

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Mountainous Landscape Scene in Hawaii

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1960

Colored ink on paper

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert M. Browne, 1991

(06594.01)

Munakata was particularly attracted by the passionate intensity in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). His biography records his career decision as follows:

I am going to become a painter. I am going to become Van Gogh. I will become the Japanese van Gogh... I wanted to paint van Gogh's sunflowers using Prussian blue. I painted with my fingers, with a brush; I painted with three or four tubes of paint, squeezing them and swirling the paint around like a coiling snake. Understanding nothing, I painted recklessly and ridiculously. Eventually, I came to be called 'van Gogh's Munakata' in Aomori.

This painting clearly demonstrates van Gogh's influence in the use of color, line, and the intensity of the composition.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Owl on a Branch

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1960

Colored ink on paper

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert M. Browne, 1991

(06595.01)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Self-portrait

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1960

Colored ink on paper

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert M. Browne, 1991

(06597.01)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Japanese Cherry Blossoms* from the series “*In Praise of Shōkei, the Kiln of Kawai Kanjirō*”**

Japan, Shōwa period, 1945

Hand-colored woodblock print

Gift of Dr. Yanagi Sōetsu, 1953

(13235)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Furuna (Purnamaitrayaniputra) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13237)

Furuna converted to Buddhism when he heard a sermon delivered by the historical Buddha. He traveled widely and dedicated himself to spreading Buddhist doctrine.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Anaritsu (Aniruddha) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13238)

Anaritsu was famous for his charity. It is said that during a famine he supported many hermit saints, to the everlasting gratitude of the heavenly host.

Shawn Eichmen 5/27/09 10:29 AM

Comment: A little flowery, but okay.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Ananda (Ananda) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas
and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”***

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13239)

The Buddha Shakyamuni's first cousin born on the same day, Ananda was a faithful attendant to the Buddha for twenty-five years. Shakyamuni praised him not only as the most erudite of his disciples, but also as having the best memory and strongest resolution. His memory was so highly respected that he was called on to recite sutras at the first Buddhist council. He is also credited with convincing the Buddha to establish an order of nuns, and then becoming their teacher.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Ragora (Rahula) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13240)

Ragora was the Buddha's eldest son, and also his follower. The patron of all novices, he is also regarded as an arhat, or one who has attained enlightenment.

It is believed that Munakata favored this print over the others in this series, and felt that it successfully stood alone as an individual composition.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Makayō (Mahakasyapa) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13241)

Makayō was a senior disciple of the Buddha famed for his austere life and exceptional accomplishments.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Sharihotsu (Sariputra) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13242)

Sharihotsu was noted for his wisdom and for his skill in teaching Buddhist doctrine. He also oversaw discipline in the monastic community. His relics were interred in the Great Stupa at Sanchi.

Munakata said of this print, "He was the wisest of the disciples. It's purely accidental that I portrayed him with a hole in his head."

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Shubodai (Subhuti) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas
and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”***

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13244)

Shubodai was considered the disciple best at explaining the void, or non-material world. He meditated on goodwill before becoming an arhat, or fully realized being.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Mokukenren (Maudgalyayana) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13245)

Mokukenren had the greatest ability among Shakyamuni's disciples to control supernatural forces. He was born on the same day as Sharihotsu, and, in fact, both were converted to Buddhism at the same time.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Fugen (Samantabhadra) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”

Japan, Shōwa period, 1948

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13246)

Fugen is a bodhisattva, or highly evolved being, who represents Buddhist law and compassion. He is frequently depicted along with Monju and the Buddha Shakyamuni.

Unlike the prints of the ten disciples, this print and the one of Monju were made from the block that Munakata had used to form the walls of a bomb shelter outside his home in Tokyo. The original blocks for the ten disciples were destroyed when Munakata's home was ravaged by fire during the Pacific War. He re-carved them in order to reprint the series.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Monju (Manjusri) from the series “Two Bodhisattvas
and Ten Great Disciples of Sakyamuni”***

Japan, Shōwa period, 1948

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1953

(13247)

Monju is a bodhisattva who is much loved for his virtue and majesty.
He represents wisdom, intelligence, and willpower.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Two Princesses

Japan, Shōwa period, 1955

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(13901)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Paradise In Praise of Shōkei, the Kiln of Kawai Kanjirō

Japan, Shōwa period, 1955

Woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14012)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

The Hawk Princess

Japan, Shōwa period, 1955

Woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14013)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

The Hawk Woman

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1951

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16723)

The women depicted by Munakata were greatly influenced by the artist's memories of his mother. He once wrote an essay that described how she had worked very hard for her family and died young. Munakata's women seem tough and capable of handling anything. His strong, curving lines symbolize the female spirit. The hawk is a symbol of his hometown, Hirosaki, in Aomori prefecture.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Kannon

Japan, Shōwa period, 1954

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16724)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Kannon

Japan, Shōwa period, 1955

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16725)

One of twelve prints from a series based upon a poem by Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939), this is dedicated to Kanzeon, or Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Mercy. The entire set won a prize in Lugano, Switzerland, in 1952. The present impression is dated 1955, the time of its sale to James Hudson, its first owner. Munakata printed on thin, undersized *kozō* (mulberry) paper, *etchū* paper (from the Etchū region in Toyama prefecture) or *izumo* paper (from the Izumo region in Shimane prefecture). The use of crumpled paper is a hallmark of Munakata's style. To obtain a misty effect, he sometimes moistened the paper before printing.

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Bird

Japan, Shōwa period, 1962

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16726)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Self-portrait

Japan, Shōwa period, 1960

Woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16727)

This is the first of three self-portraits Munakata did in the woodblock medium. As with most of Munakata's prints of the 1950s, he preferred to fill the entire space with design and activity.

Despite the expressionistic flavor, the master has admirably captured the sensitive nature of his own face. "Too many artists," declared Munakata, "have too much self in their work. Any self-conscious effort to create something beautiful can only be a pretense, and a craving for recognition can lead to nothing good. True art must be pure and simple."

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Ubari (Upali)* from the series “*The Ten Great Disciples of the Buddha*”**

Japan, Shōwa period, 1955

Woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24526)

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

***Kasen'nen (Katayana)* from the series “*The Ten Great Disciples of the Buddha*”**

Japan, Shōwa period, 1939

Woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24527)

Munakata regarded his work in black-and-white as inherently Japanese, being based on Zen Buddhism. As Munakata noted: “Others treat black as black ink. To me it is life itself.” Thus, his work is often dominated by Buddhist themes that he found profound and moving.

Kasenen was known as a very effective preacher who was able to convert his king in the city of Ujjain (Western India). Before converting to Buddhism, he had been the Brahmin chaplain to the king. Munakata commented on this print: “Kasenen looks exactly like my father. I like this print because of that, but it always reminds me of a scolding he once gave me.”

Munakata Shikō (1903-1975)

Seated Woman With Fan

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1950

Color woodblock print

Gift of May Lyn K. Powell and Maile N. Johnson in memory of Allen

R. Johnson, 2000

(26818)