

Hagura Katei (1799–1887)

Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden

Japan, Meiji period, 1882

Hanging scroll; ink and light color on silk

Purchase, 2005

(13193.1)

Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden portrays many of the illustrious Chinese literati of the Northern Song period (960–1127). Around a stone table in the lower right, a large group surrounds Su Shi (1036–1101), who is holding a brush, while further back two men view Li Gonglin (d. 1106) painting at a table. Another figure watches Mi Fu (1051–1107) writing calligraphy on the vertical face of a large boulder.

The long text in the upper left describing the gathering has been traditionally ascribed to Mi Fu. Along with a much earlier event at the Orchid Pavilion, the “Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden” became a popular painting theme throughout East Asia.

This complex composition is one of Katei’s finest creations. Employing subtle ink washes and a variety of linear brushstrokes, he skillfully incorporated clusters of figures into a lush landscape setting. The precision of his inscription is particularly impressive, considering that the artist was in his early eighties when he created this work.

Collaborative Work by Edo Literati Artists

Japan, Edo period, mid-1810s
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk
Purchase, 2005
(13166.1)

(moon) Sakai Hitsu (1761–1828)
(plum) Kuwagata Keisai (1764–1824)
(plants) Kubo Shunman (1757–1820)
(bat) Tani Bunch (1763–1840)
(oil lamp) Tani Bun'ichi (1787–1818)

Gassaku, or collaborative works, were a favorite activity among members of literati circles. The five painters that participated in the making of this hanging scroll represented the foremost echelon of the art community in the city of Edo in the early nineteenth century. Sakai Hitsu and Tani Bunch were among the most prominent.

The painting is an exercise on the established literati theme of plum and moon. Although composed impromptu at a friendly gathering in a playful spirit, this *gassaku* reveals each individual artist's thoughtful approach to creating a harmonious, well-balanced composition of painted images and inscriptions.

Suzuki Fuy (1752–1816)

Meandering Stream at the Orchid Pavilion

Japan, Edo period, 1806

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2005

(13167.1)

This painting represents the famous gathering of Chinese scholars at the Orchid Pavilion, or Lanting, which took place in 353. Wang Xizhi (c. 307–c. 365), one of the best-known calligraphers of East Asia, described the event in *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, which preceded thirty-seven poems written by the participants. The ultimate paradigm for a literati gathering, the Orchid Pavilion party generated similar meetings later in China, Korea, and Japan, and became a popular painting topic.

At the Orchid Pavilion gathering, cups of wine on lotus leaves were floated along a meandering garden stream. When a cup stopped near a scholar, he was obliged to imbibe and create a poem. Here, poets are shown in the act of composing, reciting, and listening to their new verses, while attendants prepare and retrieve cups floating on the water. Wang himself is prominently portrayed inside the open pavilion, as he writes his preface at a red lacquer table.

Yokoi Kinkoku (1761–1832)

Drawing Pure Spring Water to Compare Tea

Japan, Edo period, early 1800s

Six-fold screen; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2005

(13144.1)

This painting portrays an intimate gathering for drinking tea on a platform set over a small mountain stream. Three men converse as they sit on a circular mat covered with tea utensils. Here the teas being compared are varieties of *sencha*, roasted tea leaves steeped in hot water, popular among the literati.

A requisite for any such gathering was the finest quality water, and mountain spring water drew the highest esteem. Having an occasion in such an idyllic setting was largely a daydream for most urban literati, yet the fantastic landscape in this painting would have provided a delightful atmosphere for a tea gathering in a more humble setting, such as a room in the city.

Kinkoku was best known for dramatic, bold brushwork, as displayed in this painting. Primarily self-taught, he turned to the works by Yosa Buson (1716–1783) for inspiration throughout his artistic career.

Drawing Pure Spring Water to Compare Tea was based on an early Buson hanging scroll, but Kinkoku expanded it into a far more complex composition, making the expression distinctly his own.

Suzuki Hyakunen (1825–1891)
Spring and Autumn Landscapes

Japan, Edo period, 1866

Pair of six-fold screens; ink and color on paper

Gift of Terry Welch, in honor of Julia White, 2005

(13146.1-2)

Hyakunen founded the Suzuki School in Kyoto at the end of the Edo period. His eclectic style, which derived from a wide variety of sources, was much appreciated in Kyoto. By the time he painted this work, his new school was on its way to becoming one of the most prosperous ateliers of its time. His talented son, Sh nen (1848–1918), also flourished as an artist and continued the Suzuki lineage into the twentieth century.

In this pair of screens, Hyakunen juxtaposed two seasonal scenes of contrasting mood. Depicting ordinary human activities in the cycle of nature, both screens reflect the lyricism associated with the Shij School popular in Kyoto. Hyakunen's brushwork, however, is tempered with literati flavor and more relaxed than the tightly structured techniques of the naturalist tradition.

Nukina Kaioku (1778–1863)

Plants of the Four Seasons

Japan, Edo period, late 1840s

Set of four hanging scrolls;

ink and color on satin

Purchase, 2005

(13179.1-4)

A distinguished scholar of Chinese studies and renowned calligrapher, Kaioku was also an accomplished painter, known for his ink landscapes. *Plants of the Four Seasons* represents Kaioku's achievement in the bird-and-flower genre, demonstrating the compositional diversity and mastery of the "boneless" technique (using a wet brush to define the forms without outlines). Painted on a lustrous satin ground, its monumental size suggests that the artist produced the set for a special occasion.

In the spring scene, the main theme is the narcissus behind the rock, favored by the literati for its ability to bloom early. The summer is represented by loquat and pomegranate, symbolizing wealth and posterity. The sweet osmanthus and begonia in the autumn complement each other with "heavenly fragrance and luxurious color" as expressed in Kaioku's inscription. The winter season features the aromatic daphne amongst auspicious plants such as pine and *reishi* mushrooms.

Nukina Kaioku (1778–1863)

Landscape with Bamboo Grove in Light Red Wash

Japan, Edo period, 1847

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2005

(13182.1)

The comparatively soft, unobtrusive brushwork of this painting is typical of Kaioku's style. In this lyrical landscape, myriad bamboos grow along the riverbank, providing a setting for the enclave of a scholarly residence. In the distance, a waterfall streams from the tall central mountain, creating a thick mist below. The focus of this painting, however, is the scholar reclining on an armrest (in the house in the foreground) enjoying his peaceful natural surroundings. A red lacquer desk in the adjacent room draws the viewer's attention.

Kaioku's elegant calligraphy presents a Chinese poem about the tea-drinking practice popular among scholar-poets and echoes the spirit of literati enjoyment expressed in the painting.

Nukina Kaioku (1778–1863)
Quatrain on a Mountain Spring

Japan, Edo period, c. 1860
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
Purchase, 2005
(13181.1)

Kaioku was one of the most respected calligraphers in western Japan during the late Edo period. After studying examples by famous Chinese calligraphers and ancient Chinese-style works by early Japanese masters, Kaioku achieved a bold, individual style. This work comes from the last several years of Kaioku's life, in which his cursive script took on an exceptional vitality.

As each calligraphic work is a unique creation, great calligraphers make corrections rather than start over to produce another version. Here, Kaioku forgot the two characters for “clouds” and “trees” in the first line on the right. After finishing the piece, he inserted the missing characters in a smaller size.

*Worldly appointment cannot lead to the clouds and trees.
How to fathom the mountain's spirit to cleanse the mind?
I perceive the lofty pine winds unfurl without obstacle,
As the snow piles on the cauldron, plan an endless quest.*

Nukina Kaoiku (1778–1863)

Unzen Waterfall in Autumn

Japan, Edo period, 1837

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Gift of Mrs. Robert P. Griffing Jr., 1967

(3495.1)

The Unzen Waterfall of the title refers to Narutaki, a picturesque waterfall located in the mountains of Tokushima Prefecture on Shikoku Island. A popular theme in East Asian painting, waterfalls frequently appear incorporated in landscape paintings, but also as a main subject in their own right. While literati painters tended to create imaginary scenes, they also depicted actual places such as Narutaki and the famous waterfalls at Nachi in Wakayama and Min in Osaka.

This painting captures the individual character of Narutaki as the water drops from one level to another over the layered cliff while a separate stream of water directly descends over rocks on the left. The inscription conveys that Kaioku visited Narutaki with his cousin in 1835.

Nukina Kaioku (1778–1863)

Viewing Plum Flowers in Snow

Japan, Edo period, 1841

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2005

(13180.1)

In addition to his lifelong pursuit of calligraphy, Kaioku also studied painting, viewing numerous Chinese masterpieces during his travels around Japan. On several occasions, Kaioku visited Nagasaki and received instruction from the renowned monk-painter Hidaka Tetsu (1791-1871), who had extensive knowledge of newly imported Chinese works and immigrant Chinese artists.

Despite his talent in painting and calligraphy, Kaioku was known to the public primarily as a Confucian scholar and poet. In this sense, he fulfilled the literati ideal of amateurism by avoiding the perception of being a professional painter.

Tanomura Chokuny (1814–1907)
Great View of Rivers and Mountains

Japan, Meiji period, 1896

Handscroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2005

(13155.1)

Great View of Rivers and Mountains is a rare handscroll by Chokuny , one of the most prolific and long-lived literati painters in Japanese history. The painting depicts a broad river flowing through a peaceful mountain valley. A variety of architecture and figures are incorporated into the bucolic landscape accented with autumn colors. The detailed portrayal of an idealized natural world in delicate brushwork exemplifies Chokuny 's mature landscape style from the final years of his life.

When the scroll was remounted in 1924, twenty-eight years later, the owner requested that Tanaka Hakuin (1866–1934), Chokunyū's prominent pupil, add a title and a postscript, following the Chinese custom for landscape handscrolls.

Oda Kaisen (1785–1862)

Classification of Tea Utensils (Hincha-zu)

Inscribed by Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924)

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Handscroll; ink and colors on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2007.244)

Conserved in 2009 with a generous grant from Robert F. Lange Foundation

This scroll by Oda Kaisen begins with a portrait of the great Chinese tea master Lu Yu (733–804) seated in a garden, accompanied by a servant. Lu was the author of the *Cha Jing (Classic of Tea)*, the definitive Chinese text on the cultivation, making, and drinking of tea. The remainder of the scroll is taken up by depictions of Chinese implements for storing and making tea.

Oda Kaisen was born into a family of dyers in present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, and moved to Kyoto in his early twenties. There he studied painting of both the Maruyama-Shijō and Nanga Schools. In later years he moved to the island of Kyushu, where he studied Confucianism and Chinese painting, specializing in landscape, figure, and bird-and-flower subjects.

Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924)

Imao Keinen (1845–1924)

Tajika Chikuson (1864–1922)

Set of Five Blue-and-white Sencha Cups

Japan, Taish period, 1911–1912

Porcelain decorated in underglaze blue

Purchase, 2005

(13226.1-5)

These five *sencha* cups were decorated by three artists in Kyoto, where painters historically maintained close ties with traditional craft industries. The delight in viewing collaborative works comes from the variety of creative solutions presented by each artist. Tessai painted a pine tree on one cup and bamboo on another, combining each image with a Chinese-style inscription.

Typical of his style, both painting and calligraphy are executed in robust brushwork bursting with energy. In contrast, Keinen's two cups, respectively decorated with a design of an angler and fireflies, convey elegance and wit. On both, he added a haiku in fluent calligraphy matching his refined drawing. Chikuson, the youngest of the three, painted *reishi* mushrooms and a rock on one cup with utmost delicacy and inscribed a short verse in an equally sensitive style.

tagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875)
Sake Cup Inscribed with Waka Poem

Japan, Edo-Meiji period, 1860s

Glazed earthenware

Purchase, 2005

(13224.1a)

*A tree at the eaves of a house
in a mountain village
is beginning to change color.
I can count the number of days
into the autumn season.*

A Buddhist nun known for her compositions of *waka* (a style of poetry with 5-7-5-7-7 syllables), Rengetsu was also an accomplished calligrapher, painter, and potter. Essentially self-taught, she began making pottery as a hobby, using a small wooden stand and simple tools to hand-build her pieces. Her earthenware gained wide appreciation and popularity for its unpretentious beauty.

What distinguished her pottery was the surface decoration achieved by incising or inscribing her own poetry. This exquisite sake cup is a superb example in which she inscribed her own *waka* composition in her highly acclaimed calligraphic style characterized by a flowing, gossamer quality.

tagaki Rengetsu (1791–1875)
Tea Caddy Incised with Waka Poem

Japan, Edo-Meiji period, 1860s

Glazed earthenware

Purchase, 2005

(13225.1a & b)

Rengetsu primarily produced *sencha* utensils for the Chinese-style steeped-tea ceremony practiced in literati circles. She also made wares for serving food and sake as well as those used for the older *chanoyu* tea ceremony, which involved the whisking of powdered green tea. This tea caddy would have been used to keep the powdered tea for *chanoyu*. The slightly misshapen form of her ware sets it apart from the perfection of professional potters' work and evokes the *wabi* and *sabi* aesthetics cherished by *chanoyu* practitioners.

On the uneven surface of the container, one can easily recognize the impressions left by Rengetsu's fingers. Using a sharp bamboo tool, Rengetsu incised her verse to wrap around the surface of the tea caddy.

*White chrysanthemum
Spread fragrance near my pillow
On such a night
I dream of many autumns
Which have come and gone.*

Tomioka Tessai (1836–1924)

Tanaka Hakuin (1865–1934)

Tajika Chikuson (1864–1922)

Hashimoto Kansetsu (1883–1945)

**Stone in the Shape of Mount Fuji, Storage Bag,
Album of Three Paintings of Mount Fuji,
and Miniature Table Screen**

Japan, Meiji period, 1911

Stone with quartz markings, ink and color on paper (album), ink on
satin with bamboo frame (screen), and ink and color on silk (bag)

Gift of Drs. Edmund and Julie Lewis in Honor of Stephen Little, 2002
(12289.1-4)

Unusually shaped stones, called “strange stones” (Chinese *guaishi*, Japanese *kaiseki*) have been collected in East Asia for centuries. This remarkable stone, closely resembling Mount Fuji, belonged to the great early 20th-century master of literati painting in Kyoto, Tomioka Tessai. In a superb example of the artistic collaboration for which literati painters are traditionally known, Tessai invited Tanaka Hakuin, a senior student of his recently deceased colleague, the famous Kyoto teacher Tanomura Chokuny (1814–1907), to design a silk storage bag for the stone with two inscriptions and charming landscape paintings.

In addition, he invited Hakuin and another of Chokunyū's well-known students, Tajika Chikuson, to complete paintings of Mount Fuji in a small album intended to accompany the stone, together with the controversial young scholar-artist Hashimoto Kansetsu, whose painting is on display here. Finally, Tessai himself inscribed a miniature screen that would have been placed behind the stone when it was displayed.

Interestingly, Tessai uses the term "True Form" (Chinese *zhenxingtu*, Japanese *shinkeizu*) to describe this stone's relationship to Mount Fuji. The concept of a mountain's "true form" derives from ancient Daoist beliefs from China centuries earlier, in which talismanic designs revealing the essential, energetic form of important sacred peaks, rather than their outer material form, were treasured for their great spiritual power. By using this term, Tessai places both Mount Fuji and this small stone of which it is a microcosm within a context of great spiritual antiquity and authority.

Anonymous

Pair of Guardian Lions

Japan, Kamakura period (1185–1333)

Wood with traces of pigment

Gift of John Gregg Allerton, 1953

(1692.1, 1693.1)