

# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

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# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 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.



# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

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)

**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.



**Sakai Hōitsu**, 1761–1828

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Welcoming Descent of Jizō Bodhisattva**, mid-1800s

# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.32

Japanese Buddhists worship Jizō as a compassionate deity with the ability to rescue suffering believers, especially those who have been reborn in hell. Here Jizō descends from the heavens on a cloud bank in the guise of a Buddhist monk, with a shaved head and wearing the multipaneled silk garments worn by ordained monks. He carries a wish-fulfilling jewel and a golden walking staff that jingles to announce his arrival. Although Sakai Hōitsu executed this painting primarily in ink and touches of gold, it is iconographically indistinguishable from painted and sculptural images of Jizō that emerged in the 1200s, when worship of this deity became widespread in Japan. Hōitsu is best known as a professional painter and reviver of the decorative, primarily nonreligious Rinpa style of painting that was popular a hundred years earlier, but he also spent the years 1797 to 1809 as a Buddhist monk, which may explain why he created a number of traditional Buddhist devotional paintings over the course of his career.

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# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

**Jizō, Bodhisattva of the Earth Matrix**, early 1200s

Wood with color, lacquer, and gold; metal

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

Jizō is a bodhisattva, an enlightened being of infinite grace and compassion who postpones his own buddhahood in order to help living beings escape suffering. Since the 900s, he has been portrayed as a young traveling monk who carries a wish-granting jewel and pilgrim's staff with metal rings that jingle to announce his arrival. He is popularly believed to assist those condemned to the torments of hell and the wayward souls of deceased children. This sculpture shows Jizō descending from the heavens, as suggested by the cloud bank that supports his lotus pedestal.



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, Fall 2019



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, Fall 2019

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

**Shinto god and goddess**, 1100s–1200s

Wood with color

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.265.1a–c and 2015.79.265.2a,b

Although Shinto deities often appear in the form of Japanese aristocrats, the appearance of this paired god and goddess reflects a unique blend of foreign and native dress that demonstrates the strong influence of Buddhism on Shinto imagery. The male deity with his meditative pose, *urna* (the dot on his forehead), elongated ears, and crown appears more like a bodhisattva, a type of Buddhist deity. The female deity wears a robe with pleated sleeves and frilled collar, which reflects Chinese dress of the Song dynasty (960–1279). Carved from single blocks of wood, with the artist's chisel marks visible, the god and goddess sit before wooden plaques painted to suggest trifold screens decorated with pines, rolling hills, and birds.



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, Fall 2019

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

**Shri-mahadevi (Japanese: Kichijōten)**, first half of the 13th century

Japanese cypress, lacquer, and pigments

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.263a–e

Shri-mahadevi is a female Buddhist divinity with Hindu origins. In Hinduism, she is Lakshmi, a goddess associated with good fortune and the wife of Vishnu, one of Hinduism's three principal gods. Chinese Buddhists, however, transformed her into a *deva*, a supernatural being that has extreme longevity but remains outside the realm of enlightenment and attempts to assist believers on the path toward salvation. Married to Vaishravana-deva, Guardian of the North, Shri-mahadevi likewise is associated with protection of the north, which was believed to be a dangerous direction inhabited by demons and other evils. In this Japanese sculpture, she wears a robe that was once brightly colored with floral patterns—clothing common among women in China's Tang dynasty (618–907), a nod to her Chinese roots.



Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333) or Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392)

**The Healing Buddha and Twelve Generals**

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.7

The Healing Buddha, whose name in Japanese, Yakushi Nyorai, means literally “medicine teacher,” is the golden figure seated at the center of this painting. Just below and in front of him are his attendants, the bodhisattvas of the moon and sun. According to Buddhist scripture, the Healing Buddha himself was once a bodhisattva (a divine being who postpones becoming a buddha and helps living beings achieve enlightenment) who made 12 vows to heal the sick and ignorant and guide them on the path to salvation. His 12 great vows manifested as 12 divine generals, shown here as figures wearing armor and carrying weapons, six on either side of the central triad. Having made his vows and become a buddha, the Healing Buddha with his retinue rules over a celestial realm in the east called Vaiduryanirbhāsa, or “Pure Lapis Lazuli.” His teachings, which act as a cure for human suffering, are symbolized by the small medicine jar he cradles in his left hand.





# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

**Chakra**, 1200s

Gilt bronze

Gift of funds from Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Maslon 72.6a,b

This implement was used in Buddhist rituals. Its wheel shape is derived from an ancient Indian throwing weapon, or *chakra*, that was believed to be one of the seven treasures of universal monarchs known as *chakravartin* (literally, “wheel-turning kings”). The mystical weapon was believed to scatter the monarch’s enemies in all directions. In Buddhism, it came to symbolize the vanquishing of passions and desires that lead to human suffering.



**Rihei**, active 1400s

Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)

**Ewer**, 1400s

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. This rare example features a dragon coiling up the handle toward a supernatural elephant-tiger-oxen hybrid known as a *baku*, which crouches atop the lid.



Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)

Incense burner with Chinese lions, 1500s

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 and common motif in East Asian art. The lion on top rests his left paw on an orb—the wish-granting jewel of Buddhism—in a protective gesture.



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019



[mia\_6020248.tif]

China, *Ding* food vessel, 5th century BCE, bronze with inlaid silver decor. Bequest of Alfred F. Pillsbury, 50.46.76a,b

Japan, Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392) or Muromachi period (1392–1573)

**Wash basin with legs**, dated 1353 or 1413

Negoro ware; red and black lacquer on zelkova wood

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.410

The underside of this ceremonial wash basin (*tara*), used for rinsing one's hands in preparation for Buddhist ritual, is inscribed with the name Sanshitsuō (perhaps indicating the location at which it was used) and a cyclical date that corresponds to either 1353 or 1413 making this one of the oldest Negoro wash basins of its type in existence today.

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.



# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

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, Fall 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, Fall 2019**

# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

Galleries 221, 222, and 223

**Soga Nichokuan**, active mid-1600s

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Hawks by a Stream**, mid-1600s

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

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

2013.31.46.1-2

Birds of prey became a favorite subject of members of Japan's warrior class beginning in the 1400s and 1500s. When applied to large-scale paintings like folding screens, such images, which express notions such as military prowess, power, and valor, made for a particularly impressive backdrop for warriors' reception rooms. Soga Nichokuan, like his father, Soga Chokuan (Nichokuan literally means "the second Chokuan"), specialized in images of birds, especially hawks and other birds of prey, whose textured feathers they described using a meticulous layering of various tones of ink wash. The hawks of Nichokuan and his father owe a great deal to older Chinese and Japanese paintings (like the scroll by Kano Yukinobu displayed in this gallery). But Nichokuan, particularly in late works like this one, placed these more conservative birds into surreal landscapes of knobby, wildly twisting trees, jagged boulders, and sometimes bizarre water features.



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

**Kano Yukinobu**, c. 1513–1575

Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)

**Hawk**, mid-1500s

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.93

This painting of a hawk perched on the branch of an old tree and possibly eyeing some prey below was once the left half of a pair of paintings (see its original mate below). The hawk's feathers, meticulously rendered in fine brushwork over various shades of ink wash, reflect the influence of artist Kano Yukinobu's better-known older brother, Kano Motonobu (1476–1559), the second-generation head of the powerful Kano house, which dominated Japanese painting circles from the 1500s to 1800s. A key subject in the Kano repertoire, birds of prey were symbols of power and might that would have appealed to one of the Kano house's military patrons.



Kano Yukinobu (Japanese, c. 1513–1575), *Hawk on a Pine*, 1500s, hanging scroll; ink on paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary and Cheney Cowles Collection, Gift of Mary and Cheney Cowles

[For Rurik: Full res image is available on metmuseum.org:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/816195?&searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=yukinobu+hawk&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=1>]

# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

**Kano Hōgai**, Japanese, 1828–1888

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

**Eagle Threatening Monkeys**, second half of the 1800s

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 like linear perspective learned from Western painting: here, the mountains in the lower middle and left of the painting grow smaller and disappear at the horizon. This method of suggesting a recession into space is very different from the various alternative approaches available to earlier Japanese painters.



Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912) or Taishō period (1912–1926)

**Boy's robe with tethered hawks**, late 1800s or early 1900s

Silk

Gift of funds from the Asian Art Council 98.112.2

The birds of prey depicted on this boy's garment have braided silk cords attached to their feet, indicating that they are captive birds trained for hunting and sport. Falconry has a long tradition in elite Japanese society. Well established in Japan by the 700s and practiced primarily among the aristocracy, falconry eventually came to be associated with military prowess and was widely practiced by elite members of the rising warrior class after the 1200s. During and after the 1600s, master falconers were even accorded special rank within the warrior class hierarchy. Although this costume for a boy was created decades after the Japanese government eliminated the class system and, along with it, military privileges for the warrior class, it is decorated with falcons as enduring emblems of strength and focused determination.



Muromachi period (1392–1573)

**Storage jar**, 15th century



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

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.

17th century

**Setsuzan**

**Doves, Hermit, and Kingfisher**

Triptych of hanging scrolls; Ink on paper

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

2015.79.69.1-3



# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

**Yosa Buson**, Japanese, 1716–1783

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Kite and Crows**, late 1770s

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.62

A pair of crows huddle against a downpour of rain, suggested by diagonal bands of ink wash and downturned leaves. Farther up on the same branch, a kite (a type of bird of prey) appears unperturbed by the stormy weather. The pairing of a kite and crows appears with some frequency in paintings by Yosa Buson, as it does in a type of poetry known as *haikai* (the poetic form from which modern-day haiku evolved). Buson was a master of both mediums, and it is possible that the subject of his painting was drawn from a poem



**Yosa Buson**, Japanese, 1716–1783

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Crows**, mid-1700s

Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection; Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.128

Seven raucous crows flit in and around an old tree at dusk, a scene all too common in autumn and winter. In Japanese poetry and painting, crows have long served as signs of the arrival of winter (the autumn season is suggested in this painting by the pink highlights on the tree's leaves), and, by extension, death. One old folk belief is that a crow's call may signal the death of someone nearby. Another says that a crow's call at night is an omen of a fire. This can make them a somewhat gloomy motif, as in the famous haiku by Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), who, like Yosa Buson himself, was a widely celebrated poet: "Crows resting / on a withered branch— / evening in autumn." Here, though, Buson's loose, energetic brushwork lends the scene a sense of liveliness.



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

c. 1660-1680

**Apothecary bottle with mynah birds and peonies**

Imari ware; porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue

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

2015.79.299a,b



# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

## Gallery 223:

**Yamamoto Baiitsu**, Japanese, 1783–1856

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Flowers and Insects of Spring and Fall**, mid-1800s

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

Purchase through Art Quest 2003 and The William Hood Dunwoody Fund  
2003.197.1–2

A renowned scholar-painter, Yamamoto Baiitsu used the difficult “boneless” technique of applying pigment directly to the paper, without first drawing any outlines, as a way to impart a palpable delicacy and sense of volume to leaves and petals. As demonstrated in these screens, he also was skilled at capturing nature’s complicated profusion of vegetation. Both technique and subject matter are drawn from painting traditions in China much admired by Japanese artists. But unlike many of his predecessors, who had little firsthand knowledge of Chinese painting styles, Baiitsu had direct access to Chinese Ming-dynasty bird-and-flower paintings, imported through the port at Nagasaki.



**Yosa Buson**, Japanese, 1716–1783

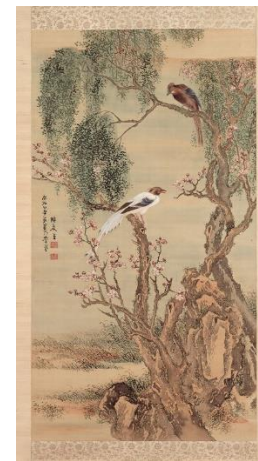
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Two Magpies on Willow and Peach Trees**, 1774

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation  
2015.79.126

In China, willows and peach trees are likened to a pair of lovers, and here their branches are intertwined. A pair of magpies, known to bring wealth and have divine power, sit in the trees with the female above seeming to look down critically at her partner’s singing.



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

Yosa Buson, a poet and prolific painter, drew from a variety of sources for his paintings. The inspiration for this large work is unmistakably Shen Nanpin (also known as Shen Quan, c. 1682–1760), an older Chinese contemporary of Buson's who lived and worked in the Japanese city of Nagasaki briefly during the early 1730s and attracted many Japanese followers. Shen's colorful, realistic pictures of birds and flowers proved extremely popular in Japan in the mid-1700s, and he continued to send works back to Japan even after his return to China in 1733.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Nagasawa Roshū**, Japanese, 1767–1847

**Birds and Flowers**, c. 1840

Pair of hanging scrolls; ink and color on silk

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund and Gift of Funds from Mary Griggs Burke, the Squam Lake Foundation, and The Asian Art Council 95.70.1–2

Artists of the Maruyama School of painting combined Western realism with the indigenous penchant for decorative design to produce works of great naturalism and pleasing visual effect. Nagasawa Roshū, pupil of the progenitor of the school and adopted son of one of its leading masters, was himself a master of this style. This set of paintings is an impressive example of his work and reveals both Roshū's debt to his teacher, Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795), and to his adoptive father, Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754–1799). The refined, precise approach clearly suggests Roshū's fidelity to Ōkyo's fastidious style, while other elements reveal the unorthodox approach of Rosetsu, who was fond of juxtaposing subjects of vastly different scale. Here, Roshū echoes this approach by pairing a tiny wagtail at left with the imposing peacock at right.



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

**Tsubaki Chinzan**, Japanese, 1801–1854

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Swallow's Song in Spring Breeze**, 3rd lunar month of 1852

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

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

2015.79.153

Tsubaki Chinzan overcame tremendous adversity to become one of the leading Chinese-style painters in Japan in the 1800s. His father died when he was only seven, leaving him and his mother destitute. Perhaps because of their sordid living conditions, he suffered from a pulmonary disease from a young age. Nevertheless, he eventually earned the minor military rank of spear bearer and was highly skilled in martial arts. Only after the low wages of this official rank forced him to seek additional income did he become a professional artist. He studied with the renowned painter Watanabe Kazan (1793–1841), who integrated elements of Western realism into his work. Here, Chinzan's close attention to natural detail probably reflects that influence. The light, lyrical impression created by the "boneless" method (painting forms with only ink and color washes instead of outlines) and lush color tonalities, however, reflects Chinzan's own artistic sense and consummate skill with the brush.



# Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

## Gallery 206: Korean Art

One Hundred Children at Play, 1800s

Ten-panel folding screen; ink and color on paper

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

2015.79.458

This folding screen draws upon a tradition of depicting an abundance of children, especially boys, playing in luxurious palace-garden settings, a convention first developed by Chinese artists in the 900s. Since then, such images have appeared frequently on everything from paintings to porcelain vases and clothing, not only in China but in places like Korea and Japan that are within the sphere of Chinese cultural influence. They represented the hopes for the birth of children and for their successes. A screen like this one, which shows numerous boys engaged in the same types of playtime activities as those seen in Chinese paintings from hundreds of years before, might have been used as an optimistic backdrop for a New Year's party or some other celebratory gathering.



China, *Children Playing in the Palace Garden* (detail), late 1200–1400s, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1987

[Note for Rurik: Let's crop this however we need to for visitors to be able to see the similarities in the description of the boys. The original file is downloaded on the JKA server

## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

or can be downloaded at full res here:

<https://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/as/original/DT4560.jpg>



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.

(No photo)



## Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019

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 *meiping* in Chinese. Known as *maebyeong* 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 *maebyeong* are meant to suggest the sectioned exterior of a melon.



## **Japanese Art—Gallery Rotations, Fall 2019**