

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, summer 2018

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Gallery 219: Art of the Samurai

The samurai—members of the warrior class—came to prominence in Japan in the 1100s, when a weakened imperial government led to the rise of bands of warriors who took over large areas of farmland and the management of local government in the provinces. Military leaders eventually came to rule over much of Japan, supported by a network of samurai. Powerful military families, provincial barons, and warriors jostled for control of the country for the next 400 years, until the Tokugawa family established a military dictatorship centered in what is now Tokyo, then called Edo. In an effort to provide social stability, the Tokugawa developed four social classes—samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants. Of these, only the samurai could carry weapons. In a time of peace, though, most of the samurai served as civil bureaucrats, their weapons mere status symbols. In 1868 the Tokugawa were overthrown, bringing an end to military rule, Japan’s feudal class system, and the samurai’s privileged position.

Kano school, mid-17th century
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from the *Tales of the Heike*, mid-17th century
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.30.22.1–2

These screens illustrate two battles of the Genpei War (1180–85) as narrated in the *Tales of the Heike*, an epic semi-historical account of two rival clans’ fight for control of Japan, written in the early 1200s. Each screen narrates a single battle through a number of small episodes divided and framed by gold clouds, landscape elements, and architectural spaces. The right screen shows scenes related to the Battle of Ichinotani, during which the Minamoto clan, identified by the white banners they carry, made a daring attack on the rival Taira clan at a Taira stronghold. The left screen shows the Battle of Yashima, another defeat for the Taira. The devastating war came to an end only a month later with the victory of the Minamoto, who took the title shogun, thus becoming Japan’s first military rulers.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes in and around Kyoto, early 17th century
Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.95

This screen shows a bird’s-eye view of the city of Kyoto, the capital of Japan for most of its early history. Many famous sites of Kyoto are pictured. To orient yourself, look for the river that emerges in the middle of the far right panel and then flows to the upper left. This is the Kamo River, which flows north-south and bisects the city. It is crossed by several bridges—the Fifth Avenue Bridge, visible in the second panel from the right, and the Third Avenue Bridge, in the upper part of the fourth panel from the right.



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At the very top of the second and third panels from the right is the famous Buddhist temple Kiyomizudera, with its long staircase and high veranda. A group of people gather there to admire blooming cherry trees below. At the far upper left of the screen, look for Kamigamo Shrine near which an annual horse race is taking place. In the middle panels, you can see a variety of large, colorful carts—floats for the annual Gion Festival Parade. Also look for a group of men near the bottom of the second panel from the left. They wear decidedly non-Japanese clothing and carry banners with white Christian crosses. Groups of locals gather in the upper floors of buildings to examine these curious visitors, perhaps Portuguese, moving through the streets of Japan's ancient capital.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Six longbows, 19th century

Laminated and lacquered bamboo

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary and Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation 2017.46.2–7

Although the sword is the iconic weapon of the samurai, mastery of the longbow was also a highly regarded skill, and expert archers were the stuff of legends. Longbows were the main weapon during the Heian (784–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods and became formally accepted as a military weapon in 1252. During battle, samurai first shot arrows from horseback before they resorted to sword fighting. In the 1300s, long swords and spears became the weapons of choice for the main offensive, and guns were subsequently introduced in the early 1500s. Archery eventually evolved into a more formal and ceremonial tradition.

Longbows are asymmetric and measure over seven feet long with a range of 160 to 330 feet, depending on the arrow. The bow is gripped below the center allowing the shooter to stand upright or kneel and, most importantly, shoot from horseback. Bows were made of bamboo that was lacquered in black, red, or gold and also decorated comparably to the sheaths of swords.



Kuniyuki, active 17th century

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Pair of war stirrups, 17th century

Iron alloy with silver inlay

The John R. Van Derlip Fund 85.13.1–2

During the Edo period (1600–1868), only warriors of middle or high rank were permitted to own horses. Regional warlords and guards of Japan's military government used riding equipment ornamented in a manner appropriate to their social position. This pair of deluxe stirrups features a design of blossoming wisteria made of inlaid silver. Inscriptions, also in silver inlay, on each of the buckle-brackets, give the name of the maker as a metalsmith named Kuniyuki, who is known to have worked in the town of Kanagawa in modern-day Ishikawa prefecture.



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Japan, 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.



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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Red-and-blue-laced Suit of Armor from the Kii Tokugawa Family, early 17th century Iron, leather, lacquer, silk, wood, gold leaf, gold powder, and bear fur

Helmet by Saotome Ichika, active late 17th–early 18th century

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Iron, gold, wood, and lacquer

The Ethel Van Derlip Fund 2009.60a-s

This elaborate suit of Japanese armor is a lightweight, form-fitting type designed to protect the body in close combat. With a face mask, forearm sleeves, thigh and shin guards, and bear-fur boots, every inch of the wearer's body is protected. Craftspeople laced together hundreds of lacquered metal and leather plates with red and blue silk cords to create a distinctive appearance, as well as flexibility. The suit may have belonged to Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602–71), the feudal lord of Kii Province, a leading fiefdom of premodern Japan.



Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)

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

Steel and gold paint



Japan, 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

Japan, 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

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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. 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.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Helmet with ornament bearing seed syllable for Fudō Myōō, 17th century

Unknown artist, Japan

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 laced neck guard (*shikoro*) and curving face protectors (*fukikaeshi*), this helmet is typical of the type used with Japan's classic armor for mounted warriors, *o_yoroi*, constructed by lacing metal or leather pieces together. The heraldic front pieces of this example are particularly dramatic, with extremely long *kuwagata* (stylized long blades). The central disk is emblazoned with the Sanskrit characters for the Buddhist deity Fudō_ Myō_ō_, "the immovable king of brightness." Thus, the owner of this helmet hoped that the fierce implacability of this demigod would accompany him into battle.



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Japan, 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

(No photo)

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*).

Yokoyama Sukesada

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Blade for a Shinshintō Dagger, 18th century

Steel

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Aikuchi Mounting with Dragon, Tiger, and Phoenix Decor, 19th century

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

Gift of Mrs. Stanley Hawks 78.69.3a-f

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Gallery 224,225: Art of the Japanese Tea Ceremony

Zenshin'an Teahouse

Constructed in 2001 by Yasuimoku Koumuten Co., Ltd.

Gift of the Friends of the Institute, the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, the Commemorative Association for the Japan World Exposition (1970), the James Ford Bell Foundation, Patricia M. Mitchell, Jane and Thomas Nelson, and many others 2001.204.1

Practitioners of the Japanese tea ceremony designed teahouses, or *chashitsu*, for the purpose of hosting special gatherings for the ceremonial preparation and service of tea. This teahouse, known as the Zenshin'an (Hermitage of the Meditative Heart), is a replica of the Sa'an (Straw Hat Hermitage), a teahouse on the grounds of the Zen monastic complex Daitokuji in Kyoto. A merchant named Kōnoike Ryōei built the Sa'an in 1742, designing it in the rustic (*wabi*) style preferred by Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591), Japan's most famous tea master. With subdued colors, walls made of a mixture of mud and rice straw, roughly hewn wood pillars, and few windows, the teahouse is simple and restrained. Beyond the utensils used to prepare and serve the tea, the only decoration might be a single hanging scroll or a flower arrangement. In such a modest structure, meant to echo a "grass hut" (*sōan*) or a monk's retreat in the wilderness, guests took part in intimate, contemplative, and meticulously orchestrated tea gatherings that made the workaday world seem very far away.

Art of the Japanese Tea Ceremony

In the 1190s, a Japanese monk returned from a journey to China with tea seeds and new ideas about the preparation of *matcha*, powdered green tea whisked into a hot, frothy drink that was first drunk for medicinal and religious purposes and, later, for pure enjoyment. In the 1400s and 1500s, Japanese tea masters began to formalize the service of *matcha*, a communal practice that was widely adopted in the following centuries. The tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*, as it is known in Japanese, is still widely practiced, and its cultural and artistic influence is felt in everything from painting, calligraphy, and ceramics to garden design, flower arranging, and food preparation.

Tea masters strive to make each gathering a singular experience, carefully arranging every detail and remaining ever mindful of the time of day, the season, and the interests of the guests. Beyond the fluid grace of their ritualized movements in preparing tea, masters demonstrate artistry through their choice of tea utensils and decorations for each ceremony. This careful selection and combination of objects for the tearoom is known as *toriawase*, a vital part of the tea ceremony that reveals a master's knowledge of art and its history, as well as sensitivity to the guests' interests and tastes.



Sa'an Teahouse (Important Cultural Property), 1742
Gyokurin'in, Daitokuji, Kyoto

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Furutani Michio, Japanese, 1946–2000

Freshwater jar (*mizusashi*), c. 1990

Shigaraki ware; glazed stoneware; lacquer lid

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark
2013.31.41a,b



Imaezumi Imaemon XIV, Japanese, born 1962

Water jar (*mizusashi*), 2016

Porcelain with polychrome enamel

Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



Kawakami Kiyomi, Japanese, born 1948

Water Jar (*mizusashi*), 2017

Karatsu ware, Mottled Karatsu (*madaragaratsu*) type; glazed stoneware; lacquer lid

Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



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Abe Anjin, Japanese, born 1938
Water Jar (*mizusashi*), 2014
Bizen ware; glazed stoneware
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



Kondō Hiroshi, Japanese, born 1936
Water jar with design of grapes, 2009
Glazed stoneware
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



Nakazato Taroemon XII, Japanese, 1895–1985
Water jar (*mizusashi*), 1970
Karatsu ware; glazed stoneware; lacquer lid
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



Yamamoto Izuru, Japanese, born 1944
Water jar (*mizusashi*), 2017
Bizen ware; glazed stoneware; lacquer lid
Lent by Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz



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Kawase Shinobu, Japanese, born 1950

Flower vase with flared lotus-shaped mouth, 1996

Porcelain with celadon glaze

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.348

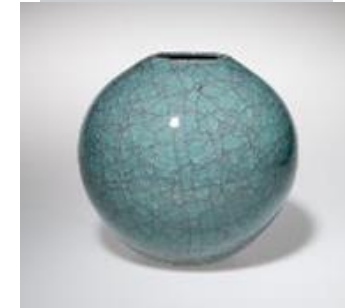


Katō Seiji, Japanese, born 1926

Vase with multi-layered haze, 1990s

Glazed stoneware

Gift of Joan Mondale 2009.15.15



Masamune Satoru, Japanese, 1954–2006

Flower vase, early 21st century

Bizen ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Margaret and Harold Sims



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Style of Nonomura Ninsei, Japanese, active c. 1646–1694

Flower vase, 18th or 19th century

Glazed stoneware

Gift of John R. Van Derlip, E. C. Gale, and others 09.79



Hata Zōroku IV, Japanese, 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



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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, with its wide body and shoulder and narrow neck, is modeled on earlier Chinese examples called *meiping* (literally, “plum vase”). 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. Many early examples of Seto ware, called “Ko-Seto” (literally, “old Seto”), echo light green celadon-glazed porcelains made earlier in China and Korea.



Fujinuma Noboru, Japanese, born 1945

Flower vase, 2000

Bamboo and red lacquer

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by the artist
2013.29.151



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Kōgō—Incense Containers for the Tea Ceremony

Masters of the Japanese tea ceremony often burn incense before their guests' arrival, to mask the smell of charcoal from the hearth used to heat water for the tea. Tea masters store precious pieces of rare aromatic wood such as camphor and sandalwood in small lacquer or ceramic boxes called *kōgō*. Particularly beautiful boxes may be displayed in the *tokonoma* (alcove) within the tearoom, for the guests' enjoyment.

Kaneta Masanao, Japanese

Incense box, early 21st century

Glazed stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Margaret and Harold Sims 2013.29.1330a,b



Nonomura Ninsei, Japanese, active c. 1646–1694

Incense box in the shape of a rooster, c. 1665

Kyōyaki ware; stoneware with overglaze enamels

The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund, The Louis W. Hill, Jr. Fund and gift of the Asian Art Council 2000.141a,b



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Kishi Eiko, Japanese, born 1948

Incense box, late 20th–early 21st century

Glazed stoneware

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture



Hosokawa Morihiro, Japanese, born 1938

Tea caddy (*chaire*), early 21st century

Glazed stoneware; ivory lid

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.906a,b



Takatori Seizan, Japanese, 1910–1983

Gourd-shaped tea caddy (*chaire*), 1977

Takatori ware; glazed stoneware; ivory lid

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

L2015.33.385a,b



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Suzuki Gorō, Japanese, born 1941

Tea bowl, 1996

Yellow Seto (*Ki-Seto*) ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of funds from the Asian Art Council 97.27



Tsujimura Shirō, Japanese, born 1947

Ido-style tea bowl, 2002

Glazed stoneware with slip

Gift of the Friends of the Institute 2003 New York Trip members 2003.135



Tsujimura Shirō, Japanese, born 1947

Hidashiguro-style tea bowl, 2000

Glazed stoneware

Gift of Koichi Yanagi 2003.203.1



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Tsujimura Shirō, Japanese, born 1947

Tea bowl, late 20th century

Iga ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of Stephen Addiss and Audrey Seo 2007.99.51



Ōhi Toshio, Japanese, born 1958

Tea bowl, 1991

Ōhi ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of Joan Mondale 2009.15.12



Unryūan Kitamura Tatsuo, Japanese, born 1952

Black Raku style tea bowl, before 2006

Wood substrate, *kanshitsu*, *kawarinuri*, black and red lacquer

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Kaneko Gallery 2013.29.1310

This wood and lacquer tea bowl echoes the shape and texture of prized Raku ware stoneware tea bowls formed by hand, so each unique bowl conforms to the user's grip. As lacquer is a far less pliable substance than clay, Unryūan Kitamura Tatsuo mimicked the contoured shape of the ceramic bowl by carving a wooden core and using the dry lacquer technique (*kanshitsu*) to give the bowl its subtle form. Dry lacquer involves soaking a piece of cloth in lacquer, then molding it over the substrate. Finally, the artist used *kawarinuri*, the application of dry, ground up dustings of lacquer to create the bowl's mottled surface.



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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Tea bowl with cherry blossoms, 18th century

Raku ware; glazed stoneware with incised and stamped designs

Gift of John R. Van Derlip, E. C. Gale and others 09.54



Murase Jihei, Japanese, 1898–1972

Tea bowl, 1964

Earthenware with multicolored clay

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

2015.79.357



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Momoyama period (1573–1603)

“Burst Bag” freshwater jar, late 16th–early 17th century

Iga ware; stoneware with natural ash glaze; lacquer on wood (lid)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.293a,b

A mizusashi is a jar that holds the fresh water needed at different times during a tea ceremony. The first utensil to enter the room and the last to leave at the end of the ceremony, the mizusashi is perhaps the most important piece a tea master selects when preparing for a gathering—often, it is the star of the show.

The power of this mizusashi is in its seeming ability to shape-shift. From one angle it appears brown and relatively stable despite its irregular, bulging shape, marks created by the revolving potter’s wheel, and incisions made by the potter, all of which combine to enhance the jar’s sense of movement. Another vantage point reveals a partially green, far less stable jar that appears so full of energy that it may collapse, or implode, at any moment. The distorted beauty of this jar, with its unusual glaze effects, cracks, and scorch marks, is an excellent example of the aesthetic spirit of the late 1500s.



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Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Freshwater jar with two handles, early 17th century

Mino ware, Iga type (Motoyashiki kiln); glazed stoneware; lacquer on wood (lid)

Lent by Michael and Tamara Root L2017.117

Perhaps surprisingly, common buckets and pails were popular inspirations for designers of tea utensils. In fact, in the 1500s and 1600s, a time when notions of rusticity and imperfection were at the heart of tea aesthetics, it would not have been uncommon for a tea master to select an ordinary stoneware pail or bucket and then use it as a freshwater jar. This jar, with its rare square shape and handles, is reminiscent of the type of buckets people used for everyday tasks, but its irregular bulging body and undulating mouth add vigor to its homely inspiration.

A mark in the shape of a T on the bottom of this jar helps identify it as the work from the highly innovative Motoyashiki kiln, from which emerged in the late 1500s and early 1600s several distinctive styles that now characterize Japanese pottery of the Momoyama period.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Tea bowl, 17th century

Ko-Satsuma ware; stoneware with slip and glaze decoration

Gift of the Friends of the Institute 2001.132

Korean potters first founded the Satsuma kilns on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu in the late 1500s. Catering to the tastes of tea masters of the time, potters in Satsuma produced a variety of tea wares, most notably tea bowls and caddies. This bowl was decorated with thick irregular swathes of black and white clay slip and green glaze. Its somber tones and irregular shape accord well with the wabi (imperfect or rustic) aesthetic championed by Japan's most renowned tea master, Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591).



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Edo period (1603–1868)

“Clog-shaped” tea bowl, c. 1614–24

Takatori ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of the Friends of the Institute 2002.141.3

This tea bowl combines a thick, whitish glaze with a translucent amber one on a triangular-shaped form, known in Japanese as a kutsugata chawan, or “clog-shaped tea bowl.” This was a name given to peculiarly shaped tea bowls, which were thought to resemble footwear worn by some Buddhist priests. The combination of this glazing technique and distorted shape is unique to a single kiln, Uchigaso, which was active only between 1614 and 1624. This kiln was one of several in the northeastern area of the island of Kyushu that produced Takatori wares, so called for Mount Takatori located nearby. Early Takatori wares were created primarily by Korean potters who had been relocated to Kyushu by powerful local warlords during two Japanese invasions of the Korean peninsula in the 1590s. These potters’ tea wares, which were quite different from styles prevalent in their native Korea, made a huge splash among Japanese tea aficionados in the distant cities of Kyoto and Sakai.



Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Tea caddy, late 16th century

Bizen ware; glazed stoneware; ivory (lid)

The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund 2000.29.1a,b

Beginning in the 1300s, Japanese potters in and around Imbe village in the old province of Bizen produced a variety of sturdy utilitarian vessels using the local, iron-rich clay. The unglazed, rich reddish brown clay later appealed to tea masters like Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591), who is credited with profoundly shaping the Japanese tea ceremony in the late 1500s and is known to have prized accidental kiln effects. This small, finely crafted tea caddy exhibits the gomayū (sesame seed glaze) effect in which small yellowish beads of natural ash glaze form in the firing process. This caddy was once owned by Sotsutaku-sai (1744–1808), eighth-generation head of the Omotesenke, one of the three schools of the tea ceremony that carry on the tradition of Sen no Rikyū.



China, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)

Tea caddy named “Tamamizu,” 13th century

Glazed stoneware; ivory (lid)

Gift of funds from the Friends of the Institute 2003.28.1

(no photo)

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In the 1200s and 1300s, Chinese Zen monks visiting Japan and Japanese Zen monks returning to Japan from trips to China, carried with them many prized Chinese artworks like this tea caddy. Small, finely crafted containers originally created to store spices and medicines, tea caddies were used in Japan to hold powdered tea during the tea ceremony. Tea caddies and other tea utensils were often handed down with assorted boxes, silk wrappings, and various kinds of 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 reflecting its unique shape—Tamamizu, or “Drop of Water.”

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Tea caddy, late 16th–early 17th century

Seto ware; glazed stoneware; ivory (lid)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.321a–e

Potters active in the regions of Seto and Mino in central Japan produced tea caddies in great numbers in imitation of imported Chinese examples. By the 1500s, however, Japanese potters began to stray from accepted Chinese forms. While this caddy still reflects the overall katatsuki (straight shoulder) style, the gentle ripples of the surface more readily suggest the potter’s touch, in contrast to more precisely geometric Chinese examples.

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Tea caddy, late 16th century

Seto ware; stoneware with iron-rich glaze; ivory (lid)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.320a,b

This tea caddy (a vessel for powdered tea), with its short neck, rounded rim, and sharply angled shoulder, was modeled on Chinese examples first brought to Japan in the 1300s. However, it differs from more precisely crafted Chinese prototypes in important ways that are in keeping with the prevailing wabi (imperfect or rustic) aesthetic of Japan’s tea culture in the late 1500s. For example, the potter’s hand is revealed in the slight modulation of the body and the eye-catching pattern created through variations in the brown glaze. Although this tea caddy has traditionally been associated with kilns in the Seto region of central Japan, it was more likely produced at a kiln in neighboring Mino, an area to which many Seto potters moved in the late 1500s.



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Nonomura Ninsei, active c. 1646–94

Edo period (1603–1868)

Tea caddy, after 1657

Kyoto ware; glazed stoneware; ivory (lid)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.308a–c

Nonomura Ninsei remains one of Japan's most renowned potters and was one of the first to mark his works with his name. Ninsei learned his craft at kilns in Seto—an important center of pottery production at which several other works on view in this gallery were made—before moving to Kyoto and setting up his own kilns near the temple Nin'naji in the western part of the city. Ninsei's highly refined works include colorful pieces decorated with overglaze enamel, as well as more subdued works such as this tall katatsuki (straight shoulder) shape tea caddy that includes two shades of brown glaze covering the neck and body, giving way to unglazed clay at the bottom.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Tea caddy, 18th–19th century

Banko ware; glazed stoneware; ivory (lid)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.281a,b

In the 1730s, a wealthy merchant and tea practitioner named Nunami Rōzan (1718–1777), in the town of Kuwana in Ise Province, began fashioning his own stoneware tea utensils inspired by the wares he saw coming from potters in Kyoto and farther afield. He stamped each of his works with one of two seals, one that read banko, meaning “eternal,” and another that read banko fueki, meaning “eternal, constant.” He had no students of his own, but, several generations later, other local potters in Kuwana rediscovered Nunami Rōzan's work and began creating their own pottery in his style. Their creations, like this tea caddy, came to be called “Banko ware” after Nunami's seals.



Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, summer 2018

Shōwa period (1926–89)

Tea scoop, mid-20th century

Bamboo

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Muro 2002.54

Tea masters use small scoops, known as chashaku, to measure and draw powdered green tea from delicate tea caddies. Tea enthusiasts prize these humble objects because they are often crafted by tea masters themselves, rather than by professional artisans. While scoops of precious metals, iron, and ivory are sometimes used, bamboo is preferred because of the natural beauty of its surface variations and because there is little chance that a scoop fashioned from bamboo will damage the delicate mouths of ceramic and lacquer tea caddies.



Edo period (1603–1868)

Red tea bowl with fisherman, 18th century

Raku ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of Charles L. Freer 17.109

Raku tea bowls were first created by Chōjirō (d.1589), a maker of earthenware tiles, under the direction of the great tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). The light clay, thick black or red glaze, and hand-built forms combined to suggest the simplicity and rustic quality desired by Rikyū. The slightly exaggerated surface treatment of this bowl, as well as the roughly incised image of a fisherman trolling his boat, suggests that it was created later in the Edo period when tea enthusiasts and potters began to venture beyond the conservative and somber wabi aesthetic preferred by Rikyū.



Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, summer 2018

Edo period (1603–1868)

Tea leaf storage jar, 17th century

Tanba ware; glazed stoneware

Gift of Bruce B. Dayton 79.4

After tea leaves are picked and dried in spring, they are placed in tightly sealed stoneware jars and stored in cool, dry places (such as in the mountains or underground) to protect the tea from the heat and humidity of summer. The high neck of such storage jars was designed to receive a stopper, which would have been lashed to the vessel with a cord threaded through the four lugs (loops). During special mid-autumn tea gatherings called kuchikiri no chaji (mouth-cutting tea gathering), the jar's seal is broken, and guests are invited to enjoy the marvelous fragrance of the freshly opened tea. While guests then eat a formal, multicourse meal, the tea is ground into a fine powder using small stone mills set up in the preparation areas (mizuya) adjoining the tearoom.



A tea leaf storage jar, sealed and wrapped in silk brocade and silk cords



Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, summer 2018

Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Tea leaf storage jar, late 16th century

Bizen ware; stoneware with natural ash glaze and straw fire marks

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.282

This sturdy jar was used to store dried tea leaves before they were ground into powder for use in the tea ceremony. Its high neck was designed to accommodate a stopper that would have been lashed to the vessel with a cord threaded through the four lugs (loops). In the kiln, ash from the fire landed on the shoulders of the vessel and liquefied in the intense heat, creating natural glaze. The high iron content of Bizen clay determines the reddish-brown color of the jar and also causes the naturally greenish glaze to turn yellow, an effect known as gomayū or “sesame seed glaze.”



Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, summer 2018

Oki Ichiga, Japanese, 1796–1855

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Autumn Grasses and Insects, mid-19th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

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

2015.79.77.1

In this painting celebrating autumn, a dragonfly, grasshopper, and several other insects fly and jump among the fringed pink petals of dianthus, pink bushclover, and other flowering grasses. The painter, Oki Ichiga, served the lords of the Tottori Domain but lived in Japan's capital Edo (now Tokyo), where he was known for his eclectic style combining elements of other well-known painters. In this work, you can see the minutely detailed plants and insects in the vein of academic painters. To that, he added the “dripped pigment” (*tarashikomi*) technique learned from the decorative painters of the Rinpa school, enhancing the suggestion of light and three-dimensionality.

