

**Takei, probably Yokoyama Takei
(1816-1864)**

The Kabuki Character Asahina

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.338)

***This painting has been conserved by the
Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation
Center.***

Asahina Saburō is easily identified on the Kabuki stage by his distinctive make-up, especially the three horizontal lines on his forehead, his “mutton chop” whiskers, and the crane motif on his outer garment. Although based on a historical military figure, in Kabuki plays and paintings he is presented as a hero of almost mythic proportions.

This painting, signed “Takei,” is probably by the Kyoto artist Yokoyama Takei (1816-1864), the son of Yokoyama Kazan, who painted the *Gion Matsuri* handscroll in this exhibition.

Here, Kakei's painting is teamed with a text by the much-traveled Edo poet Yomo no Utagaki Magao (1753-1829), which reads:

*Dozing with a sake cask for a pillow,
Asahina dreams he's a butterfly,
a butterfly suited with armor.*

*Monkeys are energized
by his monkey-face
Cranes dance on his kimono
He's conquered the Isle of Demons
He's beaten Enma, the judge of hells
Is he a monster? Is he a man?*

*Once, he was just the third son of Wada
Yoshimori.
Now, his rosy brow, like a misty peak, shines out
with the power of Asahina, the morning sun.*

Yokoyama Kazan (1784-1837)
Gion Matsuri (Festival) in Kyoto

Japan, Edo period, 1813

Handscroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.307)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

Kyoto artist Yokoyama Kazan (1784-1837) was one of the most versatile artists of his generation. Adept at bold, sketch-like pictures of everyday life, he also mastered a wide range of styles. However, his skill at using Western perspective did not become apparent until this work. Kazan's scroll demonstrates his confident control of perspective, with the initial float looming massively as it approaches the viewer, and the following floats fading into the distance.

Historically, the streets would have been filled with crowds watching this annual event, but here the focus is on the people involved in bringing the festival to fruition. The picture teems with vivid details of the musicians housed in upper levels of some of the floats, including people pulling the floats as well as people along the sidelines making sure that all is proceeding smoothly.

The floats remain stationary until a boy signals for them to move. He would have been chosen for this honor from one of the traditional neighborhoods sponsoring the various floats. This boy, dressed in a girl's kimono, is being carried on the back of a man in front of the first float.

The present form of the Gion Matsuri was created in the seventeenth century. At the time Yokoyama Kazan painted this panorama of the festival, the boy chosen to formally start the procession of floats was clearly very young, as is the case now. However, that may or may not have been the case early in the seventeenth century. The Lane Collection contains a "mystery" painting from the early Edo period, which may represent an older boy selected to start the festival.

Mitchi Eishi (dates unknown)

Ōeyama Festival Float

Japan, Meiji period, late 19th – early 20th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.379)

Festival floats were popular in a few places in ancient Japan. The most famous of these is Kyoto, where the Gion Festival started in 869 and continues to be held annually in July. Narrow streets and crowds of people were challenges for float designers, which meant that traditional floats were tall and narrow.

This float design is named “Ōeyama,” an actual mountain north and west of Kyoto. But the float embodies the most famous story connected with the mountain, that of a giant ogre, who enjoyed eating the flesh of women and children. Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948-1021) supposedly led a group of samurai up the mountain and decapitated the ogre, whose huge head is shown near the top of the float. Minamoto no Yorimitsu is shown climbing up to slay the ogre. Near the bottom, a beautiful woman represents the people who lived in fear of the giant and his band of thieves.

A float such as this would have had wheels added a few days before the actual festival. The painting is signed “Mitshi Eishi design.” Artist directories of the time list no such painter, so he was probably an artisan whose profession was to design and make festival floats in the Meiji period (1868-1915).

Okumura Sekiran (1834-1895)

Cooling off by the Kamo River

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.312)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

Okumura Sekiran (1834-95) lived and painted in Nagoya, but studied the Shijo-Maruyama painting style in Kyoto. Here, Sekiran depicts the Kamo River at night. This river runs from north to south through the city of Kyoto. Normally, the river area would be completely dark at night, but in the summer, before the onset of the typhoon season, the river becomes shallow enough to wade in.

Kyoto in mid-summer is extremely hot and humid. The narrow *machiya* (row-houses) offered a bit of cool darkness in the daytime, but for many the only refuge from the heat was the Kamo River. Restaurants near the river developed a tradition of setting up temporary platforms by the riverside, or even directly over the river. Lanterns were lit, and people could eat, drink and be entertained, while dangling their feet in the cool, flowing water.

On windless nights mosquitoes might have made this experience unpleasant, but in this painting Sekiran creates a timeless, romantic image of *yū suzumi*, “cooling off at night,” the name given to both this unique Kyoto experience and to paintings of it.

Sozan (dates unknown)

Osaka Party Scene

Japan, late Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2007.149)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

The Osaka artist Sozan was a priest who painted in the somewhat realistic Shijo-school style. He was part of a team of artists who painted albums of scenes of Osaka, which were sold as souvenirs. He also made pictures for small *surimono* prints commissioned by groups of haiku poets. All of Sozan's known work is small in scale and quiet in mood.

Here Sozan depicts a small party scene of the sort that even men of modest means could have afforded. Ukiyo-e prints and paintings commonly feature the lavishly dressed "stars" of the pleasure quarters, but this intimate party scene is probably more typical of the time, rather like a modern evening of drinks and *karaoke*.

**The Kambun Master
(active 1660s to 1670s)**

Lovers Surprised

Japan, Edo period, 17th century

Hanging scroll (originally part of a handscroll); ink
and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2007.242)

***This painting has been conserved by the
Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation
Center.***

For several reasons, *Lovers Surprised* is one of the most important paintings in the Richard Lane Collection. It is probably also one of the first major Japanese paintings he acquired. Lane revealed his excitement by writing his own name on the top of the painting's mounting, as well as on the accompanying box.

The painting is unsigned and undated, but now widely recognized as having been painted in the Kambun period (1661-1673). More importantly, Lane's research into book illustrations and paintings of this time led him to believe that one unnamed artist during the Kambun period was significantly better than any other. The time period coincides with the first popularizing of the term "*ukiyo*" by Asai Ryoji and others, making this unidentified person the first important artist of the "floating world."

In a bold move for a non-Japanese scholar, Richard Lane created a name for this artist: “the Kambun Master.” Although the painting is erotic in subject, it is not sexually explicit, although Lane considered it as belonging to the genre known as *shunga*, “spring pictures,” which unashamedly celebrate the act of making love.

In 1978 Lane wrote about the painting, which he dated to the late 1660s:

One of the major extant shunga frontispiece plates, this painting is in the characteristic style of the Kambun Master’s later work. In a common device of shunga, the lovers, though alone, are depicted as though interrupted by an intruder.

Lane refers to the artist himself:

From the fact that the year-cycle 1661-1673 was known in Japan as Kambun, we have chosen to dub this artist the Kambun Master. Whether these works represent the efforts of one artist or more, we do not know; but to judge from the style and general productivity involved, one artist seems to be the central figure—exerting some influence on his equally anonymous contemporaries and producing the great Moronobu—who was either a direct or indirect pupil—a decade later.

Japanese scholars have followed Lane's lead and routinely refer to the "Kambun Master."

Mihata Jōryū
(active 1830s to 1840s)

Asazuma-bune

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.23)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

The Kyoto artist Mihata Jōryū flourished as a painter of beautiful women in Kyoto in the 1830s and 1840s. He created his own style, combining the soft approach of the Shijo-Maruyama school with the intense pigments associated with ukiyo-e painting. His technique influenced Kyoto paintings of beautiful women for the rest of the century.

The woman in this painting is dressed as a Shirabyōshi dancer. These dancers were associated with shrine ceremonies. Here, however, the woman is depicted sitting in a small boat in shallow water. The combination of voluminous clothing, a court hat, and a boat identifies the subject as “Asazuma-bune,” a boat used by prostitutes at Asazuma (on the shores of Lake Biwa).

Early in the eighteenth century a song and dance based on this theme was popularized by the Edo artist Hanabusa Itchō (1654-1724). From that time forward various Kabuki actors performed the Asazuma dance, often as an afterpiece. It is this romanticized image of the Asazuma boat women that Jōryū depicts, perhaps in conjunction with a particularly noteworthy performance of the dance at one of Kyoto's Kabuki theaters.

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)

Illustrations

from *Yama-mata-yama*

Japan, Edo period, 1804

Woodblock printed books; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1056.1-2)

Exotic foreign objects were often featured in ukiyo-e. In this picture, Hokusai (1760-1849) gives prominence to a lacquered Dutch telescope, with Mt. Fuji in the distance. The occasion illustrated is a picnic to the north of Edo, where horse races could be viewed.

The second illustration depicts the seventh day of the seventh month, the Tanabata “star festival.” By tradition, people write wishes on strips of paper and attach them to bamboo stalks.

Hokusai became increasingly popular in the first few years of the nineteenth century. He was asked to contribute illustrations to this poetry anthology, published in 1804 as *Yama mata yama* (“Mountains after mountains”). Since the actual subject matter is the very flat outskirts of Edo, as this picture suggests, the expression “*yama mata yama*” may simply imply “scenic vista after vista.”

Kōzan

(full name and dates unknown)

Tayū in a Phoenix Kimono

Japan, Edo - Meiji period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.10)

***This painting has been conserved by the
Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation
Center.***

In Kyoto and Osaka the most accomplished courtesans of the pleasure quarters took pride in their abilities in dance and song and in clever repartee with their guests. The Shimabara district in Kyoto and Shinmachi in Osaka were especially known for the subtlety and grace of the geisha, especially the top-ranked *tayū*.

Here we see a stunning *tayū* with an outer garment combining design motifs of a phoenix and flowering wisteria. The artist, Kōzan, has not been identified, but is probably an early Meiji artist in the line of Kyoto artists who studied under Yoshimura Kōkei (1769-1836), a direct student of Maruyama Ōkyo.

Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806)

***The “Ōgiya” Beauties on Parade, from
Seirō ehon nenjū-gyōji***

Japan, Edo period, 1804

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1053.1)

For many ukiyo-e enthusiasts, the pictures of beautiful women by Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806) are unsurpassed. In 1804, near the end of his career, he created a book of pictures called *Seirō ehon nenjū-gyōji*, which traces annual events in the Yoshiwara pleasure district.

There was considerable rivalry in Yoshiwara as to the levels of sophistication, beauty and desirability of the women in the different houses. For many years, *Ōgiya*, the “House of Fans,” was a favorite of Utamaro. There were daily parades of women from each of the houses.

Here, he shows a spectacular procession marking the New Year, as four *maiko* (“dancing girls”) with elaborate hair ornaments precede the top *oiran*, the most celebrated and accomplished of the women in the House of Fans. She is flanked by two *kamuro*, apprentice girls, and followed by a slightly lower ranking *oiran*. At the front and back are men guarding the women, and at the rear is the matronly chaperone.

Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806)

Illustration from *Seirō ehon nenjū-gyōji*

Japan, Edo period, 1804

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1053.2)

Here, in the second volume of *Seirō ehon nenjū-gyōji*, Utamaro shows us two of the inner party rooms. The picture is beautifully composed and richly detailed. In the back right we glimpse a room in which a party is in progress, with a *maiko* ready to serve *sake*, and someone playing the shamisen.

In the right foreground, a *geisha* who has had too much to drink clings to a pillar to steady herself. On the left, a geisha in a kimono with a design of plovers looks into a room where an *oiran* and *geisha* are entertaining a favored client. On the far left, a man holding wooden sticks is about to clack them together, urging everyone to exercise caution against fires.

Seirō ehon nenjū-gyōji is usually printed in color. This example is either a variant edition or a unique key-block impression prepared before the color blocks were printed. Notes inserted into the book identify it as having belonged to the nineteenth century French collector Edmond Goncourt.

Kawamuro Bumpō (1779-1821)
Carrying a Sumo Wrestler in the Rain,
from *Kaidō kyōka-awase*

Japan, Edo period, 1811

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1055)

A sumo wrestler can now relax in the spacious seats of the famed Bullet Train's "Green Car," and be whisked from Kyoto to Tokyo in a little over two hours. As the picture shows, a sumo wrestler traveling the great Tōkaidō highway in 1811 faced a tougher time. He had to pay to be carried up steep slopes or in rainy weather.

The *kago* (palanquin) depicted here was normally carried by two porters, but the extra weight of this special traveler would have necessitated four men. By alternately walking in the easy places, and being carried over the difficult spots, the wrestler could expect to arrive fresh for a tournament in Edo after a two-week journey.

The great Tōkaidō highway connected Kyoto and Edo (Tokyo), but it was traveled exclusively on foot, or on horseback. Rivers had to be forded on the backs of porters, as no large bridges were allowed. Occasionally travelers also had to struggle over narrow mountain passes. For those walking, the entire trip took about two weeks, or longer in bad weather.

Bumpō was primarily a painter, and not active as a printmaker. He was, however, very well known for his evocative book illustrations. Richard Lane was particularly interested in Bumpō's books, because he discovered that ukiyo-e printmakers such as Kuniyoshi and Kunisada had "borrowed" from Bumpō book designs for their prints.

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)
People on the Ryōgoku Bridge, from
Sumidagawa ryōgan ichiran

Japan, Edo period, ca. 1805

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1054.1)

Throngs of people crowd onto the Ryōgoku Bridge, on their way to see an event on the east side of the Sumida River. Today, the regular sumo tournaments in Tokyo are held there in a beautiful building. But in 1805, when Hokusai (1760-1849) made this colorful print, there was no permanent location for sumo tournaments in Edo (Tokyo).

A popular guidebook of the time indicated that sumo tournaments were held on the east side of the Ryōgoku Bridge in the third and eleventh months, so at that time of year the crowds on the bridge would likely be headed for a sumo tournament.

Hokusai was commissioned by a poetry group to create pictures of the Sumida River, as seen from the “downtown” west side, as well as from the less populous east side. The Lane copy of *Sumidagawa ryōgan ichiran* (ca. 1805) is a fresh and early impression of this famous, but rare, book.

Katsukawa Shun'ei (1762-1819)

Ichikawa Danjūrō V, from Shibai kinmozui

Japan, Edo period, late 18th – early 19th century

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1057.1-2)

Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825)

Ichikawa Danjūrō V, from Shibai kinmozui

Japan, Edo period, late 18th – early 19th century

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1057.3)

In 1800, the popular writer Shikitei Samba (1776-1822) and the ukiyo-e artists Katsukawa Shun'ei (1762-1819) and Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825) collaborated to produce a book explaining the secrets of Kabuki. *Shibai kinmozui* illustrates and describes lighting effects, shows how parts of the stage could be moved, and also shares dozens of other stagecraft tricks.

In the first illustration, Shun'ei depicts an astonishing array of wigs and side-hair for a variety of male characters. The second illustration shows the theater district in Edo (Tokyo), with crowds facing the tantalizing dilemma of which theater to enter. In the third illustration, Toyokuni introduces a few of the star performers of Kabuki, beginning here with Ichikawa Danjūrō V (1741-1806).

Kabuki plays have been popular in Japan for nearly four hundred years. By 1800 the number of Kabuki theatres and troupes of actors had proliferated so much that even country towns hoped for traveling performances. Osaka, Kyoto and Edo were the greatest rival cities, and there were annual guidebooks listing the strengths of new as well as seasoned performers.

Attributed to Kitao Masayoshi

(1764-1824)

An All Star Show of Three Plays, from the series Newly Published Perspective

Pictures

Japan, Edo period, c. 1770s

Hand-colored woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24614)

This print shows the crowded interior of a Kabuki theater during a “*kaomise*,” literally, “face-showing” performance. Such performances introduced young actors in highlight scenes, and also gave established ones the chance to try new roles, or to celebrate a change in name or status.

Kabuki enjoyed enormous popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and *kaomise* performances gave fans an opportunity to speculate about the upcoming season of complete plays or to gossip about the ups and downs of individual performers. As the packed audience in this print implies, *kaomise* was not to be missed.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)

Sumo Match at Ekō'in Temple, from the series Ryōgoku in the Eastern Capital

Japan, Edo period, c. 1847-1852

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24558)

Even today, *Sumo* is regarded by most Japanese as something more than just a sport. At the time Hiroshige made this print, the special nature of *sumo* was even more strongly felt. High-protein diets and training led to *sumotori* towering over their countrymen. By exaggerating the perspective in this print, Hiroshige makes this sumo match appear to be between giants.

The astonishing number of people crowding into this temporary arena demonstrates the popularity of *sumo*, but also the generosity of the people of Edo. The print illustrates a *kanjin sumo* match, where the proceeds went to charity.

Tamate Tōshū (1795-1871)

Horse Race at Sumiyoshi Shrine

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.380)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

Horses have been associated with Shinto shrines since the dawn of Japanese history. Horse races associated with shrines such as Kamigamo Shrine in Kyoto, and Sumiyoshi Shrine in Osaka, are still performed. Such races have no connection with the modern sport, although thoroughbred horses are now ridden even at such traditional events.

Tamate Tōshū was noted for his sketches and paintings of scenes of Osaka. In this painting two horses and riders are preparing to race at Osaka's Sumiyoshi Shrine. To show the elaborate horse trappings and the antiquated costumes and headgear of the riders, he has left out the onlookers who would have crowded up against the low railing for a better view of the series of elimination races.

Anonymous

Boy in Woman's Kimono

Japan, Edo period, mid-17th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.382)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

This unsigned painting has no identifying box or inscription to clarify the subject matter. It appears to be a painting of a boy wearing an elaborate and colorful woman's kimono. But why would a boy wear a woman's kimono, and why would this become the subject of a painting?

One possibility is that this painting represents a *Wakashū* Kabuki actor. Kabuki was originally performed by troupes consisting mainly of women, but in 1629 these performances were banned because of claims that they were encouraging prostitution. This led to Kabuki performed by boys, or *Wakashū* Kabuki.

Ironically, by the mid-seventeenth century it was claimed that boys were also prostituting themselves, and after 1652 only adult men were allowed to perform, a tradition that continues to this day. If this painting depicts a *Wakashū* performance, it is a great rarity.

However, the kimono design may be more typical of a Genroku period (1688-1704) style, which would rule out a boy Kabuki image. If so, one possibility is the Gion Festival. (See the Yokoyama Kazan *Gion Festival* handscroll nearby). In Kazan's time, the huge floats were set in motion by the command of a boy from the Gion area, dressed in a woman's kimono and carried on the back of an adult man.

Today, the boy who starts the festival procession is placed high on the front of the lead float; the signal to start the procession comes when the boy (wearing a woman's kimono) cuts a ceremonial cord with a knife. The consistent point is the use of a boy dressed in a woman's kimono, but his placement and actions differ. It is possible, then, that the boy in the painting represents an earlier tradition in which an older boy began the Gion Festival.

Mokusanjin (unidentified artist)

Tengu at work and play

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.384)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

In Japanese folklore, *tengu* combine the attributes of humans and birds. Their faces are beak-like and they have the ability to fly, but they also have arms and legs. *Tengu* are often depicted as malevolent creatures living in trees or on mountain tops, but here the as yet unidentified artist Mokusanjin (“tree-mountain-man”) playfully depicts *tengu* engaged in a variety of activities.

There is a Kabuki *tengu* in front of a make-up mirror, a magic-show *tengu*, and painter and calligrapher *tengu*. They dance and sing, play board games such as *go*, and enjoy archery and horse-riding. Other *tengu* trim their *bonsai* or read people's palms. A blind *tengu* gives a massage, and a boy *tengu* rolls a hoop.

In this painting Mokusanjin shows various dimensions of city life through images of *tengu* at work and play.

Torii Kiyotada II
(active early 19th century)

Yoshiwara Oiran and Kamuro

Japan, Edo period, early 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.313)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

The Torii line of ukiyo-e painters are more associated with Kabuki paintings and prints than with pictures of beautiful women. But in this powerful painting, Torii Kiyotada II shows us an *oiran* from the Yoshiwara pleasure district, followed by her *kamuro*, a young female attendant. Both the *oiran* and *kamuro* are wearing kimono with red and white peony motifs.

A circular design of three fans on the kimono identifies this *oiran* and *kamuro* as from the Ogiya House in Yoshiwara. This exhibition includes a picture of a “parade” of beauties from Ogiya by Kitagawa Utamaro from his book *Seirō Ehon Nenjū gyōji*.

The artist added *nikawa* glue to black ink so that the black of the kimono and the elaborate hairdos of the *oiran* and *kamuro* would appear to be lacquered.

Anonymous

Tayū with Origami

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.12)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

The large number of tortoise-shell hair ornaments and the elaborately embroidered carp design of her outer garment identify this woman as a high-ranking *tayū*, probably from the Shinbashi pleasure quarters in Osaka, or Shimabara in Kyoto. The painting is unsigned and unsealed, so it is impossible to identify the artist, but the painting combines elements of the Shijo-Maruyama and ukiyo-e styles popularized in the Kyoto-Osaka area by Mihata Jōryū and others.

The various houses in the pleasure quarters had strict rules regarding the amount of private space to which a woman was entitled. Most had very little, but a *tayū* was entitled to her own room.

Although the subject of the painting has achieved a high rank based on beauty and skill in song and dance, she appears to be quite young, and is seen here resting in her private room. Her hair and make-up have been prepared, and she is dressed for the first party of the evening, captured by the artist as she sits on her bedding, perhaps remembering her childhood, while she folds an *origami* paper crane.

Mori Sosen (1747-1821)

Monkey Couple Marries

Japan, Edo period,

late 18th – early 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2006.135)

Tailless macaque monkeys can be found on all the main islands of Japan except Hokkaido. For centuries monkeys have been trained for entertainment, sometimes even attached to shrines. At Hiyoshi Taisha on the eastern slope of Mt. Hiei, monkeys were dressed in miniature shrine clothing and taught to assist in ceremonies, such as celebrating the beginning of a Year of the Monkey in the twelve-year zodiac cycle.

Monkeys have been depicted in Asian art for centuries, and in Japan the undisputed master of monkey painting is Mori Sosen. Here, Sosen depicts a wedding ceremony, with the bride and groom as monkeys. The picture may actually represent a bit of “monkey business” theatricals, but in all likelihood it simply shows how a great artist could use his profound understanding of monkeys in a playful sketch, perhaps for a patron born in a Monkey Year.

The “groom” is dressed in formal kimono and trailing *hakama*, with a single sword at his side. A samurai was required to carry two swords with him. The single sword may have been Sosen’s way of avoiding trouble with a humorless samurai who might have been offended. But the single

sword may also simply be a reflection of the fact that most of Sosen's patrons in Osaka were shop owners, sake makers, and others engaged in business, none of whom were permitted to wear a sword.

The "bride," sumptuously dressed in a *furisode* kimono and elaborate headdress, is lifting a congratulatory rice cake to acknowledge their marriage. In the foreground a small stand displays other decorations suitable for a special occasion.

Nishiyama Hōen (1804-1867)

Cricket Wedding Procession

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Handscroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.377)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

In Japan, it appears that even insects have weddings, complete with processions escorting the bride and all her dowry to the groom's family home. Here the popular Osaka artist Nishiyama Hōen (1804-67) depicts a cricket wedding.

The bride is hidden in a cricket cage tied with a red tassel and carried by a group of rice-hoppers. Behind the bridal group, wasps carry a nest to represent the dowry. The procession is led by crickets and mantises carrying stalks of flowers and weeds to represent crested banners identifying the families of the bride and groom.

The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection contains a faithful copy of this painting by Hōen's son, Nishiyama Kan'ei (1883-1887).

Katei (unidentified artist)

A Disrupted Fox Wedding

Japan, Meiji period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.383)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

By tradition, the rains and mists of June in Japan are referred to as “fox wedding procession weather.” The idea seems to be that on a misty night even a parade of foxes won't be noticed by sleeping humans.

Here the unidentified artist, Katei, shows us that people may sleep through a parade of foxes but not watchdogs. A barking dog prompts panic, as the bride-fox, her mother and all the attending foxes flee, abandoning the palanquin for carrying the bride.

Mitani Goun (dates unknown)

Portrait of a Beautiful Woman

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.28)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

Mitani Goun studied painting in Kyoto under Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-95), one of the most innovative artists of the eighteenth century. Ōkyo originally studied Kano-style painting but became dissatisfied with its emphasis on traditional subjects and painting methods. Ōkyo created a new style, both decorative and semi-realistic. Goun's work is representative of the best of the Maruyama school, and here he depicts a woman, probably from the Kyoto pleasure area known as Shimabara.

Unlike the ideal beauties depicted by ukiyo-e artists, the Maruyama tradition calls for art based on realistic sketches. Here Goun gives us a portrait of a woman we might recognize if we had the chance to meet her in person.

Goun's paintings are extremely scarce, and this Lane Collection example is thus especially important.

Kanamori Nanto (1823-?)

One Hundred Otafuku

Japan, Edo-Meiji period, 19th century

Handscroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.29)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

Kanamori Nanto studied Maruyama-school painting under Suzuki Nanrei (1775-1844), one of the first Edo artists to master that style. Nanto learned his craft along side Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891), another of Nanrei's students.

Nanrei was noted for his impromptu sketches of daily life, and this handscroll clearly shows that Nanto had also mastered the art of quickly sketching a large-scale work. The subject is *otafuku*, the plump-faced woman who represents robust health and happiness as a wife and mother.

In this endlessly fascinating handscroll, Nanto shows us many *otafuku* engaging in the mundane activities of domestic life: cooking, washing, nursing, and playing with children. But *otafuku* is tireless, and near the end of the scroll, she can be seen in more formal attire playing the flute, the *biwa* and *shamisen*, singing and in other cultural pursuits such as painting and calligraphy, as well as teaching these arts to her children. In Nanto's eye, *otafuku* becomes the ideal middle-class Japanese housewife.

Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1751)

Inner Room,

from *Ehon mitsuwa-gusa*

Japan, Edo period, 1740

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.1052)

Kyoto's most renowned pleasure district in the eighteenth century was called Shimabara. For the first half of the century, the beauties of Shimabara were depicted in hundreds of book illustrations by Nishikawa Sukenobu. Ukiyo-e prints were never as popular in Kyoto as illustrated books, and Sukenobu was the most prolific and popular illustrator of his generation. He was also a designer of patterns for kimono and cotton yukata worn in the summer. Part of his popularity as a book artist came from the kimono designs shown in his pictures.

Here, two young geisha take a break from singing and dancing to slice cucumbers and bananas for their guest. This picture is from Sukenobu's *Ehon mitsuwa-gusa* (1740). In later years, the Edo ukiyo-e artist Suzuki Harunobu (1724-1770) adapted many Sukenobu book designs for use in his popular color prints.

Bananas are almost impossible to grow in Kyoto because of its cold winters. By offering a banana to their guest, these women demonstrate the ability of the Shimabara pleasure area to offer exotic appeal, and at the same time flatter the guest's sense of importance.

Anonymous

Beauty Writing a Letter

Japan, Edo period,

17th or early 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.308)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

In the quiet of her tastefully appointed room, a beautiful woman, partially undressed, is writing a letter. Her red undergarment and spacious room suggest that she is a *tayū* in one of the pleasure quarters, perhaps the Shimabara area of Kyoto.

Her slightly disheveled hair and bedclothes suggest that she has just returned from her bath, and is now writing to her patron, or perhaps a love letter to a new acquaintance.

The sliding door to her room is open to let in cool air, which suggests that the season is summer.

The flooring in the hallway is painted to suggest perspective, an art device that had only recently entered the world of ukiyo-e.

Torii Tadamasu (1904-1970)

Sukeroku

Japan, Shōwa period, 20th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk
Purchase, 2003
(2008.340)

Ueno Katsumi began to study painting with Torii Kiyotada (1874-1941), taking the art name Torii Tadamasu. In addition to theater posters and billboards, Tadamasu made a series of Kabuki prints for the woodblock-print publisher Watanabe Shōzaburō (1885-1962) in 1940.

Following the death of his teacher in 1941, and the disruptions in the Kabuki and art worlds created by World War II, it was only in 1949 that Tadamasa was allowed to officially use the name Torii, connecting him by name with the lineage of Kabuki artists going back to its founding in the late seventeenth century. Of course, Tadamasa had mastered the Torii style in the early years of the twentieth century, but changes in names are not made lightly in this tradition-bound world.

Richard Lane often professed boredom with Japanese art after 1868, the last year of the Tokugawa period, but the presence of this painting (and many others) demonstrates that he bought significant twentieth-century art in a variety of styles and media.

After Hishikawa Moronobu

(ca. 1618-94)

Yoshiwara Street Scene

Japan, Edo period, early 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.311)

This painting has been conserved by the Academy's Asian Paintings Conservation Center.

This painting is based on a print by Hishikawa Moronobu, which was published in Edo in the 1680s. The print is one of a series entitled "The Appearance of Yoshiwara," and the scholar Asano Shūgō has titled the print that is the model for this painting "A Koshi-mise House of Courtesans." "Koshi" refers to the lattice construction, and "mise" means a public showing. This was one of the lower-ranked types of houses in Yoshiwara, where the women were quite literally on display.

Moronobu's woodcut includes all the figures and architectural details seen in the painting, but was printed without color, as was the custom of the time. The unknown painter faithfully copied the composition and added color and design patterns to some of the figures, but the painting lacks the crisp detail of the print.

Photograph of *Musashi Abumi*

Asai Ryoji (?-1691)

Woodblock-printed book; ink on paper

Japan, Edo period, 1661

Purchase, 2003

(2006.275.1-2)

Ukiyo-e, or "pictures of the floating world," is an ancient Japanese phrase derived from the Buddhist concept of impermanence. However, during the Edo period it took on a new meaning, used both for the annual cycle of festivals and events celebrating the seasonal changes, and also for popular culture, particularly as reflected in the rapidly changing trends of the pleasure quarters and Kabuki Theater.

The earliest use of the term "floating world" in this sense comes from the prolific writer of popular fiction Asai Ryoi. The following often-quoted passage, written by Asai in 1661, was translated by Richard Lane:

Living only for the moment, turning our full attention to the pleasures of the moon, the snow, the cherry blossoms and the maple leaves; singing songs, drinking wine, diverting ourselves in just floating, floating; caring not a whit for the pauperism staring us in the face, refusing to be disheartened, like a gourd floating along with the river current: this is what we call the floating world....

Within a few years, the term “floating world” had become a buzzword, such as the “Jazz Age” of the 1920s, or “Generation X.” In succeeding decades, pictures showing the popularity of Kabuki performances, the Yoshiwara, and other licensed pleasure quarters (as well as other popular events such as horse races, sumo tournaments and festivals) became known as ukiyo-e, pictures of the floating world.

Anonymous

Tayū in Her Room

Japan, Edo period, late 17th or early 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.310)

This unsigned scroll is an example of an early experiment in perspective painting. The figure on the left is wearing a young girl's kimono. A lacquered writing set is open before her, and she is preparing to write something, perhaps a poem or a letter. The other figure in the painting is lying down, her obi belting undone, a pipe on the matting by her left hand.

Near her right elbow we see a folded piece of paper, perhaps a completed letter or poem. The sliding paper door is open, revealing a walkway and part of a garden. The tokonoma alcove contains a painting and other accoutrements of culture.

The reclining pose and pipe suggest that the older woman is a *tayū* or *oiran*. If so, the girl may be her *kamuro* attendant. The large painting in this exhibition by Torii Kiyotada II shows an *oiran* and her *kamuro* attendant outdoors in public, while this painting shows a similar pair “at home” in a relaxed interior setting.

A *tayū* (the term used in the Osaka-Kyoto area) or *oiran* (the term used in Edo) was expected to help train her *kamuro* in the arts, as a mother would train her daughter. In fact, this painting resembles many eighteenth-century mother-daughter paintings and book illustrations.

Torii Kiyotsune

(unidentified Torii school artist)

Shirabyoshi Dancer with Umbrella

Japan, Edo to Meiji period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.309)

Anonymous

Heian Beauty with Poem Card

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk

Purchase, 2003

(2008.18)

This painting uses two contrasting styles: a detailed and colorful picture of a woman in the foreground, and a hastily brushed impression of a misty hillside temple in the background. The woman wears a multi-layered kimono, and holds a fan in her right hand and a slip of poem paper in her left.

She looks over her shoulder at the temple in the distance, a look that connects the top and bottom of the painting and energizes the empty space in between. The dynamic use of empty space is one of the most appealing aspects of Japanese art, as this painting demonstrates.

The identity of woman and the location of the setting are mysterious. The woman's face is painted in a style typical of the 19th century, but the intense colors of her clothing, the poem paper, and fan suggest a Heian-period writer.

One such writer is Murasaki Shikibu, who is associated with the hillside temple Ishiyama-dera. It was in this temple that she wrote most of her masterpiece novel *The Tale of Genji*, which was finished in 1008 AD.

Anonymous

Geisha Playing Two Hand Drums

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.336)

Women working in the pleasure quarters were expected to be adept at calligraphy, poetry, and the performing arts. This painting shows a geisha who had mastered simultaneously playing two different hand drums, the shoulder drum and the lap drum. This impressive skill would never occur in a Kabuki play, but such showy performances might have been in demand for private recitals.

Kakō-jō

(unidentified female artist)

Court Beauty with Dog

Japan, Edo period, 19th century

Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper

Purchase, 2003

(2008.16)

A courtesan with a pet dog is lifting a rolled split-bamboo *sudare* (blind). The pose and the painted eyebrows suggest that the painting playfully refers to an episode from the Heian-period literary classic, *The Pillow Book*, by Sei Shōnagon (late 16th century.)