JAPANESE LACQUER

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JAPANESE LACQUER. By ANN YONEMURA. pp. 106, 8 pl. Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1979.

This attractive booklet is the catalogue of an exhibition held in conjunction with "Japan today". The exhibition covered the range of Japanese lacquer held in the Freer Gallery, much of it coming from the Moslé collection.

It gets off to a good start by including a piece of dry lacquer sculpture, of the Nara period, and a lacquered wood sculpture of the Kamakura period. This is an unusual feature and warmly to be welcomed: normally such catalogues are solely concerned with so-called "applied art" objects. And at the end, the catalogue includes lacquer repairs to ceramics, a similarly unusual inclusion and equally to be welcomed, if with a twinge of doubt about the possibility of dating such repairs.

The catalogue continues with *negoro*, *kamakura-bori*, and a fine box in Kodaiji style.

A particularly interesting piece is the chest of drawers in a version of the Kodaiji style. Ms. Yonemura places this, reasonably, in the beginning of the 17th century for the form is not a little influenced by European shapes and it is probably contemporary with the *namban* pieces at the changeover period from the downward-folding flap door to the outward-folding pair of doors. This is a fine example of the end of the style.

Another oddity is the folding table with a top in *namban* style. Unfortunately the description is not adequate for the reader to know whether or not to agree with Yonemura's attribution to the Meiji period. What is the underside of the top like? Could it be a door re-used? I do not disagree with the attribution, I would just like to know if I could agree with it.

Eight *suzuribako* appear, one (No. 18) with a concealed *waka* poem, identified. And this leads us to further praise – several subjects shown on *suzuribako* and on *inro* have been traced back to book illustrations, a fine contribution. So good are most of these identifications that one feels badly let down by one, No. 46, that is very far-fetched.

Several times Yonemura attributes the invention of imitations of other materials in lacquer to Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747) [Ritsuo]. This is one of those dangerous traditions of which a cataloguer should most beware. It may well be true of the imitation of Chinese ink cakes (of which several fine examples are shown here) but it can be proven untrue in other cases.

In the Royal Kunstkammer in Denmark (now in the National Museum), there are two lacquer pieces that concern us here. One is a *cha-ire*, imitating Takatori or Agano ware and almost identical to No. 51 here: this entered the Royal Kunstkammer in 1725, from the collection of Gottorp Castle. This is not proof, only suggestion, of an earlier date. Proof is provided by another piece. This is a black lacquered teabowl, with a metal liner, imitating black *raku* (No. EAc60). This is first recorded in the Royal inventory of 1689 – but it is documented earlier than that, for it is illustrated, along with some other things now in the Kunstkammer, in 1665 in Simon Paulli's *Commentarius de abusu tabaci . . . et herbae thee*. This cup is illustrated in Martha Boyer's *Catalogue* as Fig. 53. I am indebted to Mrs. Joan Hornby for the Paulli reference.

OLIVER IMPEY.

DICTIONARY OF ASIAN PHILOSOPHIES. By ST. ELMO NAUMAN, JR. pp. xxi, 372. London and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. Cloth £7.50; paper £4.25.

There is a lot of information in this book, as well as some mis-information. What information there is is rendered almost entirely inaccessible by the chaotic way in which the material is arranged. The book badly needs a good index, but whoever heard of an index for a dictionary? "Idiosyncratic" is the best word with which to describe this publication. It is laced with bits of laboured humour so that, when the writer says that he has presented a chronological listing "as a tool to help orient the reader" one does not know if he is again intending to be funny. This reviewer, being a resident of Japan, decided to inspect, first of all, some of the entries on Japan, starting with "Shintō". (It appears that the word

PLATE 1. *Kamakura-bori* Incense Box, Muromachi period (1392–1573), cat. no. 5.

Japanese Lacquer

By ANN YONEMURA

The Freer Gallery of Art
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
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1979

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COVER. Detail: interior of lid, inkstone case, nineteenth century, cat. no. 20.

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PREFACE

Few of the traditional Japanese arts are as readily appreciated as Japanese lacquer. The beauty of lacquer objects, most of which were made for specific purposes, may be admired for its own sake, even when the objects are encountered in a context remote from that for which they were originally intended. Lacquer is a living art in contemporary Japan, providing functional bowls, trays, and containers of familiar traditional shapes for daily use as well as exquisitely formed and decorated objects which are unique works of art.

This exhibition presents fifty-seven objects selected from the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art to illustrate the traditional art of Japanese lacquer. The collection was begun by Charles Lang Freer during the first decade of this century, and was significantly augmented by acquisitions from the collection of Alexander G. Moslé in 1944. Dr. Harold P. Stern, the first Curator of Japanese Art of the Freer Gallery, undertook research of the Japanese lacquer collection as one of his first projects after joining the staff in 1949. For more than two decades, he guided the development of the collection of Japanese lacquer through selective acquisitions intended to make it more representative of the distinctive achievements of Japanese lacquerers, and his writings on lacquer inspired many toward a greater appreciation of this art.

Research in Japanese lacquer is progressing both in Japan and abroad. Many recent publications and exhibitions attest to a growing interest in this medium, which has reached an especially high level of technical and artistic quality in Japan. It is hoped that this exhibition and catalogue will be a contribution to the study of Japanese lacquer.

The writing of this catalogue would not have been possible without the generous assistance of many specialists. In Japan, Mr. Hirokazu Arakawa of the Tokyo National Museum, Mr. Akiō Hainō of the Kyoto National Museum, Mr. Masao Ishizawa of the Yamato Bunkakan, Mr. Tadaomi Gōke of the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, and Mr. H. Murakoshi of the Osaka City Museum interrupted their busy schedules to provide me with an opportunity to study important examples of Japanese lacquer and to offer advice and guidance. I am also grateful for the assistance of Mr. Shigemi Komatsu of the Tokyo National Museum, Mr. Yasushi Egami and Miss Taka Yanagisawa of the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Miss Toshiko Itoh of Ōtani Women's University, Professor Terukazu Akiyama of Tokyo University, Mr. Takeshi Yanagi, and the lacquerers of the Higashihata family in Kyoto, and of the Tokyo University of Fine Arts who permitted me to observe their work in progress. I am especially appreciative of the assistance of Mrs. Barbra Okada throughout the planning of this exhibition and catalogue, and of the kindness of Mr. Charles A. Greenfield for allowing me to study the Japanese lacquers in his outstanding collection and for sharing his appreciation of this art. Mrs. Sadae Walters also provided helpful technical comments on the Freer collection of Japanese lacquer. Mr. Chi Wang and the staff of the Chinese Section of the Library of Congress assisted me in studying materials from the collection of rare books.

Every member of the staff of the Freer Gallery of Art has in some way contributed to the exhibition and catalogue. Photographs for the catalogue were provided by Mr. Raymond Schwartz, Mr. James Hayden, and Mr. Stanley Turek. The manuscript was typed by Mrs. Elsie Kronenburg, and Miss Sarah Newmeyer and Mrs. Priscilla Smith assisted with proofreading.

Dr. Thomas Lawton and Mr. Richard Louie read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions. Miss Chung-ming Lung deserves special mention for her assistance in locating and interpreting Chinese documentary sources for cat. nos. 45–50. The staff of the Freer Technical Laboratory—Mr. Thomas Chase, Dr. John Winter, Mrs. Lynda A. Zycherman, and Mrs. Ilona Bene—assisted in examination and preparation of the lacquers for exhibition, and offered advice during frequent consultations on technical questions. Mr. Takashi Sugiura, Mrs. Kumi Kinoshita, Mr. Robert Evans, Mr. Santi di Blasi, Mr. Cornell Evans, Mr. Clarence Lee, Mr. Frank A. Haenschke, Mr. John Bradley, Mr. Martin Amt, Mr. Craig Korr, and Miss Sarah Newmeyer contributed their skills and experience to the preparation and installation of the exhibition.

We are especially grateful to Miss Crimilda Pontes for contributing her time and talent to design this catalogue. Publication of the catalogue has been made possible by a generous grant from the Matsushita Electric (Panasonic) Company. It has been a great privilege to be able to participate in the Japan Today Symposium through the presentation of this exhibition and catalogue.

Ann Yonemura
Assistant Curator

Japanese Lacquer

CHRONOLOGY

JAPAN

Jōmon Period	ca. 10,000 B.C. – ca. 300 B.C.
Yayoi Period	ca. 300 B.C. – ca. 300 A.D.
Kofun (Tumulus) Period	ca. 300 – 552 A.D.
Asuka Period	552–645
Nara Period	645–794
Heian Period	794–1185
Kamakura Period	1185–1333
Namboku-chō Period	1333–1392
Muromachi Period	1392–1573
Momoyama Period	1573–1615
Edo Period	1615–1868
Meiji Period	1868–1912
Taishō Period	1912–1926
Shōwa Period	1926–

CHINA (periods referred to in text)

T'ang Dynasty	618–906 A.D.
Sung Dynasty	960–1279
Yüan Dynasty	1279–1368
Ming Dynasty	1368–1644
Ch'ing Dynasty	1644–1912

KOREA (periods referred to in text)

Koryŏ Dynasty	918–1392 A.D.
Yi Dynasty	1392–1910

PLATE 2. Cabinet, early 17th century, cat. no. 8.

PLATE 3. (*left*) Document Case, 18th–19th century, cat. no. 12. (*right*) Handscroll Case, 17th century, cat. no. 7.

JAPANESE LACQUER

The art of using lacquer for protecting and decorating objects made of wood and other materials developed in Japan to a degree of technical and artistic refinement unsurpassed in the world. When Europeans first encountered Japanese lacquer in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they so admired its superior luster, refinement, and durability that they referred to all lacquerware as "Japan," just as "China" had come to designate porcelain.

Lacquer is prepared from the sap of the tree *Rhus vernicifera*, known in Japan as *urushi no ki*. Raw lacquer (*urushi*) is harvested annually during the warmer months of the year by cutting the bark and collecting the few ounces of latex-like sap exuded each season by the tree. The sap is then prepared for use by gently evaporating excess moisture and filtering off impurities. Many grades of lacquer are employed in creating the more elaborate and refined objects. Lower grades of lacquer in admixture with other materials are used for the preparatory priming and sealing of the object, which is usually constructed of wood. Lacquer of high quality is required for decorative processes such as *maki-e*, a uniquely Japanese technique in which the design is created by sprinkling powders and particles of gold and silver over patterns drawn in damp lacquer.

The excellent finish and durability of Japanese lacquerware is attributable to the unique characteristics of lacquer derived from *Rhus vernicifera*. Lacquer hardening is an enzyme-catalyzed oxidation process, unrelated to ordinary drying or the simple removal of moisture. The principal constituents of raw lacquer are a catechol known as urushiol, after the Japanese word for lacquer (*urushi*), and an enzyme, laccase. In the presence of oxygen, laccase acts as a catalyst for the oxidation of urushiol, resulting in a permanent hardening of the viscous raw lacquer. The hardening process proceeds best at normal warm room temperatures of 25–30° C in a humid atmosphere of 80–85 percent relative humidity. Japanese lacquerers control the curing environment by placing newly lacquered objects in a *furo*, a plain wooden cabinet that can be dampened with water as necessary during the drier months of the year. Enclosure in the clean, draft-free cabinet also protects the lacquered surfaces from airborne dust.

Once properly hardened, lacquer produces a lustrous and extremely durable coating. Lacquer effectively seals porous materials such as wood, bamboo, paper, or fabric, and, when hardened, is completely resistant to moisture, salts, hot liquids or food, and even mild acids and alkalis. Lacquered containers are therefore very suitable for serving, storing, and transporting foods and beverages. Coloring agents, such as vermilion for red and lampblack or iron filings for black, combine readily with raw lacquer and are held by the viscous medium in uniform suspension. Lacquer is also an excellent adhesive, even for dissimilar materials, so lacquerware may be effectively decorated with metal powders, metal leaf, sheet metal, mother-of-pearl, ceramic, glass, and other materials. Lacquer has been used in Japan for repair of fine ceramics (cat. no. 55).

Lacquering has always been an art requiring the utmost patience and care. Raw lacquer is toxic, like the products of the poison ivy plant (*Rhus toxicodendron*), a close relative of the lacquer tree. Because the collection and handling of lacquer is both hazardous and time-consuming, the raw material, *urushi*, has always been relatively costly to produce. For best results, lacquer must be applied to an object in thin layers, allowing each

to harden before applying the next. A finely lacquered object may require thirty or more applications of lacquer. The shaping and preparation of an object, even exclusive of its decoration, may require months or even years of intermittent labor.

The Historical Development of Japanese Lacquer

Evidence of the use of lacquer in Japan has been discovered in excavated sites dated from the mid to late Jōmon period (first millennium, B.C.). The excavated objects include combs and fragments of vessels, some of which are made of woven materials.[1] The excavated artifacts are simple in form but already demonstrate an awareness of the decorative possibilities inherent in the contrast between black and red lacquer. Few advances seem to have occurred in Japanese lacquering techniques prior to the Tumulus period (mid fourth century – 552 A.D.), when increased contact with China and Korea brought about significant technological advances in the arts of Japan. The subsequent history of Japanese lacquer is marked periodically by mutually beneficial exchanges of technical knowledge between Japan and the neighboring cultures of China and, to some extent, Korea, alternating with periods of relative cultural isolation and development of indigenous styles and techniques.

Following the introduction of the Buddhist religion to Japan in the mid sixth century A.D., increased quantities of lacquer were required to supply newly established temples with sculptures, shrines, furniture, and other equipment. The cultivation of lacquer trees became so important to the Japanese economy that by 701 A.D., the *Taihō Ritsuryō*, a codification of Japanese law, provided for the establishment of a department of lacquer within the Ministry of Finance. Households were directed to plant lacquer trees and to pay a proportionate amount of lacquer as a tax. The earliest surviving Buddhist lacquer object in Japan is the seventh-century Tamamushi Shrine belonging to the Hōryūji Temple in Nara.[2] Its form and decoration, consisting of colored paintings in red, green, and yellow lacquer on a black ground, are unlike any previous Japanese art, and indicate the important role of foreign craftsmen in Japan during the early centuries after the introduction of Buddhism.

During the Nara period (645–794 A.D.), lacquer was applied to objects of wood, molded leather, and hemp cloth to produce trays, furniture, containers, and even Buddhist sculpture (cat. no. 1). The extensive use of flexible, molded materials in constructing lacquered objects during this period may have helped to establish the enduring Japanese preference for smoothly curved and rounded shapes in lacquerware. Many Nara period lacquered objects were coated with black lacquer which now has mellowed to a rich, deep-brown color. Others were decorated using a variety of techniques likely to have been imported from the Asian continent: lacquer painting using colored lacquers, *raden* (inlay of mother-of-pearl), *heidatsu* (inlay of sheet silver and gold), and painting using lacquer mixed with powdered silver and gold. The most extensive collection of lacquered objects of this period belongs to the Shōsōin Imperial Repository in Nara, where the household goods of the Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749 A.D.) have been maintained in an excellent state of preservation.

The most significant technique to appear during this period of rapidly advancing technology was decoration by sprinkling powdered silver and gold over lines drawn in lacquer, while the lacquer was still damp. This technique, known in the Nara period as *makkinru* and later as *maki-e* (sprinkled-design), was unique to Japan. *Maki-e* eventually encompassed several specific techniques, all of which were based on the sprinkling of powders of metal (usually silver or gold) or other materials over lines or areas drawn in damp lacquer. Three major types of *maki-e* techniques are usually distinguished. In *hiramaki-e* (literally, "flat sprinkled-design"), the sprinkled metal powders are coated with a thin layer of translucent lacquer after the lacquer which binds them to the surface of the object has set. *Togidashi maki-e* (literally, "polished-out sprinkled-design") is a more complex technique in which the sprinkled design, after setting completely, is covered with opaque lacquer of the background color. This coating is allowed to harden and is then polished with abrasives such as charcoal until the pattern re-emerges. The *togidashi maki-e* technique produces the sharpest definition of decorative patterns. *Takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) consists of the building up of relief areas, using lacquer in admixture with other materials, prior to sprinkling and decorating the surfaces. *Takamaki-e* may produce a design raised only slightly from the surface of an object or may create three-dimensional designs with a sculptural quality.

Early Japanese *maki-e* lacquers had intricate designs strongly reflecting the foreign origin of many of the lacquering techniques in use during the Nara period. During the Heian period (794–1185 A.D.), a truly Japanese style emerged in all the arts, especially after the cessation of official envoys to China and Korea in 894. *Maki-e* and, to a lesser extent, *raden*, continued to be used for lacquer decoration, while other techniques prevalent during the Nara period, such as lacquer painting in colors or *heidatsu* (metal inlay), seem to have declined. *Maki-e* techniques especially developed during the Heian period, eventually incorporating contrasting colors and textures of gold and silver powders to create increasingly subtle designs. By the late Heian period, designs having an entirely Japanese character appear in *maki-e*. Some have a pictorial but highly decorative quality, while others express a more naturalistic conception. In the latter type of design, gold powder is sparsely applied in patches to create a cloud-like effect or to depict earthen banks alongside bodies of water. Floral designs are occasionally scattered across a surface without regular repetition, a device which appears repeatedly in Japanese art of the Heian and later periods. The predominant spirit of Heian period lacquer designs is refined and harmonious, with a subtlety reflecting the tastes of the aristocratic patrons of the arts.

Military patrons replaced the aristocrats as patrons of the arts in the ensuing Kamakura period (1185–1333 A.D.). Their preference for bolder designs is reflected in Kamakura period *maki-e*, which exhibits more clarity of contour both in the shapes of objects and in their decoration. The extensive use of the *togidashi maki-e* technique creates surfaces with a smooth, almost metallic quality. *Takamaki-e* techniques also appear in lacquerware of the Kamakura period.

Contact with China resumed during the Kamakura period and increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as military patrons of the arts encouraged the establishment of Zen Buddhist temples, many of which were founded by immigrant priests from China. The preference for Chi-

nese works of art fostered in Zen circles seems to have stimulated development of new types of Japanese lacquerware such as *Kamakura-bori* (cat. no. 5), which was probably originally intended to resemble carved lacquer imported from China. Chinese influence is also evident in the shapes of Negoro ware lacquers (cat. nos. 3 and 4), which were produced in Buddhist temple workshops primarily for use within the temples for food service and ceremonies. Negoro ware later came to be appreciated by tea ceremony devotees who admired their unusual shapes and the subtly varied coloration which resulted from years of use.

The preference for Chinese works of art established by the influential shogunal patron-collectors of the Muromachi period (1392–1573) also affected *maki-e* decoration of that period. The brushwork and compositions of Chinese landscape paintings were interpreted in the gold tones of *maki-e*, and the landscape designs appearing on lacquerware often embodied poetic themes. The literary atmosphere fostered in Zen temples permeated all the arts of the period, and is reflected in the large number of surviving Muromachi period inkstone cases (*suzuribako*) having designs alluding to specific poems. An early Edo period (1615–1868) *suzuribako* in this exhibition (cat. no. 18) reflects the style of *uta-e* (poem-picture) decoration established during the Muromachi period.

The Momoyama period (1573–1615) marks the re-establishment of peace and unity in Japan after a century of intermittent conflict. The arts of this period show a new vitality typified by *Kōdaiji maki-e*, named for the Kyoto temple established in 1605–06. *Kōdaiji maki-e* typically has a design composed of two contrasting fields of color having entirely contrasting designs. A similar compositional technique is also seen in textiles of the same period. The patterns are vivid, and emphasize the surface of the object rather than a pictorial illusion of space. Lacquerers working in Kyoto, where *Kōdaiji maki-e* was produced, also became engaged in the first mass production of Japanese lacquer for export. This export lacquerware was called *Namban* lacquer, after the term applied to foreigners who had first arrived in the southern part of Japan. *Namban* lacquers (cat. no. 9) were decorated with gold and sometimes silver *maki-e* designs, combined with extensive, usually coarsely-executed *raden* (mother-of-pearl inlay).

The lacquer industry underwent great development during the Edo period (1615–1868), as demand for lacquerware extended to the middle classes, and lacquerers established workshops in many areas not formerly noted for the production of lacquerware. *Maki-e* of extraordinary technical quality, incorporating lavish quantities of gold, was produced under shogunal patronage in Edo (modern Tokyo), the political center under the Tokugawa shoguns. Distinctive objects such as *inrō* (medicine cases), worn suspended from the *obi* (sash), required many years to complete, and eventually kept many lacquerers employed in producing the tightly fitted cases and the miniature decoration especially adapted to this accessory (cat. nos. 27–49). Lacquerware attained an important commercial status during this period, and many innovative decorative techniques were invented to satisfy the constant quest for novelty which characterized the popular culture of the age.

Little is reliably known regarding the identities of early Japanese lacquerers. In the Edo period, however, several influential families and individual lacquerers or designers may be identified. The style of the Igarashi

PLATE 4. Incense Cabinet, 19th century, cat. no. 13.

PLATE 5. Incense Box, 19th century, cat. no. 14.

lacquerers is reflected in the decoration of an inkstone case (cat. no. 18) in this exhibition. The Kajikawa lacquerers (cat. nos. 24 and 34) were specialists in decorating *inrō* and served the Tokugawa shoguns. Lacquerers of the Koma school (cat. nos. 32 and 35), in which Shibata Zeshin (1807–91, cat. no. 54) was trained, were noted for the exceptional finish of their work. Accurate documentation of the lineages of these families is difficult to establish, and the identification of signed works by individual artists of these schools is complicated by the number of successive generations of artists who often used the same sobriquets, and by the existence of many forged signatures of famous masters.

One of the most prominent individual lacquer designers of the Edo period was Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), who was primarily known as a painter. His simplified, highly effective style of lacquer decoration, combining *maki-e* and inlay of lead and mother-of-pearl, intermittently inspired lacquerers for several generations after his lifetime (cat. nos. 22 and 30).

Another influential lacquer whose work is represented in this exhibition was Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747), also known by his artistic sobriquet, Ritsuō (cat. nos. 43–50). He invented many new techniques for imitating materials such as metal, wood, ceramic, and Chinese ink, using lacquer and other materials. He also applied diverse materials such as glazed ceramics to his lacquers. His imitations of molded tablets of Chinese ink, usually functioning as *inrō*, faithfully followed the shapes and decoration of Chinese ink tablets of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and inspired many imitators during the late Edo period (see cat. nos. 45–50).

Lacquerers of the Edo period increasingly relied upon paintings, prints, and printed books to provide designs adaptable to lacquer decoration. Even the highly innovative Haritsu (Ritsuō) adapted his designs for lacquer imitations of Chinese ink from illustrations in the famous Ming dynasty (1368–1644) woodblock-printed compendium of ink tablet designs, the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*.[3] Important revivals of Kōrin's style seem to have followed the publication of woodblock-printed illustrated books of his designs such as the *Kōrin Hyakuzu* (1815) and the *Kōrin Shinsen Hyakuzu* (1864).[4] Even popular colored woodblock prints influenced the pictorial decoration of lacquers of the late Edo and Meiji (1868–1912) periods (cat. no. 24).

A general economic decline during the early nineteenth century contributed to a corresponding decline in the quality of lacquer production. Foreign demand for Japanese lacquerware during the Meiji period was an important factor in the revival of the lacquer industry. Shibata Zeshin was the most innovative lacquerer of this transitional period. He not only practiced and investigated many earlier lacquering techniques, but also invented a method of using lacquer instead of ink or colors for painting on paper (cat. no. 54).

Lacquerers today use the traditional techniques developed by their predecessors centuries ago to produce lacquers combining principles of modern design with ideas inherited from the past. Lacquer has always been a precious material, gathered laboriously and successfully utilized only when time is of little consequence. The best lacquer objects still may require years of patient labor to complete, and, as in the past, the privilege of acquiring or using the finest lacquers is restricted to a very fortunate few.

Although they work in one of the most demanding of the traditional Japanese media, Japanese lacquerers continue to create works of art which will convey to present and future generations the unique and enduring beauty of Japanese lacquer.

[1] Illustrated in the Tokyo National Museum, *Tōyō no Shikkōgei* (1978), Color Plate 1 and Monochrome Plates 1–16.

[2] The Tamamushi Shrine is illustrated in Seiroku Noma, *The Arts of Japan* (1966), Vol. 1, Plates 32 and 33.

[3] See cat. no. 45.

[4] See cat. no. 22.

Detail: lid interior of inkstone case, cat. no. 20, pp. 42–43.

The Catalogue

1

Bodhisattva

Nara period, late eighth century
Hollow dry lacquer
H 61.0 cm. 24″
Ex Hara collection
66.34

The Buddhist religion came to Japan from the Asian continent during the sixth century A.D. Many new techniques for producing the temples, sculptural images, scriptures, paintings, fabrics, and ritual implements required by the new religion were introduced to Japan, often by foreign artisans, shortly after the establishment of Buddhism. The dry-lacquer process, the principal method used in forming this sculpture, is likely to have originated in China. Hollow dry-lacquer sculptures such as this *bodhisattva*[1] were formed by applying layers of hemp cloth soaked in lacquer over a clay core giving the approximate shape of the figure. Each layer was hardened before another was added. The final surface was heavily coated with dry lacquer, a moldable compound of several materials: lacquer, sawdust (from sandalwood or other aromatic wood), and rice or other grain-starch paste. The dry-lacquer coating entirely covered the coarse texture of the hemp cloth, and permitted fine plastic modelling of the surface features. The surface of the sculpture was finished by applying lacquer mixed with fine powder, then carefully rubbed with abrasives to achieve a perfectly smooth finish. The completed sculpture could then be colored or gilded.[2] The clay core was dug out from the interior of the sculpture, leaving it lightweight and durable. Large sculptures would then be fitted with an interior wooden armature for additional support.

This figure of a *bodhisattva* is entirely hollow. Solid wood has been used to replace the hands, arms, and earlobes, which must have been lost or damaged. There is also evidence of repairs to the neck and torso. The *bodhisattva* is likely to have been made during the late Nara period, when the hollow dry-lacquer process was used to produce sculptures of both large and small scale. Small holes in the coiffure and chest of the *bodhisattva* may have been formed by nails used to attach metal jewelry. The youthful features of this *bodhisattva,* despite some damage, still retain the delicate modelling that is characteristic of the dry-lacquer medium.

[1] A *bodhisattva* is a Buddhist deity who postpones enlightenment and transformation into a Buddha in order to assist living beings in distress.

[2] A detailed account of the dry lacquer process is included in Sherwood F. Moran, "Ashura, a Dry-lacquer Sculpture of the Nara Period," in *Artibus Asiae* Vol. XXVII (1966), pp. 99–133.

PUBLISHED: Kunō Takeshi, "Bodhisattva, formerly owned by the Hara Family," *Kobijutsu* No. 14 (August, 1966), pp. 91–92, plates 89–90. *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 90 and p. 179. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 87.

2

Bodhisattva

Kamakura period, thirteenth century
Lacquer on carved wood with applied gold leaf
H 62.8 cm. 24¾″
Ex Tanaka collection
09.345

Lacquer is a very effective material for sealing and protecting wood from damage by insects or changes in humidity. For these reasons, as well as its suitability for gilding and decoration, it was frequently employed in the surface treatment of wood sculpture. This Buddhist sculpture of a seated *bodhisattva* (cat. no. 1, note 1) is carved of wood. The surface was once coated with black lacquer and probably gilded, especially on the exposed areas of the body. Polychrome decoration may also have been employed. Traces of black lacquer and gilding are apparent on the torso of the figure. Sculptors of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) achieved a new style of Buddhist sculpture based upon their study of models from the Nara period (645–794), and their work is distinguished by realistic and sensitive modelling. The heightened realism of Kamakura period sculptures is enhanced by such innovations as glass or rock crystal overlays on the eyes.

PUBLISHED: *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 93 and p. 179. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 88.

3

Ewer

Muromachi period, sixteenth century
Ewer with cuspate handle and lobed lid, high tripartite foot
Negoro ware, red and black lacquer on wood
H 35.5 cm. 14″; diameter (shoulder) 19.3 cm. 7⅝″
Ex Ryō Hosomi collection
67.5

The term "Negoro ware" comes from the name of a Buddhist temple, the Negoro-ji, where quantities of this type of lacquerware are traditionally believed to have been manufactured prior to the burning of the temple by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1585. Because of the destruction of the temple, little documentation remains of the production of lacquerware at that site; and the designation "Negoro ware" has come to be applied generically to technically similar lacquerware made in several localities. Negoro ware is usually understood to specify lacquerware with a red surface superimposed over an undercoating of black lacquer. The red lacquer wears away gradually and irregularly after prolonged use, producing a mellow effect of natural aging for which Negoro ware is highly appreciated. Negoro ware also encompasses, less frequently, objects decorated with combinations of plain black and red lacquers, and a few examples in which a part of the wood surface is coated only with translucent lacquer, leaving the wood grain visible (see cat. no. 4). Much early Negoro ware was intended for regular use in Buddhist temples. Tables, wine bottles, and containers for food service, all having simple but distinctively strong shapes, are prominent among surviving examples of Negoro ware; and their use in temples is well documented in paintings from the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (1392–1573). The few surviving dated examples of Negoro ware indicate that it was being produced by the late twelfth century.[1]

This ewer has the typical Negoro ware finish of red lacquer applied over black, but has an elegant, complex shape quite unlike the utilitarian, sturdy forms of early Negoro ware. The foot is shaped to touch the supporting surface at three points. The body is horizontally ribbed, and the ribbing is repeated on the elongated neck. A six-lobed lid surmounted by a bottle-shaped finial curves downward, then flares slightly upward at the edge. The spout repeats the reversed curve of the lid, rising close beside the body. The handle, with its high arch and ornamental scrolls at the points where it joins the body is perhaps the most strikingly effective formal detail of this ewer. The overall impression conveyed by this sophisticated form is one of lightness and grace.

The appearance of such refined shapes in Negoro ware resulted from the influence of Chinese lacquers which were especially admired and collected by Zen Buddhist temples and their military patrons from the late Kamakura through Muromachi periods. Lobed shapes, as well as footed, scrolled, and hexagonal forms reflecting Chinese prototypes, are encountered in Negoro ware of the Muromachi and later periods. One surviving ewer which is otherwise quite similar to this example has a hexagonal body which creates a logical formal transition between the six-lobed lid and the tripartite base.[2] It seems likely that the exhibited ewer represents a refinement of the formal principles established by the hexagonal ewer. This ewer thus reflects the influence of the Chinese arts which were collected and emulated in Japan during the Muromachi period, and probably dates from the sixteenth century.[3] The original function of Negoro ware ewers of this type is uncertain, but it has been suggested that they were used in Zen temples to contain hot water for the preparation of tea.[4]

PLATE 6. Negoro Ware Ewer, 16th century, cat. no. 3.

[1] Hirokazu Arakawa, "Concerning Dated Negoro Lacquers," *Museum* No. 92 (November, 1958), p. 26.

[2] Illustrated in Tei Kawada, "Negoro-nuri," *Nihon no Bijutsu* No. 120 (May, 1976), figure 158.

[3] A very similar example is discussed in Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection* (1975), pp. 326–328.

[4] Kawada, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

PUBLISHED: *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 110 and p. 181. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 91.

4

Basin

Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Basin with three attached legs
Negoro ware, lacquer on wood
H 17.3 cm. 6 13/16"; diameter 34.4 cm. 13 9/16"
67.12

Large basins of this type served as containers for water used for rinsing the hands in preparation for the *fusatsu-kai*, the monthly Buddhist ceremony of repentance for sins.[1] The basin is constructed of wood, with three carved legs attached at the base. The interior and legs of the basin have been lacquered in the manner typical of Negoro ware, with layers of red lacquer applied over a black lacquer foundation. The sides of the basin have, however, been coated with uncolored lacquer used as a translucent protective varnish. A very handsome effect is produced by the contrast between the natural wood grain of the side panel and the worn red borders above and below it.

The earliest extant dated Negoro ware basin of this type has an inscription dated in correspondence to 1352.[2] The exhibited basin shows an identical combination of translucent and colored lacquers on a body of similar design to the 1352 example. However, its wider proportions and narrower legs more closely resemble those of Negoro basins of the Muromachi period (1392–1573).[3] This basin has a relatively plain design, well suited to its function of carrying water, and it is ornamented only by the curved legs decorated with incised scroll designs. In comparison to the elaborate form of the ewer (cat. no. 3), it has a simple but pleasing design typical of Negoro wares made for frequent use in Buddhist temples.

[1] Tei Kawada, "Negoro-nuri," *Nihon no Bijutsu* No. 120, p. 69.
[2] *Ibid.*, figure 10.
[3] *Ibid.*, figure 11.

5

Kōgō

Large Incense Container

Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Circular box with lid
Kamakura-bori lacquer on carved wood
H 8.4 cm. 3 5/16"; diameter 25.0 cm. 9 7/8"
67.9

The relief decoration of this box was carved directly into the unlacquered wood surface and subsequently coated with priming layers of black lacquer, followed by several coats of red. Repeated handling of the box has caused the red lacquer finish to wear away irregularly, revealing the black under-layer, an effect also characteristic of Negoro ware (cat. nos. 3 and 4). This type of lacquerware is known as *Kamakura-bori* (literally, "Kamakura carving"). Documentation of the early history of *Kamakura-bori* is scarce, and there is no conclusive evidence that the early examples were made in the locality for which the ware was later named. A large circular incense box with an inscribed date corresponding to 1481 establishes that *Kamakura-bori* was being produced in Japan by the fifteenth century.[1] The exhibited circular box is of a similar type, formerly used for storing incense for Buddhist ceremonies, especially those of the Zen sect.[2] The Zen sect, established in Japan during the Kamakura period (1185–1333), was of Chinese origin, and was instrumental in fostering Japanese appreciation of Chinese literature and art. Thus, the furniture and implements preferred for use in Zen temples, if not actually imported from China, reflected Chinese prototypes.

This incense box has a deeply carved design of a stylized peony blossom centered on the lid. This motif was apparently inspired by Chinese carved lacquers of the Yüan dynasty (1279–1368), examples of which had been imported to Japan by the fourteenth century. The ornamental curl of the stem of the peony reflects the influence of the *guri* pattern (cat. no. 27), which was also derived from Chinese motifs. The *guri* pattern forms the exclusive decoration of many early examples of *Kamakura-bori*. Although not identical in style to other surviving *Kamakura-bori* incense containers of early date, this example probably belongs among those dated to the Muromachi period (1392–1573). Like other early *Kamakura-bori* lacquers, this box bears an intentional similarity to Chinese carved lacquers, which were made by a different and more technically demanding method. It is likely that these early *Kamakura-bori* incense containers served as substitutes for imported Chinese carved lacquers, which were probably scarce as well as costly. In later *Kamakura-bori* lacquers, including those made today, the expressive potential of the technique is realized by the deliberate revelation of the marks of wood carving beneath the lacquer surface.

See also color plate 1 (frontispiece).

[1] This box, belonging to the Kinrenji, a Kyoto Buddhist temple, is illustrated in Tadaomi Gōke, "Kamakura-bori," *Nihon no Bijutsu* No. 70 (March, 1972), figure 2. The earliest surviving example of *Kamakura-bori* lacquerware is believed to be a box decorated with a carved design of peonies in the collection of the Kyoto Zen Buddhist temple, the Nanzenji, illustrated as figure 1 in the same issue. The two incense boxes are also illustrated as Plate 76 and Plate 75, respectively, in Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), pp. 98–99.

[2] Tadaomi Gōke, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–44. An informative illustration of the techniques of making *Kamakura-bori* is included as figure 22 in the work cited.

PUBLISHED: Akiō Hainō, *Kamakura-bori* (1977), Plate 14 and p. 283. *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 109 and p. 181. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 91.

6

Tebako

Toilet Case

Momoyama or Edo period,
early seventeenth century
Deep base with fitted lid,
lead rims, gilt metal ring-fittings
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*
H 19.6 cm. 7 11/16″; L 30.4 cm. 12″;
W 26.5 cm. 10 7/16″
07.106

Tebako were lidded cases for keeping a woman's personal possessions. The traditional elements of their graceful, complex shape were established by the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and varied thereafter only in details such as proportions. The corners are rounded and the top gently domed. The edges of both lid and base are bound with metal, usually lead, which is shaped so that the high inner rim of the lower section holds the lid securely in place. Silk cords attached to the rings at either side of the box could be tied over the lid.

The striking decorative style of this *tebako* is known as *Kōdaiji maki-e*, after the name of the Kyoto temple established in 1605. The distinctive patterns of Kōdaiji lacquers set a fashion which dominated lacquer designs of the Kyoto region during the early seventeenth century, spanning the transition between the Momoyama (1573–1615) and early Edo periods (1615–1868). The dramatic juxtaposition of two dissimilar patterns along diagonal divisions of the surfaces typical of *Kōdaiji maki-e* designs is also seen in textiles of the Momoyama period. The *tebako* has patterns of wisteria against a black background, and stylized sea shells and sea grasses against a glittering, reddish pear-skin ground (*nashiji*). Each of the natural motifs is isolated against the background, without any indication of a natural setting. The design provides a dynamic study in visual contrasts which induce the eye to move constantly over the surface.

Specific technical characteristics of *Kōdaiji maki-e* include the use of *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) not only as a ground treatment, but also in smaller areas of the pictorial design. This technique, called *e-nashiji* (pictorial *nashiji*), is used for some of the leaves of the wisteria, and also in the single bold design of sea shells and sea grass on the interior of the lid. A special technique known as *maki-hanashi* (left-as-sprinkled), was employed in decorating Kōdaiji lacquers. In *maki-hanashi*, in contrast to other methods such as *hiramaki-e* (flat sprinkled-design) or *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design), the sprinkled gold powder is not lacquered over or polished, so the gold has a warm, diffuse sheen. *Kōdaiji maki-e* represents a return to two-dimensional decoration which is integral with the surface, bringing the shape of the vessel and the ornament into closer harmony. The black lines, such as those delineating details of the wisteria design, are usually held in reserve, the petals and sections of leaves separately defined with lacquer before sprinkling with gold. The less laborious *hari gaki* method of scratching the line through to the background layer is also employed in *Kōdaiji maki-e*. The simple clarity of design seen in *Kōdaiji maki-e* is characteristic of all the arts of the Momoyama period, which developed under the patronage of new military rulers. *Kōdaiji maki-e* is virtually the definitive style of Momoyama period lacquer and was continued through the early years of the Edo period.

REFERENCES: Kyoto National Museum, *Kōdaiji Maki-e* (1971). Jō Okada, *Pageant of Japanese Art*, Vol. V, pp. 56–59.

PLATE 7. *Tebako* (Toilet Case), early 17th century, cat. no. 6.

7
Handscroll Case

Momoyama or Edo period,
seventeenth century
Base with overlapping lid
Lacquer on wood with decoration in
gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design),
metal fittings with ring loops
L 37.8 cm. 14⅞″; H 7.3 cm. 2⅞″;
W 7.6 cm. 3″
59.19

This handsome covered case was formerly used for storage of a handscroll which was acquired by the Freer Gallery of Art in 1959. Originally, silk cords would have been attached to the small rings on either side of the base. The charming design of a maple tree growing from a bank is intended to be viewed from one end of the case, so the scroll stored within the case would have been properly oriented for viewing when the case was opened. The entire design is executed in the style and techniques of *Kōdaiji maki-e* (see cat. no. 6). The combination of gold *maki-e* and reddish *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) for depiction of the maple foliage is especially effective. The patterns stand out boldly against the plain black background typical of *Kōdaiji maki-e* decoration. The design of maple foliage is repeated on the high sides of the base even in areas usually covered by the deep lid. A linear pattern representing ripples of water completes the design at the base. The simplified, bold designs of *Kōdaiji maki-e* dominated Japanese lacquer decoration during the Momoyama period, and were continued by Kyoto lacquerers in the early years of the Edo period (1615–1868).

See also color plate 3 (facing p. 3).

8

Small Cabinet

Momoyama or early Edo period,
early seventeenth century
Cabinet with two hinged doors,
six interior drawers
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*
and inlay of mother-of-pearl, gilt-metal
hinges, locks, and ring-pulls
H 28.0 cm. 11″; L 33.4 cm. 13⅛″;
W 21.3 cm. 8⅜″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé
collection
44.20

This luxuriously decorated cabinet generally follows the style and techniques of *Kōdaiji maki-e* (cat. nos. 6 and 7). The autumnal motifs, of chrysanthemums on the top, door, sides, and back of the cabinet and of bellflowers and butterflies hovering over windswept grasses on the drawers and interiors of the doors, are treated as in typical *Kōdaiji maki-e* lacquers. However, the mother-of-pearl inlay (*raden*) used for some of the motifs is not to be found in typical *Kōdaiji maki-e*, and is more associated with the *Namban* lacquers (cat. no. 9) produced in quantity during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The condition of the box ranges from the nearly perfect state of preservation of the bellflower design on the fronts of the drawers to the extremely scratched and abraded surface of the top of the cabinet. Clouded patches visible near the unhinged edge of the doors and on other parts of the exterior indicate repaired areas. The color and quality of the black lacquer differs in intensity and sheen from the unrepaired areas, and the gold powder sprinkled to complete lost elements of the *maki-e* decoration is much finer in texture than that of the undamaged areas, which is uniformly coarser and slightly warmer in tone. The black linear details of the gold *maki-e* designs in the repaired areas are delineated by scratching through the gold-sprinkled area to the black ground (*harigaki*) rather than the more laborious technique (*kakiwaru*) of applying lacquer at either side of a narrow line then sprinkling the damp lacquer with gold powder to leave the unlacquered line in the ground color. Damaged areas of the contrasting reddish *e-nashiji* (pictorial pear-skin ground) have also been coated thinly with fine gold powder on translucent lacquer. Thus, the chrysanthemum design would probably originally have shown greater contrast between the gold *maki-e* and *nashiji* flowers and foliage. The back of the cabinet, which seems to have been less damaged, reveals the more vivid coloration of the original design, which was technically and stylistically closer to the Kōdaiji style than is now apparent. The cabinet is otherwise technically very similar to early seventeenth-century examples of *Kōdaiji maki-e* such as the *tebako* (cat. no. 6) in this exhibition. Despite the existence of later repairs, the cabinet probably dates from the early seventeenth century, contemporary with the later examples of *Kōdaiji maki-e*. The inclusion of *raden* (mother-of-pearl inlay) may tend to support an early Edo period (1615–1868) date.

REFERENCES: Kyoto National Museum, *Kōdaiji Maki-e* (1971).

PUBLISHED: *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 111 and p. 181. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 92. Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CV, no. 1679. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 33, no. 1679. Martin Fedderson, *Japanese Decorative Art* (1962), fig. 147, p. 159.

See also color plate 2 (facing p. 2).

9

Table

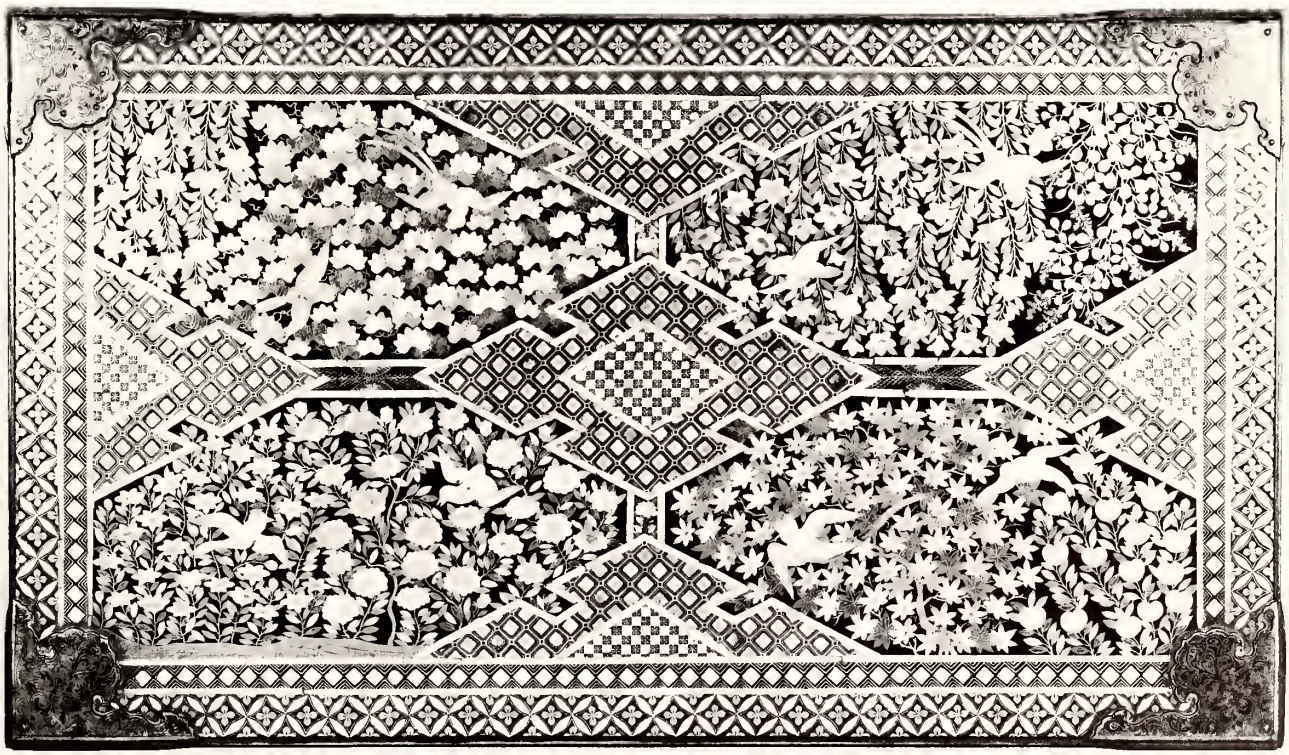
Style of the early Edo period,
seventeenth century
Table with hinged legs
Lacquer on wood, decoration in gold *maki-e*, inlay of mother-of-pearl, metal hinges and fittings
H 32.6 cm. 12⅞″; L 70.3 cm. 27⅝″;
W 39.9 cm. 15¾″
Gift of John S. Thacher
76.4

The term *Namban*, when applied to lacquers of the late sixteenth to seventeenth century, encompasses both objects decorated with themes of the Europeans who had arrived in Japan in 1542 and lacquers of a particular style related to that of contemporary *Kōdaiji maki-e* (cat. nos. 6 and 7), but intended for export to Europe. This table belongs to the latter category. It is constructed in a novel form, with each pair of legs connected by a bar and hinged beneath the table surface to fold flat if necessary for storage. Metal hooks stabilize the legs when the table is in use, and tooled metal fittings have been added at the corners as an ornamental reinforcement for the area most vulnerable to chipping. Autumnal motifs, also the usual theme of *Kōdaiji maki-e* decoration, fill the four panels of the table surface, which is divided by lozenges and bands decorated with repeated, predominantly geometric patterns. Birds and animals, which do not appear in *Kōdaiji maki-e*, are an important motif in *Namban* lacquer decoration.

Plain, unpolished gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) and *e-nashiji* (pictorial pear-skin ground), also used in *Kōdaiji maki-e*, are major techniques used in the decoration of *Namban* lacquers. Silver *maki-e*, entirely absent from *Kōdaiji maki-e* decoration, appears in some *Namban* lacquers, although not in this example. Extensive inlay of mother-of-pearl (*raden*) cut in relatively large pieces, a distinctive additional technique in *Namban* lacquers, contributes to its somewhat exotic character. It is possible that the prevalence of *raden* reflects the influence of Korean immigrant craftsmen, who also had such an important role in development of Japanese ceramics during the same period. *Namban* lacquers were made in Kyoto workshops by artisans working very rapidly to meet the demand for their work.[1] The results were often visibly imperfect in comparison to the much more carefully executed Kōdaiji lacquers. This table has a somewhat crisper and more precise design than is characteristic of seventeenth-century *Namban* lacquers and may be an example of the careful copies of earlier lacquerwares made by artists of the Meiji period (1868–1912), during a revival of interest in earlier lacquer styles and techniques.

[1] Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), pp. 158–159.

REFERENCES: Hirokazu Arakawa, *Namban Shitsugei*, 1971. Martha Boyer, *Japanese Export Lacquers from the Seventeenth Century in the National Museum of Denmark*, 1959.



10

Covered Box

Edo period, eighteenth or nineteenth century
Signature: (spurious) "Tokuyūsai Kōetsu"
Lacquer on wood with inlay of lead
and mother-of-pearl
H 23.2 cm. 9⅛"; L 29.2 cm. 11½";
W 23.8 cm. 9⅜"
Ex Charles Gillot collection
04.36

This lacquer box has a dramatically simple decoration of sprays of blossoming *prunus* executed in inlays of white mother-of-pearl and lead. A single spray of plum blossoms forms a unified design on the sides and lid. There is a striking contrast between the dense cluster of branches at one end of the box and the sparse ends of the branches as they extend to the opposite side.

The first combined use of lead and mother-of-pearl inlays to create extraordinarily effective, simple designs on lacquer objects is associated with Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), a master of many arts. This box contains a poorly written signature, "Tokuyūsai Kōetsu," which may have been added to the box after its manufacture. No signature occurs on any lacquer object reliably attributed to Kōetsu, whose designs, as exemplified by the "*Funabashi*" inkstone case in the Tokyo National Museum,[1] are marked by a harmonious unity of shape, decoration, and poetic imagery.

The decoration of this box appears to be more closely related to designs by Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), who continued and developed the techniques and style established by Kōetsu. The inlays of lead and mother-of-pearl on this box are unusually thin in comparison to genuine examples by Kōetsu, Kōrin, and their immediate followers, and marks it as a later work following Kōrin's style. The *inrō* exhibited as cat. no. 30 has thick inlays of lead and mother-of-pearl which are more typical of early lacquers of this type.

[1] Illustrated in Seiroku Noma, *The Arts of Japan* (1967), Vol. II, Plate 110, p. 123.

PUBLISHED: *The Freer Gallery of Art II: Japan* (1972), Plate 112 and p. 181. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook* (1976), p. 92.

11

E-bako
Painter's Box

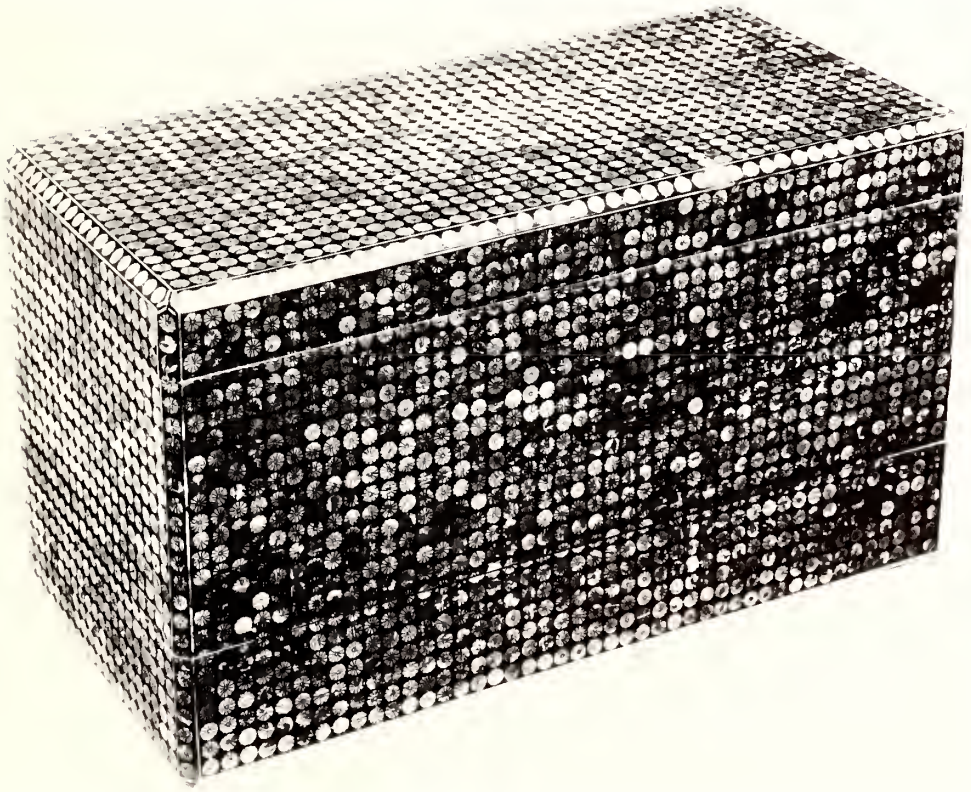
Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Two sections with interior fitted tray and lid
Lacquer on wood with inlay of *aogai*
(blue-green mother-of-pearl)
H 20.3 cm. 8″; L 35.8 cm. 14⅛″;
W 17.2 cm. 6¾″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé
collection
44.21

This tiered box was intended to hold a painter's equipment: cakes of ink and colors, brushes, and small dishes for mixing. It is coated with black lacquer on both the interior and exterior surfaces. The exterior is entirely decorated with a pattern of small, regularly spaced chrysanthemums made of inlaid *aogai* (blue-green mother-of-pearl). The use of *aogai*, which has brilliant tones of iridescent blue, green, and purple, seems to have begun in Japan during the seventeenth century as an adaptation of a Chinese technique which appears in lacquers of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).[1] The execution of the chrysanthemum pattern on this box required considerable technical skill, for each flower had to be cut separately from thin scales of *aogai* shell, incised with the radial pattern defining separate petals, and affixed to the surface of the box. The *aogai* flowers were coated with lacquer, which was then hardened and polished to create an even surface of lacquer and inlaid shell. The regularity and uniformity of this pattern are somewhat uncharacteristic of traditional Japanese design, but appear in various media during the nineteenth century.

[1] Recent studies of Ryūkyū lacquerware suggest the possible role of the Ryūkyū Islands in transmission of Chinese lacquer techniques. See Hirokazu Arakawa, "History of Loochoo Lacquer," *Kobijutsu* No. 56 (December, 1978), Plates 1–39, and pp. 33–54. Also, Yoshinobu Tokugawa, *Ryūkyū no Shikkogei* (1977).

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CVI, no. 1681. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 34, no. 1681. Freer Gallery of Art, *The Arts of Asia at the Time of American Independence* (1975–76), p. 24.

Right: Detail from a painting. *The Four Accomplishments: Painting and Calligraphy*, by Utagawa Toyohiro (1773–1828). Freer Gallery of Art, 03.57.



12

Fubako
Document Case

Edo period, eighteenth or nineteenth century
Oblong box with deep, overlapping lid
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* decoration
two silver fittings with ring loops
H 7.5 cm. 3″; W 9.6 cm. 3 3/16″;
L 25.0 cm. 9 13/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé
collection
44.23

Fubako are elongated, covered boxes which were tied shut by silk cords attached to the rings at either side. They served to protect letters and written documents. For this reason, they were typically designed with a deep lid which overlapped most of the base section. Lacquer, impervious as it was to moisture, was utilized as the ideal material with which to coat such boxes. The materials used in the decoration of *fubako* depended very much upon the status and taste of the owner.

This *fubako* is lavishly decorated with gold and silver *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) on both the interior and exterior surfaces. Many colors and gradations of gold and silver powders and leaf are used in the striking exterior design of phoenixes and paulownia sprays against a gold background. Like that of the exhibited scroll-box (cat. no. 7), the design on this *fubako* is intended to be viewed from one direction. When the box is properly positioned, one phoenix may be seen to hover dramatically above the other. The feathers and floral sprays continue over the sides of the lid, and are repeated on the base, even in the areas usually covered when the lid is in place.

The interior of the box is entirely coated with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground), created by applying flakes of gold at various levels in a translucent, amber-colored lacquer. Over this rich ground, in which the flakes of gold glimmer from the depths of the amber lacquer, chrysanthemums and a family crest based on the water plantain (*omodaka*) are repeated in gold and silver *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design). The water-plantain crest used by the Mori family of Fuchū in Nagato may indicate that this box was made for a member of that family. The motif is repeated in the silver ring-mounts attached at the sides of the base.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CVIII, no. 1690. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 37, no. 1690.

See also color plate 3 (facing p. 3).

13

Kōdansu
Incense Cabinet

Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Cabinet with hinged door, three interior drawers
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*, applied gold leaf, silver handle, hinges, locks, and drawer-pulls
H 20.6 cm. 8 1/8″; L 24.5 cm. 9 11/16″; W 16.8 cm. 6 5/8″
54.18

This small, portable cabinet was probably used for storing incense and utensils used in games based on the mixing and identification of incense. The exterior is decorated with an exquisitely rendered landscape design in gold and silver *maki-e* (sprinkled-design). The predominantly gold ground and the flowing river depicted in sprinkled silver powder have been covered with lacquer and later polished according to the *togidashi maki-e* technique, which causes the design to emerge at a single level on the surface. The gold areas have been given a protective finish of thin, polished lacquer. The finish so resembles a gleaming metallic surface that the cabinet almost seems to be the work of a goldsmith rather than a lacquerer.

The decoration is technically very skillfully executed, using a variety of *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) techniques. The main motifs of wisteria vines cascading from a pine tree are rendered in low-relief (*takamaki-e*). The pines are sprinkled with gold powders, and the wisteria blossoms with contrasting silver powder. The subtle variation of gold tints in the wisteria design appears to depend in part upon the color of the underlying lacquer layer, which is still slightly visible through a sparse sprinkling of fine gold powder. The landscape continues around the four sides of the cabinet and over the top, interrupted only by the bands of *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) embellishing the rounded corners.

The interior of the door has a motif of a blossoming cherry tree against a slightly darkened background incorporating silver powder in addition to gold. Distinct flakes of gold are scattered in cloud-like patterns (*mura-nashiji*) in the background. The cherry blossoms are rendered in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design), using gold powder sprinkled over a red lacquer ground to give the petals a slightly pink tone. The fronts and sides of the drawers are decorated with three different regularly repeated patterns. The bases and interiors of the drawers and cabinet are covered with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground).

The thematic basis of this design, like that of the incense game box (cat. no. 14), seems likely to derive from Japanese literature. Less elaborate designs having similar motifs and composition to the landscape on the exterior of this cabinet appear on Japanese kimono of the nineteenth century.[1] The kimono patterns were inspired by a poem from the *Ise Monogatari* (*Tale of Ise*), an important literary source for the Japanese decorative arts. The decoration of this box expresses a detailed and somewhat realistic conception of the landscape which is consistent with trends seen in Japanese painting during the nineteenth century.

[1] Kyoto National Museum, *Nihon no Ishō* . . . (1978), cat. nos. 103, 104, 105.

PUBLISHED: Freer Gallery of Art, *The Arts of Asia at the Time of American Independence* (1975–76), p. 26.

See also color plate 4 (facing p. 6).

14

Kōbako

Box for Incense

Edo or Meiji period,
nineteenth century
Signature: "Dōgyoku" on tray
Stacked box in two sections with
interior fitted tray and lid
Lacquer on wood with decoration in
gold and silver *maki-e*, gold leaf, silver leaf,
aogai (blue-green mother-of-pearl)
inlay on tray, silver rims
H 11.3 cm. 5¼″; L 11.3 cm. 5¼″;
W 10.6 cm. 4³⁄₁₆″
54.118

The decoration of this box, like that of the portable incense chest (cat. no. 13), reflects its function as a container for incense, for the theme of cherry trees blooming in profusion evokes the fresh and evanescent fragrance of a spring day. The landscape is probably based on the scenery of Yoshino, a spot famous for its lovely hills and cherry blossoms. The poetic image of cherry trees blooming among the hills of Yoshino appears in the *Kokinshū*, the tenth-century anthology of Japanese court poetry, and is a specific decorative theme of Japanese lacquers of the Edo period.[1]

The box is constructed in two sections, with gracefully rounded corners and a slightly convex lid. A tray rests inside the lid, supported by the rim of the upper section. The decoration of the box and the upper surface of the tray is technically the outstanding example of gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) in this exhibition. The design is built up with exceptional care, with the water depicted at the surface in contrasting silver powder. The rock and tree forms are built up in high relief and the landscape elements embellished with *okibirame*, gold leaf cut into strips or squares and individually arranged in patterns on damp lacquer. The cherry blossoms are actually treated in different degrees of relief. The more distant blossoms are cut from flat gold leaf, while those in the foreground are built up in relief lacquer and covered with gold leaf. Still others are rendered in contrasting silver polished to a high luster. The flowers, formed of pure metal rather than metal powders, stand out to the eye with a jewel-like radiance. The landscape on the sides of the box is treated continuously, flowing around the curved corners. On the top of the lid is a similar landscape of slightly different composition.

The tray has a design of several kimono hanging on a line in the foreground. They are depicted in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design), with a variation of underlying ground colors and mixtures of gold and silver powders which create subtle tints resembling the hues of dyed or brocaded silk. One of the garments has minute inlays of *aogai* (blue-green mother-of-pearl) forming a pattern of plovers. Along the right-hand rim of the tray is a minute signature reading, "Dōgyoku." This name does not correspond to that of a known lacquerer, but the incense box and tray represent *maki-e* decoration of the highest quality.

[1] A reading stand decorated with this theme is described in the catalogue of a recent exhibition at the Kyoto National Museum, *Nihon no Ishō* . . . (1978), no. 75.

PUBLISHED: Freer Gallery of Art, *The Arts of Asia at the Time of American Independence* (1975–76), p. 25.

See also color plate 5 (facing p. 7).

Interior tray.

15

Yakurō

Medicine Chest

Edo period, dated 1844, twelfth month
Chest with six drawers
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*, silver fittings on corners
H 33.8 cm. 13 5/16″; L 32.8 cm. 12 15/16″; W 19.3 cm. 7 5/8″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.26

This medicine chest has a simple, practical design, with six long drawers running the entire depth of the cabinet. These may be opened conveniently from either side to facilitate access to the medicines stored within. The surfaces are coated with highly polished black lacquer (*rō-iro*), which has been slightly damaged along the edges of some of the drawers. A slightly raised scroll design has been built up in black lacquer along the ends of the drawers and the edges of the cabinets. *Maki-e* (sprinkled-design) motifs of a branch of plum blossoms on one side and chrysanthemums on the opposite side constitute the only contrasting decoration. The inscription adjacent to the chrysanthemums indicates that the box was finished by "Shunshō" on a day in the twelfth month of the year *kō shin*, in the Tempō era. The date corresponds to the twelfth month of 1844. The identity of the artist is unknown.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 42, no. 1702.

Inscription.

16

Katakuchi
Covered Spouted Bowl

Nineteenth or twentieth century
Spouted base on high foot, circular lid
Lacquer on wood with applied gold leaf
H 15.1 cm. 5 5/16″; L 23.5 cm. 9 1/4″
60.7

This covered spouted bowl is decorated in the fashion of Hidehira lacquerware, which was produced in Northern Japan. Hidehira ware is simply decorated with red and black lacquers embellished by large lozenges or other patterns of cut gold leaf. This example also has details painted in yellow lacquer. Although traditionally believed to have been named for the twelfth-century lord of Northern Japan, Fujiwara no Hidehira, the earliest production of this type of lacquerware seems to have occurred in the late Muromachi period (1392–1573), chiefly in the vicinity of the Jōhōji, a temple in Iwate Prefecture. The Aizu region also produced Hidehira-style wares, encouraged by the active patronage of the Christian military lord, Gamo Ujisato (1556–95). Although it may be tempting to associate the cross motif on the lid of this container with such a context, there is no evidence in support of such an early date of manufacture. Hidehira wares have enjoyed great popularity, and are still being made today. In contrast to the usual red interiors of Hidehira bowls and *katakuchi* (spouted bowls), the interior of this spouted bowl is black, and its decoration reflects only remotely the simple, bold decoration for which Hidehira ware is famous.

REFERENCES: Victor and Takako Hauge, *Folk Traditions in Japanese Art* (1978), no. 163 and p. 256. Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), pp. 164–165 and 196.

Bundai, Writing Tables
Suzuribako, Inkstone Cases
Ryōshibako, Paper Cases

Japanese furniture for writing, especially low tables (*bundai*) and inkstone cases (*suzuribako*), were traditionally made of lacquered wood. Lacquer provided a surface impervious to the moisture and color of prepared ink, and also made possible elegant decoration. The practice of using smooth stones moistened with water for rubbing and preparing solid ink was introduced to Japan from China. However, the enclosure of the inkstone in a larger lidded box which would also accommodate brushes, ink sticks, and a water-dropper seems to have been a Japanese invention, already in evidence by the Heian period (794–1185).

The conveniently portable inkstone case (*suzuribako*) had fittings to hold the inkstone and water-dropper in place, and was often provided with one or more removable trays for storing brushes. The decoration of *suzuribako* was usually concentrated on the lid, which received less wear than the base and trays. It was customary to decorate both the exterior and interior of the lid, providing the user with a pleasing design when the lid was removed, as well as when the box was stored.

Practical as well as aesthetic considerations also governed the decoration of *bundai*, low writing tables which were often decorated to complement *suzuribako*. The decoration of *bundai* was usually concentrated on the left-hand side, leaving the area to the right free for writing. Traditionally, the decoration of both *suzuribako* and *bundai* was based on themes from Japanese literature. After the Muromachi period (1392–1573), however, purely decorative designs, not necessarily specifically related to literature, appear with increasing frequency on *bundai* and *suzuribako*. The practice of making matching sets of *bundai* and *suzuribako* also seems to have begun at this time. *Ryōshibako*, boxes for paper and documents, were also an important product of Japanese lacquerers, especially during the Edo period (1615–1868).

Detail from a painting. *Lady Preparing Ink*, by Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1751). Freer Gallery of Art, 99.19.

17

Bundai
Writing Table

Muromachi or Momoyama period,
sixteenth century
Table with four attached cuspate legs, two rims,
metal fittings and edging on legs
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* decoration
H 10.2 cm. 4″; W 35.5 cm. 14″;
L 55.2 cm. 21¾″
78.7

Low tables such as this example were used to support paper and *suzuribako* (inkstone cases) for writing. Most *bundai*, as these tables are known, have the decoration concentrated on the left-hand side, leaving the opposite side, where the paper would be placed, relatively free of decoration. The typical decoration of Muromachi period *bundai* was a simplified landscape, with the major motif to the left often echoed by a much smaller rock and trees in the lower right-hand corner. This type of composition, although usually more complex, is also seen in Muromachi period (1392–1573) ink painting, which was inspired by Chinese models.

This table has a landscape of low shoals extending into water, which is indicated only by a few gold lines representing ripples. On the larger bank are two trees, a pine and plum, both associated with the winter season and longevity. Their trunks cross each other in a manner reminiscent of paintings of the Muromachi period. On the rock to the right are a small *tachibana* (mandarin orange) tree, also associated with longevity, and two pine seedlings. The pictorial design is rendered in *maki-e* with sprinkled gold powders. A few areas have the coarser gold particles and reddish tone of *nashiji* (pear-skin ground). This effect is seen in the lower parts of the bank and between the pine needles, as well as on the outer legs and upper edges of the rims. The entire design is rendered in a simple, more or less flat manner. The background of plain black lacquer creates a remarkably effective atmospheric effect, for it is not clear where the water merges into the space above and beyond the landscape.

It is difficult to assign a date to this table, which closely resembles examples from the Muromachi period. Most *bundai* of the period seem to show only one tree, a pine or plum, growing from the bank to the left.[1] A crescent moon appears in the open space to the right in some examples. The table preserves the characteristic design of Muromachi-period *bundai*, a spacious composition evocative of poetic atmosphere, and was probably made during the late Muromachi or early Momoyama period.

[1] An example of an early Muromachi period *bundai* with both the pine and plum motif against a black background in the Cleveland Museum of Art is illustrated in Sherman E. Lee, *Japanese Decorative Style* (1961), fig. 42 and p. 140.

18

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

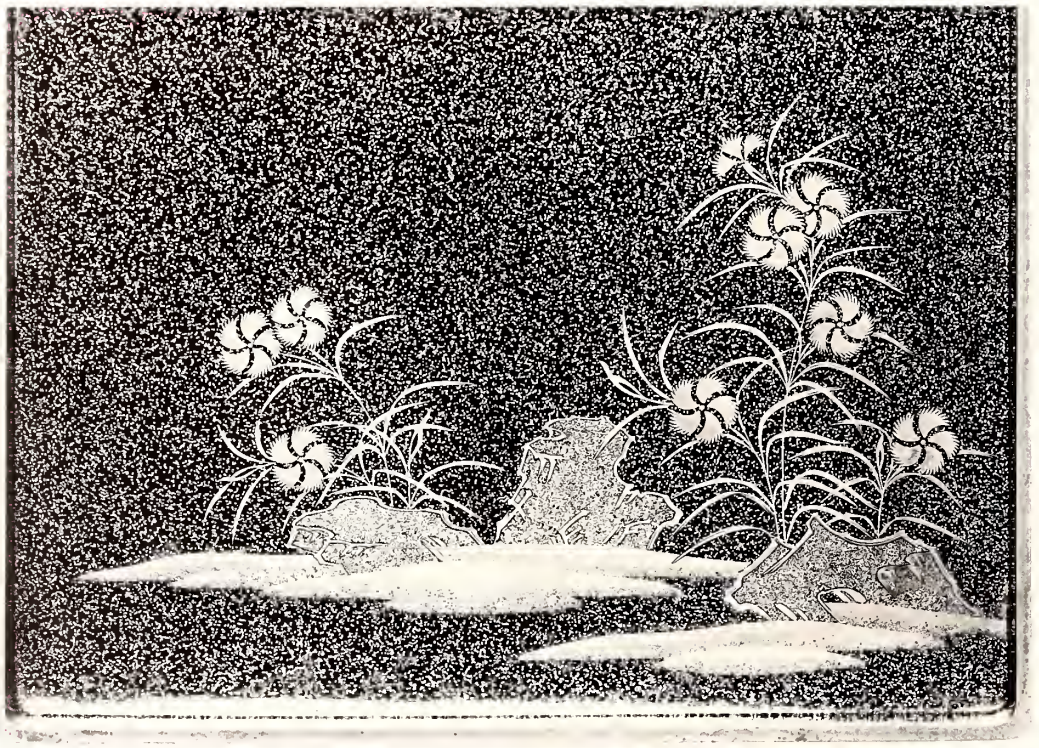
Edo period, seventeenth century
Signature: "— — saku"
Rectangular box with rounded corners, slightly convex overlapping lid, one removable interior tray, removable support for silvered metal *mizu-ire* (water-dropper) and inkstone
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) decoration in silver and gold powders, inlay of sheet silver, small silver spheres, metal binding on rims of lid, base, and tray
H 5.0 cm. 2″; W 21.6 cm. 8½″; L 23.7 cm. 9 5/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.22

Autumn grasses growing in an open field beneath a silver crescent moon form the pictorial design on the lid of this *suzuribako*. The flowering autumn grasses: *hagi* (bush clover), *susuki* (pampas grass), *fujibakama* (ague weed), *ominaeshi* (valerian), and *yomena* (aster) on the cover are rendered in gold *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) against a black background sprinkled with gold flakes. Clouds and earth are rendered in various densities of gold powder and flakes. The low-relief rocks are embellished with squares of cut gold and silver leaf. The moon and spherical dewdrops are made of silver. The interior of the box is decorated with gold flakes sprinkled on a black lacquer ground, and there is a simple decoration of *nadeshiko* (pinks) in silver and gold *maki-e* on the lid interior and the tray.

The lyrical beauty of the autumn scenery is enhanced by the poetic connotations of the word *nezame* (awakening from sleep) which appears in silver *hiragana* (cursive phonetic script) nearly concealed in the contours of the rocks on the lid exterior. The incorporation of these syllables into the pictorial design is an essential element of an *uta-e* (poem-picture). *Uta-e*, in which pictorial and verbal imagery are completely merged, first appear in Japanese art of the Heian period (794–1185). In *uta-e* it is possible to create an extremely compact yet specific visualization of a Japanese *waka* (31-syllable) poem. The design on the lid of this *suzuribako* proves to have been based on a *waka* poem from the famous Heian period anthology, the *Kokinwakashū* (Collection of Ancient and Modern Waka Poetry, 905 A.D.):

Aki nara de
Oku shira tsuyu wa
Nezame suru
Waga tamakura no
Shizuku narikeri [1]
KKS XV 757

The poem by an anonymous author may be rendered: "It is not the autumn dew that has dropped on my pillowing sleeve as I awaken." The poem



Interior of lid.

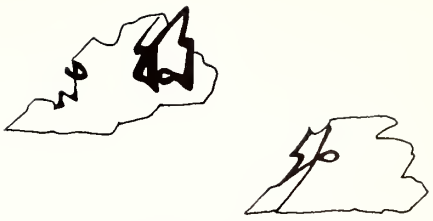
suggests that the drops on the sleeve come not from dew but tears. Every detail of the poem has been incorporated into the poem-picture: the grasses and moon which identify the autumn season, the small silver dewdrops clinging to the plants, and the edge of a brocaded garment which appears near the left-hand edge of the lid. The word *nezame*, incorporated into the contours of the rocks, supplies the essential image needed to complete and identify the poem.

The *uta-e* decorating the lid of this *suzuribako* must have been created for a patron who would have appreciated both the cleverly disguised poetic imagery and the skillful execution of the lacquer decoration. Stylistically, the box belongs to the early Edo period and is a rare example of the survival of *uta-e* designs in *maki-e* lacquerware after the end of the Muromachi period (1392–1573) when they were most prevalent. Elegant details, such as the applied silver dewdrops, relate the decoration of this box both to Muromachi-period *maki-e* designs of the sixteenth century and the work of the early Edo-period Igarashi school masters. The precision, technical quality, and clarity of this design as well as the graceful, stylized treatment of the floral motifs relate this *suzuribako* very closely to the style and period of Igarashi Dōho (?–1678).[2] A signature in seal script appears on the interior floor of the box beneath the removable support for the inkstone and water-dropper. Its reading has not been conclusively determined.

[1] *Kokinwakashū, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* (1958) Vol. VIII, p. 252, no. 757.

[2] Jō Okada, "Igarashi *maki-e*," *Museum* No. 71 (February, 1957), pp. 2–6.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 34, no. 1683. Freer Gallery of Art, *The Arts of Asia at the Time of American Independence* (1975–76), p. 25.



Details: *Above*, schematic drawing of *hiragana* syllables, ne-za-me, concealed along contours of rocks on exterior of lid. Syllables appear in the order, *me-ne-sa*, reading from right to left. *Below*, signature.

19

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo period, seventeenth or eighteenth century
Rectangular box with overlapping lid, two removable interior trays and support for inkstone and metal *mizu-ire* (water-dropper), metal edges on case and lid
Lacquer on wood, decoration in *maki-e* and applied gold leaf
H 5.1 cm. 2 1/16"; W 22.1 cm. 8 11/16"; L 22.6 cm. 8 7/8"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.19

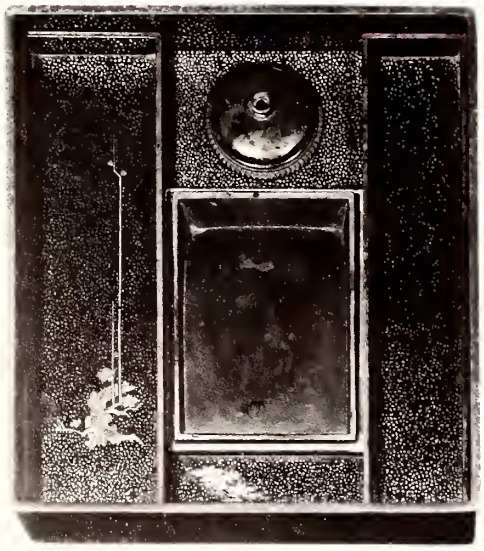
This *suzuribako* has a very simple design on the exterior of the lid, consisting of an *ebira* (quiver) holding arrows which have been tied together for support. The entire design is executed in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design). A few shafts of the arrows have been covered with applied gold leaf, which contrasts against the softer gold tone of those depicted in *maki-e*. Of special technical interest is the decoration of the side panel of the box of the *ebira*, which has a delicate marbled pattern like that of wood grain, but created by *maki-e* techniques. The front panel has a stylized butterfly held in reserve, and the ribbons trailing behind the quiver are depicted by bits of cut gold leaf. The background is plain, and was once probably black lacquer which has turned to a deep brown color with age. Around the gracefully curved border of the lid is a scroll design executed with contrasting colors and densities of gold powder.

The interior of the box is fitted with an inkstone and a simple, circular water-dropper, both held in a lacquered support between two removable trays for brushes. The backs of the trays are lacquered in plain, polished black, and the inner floor of the case is decorated with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground). All the exposed surfaces, however, have a dull black finish covered with coarse, embedded flakes of gold leaf. A similar effect is evident in the open sky above the *takamaki-e* relief landscape on the interior of the lid. These areas appear to have been unskillfully relacquered at some time after the box was originally decorated, perhaps in an effort to make the box more appealing to the taste of a later period in which more ornate decoration was preferred. Some of the details of the landscape design on the lid interior may also have been applied at the same time to disguise the transition between the original and newly lacquered areas. The contrast in workmanship is, however, most apparent. The moon of applied sheet lead may also have been added to the scene.

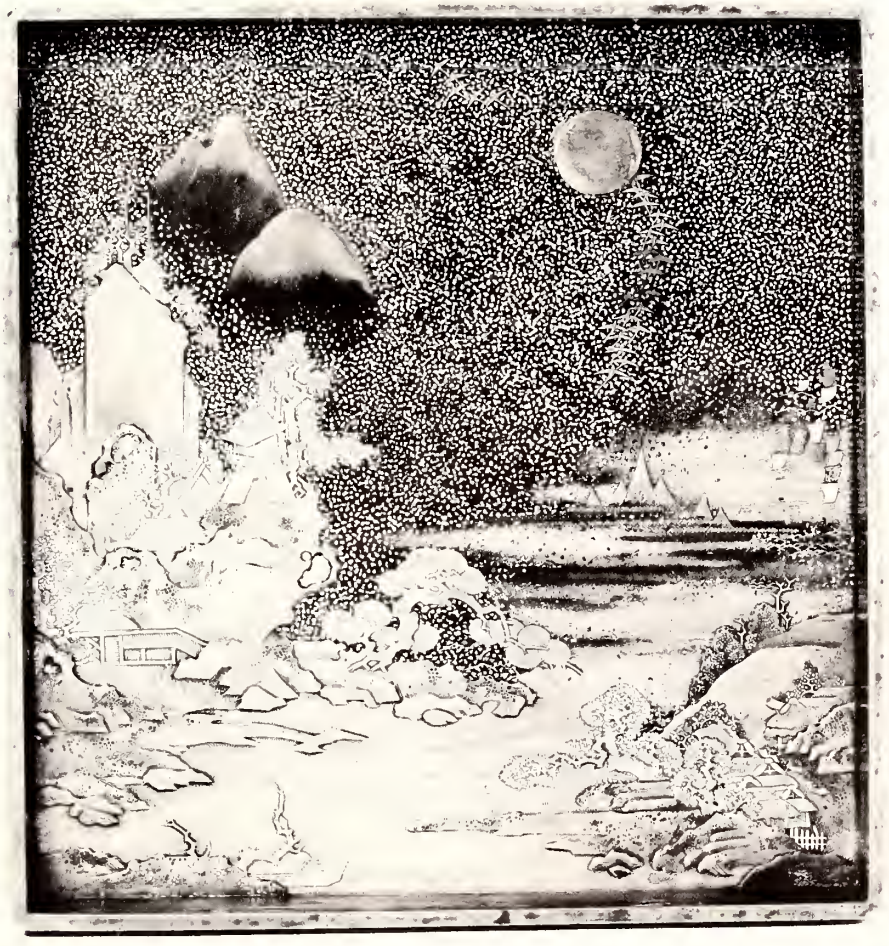
In its original state, this box probably would have been decorated in a relatively subdued manner, with only the simple quiver against a plain black exterior, and a landscape reminiscent of Chinese-inspired ink paintings of the Muromachi period (1392–1573) on the interior of the lid. The background of the lid and the upper surfaces of the inner trays were probably treated in the plain black lacquer of the lid exterior. It is likely that such a writing box would have been intended to appeal to a military patron of the early to middle Edo period. The relacquering may have occurred during the Meiji period (1868–1912) when the commercial demand for old Japanese *maki-e* was high, and a much more elaborate decorative style prevailed.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 33, no. 1678.

Interior of base section.



Exterior of lid.



Interior of lid.

20

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo period, nineteenth century
Rectangular box with rounded corners, slightly convex overlapping lid, removable interior tray and support for inkstone and metal *mizu-ire* (water-dropper)
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) decoration in gold and silver powders
H 4.5 cm. 1¾″; W 20.9 cm. 8¼″;
L 23.0 cm. 9 1/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.25

The exterior of this *suzuribako* (inkstone case) has a fine finish of glossy black lacquer embellished with evenly dispersed flakes of gold. The decoration of the lid exterior is extremely simple. A sloping bank is represented in plain polished powdered gold, and two cranes standing on the bank are realistically depicted in relief (*takamaki-e*). A few shore plants, including a reed which echoes the graceful stance of the foreground crane, are also rendered in *takamaki-e* and sprinkled with silver and gold powders for contrast. The composition of the simple design of cranes lends this relatively subdued design an air of elegance.

A finer texture of gold powder densely covers the black ground of the interior support for the inkstone and water-dropper (*mizu-ire*) in the form of a folded *tanzaku* (strip of decorated paper for writing poems), as well as the removable tray for brushes. These are simply decorated with autumnal flowers: bellflowers and chrysanthemums. The autumn imagery is continued on the interior of the lid, which has a design of chrysanthemums growing beside a stream with a stylized butterfly above. The ground of the lid interior is *nashiji* (pear-skin ground), which has a deep reddish tone with gold flakes suspended at various levels in the translucent lacquer. The pictorial design is in *takamaki-e*, with gold leaf applied to highlight a few of the flowers. Squares of cut gold leaf are applied to the bank and rocks in distinct patterns (*okibirame*). The design of chrysanthemums growing along a stream appears frequently in the decoration of Japanese lacquers beginning in the Muromachi period, and often is intended to refer to the theme of Kikujidō (Chü Tz'u-t'ung), the legendary Chinese youth whose writing on chrysanthemum petals was washed away by dew to become a magical elixir (see also cat. no. 30). It is possible that in later periods this design was utilized more for its decorative potential than as a literary allusion, but it is an appropriate theme for the decoration of a writing box.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 39, no. 1698.

Interior of lid.

21

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo period (1615–1868)
Rectangular box with rounded corners, slightly domed lid, removable interior tray and support for inkstone and metal *mizu-ire* (water-dropper)
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e* and applied sheet lead
H 5.3 cm. 2⅛″; L 23.5 cm. 9¼″; W 21.8 cm. 8⅝″
Gift of Bunkyo Matsuki
06.288

The decoration of this *suzuribako* is based on *kasen-e*, portraits of famous Japanese poets who had attained the status of *kasen* (poetic immortals). Many series of *kasen-e* were produced, often in sets of thirty-six depicting the *Sanjūrokkasen* (Thirty-six Poetic Immortals). On the slightly domed lid of this box, a single male courtier is depicted in gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) and lead. He is seated on a *tatami* mat with decorated borders, and in the space above him is a poem written in cursive calligraphy combining *hiragana* phonetic script with a few Chinese characters. The poet is identified in the inscription as Ki no Tsurayuki (ca. 868–945 A.D.). The poem following his name comes from the Heian period anthology, the *Kokin-wakashū* (905 A.D.), compiled by Tsurayuki and others. It reads:

Musubu te no
Shizuku ni nigoru
Yama no i no
Akade mo hito ni
Wakaremuru ka na [1]
KKS VIII 404

As translated by Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner the poem reads: "Like my cupped hands / Spilling drops back into the mountain pool / And clouding its pure waters / Before the satisfaction of my thirst / So have I had to part from you too soon."[2] A simple design of stylized plum blossoms decorates the plain interior of the box, which contains an inkstone and water-dropper apparently in the shape of a courtier's hat.

The calligraphy is written in the bold style associated with the calligrapher and lacquer designer Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637). The design of this writing box proves in fact to have been directly adapted from a page in a woodblock-printed illustrated edition of the *Sanjūrokkasen* (Thirty-six Poetic Immortals) published during the early seventeenth century by Kōetsu's associate, Suminokura Soan (1571–1632).[3] The page from this

Interior of base section.

edition portraying Tsurayuki shows a male courtier seated on a *tatami* mat with his name and a poem written in the space above him. The design of this inkstone case corresponds very closely to the page from this printed edition of the *Sanjūrokkasen*, even in such details as the unusual design of the border of the *tatami* mat and the inclusion of the designation "right," above the poet's name, which would ordinarily have meaning only in the context of a sequential series of portraits. The large-scale illustration from the printed book has been adapted slightly to fit the nearly square format of the lid of the *suzuribako*; the calligraphy, while faithfully preserving the style and composition of the printed version, has been moved closer to the figure, filling the space around him.

It is difficult to assign a date to this *suzuribako*. It has the uncomplicated shape and simple, large-scale decoration typical of early Edo-period lacquers influenced by the style of Kōetsu. The domed shape of the lid also reflects the influence of Kōetsu's lacquer designs. Such details as the elaborate shape of the water-dropper, however, suggest that although the design of the lid was clearly inspired by the early seventeenth-century book with calligraphy and illustrations in the style of Kōetsu, the box may have been made at a later date.

[1] *Kokinwakashū*, *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* (1958), Vol. VIII, p. 183, no. 404.

[2] Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (1961), pp. 207–208.

[3] An example of this book is the subject of an article in John M. Rosenfield et al., *The Courtly Tradition in Japanese Art and Literature* (1973), pp. 169–171. In this article, the authors (F. Cranston, L. A. Cort, and J. Rosenfield) state: "While the calligraphy is unquestionably in the Kōetsu style, it is not possible to demonstrate Kōetsu's direct personal involvement with this project as is the case with the deluxe editions of Nō texts . . . and other of the *Sagabon*" (p. 171). The example of Suminokura Soan's early seventeenth-century *Sanjūrokkasen* illustrated and exhibited here comes from the Rare Books Collection of the Freer Gallery of Art Library. Two versions are mentioned by the authors of the article cited above. This example is of the type printed on colored papers interspersed with plain sheets.

Page from woodblock-printed edition of *Sanjūrokkasen* (Thirty-six Poetic Immortals) published by Suminokura Soan, early 17th century: Portrait of Ki no Tsurayuki with Poem from *Kokinwakashū* (905 A.D.). Freer Gallery of Art Library.

Exterior of lid.

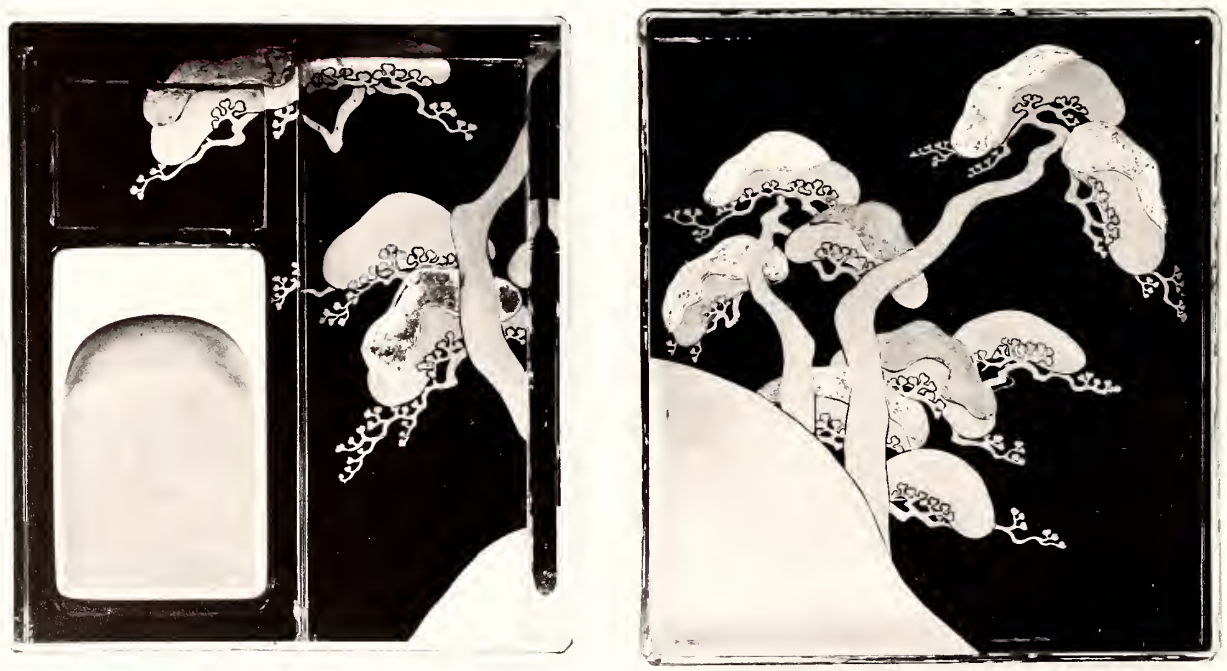
22

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo period, early nineteenth century
Style of Ogata Kōrin, 1658–1716
Signature: (spurious) "Hokkyō Kōrin"
Rectangular box with overlapping lid, containing separate inkstone, missing *mizu-ire* (water-dropper)
Lacquer on wood with decoration in gold *maki-e*, applied mother-of-pearl, and lead
H 5.2 cm. 2 1/16″; W 22.5 cm. 8 7/8″; L 24.7 cm. 9 3/4″
Ex Charles Gillot collection
04.37

The distinctive style of lacquer decoration associated with the name of Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) was not continued by an uninterrupted succession of followers, but was intermittently very influential to lacquerers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[1] This *suzuribako* (inkstone case) is very similar in style and technique to those attributed to Kōrin. The lid is decorated with a large figure of a courtier riding a horse. His costume is made of a large piece of lead with details incised or applied in gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design). Parts of the outline of the horse are also in cut and applied lead, with other linear details in gold *maki-e*. Originally, the simple, curved form representing the hill behind the courtier would have been entirely in gold *maki-e*, but most of the unprotected areas have worn away. The remainder of the background is plain black lacquer. The face of the courtier is made of mother-of-pearl, with the facial features drawn in black lacquer. At some time after the completion of this box, the facial features were roughly reincised and filled with black lacquer, giving a harsher expression than would originally have existed. The hat is covered with gold leaf protected by transparent lacquer. The hill which begins on the exterior of the case is continued on the interior of the lid and base. If opened and placed side by side, the interiors of the lid and base form a nearly continuous, simple landscape of stylized pines appearing along the crest of a hill. The interior decoration is entirely executed in gold *maki-e* and applied pieces of lead. Even the outer border of the inkstone is embellished in gold *maki-e*.

The striking simplicity of his designs so appealed to lacquerers that the popularity of Kōrin's style was not limited to his lifetime. A major revival of the Kōrin style of lacquer decoration occurred during the early nineteenth century. The re-emergence of designs based on Kōrin's work in nineteenth-century painting and decorative arts is attributable in part to the publication of several woodblock-printed books of his designs, especially the *Kōrin Hyakuzu* (One Hundred Sketches by Kōrin), published in 1815 in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of Korin's



Interior of base (*left*) and lid (*right*).

death.[2] Another major revival of Kōrin's style during the Meiji period (1868–1912) also followed the publication of a book of Kōrin's designs, the *Kōrin Shinsen Hyakuzu* (New Selection of One Hundred Sketches by Kōrin) published in 1864.[3] The latter must have been particularly helpful to lacquerers, since it included projections of lacquer designs.

The signature, "Hokkyō Kōrin," located beneath the inkstone of this box, is spurious. The gold powder sprinkled over the signature is not identical to that used in the decoration of the box, and it seems likely that the signature may have been a later addition intended to identify it as the work of the master designer. Stylistic details such as the interrupted treatment of the contour of the horse, part in lead and part in gold *maki-e*, are not seen in lacquers believed to be by Kōrin or his contemporaries. In Kōrin-style lacquers of the early eighteenth century, lead inlay is used to depict parts of the design as complete forms, rather than as outlines. It therefore seems highly likely that this box, which otherwise rather faithfully follows the style and techniques of lacquers by Kōrin, belongs to a later period and was perhaps a product of the revival of Kōrin's style during the early nineteenth century. The signature may well have been added to the box during the Meiji period, when demand for attributed lacquers, especially outside Japan, led to the application of names of famous lacquerers to numerous previously unsigned works.

[1] Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), p. 208.

[2] The *Kōrin Hyakuzu*, in two *satsu*, printed from copies of Kōrin's drawings prepared by Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828). Description in C. H. Mitchell, *The Illustrated Books of the Nanga, Maruyama, Shijō, and Other Related Schools of Japan: A Biobibliography* (1972), p. 376. Other books of Kōrin's designs published in the early nineteenth century include: *Kōrin Gafu* (Drawings by Kōrin, 1802), *Kōrin Gashiki* (Drawing Methods of Kōrin, 1818), *Kōrin Hyakuzu Kohen* (One Hundred Sketches by Kōrin, 1826).

[3] The *Kōrin Shinsen Hyakuzu* in two *satsu*, illustrated from copies of Kōrin's paintings and drawings by Koson (Fujiwara Yukinobu, 1801–66). Described in Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

Signature.

23

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Rectangular box with overlapping lid, separate interior tray, inkstone, and silver *mizu-ire* (water-dropper)
H 4.9 cm. 1 5/16"; W 22.9 cm. 9"; L 25.1 cm. 9 7/8"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.24

Several *tanzaku* (decorated strips for writing poetry) tied to a maple branch decorate the lid of this *suzuribako* (inkstone case). The autumnal theme is continued on the tray, the support for the inkstone, and the interior of the lid. The colors of the decoration, set off against a black lacquer background lightly sprinkled with flecks of gold, are produced by mixing various coloring agents with lacquer to produce tones of green, red, and yellow. These colors represent the relatively limited range of colors used by premodern lacquerers. The colored lacquer was not applied to this box in a liquid state, but was allowed to dry, ground to a fine powder, and sprinkled over damp lacquer designs. Details were added in gold powder, then the entire surface was coated with black lacquer, allowed to dry, and polished to reveal the design. This technique is a variation of the *togidashi maki-e* (polished-out sprinkled-design) method, first developed for decoration with gold and silver powders. *Iro-e* (colored-design) *togidashi*, as this method is known, was developed during the Edo period (1615–1868). The technique seems to have flourished from the late eighteenth century, when *togidashi* techniques generally enjoyed a revival of popularity and reached a new standard of technical quality. *Iro-e togidashi* permits colored decoration having finer definition and a more polished finish than does lacquer painting, in which the viscosity of the medium limits the precision with which colors may be applied and also usually results in a slightly uneven surface texture. It has been suggested that the prevalence of colored designs in Japanese lacquers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflected the popularity among the middle classes of fully colored woodcut prints which were being produced from 1765. The decoration of this writing box demonstrates the increasing influence of the art of painting on lacquer design of the late Edo period; colored lacquers and gold powders are blended, combined, and superimposed to simulate the effect of shading. The design of autumn flowers and maple foliage makes effective use of the limited palette of lacquer colors, and the *tanzaku* which seem to float in a breeze are an especially appropriate image for a box designed for writing equipment.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Pl. XVIII, no. 1697. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 39, no. 1697.

Exterior of lid.

Base section.

24

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

Edo period, nineteenth century
Signature: "Kajikawa saku"
in gold *maki-e* on lid exterior
Seal: "Kajikawa" in red lacquer on lid exterior
Rectangular box with overlapping lid, rounded corners, removable interior support for inkstone and metal *mizu-ire* (water-dropper)
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*, applied glass beads
H 20.6 cm. 8⅛″; W 16.3 cm. 6⅜″;
L 24.3 cm. 9⅝″
55.24

Signature.

This *suzuribako* is expertly decorated with a colorful pictorial design which reflects the influence of paintings and popular color woodcut prints of the late Edo period (1615–1868). The exterior ground is decorated with *hirame* (flat, evenly distributed flakes of gold leaf) on a polished black ground. Gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) with a low-relief floral pattern embellishes the border. Three figures in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) occupy the foreground. The "Wisteria Maiden" (Fuji-musume) wears a kimono decorated with iris and holds a branch of wisteria as she takes shelter from the rain beneath a tattered umbrella borne by a demon (*oni*). The Wisteria Maiden has a face coated with silver powder which has turned to a bluish black. The *oni* has a red face, horns of mother-of-pearl, and carries a gong which he is about to strike. His umbrella has the characters "*nembutsu*" written on the edge. The term refers to the name of Amida Buddha which is recited by members of popular Buddhist sects who seek salvation. Behind the demon and the Wisteria Maiden runs a man who is unprotected from the rain. The rain is depicted as silver streaks falling from the swirling clouds above. Riding the clouds is the Thunder God who beats his ring of drums. The dark clouds are effectively rendered in *togidashi maki-e* (polished-out sprinkled-design), using metal powders and charcoal to produce graded tonalities very similar in appearance to those of ink painting.

Both the Wisteria Maiden and the Praying Demon are common subjects of *Otsu-e*, paintings of religious and legendary themes by amateur artists working near the city of Otsu. Although the origins of the Wisteria Maiden theme are obscure, that of the Praying Demon probably represents a satiric comment on hypocrisy.[1] Although these themes must have come from *Otsu-e* that of the Thunder God usually constitutes an independent subject in Edo-period painting. The combination of all three legendary figures in the pictorial decoration of this box creates an intriguing design which is enhanced by the incorporation of compositional conventions from popular *ukiyo-e* woodcut prints. The compositional device of crossing diagonals depicting the movement of figures toward the viewer and the slender lines of falling rain is often encountered in nineteenth-century prints designed by such masters as Hiroshige (1797–1858).

The interior of the box has a strikingly plain, highly polished black (*rō-iro*) ground. The *mizu-ire* (water-dropper) and inkstone have clean, simple forms, and are centered in the support which covers the full width of the box. On the interior of the lid, dramatically silhouetted against the black background, is a low-relief portrait of Bodhidharma, the legendary Indian founder of the Ch'an (Zen) Buddhist sect. He wears a red robe, rendered in the *iro-e togidashi* technique, employing powdered red lacquer rather than red lacquer in a liquid state. This technique permitted the fine shading of color at the lower edge of the robe, which is embellished with fine, sprinkled-gold patterns. Bodhidharma's face is realistically rendered in *takamaki-e* and sprinkled with gold powder. Details are added in black lacquer, and the eyes are rendered in polished silver which has darkened to give them a slightly eerie expression.

This *suzuribako* as a whole is of high artistic and technical quality and constitutes a rare example of an inkstone case signed by a member of the Kajikawa school of lacquerers. Signatures and seals of the Kajikawa lacquerers of Edo are more frequently encountered on miniature objects such as *inrō* (cat. no. 34).

[1] For an informative brief account of the history and themes of *Otsu-e*, see Victor and Takako Hauge, *Folk Traditions in Japanese Art* (1978), pp. 18–19 and 228–231.

Exterior of lid.

Interior of base (*left*) and lid (*right*).

25

Suzuribako
Inkstone Case

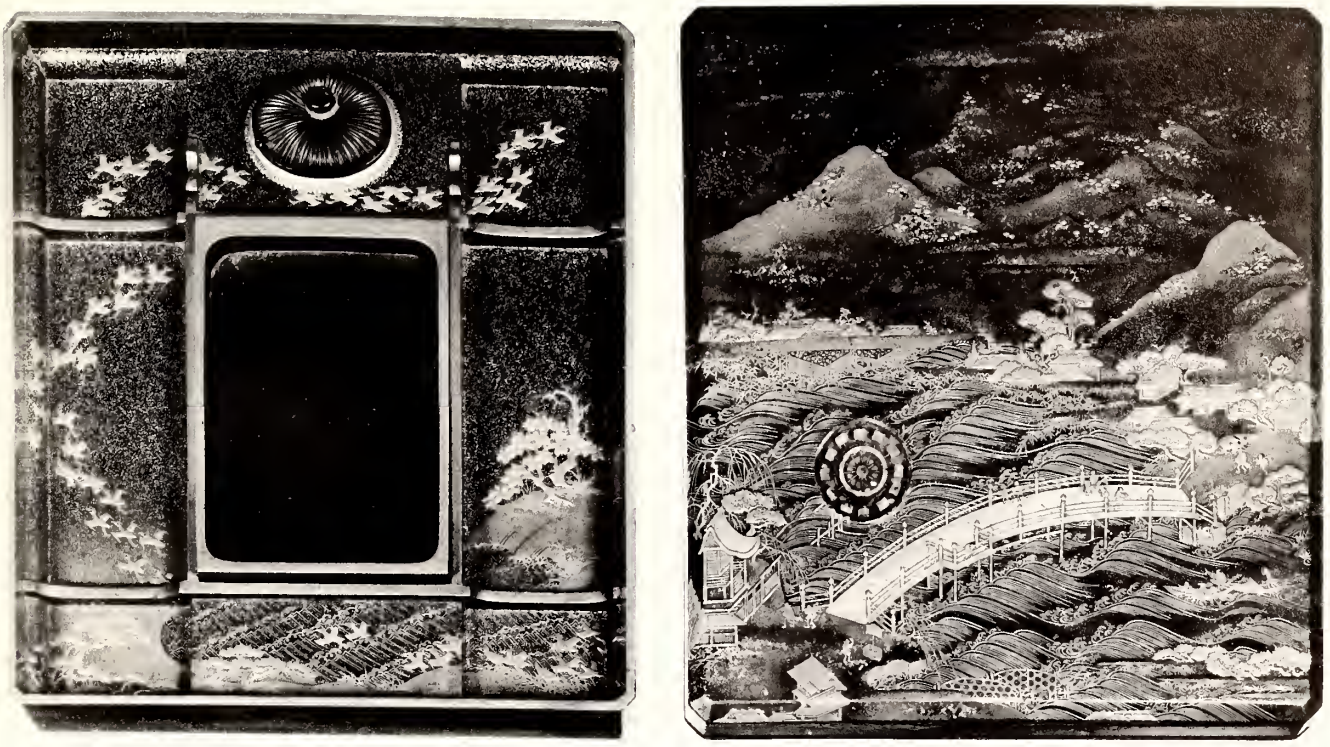
Edo period, eighteenth–nineteenth century
Rectangular box with bevelled corners, overlapping lid, bronze *mizu-ire* (water-dropper), inkstone
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e* (sprinkled-design), glass inset, waterwheel possibly bone[1] with filling of mercury
H 4.2 cm. 1 5/8″; L 21.6 cm. 8 1/2″; W 20.4 cm. 8″
72.5

This inkstone case (*suzuribako*) exemplifies the novelty of some lacquer designs of the mid to late Edo period. The outer lid has a design of a mountainous landscape and a river traversed by a bridge in the foreground. The landscape is rendered primarily in *takamaki-e* techniques, in low relief. The red sun is depicted in powdered red lacquer polished to the surface (*iro-e togidashi*). The remarkable feature of the landscape is the inclusion of a clear window of glass, behind which a waterwheel is visible. In its present condition, the wheel is immobile, but it was originally intended to be turned by the force of a pool of mercury contained in a reservoir between the inner and outer surfaces of the lid. Radiographs of the lid show that the reservoir and channels run continuously from the waterwheel toward the right, then bend upward to parallel the upper edge of the lid. From the upper left-hand corner, the channel drops vertically toward the waterwheel, narrowing just above it to increase the force with which the silvery mercury drops to drive the wheel. Because of the presence of a large quantity of mercury within it, the lid is exceptionally heavy. Raising the lid to open the box would have activated the turning waterwheel. On the lid interior is a landscape of pines and a few buildings on a sandbank with many plovers flying overhead. The design of plovers flying over water is continued on the support for the inkstone and water-dropper, which has a finely ribbed surface.

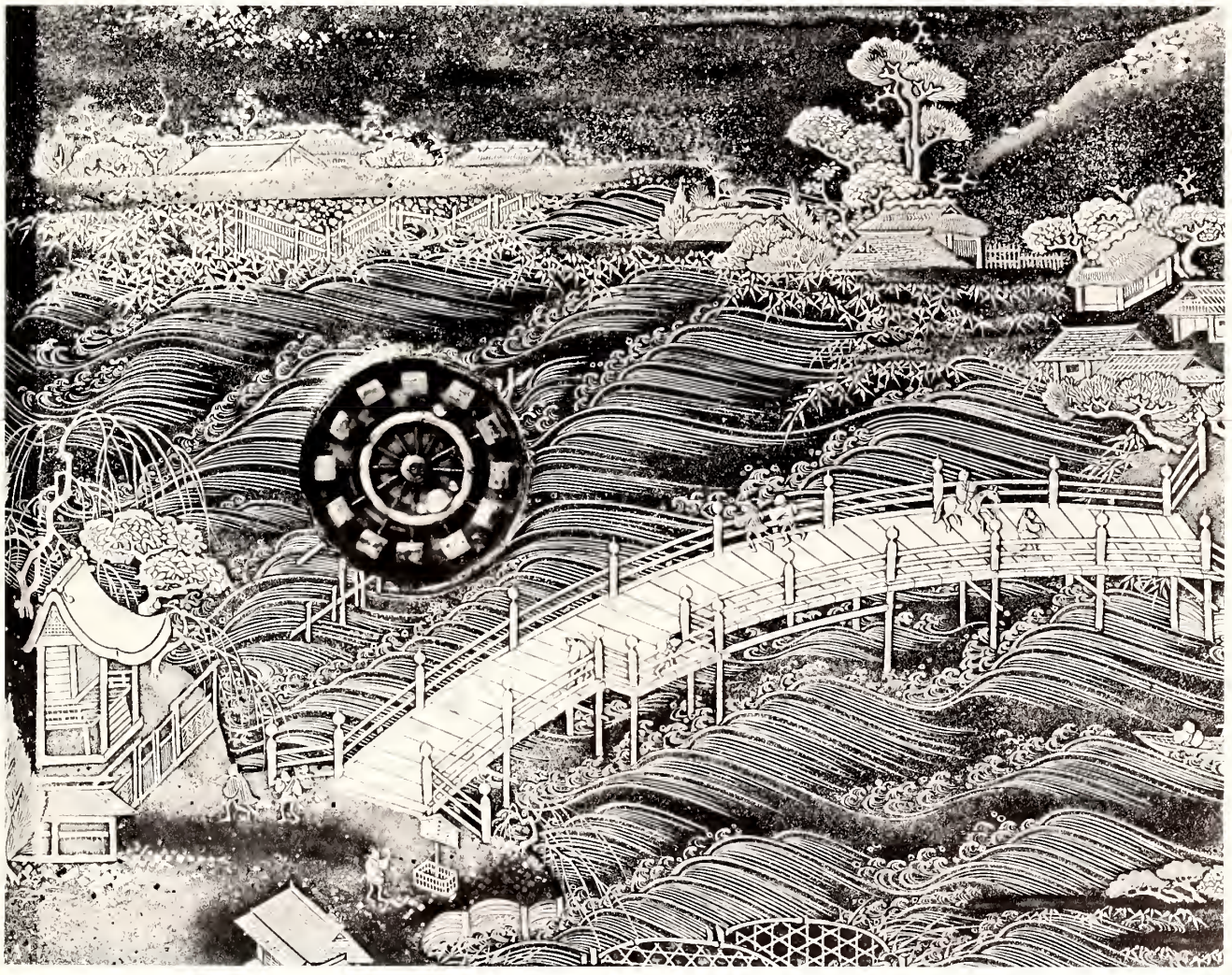
Suzuribako of this type containing mercury are relatively rare, and seem to have first appeared during the eighteenth century. They are typically decorated with *maki-e* landscapes which are very detailed. It seems usual to find a design of a waterfall, sometimes terminating at a waterwheel. Both the waterfall and waterwheel in such examples are visible through transparent glass, and the mercury can be seen and heard to rush dramatically down the waterfall turning the waterwheel at its base when the lid is raised. While not always as aesthetically pleasing as other examples of *maki-e* lacquerware from the same period, the *suzuribako* with mercury-filled lids must have presented formidable technical problems to their makers, and still elicit admiration for their inventiveness.[2]

[1] The record of an examination of this *suzuribako* by Dr. John Winter of the Freer Gallery of Art Technical Laboratory discloses that ultraviolet examination of the waterwheel produced a "bluish fluorescence consistent with bone." The waterwheel is, however, inaccessible for further examination. Record of examination 72.5 (v61.-69ab), March 15, 1972, the Freer Gallery of Art Technical Laboratory.

[2] Other examples of *suzuribako* with mercury-filled lids are in the collections of the Nezu Museum (illustrated in the catalogue of the Tokyo National Museum, *Tōyō no Shikkōgei* [1977], no. 315) and in the Charles A. Greenfield collection.



Base section (*left*) and exterior of lid (*right*).



Detail: waterwheel on lid exterior.

26

Ryōshibako

Stationery Box

Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Box with flush-fitting lid, metal edges, one interior tray
Lacquer on *sugi* (cryptomeria) wood with decoration in *maki-e*, inlaid mother-of-pearl, applied glazed ceramic, mica, and other materials
H 9.2 cm. 3 5/8"; W 19.0 cm. 7 1/2"; L 23.8 cm. 9 3/8"
56.3

The rough-textured surface of this box of *sugi* (cryptomeria) wood has been left unlacquered except where the motifs of three monkeys viewing a hanging scroll painting are depicted in relief lacquer (*takamaki-e*). It is extremely difficult to create a self-contained lacquer design on an unlacquered surface, since the wood must be completely protected from becoming soiled and from any contact with even small amounts of lacquer. The humorous design of monkeys viewing a scroll is very skillfully executed. The monkeys are realistically depicted, including the texture of their fur, and are sprinkled with various metal powders. The scroll, also in relief, has a monochromatic painting rendered in *sumi-e togidashi*, sprinkled silver and charcoal powders coated with lacquer and polished to a matte finish. The bird in the painting is, however, made of applied white-glazed ceramic. One of the monkeys wears eyeglasses made of flat flakes of mica.[1] *Aogai* (blue-green mother-of-pearl) is inlaid in lacquer to imitate the brocaded silk traditionally used to decorate the borders of Japanese hanging scrolls, and ivory may be the material used for the roller-caps. A box in which the scroll was stored is depicted in red lacquer with a *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) interior on the side and corner of the box. Prominent flakes of applied gold leaf embellish the borders of the lid and side panels of the box.

The interior of both the box and lid are lacquered with a *nashiji* ground of very high quality. A separate tray which fits over the rim of the box inside the lid has an elaborate border design of inlaid mother-of-pearl combined with colored and gold lacquer polished according to the *togidashi maki-e* technique. Against a ground densely sprinkled with gold powder is relief design of a spray of chrysanthemums and a Chinese-style table surmounted by a small sculpture. The sculpture appears to be of metal, and it has been suggested this metal ornament of a Buddhist Guardian King holding a *vajra* ("diamond" weapon which destroys defilement) may originally have been a sword-hilt ornament. The red lacquer table, intended to give an impression of carved lacquer, was actually built up of lacquer in combination with other materials, dried, and carved prior to lacquering. The applied material of which the chrysanthemums are made is difficult to identify, but is likely to be glazed ceramic or ivory. White tones are not successfully produced in the lacquer medium.

The somewhat eclectic combination of styles and media used in the decoration of this box reflects the influence of the lacquerer, Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747), who is usually known by his sobriquet, Ritsuō. Haritsu incorporated diverse materials into his lacquerwares, utilizing the excellent adhesive qualities of lacquer to combine glazed ceramic, metal, shell, and other materials with traditional *maki-e* techniques for lacquer decoration. He also invented methods of imitating non-lacquer materials such as metal, ceramic, and stone surfaces using lacquer. Although this box is of very high technical quality, and has been attributed, despite its lack of a seal or signature, to Haritsu, its style seems more consistent with a nineteenth-century date. Haritsu's influence upon later Japanese lacquerers, like that of Kōrin (cat. nos. 22 and 30), was somewhat sporadic. A revival of interest in Haritsu's style and techniques during the nineteenth century is best exemplified by the copies of his work by Shibata Zeshin (1807–91, cat. no. 54), the foremost Japanese lacquerer of the nineteenth century.

[1] Examination by E. H. West of the Freer Gallery of Art Technical Laboratory in 1962 resulted in identification of this material as mica rather than glass.

Detail from exterior of lid.

Base section (*left*) with tray and exterior of lid (*right*).

INRŌ

Inrō constitute a special class of *sagemono*, small containers held in place by the sash (*obi*) which secures the kimono, a simple garment having no fasteners or pockets. *Inrō* were used as portable containers for powdered medicines or tablets which could be separately accommodated and protected within the small, snugly fitted, lacquered compartments. The name (literally, "seal basket") suggests that early *inrō*, which may have been quite different in form from the example described below, may have been intended to hold carved seals designating personal identity, and possibly red seal-paste or ink. *Inrō* were customarily carried only by men, and seem to have come into general use as personal accessories during the seventeenth century. *Inrō* continued to be used throughout the Edo period (1615–1868), but were displaced with the adoption of Western modes of dress during the Meiji period (1868–1912).

Inrō may have one or more compartments and a fitted lid. Each of the lower sections has a vertical rim, recessed from the outer surface to permit insertion into the base of the case above it, where it meets the bottom of the upper case. At the sides of the body, usually continuing through all the sections, are tubular cord-guides which may be apparent (cat. no. 30), or completely incorporated into the shape of the body (cat. no. 33). The shapes of *inrō* show considerable variation, although a rectangular face with a flattened elliptical cross-section is most common. Such a shape would hang conveniently close to the body when suspended from the *obi*.

For use, a long cord of plaited silk was threaded through the cord-guides of the *inrō*, beginning and ending at the top. Both ends of the cord were passed upward through an *ojime* (closing bead), and finally secured to a *netsuke*, usually a small carving made specifically for this purpose. The *netsuke* served as a toggle to keep the *inrō* from slipping through the sash. The *ojime* could be slid down to the lid for greater security, and any excess slack in the cord taken up by an ornamental bow tied at the base of the *inrō* (cat. no. 44). Unlike *inrō*, which were nearly always made of lacquered wood, the *ojime* and *netsuke* were usually made of other materials, and by different artists. Most of the *inrō* in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art were acquired without *netsuke* or *ojime*, which should ideally be thematically in harmony with the *inrō*.

During the Edo period (1615–1868), when the majority of *inrō* were made and used, the making of *inrō* bodies was usually done by specialists in their construction, who might take several years to complete the processes required to shape and fit the sections. The decoration was then carefully applied by a lacquer artist, who created a design which gave the illusion of being uninterrupted by the separate sections of the case.

Because *inrō* were so time-consuming to make, outstanding examples were prized, and became prestigious accessories for those who could afford them. Large collections of *inrō* were assembled by some Japanese lords of the Edo period, who would select an *inrō* appropriate for wear on specific occasions. Demand for *inrō* was such that many lacquerers were able to depend exclusively on constructing or decorating *inrō* for their livelihood. Although *inrō* were no longer as frequently used when Western styles of clothing began to be worn by Japanese men during the Meiji period (1868–1912), the popularity of *inrō* among foreign collectors provided a new market for the many *inrō* produced by Meiji lacquerers and for earlier examples as well.

REFERENCES: U. A. Casal, "The Inrō," *Transactions of the Japan Society of London* Vol. XXXVII (1939–41), pp. 1–53. Julia Hutt, "Inrō Decoration: Its Individual Character," in *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology*, No. 6, The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art (1976).

←

The man, second from left, wears an *inrō* suspended from his *obi* (sash) and held in place by a *netsuke* (toggle). Behind the *inrō* is a pouch suspended from the same *netsuke*. Both are kept closed by sliding beads, apparently of coral. Detail from a Japanese painting, *Viewing Cherry Blossoms at Ueno Park*, by Hishikawa Moronobu (ca. 1618–94). Six-panel screen. Freer Gallery of Art, 06.267.

27

Inrō

Edo period, eighteenth or early nineteenth century
Four cases, raised cord-guides
Guri-pattern carved lacquer on wood
H 9.8 cm. 3⅞″; L 5.5 cm. 2 3/16″; W 3.2 cm. 1¼″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.42

This *inrō* is made up of four large cases which have interior surfaces embellished with gold leaf. The exterior of the cases and cord-guides has been coated with numerous superimposed thin layers of colored lacquer, built up to form ten distinct strata of contrasting colors (black alternating with red and yellow). The final red layer has been polished to a smooth matte finish. The carving of the scroll designs penetrates all the layers of colored lacquer with V-shaped grooves which expose the underlying layers as parallel bands.

The Japanese term *guri* is usually applied to this type of carved lacquer, which originated in China where many examples were made during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).[1] *Guri*, however, seems originally to have referred only to the decorative scroll pattern, derived from Chinese "classic scroll" or "*ju-i* head" motifs. The *guri* pattern appears prominently in the decoration of early *Kamakura-bori* lacquerware (cat. no. 5), which is technically distinct from carved lacquer.

There is little certainty regarding the earliest date of production of carved lacquer in Japan. Many examples of the *guri* type apparently date from the late eighteenth or nineteenth century.[2] As in Negoro ware (cat. nos. 3 and 4) and *Kamakura-bori* (cat. no. 5), the final surface coat of Japanese *guri* carved lacquers is usually red, but a few have the black surface frequently encountered in Chinese examples. There are relatively few surviving *inrō* of this type, perhaps in part because the many exposed edges produced by the carving were vulnerable to chipping, which has occurred on one side of this example. The controlled, open volutes of the *guri* carving cover the entire surface of this *inrō*, including the lid, base, and cord-guides, with a cohesive, flowing design which is enhanced by the curved surfaces of the body.

[1] Sir Harry M. Garner, in *Chinese and Related Lacquers from the Garner Collection* (1973), pp. 9–10, discusses fragmentary evidence that the technique of *guri* carved lacquer may have been known in Central Asia and possibly in China as early as the eighth century A.D. See also Sir Harry M. Garner, "*Guri* Lacquer of the Ming Dynasty," in *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* Vol. XXXI (1957–59), pp. 61–73. A recent article by Jō Okada, "On Carved Lacquer with Spiral Motifs" *Museum* No. 318 (September, 1977), pp. 4–12, discusses evidence for the development of the *guri* pattern in Chinese carved lacquer prior to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when the majority of surviving examples seem to have been made. See also Yasuhiro Nishioka, "Carved Lacquer of the Ming Period," in *Kobijutsu* 51 (November, 1976), pp. 51–78.

[2] A *guri* carved lacquer *inrō* with an inscribed date of Tempō 10 (1839) provides a point of reference for dating the production of *inrō* of this type. It is illustrated and described in Werner Speiser, *Lackkunst in Ostasien* (1965), pp. 342–343.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 57, no. 1955.

PLATE 8. *Inrō*, 17th–19th centuries: (*upper left*) cat. no. 41. (*upper right*) cat. no. 44. (*center*) cat. no. 34. (*lower left*) cat. no. 38. (*lower right*) cat. no. 42.

28

Netsuke

Edo period, nineteenth century
Two interlocking sections, metal ring attached to upper section
Carved red lacquer on wood
H 2.7 cm. 1 1/16"; W 3.1 cm. 1 3/16"; L 3.7 cm. 1 7/16"
11.550

Carved-lacquer techniques, which had developed in China during the Yüan dynasty (1279–1368), were occasionally employed by Japanese lacquerers for making *netsuke* as well as *inrō* (cat. no. 27). This *netsuke* is in the form of a miniature Chinese-style stand. The top can be removed from the snugly fitted base to facilitate attachment of a cord for suspension of the *inrō* to the metal ring secured to its underside. This ingenious design completely conceals the knotted ends of the cord once the base of the *netsuke* is in place, and the pressure exerted by the sash (*obi*) and suspended *inrō* holds the two sections firmly together. The outer surfaces of the *netsuke* are entirely covered with a thick veneer of red lacquer, which results from many separate applications. The finely carved decoration of Chinese children at play reflects the style of Chinese carved lacquers of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1912).

29

Netsuke

Edo period, late eighteenth or nineteenth century
Colored lacquer on carved wood
H 9.9 cm. 3 7/8"
04.410

This unusually large *netsuke* represents a *sennin* (Chinese: hsien-jen), one of the "Immortals" described in Chinese Taoistic legends as dwelling in remote regions after having achieved magical powers through meditation and the practice of austerities. *Sennin*, with their clothing of leaves and grass and their somewhat bizarre appearance, were a favorite subject of *netsuke* carvers. The *netsuke* carver Yoshimura Shūzan (d. 1776) seems to have been especially influential in establishing a fashion for large-scale, brightly colored *netsuke* depicting *sennin* and other superhuman beings. In the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art are several *netsuke* of the "Shūzan" style, all made of painted wood. This *netsuke*, similar in scale and subject, is decorated by painting in the more durable medium of colored lacquers over a preparatory coat of black lacquer. Because lacquer produces unsatisfactory results in admixture with some pigments, pre-modern colored lacquerwares have a restricted palette. Red and black are the most common colors, but this *netsuke* has some details rendered in green, brown, and yellow.

30

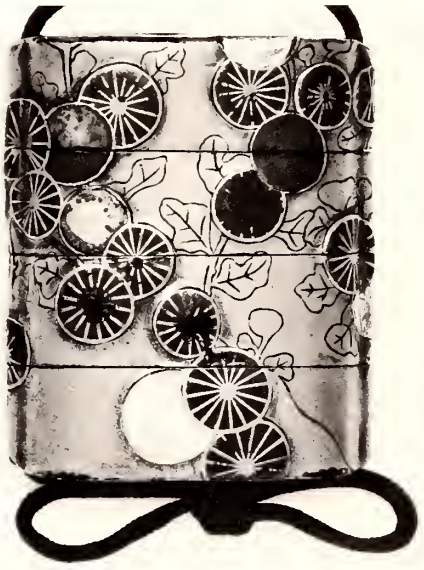
Inrō

Edo period, early eighteenth century
"Kōrin" style
Three cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with gold *maki-e*, gold leaf, inlay of lead and mother-of-pearl
H 5.7 cm. 2¼"; L 4.8 cm. 1⅞"; W 1.7 cm. 11/16"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.28

The decoration of this *inrō* is based on the Chinese legend of Chü Tz'u-t'ung (Japanese: Kikujidō). During his exile for a minor offense, he spent each day writing a magical phrase on chrysanthemum petals. The dew which washed away the writing is said to have become an elixir of immortality. The major motifs of the boy and chrysanthemums are executed in thick, flat inlays of mother-of-pearl and lead. For contrast, the belt of his garment and several of the flowers are covered with brilliant gold leaf, and the wheel-like linear details of the circular chrysanthemums are rendered in the *maki-e* technique (lacquer sprinkled, while still damp, with powdered gold). The delineation of leaf and water patterns was accomplished by holding the lines in reserve while carefully applying lacquer on either side and sprinkling the lacquered areas with gold. The densely sprinkled gold surface was dried and polished prior to adding larger flecks of gold to enrich its texture. The interiors of the cases are decorated with red lacquer having a wavy pattern left by the brush-marks (*hakeme*).

Simple but sophisticated design and the combination of gold *maki-e* with inlays of metal and mother-of-pearl are associated with the lacquer artists who adapted their techniques from those of Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637). Kōetsu's innovation in lacquer decoration and design were further developed by Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716). Kōrin developed a distinctive style of painting which inspired generations of followers, but his influence was not limited to this medium. He also assisted his brother, Kenzan (1663–1743), in painting designs on pottery, and designed and perhaps executed the decoration of some outstanding lacquer objects. Kōrin's name has been traditionally associated with the many *inrō* which have decoration inspired by his designs, although it has not conclusively been established that he actually decorated *inrō*. The previous owner of this *inrō*, impressed by its high technical and artistic quality, believed that it was an unsigned work by Kōrin. While this attribution cannot be verified, the decoration is executed with exceptional care, and continues over all the surfaces of the *inrō*, including the base. The balanced pictorial composition avoids monotony despite the repetition of simple motifs, and distinguishes this *inrō* as an outstanding example of the Kōrin style.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CIX, no. 1704. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol II, p. 43, no. 1704.



31

Inrō

Edo period, late seventeenth – early eighteenth century
Four cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e*, applied gold leaf, inlay of *aogai* (blue-green mother-of-pearl)
H 6.3 cm. 2 7/16″; W 5.3 cm. 2 1/16″; D 2.0 cm. 3/4″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.27

The elaborate decoration of this *inrō* combines *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) and inlay techniques to form an overall pattern of hollyhock vines and stylized wheels. Some of the leaves of the vines are made of inlaid blue-green mother-of-pearl (*aogai*), with details added in gold *maki-e* which has been worn away in many areas. A few of the leaves of *aogai* inlay have been covered with gold leaf for an especially luminous effect, since thin gold leaf is somewhat translucent. Because of the heavy wear sustained by the surface, it is possible to appreciate the variety of superimposed colored lacquers and other materials which were required for the luxurious decoration of this *inrō*. The interiors of the cases are treated with pear-skin ground (*nashiji*), flakes of gold suspended in translucent amber-colored lacquer.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CIX, no. 1703. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 43, no. 1703.

32

Inrō

Edo period, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century
Signature: "Koma Kyūhaku saku" written on base in gold *maki-e*
Two cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* decoration
H 7.1 cm. $2\frac{13}{16}$"; W 6.6 cm. $2\frac{9}{16}$"; D 1.8 cm. $\frac{3}{4}$"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.36

The decoration of this *inrō* imitates the subtle effects of ink painting. Two overlapping circles of silver-gray, suggesting a moonlit night, form the miniature "paintings." On the face of the *inrō* is a design of a landscape and buildings, and on the reverse side, one of geese and reeds, both themes which were introduced into Japanese painting during the fourteenth century from China. A gourd-shaped artist's seal in red appears in the lower right-hand corner of the landscape, just as it might in an actual painting. The seal reads, "Morinobu," a sobriquet used by Kanō Tan'yū (1602–74), a painter who possessed an extensive knowledge of Japanese and Chinese ink paintings. Japanese lacquerers, especially during the Edo period (1615–1868), often adapted their designs from paintings, occasionally employing designs provided directly by the artists themselves. The maker of this *inrō* evidently based his design on paintings by Tan'yū and included a miniature copy of the painter's seal to indicate the source.

The pictorial decoration of the *inrō* is executed entirely in the *togidashi* technique, in which the design of sprinkled powders of silver, gold, colored lacquer, and charcoal is covered with lacquer and allowed to dry. The hardened lacquer coating is then ground and polished away until the layer bearing the design re-emerges. The *togidashi* technique, known to Japanese lacquerers since the eighth century A.D., had traditionally employed only gold and silver powders; but in the late eighteenth century, charcoal powder was incorporated to simulate the nuances of ink painting. Decoration of this type came to be known as *sumi-e togidashi* ("ink-painting *togidashi*"). Considerable skill was required for using the laborious *maki-e* techniques of lacquering, sprinkling, and polishing to suggest the spontaneity of ink painting, in which each stroke represents a single impulse of the brush. Silver rather than gold grounds were generally preferred for *sumi-e togidashi*, and it has been suggested that the technique flourished during the late eighteenth – early nineteenth century because the sumptuary laws imposed by the Tokugawa shoguns induced lacquerers and other artisans to find alternatives to gold decoration.[1] This *inrō* has the sleek, flattened shape which seems to have been preferred by lacquerers of the Koma school, and bears the signature "Koma Kyūhaku" on the base. Biographies of lacquerers are not clearly documented, but the genealogy of the Koma

family records several generations who used the same sobriquet, "Kyū-haku," beginning with the master who died in 1715. The meticulous and elegant decoration of this *inrō* mark it as the work of a master craftsman.

[1] Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), p. 217.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CXVIII, no. 1723. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 49, no. 1723.

33

Inrō

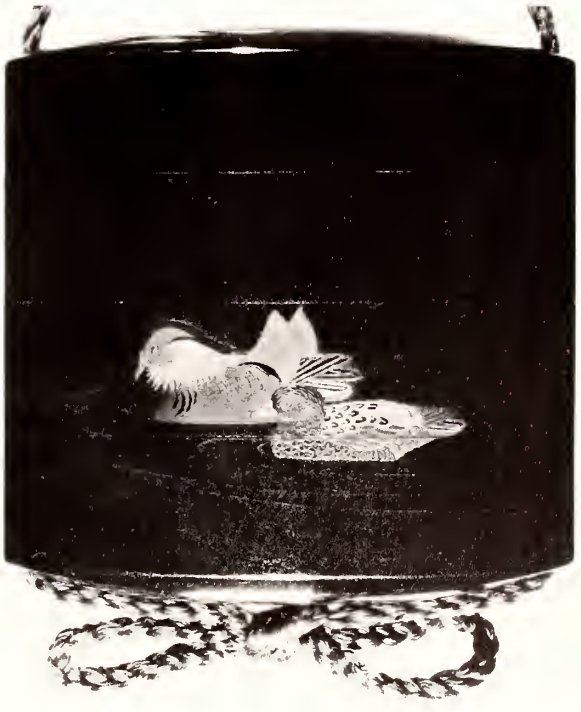
Edo period, nineteenth century
Signature: "Furōsai" on base
Three cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* decoration, *rō-iro* (polished black) ground
H 7.6 cm. 3″; W 7.5 cm. 2 15/16″; D 2.3 cm. 7/8″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.41

Signature.

This *inrō* has an especially sleek profile, uninterrupted even by the tubular cord-guides, which have been incorporated within the contour of the body. The interior of the cases has been coated with a rich pear-skin ground (*nashiji*), created by coating gold flakes with translucent lacquer of an amber tone. Several *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) techniques were employed to produce the deceptively simple, graceful design of waterfowl. Water is subtly indicated by sprinklings of gold powder in two contrasting colors. The density of sprinkling of the gold powders is carefully controlled to create an effect as subtle as a faint wash of watercolor. This part of the decoration has been "polished out" by the *togidashi* technique (cat. no. 32), to form a perfectly smooth surface with the glossy black (*rō-iro*) ground.

The birds are carefully executed in the *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) technique; their forms have been built up in low-relief using lacquer in admixture with other materials prior to application of the final decoration. The rendering of the plumage of the birds is exceptionally skillful. The layers of feathers have been built up gradually by successive lacquering and sprinkling with silver and gold powders, resulting in a highly naturalistic effect despite the minute scale of the motifs. The signature "Furōsai," on the base of the *inrō*, is a sobriquet of the *maki-e* artist, whose identity is otherwise unknown.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CXV, no. 1752. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 56, no. 1752.



34

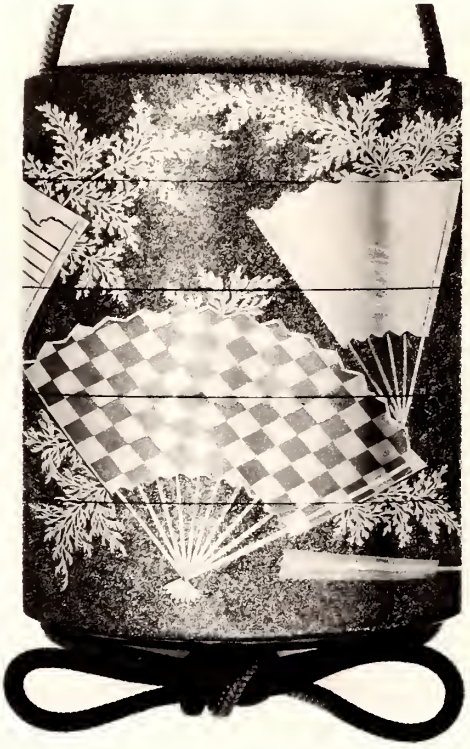
Inrō

Edo period, eighteenth century
Signature: "Kajikawa Kyūkō" (or "Hisataka") in gold *maki-e* on base
Seal: "Kajikawa" in red lacquer
Four cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with gold and silver *maki-e* decoration
H 9.0 cm. 3 7/16"; W 6.7 cm. 2 5/8"; D 1.9 cm. 3/4"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.40

Folding fans, with their elegant, flexible shape and varied patterns, appear in the decoration of Japanese lacquerware as early as the Kamakura period (1185–1333). The decoration of this *inrō* consists of five Japanese folding fans gracefully arranged against hare's-foot fern (*shinobugusa*). The ground is prepared with brown lacquer which has been lightly sprinkled with powdered gold, then coated with a protective layer of clear lacquer. This technique is known as *hiramaki-e* (flat sprinkled-design), even though the gold particles may be seen to protrude slightly in the finished surface. The fan shapes are rendered in the *togidashi maki-e* technique, in which the powdered gold is polished to a perfectly smooth luster. Gold powders predominate, but silver powder has been used in alternation with gold for the diamond-patterned fan on one side. Details, such as the fan-frames and the patterns of ferns, pines, and windswept grasses ornamenting the fans stand out in low relief (*takamaki-e*). The slightly greenish tone of gold used to render the pine needles enhances the subtle contrasts. The design of geese and reeds in delicate strokes of black lacquer is applied with a brush, rather than in the *sumi-e togidashi* technique (cat. no. 31) often used to imitate ink painting. The interiors of the cases are coated with pear-skin ground (*nashiji*), a treatment preferred by decorators of the Kajikawa school of lacquer artists. The circular seal, "Kajikawa," and the signature, "Kajikawa Kyūkō" (or "Hisataka"), appear on the base of the *inrō*.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 55, no. 1749.

Signature.



35

Inrō

Edo period, late eighteenth century
by Koma Koryū (fl. ca. 1764–89)
Signature: "Koryū saku" in gold *maki-e* on base
Four cases, slightly raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood, *maki-e* decoration,
nashiji ground, gold leaf
H 7.3 cm. $2\frac{7}{8}$"; W 6.7 cm. $2\frac{5}{8}$";
D 2.0 cm. $\frac{25}{32}$"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé
collection
44.34

This *inrō* is covered on the exterior and most of the interior surfaces with a rich *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) of gold flakes applied on various layers of amber-colored translucent lacquer. A Chinese-style bulb-bowl with an arrangement of orchids is rendered in low-relief over the *nashiji* ground. Gold leaf protected by a coating of transparent lacquer highlights the design, providing a brilliant contrast to the softer effect of powdered gold. The bulb-bowl is executed in red lacquer with golden highlights. The flower arrangement is centered on one of the cord-guides, unifying both faces of the *inrō* with a single design. The signature, "Koryū saku," on the base of the *inrō* identifies it as a work by a late eighteenth-century member of the Koma school of lacquer artists, who worked in Edo.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 47, no. 1714.

36

Inrō

Edo period, eighteenth century
Four cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with gold *maki-e* decoration and applied gold leaf
H 8.25 cm. 3¼″; W 5.2 cm. 2⅛″; D 2.4 cm. 15/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.30

This *inrō* of elongated shape is so heavily decorated in *maki-e* techniques that it appears almost to be made of gold. The interiors of the cases and the base are covered with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground). The remainder of the exterior has a continuous low-relief design of willows growing beside water. Large gabions, baskets filled with stones to retain the embankment, are prominent motifs in the foreground. The design has been carefully built up in successive layers from a black ground sprinkled with gold powder and polished. These dark areas represent water. Gold powder of various compositions is used to produce contrasting pale green and yellow tints. The faint green tinge of the willow leaves is especially effective. Gold leaf cut into small squares is laid into the surface of the embankment in a carefully ordered pattern, then covered with lacquer and polished. This technique of "paving" with gold leaf is known as *okibirame*, and requires considerable skill to achieve the precise alignment seen in the best examples.

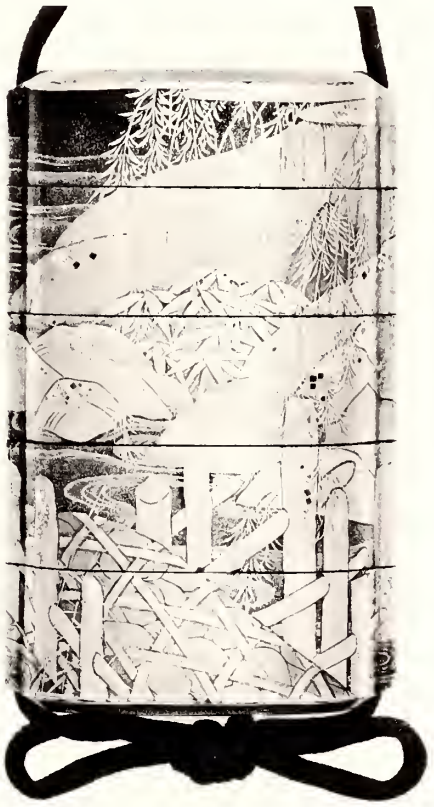
The decoration of this *inrō* may allude to the theme of the Uji Bridge, which was also the subject of a number of Japanese folding-screen paintings. These screens, many of which are believed to date from the Momoyama period (1573–1615), have a distinctive, highly decorative style which seems to reflect the influence of the techniques and aesthetics of *maki-e* lacquerware more than any established style of painting.

Color in the Uji Bridge screens is usually limited to the depiction of the willows; gold leaf predominates. *Moriage*, a technique of using *gofun* (powdered oyster shell) for building up relief designs, is extensively used to define the main motifs beneath the gold surface. Relief designs in gold were an important feature of Japanese lacquer decoration of the Muromachi (1392–1573) and Edo (1615–1868) periods, but the analogous effect does not appear to have been sought to any appreciable degree by Japanese painters prior to its emergence in the Uji Bridge screens.

Other techniques reminiscent of Japanese lacquer decoration include the extensive use of applied squares and strips of gold leaf to form patterns such as clouds, and the attachment of a moon of silvered metal to one of each pair of screens. Small details of solid metal were easily incorporated into the decoration of lacquerware through the exceptional adhesive qualities of the medium, but the attachment of solid metal elements to paintings on paper presents such formidable technical problems that it can only have been motivated by a desire to imitate lacquer decoration as closely as possible. The Uji Bridge screens represent an important instance of the influence of *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) lacquer decoration on Japanese painting, and they express the taste for showy and luxurious art among the military patrons of the Momoyama (1573–1615) and Edo periods.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 44, no. 1709.

Uji Bridge. Anonymous, Momoyama period (1573–1615). Six-panel screen. Ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, with attached silvered copper moon (third panel from right). Freer Gallery of Art, 68.39.



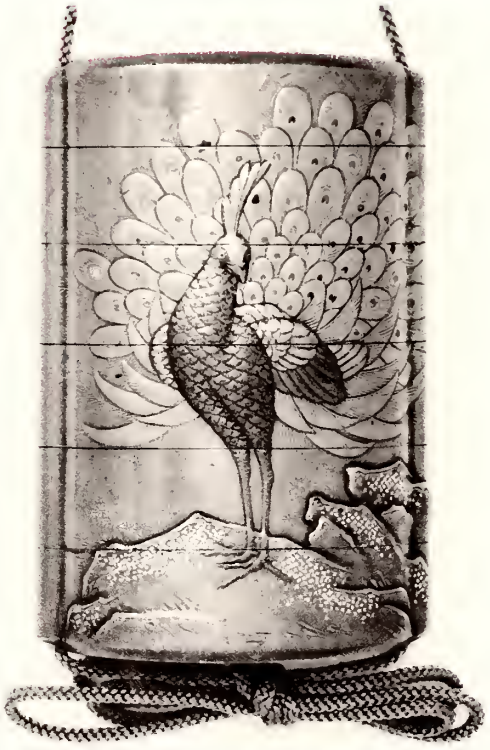
37

Inrō

Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Five cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with decoration in gold *maki-e* and inlay of mother-of-pearl
H 8.2 cm. 3 3/16″; W 5.3 cm. 2 1/16″; D 2.4 cm. 15/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.39

This *inrō* has a showy design of a peacock rendered in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) on a polished gold ground. The peacock feathers, depicted in lacquer sprinkled with powdered gold, have "eyes" of inlaid blue-green mother-of-pearl, the edges of which have been covered with lacquer and sprinkled with gold to incorporate them harmoniously into the decoration. The rocks on which the peacock stands have been highlighted with inlaid squares of cut gold leaf, a few of which have fallen away. The feathers of the peacock's tail are continued over the tubular cord-guide on the right-hand side of the *inrō*, meeting a motif of large peonies on the back. The *inrō* is unsigned, but the motif of a golden peacock is often seen in *inrō* decorated by the Kajikawa school of lacquerers. The *nashiji* (pear-skin ground) embellishment of the interiors of the cases is also typical of Kajikawa *inrō*, which were popular among foreign collectors in the late nineteenth century.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection* . . . (1933), Vol. II, p. 54, no. 1745.



38

Inrō

Meiji period, late nineteenth century
Signature: (spurious) "Koma Kyūhaku saku" scratched into base and filled with gold
Four cases, recessed open cord-channels
Lacquer on wood, *maki-e* decoration on matte red lacquer ground
H 7.7 cm. 3 1/16"; W 6.7 cm. 2 5/8"; D 2.0 cm. 11/16"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.35

The shape of this *inrō* is unusual in that the channel for guiding the cord is entirely open on all but the lid and base case. The central three cases may thus be removed without withdrawing the cord which usually serves to keep the sections of the *inrō* securely together. Making a body in this form requires far less time and skill than constructing the more usual type of *inrō* with its tubular cord-channels, a process which may take several years of intermittent labor. The signature which appears on the base of this *inrō* is scratched in and filled with gold, giving the name "Koma Kyūhaku," which is associated with several masters of the Koma school who were active from the early eighteenth century through several successive generations. When collecting *inrō* became fashionable in Europe and America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, signatures of famous lacquerers were applied to *inrō* of recent fabrication, as well as to genuine unsigned *inrō* of earlier date. Although it is highly likely that this *inrō* was produced to appeal to the tastes of collectors of the late nineteenth century, it typifies the technically competent work of lacquerers of that period, who were working under the stimulus of increased demand for their work. The archaistic motif of foreign acrobats on horseback is executed in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) techniques, with some details in applied gold leaf.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CXIII, no. 1722. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 49, no. 1722.

Signature.

39

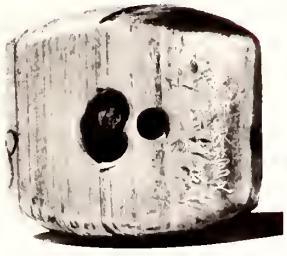
Inrō and *Netsuke*

Edo period, nineteenth century
by Tōshi, fl. mid-nineteenth century
Signatures: *inrō* "Tōshi" followed by *kakihan*, (written seal); *netsuke* "Tōshi" followed by *kakihan*, both in gold *maki-e*
Inscription: (*netsuke*) described in text
inrō: single case, with *netsuke*
Transparent lacquer on wood decorated in *maki-e* with applied gold leaf
inrō H 5.9 cm. 2 5/16″; W 6.7 cm. 2 5/8″; D 1.7 cm. 11/16″;
netsuke H 3.0 cm. 1 3/16″; W 3.2 cm. 1 1/4″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
inrō 44.44a, *netsuke* 44.44b

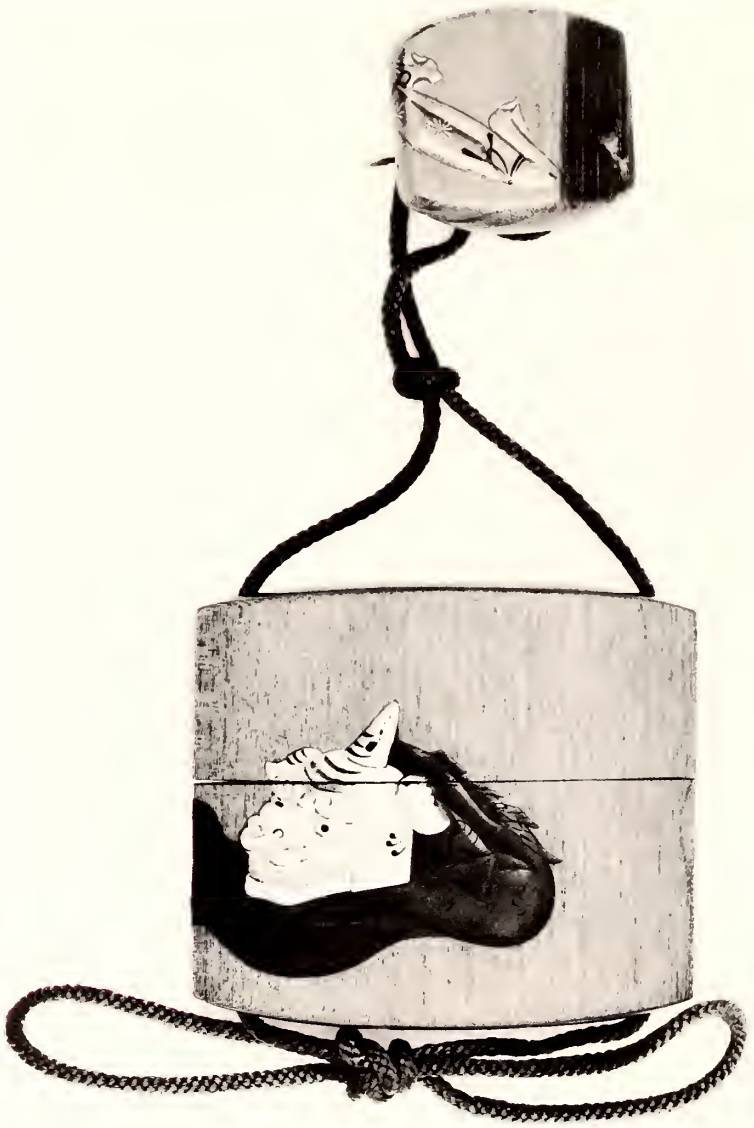
This *inrō* and accompanying *netsuke* are made of wood which, according to the inscription written in gold *maki-e* on the *netsuke*, came from the Battle of Sekigahara, which resulted in the decisive victory of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) in 1600. The wood is coated with a thin layer of transparent lacquer for protection, and the interior of the single-case *inrō* is embellished with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground). The decoration of the *inrō* consists of a mask and costume for the "lion dance" and a sistrum with several suspended golden bells which was used to accompany the itinerant dancer. The decoration is executed in the *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) technique, with gold leaf covering the mask and bells for a particularly brilliant effect. The *netsuke* is decorated in a similar manner, with a motif of a cloth cover for a flute. The name "Tōshi," appearing on both the *inrō* and *netsuke*, is believed to belong to a lacquerer active in the first half of the nineteenth century. This set of an *inrō* and *netsuke* signed by one artist constitutes an exception to the usual distinction between lacquerers who made *inrō* and *netsuke* carvers.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 58, no. 1761.

Signature on *inrō*.



Inscription on *netsuke*.



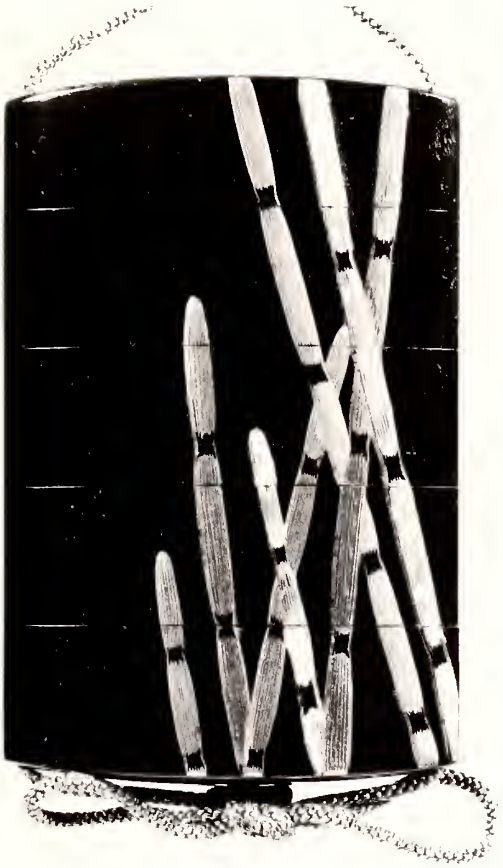
40

Inrō

Edo period, nineteenth century
Signature: (probably spurious)
"Koma Yasutada saku" and "Jōkasai"
on base in gold *maki-e*
Four cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood, decoration in *maki-e* and inlay
of mother-of-pearl on brown lacquer ground
H 9.1 cm. 3 9/16"; W 5.9 cm. 2 5/16";
D 1.7 cm. 11/16"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé
collection
44.38

This *inrō* has a design of two rabbits on the face and *tokusa* (scouring rush) stalks on the back. Both designs are executed in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design), using silver and gold powders. Some of the *tokusa* grasses are made of iridescent mother-of-pearl inlay, with details in *maki-e*. The theme of rabbits and *tokusa* grasses appears frequently on *inrō* from the early nineteenth century. This *inrō* is unusual for having two signatures on the base, and there is reason to doubt their authenticity, since the style of the *inrō* indicates a date later than the period of activity implied by the names of the artists: Koma Yasutada (?–1715) and Jōkasai (fl. ca. 1681–1704). Although the name Jōkasai was also used by Tsuneo Jō'ō (1811–79), whose dates of activity correspond to the style of this *inrō*, both signatures appear to be by the same hand and are dissimilar to other published examples.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 54, no. 1742.



Detail: signature
"Jōkasai."

Signature
"Koma Yasutada saku."

41

Inrō

Edo period, late eighteenth century
"Somada" style
Four cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with inlay of *aogai* and cut sheet gold in a polished black ground
H 10.1 cm. 4″; W 3.2 cm. 1¼″;
D 2.4 cm. 15/16″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.37

This *inrō* has a narrow, almost cylindrical form, with deep cases which are coated with black lacquer on both the interior and exterior surfaces. The exterior decoration consists of Chinese-style landscapes rendered in extremely thin inlays of *aogai* (blue-green mother-of-pearl) and sheet gold. The gold and the iridescent shell have been cut into various shapes before inlaying into the contrasting lacquer ground. Larger pieces form the foreground rocks and tree trunks, while minute, precisely cut shapes form the leaves of trees, ripples of water, and distant mountains.

The introduction of thin, fine inlays of *aogai* shell into Japanese lacquer decoration may have occurred during the seventeenth century in response to the importation of late Ming-period Chinese lacquerware of the type which also became popular in Europe as *lacque burgautée*. In contrast to the earlier Japanese *raden* inlays of thick, predominantly white mother-of-pearl, *aogai* inlays were cut very finely from thin scales of shell, and permitted variations of color ranging from green and blue to purple. Somada Kiyosuke (fl. ca. 1716–36), a lacquerer from Toyama Prefecture, is said to have learned the technique of *aogai* inlay at the port city of Nagasaki, where the technique, of Chinese or possibly Korean origin, is likely to have been first introduced. This decorative technique remained a localized style in Toyama, and came to be generally known as "Somada" lacquerware. Most Somada-type lacquerware, of which this *inrō* is an excellent example, seems to have been made during the eighteenth century. The Toyama region remains today a center for production of a regional type of inlaid lacquerware which still reflects Chinese styles.[1] This *inrō* is illustrated with the *netsuke* (toggle) and *ojime* (closing bead) with which it was acquired from the Moslé collection in 1944: the *netsuke* made of a carved nut with a motif of a plum branch and chrysanthemum, and the *ojime* a bead carved with the face of a god of good fortune.

[1] Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (1976), p. 198.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 50, no. 1729.

42

Inrō

Edo period, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century
Signature: "Kyūkoku" followed by *kakihan* (written seal) in gold *maki-e* on base
Three cases, raised cord-guides
Lacquer on wood with polished powdered-gold (*togidashi*) ground, appliqué of carved white mother-of-pearl
H 7.1 cm. 2 13/16″; W 7.3 cm. 2 7/8″;
D 1.9 cm. ¾″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.31

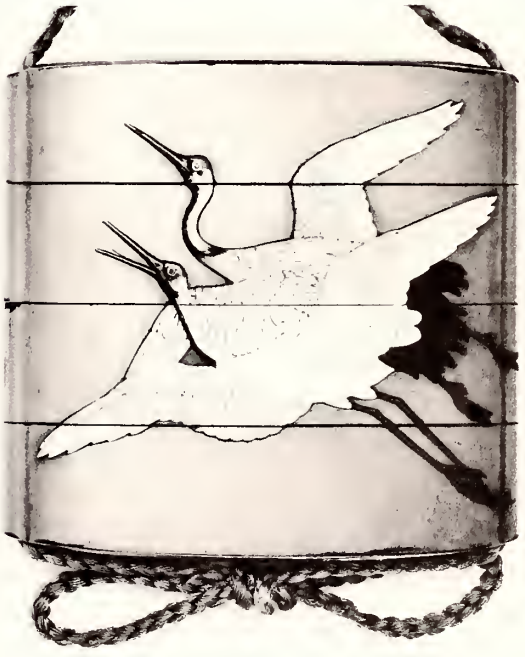
The interior surfaces of the cases of this *inrō* are decorated with *nashiji* (pear-skin ground), and the exterior surfaces prepared with a ground of densely sprinkled gold powder which has been covered with lacquer, dried, and polished to a smooth, matte finish. The decoration consists of appliqués of expertly carved and engraved mother-of-pearl in the form of cranes, a Far Eastern symbol of longevity. Black and red lacquer are used to paint the details of the plumage and eyes of the cranes. Elaborate mother-of-pearl appliqués were often carved by a specialist of this art who was not necessarily also a lacquerer. The signature, "Kyūkoku," appears on the base of this *inrō*. Although Alexander G. Moslé, the former owner of this *inrō*, believed this name to be that of "Ogawa Kiūkoku, teacher of Ogawa Ritsuō; XVIIth c.,"[1] the style of the *inrō* better supports an attribution to the early nineteenth-century lacquerer Nomura Kyūkoku. Nomura Kyūkoku seems to have specialized in *chinkin-bori*, a type of lacquer decoration derived from the Chinese *Ch'iang-chin* technique, in which the linear decoration is engraved into the lacquer surface and filled with gold. He is also said to have followed techniques established by Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), who made extensive use of inlays and appliqués of non-lacquer materials in decorating his lacquerware.

[1] Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 44, no. 1708.

Detail (enlarged) of *aogai* and gold decoration, cat. no. 41.

41

42



43

Netsuke

Edo period, eighteenth or
early nineteenth century
Style of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), 1663–1747
Intaglio seal: "Kan" impressed on base
Colored lacquer and glazed pottery
on a ceramic base
H 3.6 cm. $1\frac{13}{32}$″
99.32

This *netsuke* is in the form of a ceramic jar to which an octopus and barnacles cling. The octopus and barnacles are of white-glazed ceramic; the jar itself seems also to be made of pottery to which lacquer has been applied. The "glaze" which seems to drip from the rim of this jar is simulated with brown and green lacquer, and the body of the jar is coated with lacquer sprinkled with powdered metal. *Netsuke* made of lacquer on a ceramic base are relatively rare. The use of ceramics in decoration of lacquerware, and, conversely, the development of techniques for imitating non-lacquer materials using lacquer are innovations attributed to Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747), who is better known outside Japan by his sobriquet, "Ritsuō." His methods were imitated by many followers, who also imitated his seal, "Kan," which appears on the base of this *netsuke*.

44

Inrō

Edo period, late eighteenth
or nineteenth century
Style of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), 1663–1747
Signature: "Ritsuō" on base in gold *maki-e*
Seal: square seal of green-glazed pottery
applied to base, "Kan" in relief
Three cases, raised cord-guides
Black lacquer on wood with applied carved metal,
mother-of-pearl, ivory, crystal or glass
H 6.7 cm. $2\frac{5}{16}$″; W 5.2 cm. $2\frac{1}{16}$″;
D 2.2 cm. $\frac{7}{8}$″
04.153

This *inrō* depicts the legend of Taira no Koremochi who is said to have encountered a demon after falling asleep during a maple-viewing excursion to Takao near Kyoto. On the face of the *inrō*, Koremochi struggles with the demon, whose red hair extends over the top of the lid. The figures are executed in high relief, utilizing such materials as mother-of-pearl for Koremochi's head, arms, and feet, and carved metal for his trousers. In the demon's body, some applied material is also evident, but it has been so thoroughly covered with colored lacquers that it is not obvious what material has been used. The screen on the back of the *inrō* is made of carved ivory, behind which a curtain is rendered in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design). The applied maple leaves of carved red lacquer refer to the famous autumn scenery at Takao.

The use of a variety of applied materials in the decoration of lacquer was introduced by Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747), who is often referred to by his artistic sobriquet, Ritsuō. Despite the presence of the written signature, "Ritsuō," and the seal, "Kan," of green-glazed ceramic on the base, it is difficult to accept this *inrō* as an actual work by the master. In particular, the rather coarse cutting of such details as the maple leaves seems uncharacteristic of the meticulous craftsmanship which is evident in genuine works by Haritsu, such as the *suzuribako* (inkstone case) in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum.[1] Haritsu's style, although somewhat anomalous in the history of Japanese lacquerware, influenced generations of later followers who imitated his techniques and seals. This *inrō* was decorated by an artist who was consciously following the style established by Haritsu The *inrō* is exhibited with the original *ojime* (closing-bead) and *netsuke* (toggle) with which it was acquired by Charles Lang Freer in 1904. The *ojime* is of carved wood in the shape of a fruit; the *netsuke*, also of carved wood, represents a dragon emerging from an egg and has the signature "Yoshitomo."

[1] Tokyo National Museum, *Tōyō no Shikkōgei* (1977), Plate 312.

43

Seal.

44

Signature and seal.

45

Inrō

Edo period, early eighteenth century
by Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), 1663–1747
Inscriptions: described in text
Intaglio seal: "Kan"
Two cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood
Diameter 5.7 cm. 2¼″;
Average thickness 1.9 cm. ¾″
Ex Charles Gillot collection
04.47

Seal.

This *inrō* has an unusual circular shape that necessitated some ingenuity in shaping the rims and cord-guides. The body of the *inrō* has been heavily coated with layers of lacquer in admixture with other materials which simulate the surface texture and molded decoration of an antique tablet of solid Chinese ink. The pictorial design and inscriptions are executed in black lacquer built up in low-relief to resemble the intricate designs produced on Chinese ink tablets by the carved wooden molds used in their manufacture.

On one face of the *inrō* is a strange sea-creature hovering over waves. Around the perimeter are two inscriptions. One gives a Chinese cyclical date in the Wan-li era of the Ming dynasty, corresponding to 1585. The other, which reads, "*T'ai hsüan chen i chih mo*," might best be interpreted as a declaration of the high quality of the ink, incorporating the Taoistic concept of "*t'ai-hsüan*," the origin or source of all things.[1] On the reverse side is an inscription in Chinese characters, with a border of auspicious Chinese symbols. The inscription cites, with slight modification, a passage from the *Chuang-tzu*, a Chinese Taoist classic. The original passage in the *Chuang-tzu* describes a fish which lives in the North and is called "*k'un*," so huge that its length may reach several thousand *li*. The *k'un* transforms itself into an equally vast bird, known as the *p'eng*. In the Japanese transcription of this passage on the *inrō*, the name of the fish is slightly altered to read, "purple *k'un*," and the phrase referring to its size is transmuted to a statement that it "lives for one thousand years." The alteration of the Chinese citation may have been deliberate, preserving the tone of the original passage while alluding to the fact that fine ink should also last for a very long time.

To the left of this inscription, which serves to explain the pictorial image on the obverse face, are the Chinese characters "Chien-yüan," the style-name (*tzu*) of Fang Yü-lu (fl. ca. 1570–1619). One of the most famous ink makers of the Ming dynasty, Fang published the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*, a woodcut-illustrated compendium of ink-tablet designs which included many of his own creations, as well as some by other artists. In the *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (first edition ca. 1588), *chüan* 2, folio 22b, is an illustration of both sides of a circular ink tablet (see facing page) with a pictorial motif and inscription so similar to those of this *inrō* that there can be little doubt that the design in Fang's catalogue was known in detail to the maker of the *inrō*. The few modifications of the design, such as the addition of the Wan-li date and Fang's *tzu*, seem to have been intended to specify the prestigious source of the design.[2]

On the curved side surface of the *inrō* is the seal, "Kan," which was used by Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), the first Japanese lacquerer to make *inrō* in imitation of Chinese ink tablets. In this example, the finest of several in the Freer Gallery, the thematic unity of the Chinese prototype has been faithfully maintained. The lacquerer's seal is applied to the side of the *inrō*, following a custom of Chinese ink makers, to avoid disturbing the integrity of the pictorial and calligraphic design.

[1] This phrase is subject to more than one interpretation. "*T'ai-hsüan*" refers, especially in Chinese Taoistic literature, to the source or origin from which all things arise. "*T'ai . . .i*," a concept incorporating two characters of the phrase, occurs in the the fourth-century B.C. Toaist classic, the *Chuang-tzu*, the source of the longer quotation on the reverse side of the *inrō*. These concepts seem to have been cited to complement the imagery of the simulated ink tablet and to stress the unmatched quality of

the ink. The first four characters may also be taken to be a sobriquet, thus giving the reading: "Ink of T'ai-hsüan chen-i." However, since no person having precisely this sobriquet is recorded, this interpretation seems less likely.

[2] To the left of the illustration of the ink tablet in the *Fang-shih mo-p'u* is a seal bearing the legend "Nan-yü." This is a sobriquet of Ting Yün-p'eng (fl. 1584–1618), a painter who assisted Fang in preparing illustrations for the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*.

REFERENCES: Fang Yü-lu, *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (ca. 1588), *chüan* 2, folio 22. K. T. Wu, "Fang Yü-lu," in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (1976), Vol. I, pp. 438–439. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 1289–90: "Ting Yün-p'eng," by Yu-ho Tseng Ecke. Citations from the *Chuang-tzu*: Morohashi Tetsuji, ed., *Dai Kanwa Jiten* (1960), Vol. II, p. 457, no. 2574..430; Vol. XII, p. 754, nos. 46247 and 46247..3.

Fang-shih mo-p'u, *chüan* 2, folio 22b.

46

Inrō

Edo period, eighteenth century
School of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), 1663–1747
Inscriptions and seals: described in text
Three cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood
H 7.8 cm. $3\frac{1}{16}$″; W 6.1 cm. $2\frac{3}{8}$″;
D 2.2 cm. $\frac{7}{8}$″
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.32

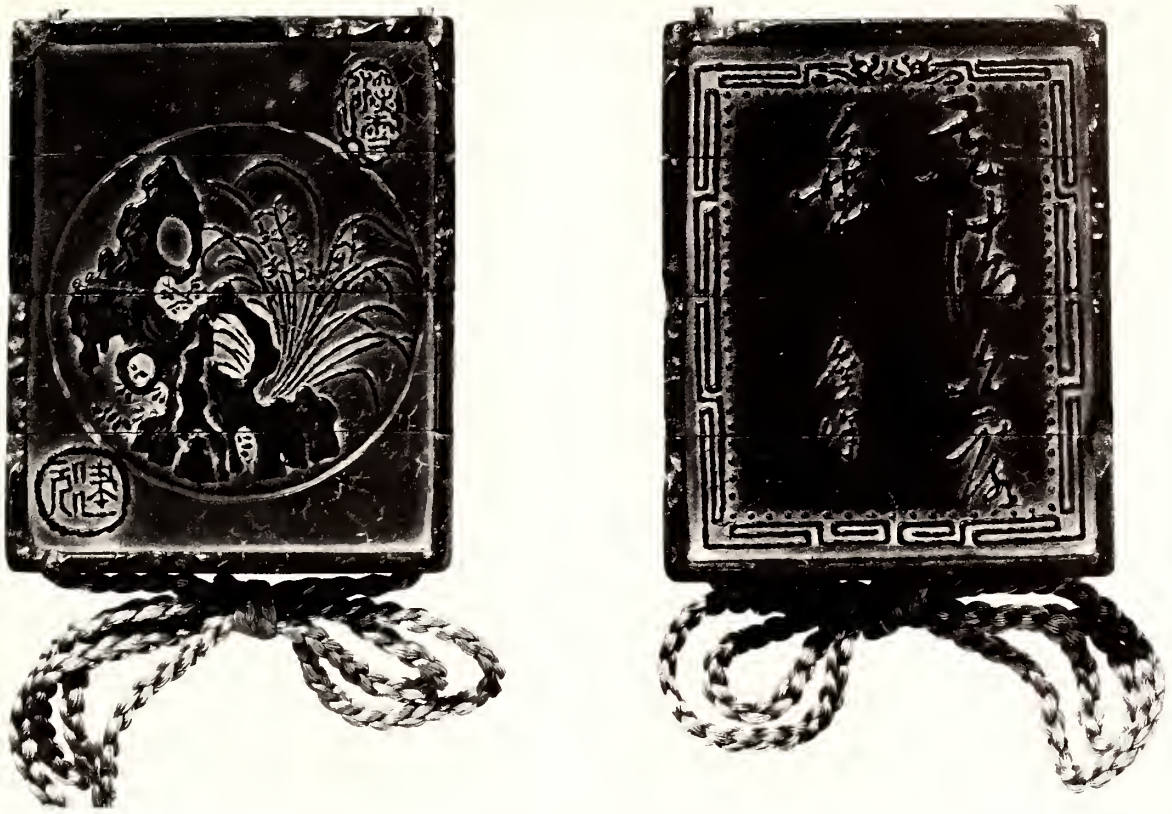
Chinese cyclical date corresponding to spring of 1585.

This rectangular *inrō* in the form of a Chinese ink tablet is of high technical quality and has been attributed to Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), the first Japanese lacquerer to make *inrō* of this type. On one face is a design of an orchid and rock enclosed within an intaglio circle. An oval-shaped seal bearing the legend "Shen-hsüeh . . ." (literally, "deep snow") and a circular seal, "Chien-yüan," appear at the perimeter of the circle. The latter gives the *tzu* (style-name) of Fang Yü-lu (fl. ca. 1570–1619), a famous Ming dynasty Chinese maker of ink tablets. Although this design does not appear in identical form in Fang's compendium of ink-tablet designs, the *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (first edition ca. 1588), the graceful composition is comparable to that of a circular ink tablet illustrated in his catalogue, *chüan* 4, folio 9a (see facing page). A Chinese cyclical date corresponding to spring of 1585 in the Wan-li era of the Ming dynasty is copied on one of the vertical sides of the *inrō*. Wan-li dates appear on some ink tablets illustrated in the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*. The Chinese date on the *inrō* serves to emphasize the source of the pictorial design among the outstanding ink tablets produced during the Wan-li era, when this art reached a peak of artistic quality.

On the reverse side of the *inrō* is a cursive inscription of five characters, followed by two characters which give the name "Kōtaku." The inscription may be rendered, "The flower is pure, white dew falls." The name following the inscription belongs to a Japanese calligrapher and Confucian scholar, Hosoi Kōtaku (1658–1735). Kōtaku was a contemporary of the lacquerer Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō), the inventor of ink-tablet *inrō*. With their mutual interest in Chinese studies, it seems likely that Kōtaku and Haritsu might have had some acquaintance with each other. It is difficult, however, to accept this *inrō* as a genuine work by Haritsu. It lacks his seal, and the design is not executed with the technical finesse of the circular *inrō* (cat. no. 45) described above. This is particularly evident in the execution of the floral design, which is flatter and less precisely defined than the fish and waves of the circular *inrō*, where the relative levels of the waves are readily apparent. It seems likely that this *inrō*, while close in style and technique to Haritsu's genuine work, might have been done by one of his pupils.

REFERENCES: Fang Yü-lu, *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (ca. 1588), *chüan* 4, folio 9a.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CXI, no. 1710. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 45, no. 1710.



Fang-shih mo-p'u, *chüan* 4, folio 9a.

47

Inrō

Edo period, eighteenth or nineteenth century
Inscription and seals: described in text
Three cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood
H 6.9 cm. $2\frac{11}{16}$″; W 5.5 cm. $2\frac{1}{8}$″;
D 2.3 cm. $\frac{7}{8}$″
Ex Charles Gillot collection
04.45

This *inrō* in the form of a Chinese ink tablet is technically so similar to the example described below (cat. no. 48) that it is tempting to consider them as having come from the same workshop. Both have a nearly identical, slightly glossy yellowish tinge in the surface coating, which suggests an imperfect mastery of the techniques of using lacquer to imitate ink. This peculiarity is not at all apparent in the better-executed examples discussed above (cat. nos. 45 and 46).

Moreover, the decoration of this *inrō* is nearly identical to that of cat. no. 46. In this example, the design is modified by the placement of the orchid and rock in a rectangular dish, whereas in cat. no. 46, they are enclosed within a circle, and give the impression of being in a natural setting. The inscription on the reverse face also duplicates that of cat. no. 46, including the signature "Kōtaku," the name of the famous Japanese calligrapher and Confucian scholar, Hosoi Kōtaku (1658–1735). Kōtaku may well have provided the original calligraphy which was used as a model for the inscription of cat. no. 46 and apparently copied by the maker of this *inrō*. Following the signature on this *inrō* are two seals. The upper seal has not been deciphered, but the lower seal reads, "Itō," combining a single character from each of two of Kōtaku's sobriquets. Neither seal is based on any of Kōtaku's known seals, and it seems likely that the lacquerer, unfamiliar with Kōtaku's seals, might have invented these approximations.

A comparison of the two *inrō* with nearly identical decoration (cat. nos. 46 and 47) is instructive, for the lower technical quality of this one should be readily apparent. The pictorial design appears still flatter and less clearly articulated than in cat no. 46, with such details as the leaves of the orchids forming a somewhat confused and repetitious visual rhythm. Ink-tablet *inrō*, which were the invention of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō) in the early eighteenth century, were later imitated by other artists with various degrees of success. It is apparent from the comparison of this *inrō* to one probably made by a more immediate follower of Haritsu (cat. no. 46) that the technique of making *inrō* in imitation of ink tablets was not, in its finer points, readily mastered.

48

Inrō

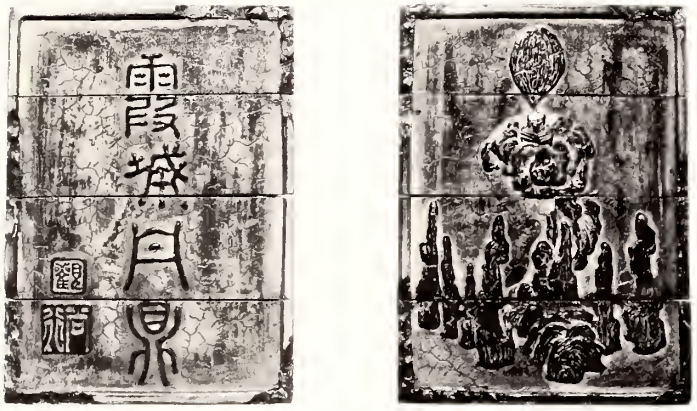
Edo period, eighteenth or nineteenth century
Inscriptions: described in text
Seals: "Kan" and "Shōkō" (or "Naoyuki")
Three cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood
H 7.4 cm. $2\frac{15}{16}$″; W 5.5 cm. $2\frac{3}{16}$″;
D 2.1 cm. $\frac{13}{16}$″
Ex Charles Gillot collection
04.46

In dimensions and technical quality, this *inrō* is nearly identical to the example described above (cat. no. 47), and is likely to have come from the same workshop. On the face of the *inrō* is a pictorial design of several pinnacles, the highest terminating in a plateau surmounted by a vessel from which light emanates. On the reverse face is a four-character inscription in archaic Chinese script which refers to the *tan ting*, a ceremonial vessel which is located at the top of a pinnacle, and is said to be used by the Taoist Immortals (*hsien-jen*) as a source of cinnabar (*tan*). According to Taoist legends, *tan* of high quality, when taken in an elixir, would promote the attainment of immortality and superhuman powers.[1] The theme of the *tan ting* probably seemed to the Japanese *inrō* maker to be appealingly exotic and especially appropriate for the decoration of a medicine case.

The design of this *inrō*, like several others in this exhibition, has apparently been adapted from the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*, the Ming Chinese catalogue of ink-tablet designs compiled by Fang Yü-lu (fl. ca. 1570–1619). In the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*, *chüan* 6, folio 2ab, are illustrations of both sides of an elongated rectangular ink tablet with the pictorial decoration and inscription which probably provided the model for the decoration of this *inrō*.

47

48

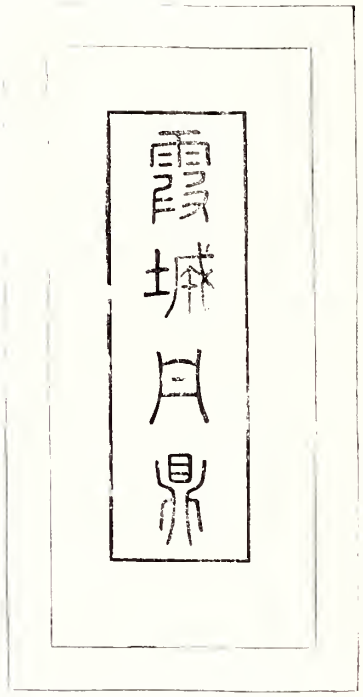


The seals "Kan" and "Shōkō," both used by Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747), the originator of lacquer imitations of Chinese ink tablets, appear to the left of the inscription on this *inrō*. A Japanese date corresponding to 1720 appears on one side of the vertical *inrō*. While this date falls reasonably within Haritsu's period of activity, this *inrō* cannot be considered to be a work by his hand. A comparison of this *inrō* to the circular *inrō* likely to be an original work by Haritsu (cat. no. 45) reveals the superior technical and artistic quality of the latter. In contrast, the decoration of this example, like that of the related *inrō* (cat. no. 47), is rendered in a somewhat flattened manner. The depiction of rays of light emanating from the *tan ting*, an attempted imitation of the stylized linear pattern in the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*, loses the grace of the model and takes on the appearance of a solid form such as a balloon. The most generous explanation of the inclusion of Haritsu's seals and the appropriate eighteenth-century date on this *inrō* is that the maker might have wished to indicate the master lacquerer as the source for his design, just as Haritsu (cat. no. 45) specified the name and appropriate era-date for Fang Yü-lu, the Chinese ink maker who inspired his work.

[1] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (1974), Vol. v, part 2, cites several accounts of elixirs containing cinnabar as an ingredient. The *tan ting* is mentioned in a passage from the Yüan dynasty book, the *Lang-huan-chi*, which relates the story of the thousand-year-old tortoise who is said to have attained the ability to fly after drinking the liquid used by the Immortals to wash the *tan ting*. (Cited in Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kanwa Jiten* (1960), Vol. I, p. 327, no. 99..222.)

REFERENCES: Fang Yü-lu, *Fang-shih mo-p'u, chüan* 6, folio 2ab.

Fang-shih mo-p'u, *chüan* 6, folio 2a (upper figure) and 2b (lower figure).



49

Inrō

Edo period, nineteenth century
Signature: "Ritsuō" Seal: "Kan"
Three cases, hidden cord-guides
Lacquer on wood
H 7.8 cm. 3 1/16"; W 6.0 cm. 2 3/8";
D 2.0 cm. 3/4"
Ex Alexander G. Moslé collection
44.33

This *inrō* is modelled after a gilded tablet of Chinese ink. On the face is a design of a *kirin* (Chinese: *ch'i-lin*), a fantastic animal from Chinese mythology. Above the animal is the character "*ko*" and a hexagram from the Chinese classic the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*). "*Ko*" designates hexagram number 49 of the sixty-four permutations which are explained in the *I Ching*. On the reverse face of the *inrō* is a citation of a passage from this section of the *I Ching:* "The superior man changes like a panther. His marking is more delicate."[1] The inscription in archaic "seal script" style characters is followed by the name "Ritsuō" and the seal "Kan," both sobriquets of the Japanese lacquerer Ogawa Haritsu (1663–1747). Like several other ink-tablet-type *inrō* exhibited here, this example was modelled after a design published in the *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (first edition ca. 1588), a Chinese catalogue of ink-tablet designs compiled by Fang Yü-lu (fl. ca. 1570–1619), a celebrated Ming dynasty maker of ink tablets. In the *Fang-shih mo-p'u, chüan* 2, folio 11b is an illustration of an ink tablet with a picture and inscription virtually identical to that of this *inrō*. The *inrō*, however, does not follow the shape of the ink-tablet design, and the inclusion of Haritsu's sobriquet and seal immediately following the inscription suggests that the *inrō* was made in a later era when the Japanese lacquerer's identity had superseded that of the Chinese ink-tablet designer in importance. In contrast, Haritsu's own work (see, for example, cat. no. 45) is characterized by technical mastery and fidelity to the Chinese model.

[1] *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, tr. Richard Wilhelm, rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes (1950), p. 289.

REFERENCES: Fang Yü-lu, *Fang-shih mo-p'u, chüan* 2, folio 11b.

PUBLISHED: Alexander G. Moslé, *Japanese Works of Art . . . from the Moslé Collection* (1914), Vol. II, Plate CXI, no. 1711. Alexander G. Moslé, *The Moslé Collection . . .* (1933), Vol. II, p. 46, no. 1711.

Fang-shih mo-p'u, chüan 2, folio 11b.

50

Brush Rest

Edo period, eighteenth century
Base and fitted lid
Lacquer on base of wood and possibly ceramic
Overall H 3.2 cm. 1¼″;
diameter 8.1 cm. 3³⁄₁₆″
09.296

This lidded object, like the five *inrō* described above (cat. nos. 45–49), is a Japanese lacquer simulation of an ink tablet of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The octagonal shape is often encountered among Ming dynasty ink tablets, and the raised border is also typical of ink designs of that period. All four sides of the lid and base are decorated. On the lid is a pictorial design in relief black lacquer of five figures gathered outdoors around a book. On the interior of the lid is a lengthy inscription followed by the name Wu Chien-yüan, and two seals: "Chien-yüan" and "Mo — —." (Wu) Chien-yüan is an alternative name of Fang Yü-lu, the Ming dynasty Chinese maker of ink tablets whose catalogue, the *Fang-shih mo-p'u* (first edition ca. 1588), was so important to Japanese lacquerers designing objects in the form of ink tablets. On the upper surface of the base, deeply engraved, are the three Chinese characters "*K'ai t'ien pao*," a reference to the initiation of learning. Completing the design on the lower surface of the base, which would ordinarily be hidden from view, is a pattern of four cranes flying among stylized clouds surrounding the Eight Trigrams from the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*) and the *yin-yang* symbol. These important symbols of Chinese philosophy and divination were also familiar to the Japanese. Neither the pictorial design on the lid nor the inscription on the opposite face is reproduced in the *Fang-shih mo-p'u*, nor do they appear in the other great Ming compendium of ink-tablet designs, the *Cheng-shih mo-yüan* (1606). The design is, however, so faithful to those by Fang and his contemporaries in the Anhwei region that it is probable that the lacquerer who made this object copied an extant Ming ink cake or reproduction thereof.

A shallow rim around the perimeter of the base seems to have been intended primarily to hold the lid in place, for the enclosed space is scarcely deep enough to qualify the object as a box. From the imagery of the decoration, which seems to relate to the theme of learning, it seems highly likely that this object was used by a scholar or painter who appreciated the

Left, exterior of lid; *right*, interior of lid.

aesthetics of fine Chinese ink, which was in fact more intended for preservation and appreciation than for use. The residue remaining in the recessed Chinese characters on the upper surface of the base has been identified as malachite, a pigment used in Far Eastern painting. The presence of the malachite residue gives rise to the possibility that the object, when opened, might have served as a brush rest. The lacquer coating would have protected the base from the moisture of the ink or pigment, and the deeply recessed inscription would have caught and held any liquid dripping from the brush. Moreover, both the lid and base are extremely thick and heavy; it seems possible that some material denser than wood might have been incorporated in forming the sections. The lid might well have served as a weight for the paper used for writing or painting.

The apparent use of this object as equipment for the desk of a scholar or painter, together with the consistently Chinese imagery of its decoration, suggests that it was specifically made for a person interested in Chinese literature and art. In contrast to the self-contained *suzuribako* (inkstone case) popularly used in Japan (cat. nos. 18–25), a Chinese scholar's desk was traditionally equipped with many individual implements of high quality: an inkstone, brushes in a brush holder, brush rinsers, and brush rests. A significant group of Japanese scholars and painters of the Edo period (1615–1868) devoted themselves to the study of Chinese literature, art, and philosophy. They appreciated and collected Chinese books and art and would surely have aspired to own fine Chinese writing equipment. This lacquer imitation of a tablet of Chinese ink was probably made for such a patron. It is likely that the lacquerer belonged to the circle of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō) of the eighteenth century, since it was Haritsu who expressed in the lacquer medium his own strong interest in Chinese art forms and motifs. Haritsu's interest in Chinese decorative art corresponded to the rise of the Nanga school of painters, who modelled their lives after those of the Chinese scholar-painters.

Left, interior of base; *right*, exterior of base.

51

Cha-ire

Tea Caddy

Edo period, eighteenth or nineteenth century
Lacquer on unknown base, ivory lid lined with silk
H 7.0 cm. 2¾″
Ex Samuel Colman collection
02.70

Tea caddies for use in the tea ceremony were of two general types: ceramic jars fitted with ivory lids, and lacquer tea caddies which were usually fashioned in the *natsume* shape (cat. no. 53). This tea caddy is a curiosity, a lacquer imitation of Takatori ware pottery which simulates the shape and glaze of a typical tea caddy of this ceramic ware.[1] The body is much too thin and light in weight to have been formed of wood or clay, and was probably formed of some thin, resilient material such as paper. The irregular, thicker area at the mouth of the jar simulates the flow of glaze that runs down a ceramic object during firing, but it had to be built up by the lacquerer with great deliberation due to the viscosity of the medium. For even this apparently spontaneous effect, the lacquerer had to work slowly, planning his work step by step. To create the illusion of the natural variations of color in a typical Takatori ceramic glaze, the artist had to paint fine streaks of lacquer of contrasting brown and ochre tones over the black ground.

After Ogawa Haritsu's (1663–1747) invention of methods for imitating diverse materials in the lacquer medium, many lacquerers delighted in the challenge of creating objects which appeared to be made of other materials. A number of lacquer *inrō* were decorated with motifs of ceramic tea caddies or tea bowls with varied glazes, a theme which allowed the lacquerer to demonstrate his virtuosity in the imitation of ceramic surfaces.[2]

[1] A fine tea caddy of Takatori ware is illustrated in Ryōichi Fujioka *et al.*, *Tea Ceremony Utensils* (1973), figure 46, p. 38.

[2] For illustrations of two *inrō* of this type, see Melvin and Betty Jahss, *Inrō* . . . (1971), Plates 4–5.

52

Natsume

Tea Caddy

Edo period, late eighteenth – nineteenth century
Lacquer on wood with inlays of lead
and mother-of-pearl
H 6.4 cm. 2 9/16″; maximum diameter 6.5 cm. 2 5/8″
11.443

Tea caddies for use in the tea ceremony were traditionally made of ceramic or lacquerware. Lacquer tea caddies were preferred for preparation of thin tea (*usu-cha*), the less formal style of preparation for powdered tea (*matcha*).[1] The *natsume* type of lacquer tea caddy, which was named for its resemblance to the jujube fruit, became popular during the Momoyama period (1573–1615) and remains the most prevalent shape among tea caddies made by contemporary lacquerers.

This *natsume* is decorated with inlays of lead and mother-of-pearl, forming a motif of a rabbit on the lid and *tokusa* (scouring rush) stalks which grow vertically up the sides. The lacquer ground is red, and is heavily sprinkled with gold which imparts a warm and luminous tone. The interior of the *natsume* is undecorated and is coated with brown lacquer. The storage box for this tea caddy bears an inscription in ink attributing it to the celebrated painter and lacquer designer Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716). Although this *natsume* reflects the influence of Kōrin and his followers, the style, decorative motifs, and execution belong to a later period.

[1] Ryōichi Fujioka *et al.*, *Tea Ceremony Utensils* (1973), pp. 46–52.

51

52

53

Seal.

This circular box has the form of a very large, flattened *natsume* tea caddy, although it seems doubtful that it would have been used for that purpose. Its decoration follows, rather remotely, the bold, simple style associated with Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) and his followers. This is probably the reason for the misreading of the seal on the base as "Iryō," one of Kōrin's sobriquets. It should actually probably be read as "Itei," which does not correspond to the name of a recorded lacquerer. It is also possible that the seal written on the base in *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design) might have been miscopied, but intended to duplicate Kōrin's sobriquet. The decoration consists of large camellias of lead and mother-of-pearl (*raden*) inlay on a densely sprinkled gold ground. Pine needles in *takamaki-e* form a contrasting pattern on the exterior, and are repeated with scattered pinecones on the interior of the box.

53

Circular Covered Box

Edo or Meiji period, nineteenth century
Seal: "Itei"
Circular box with fitted lid
Lacquer on wood with decoration in *maki-e* inlay of mother-of-pearl and lead
H 5.5 cm. 2 3/16"; diameter 4.0 cm. 1 9/16"
04.348

54

Lacquer Painting: Carp

by Shibata Zeshin, 1807–91
Signature: "Zeshin" Seal: "Zeshin"
Lacquer and metal powder on paper
H 34.6 cm. 13 5/8"; W 47.2 cm. 18 5/8"
63.11

The styles and subjects of Japanese painting had an increasing influence on the decoration of Japanese lacquerware during the Edo (1615–1868) and Meiji (1868–1912) periods. However, perhaps in part because of the technical difficulties involved, lacquer was rarely used for painting. This carp was painted on paper using lacquer and *maki-e* techniques by Shibata Zeshin, whose signature and seal appear beneath the fish. Zeshin was both an accomplished painter, known for his simple yet sophisticated designs, and a skillful lacquerer. He had studied lacquering under Koma Kansai II (1766–1835), and became the outstanding lacquerer of his era, spanning the late Edo to Meiji periods.

Zeshin made important studies of the techniques of earlier Japanese lacquerers, and also made many innovations of his own, aided by his knowledge of the techniques of both painting and lacquering. He was the first Japanese artist to make extensive use of lacquer in lieu of ink and pigments for painting on paper. To use lacquer successfully for this purpose required considerable knowledge of the nature of the materials, and especially of their limitations. Lacquer is viscous and does not permit the nuances associated with a fluid and easily applied medium such as ink, which is quickly absorbed by paper following the slightest touch of the brush. It is technically impossible to paint spontaneously using lacquer, yet Zeshin has achieved that illusion in this painting through a deliberate simplification of his design. The water grasses, for example, are painted as two strokes of the brush, diminishing in intensity toward the lower ends. Dilute lacquer has been used for the carp which seems to emerge from the grasses at the left.

Only upon close examination of this painting are the marks of the lacquerer's technique evident. Details such as the scales of the fish are rendered in *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) techniques using gold and other metal powders. Linear elements of the design may be seen to be clearer and more precisely controlled than in most paintings. Zeshin's training as a lacquerer is revealed in the precise and systematic execution of this painting as well as in the decorative approach to composition and design. The motif of water grasses near the base of the painting might in isolation be an appropriate decoration for a lacquer box. The success of Zeshin's experiment in lacquer painting depended upon his dual vision: as a painter to visualize the intended result, and as a lacquerer to understand the means of achieving it, using an inherently less fluid and responsive medium.

PUBLISHED: Tadaomi Gōke, "Shibata Zeshin," *Nihon no Bijutsu* No. 93 (February, 1975), figure 9.

55
Lacquer Repairs of Ceramics

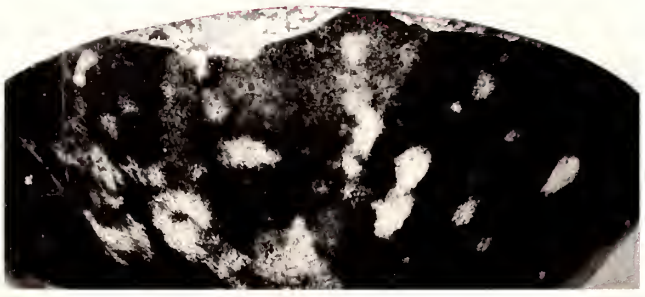
Celadon Bowl with repair in lacquer and plain gold *maki-e* (sprinkled-design)
Korean, Koryŏ dynasty, twelfth century A.D.
17.299

Old Seto Ware Vase with mouth repaired in black lacquer and applied gold leaf (*hirame*)
Japanese, Kamakura period (1185–1333)
14.14

Seto Ware *Temmoku* Tea Bowl with rim repair in lacquer and *takamaki-e* (relief sprinkled-design)
00.53

Techniques for repair of ceramics using lacquer appear to have been developed only in Japan. A uniquely high regard for the beauty and individuality of ceramic utensils was fostered by the Japanese tea ceremony, and probably encouraged the development of repair techniques which were themselves somewhat conspicuous and beautiful. Lacquer has excellent adhesive qualities, and forms a strong and stable bond even between dissimilar materials. Simple cracks or breaks in ceramics are joined by lacquer mixed with rice-starch paste (*nori*). When hardened, the lacquer adhesive forms a durable, waterproof bond. Losses, ranging in size from small chips to entire sections of the body, may be replaced by a mixture of lacquer and powdered clay (*sabi urushi*), a plastic substance suitable for modelling the desired shape. The typical finish given Japanese lacquer repairs is a simple sprinkling of gold powder (*maki-e*) on a damp lacquer surface. The gold harmonizes better with most glazes than the black foundation color. Occasionally, gold flakes of an appropriate size to complement the mottling or crackle of the ceramic glaze were applied to the lacquer repair (see figure B). The most elaborate lacquer repairs utilize various *maki-e* techniques to create an independent pattern unrelated to that of the ceramic glaze.

REFERENCE: Steven Weintraub, Kanya Tsujimoto, and Sadae Walters, "Urushi and Conservation: The Use of Japanese Lacquer in the Restoration of Japanese Art," *Ars Orientalis* Vol. XI (1979), pp. 39–62.



A. *Temmoku* Tea Bowl (detail: rim repair), 00.53.

B. Old Seto Ware Vase (detail: repaired neck and rim), 14.14.

C. Celadon Bowl, 17.299.

REFERENCE LIST OF ACCESSION AND CATALOGUE NUMBERS

By Catalogue Number

Catalogue Number	*Accession Number*
1	66.34
2	09.345
3	67.5
4	67.12
5	67.9
6	07.106
7	59.19
8	44.20
9	76.4
10	04.36
11	44.21
12	44.23
13	54.18
14	54.118
15	44.26
16	60.7
17	78.7
18	44.22
19	44.19
20	44.25
21	06.288
22	04.37
23	44.24
24	55.24
25	72.5
26	56.3
27	44.42
28	11.550
29	04.410
30	44.28
31	44.27
32	44.36
33	44.41
34	44.40
35	44.34
36	44.30
37	44.39
38	44.35
39	44.44ab
40	44.38
41	44.37
42	44.31
43	99.32
44	04.153
45	04.47
46	44.32
47	04.45
48	04.46
49	44.33
50	09.296
51	02.07
52	11.443
53	04.348
54	63.11
55	17.299
	14.14
	00.53

By Accession Number

Accession Number	*Catalogue Number*
99.32	43
00.53	55
02.70	51
04.36	10
04.37	22
04.45	47
04.46	48
04.47	45
04.153	44
04.348	53
04.410	29
06.288	21
07.106	6
09.296	50
09.345	2
11.443	52
11.550	28
14.14	55
17.299	55
44.19	19
44.20	8
44.21	11
44.22	18
44.23	12
44.24	23
44.25	20
44.26	15
44.27	31
44.28	30
44.30	36
44.31	42
44.32	46
44.33	49
44.34	35
44.35	38
44.36	32
44.37	41
44.38	40
44.39	37
44.40	34
44.41	33
44.42	27
44.44	39
54.18	13
54.118	14
55.24	24
56.3	26
59.19	7
60.7	16
63.11	54
66.34	1
67.5	3
67.9	5
67.12	4
72.5	25
76.4	9
78.7	17

GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE LACQUER TERMINOLOGY

aogai Although often used interchangeably with *raden* (q.v.), this term properly designates a decorative technique employing inlay of thin, intensely colored iridescent mother-of-pearl. Very similar to the Chinese technique (known in the West as *lacque burgautée*) seen in lacquers of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which were probably directly or indirectly the source of the analogous Japanese technique. Thin layers from the interior of the *awabi* (*haliotis*) shell usually provide the material for *aogai*.

bundai Low writing table (cat. no. 17).

dry lacquer (*kanshitsu*) Technique of Chinese origin, in which objects are formed from hemp cloth soaked with lacquer and hardened over a clay form which is later removed. Surface treatment consists of coating with a material known as dry lacquer, which is composed of raw lacquer, aromatic wood powders, and other materials. Predominantly used in the Nara period (645–794 A.D.) for producing Buddhist sculpture (cat. no. 1).

chinkin-bori (Chinese: *ch'iang-chin*) Decorative technique originating in China, in which lines are incised in hardened lacquer, then filled with gold. No evidence to date of use in Japan prior to the Edo period (1868–1912).

e-nashiji (pictorial pear-skin ground) Decorative technique using *nashiji* (pear-skin ground), reddish or amber-colored lacquer embedded with conspicuous flakes of gold, to define individual motifs of a design. (See also *nashiji*.)

fubako Document case (cat. no. 12), usually having an elongated shape, a deep, overlapping lid, and metal ring-loops for attaching cords at either side.

furo Cabinet of plain wood in which recently lacquered objects are enclosed while curing. The *furo* protects the surfaces from contamination and is humidified as necessary to provide optimum conditions (80–85% relative humidity) for curing.

guri (or *guri-bori*) A type of carved lacquer in which lacquer is applied and hardened in layers of contrasting colors, then incised deeply with U- or V-shaped grooves, usually in an open spiral design derived from Chinese cloud-collar or *ju-i* head motifs.

harigaki Linear decoration produced by scratching through a recently lacquered area to the hardened lacquer ground using a bamboo or metal needle, or a feather quill.

heidatsu Decoration of sheet gold or silver cut into shapes and applied to the prepared surface of an object. Additional lacquer is applied to cover the sheet-metal decoration, then polished away with abrasives after being allowed to harden. The decorative pattern is thereby re-exposed at the same level as the lacquer background. *Heidatsu* was probably introduced from China, and appears on some eighth-century objects preserved in the Shōsōin Imperial Repository.

Hidehira ware Production of this lacquerware originally centered in Iwate Prefecture; it is still a popular type. A relatively simple ware, usually having a black ground and decoration of red or yellow lacquers with bold patterns of applied gold leaf (cat. no. 16).

hakeme Lacquer applied with a stiff brush, leaving the brush-marks visible as a pattern in the final finish.

hiramaki-e (flat sprinkled-design) Decoration of gold or silver powder sprinkled over patterns delineated in lacquer while the lacquer is still damp. The decorated areas may be covered later with a thin layer of transparent lacquer, but not polished or burnished with abrasives as in *togidashi maki-e* (q.v.).

inrō Literally, "seal case," but probably used for storing small amounts of medicines. A container made up of from one to several interlocking sections, held in place by a cord and sliding bead (*ojime*). *Inrō* were worn by men of the Edo period (1615–1868), suspended from the sash securing the *kimono*. A toggle (*netsuke*) attached at the ends of the cord prevented the *inrō* from slipping through the sash (cat. nos. 27–49).

iro-e togidashi A *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) decorative technique, in which powders of hardened, colored lacquer are used instead of or in addition to the more usual gold or silver metal powders for creating designs by sprinkling the powders over designs drawn in lacquer and left damp. After the pattern has set firmly, the design is covered with lacquer, which is hardened, then polished with abrasives to reveal the design. *Iro-e togidashi maki-e* was introduced during the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century.

Kamakura-bori Type of lacquerware associated with the Kamakura region, but now widely produced. Patterns are deeply carved into wood prior to lacquering, then coated with layers of black lacquer followed by red lacquer. Earliest examples (fourteenth–fifteenth centuries) resemble Yüan and Ming dynasty Chinese carved lacquers in shape and decoration (cat. no. 5).

kanshitsu See dry lacquer.

katakuchi Spouted bowl (cat. no. 16).

kirigane Decorative technique employing cut gold leaf. Used in various forms in lacquer decoration as well as painting.

kōbako Incense box (cat. no. 14).

Kōdaiji maki-e A specific type of *maki-e* lacquerware originated in Kyoto at the turn of the seventeenth century and exemplified by the decoration of architecture and objects at the Kōdaiji. Characterized by bold, large-scale design, strong contrasts, and technical simplicity (cat. nos. 6 and 7).

kōdansu Incense cabinet for storage of implements used in incense comparison games.

kōgō General term for lidded boxes of diverse shapes and sizes used for storage of incense (cat. no. 5).

lacque burgautée French term for Chinese lacquer decorated with thin flakes of iridescent shell.

lacquer tree See *urushi no ki*.

maki-e General term for a class of decorative techniques all employing sprinkled powders, usually of silver or gold, applied to lacquered designs

while the lacquer is still damp. Apparently, a uniquely Japanese technique, already in use during the eighth century A.D. (See also *hiramaki-e*, *iro-e togidashi*, *sumi-e togidashi*, *takamaki-e*, *togidashi maki-e*.)

maki-hanashi (literally, "left as sprinkled") A technique especially used in *Kōdaiji maki-e* (q.v.), in which gold powder sprinkled over damp lacquer patterns is left exposed without a protective coating of translucent lacquer (as in *hiramaki-e*) or abrasive polishing (as in *togidashi maki-e*).

makkinru Early term for a decorative technique virtually identical to *togidashi maki-e* (q.v.). Used in the decoration of an eighth-century scabbard in the Shōsōin Imperial Repository, possibly the earliest example of an object decorated in *maki-e*, which was to become the most typically Japanese type of lacquer decoration.

Namban lacquer (*Namban-nuri*) Specifically, a type of lacquerware decorated with *maki-e* of gold and occasionally silver powders, in combination with *raden* (mother-of-pearl inlay), made in Kyoto for export to Europe during the early seventeenth century. Many motifs and techniques similar to those used in *Kōdaiji maki-e* (q.v.), although *Namban* lacquers rarely reach the technical refinement of Kōdaiji lacquers. The same term is often applied to lacquerware having motifs depicting Europeans in Japan, a theme briefly in vogue during the Momoyama period (1568–1615).

nashiji Decorative technique employing irregularly shaped, relatively coarse flakes of gold embedded in reddish or translucent amber-colored lacquer. Usually a ground treatment. When used in pictorial motifs, referred to as *e-nashiji* (q.v.).

natsume Traditional shape for lacquer tea caddies, named after the *jujube* fruit (cat. nos. 52 and 53).

Negoro ware (*Negoro-nuri*) Lacquerware believed to have originated at the Negoro Temple. Usually for use in Buddhist temples, Negoro ware is typically finished with red lacquer over a black lacquer undercoating, but occasionally employs plain black or red lacquer, or translucent lacquer over a wood base (cat. nos. 3 and 4).

netsuke Toggle used to hold *inrō* (q.v.) in place when suspended by cords from the sash.

nori paste (cat. no. 55).

ojime Sliding bead for securing the lid and sections of an *inrō* (q.v.).

okibirame Decorative technique employing precisely-cut, minute shapes of gold leaf accurately placed on a lacquer surface without overlapping, to form a distinct pattern (cat. nos. 14 and 36).

pear-skin ground See *nashiji*.

raden Decorative technique employing inlay of mother-of-pearl shell, usually relatively thick. This technique, apparently imported from continental Asia, appears in Japanese lacquers of the eighth century A.D. and has been frequently used alone or in combination with other materials and techniques to the present. The shell used for *raden* is usually prepared from the *yakōgai* (*turbo marmoratus*) shell.

relief sprinkled-design See *takamaki-e*.

Rhus vernicifera See *urushi no ki*.

rō-iro nuri A glossy black finish produced by repeated polishing of refined black lacquer after complete hardening of the final coats.

ryōshibako Stationery case (cat. no. 26).

sabi-urushi A mixture of lacquer and pulverized clay used in lacquer repairs of ceramics, and in undercoating lacquer objects prior to decoration.

Somada lacquer A type of lacquerware produced in Toyama Province, named for the lacquerer who is believed to have introduced in the early eighteenth century techniques which had originated in Ming-dynasty China. Some evidence of affinity to lacquerware from the Ryūkyū Islands, which was also strongly influenced by Chinese motifs and techniques.

sprinkled-design See *maki-e*.

sumi-e togidashi maki-e (literally, "ink-painting polished-out sprinkled-design") A *maki-e* decorative technique employing charcoal powder in combination with silver and gold powders for creating designs similar in effect to ink painting (*sumi-e*). A smooth finish is created by polishing of the surface, using abrasive methods.

takamaki-e (relief sprinkled-design) A *maki-e* (sprinkled-design) decorative technique in which motifs are built up using lacquer or lacquer in admixture with other materials, prior to sprinkling with metal powders.

togidashi maki-e (literally, "polished-out sprinkled-design") A *maki-e* decorative technique in which the design of metal powders sprinkled over damp lacquer is permitted to harden, then entirely covered with lacquer and finally, after hardening, polished with abrasives to reexpose the design.

urushi Lacquer. The sap of the lacquer tree, *Rhus vernicifera*, used for coating and decorating objects made from a variety of materials.

urushi no ki (*Rhus vernicifera*) Lacquer tree. Tree of the sumac family which produces a latex-like sap known in Japanese as *urushi*. The tree is harvested annually, during the warmer months of the year, by cutting through the bark of the tree and collecting the few ounces of sap exuded each year.

yakurō Medicine chest (cat. no. 15).

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