



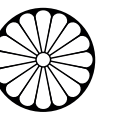
**LAURA BORDIGNON**  
JAPANESE WORKS OF ART

# TIMELESS BEAUTY OF IMPERIAL JAPAN





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People all over the world are captivated by the beauty and exquisite craftsmanship of Japanese works of art, but it is also the mythical and mysterious in their forms that is most appealing and enchanting. There is always so much more than meets the eye when you look at Japanese Art, the symbolism and mythology are deeply embedded and the appreciation of these subtleties can add greatly to their enjoyment.

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THE GOURD  
AND THE BEETLE

1

*The gourd (fukube/hyotan 瓢) form is a popular subject in Japanese art objects and is very appealing especially with insects like the stag beetle (kabutomushi カブトムシ).*

*The symbolism of the beetle dates back to ancient times across many different cultures.*

*In Japanese art is a good omen, symbolic of abundance and good fortune coming into your life and it is linked with the hearth suggesting to stay strong in your convictions.*

**ANDO HOJU AND CHORAKUSAI**

A silver gourd vase with a climbing stag beetle up the side finely carved with paulownia leaves (*kiri* 桐) and flowers, inlaid with details in *shibuichi* signed Hojo 芳乗 with a round seal Toshu 藤州 and under the base Chorakusai 長禾斎 with Jungin mark 純銀 (pure silver) original wood stand, Shōwa period circa 1945.

The *tomobako* wood storage box bearing inscription: Nanryo, hisago-gata kabin 南鐐, 瓢形花瓶 (made of silver, a flower vessel in a shape of a gourd).

Reverse lid with a presentation inscription: Zo, Fujita rijicho dono, Showa nijunu-nen, shichigatsu, Banshu ori kogyo kyodo kumiai 贈, 藤田理事長殿. 昭和二十二年七月, 播州織工業協同組合 (to Chairman Fujita from Banshu Textile Industry Association, July of Showa 22).

Ando Hojo 安藤芳乗 was born in 1910 in Kagoshima Prefecture. In 1934 he graduated from the Metal engraving Art Department (Chokin) of the Tokyo University of Fine Art.

Height: 28 cm (11 in.)  
Width: 14.8 cm (5.8 in.)  
Diameter: 10 cm (3.9 in.)





*The quail (uzura 鶉) is emblematic of the Autumn season, symbolic of courage from its combative character and victory in battle.*

*In Japanese art quails are often featured with millet in woodblock prints and paintings.*

#### MIYABE ATSUYOSHI AND MARUKI COMPANY

A pair of bronze quails one is looking to the left and the other is preening its feathers, the eyes inlaid in *shakudo* and gold finely carved with a rich brown patination signed in an oval reserve Atsuyoshi saku 厚義作 with seal Maruki sei まるき製 (made by Miyabe Atsuyoshi for the Maruki Company), Meiji period 1868–1912.

The artist Miyabe Atsuyoshi 宮部厚義 is recorded in Wakayama Takeshi 若山猛, *Kinko jiten 金工事典* (Dictionary of Metalworkers), Tokyo, Token Shunju Shinbunsha 刀剣春秋新聞社, 1999 p.1141, as a maker of sword fittings and was a pupil of Shinoyama Tokuoki (1813–1891), active in Kyoto during the late Edo period and early Meiji era. He made finely modelled bronze studies of animals, almost all of them made for the Maruki Company.

The Maruki workshop was based in Sukiya Street, Nihonbashi ward–Tokyo, made fine quality bronzes and carvings during the Meiji era, and exhibited at many domestic and international exhibitions.

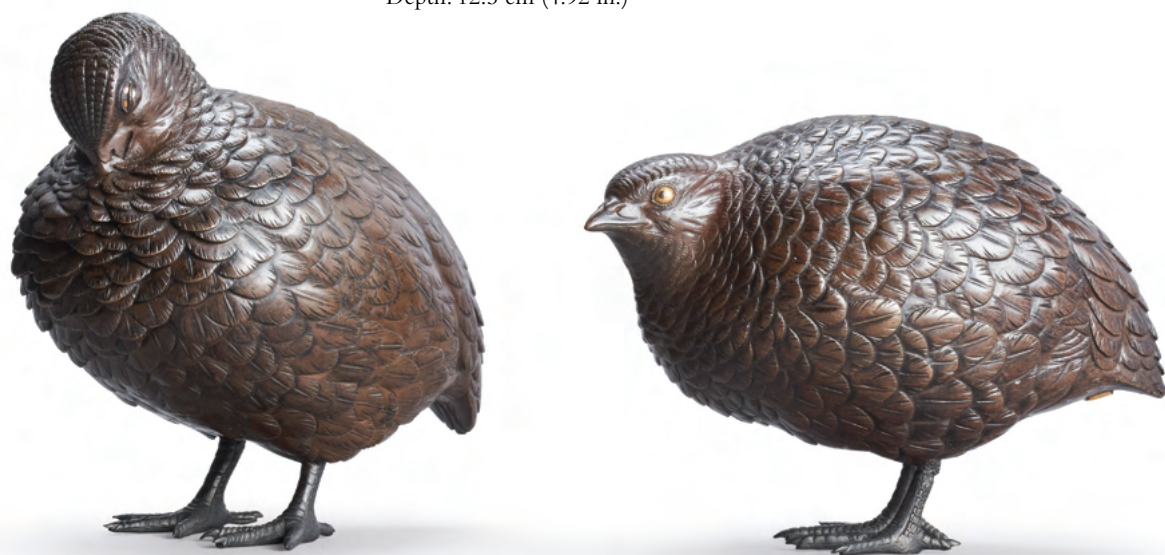
#### REFERENCE:

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, no. 93 and no. 103.*

Also see *Splendors of Imperial Japan, Arts of the Meiji Period*, J. Earle no. 188.

Height: 10.5 cm (4.13 in.)  
Width: 7.5 cm (2.95 in.)  
Depth: 12.5 cm (4.92 in.)

Height: 8.5 cm (3.34 in.)  
Width: 6.5 cm (2.55 in.)  
Depth: 12.5 cm (4.92 in.)





## THE CHERRY BLOSSOM

3

*The beloved Cherry blossom (sakura 桜) is regarded by the Japanese as the symbol of patriotism, renewal, beauty and transience of life as it withers in a short period of time. Every spring the exquisite blossom-glow of white and pink is one of nature's most spectacular sights. During the hanami festivals people celebrate the beauty of the cherry blossoms by having cheerful feasts under the trees.*

## THE BAMBOO

*The Bamboo (take 竹) is the national tree of Japan and is very precious to its people. Together with the pine and plum known as the Three Friends of Winter (Saikan no sanyu), are a very auspicious symbol and a popular decorative motif. Artists have portrayed the bamboo innumerable times in their art and is a symbol of resilience and strength. The association with the crane symbolises longevity, rectitude, and fidelity. With the flying sparrows among its branches, is emblematic of friendship.*



## THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

*The Chrysanthemum (kiku 菊) is the Emperor's flower symbolic of purity, happiness and virtue, as the sixteen petalled variety forms the Imperial crest of Japan. It is custom at the Festival of Kiku to place chrysanthemum petals in wine cups thus insuring long life and happiness.*

## SHUZAN

A silver chest of drawers (*kodansu*) with hinged doors and four black lacquer interior drawers lined in red velvet, finely worked in *katakiribori* with cherry blossoms, peonies, chrysanthemums and bamboo, signed with chiselled characters Shuzan koku 洲山刻 (carved by Shuzan), late Meiji period 1868-1912.

Height: 15.5 cm (6.1 in.)  
Width: 14 cm (5.5 in.)  
Depth: 11.6 cm (4.6 in.)





*The Koi (nishikigoi 錦鯉) is symbolic of courage, strength of will and steadfastness in adversity.*

*They were brought to Japan from China in the 1st Century A.D. as a source of food, but in the late 19th century Japanese farmers began breeding the ornamental koi as pets for their vibrant colours and became prized possession.*

*Many legends are associated with the koi, the most famous is the 'Dragon's gate waterfall' it tells the story of thousands koi fish swimming upstream the Yellow River against strong currents, the ones that reach the top of these huge waterfalls transform into dragons. This fable teaches that through perseverance you may overcome all difficulties in life.*

*In Japan it also symbolises good fortune and fertility. During the Boys Festival called Tango no Sekku 端午の節句, that takes place every 5th May all families with a son born in the year, put a coloured carp streamers outside their homes raised on bamboo poles, as the koi is the symbol of the male child.*

## UNSHO

A bronze vase cast in relief with koi carps swimming beneath the surface, the eyes inlaid in *shakudo* and gold on a rich brown ground signed in an oval reserve Unsho 雲正, Meiji period 1868-1912.

Height: 32 cm (12.6in.)  
Width: 18.5 cm (7.3 in.)





*The pheasant (kiji 雉) is associated with Amaterasu, the sun goddess, and is a symbol of spring and Imperial elegance.*

**SHUBI (HIDEYOSHI)**

A bronze figure of a golden pheasant (Kiji 雉) naturalistically modelled with details worked in *shakudo*, silver and gilt, and inlaid glass eyes signed in an oval reserve Shubi (Hideyoshi) 秀美, Meiji period 1868–1912.

## REFERENCE:

*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordignon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork pg. 244.

Height: 23.5 cm (9.3 in.)  
Width: 32.5 cm (12.8 in.)  
Depth: 10 cm (3.9 in.)





*Fire (ka 火) symbolises purity and renewal and has a long tradition with rice agriculture.*

*In Japan the use of fire features in many Buddhist and Shintō rituals and at festivals. Every March at the Aso Fire Festival villagers burn down grasses from their fields with ceremonies praying for a good harvest.*

### UNSIGNED

A silk embroidery decorated with a burning woodland worked in layers of long and short silk stitch with thicker threads for the pine trees, original wood frame, late Meiji period 1868-1912.

#### REFERENCE:

For a similar example see *Splendors of Meiji, Treasure of Imperial Japan – Masterpieces from the D. Khalili Collection*, by J. Earle, the Kibo Foundation 2002, Textiles no. 296 pg. 403.

Height: 52 cm (20.5 in.)  
Width: 64 cm (25.2 in.)





The white heron (*sagi* 鷺) is a bird much admired for its grace and elegance and is often featured in Japanese art alongside pine trees, turtles and bamboo. It is symbolic of purity, happiness and longevity.

The ancient Shinto ceremony called *Shirasagi-no Mai* 白鷺の舞 (White Heron dance) takes place at the Sensoji Temple in Asakusa where the participants enact a dance wearing white herons costumes. This ritual was performed to drive out the plague and purify the spirits in the afterlife.



# ICHIRYU KAZUTOSHI

A wood panel inlaid with an elegant bronze heron worked in silver, *shakudo* and gold *takazogan* (high relief inlay) perched on a *giboshi* temple post (the round finial shape is believed to ward off evil spirits) looking down at a kingfisher in flight signed Kazutoshi 一寿 with gold seal Ichiryu 一柳 with a hardwood frame, Meiji period 1868-1912.

Height: 94 cm (37 in.)  
Width: 68 cm (26.7 in.)





**MASATSUNE**

A silvered bronze heron naturalistically modelled standing on one leg while perched on a gnarled tree trunk, details in *shakudo* and gilt and featherwork finely carved, signed in a rectangular gilt plaque Masatsune chū 政常鑄 (cast by Masatsune), Meiji period 1868-1912.

The artist Masatsune 政常 was very accomplished in birds subjects produced in the Meiji era.

## REFERENCE:

For other bronze birds by this artist see: *The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordinon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork no. 248.

*Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork part II, no. 104-105.

Height: 59 cm (23.2 in.)

Width: 27 cm (10.6 in.)

Depth: 25.5 cm (10 in.)





*In Japanese art the peacock (kujaku 孔雀) is an auspicious symbol emblematic of beauty and royalty and a favourite motif among the artists. Because it can eat poisonous snakes, plant and insects is considered a protector from calamities. The Esoteric Buddhist deity Kujaku Myōō sits on a peacock with a wide tail feathers and is believed to have godlike powers.*

### ANDO JUBEI

A *cloisonné* enamel vase finely worked in silver wire with a peacock perched on a cherry blossom branch in bloom, on a blue ground, applied with silver mounts, the foot rim marked Jungin 純銀 (pure silver) by Ando Jubei-Nagoya, late Meiji period (1868-1912).

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed: Shippo, sakura kujaku kabin, Jubei zo (*cloisonné*, a flower vessel with designs of cherry blossom and peacock, made by Jubei) 七寶, さ久良孔雀花瓶, 重兵衛造 and Kunaisho goyotashi, Nagoya Ando Shippoten (*cloisonné* shop Ando-Nagoya, Royal Warrant of Appointment to the Imperial Family) 宮内省御用達, 名古屋 安藤七寶店. With red logo label: "J. ANDO Cloisonné Ware, Nagoya, Tokyo, Japan.

The Ando Cloisonné Company was founded in 1880 by Maeda Matsukichi 前田松吉 who was later joined by Ando Juzaburo known as Ando Jubei I 安藤重兵衛 (1876-1953). In 1891 and 1892 the Imperial Household purchased several pieces from the company.

During the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) periods, they were awarded medals at many Expositions in Chicago 1893, Paris 1900, Glasgow 1901, St. Louis 1904, London Japan-British Exhibition 1910 and Philadelphia 1926.

#### REFERENCE:

*Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, The Kibo Foundation 1995. Enamel Vol. III, no. 38.

Height: 16 cm (6.3 in.)

Diameter: 8 cm (3.1 in.)





*During the Meiji period Shinto 神道 (lit. the way of the gods) became Japan's state religion and separated from Buddhism.*

*Many shrines received state funding, the aim was to foster a religious rational and a national identity with the Emperor as a divine being. Priests work and perform religious ceremonies in Shinto shrines.*

### MATSUO CHOSHUN

A wood carving of a Shinto priest (*kannushi* 神主) finely carved wearing *eboshi*, a traditional formal headwear, sweeping fallen leaves with a broom and with cheeks puffed out signed in carved characters Choshun saku 朝春作, Shōwa period 1930.

The *tomobako* wood storage box bearing inscription: Kami no niwa no ochiba 神苑の落葉 (fallen leaves at a Shinto shrine garden) and Showa gonen shinshun, Choshun saku, with a seal Choshun 昭和五年新春, 朝春作, with a seal 朝春 (made by Choshun, in the early spring of the year 1930, Showa 5).

Matsuo Choshun (1885–1930) was born in Fukuoka prefecture and studied wood carving under Yamazaki Choun (1867–1954). He was awarded a special prize (*tokusen*) at the Teiten exhibition in 1925. In 1929 he was appointed judge at the Teikoku Bijutsu-in (Imperial Art Academy).

Height: 38 cm (15 in.)  
Width: 17 cm (6.7 in.)  
Depth: 15 cm (5.9 in.)





The dragon (tatsu 辰/ryu 龍) is one of the twelve Zodiac signs and is a water deity symbolic of power, wealth and prosperity.

The mythological animal has three claws on each foot, while the Chinese dragon has four or five claws. Dragon motifs are found in Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines and are often represented holding a jewel in their fore claw, suggestive of the many legends that enrich Japanese mythology.

One of the most important of all Japanese dragons is Ryūjin 龍神, the dragon King with a kingdom under the sea, and is believed to be one of the ancestors of the Japanese Imperial dynasty.

A well known legend is about Urashima Tarō a fisherman who rescues a turtle being taunted by children and releases back into the sea. It turns out that the creature is a princess, the daughter of the Dragon King of the sea, and Tarō is rewarded for saving her life with a visit to the Palace at the bottom of the sea.

Once there he falls in love with the beautiful princess, and with the king's blessing they get married. After a while he start missing his village and elderly mother, so he leaves the sad bride to visit home. Before his departure she gives him a box but makes him promise not to open it while on his visit.

Once home he cannot find his house nor his mother, the villagers tell him that she is long dead, and that her son Urashima Tarō also died more than 300 years ago. Sad and shocked by the realisation that so much time has passed, he forgets about the promise made to his bride and opens the box. A cloud of smoke rushes out of it, and he suddenly turns into an old man and dies.

## RYOSHU

An enamelled silver vase of *gu* shape with a writhing dragon coiled around its neck clutching the flaming sacred jewel (*tama*), inlaid in gold and enamel details to its foot and neck, the dragon body finely carved with gold eyes and claws with a central geometric pattern band, signed Bokuryu hokkyo, Oryusai, Ryoshu koku 墨流北居, 桜柳斎, 漁舟刻 (engraved by Ryoshu, Oryusai studio, residing to the north of the Sumida River), Meiji period 1868–1912.

Height: 34 cm (13.4 in.)  
Diameter: 13.5 cm (5.3 in.)  
Weight: 1.54kg (3.4lb)





*Mount Fuji (Fujisan 富士山) is Japan's most sacred mountain located in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park which was declared in 2013 a UNESCO World Heritage Site.*

*Considered as holy ground for Japanese pilgrims, the mountain has been awe-inspiring for centuries to foreign visitors.*

*The iconic Fuji has been reproduced in Japanese art, most notably in the series of landscape prints the 'Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji 富嶽三十六景' by the famous ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai, published between 1826 and 1832.*

### KOMAI COMPANY

An inlaid iron damascene dish worked in gold and silver *numomezogan* on a matt black ground with a lake scene and Mount Fuji in the background, signed Nihon koku Kyoto ju Komai sei 日本國京都住駒井製 (made by Komai, Kyoto-Japan) beneath the dragonfly mark, Meiji period 1868-1912.

The Komai Company in Kyoto was founded in 1841 by Komai Seibei. Under the leadership of his son Komai Otojiro I 駒井音次郎 (1842-1917) the company became famous and produced the finest damascene objects (inlaid work of gold and silver on iron ware) in Western and traditional Japanese styles, and continued to make metalwork until 1941. Some of their pieces were exhibited at the Portland Exposition in 1905, St. Petersburg in 1908, London and Brussels in 1910 and Vienna in 1913.

#### REFERENCE:

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork part I, Vol. II no. 36.*

Diameter: 18.2 cm (7.2 in.)





*The Tanuki 狸 (raccoon dog) is a master of disguise with a cheerful disposition and often features in Japanese tales.*

*The legendary animal has a mischievous nature and magical powers making it capable of shape shifting into human form or into objects. The Tanuki has a long tail, which it uses to wrap itself into a bundle and hide, or to baffle its enemies.*

*In the famous tale Bunbuku Chagama 文福茶釜, a tanuki uses its magical powers to turn itself into a performing tea kettle in order to repay the kindness of a monk who cared for him.*

#### NORIMITSU

A large silvered bronze Tanuki in the guise of a Buddhist priest wrapped in a cloak and leaning over a mokugyo, a percussion instrument used in temples to keep time for chanting, clutching a rosary beads with its paw, the details finally engraved, signed in a rectangular plaque Dai Nihon Norimitsu saku (made by Norimitsu, Great Japan) 大日本 則光作, Meiji period 1868–1912.

Height: 16 cm (6.3 in.)  
Width: 35 cm (13.8 in.)  
Depth: 24.5 cm (9.6 in.)





*The hawk (taka 鷹) is an auspicious symbol of strength and power and a favourite theme in Japanese art, much admired for its fearsome qualities by the warrior class.*

*The tradition of falconry (Takagari 鷹狩) in Japan is believed to date back to the 4th Century. Takagari birds (hawks, falcons and eagles) were popular with the nobility and the Samurai class and were used as a measure of wealth and status. Alongside archery and swordsmanship, it was a favourite pastime of the elite to demonstrate their military prowess.*

### SHOEIDO

A silver hawk perched on a lacquer stand worked in gold *hiramakie* and *takamakie* with chrysanthemum flowers, foliage, scrolls and *aogai*, the details in *shakudo* and gold with detached silver cup bearing the *kikumon* chrysanthemum seal, signed in an oval reserve under the tail feathers Shoeido 松栄堂 and the mark Jungin 純銀 (pure silver) also signed under the cup, with *tomobako* wood storage box, late Meiji period (1868–1912).

#### REFERENCE:

*Hiramakie*: a flat sprinkled lacquer technique where the design is raised above the ground only by the thickness of its coats of lacquer.

*Takamakie*: a high sprinkled lacquer technique where the lacquer is built up by applying many layers.

*Aogai*: lacquer technique where small fragments of blue-green abalone shell are inlaid into a lacquer ground.

Height: 43 cm (16.9 in.)  
Width: 24.5 cm (9.6 in.)  
Depth: 16 cm (6.3 in.)





THE SWALLOW  
AND WISTERIA

15

*The swallow (tsubame 燕) is an elegant bird that represents the arrival of spring and is a symbol of fidelity in marriage and prosperity.*

*The wisteria (fujii 藤) is one of the most impressive of oriental flowers emblematic of youth, longevity, beauty and everlasting wisdom. The purple blossom is prized more than the white, although they are both represented in Japanese art.*

**INOUE COMPANY**

A bronze incense burner (*koro*) and cover, the ovoid body decorated with swallows among wisteria branches inlaid in silver, copper and gilt. The pierced cover with butterflies and a chrysanthemum (*kiku*) blossom finial, supported on three legs decorated with mythological beasts and paw feet, signed in a square seal Inoue sei 井上製 (made by the Inoue Company of Kyoto), Meiji period 1868-1912.

REFERENCE:

For other metalwork of the Inoue Company see: *Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, the Kibo Foundation* 1995, Metalwork part II, no. 87.

Height: 13.5 cm (5.3 in.)  
Width: 9.5 cm (3.7 in.)





During the Japanese feudal era the Samurai (bushi 武士 lit.warrior) was a class of highly trained and skilled warriors in martial arts.

Their ethos embodied a code of honour and loyalty the bushidō (way of the warrior) where a Samurai will fight to the bitter end for his master, the only option in case of a dishonourable defeat was to commit seppuku, a ritualized suicide through self disembowelment by plunging a sword into the abdomen.

The Samurai served their daimyo lords who lived in castles surrounded by vast areas of land, but had to answer to the shōgun (military ruler).



MIYAO EISUKE

A bronze figure of the Samurai Yoshitsune standing holding a *naginata* (a pole weapon with a curved blade) his *kabuto* (helmet) slung over his shoulders, the gilt details *mon* (heraldic crest) finely worked on grounds of rich brown patination, signed in a rectangular gilt plaque Miyao Ei 宮尾栄助 (Miyao Eisuke), the wood lacquered base with ho-o and foliate scrolls, Meiji period 1868-1912.

Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源 義経 (1159-1189) is the most famous samurai warrior in the history of Japan. He is the general of the Minamoto clan and became a legend because of his bravery and benevolence. Many stories and kabuki plays celebrate the exploits of Yoshitsune especially the literary classic Heike Monogatari, the Tale of the Heiki, the epic struggle between the Heike and Taira clans to seize control of Japan at the end of the 12th century.

The Miyao Company founded by Miyao Eisuke had premises in both Tokyo and Yokohama, produced fine bronzes with a rich brown patina and gilded details. The Company exhibited at the National Industrial Exposition (Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai 内国勸業博覧会) in 1881.

REFERENCE:  
*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordignon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork no. 241, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266.

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, Metalwork Part II, no. 108.

Height: 31 cm (12.2 in.)  
Width: 14 cm (5.5 in.)  
Depth: 11 cm (4.3 in.)





**MIYAO EISUKE**

A bronze figure of a Samurai wearing an elaborate robe decorated with flying cranes and floral motifs, he is smiling and holding a fan in his hand, with swords tucked into his waist and side, the gilt details finely worked on grounds of rich brown patination, signed on a rectangular gilt plaque Miyao saku 宮尾作 (made by Miyao), the wood lacquered base with ho-o and foliate scrolls, Meiji period 1868-1912.

Provenance: this piece was in the Collection assembled over 40 years by the Chinese painter Mr. L. Xianguang (1906-1994). He settled in Paris at age 24 during the 1930's with his friend Wu Zuoren, both pupils of Xu Beihong the famous painter known for his Chinese ink paintings of horses and birds, and studied at the Beaux-Arts here and in Brussel. He returned to China in 1936 to join the Kuomintang, the Chinese National People's Party, which used his talent for the war propaganda, rising through the ranks as general in the Chiang Kai-shek army during the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1937.

In 1946 he returned to France and resumed his painting career and as an art's dealer until his death in 1994. He exhibited at the Biennale des Antiquaires in the 1960's, and together with his wife in the 1980's sponsored many Chinese artists to study in Paris by establishing a studio for the National Chinese Artists Association.

In 1993 he gifted to the Zhejiang Province Museum in Hangzhou part of his Chinese and European paintings collection, notably paintings of his contemporaries Qi Baishi, Wu Zuoren and his teacher Xu Beihong.

Height: 34.5 cm (13.6 in.)  
Width: 15.5 cm (6.1 in.)  
Depth: 11.5 cm (4.5 in.)





*The Rooster (tori 酉) is the tenth symbol of the Japanese Zodiac and is thought to embody courage, loyalty, literary accomplishment and virtue.*

*It also symbolises high esteem and was very highly prized at the Imperial court.*

*In Japanese mythology the rooster tempted Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun, out of her cave thus bringing light again after leaving the earth in total darkness. Without her there could be no sun, and without the sun there could be no day. Because of this association roosters are considered sacred birds and are allowed to roam freely in Shinto temples.*

### TSUSETSU

An inlaid silver incense burner (*koro*) worked in gold, silver, *shakudo* and *shibuichi*, with roosters, hens and chicks supported on three feet in the form of demon masks. The pierced cover decorated with a cluster of gilt chrysanthemum blossoms and a rooster finial, paulownia handles on either side, signed in a seal Tsusetsu 津雪 and Gin mark 銀, Taishō period 1912–1926.

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed Ginsei, kinkeicho, koro, Tsusetsu saku, with seal Tsusetsu 銀製, 金鶏鳥香爐, 津雪作 seal 津雪 (silver *koro* with golden chickens made by Tsusetsu with seal).

The artist Tsusetsu 津雪 (1872–1932) had a studio in Takaoka City in Toyama Prefecture.

#### REFERENCE:

See a similar *koro* design but by Katsuhide *Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part I, no.9.

Also see *Shoami Katsuyoshi no kenkyu* Asahara Ken, Tokyo 1987 no. 263 and no. 313. And *Rokusho Magazine* Volume 32 pg. 29 *koro* by Shoami Katsuyoshi *The Kyoto Kiyomizu Sannenzaka Museum Collection*.

Height: 17 cm (6.7 in.)  
Width: 12 cm (4.7 in.)





Jurojin 寿老人 is one of The Seven Gods of Good Fortune, known as Shichifukujin 七福神 whose origins derive from Buddhism, Chinese Taoism and Japanese Shinto. They are considered benevolent friends and are very popular amongst the Japanese.

This peaceful God has a white beard and carries a sacred staff of learning with an attached scroll containing the wisdom of the world. He is often in the company of a crane, a white stag or a turtle, all three emblems of longevity. He holds a special place among the Japanese artists and is much featured in their art.

Traditionally, on New Year's Eve children in Japan are told of the arrival into port of Takarabune, the treasure ship, bearing the Seven Gods bringing precious gifts to the people who have been good.



KANO SEIUN

A bronze figure of Jurojin, the God of learning and longevity holding in his hand the sacred scroll worked in silver, gold, shakudo and shibuichi accompanied by a crane standing on one leg with details finely carved, signed in a rectangular plaque Seiun 晴雲 on a wood base inlaid with fine silver wire decorations, late Meiji period 1868-1912.

The tomobako wood storage box bearing inscription: Juro okimono, Hakkeido 寿老置物, 八景堂. (Okimono of God Jurojin, Hakkeido).

Label on the reverse lid: Kyobashiku Yazaemon-machi nibanchi, kikinzo bu bijutsuhin, seisaku hanbai, Miyamoto Shoko, Miyamoto Shop, Ginza, Tokyo 京橋區 弥左衛門町二番地, 貴金属美術品 製作販賣, 宮本商行 (retailed by the Miyamoto Shop, Yazaemon-machi 2-banchi, Ginza district, Tokyo).

Kano Seiun I 加納晴雲 (art name Kano Ginzaburo) was born in 1871 and studied metalworking under the famous artist Oshima Joun 大島如雲 (1848-1940).

Seiun exhibited a bronze figures of sparrows at the Paris Exposition in 1900 and also exhibited at the 1914 Exhibition in Tokyo. One of his works is in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum.

REFERENCE:  
Splendors of Imperial Japan, Arts of the Meiji Period from the Khalili Collection, by J. Earle pg. 378, no. 271.

Height: 29 cm (11.4 in.)  
Width: 24 cm (9.4 in.)  
Depth: 7.5 cm (3 in.)





SEKIGUCHI ICHIYA

A *shibuichi* plaque of round form, carved in *katakiribori* with Jurojin, the God of learning and longevity carrying a *shaku*, a sacred baton with an attached scroll containing the wisdom of the world.

He has a white beard and is in the company of a crane and a white stag, symbolic of contentment in old age, worked in *shakudo*, silver and gilt and mounted on a wood panel within a harwood frame.

Signed Sumida tsutsumi nite, nanajuusan o, Jitokusai Ichiya koku 筆意写, 於墨堤ひ, 七十三翁 自得齋一也刻 (engraved by Jitokusai Ichiya, residing near the Sumida River, at the age of 73) with gold seal Ichiya no in 弋也之印 (seal of Ichiya), Taishō period 1912–1926.

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed Taisho mizunoe-inu toshi kajitsu saku, Nanajuu-san-o Jitokusai Sekiguchi Ichiya, seal Ichiya no in 大正壬戌年夏日作, 七十三翁, 自得齋 関口一也, with seal 一也之印 (made by Sekiguchi Ichiya, art name Jitokusai on a summer day in the year 1922, Taishō 11, at the age of 73 with seal Ichiya).

Sekiguchi Ichiya 関口一也 was born in Tokyo (1850–1933), his *go* (art name) Jitokusai 自得齋, was apprenticed to Sugiura Ikken in 1864, later studying for ten years under Goto Ichijo and Goto Korai. He was a member of the Tokyo Association of Carvers and Sculptors (Tokyo Chokokai 東京彫工会) and the Japan Art Association (Nihon Bijutsu Kyokai 日本美術協会), highly regarded for *takabori* or high relief metal carving, metal inlay and coloured metal patination.

Ichiya exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900 and in 1910 at the Japan–British Exhibition. In 1928 Nihon Bijutsu Meikan lists him as a living artist, and is likely that he died in the following decade. His son Sekiguchi Shinya was also an excellent metalwork artist.

REFERENCE:  
*Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, no. 135.

Frame diameter: 40 cm (15.7 in.)  
Plaque diameter: 27 cm (10.6 in.)





THE GOLDEN  
PAVILION

21

*Kinkaku-ji 金閣寺 the "Temple of the Golden Pavilion" is one of the most popular buildings in Japan designated as a National Special Historic site, with two floors covered in gold leaf and set over a large pond that reflects the pavilion.*

*The gardens and temples in Japan reflect the ethos of Buddhism.*

**UNSIGNED**

A silk embroidery decorated with a view of Kinkaku-ji Temple in Kyoto set in a landscape garden overlooking a large pond, worked in layers of long and short silk stitch with original wood frame, late Meiji period 1868-1912.

Height: 44 cm (17.3 in.)  
Width: 75 cm (29.5 in.)





*The rat (nezumi 鼠) is Daikoku's messenger, one of the seven Gods of Good Fortune, and is the first animal of the Oriental Zodiac.*

*It is often shown feasting on chestnuts, rice, turnips and pomegranates, and is symbolic of bounty and abundance.*

**HASEGAWA ISSEI**

A bronze vase finely inlaid with two rats feasting on a pomegranate, worked in silver, *shakudo* and copper, signed in a rectangular silver tablet Meiji Kanoë-ne shunjitsu, Higashi bi oka fujo nishi, Hasegawa Issei saku 明治庚子春日, 東備岡府城西, 長谷川一清作 (made by Hasegawa Issei, residing to the west of Okayama Castle, in East Bizen Okayama prefecture, on a spring day in the year 1900).

The *tomobako* wood storage box bearing inscription: Chukin hanaïke, Hasegawa Issei saku, Meiji sanjuu-san-nen saku 鍍金花生, 長谷川一清作, 明治三十三年作 (cast bronze flower vase made by Hasegawa Issei in the year 1900, Meiji 33).

The artist Hasegawa Issei 長谷川一清 was active from 1890 to 1920 and exhibited at the 1893 Chicago Columbus Exposition, his art name was Gyokutosai 玉東齋.

Height: 28 cm (11 in.)  
Width: 17.5 cm (6.9 in.)





**NOJIRI SHUSEI AND TAKAHASHI RYOUN**

A silvered bronze rat naturalistically modelled standing on its rear haunches and with its head bent slightly down to eat a small nut held in its forepaws, standing on large turnips, with inlaid *shakudo* eyes signed with chiselled characters under the rat Shusei 秀誠 and in an oval plaque under the turnip Ryouun 凌雲, late Meiji period 1868–1912.

Nojiri Shusei 野尻秀誠 was a member of the Tokyo Doki 東京銅器 (the Tokyo Bronze Company) and was active during the Meiji and Taishō periods.

Takahashi Ryouun 高橋凌雲 lived in Tokyo and his artistic career spanned from the mid-Meiji period to the Taishō period. He graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and was famed for his skill in casting bronze. The Tokyo Casting Association lists him as a designated special member, a ranking reserved for the best artists.

He exhibited at the Paris Great Exposition in 1900 and entered three pieces in the Exhibition catalogue, two pieces were exhibited in the Award winning catalogue. His work can be found in the Museum of the Japanese Imperial Collections in Tokyo (Sannomaru Shōzokan 宮内庁三の丸尚蔵館).

The work in the Exhibition catalogue (plate 34) *The Era of Meiji Bijutsu-kai and Nihon Kinko Kyokai: Reappraisal of Meiji Art I*, won the Silver Medal at the Tokyo Chōkō-kai (Tokyo Sculptors' Association) in 1900.

Height: 26 cm (10.2 in.)

Width: 25 cm (9.8 in.)

Depth: 19 cm (7.4 in.)





*The eagle (washi 鷲) is a spectacular bird symbol of majesty and power, and shares much of the symbolism with the hawk. They were popular subjects in sculpture, paintings, scrolls and screens, and became emblems of the Japanese warrior class.*

**AKASOFU GYOKO**

A bronze eagle naturalistically modelled with its wings folded and head lowered, perched on a root wood base with the beak, eyes and claws inlaid in *shakudo* and gilt, signed in a rectangular reserve plaque Gyōkō 暁光, Meiji period 1868-1912.

The artist Akasofu Gyōkō 赤祖父暁光 (given name Sotojiro) lived in Tokyo producing from his workshop cast metalwork sculptures. His recorded figures of birds are hawks and eagles but he also produced large-scale models of samurai warriors. He was a member of the Tokyo Cast Metalworkers' Association (Tokyo Chukinkai 東京鋳金会) active in the second half of the Meiji Era.

Height: 74 cm (29.1 in.)  
Width: 47 cm (18.5 in.)  
Depth: 28 cm (11 in.)





*The tall slender Iris flower (shoubu 菖蒲 lit. martial spirit) represented in Japanese art symbolises victory and is said to ward off evil spirits, that is why this motif is often seen in their art. The fascination with Japanese art started a trend in the West known as Japonisme during the 19th century, in particular the ukiyo-e woodblock prints inspired the Impressionist painters and the Art Nouveau movement.*

*Artist like Vincent Van Gogh was influenced by woodblock artists like Hiroshige and Hokusai and many of his paintings featured irises and water lilies. In 1888 he wrote to his brother Theo: "All my work is based to some extent on Japanese Art..."*

*Also Claude Monet and Paul Gauguin were influenced by the Japanese iconography, the boldness and vibrancy of the colours, the Japanese asymmetry and composition.*



## KOWA

A bronze vase finely worked with a pair of cranes in flight and sprays of irises among reeds, inlaid in gold, silver, and copper *takazogan* (high relief inlay) signed in chiselled characters Kowa 幸和 with kakihan and a seal mark on the base Hirotake 寛雄, Meiji period 1868-1912.

The artist Kowa 幸和 was active in Kyoto during the Meiji era.

Height: 23.8 cm (9.4 in.)  
Width: 11 cm (4.3 in.)  
Diameter: 6 cm (2.4 in.)





THE MANCHURIAN  
CRANE

26

The red-crowned crane (*tancho-zuru* 丹頂鶴) is a tall graceful bird. In Japan is an auspicious symbol of long life because of its fables life span of a thousand years, luck and fidelity as cranes pair for life. This bird does usually accompany the God Jurojin one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune known collectively as the *Shichifukujin* (Seven Happiness beings).

The crane motif is featured in bronze sculptures, vases, boxes, porcelain, screens, paintings, woodblock prints and scrolls.

The Art Nouveau movement adopted the crane as one of their favourite animal motif. Because of their happy connotation cranes were often depicted in the walls of temples and homes.

The main population of the Japanese crane is found in Hokkaido island at Kushiro Shitsugen National Park, this majestic creature stands around 1.6 metres tall with a wingspan up to 2.5 metres.

HIDENAO

A pair of silvered bronze Manchurian cranes one standing with its head raised, the other lowered with its wing outstretched, details in *shakudo* and gold on a carved wood base, signed in chiselled characters Hidenao 秀尚 (Shūshō), Meiji period 1868-1912.

REFERENCE:  
*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordignon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork pg. 254.

*Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, no. 107.

Meiji no chōkin: Unno Shōmin to sono shūhen (Metal carving of the Meiji era: Unno Shomin and his vicinity) Sannomaru Shōzōkan Exhibition catalogue 2006, no. 31.

Height: 42.5 cm (16.7 in.)  
Width: 55 cm (21.7 in.)  
Depth: 34 cm (13.4 in.)





### KOBAYASHI BISHUN

A pair of silver vases, each with a slender baluster shape finely carved in *katakiri-bori* (a technique using an angular chisel to achieve a thick and thin effect to imitate brush strokes) with flying Manchurian cranes above pine trees and Mount Fuji rising through in the distance, signed to the body in chiselled characters Bishun koku 美春刻 (engraved by Bishun) and stamped to the underside with the mark Jungin 純銀 (pure silver) and Kobayashi sei 小林製 (made by Bishun Kobayashi for the Kobayashi Company) with silk lined bag and hardwood stands, Taishō period 1912–1926.

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed Gin unkaku kabin, ittsumi 銀雲鶴花瓶, 壹対 (a pair of silver vases with design of clouds and cranes).

Kobayashi Bishun 小林美春 was active in the Meiji and Taishō periods. He is listed in the Toso Kinko Jiten by Wakayama Takeshi pg. 530. His given name was Daiyu (Daisuke) and lived and worked in Osaka and Tottori. His father was Kobayashi Shunko 小林春江 also an artist skilled in metalwork and *cloisonné* enamels.

The Kobayashi Clock Company was based in Tokyo and produced fine metalwork.

#### REFERENCE:

*Meiji no Takara* 明治の宝 *Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part I, no. 44.

Height: 31 cm (12.2 in.)

Width: 13 cm (5.1 in.)





**ISHIKAWA KATSUNOBU**

A silver and *shibuichi* box, the cover finely inlaid in gold, silver, *shakudo* and *shibuichi* with two cranes on a shore among pine trees and crashing waves beneath a rising sun, the droplets of foam inlaid in gold, the sides and interior in plain silver, signed Katsunobu koku 勝信刻 (engraved by Katsunobu) with gold seal Ishikawa 石川, Meiji period 1868–1912.

With *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed: Kyokujitsu shokaku no zu, ginsei, kashiki 旭日松鶴之図、銀製、菓子器 (sweets box made in silver, with design of the rising sun, pine and cranes).

The reverse lid inscribed Mito Hagiya Katsuhira nai, Katsunobu saku 水戸萩谷勝平内、勝信作 (made by Katsunobu, pupil of Hagiya Katsuhira of the Mito School).

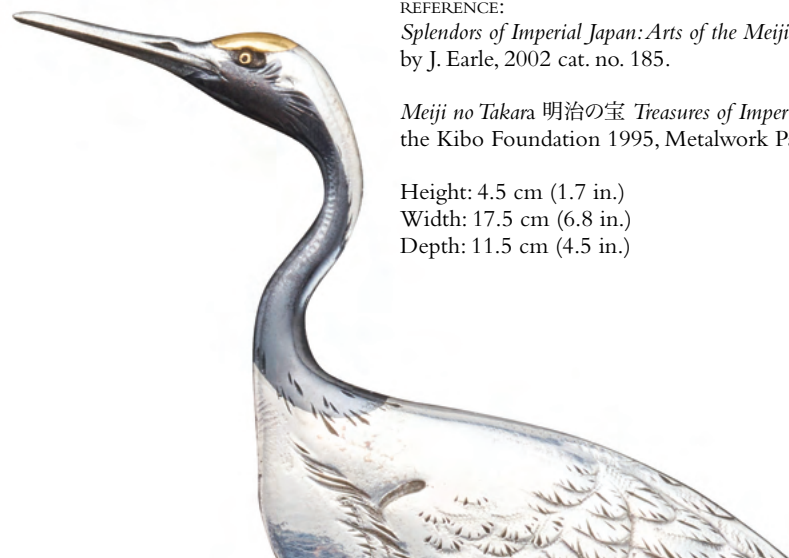
Ishikawa Katsunobu 石川 勝信 was one of the most talented metalworkers of his time, also known by his *go* (art name) Chishinsai 知新斎. He was born in 1869 in Mito, Ibaragi Prefecture northeast of Tokyo, and in 1882 was apprenticed to Namekawa Sadakatsu and Unno Shomin. He later started to work on his own in 1890 and lived in Atagoshita district, Tokyo.

He exhibited two pieces at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900, see Tokyo Kokuritsu Bunka-zai Kenkyujo (Tokyo National Research Institution of Cultural Properties), Meijiiki bankoku haku-rankai bijutsuhin shuppin mokuroku (Catalogues of objects exhibited at International Expositions in the Meiji Era), Tokyo, Chuokoron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1997, nos. Q168, R818. He also exhibited at many International exhibitions including the Japan–British Exposition in 1910. His work was commissioned by the Hattori Clock Company, an upscale emporium in the Ginza district, and the Mitsukoshi Department store in Nihonbashi. He was appointed an Imperial Court Artist (Teishitsu Gigeiin) in 1896.

REFERENCE:  
*Splendors of Imperial Japan: Arts of the Meiji Period from the Khalili Collection*,  
by J. Earle, 2002 cat. no. 185.

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*,  
the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, no. 84.

Height: 4.5 cm (1.7 in.)  
Width: 17.5 cm (6.8 in.)  
Depth: 11.5 cm (4.5 in.)





*The turtle (kame 亀) is a symbol of longevity, wisdom and good luck.*

*In the old Japanese tale of the crane and turtle, friendship and mutual support are celebrated.*

*During a great flood the crane could not find a place to rest, so the turtle allowed him to stand on his back. Many years later during a terrible drought the crane returned the favour and lifted the turtle to a lake far away. Even if these two creatures were so different they became friends for life.*

### YOSHINOBU

A bronze group naturalistically modelled as three turtles with finely carved details, the eyes inlaid in *shakudo* and gold signed in a rectangular reserve Yoshinobu chu 美信鋳 (cast by Yoshinobu), Meiji period 1868–1912.

Height: 9.5 cm (3.7 in.)  
Width: 24 cm (9.4 in.)  
Depth: 15 cm (5.9 in.)





*The owl (fukurō 梟) is symbolic of luck, wisdom and good fortune.*

*The Ainu, the indigenous people of northern Japan, consider the owl a deity and believe that if someone hears the sound of rain falling under a tree where the owl is found, he will become very wealthy. There are many Japanese legends and folktales associated with the owl.*

### HIDEHARU

A bronze owl naturalistically modelled standing on one leg while perched on a root wood base, the details finely engraved and worked in silver, *shakudo* and gold, with inlaid glass eyes signed in an oval gilt reserve Hideharu 英晴, Meiji period 1868–1912.

Height: 46.5 cm (18.3 in.)  
Width: 21 cm (8.2 in.)  
Depth: 30 cm (11.8 in.)





*The frog (kaeru 蛙) is symbolic of fertility and good fortune that will return, as the word in Japanese also means “to return”.*

*This amphibious creature also features prominently in Japanese fables and is associated with the Gama Senjin 蝦蟇仙人, a benign immortal ragged in dress named after the three-legged toad who always accompanies him and assists in various magical arts.*

**NISHIMURA YOSHIMITSU**

A bronze vase of gourd shape modelled in high relief with a climbing frog up the side, its eyes inlaid in *shakudo*, signed with incised characters Yoshimitsu zo 義光造, Taishō period 1912–1926.

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed on the front: Hisago-gata kaeru kabin 瓢形蛙花瓶 (gourd-shaped flower vessel with a frog) and on the reverse lid signed and sealed Mukoda kinsei Yoshimitsu saku 向田謹製, 義光作 with seal よし光 (made by Yoshimitsu, respectfully manufactured by Mukoda) with seal Yoshimitsu.

The artist Nishimura Yoshimitsu 西村義光 was born in 1899 and his *go* (art name) was Hokuryo Sanjin 北陵山人.

Height: 19 cm (7.5 in.)  
Diameter: 8.5 cm (3.3 in.)





Japanese festivals (matsuri 祭) have ancient roots in Japanese Shintoism. They are festive occasions where people wear traditional costumes, play music and dance, often featuring processions where the Shinto deities are carried in palanquins to bestow good fortune.

MIYAO EISUKE

A bronze figure of a dancing boy wearing a festival headdress with a bat, he holds a drum in his hand, the gilt details finely worked on grounds of rich brown patination, signed on a rectangular gilt plaque Miyao 宮尾, the wood lacquered base with ho-o and foliate scrolls, Meiji period 1868-1912.

The Miyao Company founded by Miyao Eisuke had premises in both Tokyo and Yokohama, produced fine bronzes with a rich brown patina and gilded details. The Company exhibited at the National Industrial Exposition (Naikoku Kangyo Hakurankai) in 1881.

REFERENCE:  
*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordinon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork no. 241, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266.

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, no. 108.

Height: 26 cm (10.2 in.)  
Width: 12 cm (4.7 in.)  
Depth: 9.5 cm (3.7 in.)





*The lizard (tokage 蜥蜴) has a graceful shape and being a reptile is associated with the powerful symbolism of the dragons. It symbolises regeneration and great survival.*

**MITANI**

A bronze vase with a lizard looking up at a small spider suspended from its web, its eyes inlaid in gold and *shakudo*, the details worked in silver, signed in a rectangular gilt plaque Mitani sei 三谷製 (made by Mitani), Meiji period 1868–1912.

## REFERENCE:

For another work by this artist see Frederick Baekeland *Imperial Japan, the art of the Meiji era*, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, New York 1980. Catalogue no. 106: a bronze work of an eagle perched on a stump by the same artist Mitani.

*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordinon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork pg. 244.

Height: 26 cm (10.2 in.)  
Width: 8.5 cm (3.3 in.)





THE TURTLE DOVE  
AND ROOF TILE

34

*The Oriental turtle dove (kame hatō 亀鳩) is a symbol of loyalty, fertility and is the messenger of the Emperor Ōjin, later deified as the archery and war god Hachiman, worshipped by the Samurai warrior class.*

*In traditional Japanese architecture the kawara (瓦) is a clay roof tile with an embossed front motif.*

**TOSHIYUKI**

A pair of Oriental turtle doves with details finely worked in gold, silver, *shakudo*, *shibuichi* and copper standing on *kawara* roof tiles embossed with a *tomoe mon* (emblem with swirling commas) and autumnal trailing leaves signed with chiselled characters Bokusui ju, Toshiyuki 墨水住, 壽之 (made by Toshiyuki, residing near the Sumida River, Tokyo), late Meiji period 1868–1912.

The *tomobako* wood storage box inscribed: Yane hatō okimono 屋根鳩, 置物 (Okimono of doves on roof tiles).

With blue label on the reverse lid: Bijutsuten, Seishukan, Tokyo Ginza nichome, denwa Kyobashi 132 美術店, 生秀館, 東京銀座二丁目, 電話京橋一三二 (Seishukan, Fine Art Shop, address Ginza 2-chome, Tokyo, tel.no. Kyobashi area 132).

Height: 23 cm (9.05 in.)  
Width: 33.5 cm (13.1 in.)  
Depth: 21.5 cm (8.4 in.)





*The crow (karasu カラス) is thought to be gifted with supernatural powers and is also a messenger of the gods and has a long history and cultural tradition in Japan.*

*The mythological Yatagarasu, a crow with three legs, was sent by the sun goddess Amaterasu to the legendary first Emperor Jimmu, to guide him on his perilous mountain journey so that he could safely reach the Yamato plains where he was fated to rule.*

**MITANI**

Japanese bronze crow naturalistically modelled with its wings folded and head lowered perched on a gnarled tree trunk. The featherwork finely carved and the eyes inlaid in glass with details worked in *shakudo*, signed in an oval reserve Mitani 美谷, Meiji period 1868–1912.

REFERENCE:  
For bronze works by the same artist see: *The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordinon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork no. 244, 245, 246.

Mitani, Frederick Baekeland *Imperial Japan, the art of the Meiji Era*, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, New York 1980. Catalogue no. 106.

Height: 24.5 cm (9.6 in.)  
Width: 13 cm (5.1 in.)  
Depth: 10.5 cm (4.1 in.)





*The Taro plant (satoimo 里芋) produces many taro roots and has come to symbolise a prayer for the children. In Japan as part of the New Year's celebrations people pay visits to their local shrines with special food offerings eaten to give thanks and wish for happiness and prosperity.*

*This ancient ritual is known as Osechi Ryori お節料理 and each dish symbolises a wish for the coming year. The taro root dish is eaten in the hope that the family will be blessed with many children, as many small taro tubers grow off of the main tuber.*



**JOMI EISUKE II**

A bronze inlaid vase with a slender neck worked in silver and *shakudo* cherry blossoms and taro leaves, the body with a reddish brown patina signed in a seal Jomi Eisuke II 紹美榮祐, Meiji period 1868–1912.

The Jomi Eisuke Company exhibited at Domestic and International Expositions winning many prizes and gold medals, but it is believed that their fortunes waned after the death of Jomi I.

Jomi Eisuke II also known as Jomi Einosuke 紹美英之助 studied under Kanaya Gorosaburo. Einosuke took over the business and under his direction led the company to great success in the early years of the 20th century. He exhibited extensively at the II, III, and IV Domestic Industrial Expositions (1881, 1890, and 1895) and also won many prizes at the International Expositions in Philadelphia (1876), Paris (1878, 1889, and 1900), Chicago Columbus (1893), St Louis (1904), and at the 1910 Great Britain–Japan Exposition in London.

REFERENCE:  
*The Golden Age of Japanese Okimono, the Dr. Kanter Collection*, by Laura Bordignon, ACC Woodbridge 2010, Metalwork no. 284 and no. 285.

*Meiji no Takara 明治の宝 Treasures of Imperial Japan, the Nasser D. Khalili Collection*, the Kibo Foundation 1995, Metalwork Part II, Vol. II no. 88 and no. 95.

Height: 22 cm (8.7 in.)  
Width: 11 cm (4.3 in.)  
Depth: 11 cm (4.3 in.)





*The sparrow (suzume 雀) is symbolic of happiness and prosperity.*

*A well known traditional tale is Shita-kari Suzume 舌切り雀 (sparrow with cut tongue) which tells of a kind old man who finds an injured sparrow in the mountain, and nurses it back to a full recovery.*

*One day, full of resentment for all the attention her husband has lavished on the little bird, his jealous wife cuts out the bird's tongue.*

*The old man looks everywhere for the sparrow, and decides to go back to the mountain where is greeted by other sparrows who lead him to the little bird.*

*In gratitude for saving its life, he is given the choice of two baskets. He chooses the smaller one, and takes it home. On opening the basket he finds great treasure.*

*His greedy wife goes back to the mountain to retrieve the larger basket that was left behind, but when she opens it she finds many snakes and monsters; she is so frightened by them and falls from the mountain to her death. The moral of this story is that friendship is more important than greed.*

## INABA STUDIO

A cloisonné enamel vase worked in silver and gilt wire with sparrows perched on cherry blossom branches in bloom on a dark blue ground, the neck with paulownia flowers and foot with floral scrolls, applied with silver mounts, signed in a silver square plaque Kin'unken zo 錦雲軒造 (Inaba Nanaho Studio-Kyoto), Meiji period 1868-1912.

Inaba Nanaho 稲葉七穂 under the leadership of Ozaki Kyubei was the second most important studio in Kyoto founded in 1871 using the trade name Kinunken meaning "brocade-cloud-company". During the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1926) periods, they were awarded medals at many Expositions in Vienna 1873, Paris 1878, New Orleans 1884, St. Louis 1904.

Height: 19 cm (7.5 in.)  
Diameter: 7.5 cm (3 in.)





The kirin 麒麟 is a mythical creature with a dragon and deer features, whose origins are from Chinese mythology known as qilin. It has cloven hoofs and a flowing tail and is symbolic of goodness and purity.

This sacred and solitary creature is often depicted walking upon the clouds and is considered to be even more powerful than the dragon. When it appears is a good omen bringing prosperity and peace.

### SADAMUNE

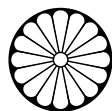
A silver *shibayama koro* inset with *kinji* gold lacquer panels finely inlaid in mother-of-pearl, coconut shell and coral with birds and flowers designs, applied with silver mounts and translucent enamels with floral scrolls motifs.

The sides applied with writhing dragons handles and the domed cover with a *kirin* finial, signed in a gold rectangular plaque Sadamune 貞宗, late Meiji period 1868–1912.

Height: 18.5 cm (7.2 in.)  
Width: 15 cm (5.9 in.)  
Depth: 12 cm (4.7 in.)







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*Catalogue design by:* Adrian Franks, Creative Wisdom Ltd



