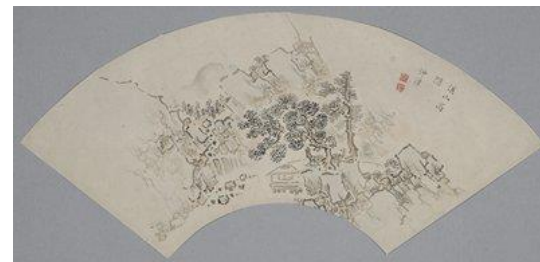
Nakabayashi Chikutō, 1776–1853

Edo period (1603–1868)

Lofty Recluse amid Streams and Mountains, mid-19th century

Folding fan; ink and color on paper sized with mica

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.920



Satake Kaikai, 1738–1790

Edo period (1603–1868)

Light Sails in the Dawn, late 18th century

Folding fan; ink and color on paper sized with mica

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.962



Okada Beisanjin, 1744–1820

Okada Hankō, 1782–1846

Edo period (1603–1868)

Rocks and Flowers, 1817

Folding fan; ink and color on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Mrs Justin Dart 2013.29.316



Galleries 252 and 253: Japanese Art after the Edo Period

In 1868, Prince Mitsuhiro ascended the Japanese throne as Emperor Meiji. After more than two hundred years of self-imposed isolation, he led the country on a program of modernization that radically transformed it into an international power. Japan's art world reflected and contributed to this climate of change. Early on, the Meiji government encouraged artists to study Western art, but after an initial burst of enthusiasm, artists and patrons refocused attention on a renewal of traditional Japanese arts. In the ensuing reigns of Emperors Taishō (reigned 1911–26) and Shōwa (reigned 1926–89), Japanese artists explored an ever-widening range of styles and materials. The early decades of the 1900s witnessed both a craze for Western modernism and renewed explorations of Japanese traditionalism.

Shibata Zeshin, 1807-1891

Meiji period (1868–1912)

The Four Elegant Pastimes, second half 19th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and color on gold leaf

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.47.1-2

This pair of screens shows fashionable youths in the pleasure quarters enjoying the so-called Four Elegant Accomplishments: music, go, calligraphy, and painting. Music is represented by the women and blind elderly man in the left screen. In the far-right panel of the right screen, a go board has been brought out and placed on a rug. Nearby, books, scrolls, and various writing implements—collectively representing calligraphy—have been laid out for several figures who surround a low black-lacquer writing desk. Some of these individuals admire a pair of folding-screen paintings depicting Chinese landscapes.

Shibata Zeshin took inspiration from a famous folding screen commonly known as the “Hikone Screen,” a masterpiece of Japanese genre painting created in the 1620s or 1630s and well known in the 1800s. Zeshin is said to have “discovered” the painting in a private collection in Edo (present-day Tokyo) in the 1830s. He was so moved by the work that he created at least six paintings modeled after it, including the present screens.



Watanabe Seitei, 1851-1918

Meiji period (1868-1912)

Waterfall, late 19th-early 20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, copper and silver on indigo-dyed paper

Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark 2015.114.27

Japanese painters in the 1800s and early 1900s sometimes extended their artistry to the borders surrounding the painting, rather than leaving the job to a professional to mount the painting on silks. For this painting of a waterfall on silk, Watanabe Seitei created a mounting by piecing together sheets of indigo-dyed paper and then applying copper and silver paint. In his youth Seitei trained under several famous painters, including briefly under Shibata Zeshin, whose folding screens are exhibited in this gallery. Seitei was among the first Japanese painters to travel to Europe when he visited Paris in his late twenties.

(no photo)

Meiji period (1868-1912)

Ghost in a Graveyard, second half 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink on silk

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1308

Traditionally in Japan, the spirit is said to leave the body after death and travel to the Pure Land to become an ancestor spirit. However, if the deceased had powerfully obsessive emotions in this life, her soul would remain in the world of the living as a ghost, unable to proceed to the next world until finding release from her obsessions. Ghosts are almost always female and are commonly portrayed as legless figures wearing white robes used for corpses and with long, disheveled hair and horrific facial expressions.

Painters of such images rarely signed their works, which were usually stored in Buddhist temples, believed to be the best place to secure ghostly imagery. Summer was seen as the best time to view such paintings—when Kabuki theaters staged ghost plays, the pictures provided viewers with a welcoming chill in the hot, humid months.



Murata Seimin, 1761-1837

Edo period (1603-1868)

Incense Burner in the Shape of a Rabbit, late 18th-early 19th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.445a,b



Edo period (1603-1868) or Meiji period (1868-1912)

Incense Burner in the Shape of a Sitting Boar, mid-19th century

Bronze

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.29.1089



Edo period (1603-1868) or Meiji period (1868-1912)

Incense Burner in the Shape of an Eggplant with an Insect, 19th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.442a,b



Edo period (1603-1868) or Meiji period (1868-1912)

Incense Burner in the Shape of a Chinese Boy on a Water Buffalo, 19th century

century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

L2015.33.473a,b



Edo period (1603–1868)

Candlestick of a crane on a long-tailed tortoise, 18th century

Gilt bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.440



Sugai Shōzō, active c. 1915–1971

Vase, mid-20th century

Bronze

Bequest of Harry Drake 2015.117

(no photo)

Hata Zōroku IV, 1898–1984

Crane-neck Flower Vase, mid-20th century

Bronze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.446



Okuni Jurō, active first half 20th century

Flower, first half 20th century

Bronze

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1138



Funada Gyokuju, 1912–1991

Lying Dragon Plum Tree, 1983

Pair of two-panel folding screens, ink and color on paper

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund 2015.31.1-2

Although he initially studied Western oil painting, in the late 1930s Funada Gyokuju came to be seen as a representative of avant-garde Japanese painting and participated in exhibitions of the experimental Rekitei Art Association, whose members were influenced by surrealist and abstract art. After the end of World War II (1939–45), he sequestered himself in his native Hiroshima, one of the cities that had been decimated by a nuclear bomb at the end of the war. He subsequently refused to participate in nationwide exhibitions. For this painting, based on the artist's own photographs and sketches, Funada achieved the richness and density of thousands of plum blossoms by applying many layers of paint to the paper surface, one after another over the course of many years.



Honda Shōryū, born 1951

Prominence, 2012

Bamboo (madake) and rattan

Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark 2015.114.4



Otake Chikuha, 1878-1934

Hikaru Genji, 1930

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark 2015.114.33

In this late painting, Otake Chikuha took a very unusual approach to a subject that has fascinated Japanese artists since the classical Heian period (794–1185)—namely, the Tale of Genji and its titular character, Hikaru Genji. Otake began training as a painter when he was only five years old, studying the brush styles of famous Nanga-school painters. As a teenager he relocated from rural northeast Japan to cosmopolitan Kyoto, where he shifted his attention to the Japanese painting and woodblock print tradition called ukiyo-e and, in the early 1900s, was briefly among the most popular painters active in the city. After the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 he refocused again, turning his attention to the Italian modernist movement Futurism.

(no photo)

Fukami Sueharu, born 1947

Windy Seascape II (Kaze no kaikei II), 2005

Porcelain with pale bluish glaze (seihakuji)

Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.30.55a,b

China is the birthplace of porcelain, and pale blue glazed qingbai porcelain—characterized by a beautiful harmony of blue and white—is a key part of that rich tradition. Fukami Sueharu uses qingbai porcelain to extend the thousand-year history of glazed porcelain to the realm of contemporary sculpture.



Kuroda Taizō, born 1946

Vase in Meiping Shape, early 21st century

Porcelain

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.150



Kuroda Taizō, born 1946

Vase, early 21st century

Porcelain

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.147



Gallery 239: Modern Japanese Art

Since the end of World War II in 1945, Japanese artists have embraced Western concepts of spiritual freedom and self-expression. Studiously aware of the international tenets of modernist art, yet insistent on their own cultural identity, Japanese artists have achieved worldwide recognition not only for avant-garde painting, sculpture, and calligraphy, but also for photography, film, performance, and installation art. Exposure to Western styles and concepts has stimulated the Japanese art scenes, but at the same time this has not meant an obliteration of time-honored aesthetic ideals. The spirit and essence of traditional Japanese aesthetics, techniques, and materials still strongly inform much of modern Japanese art.

Kishi Eiko, born 1948

No. 12, 1991

Stoneware

Gift of David Tausig Frank and Kazukuni Sugiyama 2015.111.30

Kishi Eiko is one of the most celebrated ceramic artists active in Japan today. She trained at Kyoto Arts University and the Ceramic Research Center before establishing her own studio in her native Kyoto. Without an affiliation to any of Japan's long-standing pottery traditions, she has been free to develop her own unique style. Kishi is known for her laborious saiseki zogan technique, in which she builds geometric forms from Shigaraki clay mixed with pigments, scores many fine lines into the surface, and then applies colored slip, glazes, and clay, resulting in a complex, delicate surface that can appear as if it were stitched.



Suzuki Gorō, born 1941

Chair with Oribe Glaze, 2000

Oribe ware; glazed stoneware

Promised Gift of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz L2015.264.9

Suzuki Gorō has long been inspired by Japanese pottery from the Momoyama period (1573–1603), especially that era's most famous wares like Yellow Seto, Black Seto, Shino, and Oribe, all of which were produced in the Mino region of central Japan, a traditional center for the production of pottery. Although Suzuki uses many of the glazes that characterize these traditional wares, his remarkable clay forms diverge greatly from tradition. These include fanciful teapots, vases, boxes, and tea bowls, as well as chairs such as this one, which is covered in green Oribe glaze and also decorated with pictures on front and back.

(no photo)

Hasu Yoshitaka, born 1949
Assembled Box (Kumikushige), 2015

Iga ware; stoneware with ash glaze
Gift of Gordon Brodfuehrer in honor of Bill and Libby Clark 2016.12a-g

This stacked box, consisting of six tiers and a lid, is designated by the artist as a kumikushige, or “assembled box.” Trained as a mechanical engineer, Hasu turned his attention to ceramics in his mid-twenties, and in 1975 began an apprenticeship under Ban’ura Shiro (1941–2001), an acclaimed maker of Iga ware tea utensils. After finishing his training, Hasu established his own kiln in Iga, a center of ceramic production since the ninth century, in what is today northwestern Mie Prefecture. Hasu uses only clay from Iga, prized for its many particles of feldspar and quartz that result in a dramatic pocked surface enhanced by vitreous ash glazes. Here, Hasu used a variety of ash glazes, from translucent green to lustrous black, to embellish the tiers’ exteriors, while a metallic silver glaze commands the inside surfaces of some tiers. The lid features a mesmerizing pool of glassy black glaze.



Kamoda Shōji, 1933–1983

Jar, 1977
Glazed stoneware
Gift of Joan B. Mirviss and Robert J. Levine in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Art 2015.38

The ceramic artist Kamoda Shōji is widely considered to have transformed the aesthetic of modern ceramics in Japan. During his remarkable career he was continuously involved in research and experimentation, creating striking works that were only nominally functional, but that displayed fresh and imaginative forms and unique surface decoration. For this large jar, he created abstract shapes that seem to twist and move across the rough clay. He made the shapes’ contour lines by incising the surface with a sharp tool and then applying alternating lines of white and blue glazes.

(no photo)

Wada Akira, born 1978

Moon, 2013
Porcelain
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz L2014.15.13a,b

(no photo)

Tsujimura Shirō, born 1947

Large Tea Bowl with Grey and Green Glazes, 2002

Iga ware; glazed earthenware with slip

Gift of Koichi Yanagi 2003.203.2

Like many contemporary Japanese ceramists, Tsujimura Shirō produces pottery in a variety of historic styles. This bowl was inspired by the simple bowls first imported from Korea in the 1500s; the Japanese dubbed them ido, or “deep well,” because of their generous proportions, and they became popular for use in the tea ceremony. The potter typically covered the rough clay body with a light-colored slip (a liquid clay that can act as a glaze or paint) before applying a transparent ash glaze. Pieces of sand in the clay broke through the slip in the intense heat of the kiln, creating the mottled coloration and appealing texture that characterize this bowl.

(no photo)

Miwa Jusetsu, 1910-2012

Tea Bowl, 2004

Hagi ware; stoneware

Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz L2015.264.16

Miwa Jusetsu was the head of a distinguished family of ceramists that goes back eleven generations. They specialize in Hagi ware, characterized by humble forms and white glazes. Early in the Edo period (1603–1868) Miwa family potters began serving the lords of the Chōshū domain, which occupied an area of western Japan that corresponds to modern-day Yamaguchi Prefecture. The thick, creamy-white glaze, rough surface, and notched foot of this large tea bowl are characteristic features of so-called Oni-Hagi, or “Demon Hagi” tea bowls, a favorite mode for this artist.

(no photo)

Kim Hono, born 1958

Teabowl Tea Bowl with White, Black, Silver, Red, and Pink Glazes, c. 2010

Stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1167



Hori Ichirō, born 1952

Tea Bowl with White Glaze, late 20th century
Nezumi-Shino ware; glazed earthenware
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz L2015.264.1

(no photo)

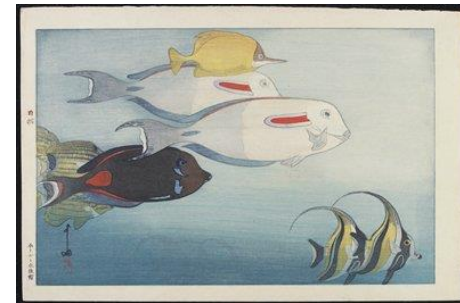
Yoshida Tōshi, 1911–1995

Hawaiian Fishes A, 1955
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. 87.85.87, 87.85.88

(no photo)

Yoshida Hiroshi, 1876-1950

Honolulu Aquarium, 1925
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Gift of Ellen and Fred Wells 2002.161.119



Gallery 239, Window Case: Sōdeisha—Avant-garde Ceramics in Postwar Japan

In 1948, just a few years after the devastating Second World War ended, a group of young potters in Kyoto established an artist collective known as Sōdeisha (in English, “Crawling through Mud Society”). Led by Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979) along with Suzuki Osamu (1926–2001) and Yamada Hikaru (1924–2000), the Sōdeisha potters rejected the two mainstreams of prewar Japanese pottery—first, the Mingei (“folk craft”) movement, with its focus on utilitarian, often inexpensive, and purposefully rustic pottery made by and for the masses, and, second, attempts to perpetuate or revive historical Japanese pottery styles and forms, especially those from the Momoyama period (1573–1603). Instead, Yagi and his colleagues ignored functionality and abandoned use of the potter’s wheel to create sculpture and nonfunctional vessels that often highlighted the beauty of unglazed clay or featured glazes and techniques not seen in any traditional ceramic style. Sōdeisha was only disbanded in 1998, having lasted for a remarkable fifty years and, in the process, fully transforming the world of Japanese ceramics.

Yagi Kazuo, 1918–1979

Vase with Floral Pattern, 1959

Stoneware with black iron glaze

Gift of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz 2015.112.7

Yagi Kazuo was one of the great innovators of Japanese ceramics. Together with other artists who belonged to an avant-garde group called Sōdeisha, he successfully pushed the expressive boundaries of clay. For this dramatic vase, he applied a white slip over a underlying dark clay body. By carving through the white clay, he revealed the dark clay beneath. While this technique had long been used by potters in China, Japan and Korea, Yagi’s assertively contemporary, non-representational surface patterns were surprisingly innovative at the time--and still seem fresh even today, over fifty years later

(no photo)

Yagi Kazuo, 1918–1979

*****Circle Jar (Henko), 1960s**

Stoneware with white-brushed slip (hakeme)

Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz L2014.15.2

(no photo)

Suzuki Osamu, 1926–2001

Afternoon Beach, 1987

Stoneware with ash glaze deposits

Gift of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz 2015.112.1

