

LANDSCAPE

Japanese, Muromachi period, ca. 1547–79

Ink on paper, mounted as a hanging scroll

36 × 14¼ in. (91.4 × 36.2 cm.)

Signature: Hōsetsu; seal: Tōzen

Gift of A. E. Steadman (Martha Cooke Steadman
Acquisition Fund), 1962 (3099.1)

The composition of this fine ink painting, done in a semi-cursive brush style, is close to the one-corner view of mid-fifteenth-century Japanese landscapes, but the background mountains stretching the full width of the composition suggest that the work should be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century. During the transitional years at the close of the Muromachi period, paintings tended to exhibit the two-dimensional decorative style documented here. The concise composition, however, is clearly the work of an exceptional painter.

The inscription above the mountain translates: "Where duckweed ends, one sees mountains reflected in the water; when boats of the Chu River return, it is so still one can hear the grass grow. Written from the Kun Ken Studio." Kun Ken was a Zen priest who visited Ming dynasty China in 1547 and again in 1555. He died in 1579. This inscription and the painting were probably brushed at about the same time, as was the general practice in those days. On this basis it is possible to date the Academy painting to sometime after 1547 but before 1579.

Hōsetsu Tōzen studied under the great master Sesshū and acquired a deep understanding of painting techniques. He also studied Sung and Yüan paintings as well. Since none of Tōzen's surviving works, which number only a very few, offer an inscribed date, the length of Tōzen's activity has always been a matter of conjecture.

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KANŌ NAONOBU

Japanese, Edo period, 1607–50

Temple Artisans at Work, ca. 1630

Ink and light color on paper, two panels from a pair of six-fold screens; each panel: 51³/₈ × 19¹/₄ in.

(130.5 × 49 cm.)

Seal: Kanō Naonobu

Gift of Joseph Brotherton in memory of

Robert P. Griffing, Jr., 1981 (4892.1a)

Purchase, Marjorie Lewis Griffing Fund, 1981 (4892.1b)



This pair of screens in the *oshie-bari* format (individual panel paintings) pictures twelve craftsmen whose occupations are associated with temple life and maintenance. They were painted by a distinguished follower of Kanō Tan'yū (1602–74), Kanō Naonobu, using a deft ink brush line and light color. The occupations have been identified as follows: (right screen, left to right) polishing a needle, making wood veneer, boiling ocean water to make salt, carrying charcoal, binding a mat, drilling holes in rosary beads; (left screen, left to right) squaring wood to prepare it for carving, forging metal to make a machete, a blind musician with helper carrying a stringed instrument (*biwa*), making a bow, chiseling a *kannon* and preparing paper for handscrolls and album leaves. These identifications are based not only on the illustrations themselves but on the poems that occur above, inscribed by the great calligrapher Shōkadō Shōjō (1584–1639). The joint work of such distinguished artists suggests that these paintings were highly regarded during the Kan'ei era, when they were painted.

In 1623 Kanō Naonobu was appointed Goyō Eishi (a master painter employed by the court or military government under the shogun) to the shogun's court, and in 1626 he worked with his master, Tan'yū, for Tokugawa Iemitsu in Nijō Castle. He was summoned in 1630 to Edo, where he helped Tan'yū found the Kobikicho branch of the Kanō family. His association with Shōkadō Shōjō dates from this period; these paintings are a rare product of their collaboration.

Naonobu painted in ink, using a broad free brush and light color washes in compositions of considerable elegance. His style is clearly evident in these screens, despite the fact that the subjects themselves are unique in the Kanō school. Paintings of craftsmen can be traced back to *yamato-e* and Tosa-school scrolls as early as the Kamakura period (1185–1333). The Academy's screens, however, suggest that a tradition for this subject existed in the *sui-boku* ink-painting style of the Kanō school. The screens are therefore historically as well as aesthetically important.

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In the late 1830s Utagawa Hiroshige completed the series "Sixty-nine Stations on the Kisokaidō," a reference to a route connecting Edo and Kyoto. Eisen (1790–1848), a *ukiyo-e* artist and editor of early histories of *ukiyo-e*, had begun the series. The result is one of the great *ukiyo-e* collaborations. The station Nagakubo is shown here in a particularly fine impression, with rich vibrant colors and in pristine condition.

Hiroshige was a master of poetic landscapes, as this superb print clearly demonstrates. Born in Edo, Hiroshige entered the studio of Utagawa Toyohiro in 1811 and soon received the art name Hiroshige, which he used throughout his life. His first published work, an illustrated book, is dated 1818. It was not until 1831, however, that he turned to landscape prints. His "Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō" and "Sixty-nine Stations of the Kaikaidō" are among his masterpieces. He consolidated the landscape form and adapted it to popular taste. At their best, his landscapes are imbued with a poetic quality unmatched in the history of Japanese landscape prints.

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UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE

Japanese, Edo period, 1797–1858
Nagakubo, no. 28 in the series "Sixty-nine
 Stations on the Kisokaidō," late 1830s
 Full-color woodblock print; 9 × 14 in.
 (22.9 × 35.6 cm.)

Signature: Hiroshige ga; seal: Ichiryūsai
 James A. Michener Collection (15,618)



During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a number of Japanese painters based their style on the work of Chinese landscape artists. Their paintings were called *nanga* (southern-style paintings), after the southern-style *nanzhai* (painters of China), or *bunjin-ga* (painting of literati), after the Chinese *wen-jen hua*. The majority of these painters depended on woodblock manuals of Chinese painting for their inspiration rather than on any direct study of originals. As a result, Japanese artists composed and borrowed elements from various ancient artists to produce a unique and eclectic art suited to Japanese taste.

Ike no Taiga was a prolific painter and calligrapher who experimented outside the limits of Chinese painting as set forth in the woodblock manuals. He developed special brush mannerisms in the delineation of foliage that became his trademark. Taiga was, moreover, one of the wittiest and most original of all the *nanga* artists, particularly in his depictions of the humans that populated his vast landscape studies. Whether his paintings remained faithful to Chinese ideals or took on the rolling, rollicking rhythms of his more Japanese style, the results were always of the highest quality. This work of a more conservative nature is unquestionably a masterpiece.

In the early spring of 1762 Taiga produced a *sumi* (ink) landscape comprised of eight sliding doors, which, when placed together, created a panoramic mural that was probably three and one-half meters in width. On this huge surface Taiga painted his vision of a Chinese landscape, intended to give a sense of revisitation to the observer but not based on any real acquaintance with the scenery of China. The resulting display shows off Ike no Taiga's vir-

IKE NO TAIGA

Japanese, Edo period, 1723–76

Landscape, 1762

Ink on paper, one of a pair of six-fold screens;

each screen: 5 ft. 7 in. × 11 ft. 10½ in. (1.7 × 3.62 m.)

Wilhelmina Tenney Memorial Collection, 1964 (3299.1)

tuosity with the brush and is a classic example of his pointillist texturing. The landscape is painted with soft, subtly modulated ink textures in a dreamlike composition of vast space. The configurations blur and fade on the light, airy surface, dazzling the eye. All the standard elements are included in the composition: mountains, trees, mists, foliage, and small human figures that emphasize the vastness of the scene.

The work has been reassembled and remounted as a pair of six-fold screens. One bears Taiga's seals, and the other includes a long inscription of authentication and the seal of Shukei Imei, a Zen priest and painter (act. 1804–17) who apparently was Taiga's friend. The inscription translates in part: "This is a monoscenic eight-panel landscape, painted by the deceased Ike no Taiga in the early spring of 1776. . . . This screen is executed in *sumi* and is of superior quality. Recorded by Shukei Imei, in April 1807." Careful inspection confirms that the screens were originally divided into eight separate panels, adding further support to the overwhelming evidence that this work is an authentic masterwork of Ike no Taiga done in the prime of his life. HAL



TSUBAKI CHINZAN

Japanese, Edo period, 1801–54

Landscape with Fishermen, 1850

Ink and light color on paper, mounted as a four-fold screen; 5 ft. 8¾ in. × 14 ft. 3 in. (1.75 × 4.34 m.)

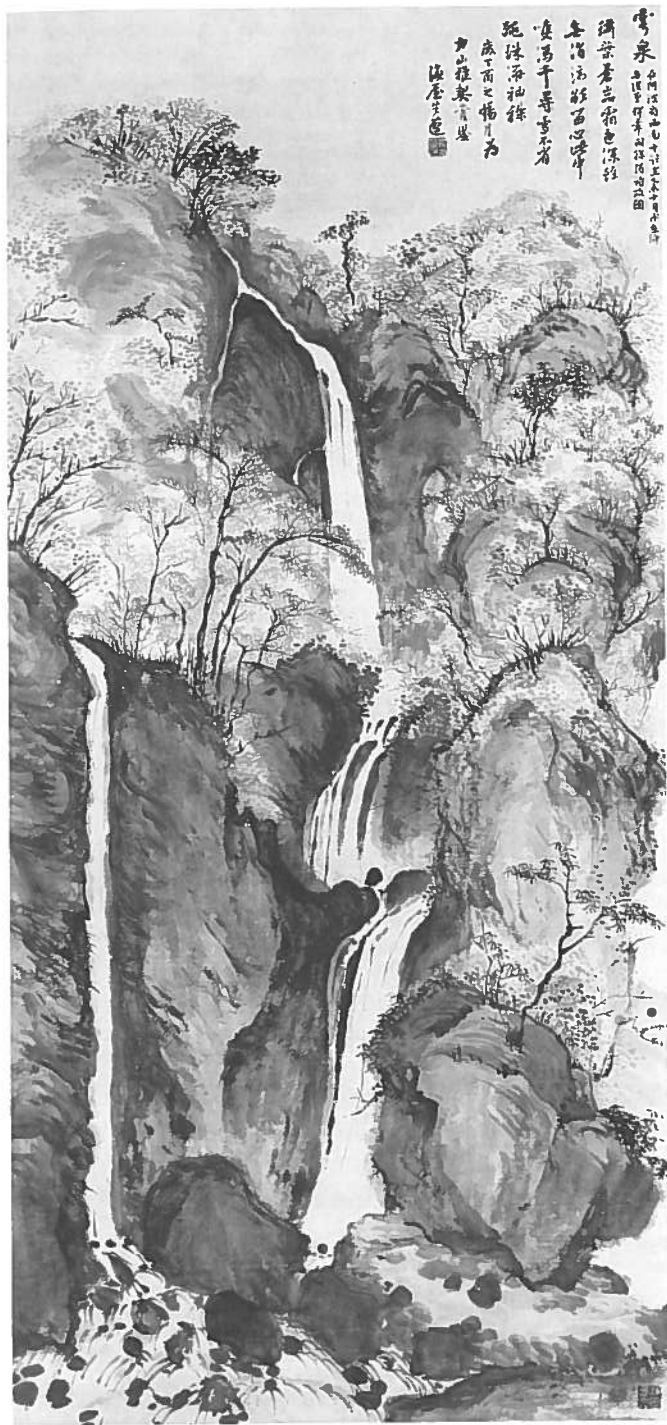
Signature and date: “Painted by Kyuan-Itsujin [pseudonym of Chinzan] in the late fall of 1850”

Purchase, 1972 (4081.1)

Originally painted as four *fusuma* (sliding doors), this screen focuses on a Chinese fishing village. *Nanga* artist Tsubaki Chinzan invigorated the entire composition with color and a pervasive restlessness of moving forms. Particularly convincing are the turbulence of the river’s current and the movement and gestures of the fishermen.

This rural scene, a common theme in both Chinese and Japanese painting, is described in the poem inscribed by Chinzan himself: “The evening view of the fishing village where white clouds float low in the sky and a long horizontal shadow streaks the grassy beach disappearing in the water. Now the fisherman leads an enviable life and exchanges his catch for wine, enjoying the intoxication. Like the gods, the fisherman enjoys his happy and simple life.”

Although the fishermen are dressed in Chinese clothes, the detailed drawing of individual features and gestures conveys the same affectionate reportage as seen in traditional Japanese scroll paintings. The work may be thought of as a transformation of Chinese-style painting to suit Japanese taste. HAL



NUKINA KAIOKU

Japanese, Edo period, 1778–1863

Mount Unzen in Autumn, 1837

Ink and color on paper; 52³/₈ × 24⁷/₈ in.

(133 × 63.2 cm.)

Gift of Mrs. Robert P. Griffing, Jr., 1967 (3495.1)

Although Nukina Kaioku, the *nanga* master and theorist, urged a faithful submission to Chinese ideals, *Mount Unzen in Autumn*, executed when the artist was fifty-five years old, combines the Chinese ink tradition with the more robust traits of Japanese art. The painter took obvious delight in the use of bright opaque colors and in the inexhaustible range of expression possible in ink painting, here blending them in a new and original statement that is purely Japanese.

Both the seal and the signature are those of Kaioku, and the accompanying inscription describes the work and dates it to 1837. Studies note the similarity in composition to the thirteenth-century Japanese painting *Nachi Waterfall*, a symbolic landscape that is really an icon representing a Shintō deity. Whether or not this composition alludes to the classic native painting, it is undeniably the ultimate expression of *nanga* painting and a true masterpiece of Japanese landscape ink painting. HAL