Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Contents

G206	**Korean Art**
G220	**Sacred Arts of Buddhism and Shinto (partial rotation)**
G221-3	**Nature in Monochrome: Birds and Flowers in Japanese Ink Painting**

Upcoming in Japanese and Korean Art

EXHIBITION

Love Affair: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art until March 10, 2019

Rotation 2 – Galleries 226,227,237,238,239,251,252,253

Upcoming Exhibition

Living Clay -March 23, 2019- December 8, 2019 Galleries 251, 252, 253

PERMANENT GALLERY ROTATIONS

March 23, 2019- Fall 2019 —Galleries 226, 227, 237, 238, 239

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Gallery 206: Korean Art

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910)
Wedding robe, late 1800s–early 1900s
Silk
Gift of Kang Collection, Korean Fine Art, in honor of Dr. Matthew Welch
98.253

For most of the Joseon dynasty, only aristocratic women could wear the grand ceremonial robes known in Korean as *hwarot*. But in the late 1800s, women of all classes gained the ability to wear them. For this wedding robe, each color of silk also features a different design motif. The pink silk used on the sleeves, for example, features a geometric design of small diamond shapes while many of the other silks feature floral and vegetal patterns. All are symbolic and meant to provide wishes of happiness for the bride and her groom.

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910)
Man's Robe, late 1800s
Silk
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Byung Kang 99.184

This man's robe would have been worn over loose-fitting trousers called *baji*.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910)
Hat Box, 1800s
Wood, lacquer, abalone shell, metal
Gift of Will-Bes Dominicana Company, Chong Won Trading Company, Beautic Company, Yang Jee Industrial Company, the Margurite Kim Memorial Fund, the Harriet Hanley Estate, and the Mimi Johnson Estate
2002.219.1

This hat box, entirely encrusted with pieces of abalone shell, was used to store a man's inner hat, or *tanggeon*. Korean craftspeople used a special technique to create such objects. First a wooden box was coated with several layers of lacquer, onto which pieces of abalone shell were affixed. They then continued to coat the box with lacquer until the shell was completely covered. After the lacquer dried, they laboriously polished the surface with charcoal until the iridescent shell was revealed. Typical of Korean style, the mother-of-pearl is broken and reassembled in the manner seen here.

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910)
Hat, , late 1800s–early 1900s
Horsetail hair, bamboo and silk
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.524

Hats like this one, called *gat* in Korean, are made of horsetail hair and silk on a bamboo frame. In the 1800s they were only worn by married, middle-class men. *Gat* rode atop the head (rather than low on the brow like Western hats), were worn over an inner hat called a *tanggeon*, and were tied under the chin with black cords that might fall as low as the man's lower torso.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Image: Three Korean men, 1894. New York Public Library Digital Collections.
[https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-17a3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99]

<table>
<tr>
<td>Korea, Joseon period (1392–1910)
Tomb guardian figures, 1500s–1700s
Granite
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.533.1-2

From the 1500s to 1700s, stone figures of child attendants, called dongja, were placed in front of the graves of aristocrats or individuals who held high ranks in the government. The pair of dongja here each hold a lotus up to their chests. Later, stone child attendants like these were more commonly seen in combination with or replaced entirely by stone figures of adult civil officials. Such stone figures were charged with watching over the soul of the dead.</td>
<td>(No photo)</td>
</tr>
</table>

13th century **Lobed maebyeong** Vessel; Stoneware with incidental ash glaze Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.488 Vessels like this one, with its relatively narrow base that elegantly swells to broad shoulders and then narrows dramatically at the mouth, first gained popularity in China in the 900s, and came to be called “plum vessels,” or <i>meiping</i> in Chinese. Known as <i>maebyeong</i> in Korea, they are sometimes described as having been used for displaying branches of blossoming plum or other flowers but were more likely used to store plum wine. The lobes of this gracefully curving <i>maebyeong</i> are meant to suggest the sectioned exterior of a melon.	

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Gallery 220: Sacred Arts of Buddhism and Shinto

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.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

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.

Traditionally attributed to **Kyosei Sonchi** (dates unknown)
Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Welcoming Descent of the Amida Buddha Triad
Hanging scroll: Ink, color, and gold on silk
Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Carol Brooks 2013.29.794

Followers of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism believe that at the moment of death Amida Buddha will descend from his paradise to receive the soul of a faithful follower. This painting depicts Amida floating downward on clouds. He is accompanied by two attendant bodhisattvas, enlightened beings who postpone becoming buddhas in order to help living beings gain salvation. The bodhisattva at left is Seishi, whose hands are clasped in prayer, and at right is Kannon, who holds a lotus. It is believed that the dead will be received upon this lotus and transported to Amida's paradise by the sacred trio.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Kamakura period (1185–1333)
Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, 13th century
Japanese cypress wood (hinoki) with lacquer, gold, and inlaid glass
The Suzanne S. Robert Fund for Asian Art 2012.30a,b

This handsome, youthful male figure represents Kannon, a compassionate Buddhist deity who has forgone his own enlightenment in order to guide earthly beings along the Buddha path. In Japanese Buddhist art, Kannon takes various forms. Here, leaning forward with upturned, open hands, he is an attendant to Amida, a buddha who descends from the heavens to greet the faithful at the moment of their death and deliver them to paradise. This sculpture would have stood on an altar to the right of a larger sculpture of Amida. Kannon originally held a lotus pedestal (now missing) on which the dead were placed for their journey to paradise.

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.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Momoyama period (1573-1603)
Portrait Sculpture of Priest Gyōki, early 17th century
Wood, gesso, lacquer, pigment, and gold
The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund 95.85a0c

Gyōki (668–749) was one of the most celebrated Buddhist priests of the Nara period (710–94), revered as much for his spirituality as for his social and civic accomplishments. His most monumental undertaking was the casting of a colossal bronze statue of the Cosmic Buddha, Vairocana, at the temple Tōdaiji in the Japanese capital of Nara.
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 the temple and repair of the Vairocana Buddha sculpture. It was based on a 13th-century portrait-sculpture now in the collection of Tōshōdaiji temple in Nara. 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.

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.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Buddhist Altar Set, 18th century
Bronze

The John Cowles Family Fund 2002.141.2.1–5

In East Asia, Buddhists place fragrant incense, flowers, and candles before holy images as an expression of respect and to increase the magnificence of the worship hall. Incense is believed to purify the space, flowers constitute an offering or gift to the deity, and light symbolically illuminates the darkness of ignorance. This standard set of five objects for a Buddhist altar, known collectively as a go-gusoku, consists of two vases for flowers, two candleholders, and an incense burner.

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Makora, one of the Twelve Divine Generals, early 14th c.
Wood with traces of pigment and inlaid crystal eyes

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark
2013.31.40a,b

Many Buddhist deities are believed to be accompanied by groups of assorted attendants and guardians. In devotional paintings or in sculptural groupings installed on Buddhist altars, they appear beside or around the main deity. This fierce-looking figure is Makora, one of twelve protective deities known as the Twelve Divine Generals (*jūni shinshō*) who accompany the Healing Buddha, Yakushi Nyorai, to whom the faithful pray for release from suffering. Each of the Divine Generals is said to represent one of twelve vows made by the Healing Buddha to heal the sick and ignorant and guide them on the path to enlightenment.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Bishamonten, the Guardian of the North, late 12th century
Japanese cypress wood with traces of pigment and cut gold leaf (*kirikane*); metal

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the Collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark
2013.31.57a-c

Wearing heavy armor and carrying a lance, Bishamonten is a fierce protector of Buddha's teachings. In fact, he is the fiercest—the leader of the Four Heavenly Kings who guard the cardinal directions (East, West, North, South). As such, he presides over the most dangerous direction: the North, where evil forces were believed to originate. He was once worshipped in his own right, a cult that emerged early in the history of Buddhism. Already in the 700s, Japanese rulers and warriors were invoking Bishamonten in rituals for the protection of the state and victory in battle.

In this sculpture, his fearsome facial expression is enhanced by eyes made of crystal embedded within the head and painted from the back—a new technique developed in Japan in the late 1100s. The painting on or insertion of eyes takes place as part of a ritual ceremony that "activates" a sculpture. Once consecrated and enshrined upon an altar lit by candlelight, this sculpture's crystal eyes gleam with realistic intensity.

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)
Lotus Sutra, Chapter 9, 1200s–early 1300s
Fragment of a handscroll; Silk embroidered on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.451

The Lotus Sutra teaches that salvation is attainable for all living beings and states explicitly that women may also become buddhas. This straightforward teaching made it one of the most influential Buddhist scriptures and a particularly popular one, especially among women. Very little is known about the early production of embroidered Buddhist sutras like this one. But as most surviving examples are transcriptions of the Lotus Sutra, it is highly likely that women created them. Creating these extravagant sutras, first transcribed in ink and then embroidered with colored silk and lavishly decorated with gold and silver, was an act of devotion. This work is but one small fragment—19 lines of a single chapter from a sutra consisting of some 28 chapters—of what must have been a set of numerous handscrolls.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Heian period (794–1185)
Cylindrical Sutra Container, first half of the 1100s
Bronze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson 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, zealously copying Buddhist scriptures (*sutras*), enclosing them in sutra containers, and burying them in sutra burial mounds.

Japan, Heian period (794–1185)
Hexagonal Sutra Container, 1127
Bronze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.430a,b

This sutra container can be dated to the year 1127 thanks to an inscription incised on the body of the container. Its lid is decorated with delicate bird motifs.

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.

Kamakura (1185–1333) or Nanbokuchō (1336–92) period
Container for rubbing incense, 14th century
Gilt bronze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.432a–c

Rubbing incense (zukō)—powdered incense mixed with liquid to form a thick paste—has several ritual uses in Buddhism. It is applied to the body and also 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, like this gilt bronze example, are thus essential implements in Buddhist ritual.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

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.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Galleries 221, 222, and 223

Nature in Monochrome: Birds and Flowers in Japanese Ink Painting

Birds, flowers, insects, and plants are popular motifs in all types of Japanese art, but it was in the 1300s that Japanese painters first began painting pictures of these natural subjects in ink alone. Japanese painters, especially Zen painters, took up the brush to create small vignettes of nature in shades of black on paper or silk, inspired by Chinese ink paintings from the 1100s and 1200s then being imported to Japan. Their paintings often formed parts of multi-scroll compositions to be used in temples. Professional painters later applied these themes and techniques to large-scale paintings like folding screens. Bird-and-flower paintings often combined ink with bright flat colors and gold or silver foil, especially in the 1600s and thereafter—a uniquely Japanese synthesis of older Chinese and Japanese painting styles. But the expressive potential of ink meant that the popularity of monochrome bird-and-flower paintings never faded.

I **Hasegawa school**
Japan, Muromachi (1392–1573) or Momoyama period (1573–1603)
Crows and Cryptomeria, late 1500s or early 1600s
Six-panel folding screen; ink on paper
Bequest of Louis W. Hill, Jr. 96.146.11

A crow's cry is considered an ill omen in China and Japan, yet crows became a standard theme among Japanese artists from the 1500s onward. They may have been inspired by imported Chinese paintings of myna birds, which are not native to Japan, substituting the native species of crow instead. Painters of folding screens (which usually come in pairs) often paired a scene of raucous black crows with a quiet image of white egrets—the contrast heightened by the birds' coloration. Artists of the Hasegawa school, which originated with the celebrated painter Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539–1610), specialized in the impressionistic handling of ink brushwork seen here in the sketchily rendered branches.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Storage jar, 15th century
Tanba ware; stoneware with natural ash glaze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.329

This is an example of Tanba ware, named for the old province of Tanba, the area northwest of Kyoto where the kilns were traditionally located. Tanba ware has been produced there since the 1100s. Tanba jars and vases are often dark in color, due to the high iron content of the local clay. Vessels made before the late 1500s are either unglazed or enhanced only by natural ash glaze. The firing process for Tanba ware can take up to two weeks. Layers of wood ash that settled on this large storage jar during its long firing formed an irregular pattern of yellow-brown glaze over a portion of the neck, shoulder, and body.

Japan, Muromachi (1392–1573), Momoyama (1573–1603), or Edo period (1603–1868)
Owl and Crested Mynas on a Plum Branch, 16th or 17th century
Fan mounted as hanging scroll; Ink on paper
Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.10

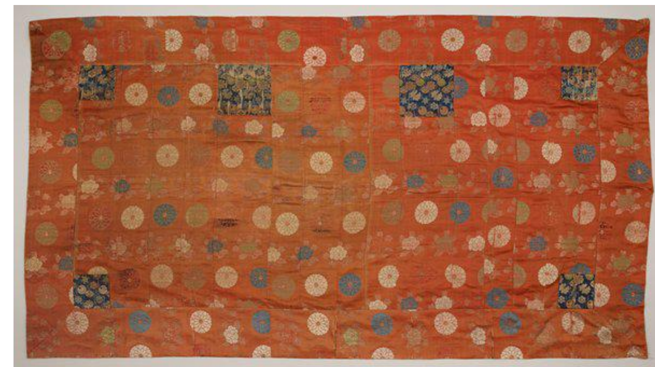
The combination of an owl with flocks of either crested mynas or crows, both loud and rowdy birds, appear on a number of ink paintings beginning in the 1500s. In this painting, five raucous crested mynas (a type of starling native to China) surround a stoic owl intent on resting on a blossoming plum branch. The vertical creases in the painting surface indicate that it was originally painted as a folding fan, and, given its appearance, it must have been a beloved, heavily used fan. After the fan had served its utilitarian purpose, its owner had the painted paper removed from the bamboo ribs of the fan and remounted as a hanging scroll for interior decoration.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Kenkō Shōkei Japanese, active c. 1478–c. 1523
Wagtails, late 1400s or early 1500s
Pair of Hanging scrolls; ink on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.3.1-2

Kenkō Shōkei was both a Zen priest and a highly skilled ink painter who spent most of his career at the major Zen monastery Kenchōji in the city of Kamakura. Here he depicted a pair of wagtails on branches in strikingly contrasting poses. One stares down to the right as if aiming at some prey, while the other stands straight with a glance to the left. Shōkei painted his birds using a rapid brush technique called "boneless" (that is, without outlines), a method seen as particularly suitable for Zen themes. This combination of compositional device and technique suggests that these wagtails once flanked a third painting of a Zen deity or patriarch as part of a devotional triptych. Pictures of birds or flowers often served this purpose in Zen painting. But Shōkei's original format seems to have been radically transformed by some later owner. Not only is the central painting missing but the vertical seams on each painting suggest that a previous owner cut up the original paintings to create two large horizontal compositions. The new format was less suitable for a Zen temple but fit the wide display alcove typical of grand residences. This type of conversion of a once sacred image to a secular one was not uncommon in Japan after the 1500s.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Buddhist priest's robe with design of chrysanthemums and peonies, 1700s
Silk brocade patchwork
Gift of Heidi Heffelfinger Todd in memory of Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Heffelfinger
95.117



***Kesa*: Buddhist Vestments**

Kesa are outer garments worn by Buddhist priests. Traditionally, they were pieced together from scraps of fabric rescued from old clothing donated by members of the community, an act symbolic of the historical Buddha's rejection of wealth. Sewing the scraps together serves as an act of meditation as a monk concentrates his attention on the creation of the garment and reverence for the Buddha's teachings. *Kesa*, however, can also be quite luxurious, as with the

examples here. This is because they were sometimes made from rich fabrics donated by wealthy

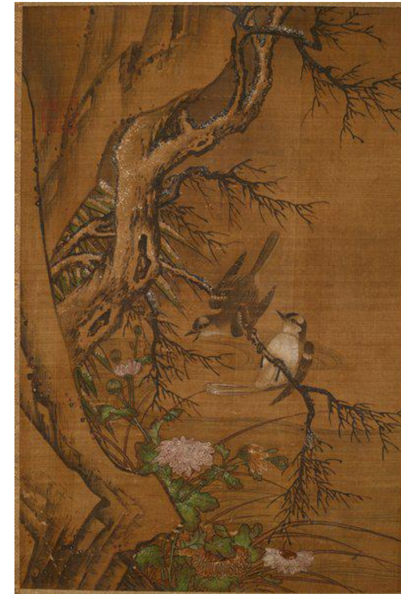
Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Storage jar, 15th century
Shigaraki ware; stoneware with natural ash glaze
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.324

Shigaraki, a town southeast of Kyoto, was one of Japan's great pottery-making centers, producing huge numbers of large storage jars and sturdy mortars (cooking vessels used for grinding seeds and spices). Shigaraki clay is notable for its high content of sand and the mineral feldspar. Such imperfections burst, or "bloom," in the kiln, giving the surface its characteristic roughness. This jar also displays an unusually heavy deposit of natural glaze that resulted when wood ash settled on the vessel's shoulder and liquefied in the heat, running down the sides in dramatic, uneven drips.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Setsuzan Japanese, active 1600s
Hermit, Doves on a Plum Tree, and Kingfisher on a Lotus, 1600s
Three hanging scrolls; Ink on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.69.1-3

As this trio of paintings currently exists, pictures of birds and flowers flank a central figural subject. This is an age-old compositional device frequently used for devotional Zen paintings in the 1400s and 1500s. In the center is a Chinese hermit, who appears to have fallen asleep. Writing utensils are set out beside him. A dove at right sits on an old plum branch, a tree that blossoms in late winter or early spring, while the kingfisher rests on a stalk of lotus, at left, its ragged edged leaf and exposed pod suggestive of autumn. However, it's unlikely that these paintings were originally intended to be shown together like this, given the uneven composition, with the motifs clustered in the lower right corner. Instead, they may have been part of a set of paintings pasted on the panels of a folding screen. Once removed from the screen, they may have been remounted as hanging scrolls and composed as a triptych by a previous owner.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019



Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Geiai Japanese, active c. 1489
Birds and Chrysanthemums in Snow, late 1400s
Hanging scroll; Ink and color on silk
Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.4

A pair of small birds have alighted on the branch of an old tree at the water's edge. A dusting of snow—delicately painted using *gofun*, a white pigment made of ground oyster shells—has fallen on the tree and a clump of blooming chrysanthemums below. This painting was almost certainly once part of a larger set depicting birds and flowers of various seasons. The season represented here is early winter, when chrysanthemums remain in bloom even as the snow begins to fall.

The artist Geiai is a bit of a mystery, but his known body of work reveals fluency in several different styles of Chinese painting introduced to Japan in the 1300s and 1400s. The unique composition (with most motifs clustered at left), heavy contour lines, and distinctive texturing of rocks suggest that Geiai took as his model a painting by a member of the Zhe school, a group of painters that flourished in China's Zhejiang region during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Geiai Japanese, active c. 1489 Japanese, active c. 1489
Sparrows among Millet and Asters, late 1400s

Hanging scroll; Ink on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.54

In this lively autumnal scene, five sparrows romp and bicker near millet and blooming asters. The artist Geiai used almost no contour lines in this work, which is quite distinct from his other painting displayed nearby, opting instead for the so-called "boneless" technique that relied on ink wash rather than lines to define the volume and mass of motifs. Little is known about the artist, who impressed a red seal reading "Geiai" at lower right. He may have been active in Kyoto at the end of the 1400s, and the handful of surviving paintings bearing his seals reveals his fluency in a number of styles of Chinese bird-and-flower painting introduced to Japan in the 1300s and 1400s.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Apothecary bottle with myna birds and peonies, c. 1660–80
Arita ware; porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.299a,b

In the 1500s and 1600s, blue-and-white porcelains made at China's famed Jingdezhen kilns were extremely popular in Europe, where the technology required to produce porcelain would not be known for another 200 years. When the Jingdezhen kilns entered a period of decline in the mid-1700s, porcelain makers in a town in far western Japan called Arita seized the opportunity and began making blue-and-white porcelains featuring European shapes and Chinese-style decoration for export to Europe. The combinations of flowers and birds used on many of these works—like myna birds and peonies—could also be found in traditional Chinese-style ink paintings. In the 1660s and 70s, the period of time during which this large apothecary bottle was created, Arita dominated the global porcelain market.

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Gallery 223:

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Kano Naonobu Japanese, 1607–1650
Birds in a Landscape, mid-1600s
Sliding-door panels mounted as a pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.13.1-2

Although these paintings now exist as a pair of folding screens, this is not how Kano Naonobu designed them. He originally designed them as sliding wall panels. One of the ways you can tell is by looking closely at the far left panel of the right screen, where at the left edge you can see a telltale round repair in the paper surface. This was where one of the door pulls originally was. In that original format—essentially movable, floor-to-ceiling murals—they would have surrounded the room's occupants, giving them the sense of being immersed in nature.

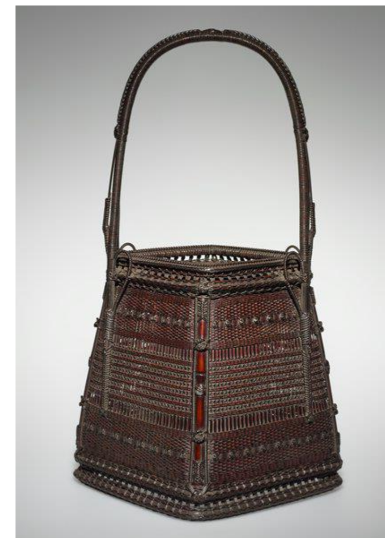
Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Ike (Tokuyama) Gyokuran, Japanese, 1727–1784
Chrysanthemums and Rock, mid to late 1700s
Hanging scroll; Ink on paper
Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
22015.79.138

Late blooming chrysanthemums, which often remain in flower during the first snowfalls of winter, are symbols of fortitude and resoluteness, and were a favorite subject for literati painters like Ike (née Tokuyama) Gyokuran and her husband, Ike Taiga. Her use of an angled brush—sometimes wet, sometimes very dry—captures the rough texture of an eroded rock, over which towers a chrysanthemum plant with three dramatic blossoms. The animated, well-balanced composition and abundance of curvilinear forms are characteristic of Gyokuran's singular painting style.

Japanese, Meiji period (1868–1912)
Morita Chikuami I, Japanese, 1877–1947
Chinese-style flower basket, late 1800s
Bamboo, lacquer, copper
Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.30.34a,b

Working out of a shop in Kyoto, established by his family in 1819 and still open for business today, Morita Chikuami specialized in creating bamboo baskets for a type of Japanese tea ceremony called *sencha*. *Sencha* emerged in Japan in the 1700s, based on contemporary Chinese practices, and was especially popular among the cultural elites of urban Japan. A key component of *sencha* decoration is flower arrangements, which often utilize bamboo flower baskets like this one. Symmetrical, with an abundance of meticulous decorative detailing, it reflects an age-old Chinese tradition of bamboo basketry that is in stark contrast to the freer forms characteristic of Japanese-style baskets.



Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)
Kusumi Morikage, Japanese, c. 1620–1690
Ducks, mid to late 1600s
Hanging scroll; Ink and color on silk
Bequest of Louis W. Hill, Jr.   96.146.14

Ducks, which begin arriving in late fall and populate creeks and ponds throughout the Japanese islands through the cold winter, have long been a favorite subject of Japanese poets and painters. Since they remain on the water even as ice forms around them and frost forms on their colorful feathers, they often serve as a metaphor for sleeping alone or remaining faithful to one's partner when away from home. In this painting, Kusumi Morikage shows a pair of mated ducks in a creek at night with a poem above.

The Wada Lineage of Bamboo Artists

Wada Waichisai I (1851–1901) was a pioneering bamboo artist active in the city of Osaka in the second half of the 1800s. While much remains unknown about his life and practice, the lineage of bamboo art that he established—and which continues today—is considered one of Japan's most distinguished. The first-generation Wada Waichisai, a specialist of Chinese-style bamboo basketry, catered to a clientele made up largely of members of the literati in Osaka, who practiced a type of Chinese-style tea ceremony called *sencha*, requiring a variety of vessels fashioned from bamboo. In addition to Wada Waichisai II (1877–1933) and Wada Waichisai III (1899–1975), heirs to the lineage name, Wada Waichisai I's students included Tanabe Chikuunsai, who established his own prominent lineage of bamboo artists that continues to this day.

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)
Wada Wachisai II, Japanese, 1877–1933
Passing Showers, early 1900s
Bamboo (hōbichiku or susudake)basket
The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.206a,b

Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Winter – Spring 2019

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)
Wada Wachisai I, Japanese, 1851–1901
Trailing Rings, late 1800s
Bamboo (*hōbichiku* or *susudake*), rattan, lacquer
The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark
2013.31.43a,b

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)
Wada Wachisai I, Japanese, 1851–1901
Diamond-shaped flower basket, late 1800s
Bamboo, rattan, lacquer
The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark
2013.31.58a,b