

Recent Acquisitions: Asian Art

MENNO FITSKI, MARIJE JANSEN, WILLIAM SOUTHWORTH AND CHING-LING WANG

і ANONYMOUS (Korea) *Mirror*, Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), 12th-13th century Cast bronze, d. 17 cm

The back of this octafoil mirror depicts people in a boat sailing into tumultuous waves, while a dragon emerges from the sea. Above the mast of the boat is the four-character inscription: 'hwang bi chang cheon' (Chinese: huang bi chang tian 煌조昌天), which means 'heavenly blessings bring prosperity to the world'. There is a raised boss designed to take a silk tassel in the centre of the back of the mirror. When in use, the mirror would be placed on a stand, usually made of wood, thus freeing the user's hands to attend to their hair or make-up.

Korean mirrors are found with both distinctively Korean decorative motifs and Chinese-inspired schemes; this mirror is one of the latter. It is a copy of a known Chinese design that can be traced back to the early twelfth century of the Song dynasty (960-1276). However, the copied image is reversed, as the inscription of the four Chinese characters on the mirror reveals. It indicates that the maker of the mould did not take into account the fact that the resultant image would be flipped when the mirror was cast.

A mirror was considered to have supernatural powers throughout East Asia. On the one hand

it showed the owner's reflection, on the other it offered a representation of the powerful patterns and forces believed to govern the working of the universe. These included dragons, mythical guardian animals of four directions (the Azure Dragon of the East, the White Tiger of the West, the Vermilion Bird of the South, and the Black Warrior of the North) and references to the sexagenary cycle of the calendar. It was also believed that mirrors could cast out evil spirits, and so they were also used as grave goods in tombs. The corrosion and patination suffered by the mirror was probably caused by centuries of contact with the soil.

CLW

PROVENANCE: ...; Mr A. Verheij Bequest, 2019 (AK-RAK-2019-123).

2 ANONYMOUS (Java, Indonesia) *Waterspout in the Form of a Makara*, East Javanese period, 11th-13th century Volcanic stone, 43.5 x 33 x 19 cm

This waterspout is carved in the shape of a makara or mythical water creature. In ancient Java, the makara was usually depicted as a disembodied head without body or limbs. Its huge jaw is open wide to reveal rows of large teeth. An extension from the top of the mouth curls upwards in the form of an elephant's trunk, while a ram's horn can be seen curving downwards behind the ears. In Central Java, from the eighth to tenth centuries, makaras were often placed on either side of a temple doorway, suggesting both a protective and sacred function. In East Java, from the eleventh century onwards, makaras appeared almost exclusively as waterspouts; to such an extent that the two became synonymous. Such waterspouts were often used on temple platforms and at ritual bathing places to eject excess water, the water entering the stone via a broad channel at the back and issuing in a jet from a narrow hole at the front. Narrative reliefs also show makara waterspouts placed within the wider landscape, channelling and supplying flowing water to hermitages and sacred groves.

The sculpture here is carved with a unifying arc of spray rising upwards over the forward-curling trunk of the *makara* and cascading over the back of the creature's head. The head and upper torso of a male figure, carved directly above the round hole for the jet-stream at the front, are shown emerging half-hidden from the spray. Although difficult to date with certainty, this waterspout may well come from the early East Javanese period of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

Sadly, the stone water channel that would originally have led water into the back of the *makara*'s head has been lost. However, this feature is preserved on a second *makara* held on longterm loan at the museum (AK-MAK-390). It is hoped that these two *makara* waterspouts can be displayed together, demonstrating both their artistic quality and practical function.

Together with the statue of a deified noblewoman (no. 3), this waterspout is the first stone sculpture from Java to have been bought by the museum for over twenty years. Indeed, the purchase was made at a time of heightened sensitivity regarding the provenance and future of Javanese antiquities in the Netherlands.



Part of the rationale in acquiring both sculptures is undoubtedly the fact that both pieces have previously been on public display in the Netherlands. The waterspout was first displayed in Amsterdam in 1978, as part of an exhibition at the Rijksmuseum to celebrate the first sixty years of the Koninklijke Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst (KVVAK) or Asian Art Society in the Netherlands.

WS

LITERATURE:

K.W. Lim, Aziatische kunst uit het bezit van leden [van de] Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst, 1918-1978, Amsterdam 1978.

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Gebroeders Refuge, Diepenveen, 1970; from whom to Frides Laméris (1921-2003), Amsterdam, August 1970; from whom to his wife, Geertruida Kitty Laméris-Essers; from whom purchased with the support of the B.J. Peiser Bequest, the Familie Verbeek Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and Familie M. van Poecke/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2020

(inv. no. AK-RAK-2020-2)



3 ANONYMOUS (Java, Indonesia) Statue of a Deified Queen or Princess, Majapahit period, 14th century Volcanic stone, 80 x 45 x 37 cm

This sculpture is a high-relief carving of a deified queen or princess. The statue is attributed stylistically to East Java in the Majapahit period (1293-1527) and belongs to a type of image depicting deified members of the royal family. This practice of posthumous deification is described by Mpu Prapañca in the Old Javanese Deśawarnana or Nāgarakrtāgama. In this poem, the spirit of the king's grandmother Rājapatnī is united through ritual with the Buddhist goddess Prajñāparimitā and returns to the realm of the Buddha. This ritual was performed twelve years after Rājapatnī's death. Deification statues were made as part of this ritual and were used for the veneration of both the deceased ancestor and the god or goddess with whom they are united. Such statues are recognizable by their stiff, hieratic posture and by the fact that the two lower hands of the image are often placed together in meditation (in this case, supporting a lotus flower). They are sometimes called 'portrait statues', but this name is erroneous. The statue does not represent the person's physical appearance in life, but rather their sacred, heavenly form after death.

In addition to the aesthetic qualities of the carving, the iconography of the image is also intriguing. At first sight, the upper right hand of the deified lady appears to be holding a flywhisk (cāmara). However, on closer inspection, this is not actually the case. The palm of the hand is opened outwards in what is normally described as the abhaya mudrā or gesture of protection. The flywhisk is clearly depicted, but only emerges from behind the upright fingers of the hand. This curious manner of depiction might be attributed simply to a lack of skill on the part of the sculptor. However, the upper left hand is shown holding the stem of a lotus in a completely natural way. The stem supports a lotus base carrying a book or palm-leaf manuscript (pustaka). The raised, diagonal bindings of the manuscript are clearly delineated, but instead of lying horizontally on the lotus, as is usual, the book is shown standing upright. This position looks most unnatural. Indeed, from a distance, the book has the outward appearance of a *linga*, the phallic symbol of the Hindu god Śiva.

These anomalies in the iconography may be accidental, but it is worth noting that the abhaya mudrā and manuscript are normally associated with Buddhism, while the flywhisk and *linga* are both key symbols of Siva. This would suggest a dual religious belief in which both Buddhism and Hinduism are seen as separate, but complementary, interpretations of the same underlying reality. Textual evidence for this type of religious dualism can be found in the literature of the Majapahit period, notably in the Old Javanese Sutasoma of Mpu Tantular. The statue is therefore unlikely to represent a particular deity, but rather depicts a transcendent form of the deceased suitable both for the Buddhist and Hindu conceptions of heaven. The statue was first exhibited at the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam in 2000 as part of an exhibition on the Majapahit kingdom and can be displayed alongside the Majapahit image of the goddess Durgā Mahişāsuramardinī (AK-RAK-1997-1).

ws

LITERATURE:

Marijke Klokke, 'Stone Images of the Singhasari and Majapahit Periods', *Arts of Asia* 30 (November-December 2000), no. 6, pp. 60-68

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Gebroeders Refuge, Diepenveen, 1970; from whom to Frides Laméris (1921-2003), Amsterdam, August 1970; from whom to his wife, Geertruida Kitty Laméris-Essers; from whom purchased with the support of the B.J. Peiser Bequest, the Familie Verbeek Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and Familie M. van Poecke/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2020

(inv. no. ak-rak-2020-i).



4 HAKUIN EKAKU 白隠慧鶴 (Hara 1685-1769 Hara) Shakyamuni Descending from the Mountain, Japan, c. 1745-65 Ink on paper, 421 x 257 mm Seals: Hakuin no in <白隠之印>, Ekaku <慧鶴>

Part of the biography of the historical Buddha (Shakyamuni, Japanese: Shaka) deals with his stay in the mountains, where in isolation he dedicated himself to seeking enlightenment. For six years he fasted and meditated, before descending from the mountain and mingling with the people again. In the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE) in China Buddha Descending from the Mountain (出山釋迦, chushan shijia, Japanese: shussan shaka) became a theme among painters from the emerging Chan (Zen) School. In the thirteenth century it was also adopted in Japan, after Chinese Zen paintings had been brought to the country by monks. Japanese Zen painters depicted the subject in different ways because there was a difference of opinion about the precise state of the Buddha's mind at the time of his descent: had he already achieved enlightenment and was he aware of it, or was he confused about it and so decided to end his isolation, frustrated by the supposed lack of progress? The inscriptions on the works reflected the painters' different views on these questions, and with this version Hakuin contributed to a corpus of works in this pictorially executed, centuries-long debate.

In translation Hakuin's inscription reads as follows: 'He left the world of woe, hiding himself deep in the forest to quell the fire of existence now his great virtue is a light for all humanity' (遁はこき林中乃火 靖ぐ功徳の林を燈く; Stevens and Hess, p. 32). It is not a crystal-clear statement, but it seems that in Hakuin's vision Buddha came down from the mountain in a consciously enlightened state and the depiction appears to emphasize this. Although he is emaciated after his hardships, he proceeds at a brisk pace with a determined smile on his face, ready to proclaim his message to the world. He has many of the external characteristics of Buddha, such as the whorl of hair on his forehead (urna) and a protuberance at the top of his head (ushnisa). The keen characterization embodying the state of mind in careful lines, is typical of Hakuin.

It should be borne in mind that however much Hakuin's paintings are still appreciated now, he did not produce them as works of art. These paintings were used as learning tools in the teaching of Zen, intended to deepen insight. Hakuin gave the paintings away to a wide range of people, from priests to commoners, and added inscriptions to the works that were tailored to the recipient's level of understanding. His typical meticulous characterization served to convey the essence of the message as clearly as possible, and the inscription may have been intended to encourage the viewer to find his or her own answer.

MF

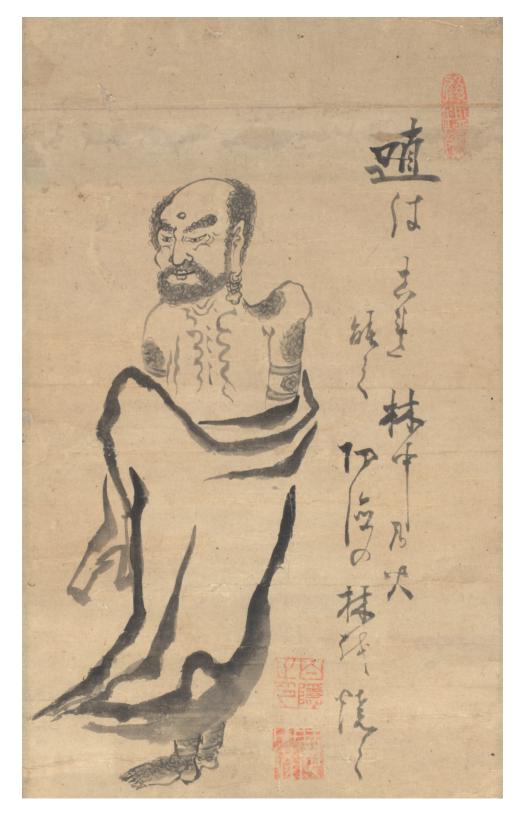
LITERATURE:

John Stevens and Felix Hess, *Seeing Zen: Zenga from the Kaeru-An Collection*, Warren, CT (Floating World Editions), 2018

PROVENANCE:

...; purchased by F. Hess, Haren (Groningen), by whom donated to the Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (KVVAK), 2019

(inv. no. ак-мак-1804).



5 TORII KIYONAGA 鳥居清長 (Edo 1752-1815 Edo) Saishiki mitsu no asa 彩色美津朝 (Colours of the Triple Dawn), 1787 Author: Yomo no Utagaki Magao 四方歌垣真顔 (1752-1829) Publisher: Nishimura Yohachi 西村与八 (dates unknown), Eijudō 永寿堂 Colour woodcut, key-block in black with colour blocks, embossing, mica, gold, 255 x 380 mm

Last year a unique opportunity presented itself: a rare album came on to the market, designed in 1787 by Torii Kiyonaga, one of the most influential printmakers from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. This album dates from his most productive period. Thanks to the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds, we were able to purchase it, and the Rijksmuseum may now call itself the proud owner of *Saishiki mitsu no asa* (Colours of the Triple Dawn). The album, still with the original hand-drawn cover, contains seven double-page full-colour woodblock prints and a preface and colophon woodblock printed in black.

In *Colours of the Triple Dawn*, Kiyonaga pictures various New Year activities. 'Triple dawn' refers to New Year: the start of the first new day of the first new month of the new year. A moment of renewal, where traditionally extra attention was devoted to the first performance of certain activities. In succession, Kiyonaga shows the Writing of the First Poem, the First Courtesan Parade, the First Archery Competition, the First Opening of the Storehouse, the First Horseback Ride, the First Bath and, finally, the First Sale shown here.

We see two children with a kite running along a busy street, past a book and print shop. A little boy hands a passing young man a small book, while two hawkers leave the shop with a fresh stock of prints and illustrated books to sell elsewhere in the town. In the shop a customer has picked up a print from the pile to look at it: it is a portrayal of a courtesan with her two assistants, made by Kiyonaga - the artist who designed the prints in this album. The shop is that of the publisher of this album, Nishimura Yohachi, of the firm of Eijudo, in Edo, present-day Tokyo. This can be deduced from the text on the post next to the little boy and the white emblem on the curtain to the left of the wooden gate. There is even an advertisement for this album on the wall, far left.

The interaction between the people portrayed – and frequently also with people who are outside the picture plane – is characteristic of many of



Kiyonaga' s prints. In this print, for example, he shows the biggest girl from the group of children who crowd around the kite seller behind the gate gesturing to other children who do not feature in the print to join in.

The print is also full of New Year symbolism. The pine tree branches, for instance, here bound together by the entrance to the shop, are a typical



New Year symbol. And the children flying a kite also refer to New Year; flying a kite – like playing battledore and shuttlecock or throwing a special multi-coloured ball, as can be seen elsewhere in the album – was (and still is) a typical New Year activity for children in Japan.

PROVENANCE:

...; anonymous sale, Tokyo (Tōkyō Kotenkai), 2018, no. 751, to the dealer Jonathan A. Hill Bookseller Inc., New York, 2018; from whom purchased with the support of the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2019

(inv. no. RP-P-2019-248).

6 RYŪRYŪKYO SHINSAI 柳々居辰齋 (active 1799-1823 Edo) Sushi and Sake, c. 1820 Colour woodcut, key-block with colour blocks, embossing, metal pigments, 133 x 183 mm Signature Ryūryūkyo Shinsai ga, followed by a red seal: Ryūryūkyo <柳々居>

Thanks to the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds, the Rijksmuseum was recently able to purchase eighteen *surimono*. Over the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to find good quality *surimono*, which makes it all the more exciting that this acquisition was done on the twentieth anniversary of this fund, whose main objective is to maintain and expand the *surimono* collection.

Although the word *surimono* literally just means 'printed things', they are privately published woodblock prints in which text (poems) and image are closely related. They were luxuriously executed, printed with expensive pigments on the best paper, thick and absorbent, with much use of embossing. *Surimono* were often commissioned by a poet or a poetry club, to be distributed among friends or members as an invitation or to mark a special occasion, such as New Year.

Outside Japan, *surimono* are collected chiefly for their aesthetic quality, but originally the poems were just as important as the images. The text is often full of puns and, like the images, contains many references to personal or contemporary events that are often difficult to identify nowadays. Nevertheless, *surimono* are a feast for the eye and frequently tell us something new about particular customs in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when the majority of them were made, including this still life with *sushi* and *sake*.

Three kinds of carefully prepared rice lie on the rectangular tray. We can see some pieces of *sushi* with shrimps, little packages of rice in a bamboo leaf, and seaweed rolls. These small rice rolls (*futomaki*) were known for their beautiful swirl of dark seaweed, contrasting with the white rice, depicted here with just a hint of salmoncoloured filling. The individual grains of rice are blind embossed and the result is very evocative.

Behind the tray of *sushi* is a porcelain cup filled with *sake* with two little flowers floating in it. If we look at the box in the lower right corner, however, it becomes clear that they are not real flowers. The label on the box has the word *shuchūka*, which literally translates as 'flower in sake'. This was a kind of game that added to the enjoyment of drinking *sake*, alone or with friends. Shuchūka are little shapes cut from the coloured insides of the stems of *yamabuki* (*Kerria japo-nica*), the Japanese marigold bush. These shapes were then compressed. When they were put into *sake*, they absorbed it and opened up, revealing their shape and the colour.

The print appears to show the different parts of the game: we see the box in which the readymade product was sold, with alongside it three compact cones that apparently had to be opened. There are some flower shapes on the small red dish, probably the unwrapped cones. And the end result is floating in the cup of *sake*: the fullyopened flowers after the petals had absorbed the liquid. The slow opening of the little shapes and the element of surprise as to what would appear and what colour it would be brought extra pleasure to the *sake* table. This kind of small insight into the life of a Japanese poet, some two hundred years ago, is what makes *surimono* so interesting.

МJ

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Hotei Japanese prints, Leiden; from whom purchased with the support of the Goslings NieuwBeerta Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2020

(inv. no. RP-P-2020-19).



7 ATTRIBUTED TO HASEGAWA IKKO 長谷川一虎 (active c. 1800-50) *Tobacco Set*, Japan, c. 1800-50 Bamboo, ironwood, ivory, horn, gold foil, h. 7 x b. 10 x d. 3.5 cm (box), h. 9 cm (*netsuke*)

The tobacco box in this set consists of two segments of bamboo lined with gold foil. On one side a tiger fills the whole of the surface; the other side has a pattern of clouds and a dark wood lid with a dragon. Both beasts have details of inlaid ivory, as do the sides, which are made from exotic ironwood. The frames are also of ivory and form the fastening for the miniature sculpture (*netsuke*) which is used to hang the set on the sash of the kimono. The detailed figure of a Dutchman holds





a little dog in his arms – in Japanese art a small dog with a long tail was often an exotic western element. There is a medicine box hanging from his sash, carried in the same way as this object. One striking detail is the broad-brimmed deer horn hat, which was all that was visible when the set was worn and the figure was hidden behind the sash. This meant it looked like a disc of deer horn, one of the simplest forms of netsuke. The surprise when the wearer pulled out the entire object and revealed that there was a complete figure attached to it, was part of the interactive visual pleasure that is a characteristic of Japanese arts and crafts. The curious could also be shown that the limbs could move, and this flexibility ensured that when it was worn the figure moved easily with the movements of the sash.

The engraved signature has worn away, but the first character is still visible as '一' ('*ichi*', 'one'). It could well be that this was the first character of the signature '一虎' ('Ikko'). Hasegawa Ikko was a *netsuke* carver in the first half of the nineteenth century, who appears to have worked in wood with inlaid materials quite often. It was he who made the only other known example of a similar tobacco set with a *netsuke* of a Dutchman attached directly to the holder (Joly and Tomita 1916, pp. 202-03, no. 27).

MF

LITERATURE:

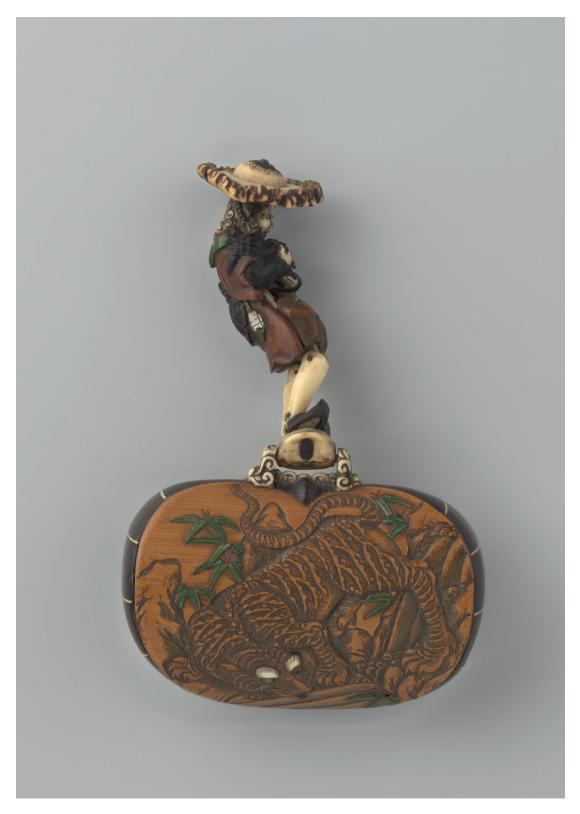
Jan Dees, 'The Swinging Dutchman: An Exceptional Tobacco Set Attributed to Hasegawa Ikko', *Andon* 99 (2015), pp. 42-46 Eveline Kamstra, 'Een greep uit de collectie: een verzameling Indonesische krisheften', *Aziatische Kunst* 32 (2002), no. 3, pp. 2-20

Henri L. Joly and Kumasaku Tomita, Japanese Art & Handicraft: An Illustrated Record of the Loan Exhibition Held in Aid of the British Red Cross in October – November, 1915, London 1916

PROVENANCE:

...; Lū Xiaguang 呂霞光 (1906-1994), artist and art dealer, Paris; sale of his estate, Paris (Drouot Richelieu), 21 February 2014, no. 91, to Guus Roëll Fine Art & Antique, art dealer, Netherlands; from whom to J.J. Witsenburg (1934), The Hague, 2017, by whom donated to the Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (KVVAK), 2019

(inv. no. ak-mak-1780).



8 ATTRIBUTED TO XU YANGHONG 徐養洪 (China, active late 17th-early 18th century) One Hundred Children, late 17th-early 18th century Handscroll, ink and colours on paper, 29.8 x 526 cm Unsigned with a seal: Xu Yanghong yin 〈徐養洪印〉

Unrolling the scroll, the viewer sees a Chinese garden scene, in which a hundred boys are engaged in games and pastimes. The long scroll is divided into twelve segments illustrating the children at play. In the first, the scroll shows children practising calligraphy (I); then children viewing paintings (2); playing instruments (3); playing chess (4); playing with toys (5); teasing pets (6); watching crickets fight (7); catching birds (8); pouring water into an empty tree trunk so the ball that accidentally fell in will float up (9); saving a drowning companion who fell into a deep water tank by smashing it, watching a cockfight, playing with dolls (IO); playing house – a boy pretends to have passed the imperial exam with honours, riding home on horseback, which is actually a deer (11); and flying kites (12) in the folding flaps.

'Children at play' (yingxi tu 嬰戲圖) as a subject of painting has a long history in China. It first emerged around the eighth century in the Tang dynasty (618-907) and was well established by the eleventh century during the Song dynasty (960-1279). 'Picture of One Hundred Sons' (baizitu 百子圖) is a motif derived from the subject 'Children at play'. Its iconographical source can be traced to the legend of King Wen (Zhou Wenwang 周文王, I152-1056 BCE) of the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BCE). It is said that King Wen had ninety-



9 TANI BUNCHō 谷文晁 (Edo 1763-1841 Edo) One Hundred Children, 1804 Handscroll, ink and colours on paper, 30.1 x 528 cm Signed upper right; seals: Tani Bunchō in <古文晁印>, Tani shi Bunchō <古氏文晁>

The Japanese Tani Bunchō (1763-1841) painted this scroll in 1804 at the age of forty-two. It was copied directly from a Chinese scroll attributed to Xu Yanghong (no. 8). The scroll was once in the collection of Watanabe Gentai 渡邊玄對 (1749-1822), Bunchō's teacher, and selections were published in *Visual Amusements in Rinroku Cottage* (*Rinroku gokan* 林麓娛觀), an anthology of copies of paintings and inscriptions published in 1804 as a supplement to *Master Gentai's Painting Manual* (*Gentai seisei gafu* 玄對先生画譜, 1804, in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC, inv. no. FSC-GR-780.753.3). This publication was executed by Tōkyō, Gentai's second son; the illustrations in *Rinroku* gokan are known to be partial copies of Chinese paintings from the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties owned by the Watanabe family. Bunchō probably learned about Xu's scroll of *One Hundred Children* directly from his teacher.

Bunchō was famous for his eclectic taste. He was a skilled landscape painter and a master of Buddhist and figure painting, as well as animal, flower and bird painting in different styles and combining various genres. Under the instruction and influence of his teacher Gentai, Bunchō began copying paintings at an early age.



nine sons. One day he found an infant after a thunderstorm at Yanshan and adopted the child so that he could have a hundred sons. 'One hundred sons' became an auspicious symbol for having many descendants, which most Chinese families wish for.

This scroll is attributed to Xu Yanghong, based on a seal of his name (*Xu Yanghong yin*) stamped at the end of the scroll. The painter Xu Yanghong is almost unknown in the history of Chinese painting. Judging by the style of this scroll and the other extant painting by Xu Yanghong, he was probably a professional figure painter and active from the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century.

LITERATURE:

Shibunkaku, Wanobi: Fine Art Archives, No. 500, Kyoto 2016, pp. 86-87, 147 Rinroku gokan, in Gentai seisei gafu, vol. 3, Edo 1804, pp. 17-22

PROVENANCE:

(see also acquisition no. 9)

...; collection Watanabe Gentai (1749-1822); from whom to a private collection, Japan; from whom to Shibunkaku, Kyoto, 2012; from whom purchased with the support of Rituals, 2020 (inv. no. AK-RAK-2020-3).



This, he asserted, was how the art of painting should be taught: the study of painting begins by copying numerous works by the ancients and listening to the transmitted knowledge of a teacher in order to learn the general meaning of old paintings. How wonderful, therefore, to be able to see Tani Bunchō's copy and Xu Yanghong's original together. The significance of this juxtaposition of Bunchō's scroll with its Chinese model is that it shows how copying was the essence of the study of art in East Asia, while it also serves as an example of transcultural interaction and exchange in East Asian art.

LITERATURE:

Shibunkaku, Wanobi: Fine Art Archives, No. 500, Kyoto 2016, pp. 86-87, 147 Rinroku gokan, in Gentai seisei gafu, vol. 3, Edo 1804, pp. 17-22

PROVENANCE:

...; private collection, Japan; from whom to Shibunkaku, Kyoto, 2007; from whom purchased with the support of Rituals, 2020

(inv. no. ak-rak-2020-4).





AK-RAK-2020-3

AK-RAK-2020-4





































