Masterpieces of Japanese Art
Cincinnati Art Museum February 14 – August 30, 2015
Docent Packet

The *Masterpieces of Japanese Art* exhibit celebrates the beauty and breadth of the Cincinnati Art Museum's permanent collection. The one hundred featured artworks exemplify five centuries of artistic creation. They were selected from over three thousand Japanese objects, including paintings, screens, ceramics, lacquer and metal wares, ivory carvings, arms and armor, dolls, masks, cloisonné, textiles and costumes. The Cincinnati Art Museum was one of the first museums in the United States to collect Japanese art, thanks to many generous patrons, including business people and artists, who traveled to Japan.

From the Director's Forward to the catalog: "We will forever be grateful to Dr. Hou-mei Sung for assembling *Masterpieces of Japanese Art* and for spearheading an extensive project of researching, cataloging, documenting, and preserving these works. Without her scholarship, her vision and her passion for Japanese art we would not be in a position to share this collection in such a complete and thorough fashion." Aaron Betsky

The packet begins with a short history of Japanese art history and a discussion of Heian Court Life which influenced many artworks in the exhibit. Five sections are organized around themes that could be used to plan a tour or to select artworks across the themes to customize a tour. The Animals and Fashion tours are family friendly. The Asian Painting, Religion and Donors tours appeal to a wide audience. The committee is very grateful to Dr. Sung for selecting the highlights of the exhibit that are featured in this docent packet. We relied heavily on her scholarship in the catalog and in her excellent Gallery Guide that is available in the exhibit. Committee members were: Pat Cordes, Patty Misrach, Ellie Nelson, Beth Newman, and Helen Rindsberg, Chair.

A Brief History of Japanese Art

Japan is a nation of islands off the east coast of Asia. The Sea of Japan separates it from its nearest neighbors, China and Korea. Those two cultures influenced Japan during key periods of its development. But Japan blended those ideas with its native artistic aesthetic that stressed unspoiled nature, natural materials like clay and wood, asymmetry rather than symmetry and simple handmade forms.

The earliest culture in Japan is the Jomon (10,000 – 300 BC), a hunter-gather society that is the only one in the world to create pottery. Jomon pottery is distinguished by complex coiled clay designs that are asymmetrical and sculptural. The Yayoi culture (300 BC – 300 AD) began cultivating rice and developed a complex society that led to the imperial family. The Kofun culture (300 – 710 AD) built large hill-shaped tombs that were guarded by clay figures of warriors, singers and horses. The great Shinto shrine at Ise, built in the 4th century, shows a unique Japanese style of wooden architecture. Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the 6th century when formal contact with Korea and China began. New forms of art, government, Chinese writing, medicine, music and city planning changed Japan.

During the Nara period (710-794), Japanese traveled freely to Tang Dynasty China. Buddhist temples were built using Chinese architectural traditions. Todaiji Temple in the city of Nara was built on a grand scale to impress everyone that a strong government ruled Japan. The Heian era (794-1185) was the great flowering of court culture in the capital city of Kyoto. In 838 Japan closed her doors to China and made a determined effort to develop native forms of art and culture. In the eleventh century Lady Murasaki wrote the world's first novel *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji)*. New styles of painting and calligraphy blossomed.

During the Muromachi Period (1392-1573) powerful clans outside of Kyoto rebelled against the taxes imposed by the emperors. A military shogun controlled Japan from Kamakura. The samurai warrior was now the hero. Daimyo (clan rulers) commissioned artists to decorate their castles and commemorate their military victories. The samurai adopted Zen Buddhism, which stressed mental and physical discipline and self-denial. *Zenga*, the art of Zen monks, aided meditation. During the Momoyama Period (1573-1615) Japan was unified after centuries of war. The Momoyama generals were great patrons of the arts. In public their artists built grand audience halls in

elaborate castles, such as Himeji, but in private they preferred the rustic Shinto aesthetic and the tea ceremony. Confucianism with its emphasis on a strict hierarchy also influenced samurai culture. That philosophy included the concept of *ren* – human heartedness and education, loyalty, justice with empathy, and respect for age and authority. From 1543 – 1600 Portuguese and Spanish traders brought new goods and ideas that influenced Japanese artist.

The Tokugawa Shogunate brought peace to Japan during the Edo Era (1615-1868). The traditional arts, pottery, painted screens and religious art continued in Kyoto and Osaka, but new art forms developed in the shogun's capital, Edo (Tokyo). Literacy was more widespread and illustrated novels, romances, travel guides and tales of the supernatural were published. Woodblock prints quickly developed into a fine art. Colorful prints of fashionable women and famous male Kabuki actors replaced traditional images of Buddha, samurai, Zen masters and misty landscapes. Peace brought prosperity and more people traveled. The new middle class eagerly collected views of popular landscapes.

America and Europe forced Japan to reopen its door to international commerce in the late 1850's. The resulting cultural shocks brought down the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868. In the Meiji Period (1868-1912) Japanese artists became fascinated with Western art and the *Yoga* School developed out of tutoring by European painters and sculptors in the 1870s. There was a sharp reaction against *Yoga* in the 1880s when *Nihonga* artists adapted some traditional painting techniques to a modern aesthetic. Other historic styles remained unaffected by the great changes. During these decades Japanese art became very popular in the West, influencing Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, symbolism, art nouveau and the arts and crafts movement.

Common Characteristics of Traditional Japanese Art

1. Reverence for nature and awareness of the seasons from the native Shinto religion
    a. preference for asymmetry and natural imperfections
    b. deeply felt love for unspoiled nature
    c. reverence for natural materials, clay and wood
    d. tradition of rustic, handmade objects
    e. periods of silence for contemplation, poetry, drama, tea ceremony to be experienced slowly and thoughtfully
2. Influenced at key points by the art, architecture and religions of other cultures
    a. China, beginning in the 6th century AD
    b. Europe, briefly between 1543 – 1638
    c. Europe and America, beginning in 1853
3. During periods of isolation, adapted foreign influences into their arts to develop a unique aesthetic based on Japanese values.
4. Developed one of the first popular cultures centered on commoners; artistic traditions spread through printed communications, wide-spread travel and theater.

Heian Court Culture (794-1185)

Over fifteen artworks in the exhibit are based directly on the culture of the imperial court during the Heian Period, illuminating the poetry, literature, social life and architecture of that culture. During that era it's estimated that one thousand courtiers and members of the royal family influenced every aspect of the arts, both secular and religious. Even today, motifs from the Heian Period can be found in fine and popular arts.

By the Heian Period, most aspects of Japanese culture had been affected by Chinese art and religion. But in the early ninth century the Japanese closed their doors to the Tang Dynasty and chose to re-examine their own artistic heritage. Japanese painters rejected the Chinese narrative themes, ferocious mythical creatures and landscapes of rugged mountains. Artists embraced the softer contoured landscape they loved in the low mountains that surround Kyoto on three sides. Artworks were primarily secular, colors were rich but not brash and artists used images from nature drawn directly from poetry.

Life centered on the palace in Kyoto. Men and women were expected to compose poetry, brush exquisite calligraphy, dress impeccably and chose the perfect incense for every occasion. Polygamy assured an heir and men constructed sprawling mansions with a private wing for each wife. Women were somewhat isolated but did attend festivals and court ceremonies though they were behind luxurious silk screens. In the tenth century court ladies devoted themselves to writing romances and later women spent considerable time painting religious works including Buddhist sutras (*Sutra* 1985.12, catalog pages 86-87 and see page 10 this packet).

Genji Monogatari (Tale of Genji) is the direct inspiration for three artworks. The world's first novel is a psychological exploration of the complex Heian aristocracy brought to life through all five senses. The six-panel screen *Presentation of a Prince* (1982.6, catalog pages 122-123 and see page 16 this packet) illustrates a scene from the first chapter, twelve-year old Genji's initiation ceremony before the emperor. *Tale of Genji: Autumn Outing* (1996.337, catalog pages 92-93) illustrates Genji, now a cultured, handsome and sensitive man, stopping to visit his future bride, Murasaki, as she plays with a set of dolls in a doll house.

A pair of eight-fold screens *Scenes from the Tale of Genji* (1964.292-3 catalog pages 110-113 and see page 14 this packet) illustrates a wide variety of episodes from Chapters 1, 7, 18, 15, and 26. These were standard conventions for painting Genji scenes from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including servants waiting by an ox cart and musicians on a dragon boat.

These screens also give us examples of the architecture of the times. The "blown away roof" convention allows viewers to peer into rooms that were simply furnished and divided by large folding screens. Wide porches afforded views of extensive gardens used for games and poetry and painting competitions. Two rivers and many streams flow down from the mountains around Kyoto. Architects directed their waters into large ponds where boating parties were a favorite pastime.

Two artworks give a detailed view of an oxcart, the premier status symbol of the time: *Ox Carts* (1964.720-1 folding screens, catalog pages 114-117) and *Model of an Oxcart* (1911.1371, catalog page 155). The koto, known as the Japanese harp, was a major instrument in court music. Ivory, red coral, and gold lacquer create a beautiful landscape with blooming plants and butterflies on the *Koto* (1891.2956, catalog 153),

Throughout the Heian period poetry was a favored art form and a cherished means of communication between friends, family and lovers. One's reputation depended on skill at poetry and writing calligraphy. The Japanese developed *waka,* a poem of five lines and 31 syllables that drew on a rich fund of imagery developed over several centuries by court poets. Major themes were nature and the changing seasons and could evoke a mood of a particular moment or season. The beautiful *Writing Box* (1889.310, catalog page 151) with its rolling hills, meandering stream and auspicious pine and bamboo incorporates motifs favored by imperial poets.

Scenes from the Tales of Ise (1962.569a-b, catalog pages 106-109) takes its subject matter from a lyrical novel of more than one hundred episodes written in the late ninth or early tenth centuries. Each episode included one or more waka poems and expressed an appreciation of nature's beauty and a melancholic awareness of the transience of life. *Plate* (L503.1891, catalog page 177) is a portrait of a hero of the *Tales of Ise*, Ariwara no Narihira (825-880) one of the Thirty-Six Immortal Poets and shown here as the epitome of *beau homme* in the Japanese culture.

Poetry competitions were held at court and at private social events. Saké was a favored drink during these activities and the palace compound included a saké brewery. *Animal Story Scroll* (1906.4, catalog pages 58 – 61 and see page 6 this packet) depicts bush warblers in a poetry competition and frogs composing poems in an informal setting. *Plate* (1977.189, catalog page 148-149) depicts eight views of Lake Biwa, a favorite leisure area for the Heian court. The views are based on eight ancient Chinese poems that include the themes of a temple bell at sunset and geese flying home.

Many imperial poetry anthologies were assembled during the Heian Period. Around 1237 a courtier, Fujiwara no Teika, compiled *Hyakunin Isshu*, a selection of one hundred poems from one hundred poets from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries. Later these poems became part of a card game much like Concentration that is still played today at New Years. Typical cards from the game are illustrated on the Kutani *Vase* (2011.26, catalog page 150). Another anthology was the *Thirty-six Immortal Poets*, again one poem from each poet. Look

carefully at the upper left corner of *Portrait of Kakinomoto no Hitomaru* (1964.706, pages 74-75) and you will see an island and sailboats that refer to his poem from that anthology.

> Faintly with the dawn
> That glimmers on Akashi Bay
> In the morning mist
> A boat goes hidden by the isle –
> And my thoughts go with it. (Translation by Edwin A. Cranston, Harvard University)

Submitted by: Helen Rindsberg

Animals in Japanese Art

Animals play an extensive role in Japan's cultural and religious history. Artists portray them realistically, as mythical creatures and as imaginary figures. Animals appear in many native mythical stories. They constitute an element of the ancient Shinto religion and are linked with Taoism and Buddhism. They were imported from India and China into Japan in the 6th century and incorporate many representatives of the animal kingdom, linked to Buddhist deities as messengers or mounts. Animals figure prominently as signs in the traditional East Asian zodiac cycle of twelve different animals, in the lunar calendar system, each of them representing the 12 years or "branches" and also used for the twelve horary periods of a day.

Ozawa Nankoku (1844-?)
Flying Cranes
Meiji Period (1868-1912)
Pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk
Gift of Robert F. Blum Estate 1906.13.1-2 (Catalog pages 64-65)

Ozawa Nankoku was a Nanga school painter of the Meiji period. *Nanga* was a school of painting which flourished in the late Edo period among artists who considered themselves literati, or intellectuals. The Nanga painters all shared an admiration for traditional Chinese culture. Their paintings usually focused on expressing the rhythm of nature and were painted in monochrome black ink with some light color. They nearly always depicted Chinese landscapes or similar subjects and were patterned after Chinese literati painting.

The scrolls depict the gathering of cranes in the spring and autumn. The Daoists believe that cranes are "birds of the immortals" and when cranes gather it is an auspicious sign indicating a time of peace and prosperity. The left scroll depicts spring. Many cranes are arranged against a spring landscape of budding trees, some hovering over the water and two cranes are shown in the heaven calling attitude (heaven calling refers to the voice of a sagacious man which will be heard by a wise ruler who is a son of heaven). The cranes along the riverbank are in the food pecking attitude and the rest are flying overhead. The autumn scroll features five cranes on the ground. Look for the blue crane and a baby crane. The autumn grasses are beautifully painted. Six more cranes fly overhead in formation. Together the scrolls form a subtle lyrical expression of the seasons' moods.

Cranes: Cranes are the most admired birds in China and Japan. The crane is a symbol of longevity and the companion of wise men. The bird was protected by the emperor and it was absolutely forbidden to shoot one. The birds are typically five foot tall with a wingspan of eight feet. The patch of red skin on their crown becomes brighter when they are ready to mate. The crane is the symbol of Japan Air Lines. It mates for life so it is a symbol of loyalty and it flies high for miles without tiring, so it is a symbol of strength.

For discussion: Why do you think the artist showed the cranes in spring? How does the season relate to the crane's symbolism? What birds are used as symbols in America? What do they represent?

Hoen (Taira) Yoshiteru
One Hundred Birds
Meiji Period (1868-1912)
Hanging scroll ink and color on silk 2005.610 (Catalog pages 100-101)

One hundred birds is a traditional Chinese theme symbolizing prosperity. One hundred is not taken literally but usually refers to a numerous amount. The theme's symbolic meaning is based on an analogy that compares the daily activities of many species of birds to the peace and prosperity of Japan at that time. The different birds equate to all the people from different walks of life going about their daily business. The painter treats his traditional subject in an innovative manner. The many birds are placed against autumn plants next to a stream and are painted with ink and color washes that evoke a lyrical mood associated with the season.

Birds are the wild animals most frequently encountered in daily life. They figured prominently in literature and art. Birds are among the subjects of the earliest cave paintings. Kings and commoners have kept birds in cages to enjoy their songs and beauty. In many cultures birds have been an inspiration for poets and painters. The Japanese view of animals has been influenced by two spiritual traditions, the native Shintoism and Buddhism, introduced into Japan in the 6th century. Both impart a sacredness to nature. Therefore animals, just the same as man, are considered to be traveling to enlightenment and they should not be harmed.

Symbolism of several species of birds found in the scroll
Crow or Raven: The imperial monarchy of Japan was founded in 660 BC by Emperor Jimmu, according to the legend with the help of a crow. His ancestor Amaterasu came in a dream to him and said that she would send him a crow (or raven) to guide him through the land and help him become the new emperor. Crows are thought to be gifted with supernatural powers and to be messengers of the Gods and associated with fire. There is a legend that the crow is the only bird that flies near the sun and the black color of the crow's feathers is the result of scorching by the sun rays – hence the association with red sunsets. The crow was an important animal in the Haiku poetry of the Edo period.
The Egret: The egret, like the white heron or crane, is a symbol of longevity and was sometimes used as a mount by the gods or sages.
Wild Geese: Admired for keeping in good order while flying or resting, geese never lose their orderly sequence which is the way it should be among brothers. The goose standing on guard, always alert while the others are resting or eating demonstrated the bond between a master and his attendant.
Mandarin Ducks: These birds symbolize loyalty, conjugal love and eternal faith. Once paired, they stay together for life as Buddhism teaches.

For discussion: Why do you think that a large group of birds is a symbol of peace? Ask the visitors to find a crow, egret, wild goose or mandarin duck. Then share with them the symbolism of the bird they choose.

Admonition Drum
Meiji Period (1868-1912)
19th century
Lacquer 1913.706-707 (Catalog page 157)

In China and Japan, a drum with a rooster or bird perched on top of it symbolizes peace and good government. This lacquered sculpture features a standing rooster on top of a drum while a hen rests quietly on the drum's support. Since ancient times bronze drums were used in China to signal approaching enemy forces.

This is a sculpture of a Japanese drum with a rooster sitting atop the drum. It refers specifically to the admonitory drum of the ancient Chinese Emperor Yao. Legend holds that Yao was concerned that his subjects should be able to report any injustice they suffered. Yao placed a drum outside the palace door to be hit by anyone who wished to have an interview with him. This provided his subjects an easy way to address or admonish him. Yao was a wise ruler so therefore the drum was rarely used and became a perch for birds. In effect the cock or rooster is standing over the hen and this symbolizes benevolence, responsibility and care. Together with its companion hen, the image stands for loyalty, harmony and household peace.

The cockerel is an animal of the zodiac, an emblem of male beauty and is connected to one of the oldest myths regarding the origin of the world and Japan. He is an emblem of martial spirit but is also connected with peace when he nestles on an overgrown war drum. Recent years of the rooster: 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005.

Jar
Meiji Period (1868-1912)
Ceramic
Gift of James Guggenheim 1953.42 (Catalog page 147)

This example of 19th century Akahada ware is superior. The creamy glazed jar is shaped like a Buddhist prayer gong. The handle is formed by the heads of two dragons facing each other and holding a shared pearl with their mouths. The dragons' bodies are suggested by two semicircular medallions near the rim on each side. The jar's simplicity and understated design show a subtle and elegant beauty. Akahada pottery is typically covered with a milky white glaze with a reddish tint, which comes from the iron rich soil.

Pair of Swords
Momoyama Period (1573-1615)
Steel, Wood and Lacquer
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hinkle L500.1891, L501.1891 (Catalog pages 182-183)

The pair of swords consists of a long sword (*katana*) and a short sword (*wakizashi*) and would have belonged to a samurai. The sterling silver sword guard is in the shape of a dragon. A small utility blade decorated with a small dragon next to Mount Fuji is fitted on the outside of the scabbard of the short sword.

Dragon: The dragon is a completely imaginary animal but consistently depicted: its head resembles a camel; it has two deer horns, demon eyes, bushy eyebrows, oxen ears, broad whiskers, snake-like body, nine times nine scales (a lucky number) and in Japan three claws. The three claws hold its emblem, the pearl of purity and are sometimes wrapped in flames. It can be large or small; it has supernatural powers in all events connected with water. In Asia, the dragon brings rain for a good harvest and therefore is an auspicious symbol. Its breath can turn into clouds from which torrents of rain can pour down with flashes of lightening. The dragon is always connected to wind and rain, to the sky and to the East. The connection with water made it the protector of fireman. The dragon rises to heaven in the spring (thunder and lightning) and comes back in the autumn. It is said to be bad luck to see the entire body of the dragon because of its enormous powers. As the Japanese Emperors were thought to be descended from a dragon this could have been one of the reasons that the emperor always received his visitors behind a bamboo screen.

For discussion: Where have you seen dragons, in movies, on television? Were they good or evil, big or little, how were they shown? Were they like the Asian dragon? (Dragons appear in the Harry Potter books and in Japanese animated films.)

Ogawa Haritsu (1663-1747)
Animal Story Scroll
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Hand scroll, ink, color and gold on paper
Gift of the Robert F. Blum Estate 1906.4 (Catalog pages 58-61)

The wonderful story told in this scroll is a continuous narration about a poetry competition in the court. The style can be compared to a Japanese cartoon. The narrative hand scroll viewed from right to left features warblers and frogs shown anthropomorphically as human poets. The bird poets are dressed in the costumes of male aristocrats, Buddhist priests and court ladies. Their hats signify their rank in the hierarchy of the court. The birds are engaged in a poetry contest where poems composed on assigned topics by members of two opposing teams are to be submitted to the judges.

The frog sections start next. We see frogs in various stages composing poems, preparing ink and paper, lounging and partying while waiting for their master. The master arrives riding in the river, on a huge toad, his vehicle, and

is wearing a bright red robe and a crown. The frogs are playfully carrying reeds and leaves to indicate status. The distinctive yellow flower on the riverbank indicates the river and region which is known for its lyrical association with such flowers and frogs. The frog and toad were regarded in China as prophesying rain, especially spring showers which brought fertility.

The story is based on a long lost folk tale. The choice of bush warblers and frogs was probably inspired by the first imperially commissioned anthology of Japanese poetry. In the introduction it was written "how could they refrain from making poems when they listen to the bush warblers in the blossoms or frogs in the water?"

In Japan, the warbler's song is well known and the bird pervades poetry and literature as a symbol of spring, signifying rebirth, hope and an end to the hard winter times. It is also called the "Poem Reading Bird" and in poetry is associated with the sour plum blossom evocative of spring. The warbler is the official bird of Edo.

For discussion: In the Heian Period people wrote poems for family and friends, to capture the beauty of the seasons or a special feeling. How do you use poetry in your life? For school groups, ask them to silently walk the length of the scroll, looking carefully with their eyes (no touching). Have them sit on the floor or turn their backs to the display case. Ask them what they noticed on the scroll that was beautiful or unusual. Why was it beautiful or unusual?

Submitted by Patty Misrach

Japanese Fashion in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Tomb paintings from the fourth century AD show elegant Japanese court ladies dressed in Chinese court fashions. But by the ninth century, the kimono, a Japanese creation, was high style in the Heian Imperial court. Ladies wore multiple layers of luxurious silk kimono dyed a vast array of colors, all coordinated to the seasons. Beginning in the thirteenth century, craftsmen constructed samurai armor using textiles, from simple to elaborate. In the Edo Period (1603-1868) Japanese artists perfected a wide range of applied decorative techniques, from ink painting, embroidery, applique and stenciling to tie-dye and paste resist dyeing. More than one technique was often used on a garment and motifs included natural and geometric forms. Clothing reflected a person's social class. Fabric, colors and patterns were restricted based on government decree. However, sumptuary laws actually spurred creativity in design and decorative techniques. Geisha and kabuki actors were style setters. Accessories such as shoes, fans and hair ornaments changed seasonally and year to year. Today kimono for men and women still focus attention on the weave, such as brocade, twill and tapestry, decoration and use of color.

Kinoshita Roshu (1809-1879)
Portrait of a Court Lady,
Meiji Period (1868-1912)
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
Bequest of Virginia H. Irwin, 1956.479 (Catalog, pages 72-73)

It is suggested that the inspiration for this painting came from a screen painting by Tsukioka Settei (1710-1786). The graceful female figure stands in front of a sparse landscape and appears ready to play *hanetsuki*, a traditional game much like our badminton. The pine trees in the background are associated with virtue, a motif of winter and New Year's, and a premier symbol of long life and even mortality. Her hair style is embellished with a tortoiseshell comb and two ornamental combs (*kanzashi*) and was fashionable in the eighteenth century. The lady wears four layers of kimono. The outer kimono is decorated with a motif of flower branches and flowing water. There are three under-kimono – red (for health), orange and cream.

For discussion: If you met this woman, how would she act? What clues gave you the ideas? What do you wear for a party? What is important in the decorations – colors, patterns?

Fan
Meiji Period (1835-1845)
Ivory
Gift of Mrs. Murat Halsted 1986.981 (Catalog, page 165)

Fans have a long history in Japan. According to legend Japan is the home of the folding fan. The fan became a symbol of life to the Japanese. The sticks radiating out from the rivet symbolized the sun's rays radiating out and supporting life itself in the form of a leaf. Decorated with the identical bird and flower scene on both sides, this gold and brown lacquered fan is an outstanding example of the Meiji Period art. The cranes flying in the sky are symbolic of longevity and good fortune. The Japanese considered the peony to be 'king of the flowers' and represented good fortune and the season of spring. The main power of the chrysanthemum was medicinal and even today chrysanthemum extract is used in Asian herbal medicine. The chrysanthemum also became a primary symbol of autumn. The Japanese used the chrysanthemum as a subject for poetry and design as far back as the Heian Period (794-1185). Iris, hollyhock and butterflies also grace the design. The lyrical quality of the design and the lavish use of gold make this fan a masterpiece of Japanese art.

For discussion: What fashion accessory is important to you? How is it designed?

Doll with Accessories
Showa Period (1926-1989) 1927
Wood, cloth, silk and cotton
Gift of committee on World Friendship Among Children, 1929.17, 1929.584, 1929.61,1929.63, 1929.66 (Catalog, pages 192-193)

After the Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited East Asians from immigrating to the United States, our relations with Japan suffered. Dr. Sidney Gulick, a former missionary who had spent time in Japan from 1888 to 1913, knew how important dolls are in Japanese culture. In order to promote goodwill between the countries he started a program to send dolls from the U.S. to children in Japan. He helped form a group called 'The Committee on World Friendship Among Children.' In 1927, the committee sent 12,739 friendship dolls (often called American blue-eyed dolls) to Japan. The dolls arrived in time for *Hina Matsuri,* the annual Japanese doll festival on March 3. Viscount Eiichi Shibusawa led a collection in Japan to reciprocate for this gift. The best doll makers in Japan were commissioned to produce 58 friendship dolls. Each doll was 32 inches tall and was dressed in a beautiful kimono of hand-printed, hand-painted and hand-embroidered silk. Our doll, Miss Okinawa, arrived with a change of kimono, a lacquered tea service, passport, steamship tickets, letters from Japanese children, and a booklet about Japanese tea parties. Ms. Okinawa's kimono is decorated with cherry blossoms, chrysanthemums, and peonies. Her obi has maple leaves among flowers finished with a bright red and white shibori sash.

For discussion: What is/was your favorite doll? Tell us about her/his clothes and accessories. What toys do/did you ever trade with your friends?

Kimono
Edo Period (1615-1868), late 18th or early 19th century
Silk, metallic thread, and cotton
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Emery 1964.783 (Catalog pages 194-195)

The word *kimono* translates to mean "thing to wear." It is the traditional Japanese garment for men and women. Kimono are T-shaped ankle-length robes with straight sides. They have long, wide sleeves and are wrapped around the body. They are secured by a wide sash (obi) that is tied in the back. The Japanese kimono is classified by the style of the *sode,* sleeves. This *furisode,* swinging sleeve, would have been worn by an unmarried woman. The long sleeves were thought to flutter as the woman walked thus attracting young men to them. Kimono were constructed from large pieces of straight edged fabric, creating a perfect canvas for Japanese artistic expression. "Layers of embellishment decorate this piece. The fabric itself is woven with a subtle pattern of auspicious symbols, including coins, clouds, and scrolls. The more apparent ornamentation includes *shibori* (resist dyeing), embroidered *kiri* (paulownia) leaves and flowers, and colorful phoenixes in flight. Both the phoenix and the

paulownia tree were originally associated with the imperial household." (Cindy Amneus, catalog) *Shibori i*s a tie-dying technique that originated in the 8th century. The pattern is created by binding "pinches" of cloth so that when these bindings are removed after dyeing a pattern appears reserved in the original color of the cloth. A kimono completely covered with shibori could have 300,000 pinches.

For discussion: How are your very best clothes decorated? Do they have texture, color, embroidery?

Sumo Mawashi
Meiji Period (1868-1912), late 19th century
Embroidered silk
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Charles. Hinkle, L496.1891 (Catalog page 196)

"Sumo wrestling is a popular traditional sport in Japan. The wrestlers wear a thick wrapped loincloth called a mawashi for both training and competition. This ceremonial mawashi of the 19th century is made of dark blue silk decorated with two large embroidered butterflies and two Japanese characters, which literally mean "mountain man," an appropriately masculine ring name. The apron supposedly belonged to a defeated wrestler, who, in a fit of dejection, disposed of this mawashi." (Hou-mei Sung, catalog, page196) Sumo wrestling developed perhaps two thousand years ago as ancient Shinto rituals to ensure a bountiful harvest and honor the spirits known as *kami*.

For discussion: Create a new strong name for a wrestler that uses two words. What personality would your wrestler have?

Suit of Armor
Edo Period (1615-1868), late 18th or early 19th century
Iron, doeskin, and lacquer
x2012.1 (Catalog pages 180-181)
This suit of armor was made in Kaga, Ishikawa. It is *gusoku* style (full equipment) armor first developed in the late Muromachi Period (1333-1573). Despite all of its decorations, this armor was made for battle and would have been worn by a high ranking member of a samurai family. The helmet is made of fifty-two iron plates riveted together and treated with a chemical agent to prevent rust. The helmet features a crest, perhaps given by the emperor to the shogun or a feudal baron, and a neck guard. The chest armor (*do*), an example of a *nimai-do*, has front and back halves which are joined at the sides. These halves are made of doeskin crushed on iron and coated with black lacquer to create a kind of pebbly texture. The most interesting part of this armor is a small brocade bag situated on the left hip which may have held materials to stanch battlefield wounds (an old fashioned first aid kit). The *kasazuri* - a protective skirt - consists of lacquered iron plates that are held together with gray braiding. The panels made for thigh protection are made of gold and black lacquered iron plates in a checkerboard pattern mounted on a fabric with a maple leaf pattern. The sleeves are made of the same fabric with additional iron plates to cover the fingers and thumb. Chain mail has been added for more protection. The *menpo* – iron face plate – not only provides protection for the face, but has a detachable moustache. Fearsome face masks like this were made to frighten one's enemies. The helmet is equipped with straps to keep it securely in place.

For discussion: What is your favorite decoration on the armor? Why? How would it feel to wear this armor? Would it be easy or hard to fight in this suit? (Edo Period armor weighed 40-50 pounds and weapons added 10 – 15 pounds. A samurai would wear and carry 50 – 65 pounds of gear; a samurai's average weight, 125 pounds.)

Submitted by Ellie Nelson

Religions of Japan

Shintoism
Shinto, which means Way of the Gods, is a quest for purity and harmony with nature revolving around reverence for Japanese land and seasons and the gods' relations with humans. Rites are used to purify the effects of death and decay. However, there is no moral code, no scriptures, and no concept of life after death. The places of worship are called shrines and are placed near the element being celebrated.

Shinto recognizes divine spirits, *kami,* found in old trees, big mountains, tall waterfalls, etc. Kami guard their villages and natural areas and are part of all aspects of life and manifest themselves in various forms. Kami are led by Amaterasu no Omikami, the goddess of the sun, worshipped at Ise Jingu, the central shrine of Shinto.

The introduction of Buddhism caused interaction with Shintoism. Neither religion conflicted with the other. Many contemporary Japanese consider themselves both Buddhist and Shinto. Today when a new factory manager is appointed, he traditionally visits a mini shrine installed in a corner of the factory grounds to say prayers for safety during his term of office. Shinto priests are invited to perform purification and exorcism rituals when new homes, office and stores have their ground breaking ceremonies.

Hōen (Taira) Yoshiteru
Amaterasu
Meiji period (1868–1912)
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
Gift of Jeanann Gray Dunlap, 2004.1130 (Catalog pages 98-99)

Amaterasu is the Shinto Sun Goddess and the mythical ancestress of the royal family of Japan. This painting depicts a scene from the legend of Amaterasu. She was once so offended by misdeeds of her brother that she came to earth and hid in a cave. The earth was plunged into darkness and evil prevailed. Gods and goddess tried to coax her out of the cave. They held a party and a goddess began to dance in front of the cave - the crowd was delighted. As she whirled, her clothes fell off, the crowd was really delighted. Amaterasu wanted to know what was going on outside. As she peeked out from behind a rock, the dancing goddess held up a mirror and said, "We are dancing to celebrate a new goddess!" What Amaterasu saw was her own reflection. A powerful being grabbed her and told her to never hide again! Amaterasu became a popular subject in painting when Japan used a revitalized interest in Shintoism to strengthen nationalism in the late 19th century.

For discussion: After telling the story of Amaterasu, ask the visitors what part of the story is illustrated in this painting. Why did the artist choose this moment?

Buddhism

Buddhists believe in the karmic cycle, that the universe is an endless cycle of death and rebirth. Karma is the belief that each moment arises out of many causes and conditions and in turn affects the next moment. Good karma means an improved reincarnation while bad karma produces a lower reincarnation. Reincarnation exists because of our cravings and desires.

Buddhists believe the aim in life is to achieve nirvana, an enlightened state where the person is free of greed, hate and ignorance. They search for a release of their earthly existence; a breaking of the cycle of death and rebirth. They believe enlightenment is reached by the middle way, rejecting both luxury and asceticism. Buddhism arrived in Japan thru Korea in the 6th century and spread quickly through the upper classes. By the 7th century the court aggressively accepted Buddhism and used it as a means to consolidate state power.

In Buddhism, the place of worship is called a temple and is run by monks and abbots, many of whom pursued literary and artistic careers. The government funded temples and lower class people entered them to rise to a higher social class. This led to its rapid growth among common people. The Zen school arrived from China in the 12th century and found audience in the warrior elite due to its directness and emphasis on self-discipline. It influenced the arts and the samurai culture. It utilized meditation and riddles to reach enlightenment.

Sutra
Heian period (794–1185), 1185
Handscroll, gold and silver on indigo paper
John J. Emery Fund, 1985.12 (Catalog 86-87)

Copying Buddhist sacred texts and donating them to temples was considered a meritorious act of devotion. It became important in the 12th century for high ranking court nobles to commission the copying of these large texts. The use of gold and silver ink on the indigo-dyed paper made these scrolls more sumptuous. This sutra (Buddhist scripture) is illustrated with a scene of Buddha preaching to his followers. Buddha's right hand is in the Abhaya Mudra, a hand gesture that means blessing and protection to those who pray to Buddha and follow his teachings. The hill represents Vulture Peak where Buddha preached. In the style favored at the time, Buddha is simply drawn. The text describes the ten stages of a bodhisattva (saint) and is elegantly written. There is a Jingoji temple seal in red ink. The seal indicates that this is one of the precious scrolls from the Jingoji temple in Kyoto.

For discussion: Describe what is happening in the painting. Where have you seen a religious painting like this before? What other religions have sacred texts that are sometimes beautifully written?

***Buddhist Pocket Shrine*,**
Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Wood, lacquer
Gift of Mrs. Robert McKay, 1961.282 (Catalog pages 158-159)

Buddhist travelers carried these tiny pocket shrines as reminders of the compassion and teachings of Buddha. On one side is Buddha with the jewel of wisdom in his left hand and his right hand is raised in blessing. On the right are lotus seeds, one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols. The growth of the lotus is a symbol of spiritual progress from the mud of materialism to the waters of experience and into enlightenment.

Daoism

Daoism is a religious philosophical tradition that has shaped Chinese and Japanese life for more than 2000 years. It is an attitude toward life exhibited by the accepting, joyful, and carefree sides of Chinese character. This attitude offsets and complements the moral and duty-conscious character attributed to Confucius. One of the great sages of Daoism is Laozi, regarded as the author of a classic text on the subject.

Azuma Tōyō (1755–1839)
Deer
Edo period (1615–1868), 1830s
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
The Thoms Collection; Given by Mrs. Murat H. Davidson in honor of her grandfather, Joseph C. Thoms, 1982.13 (Catalog pages 78-79)

The Daoist philosophy views nature as a balance of opposites that are really complementary and interdependent, such as sun and moon and day and night. Here is a peaceful scene of two deer, female and male, yin (dark) and yang (light). A legendary white buck is shown as a common brown doe, her back to the viewer, gazes at it. The minimalistic style of the artist is markedly different from the style of his contemporaries. According to Shinto legend, deer are sacred and white deer carry deities to shrines.

For discussion: Can you think of other opposites dependent upon each other? Why is the brown doe shown gazing at the white buck with her back to the viewer? What might this represent?

Kanō Tōun (1625–1694)
Daoist Immortals
Edo period (1615–1868)
Handscroll, ink, colors, on silk
John J. Emery Endowment, 1997.35 (Catalog pages 94-97)

This handscroll features famous stories about Eight Daoist Immortals.
For discussion: Look closely, can you find the Queen Mother of the West and her servant with the peaches of immortality? There's also He Xiangu riding her phoenix in the clouds, Liu Hai dancing with a three-legged toad

and Zhang Guo Lao releasing a magical donkey from a gourd. You can also do the activity described on page 7 for the *Animal Story Scroll*.

Nō Masks and Theater

Nō is a classical Japanese drama known for very slow movements and traditional chant-based musical accompaniment. Nō combines mime, dance, chanting, music, and costume. Nō drama, like tea ceremony, calligraphy, and ink painting, is closely linked to Zen aesthetics and philosophy. Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines organized the original theater troupes in order to entertain and educate the local people. The plots came from history, literature, legend and contemporary events. A Nō play may last many days. Boys started their training as a Nō actor as early as three years. Since they spend many years learning the plays under the supervision of a senior member of the troupe, the actors need only rehearse together once.

Nō masks represent five categories: gods, men, women, ghosts, and demons. Each mask has a name, which indicates its character, age, rank and form. Only two main characters wear a mask. Nō masks are made of Japanese cypress and layered with paint mixed with deer-hide glue. They demonstrate some of the most moving works of Japanese sculptural art and take great skill to create.

Maijo (Old Man),
Edo period (1615-1868)
17th century, wood,
Gift of Robert Blum Estate, 1921.251 (Catalog pages 188)
This mask portrays a maijo (an old man) and was typically used to represent the fishermen and woodcutters who appear in the first act of many Nō plays. In the second act these men turn out to be gods, wraiths, or tormented souls.

Ghost
Edo period (1615-1868)
17th century, wood,
Gift of Robert Blum Estate, 1921.254 (Catalog page 190)
This male ghost mask may have been used for the Nō play *Uto*. The ghost of a man dances out the misery he must suffer in payment for ill deeds. This mask skillfully evokes the pain and despair of a forsaken spirit. It was carved by Zekan Yoshimitsu (?–1616), the founder of the Ōno Deme line of Nō mask makers. Because he was able to create masks that capture the essence of the subtle emotions of the characters, he achieved great success.

Oto (Female),
Edo period (1615-1868)
17th century, wood,
Gift of Robert Blum Estate, 1921.253 (Catalog page 189)
This kyōgen mask of an *oto* (an adult female) portrays the charm of a female character. Kyōgen plays are comic interludes between acts in a Nō performance in order to relieve the tension of the drama. Therefore, they often have exaggerated expressions and are created with a sense of humor. Kyōgen masks portray nameless characters and ordinary people, including men and women, deities, demons, and spirits of animals and plants.

Sasayama Yoi (? - 1743)
Portrait of Actor with Black Mask and Bells,
Edo period (1615–1868)
Handscroll, ink and color on paper
Gift of Robert F. Blum Estate, 1906.14 (Catalog pages 66-67)
The artist is little known and few of his paintings survive. This piece, signed and sealed, is a rare masterpiece. It depicts an actor performing a ritual dance in a Nō drama. The character is Sanbaso, the Third Old Man, and appears as a comic interlude in a drama to appease the gods. He carries a fan and a string of bells. The tall black hat symbolizes old age. Although stiff and angular, graceful motion is captured by the position of the head and folds of the robe.

For discussion: How would you design a Nō mask for one of these characters: a god of hell, a god of good fortune, a handsome young man, a kind grandmother?
Submitted by Susan G. Hoffheimer

Asian Painting

The origins of painting in Japan are ancient, dating well back into Japan's prehistoric period. Moving forward though Japanese history, the art grew, changed and was informed by outside influences as well as inherent Japanese traditions. As always, the Japanese would adopt and then adapt these new ideas to both suit and enhance their personal aesthetics. The introduction of the Chinese writing system, the Chinese governmental systems and the introduction of Buddhism and Hinduism enriched an already dynamic civilization. Japanese painting subjects, and later printmaking, would come to exhibit the characteristic of Japanese painting, using subject matter taken from scenes of everyday life as well as narrative scenes which are often crowded with figures and detail. Displayed and mounted as hanging scrolls, handscrolls, folding screens or albums, the Japanese art of the brush, expresses their ideas in many different styles. While influenced by the Chinese, Japanese artists would strengthen and enrich their tradition, lasting well into the modern period.

Matsumura Keibun, (1779-1843)
Dragonfly and Ground Cherries
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Hanging scroll, color on paper
The Thoms Collection, 1982.17 (Catalog, page 84-85)

This painting is an example of *sumi-e,* the art of brush painting, using only black ink and its accompanying washes of grey. Mounted on a hanging scroll, it is an example of a style unique to Asian painting. The white flower and the dragonfly are depicted without contour line. The artist uses, instead, a skillful wash technique. The details are put in with a much darker ink and wash that serves to stabilize the work. This exquisite and gentle brushwork, depicting everyday objects in the natural world, creates a delicately cool and refreshing work. The ground cherry bears small, round red fruits, covered in a husk. These cherries will be seen again in the work *Woman Reading a Letter.* This husk looks much like a lantern and is used on home altars during Obon, the Buddhist Festival of Lanterns held in July. This would act as a memorial to the spirits of their ancestors. Matsumura Keibun is known for his flower and bird paintings. His work, based on sketches made from close observations of nature, is similar to the work of his brother, Goshun Keibun, and the Matsuyama School. However, Matsumura used much less meticulous detail, providing a gentle, lighter feeling than the details of that school. From the 18th century, paintings with this soothing, peaceful quality, seen here, became popular in Japan.

For discussion: If you could have a copy of this painting, where would you hang it in your home? Why?

Shoshu Shunso (1752-1835)
Daruma
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
Gift of B. S. Cunningham, 1978.175 (Catalog pages 76-77)

Zenga, a style of painting developed by Zen monks, was used as a form of meditation or as a visual aid to evoke a particular Zen concept. The characteristics of the *Zenga* painting style are the bold and simple depiction of the subject matter, highly kinetic brushwork, and a clear and intimate effect. *Zenga* also has strong elements of wit and humor. Shosho's portrait of Daruma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, strives to record the artist's state of mind in a moment of enlightenment and Daruma's inner character. Legends abound about Daruma's fierce concentration, including one that said he meditated day and night in a cave for so long that his legs atrophied and fell off. Shoshu became a monk at age nine and traveled throughout Japan from age 19 to 35 when he became chief priest at a temple in Awa province. At age 73 he became the 470th abbot of Myoshinji Temple in Kyoto, one of the headquarters of the Rinzai sect of Zen. The Imperial Court confirmed the title of Zen Master on Shoshu when he was eighty-five.

For discussion: What do you notice about Daruma's eyes? We don't see Daruma's arms and legs. How does that affect your feelings about Daruma?

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)
Woman Reading a Letter
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
The Thoms Collection 1982.14 (Catalog, page 80-81)

Katsushika Hokusai is painter of great renown. Here he presents a work of great delicacy and sophistication. This elegant painting was once part of an album that could be enjoyed by one person at a time. The details, done by tiny brush strokes over flat colors, would be carefully studied by the viewer while held in their hands. Note the subtle flower pattern on the young woman's inner robe. She appears to be reading a theater text while snacking on a ground cherry. The detailed rendering of clothing, hairstyle and physical features indicate this painting as one of the Beautiful Women series. The circular setting surrounds a work of amazing grace and was probably an acknowledgement to the tradition of Chinese paintings during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Note the repetition of red in her hair ornament, her delicate mouth with a cherry and the insets into her kimono, along with another ground cherry on her dress. This balance lends a sense of stability and order and allows the eye to travel around the painting and makes for a lovely experience for the lone viewer accessing the album.

For discussion: If Hokusai painted your portrait, how would you dress? Why would you choose those clothes? Would you hold any favorite objects? How would you pose, including your facial expression?

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)
Sun Flower
Edo Period (1615-1868), dated 1848
Hanging scroll, color on paper
The Thoms Collection, 1982.15 (Catalog, page 82-83)

This painting, done on paper, and then attached to silk, was made into a hanging scroll. Valued by collectors, they were shown during appropriate seasons or for a tea ceremony. They would then be rolled and stored in special wooden boxes until used again. This sunflower, supported by a bamboo pole, dominates the painting. Hokusai uses washes of varying shades of green for the stem and leaves while defining the head of the flower with differing washes of gold, yellow and rust. He uses lines of varying widths and layers in detailing the flower. These brush strokes along with his meticulous techniques gives an almost 3 dimensional effect. Hokusai was familiar with, and had an understanding of Western paintings, specifically a naturalism achieved with light and shading. Hokusai's prints later influenced Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists. There is, in this work, a human touch that reveals a beauty that is tangible and intimate. This works was done one year before his death and it has been said that "it conveys a sense of solitude and heroic – but tragic – beauty, characteristic of his later works."

For discussion: One viewer said that this painting shows solitude and heroic beauty. What emotions do you feel when you see it?

Illustrations of Hell
Nanbokucho Period, (1336-1392)
Handscroll, ink, watercolor and gold on paper
Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Leyman Endowment, 1987.1 (Catalog, pages 88-91)

Handscrolls unwind one scene at a time, allowing the viewer to follow the story much like a video. They are drawn horizontally and are often used for narratives or continuous landscapes with or without text. This is a portion of a larger scroll, with only these three parts remaining intact. In the first chapter, we see a sinner who has been pardoned from Hell and now lives in luxury with his wife and children. The second chapter shows that after being saved, rather than living a life of piety and prayer, he has slipped back into his life of debauchery. Once

again he is sentenced to Hell. The third chapter quotes Buddhists texts and preaches the importance of a righteous life. In this section we see the sinner being judged by Ema, the King of Hell, and condemned to further torture. This relatively simple and plain painting, which uses strong contour lines, shows a dynamic strength. The use of water color and gold paint lends refinement to the scrolls, seemingly giving it importance. However, the text lacks a sense of specific storytelling. It is more of a sermon and because the text and illustrations contain quotes from various Buddhist texts, this is probably part of an illustrated handscroll of Buddhist folktales. Since no other example of this story is known to exist, this work becomes especially significant.

For discussion: Look carefully at the painting. Tell us what you see in Hell. What part of the story did the artist illustrate? Why?

Pair of Eightfold Screens: Scenes from the Tale of the Genji
Edo period (1615-1868), late seventeenth century
Painting on paper
The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, 1964.292-3 (Catalog, pages 110-113)

Folding screens were introduced to Japan in the 8th century. Due to custom and the arrangement of Japanese architecture, these folding screens remained a most important interior decoration. Elaborately designed these decorative screens provided a beautiful addition to their homes. They were designed to be portable works of art that could decorate reception rooms to impress visitors or to brighten family spaces. In these screens the use of detailed vignettes painted in brilliant colors and accented with gold paint were used to illustrate entertainment at a party in a Kyoto mansion over 1000 years ago. The clever use of the golden clouds serves to focus our attention on individual chapters and allows a viewer to recognize each episode or chapter.

The *Tale of Genji* is a classic work of Japanese literature written by the noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11th century. Often called the world's first novel, this vast work, numbering 54 chapters, focuses mostly on the life of its hero, Prince Hikaru Genji. It traces his rise, as the son of a minor consort of the emperor, to a position in society second in importance only to the emperor. The tale spreads across four generations and is marked with poetry, romance and an awareness of the short-lived quality of life.

Right screen: As read from right to left, we see the first screen representing spring. A group of men are playing a "soccer like" game called *kemari*. They are near the blooming cherry tree, which is our indication that it is indeed spring. To the upper right we see Genji's young wife, partially obscured by a door, as she attempts to catch her cats. This allows one of the men, Kashiwagi, to catch a glimpse of her. (Chapter 1, "New Herbs") To the left of the screen we see Genji, and his young son, relaxing in the pavilion with friends, enjoying fish, saké and iced water. Genji is seated in front of a screen. Seated near him, wearing a red robe, is probably his son Yuguri. (Chapter 26, "Wild Carnation")

Left screen: These screens present scenes of autumn. As read from the right, Genji and his friends rehearse a dance while the ladies of the court observe. Musicians seated in dragon boats accompany them with their instruments. (Dragon boats still parade and race under the auspices of the Japan National Dragon Boat Association.) The pine trees, seen throughout the screen, are our indication of autumn. (Chapter 7, "Autumn Outing") The lower section depicts one of Genji's impromptu banquets. (Chapter 18, "The Wind in the Pines") The rafts on the River Ōi reference a visit to Lady Akashi, one of his lovers, prior to the banquet. In the upper left corner, Genji and two companions visit a court lady whose home is now in ruins and the grounds overgrown with wormwood. (Chapter 15, "The Wormwood Patch")

There is no artist seal or inscription on these screens but the style of the painting of trees and figures indicates the artist's training in the Kanō school technique. The use of decorative gold paint and gold leaf signify that this is an eighteenth century work from the mid- Edo period.

For discussion: Close your eyes. Tell us what you would hear if you were in a scene in one of the screens. Imagine you could touch anything in the house or garden, what would it feel like? What would you smell?

Submitted by Pat Cordes

Donors of the Exhibit Artworks

For a relatively small Museum, the Art Museum has an extraordinarily large and varied collection of Japanese art of the highest quality. We will inevitably be asked: Why? The answer lies first in the late nineteenth century fascination with all things Japanese. This excitement (some have called it "mania") that began with the Paris Exposition of 1867 quickly spread internationally. Wealthy Cincinnatians who saw the Japanese exhibits at the International Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 brought home their enthusiasm. Alfred Taylor Goshorn, for instance, even brought over an entire Japanese village in 1886 for the Thirteenth Cincinnati Industrial Exposition that he organized. *Japonisme* also affected business and commercial decisions as our beautiful Japanese-influenced bedroom suite demonstrates.

Equally important to the excellence of our collection is the superb taste and remarkable generosity of an interesting group of donors. To illustrate this donor generosity, the section below explores a group of particularly lovely or historically intriguing donated artworks which were selected by Hou-mei Sung.

Hasegawa Settan (1778-1843)
God of Wind
Edo period
Gift of Robert Blum, 1906.18 (Catalog, pages 67-68)

Among the most interesting of our donors is Robert F. Blum, one of Cincinnati's favorite painters with several artworks on display at the CAM. As an illustrator for *Scribner's Magazine,* Blum went to Japan in 1890 and stayed until 1892. He was accompanied by Hiromichi Shugio, a collector and dealer in Japanese wood-cuts, who introduced him to the Japanese art scene. Blum loved the whole Japanese culture and from then on assembled a large collection of Japanese art, much of which, including 28 paintings and four No masks, he, and later his descendants, gave to the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Among them is Hasegawa's hanging scroll, the whimsical *God of Wind.* During the 17th century, after a long period of peace and prosperity, Japanese artists turned to whimsy, radically changing ancient mythic images, as Settan does in this painting. He portrays Fujin, the Wind God, who was mythically born of a tsunami long before Izanagi and Izanami, the sibling progenitors of Shinto myth, created the world out of chaos. Fujin helped at creation by releasing the winds from his bag, to clear out the interfering mists. Nevertheless, he was traditionally portrayed as a ferocious demon. But here, though wearing his traditional animal skin and horns, he is almost human and has a humorous expression on his leonine face. His transformation began with the anthropomorphic deities encountered on the Silk Road where Fujin syncretized with the Greek Wind God, Boreas.

Settan's image of Kuraoami, the Rain God, is even more non-traditional. Though rarely portrayed (Fujin, rather, is often paired with the demonic God of Thunder), Kuraoami is usually a serpent or water snake, sometimes a dragon. He was created when Izanami burned to death while giving birth to the Fire God. Her mate was so angry that he stabbed Kuraoami to death and the blood droplets from the knife each became different water gods, including the Rain God. But there is nothing serpentine in Settan's portrayal: despite the claw-like toes, Kuraoami is quite human, dancing in his farmer's hat and pouring water from his double gourd, he seems to personify a prayer for rain.

For Discussion: Look at the Wind God's expression. What do you think he is thinking? Why? This next question will work if you have time to see *The Silk Merchant* first. Judging by Blum's own work what do you see in this scroll painting that might have attracted him enough to purchase it?

Chiyo Mitsuhisa (attributed) Active ca. 1532-55
Presentation of a Prince
Momoyama period (1573-1615)

The Thoms Collection, Gift of Mrs. Murat H. Davidson in honor of her grandfather, Joseph C. Thoms 1982.6 (Catalog pages 122-123)

Joseph Thoms was a world traveler and philanthropist. He visited Japan in 1897 and greatly admired the art work and decided to purchase a sizeable number of paintings and screens. Being a shrewd businessman, he hired expert Ernest Fenollosa to help him select those of the highest quality. In this way he acquired quite a large collection. After his death, his grand-daughter, Muriel H. Davidson, donated most of it, including this screen, to the Cincinnati Museum in his honor.

This screen is the only extant work attributed to late sixteenth century artist Chiyo Mitsuhisa, the daughter of a Tosa School artist and the wife of a Kano School artist. The emperor and imperial court patronized Tosa School artists while the Kano School artists served the samurai. The screen is considered so culturally important that the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Japan restored the screen for the Art Museum.

Presentation of a Prince is painted in the *yamato-e* (Japanese painting) style, so named in the late ninth century to distinguish it from what had been imported from China. This screen is typical of the late Muromachi period (1392-1573) *yamato-e* style with its opaque colors; golden clouds that both obscure and divide space; simplified faces in a technique called *hikinuki kagibana* (slit eyes–hook noses); roofless houses displaying the indoors; and subject matter taken from classical Japanese literature. *Presentation of a Prince* is based on Japan's most famous novel, *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), written by an early twelfth century Empress's Lady-in-Waiting for the amusement of all the ladies at court. It tells the story of Prince Genji's many amorous encounters and in Part II the romantic adventures of Genji's son. Early depictions followed the story chronologically, but later ones, like ours, skipped through the novel, placing scenes where they are aesthetically satisfying without regard for the original sequence. *Genji Monogatari* was an exceedingly popular subject for art, appearing on hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, fans, sliding door panels, albums, and screens.

For Discussion *Yamato–e* style art, like so much of Japanese art and poetry, is closely tied to nature and the imagery of the four seasons. What season is suggested by *Presentation of a Prince?* What in the painting makes you think that? The artist contrasts the elements of nature with lots of gold. Why do you think that he did that?

Suit of Armor
Edo Period (1615-1868) late 18th or early 19th century
X2012.1 (Catalog pages 180-181)

Dr. Adeline Kelsey was not a wealthy member of the business world as so many of the Art Museum's benefactors were. Rather, she was a missionary doctor in Japan, and the Japanese art which she sold to the Museum, including this armor, were gifts to her from grateful patients. When she was practicing medicine and teaching at a girls' school in Yokohama (1885-1890), she had two gifted students who wanted to become doctors. But women were not permitted in Japanese medical schools at that time. Laura Memorial Woman's Medical College in Cincinnati (now incorporated into UC's Medical College) was one of the few that educated women in America. Determined that her students would have the necessary funds to study there, Dr. Kelsey arranged a loan exhibit at the Art Museum in 1893, displaying more than 40 Japanese objects to be sold to meet the girls' financial needs. The Museum itself bought two suits of armor, including this one, and a piece of brocade. The sale was successful, and the young women were able to graduate as doctors in 1896, after which all three returned to Yokohama and founded Negishi Hospital. For a discussion of the armor itself, please turn to page 8 of this packet.

For Discussion: Now that you know the story of the armor, what effect does it have on you? Is it positive or negative? Why?

Teapot
Meiji Period (1868-1912) late 19th century
Gift of Rookwood Pottery 1898.208 (Catalog pages 138-139)

This teapot, like so many other ceramic pieces in the Art Museum's collection, is a gift of Rookwood Pottery. Maria Longworth Nichols Storrer, the grand-daughter of Nicolas Longworth, founded Rookwood Pottery in 1880.

Maria spared no money to make Rookwood the finest Pottery in the US. After attending the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, Maria was so taken with Japanese ceramics that she travelled at least twice to Japan. She hired Kitaro Shirayamadani, who established a remarkably beautiful *Japanese Rookwood* style, and on his three visits (of varying lengths) to Japan, he built for Rookwood a first-rate collection of Japanese art. While there, he served as what the catalog calls "a cultural ambassador between Cincinnati and Japan." He worked at Rookwood until his death.

The tea pot is a charmer, featuring all the Seven Gods of Luck or, in literal translation from their Japanese name, "Seven Happiness Beings." Only one, Ebisu, is Japanese, from Shintoism, the indigenous religion. He is the patron of fishermen and holds a large carp. Three are from India's Hindu pantheon: Benten, the only female, is patron of geishas and artists. Bishamon, patron of warriors, is shown in armor; and Daikoku, patron of farmers and wealth is portrayed fat with attributes of a rice sack and rats. Three come from the Chinese Buddhist/Daoist tradition: Fukurokuju, god of wisdom, portrayed with a high forehead; Hotei, god of wealth, laughter and happiness, generally shown as a laughing fat man; and Jurojin, god of longevity, depicted as a happy old man. All of these were independent deities until probably the late 15th century when Japan gathered them into a group. These gods are still very popular in Japan and are used commercially (Ebisu beer), but many worshipers still make pilgrimages to their shrines. One popular ritual is for children to put a picture of the Seven Lucky Gods' treasure ship under their pillow on New Year's Eve so that the Seven will sail up and give them a good dream that foretells a happy year.

For Discussion: Give visitors a description of the gods that are easy to see and ask them to identify who's who. Three gods are easy to identify: Jurojin, god of longevity, is on the lid (long white beard), Fukurokuju, god of wisdom, (tall forehead) is below the handle, and Bishamon, patron of warriors, has the blue and gold helmet. It's difficult to distinguish Ebisu and Daikoku or to see Benten and Hotei.

Sword Fittings
Meiji period (1868-1912)
Gift of the Heirs of John W. Bookwalter (Catalog, pages 186-187)

Mr. Bookwalter was a world traveler of some renown, and wherever he went, he picked up interesting curiosities, including nearly 300 Japanese sword fittings, most of which his heirs donated to the Art Museum. His collecting was so notable that it inspired a *New York Times* 1883 article with the headline: "BOOKWALTER'S BRIC-A-BRAC: The Rare and Curious Things He Gathered in a Leisurely Tour around the World."

Among Bookwalter's Japanese donations are knife handles, hilt collars, sword guards, and pommel caps. Despite their small size, the artists who made them took great care and spared no expense. They used gold and silver in their overlay and inlay. Despite the bloody purpose of the sword, fittings were embellished with typical Japanese nature imagery – the birds and flowers relating to the four seasons: from the head of a millet seed, suggesting autumn melancholy to the flowers and plants of spring, symbolizing rebirth and growth. There is even a picture of a Buddhist guardian figure.

Submitted by Beth Neman

Japanese names appear family name first and given name second (except for Shirayamadani)

Pronouncing Japanese is relatively easy:

1. Each word is broken into a consonant and vowel pattern, such as sa-ké.
2. Also, the vowels have constant sounds:
    a. "a" as in father
    b. "i" as in week
    c. "u" as in who
    d. "e" as in bed
    e. "o" as in oh
3. When vowels are combined, the sounds are blurred together:
    a. "ei" as in hay
    b. "ai" as in sky
4. The "n" is combined with the vowel before it and sounded like "rain"

Here are some common words that you will use on tour, words are unaccented:

Amaterasu = A-ma-te-ra-su
Daoism = Da-o-ism
Edo = E-do
Geisha = gei-sha
Genji Monogatari = Gen-ji Mo-no-ga-ta-ri
Haiku = Hai-ku
Heian = Hei-an
Ise = I-se
Meiji = Mei-ji
Murasaki = Mu-ra-sa-ki
Okinawa = O-ki-na-wa
Samurai = sa-mu-rai
Shinto = Shin-to
Shirayamadani = Shi-ra-ya-ma-da-ni
Shogun = sho-gun
Waka = wa-ka

Resources:

A Brush with Animals - Japanese Painting 1700-1950 by Robert Schaap with essays by Willem van Gulick, Society for Japanese Arts in Association with Hotei Publishing 2007
Art Beyond The West, By Michael O'Riley, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 2002
Decoded Messages by Hou-Mei Sung, Yale University Press, 2009
History of Japanese Art by Penelope Mason and Donald Dinwiddie, 2nd Edition, Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005
Masterpieces of Japanese Art, Edited by Hou-mei Sung, Cincinnati Museum of Art. 2014.
Masterpieces of Japanese Art Gallery Guide by Hou-mei Sung
Paths activity cards developed by Hou-mei Sung, Emily Holtrop and Helen Rindsberg (available in the exhibit)
Gary L. Grose, Collector, Samurai armor and weapons
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen
www.ancient_world.net/aw/article837310
Basho's Haiku – Selected poems
http://helenrindsberg.myiglou.com/japan/ This web site contains a wide array of essays and readings found by our docents as we worked on various exhibits since 2008 and was updated for this exhibit.