

**Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944)**

***Beauty Dressed for a Ceremonial Occasion***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926), 1920s

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2003

(27476)

## **Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944)**

### ***Heron Maiden***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926), 1920s

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, Marjorie Lewis Griffing and Beatrice Watson Parrent  
Funds, 1994

(7551.1)

The Heron Maiden was a popular subject during the Taishō and early Shōwa periods. Here, Shūhō brings the Heron Maiden into the conservative Tokyo *bijin* tradition as fashioned largely by his teacher Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972). The stoop-shouldered, columnar figure is gracefully vaporous, yet she is rooted by her impossibly long cloak, which trails on the ground before and behind her.

**Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944)**

***Autumn***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), 1927

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2003

(27481)

## **Wada Seika (active 1920s-1930s)**

### ***Portrait of Mrs. Ueda Terue***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), 1932

Two-panel folding screen; ink and color on silk

Purchase, Marjorie Lewis Griffing and Beatrice Watson Parrent Funds, 1994

(7544.1)

After a trip to Europe with her husband, the subject of this portrait returned with newly cropped hair and a trunk full of the latest fashions. She posed for this painting in her own house; the artist added most of the furnishings (except for the bentwood rocker) to create a setting as contemporary as Terue herself.

The orderly vertical and horizontal lines of the credenza, curtain, and carpet create a geometric frame against which the organic curves of Terue and her chair seem all the more vivid. Although both painter and sitter eventually returned to a more conservative style, this work represents their brief flirtations with modes of presentation considered to be outside the traditional boundaries for women who desired to maintain a place in acceptable society.

## Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944)

### *Three Sisters*

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), 1936

Four-panel folding screen; ink and color on silk

Purchase, Beatrice Watson Parrent Fund, 2002

(11822.1)

The women in this painting share a striking resemblance, so much so that they might even be considered triplets. They also wear similar clothing: long-sleeved kimono and obi with the same arabesque *karakusa* (Chinese grass) pattern, although the colors vary. Though this is likely a portrait of three specific women, it is also a depiction of Japanese femininity. As such, the juxtaposition with the Western car is intriguing.

The title *Three Sisters* repeats the title of Chekov's famous play of 1901, which was not performed in Japan until 1932. These screens are mostly about consumption and privilege. The fancy automobile leaves no doubt about the economic status of these women. Their high fashion and aloof expressions are in keeping with the "classical" elegance of the car, with the strong lines and sweeping curves of their kimono reprising the car's stylish silhouette.

## **Nakamura Daizaburō (1898-1947)**

### ***Takako Irie on a Couch***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), 1930

Two-panel folding screen; ink, color and gold on silk

Purchase, Marjorie Lewis Griffing and Beatrice Watson Parrent

Funds and Estate of Seldon Washington, 1994

(7547.1)

This screen epitomizes the style that made Daizaburō one of Kyoto's top specialists in painting beautiful women (*bijinga*). Popular film star Takako Irie may be wearing a traditional kimono, but her graceful position on a chaise longue, with left ankle over right, is reminiscent of Manet's famed *Olympia*, the scandalous hit of the 1856 Paris Salon. Where Manet flouted Renaissance ideals by showing an unidealized, contemporary woman as a naked courtesan who gazes back at the viewer, Daizaburō re-classicizes his model as a modern Japanese Venus, fully clothed and gaze averted, but exerting subtle femininity.

The dramatic centrality of the woman is set off by the emptiness of the surrounding space and by the intricate details on the couch and clothing. Arrayed in the latest in Japanese couture and coiffure, yet at ease on European furniture, Takako coolly synthesizes native and foreign aesthetics.

**Hashiguchi Goyō (1880-1921)**

***Summer Kimono***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926), 1920

Color woodblock print

Bequest of the Estate of Leslie B. Andrews, 1990

(20688)

## **Masuda Gyokujō (1881-1955)**

### ***Osen of Kasamori Shrine***

Japan, Taishō (1912-1926) to Shōwa (1926-1989) period, ca. 1925-1935

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Purchase, Marjorie Lewis Griffing and Beatrice Watson Parrent Funds, 1994  
(7554.1)

A characteristic of Taishō *nihonga* is a fascination with the theme of Edo period beauty (*bijin*). In this evocative scroll by Gyokujō, the aesthetic link between old and new hints at the timelessness of specific feelings and values. The subject and composition of this painting derive from Suzuki Harunobu (1724-1770), one of the greatest ukiyo-e masters.

In several prints of the 1760s, Harunobu depicted the famous beauty Osen, at her tea-stall in front of Kasamori Shrine, accompanied by other people. In Gyokujō's depiction, he eliminates all figures but Osen, and radically simplifies the setting. The prominent focus on Osen creates the feeling that she has somehow slipped through the bounds of time.

**Torii Kotondo (1900-1976)**

***Combing the Hair***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), 1929

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1983

(18894)

## **Anonymous**

### ***Set of Ruby and Clear Cut Glass Cups and Saucers***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926)

Glass with ruby glass overlay, stainless steel

Gift of Patricia Salmon, 1994

(7592.1-12)

This set of ruby-overlay and clear-glass cups and saucers are striking examples of Japanese art deco, with their wide linear and scalloped geometric patterns. They might have been a summer gift to an upper-class family, or a “return gift” for guests attending an elite wedding celebration.

## **Anonymous**

### ***Set of Ten Bowls***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926)

Glass with purple glass overlay

Gift of Patricia Salmon, 1994

(7593.1-10)

The sides of these bowls are cut into a tri-petal floral shape. Each petal, half in purple and half in clear glass, has a geometric cross-hatched pattern carved into the clear side and etched into the purple glass. This type of bowl was used for special side dishes, but, by modern times (since the transparency and coolness of glass suggests summer) these bowls were probably used for chilled desserts such as ice cream or flavored ice.

## **Anonymous**

### ***Jūbako***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), ca. 1925-1960

Lacquered wood

Gift of Patricia Salmon, 1994

(7575.1)

The stacked food box, or *jūbako*, is one of the most practical objects in Japanese daily life. Its design and manufacture range from common, mass-produced boxes made of cheap woods to elaborate lacquer containers costing millions of yen. In the early twentieth century, lacquer craftsmen often broke from tradition and took their designs in imaginative, playful directions.

This five-tiered container takes the form of a bamboo shoot. The exterior depicts a forest of bamboo shoots; the interior of each tray is a red lacquer. The size and motif of this *jūbako* indicate that it was meant for use on special occasions, perhaps a New Year's celebration. It would have been the focal point of a table setting before the stacked compartments were separated to reveal the delicacies within.

**Anonymous**

***Clamshell-shaped Trays***

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989), ca. 1930-1940

Lacquer

Gift of Patricia Salmon, 1994

(7602.1-5)

Lacquer trays took on inventive shapes, as seen in this set of five black and brown clamshell-shaped trays. Each is decorated with a different fish, and some have sea plants done in *makie* (gold-flecked lacquer) on a stylized, gray, wave-patterned ground.

## **Itō Shōha (1887-1968)**

### ***Genroku Beauty***

Japan, Taishō period (1912-1926), ca. 1920

Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk

Gift of Mr. Felix Juda, 1962

(6161.1)

Although homogeneous at first glance, at closer inspection the depiction of women in Taishō *nihonga* was comprised of a variety of styles. This diversity stems in part from the range of stylistic traditions of painting in the previous Edo (1615-1868) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods, the desire to fuse them with aspects of Western art, and the necessity of finding formulas that would garner the favor of critics, judges at exhibitions, and patrons.

Though her talent has been largely overlooked in postwar years, Shōha was one of the most skillful and versatile *bijinga* painters of her time. In stark contrast to the large, formal paintings that define most of her work (and the *bijinga* canon), this painting is refreshingly casual. The loose brushwork and muted tone make it appear as if it were done in an instant, capturing a single moment in time. At the same time, in only a few strokes, the woman's face exudes the haughty confidence of a high-ranking courtesan.