Teaching Program

Edo

ART IN JAPAN 1615 – 1868

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

The exhibition
Edo: Art in Japan 1615 – 1868
is made possible by NTT

Exhibition dates:
15 November 1998 through
15 February 1999

Edo

Art in Japan 1615 – 1868

Teaching Program

National Gallery of Art, Washington

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This teaching program was written for the education division by Christine Guth, an independent scholar. Since receiving her Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Harvard University in 1976, she has taught at institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania. Her recent publications include *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (Princeton, 1993) and *Art of Edo Japan: The Artist and the City, 1615–1868* (New York, 1996).

Concept development and teaching activities by Anne Henderson, Heidi Hinish, and Barbara Moore.

Thanks to Leo Kasun, Elisa Patterson, Ruth Perlin, Renata Sant'anna, Takahide Tsuchiya, and Susan Witmer for their assistance with this project.

Produced by Donna Mann.
Designed by Carol Beehler.

NOTES TO THE READER

The Japanese government has designated numerous works of art as National Treasures, Important Cultural Properties, or Important Art Objects because of their artistic quality, historic value, and rarity. Several works with these designations are included in this publication.

Dimensions are in centimeters, followed by inches in parentheses, height preceding width, and width preceding depth.

Cover: Watanabe Shikō, *Mount Yoshino,* early eighteenth century, detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, Private Collection, Kyoto

Title page: *Dish with radish and waves design,* c. 1680s –1690s, Nabeshima ware porcelain, Imaemon Museum of Ceramic Antiques, Saga

Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved.
Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington

CONTENTS

Edo: Art in Japan 1615 – 1868 • 4

Edo Style • 10

Samurai • 15

Work • 19

Religion • 23

Travel • 28

Entertainment • 33

Glossary • 39

Chronology • 40

Activities • 42

Further Reading • 44

Slide List • 46

EDO: ART IN JAPAN 1615 – 1868

The Edo period (1615 – 1868) saw the flowering of many forms of cultural expression, both colorful and boisterous, muted and restrained, that we think of today as typically Japanese. These include kabuki and nō drama, the tea ceremony (see fig. 1), the martial arts, woodblock prints, and porcelain. This culturally diverse and extraordinarily vibrant period gets its name from the city of Edo, now known as Tokyo, which became the seat of the government when Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542 – 1616) unified the country after a century and a half of warfare.

The Tokugawa regime was formally established in 1603, when the emperor, in recognition of Ieyasu's supremacy on the battlefield, appointed him **shogun,** the highest rank in the military order, and the titular head of the military government. The emperor was a figurehead who commanded no political authority, but his approval was necessary to legitimize the shogun. By putting in place a highly centralized administrative organization and strictly controlling Japan's contacts with other countries, Ieyasu and fifteen successive generations of **Tokugawa** shogun ensured peace and stability for an unprecedented two and a half centuries.

The Tokugawa rulers exercised authority through their roughly 250 feudal vassals, known as **daimyo,** to whom they granted fiefs throughout the country. In return, these feudal lords were expected to lend military assistance when required, to serve the shogun in various administrative capacities, and to provide ceremonial entertainments and gifts. Their fiefs were strategically allocated to keep potentially dangerous rivals as far from Edo as possible. To ensure that they did not establish provincial power bases that might challenge shogunal authority, the daimyo had to spend alternate years in residence in Edo. Even when they returned home, they had to leave wives and family as hostages in Edo.

By 1720 Edo, the nation's administrative capital, had a population of more than one million inhabitants — exceeding that of London or Paris at the time. Kyoto, a city of temples and shrines, the residence of the emperor, and the leading center of arts and crafts production, had a population of close to 400,000. Osaka, popularly known as the nation's kitchen because it was the hub of rice trade

FIGURE 1
Nonomura Ninsei (d. 1695), **Tea bowl with crescent moon and waves design,** c. 1656, stoneware with polychrome overglaze enamels, diameter 12.5 (4⅞), Tokyo National Museum

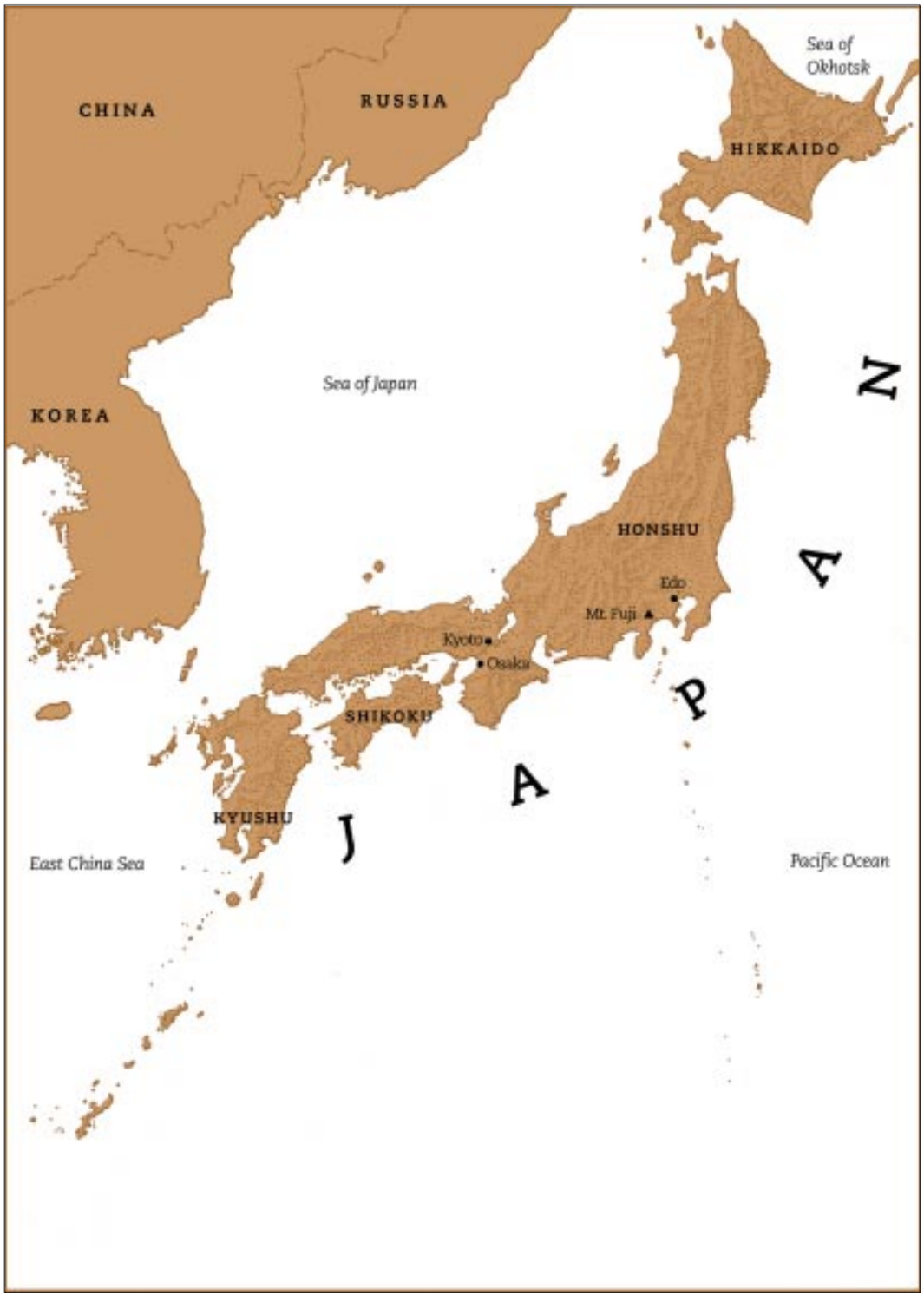


FIGURE 2

and shipping, also had around 400,000 inhabitants. These metropolises, along with the smaller cities and towns that sprang up across the Japanese archipelago, combined to make Japan one of the most urbanized countries in the world (see fig. 2).

The growth of a money economy and resulting concentration of wealth in the urban setting led to a dramatic

shift in cultural power over the course of the Edo period. Although the ruling warrior or **samurai** class was at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy, followed by farmers, artisans, and merchants, its members were largely dependent on fixed stipends from rice production. The same was true of the court nobility and clergy. The money-based income of merchants and artisans, on the other hand, was variable and therefore more responsive to inflationary pressures. Although political power was monopolized by the samurai, artisans and merchants vastly outnumbered them and became more affluent and influential as patrons of the arts.

Through their enthusiastic support of visual and performing arts, such as woodblock prints and kabuki theater, this new urban economic elite had a lasting impact on the distinctive cultural style of the Edo period. But traditional patterns of patronage did not disappear. The samurai class required a wide range of paintings and other arts to decorate their residences. To fill these needs, they retained hereditary lineages of artists, such as the **Kano** school of painters, whose themes and styles dictated official taste of the period. Religious institutions employed carpenters to build new halls and sculptors, painters, and other craftsmen to fill them. Members of the imperial family, though financially dependent on the shogunate, also continued to support the arts. Following her marriage to Emperor Gomizunoo in 1620, Tōfukumon'in (1607 – 1678) employed many of Kyoto's most creative weavers, dyers, and designers to supply her luxurious, trendsetting wardrobe.

Despite the phenomenal growth of towns and cities, more than eighty percent of the population continued to make a living by farming. Rice was the dominant crop, but to supplement this, many farmers began to diversify, planting cash crops such as cotton, rapeseed, or tobacco and producing goods such as cotton fabrics. The economic benefits of these developments enabled some farmers to acquire wealth enough to devote themselves to cultural pursuits such as poetry, painting, and calligraphy, previously enjoyed only by the urban elite. Literati painters such as Ike Taiga (1723 – 1776) and Yosa Buson (1716 – 1783) traveled to rural areas to provide instruction as well as to find new markets for their work.

A nationwide system of roadways and waterways fostered communication, commerce, and cultural exchange between city and country. Traffic went both ways. Urban fashions were quickly taken up in the provinces, and rural folk paintings and textiles found favor in the cities. This flow of culture between the metropolis and the periphery enriched the lives of individuals and fostered the growth of shared cultural values throughout the Japanese islands.

There was also regular, if carefully controlled, trade with China, Korea, and the West, primarily through the southern port of Nagasaki. The Tokugawa had banned the Portuguese and Spanish from Japanese ports

because of their efforts to gain converts to Catholicism, but they permitted trade with the Dutch, who were less interested in promoting religion. After 1720, when restrictions on imported books were lifted, providing they had no religiously subversive content, a wide range of foreign books and pictures filtered into the country. These fueled the thirst for knowledge and novelty, contributing significantly to the rich cultural mix of the period. In the 1820s, for instance, the introduction of an imported aniline dye known as Prussian or Berlin blue contributed to a craze for prints that made extensive use of this startlingly deep and permanent color (see fig. 3).

With the spread of educational opportunities and the diffusion of inexpensive books, literacy soared among men, women, and children of all classes. Education, once limited to warriors and courtiers, now became available through temple schools as well as private academies. Learning to read and write required mastery of Chinese characters as well as two syllabic systems. Although Chinese and Japanese belong to different linguistic systems, Japan had adopted Chinese characters, supplementing them with a complex phonetic syllabary. The publication of easy-to-read novels, instructional manuals, and collections of poetry, many of them with lively illustrations, helped to make reading one of the most popular leisure activities in town and country.

China, long Japan's cultural mentor, continued to play an important role, especially in the intellectual and artistic spheres. The Tokugawa regime adopted **Confucianism** as the state ideology. The government found it especially appealing because unlike **Buddhism** and **Shinto,** the two other prevailing ethical systems, it addressed political and moral concerns in a highly pragmatic way. The Confucian value system undergirded the Tokugawa social hierarchy as well as the emphasis on filial piety and

FIGURE 3
Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849), **Amida Waterfall on the Kiso Highway,** from A Tour of Waterfalls in Various Provinces, c. 1833 – 1834, color woodblock print, 37.5 x 24.8 (14¾ x 9¾), Private Collection, California

FIGURE 4
Ogata Kōrin (1658 – 1716) and Ogata Kenzan (1663 –1743), **Square dish with crane design,** c. 1710, stoneware and underglaze iron oxide, width 22.2 (8¾), Fujita Museum of Art, Osaka, Important Cultural Property

loyalty to one's superior. The moralizing themes common in paintings commissioned by the shogun, daimyo, and their vassals served to reinforce Confucian ethical values.

Many artistic developments of the period were informed by a dynamic tension between Chinese and indigenous aesthetic values that had characterized Japanese culture since ancient times. Painters of the orthodox Kano school specialized in pictorial themes and ink painting styles of Chinese origin; so too did the more individualistic painters of the literati school. Yet both groups also incorporated elements of Japanese aesthetics. While Chinese pictorial traditions tended to emphasize the potential of the brush to create expressive line and texture, Japanese aesthetics gave priority to color and surface. The interplay between these approaches was not limited to the pictorial arts, but was also manifested in other media, especially ceramics (see figs. 4, 5).

The Edo period was characterized by a highly integrated approach to the arts. The Western distinction between the "fine arts" of painting and sculpture and the "applied arts" of ceramics, metalwork, and lacquer was unknown. Many artists worked in several media. Those of the **Rinpa** school, for instance, were accomplished painters and calligraphers as well as designers of textiles, lacquer, and ceramics. Nor was there a sharp distinction between the visual, literary, and the performing arts. The tea ceremony is among the many art forms that combine both performative and visual elements.

Most artists, whether painters, sculptors, potters, lacquerers, or weavers, were organized into heredi-

tary workshops, some of which lasted for many generations. These were structured along familial lines, with most members related by blood or marriage; and those who were not related adopted the same family name. These occupational groups jealously guarded their trade secrets, handing them down from master to disciple. The Kano school of painters and Gotō school of armorers, which primarily served members of the samurai class, flourished throughout the Edo period. Woodblock print workshops were more dependent on the fickle tastes of the public and rarely lasted more than a generation or two. This familial system was the norm among other cultural groups as well. Schools of tea, calligraphy, swordsmanship, and poetry were similarly organized into artistic lineages, sometimes with many branches across the country. Those desiring to learn a particular skill paid a fee to study under one of their officially licensed masters. Mastery in one or more such arts was deemed essential to the development of aesthetic sensibility and cultural literacy.

FIGURE 5
Dish with lotus leaf and geometric pattern, late 1640s, Hizen ware, porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue and polychrome overglaze enamels, diameter 33 (13), Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo

EDO STYLE

When we refer to a person's "style," we are usually describing the way he or she behaves, talks, and dresses. Style is an expression of both individual and collective identity, and as such it is shaped by and reflective of many factors — ethnic, religious, regional, social, occupational, and historical. These variables must be kept in mind when trying to discern the distinguishing features of Japanese style during the two and a half centuries of the Edo period. What we now characterize as "Edo style" is in fact a blend of many different cultural traditions, indigenous and foreign, elite and popular, old and new.

The term "Edo style" may be confusing, since Edo can refer both to the city known today as Tokyo and to the period when its status as shogunal capital made it the nation's political and economic hub. Although Edo became Japan's largest city, by comparison with Kyoto, it was a cheeky upstart. The cultural style that developed in Edo celebrated this youthful vigor. Residents of Edo prided themselves on their modern sensibility — their openness to innovations, their bravado, their love of extravagant display. This aesthetic outlook was in striking contrast to that prevailing in Kyoto and nearby Osaka. Kyoto traditionally was the home of the emperor and the nobility, and its residents identified deeply with the elegance and refinement of this time-honored courtly tradition. Rivalry between the brash young capital in the northeast and its older counterparts to the southwest was central to the cultural dynamics of the Edo period.

An acute preoccupation with seeing and being seen is among the most notable characteristics of Edo period style, transcending such regional differences. The Edo world thrived on the spectacular, and the relationship between art and life was constantly being defined and redefined by images ranging from portraits of courtesans and actors, to scenic views of China and textile designs. This fascination with the visual also spurred artistic experiments with unusual forms and materials, with the fantastic and the grotesque, and with the miniature and the gigantic. The high level of ornamental refinement and technical perfection in the design of even the smallest articles of daily life is further evidence of this tendency.

Aesthetic rebellion against the tight socio-political controls maintained by the Tokugawa government was another distinguishing feature of Edo style. This spirit of subversion appeared in all media and was given expression in many ways, both subtle and blatantly defiant. The popularity of ceramics, lacquer, and textiles with Rinpa style designs had anti-shogunal overtones because of their association with the tradition of the imperial court; these aristocratic values represented an artistic alternative that challenged those promulgated by the samurai class. This aestheticism was central to the visual arts, performing arts, and fashions in the pleasure quarters. Further evidence of this defiance of the cultural values of the Tokugawa shogunate can be found in the exceptional delight both artists and their audiences took in artful displays of novelty, eccentricity, fantasy, and visual and verbal puns. ●

SLIDE 1

Kosode with net pattern, chrysanthemums, and characters

1668 – 1704
Tie-dyeing, stenciled imitation tie-dyeing, and silk and metallic thread embroidery on figured silk satin
158.5 x 139.6 (62⅜ x 55)
Tokyo National Museum

Most men and women, regardless of status, wore **kosode,** which were loose, straight-seamed garments, crossed left over right in front and tied at the waist — precursors of the modern kimono. While its cut changed little over the course of the Edo period, the techniques and styles of decoration varied widely in keeping with changing fashions and individual tastes. The dynamic design of this woman's kosode, produced using a combination of weaving, dyeing, and embroidery techniques, reflects the sophisticated approach popular in the last quarter of the seventeenth century — one of the creative high points of the Edo period.

The rebuslike design of Chinese characters and pictorial motifs alludes to an unidentified classical poem that would have been familiar to educated persons at the time. The presence of chrysanthemums suggests that its theme was autumnal and its mood melancholy. Such striking designs were popular in the fashion world because they allowed the wearers to display their cultivation and cultural literacy.

SLIDE 2

Writing box with crane design in the style of Ogata Kōrin

Eighteenth century
Lacquer
4.8 x 24.2 x 21.8 (1⅞ x 9½ x 8½)
Tokyo National Museum

Lacquer writing boxes were treasured accessories of daily life with both practical and symbolic value. Made to hold the implements of writing and painting — brush, inkstone, inkstick, and waterdropper — they were status symbols of the cultivated man or woman.

The asymmetrical arrangement of cranes in flight seen here is characteristic of the aesthetics of the Rinpa school, which first developed among a circle of craftsmen in sixteenth-century Kyoto and reached artistic fruition a century later in the work of Kōrin and his brother Kenzan. Because these artists drew inspiration from the literary and artistic traditions associated with the imperial court, the Rinpa style had connotations of courtly elegance that made it very attractive to many social constituencies. The motifs and design principles developed by Rinpa artists readily lent themselves to adaptation in many media, including textiles, ceramics, metalwork, and lacquer, and were rapidly diffused throughout Japan.

What is lacquer?

Lacquer is the sap of the lac tree, which is poisonous. The sap is mixed with mineral and vegetable dyes to produce different colors, such as red, black, green, yellow, and brown. When many coats of lacquer are applied to wood, paper, or other materials and allowed to dry, they create a hard and waterproof surface. Sometimes color or metal dust is added while the surface is still wet to create sumptuous, decorative effects. Articles coated with lacquer ranged from soup bowls and chopsticks to writing boxes and tables.

SLIDE 3

Dish with radish and waves design

c. 1680 – 1690s
Nabeshima ware
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue and overglaze enamels
Diameter 20.4 (8⅛)
Imaemon Museum of Ceramic Antiques, Saga

A single giant radish *(daikon)* curves around the rim of this plate, with its broad leaves cascading down toward the center. The remainder of the plate is covered with a pattern of small waves whose soothing rhythms are in sharp contrast to the drama and monumentality of the radish. Radishes were humble fare, a staple in the diets of people of all walks of life, but because of their phallic connotations they were also auspicious motifs.

This porcelain plate is a striking example of the tableware made for the Nabeshima, daimyo whose domain was situated in northern Kyushu, the source of Japan's finest porcelain-making clays. Nabeshima wares were made to exceptionally high standards of workmanship and uniformity in a limited range of sizes and shapes because they were reserved for official use or gift giving. Unlike other porcelains, they were not exported to the West during the Edo period.

SLIDE 4

Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797 – 1861)

He Looks Fierce, but He's Really a Nice Person

from an untitled series of composite portraits
c. 1847 – 1848
Color woodblock print
Approx. 38 x 26 (15 x 10¼)
Private Collection, Hyōgo

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century many woodblock print artists began to explore subjects such as landscape, historical figures, and even playfully subversive themes that previously appeared rarely or not at all in the print repertory. Kuniyoshi, one of the most inventive artists of his generation, specialized in witty pictures that turned the viewing experience into a kind of game. Many of his designs incorporated elements from European prints; this one, for instance, is influenced by the fruit and vegetable composites of the sixteenth-century Italian painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

This playful composition shows the head and hand of a samurai formed from an assemblage of bodies. It is accompanied by a title and the moralizing statement, "Many people have come together to make a truly fine person, but in the end, it's true for everyone, without receiving something from others, one cannot become a good person." Using these verbal and visual clues, the informed viewer might have identified this picture as a clever allusion to a fierce but kindly twelfth-century warrior.

How are woodblock prints made?

Woodblock prints are the products of a collaborative effort. They involve an artist who creates a line drawing; a carver who cuts the design into blocks of wood; a printer who produces the final impression by applying ink to the woodblocks and transferring the image to paper; and a publisher who finances and sells the print. In preparing a multicolor print, a separate block is used for each color. Sometimes as many as fifteen blocks may be required.

THE SAMURAI CLASS, representing a mere seven to ten percent of the population, owed its power and status to its prowess on the battle-field. But with the advent of nationwide peace, these warriors were forced to become civil bureaucrats. Although they continued to practice the military arts, they also applied themselves increasingly to the arts of peace that were deemed necessary to carry out their administrative duties. In 1615 Tokugawa Ieyasu promulgated a code for the warrior class that stipulated: "The arts of peace and war, including archery and horsemanship, should be pursued singlemindedly. From days [of old] the rule has been to practice the 'arts of peace on the left hand and the arts of war on the right': both must be mastered" (Tsunoda et al., 1964, 326). In keeping with this injunction, most samurai studied Chinese history and literature and took up at least one of the four traditional gentlemanly arts of painting, calligraphy, poetry, and chess. Yet preserving all the symbolic trappings of their military tradition remained paramount.

Growing distance from the realities of war contributed to the idealization of the martial life. The cult of **Bushidō,** the way of the warrior, encapsulated many principles central to this martial ideal. It emphasized valor and loyalty to one's feudal lord as well as the samurai's obligation to provide moral and political leadership. Although these values had long been part of the warrior's ethic, Bushidō assumed its mature form in the Edo period only through the influence of Confucianism.

FIGURE 6
Niō cuirass armor, iron, lacquer, silk, leather, and boar's hair (on helmet), height of cuirass and skirt 65.2 (25⅝), Tokyo National Museum

Unlike most Japanese armor, which is fashioned from multiple iron plates covered with lacquer and laced together with leather cords or silk braid, this one is made with two large sheets of iron for the front and back. These iron sheets are hammered into the shape of a naked torso with grotesquely exaggerated ribs, breasts, and navel, like those of the Niō, the bare-chested, muscular figures that stand guard at the entrances to Buddhist temples. The unusual construction of this armor and helmet may reflect the influence of European armor. Both were designed to withstand gunfire.

In the absence of actual warfare, samurai developed elaborate rituals through which to display their martial spirit. They demonstrated their skill at horseback riding, shooting with a bow and arrow, and, of course, swordsmanship at ceremonial sporting events. To create an impressive spectacle, daimyo donned armor when marching between Edo and their feudal domains. Since functional considerations were secondary, these were often highly decorative and finely crafted of the most costly materials (see fig. 6). A pair of matching swords, one large and one small, the badge of samurai status, was worn at all times. Because of their symbolic value and intrinsic beauty, samurai of means often amassed many more swords than they could actually use. Ancient swords, such as those made by the legendary swordsmith Masamune, were especially treasured by such collectors. ●

SLIDE 5

Miyamoto Musashi (1584 – 1645)

Hotei and Fighting Cocks

Seventeenth century
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
71 x 32.7 (28 x 12⅞)
Fukuoka Art Museum
Important Art Object

A bulging sack over his shoulders and a staff propping up his arms, Hotei, one of the seven gods of good fortune, looks down benignly at a pair of fighting cocks. A semi-legendary figure in the Buddhist pantheon of saints and sages, who was popularly believed to bestow wealth and good luck, Hotei was a frequent subject for amateur ink painters. A masterless samurai, Miyamoto Musashi was one of the greatest swordsmen of his day. He also studied **Zen** Buddhism and cultivated the arts, becoming highly accomplished in the minimalist style favored by monk painters of the Zen sect. In this unusual work, executed with only a few simple brushstrokes and broad washes of ink, he invites the viewer to contemplate the possibility of reconciling the pursuit of Buddhist enlightenment with that of the martial arts.

SLIDE 6

Helmet with rabbit's ears

Sixteenth century
Wood and/or papier mâché, iron, lacquer, and silver foil
Height of helmet bowl 39.5 (15½)
National Museum of Japanese History, Chiba

Presenting an imposing appearance was important to warriors in times of war and peace. As the opportunities to display prowess on the battlefield waned, warriors increasingly sought to draw attention to themselves by commissioning inventively shaped helmets that emphasized craftsmanship at the expense of protective function. This helmet combines tall rabbit's ears made from papier mâché covered with silver foil and lacquer, a metal brow plate hammered into wrinkles, and a crescent moon of leather decorated with silver leaf. Although the effect may appear humorous to the modern viewer, the wearer may have chosen this design because the rabbit and the moon had connotations of immortality.

SLIDE 7

Jinbaori with ship's sails

Eighteenth century
Wool and other textiles
85 x 100 (33½ x 39⅜)
Maeda Ikutokukai Foundation, Tokyo

Amply proportioned garments like this were originally designed to be worn over armor, to protect their wearers from rain and cold. Yet design rather than function was uppermost in the mind of the craftsman who fashioned this garment for Maeda Shigehiro, daimyo of Kaga domain. Its eye-catching design shows European ships with wind-filled sails and cresting waves on the back, and sleeves decorated with a dramatic sawtooth motif. The material from which this coat was made, its shape, and the motifs decorating it reveal the influence of the Portuguese and Spanish, who introduced both wool and European fashions to Japan during the sixteenth century. Although Portuguese ships were not permitted entry into Japanese ports during the Edo period, their striking appearance and exotic connotations made them enduring decorative motifs.

During the Edo period an individual's occupation determined his or her social status, and class consciousness was closely allied to professional identity. The Tokugawa shogunate recognized four hereditary occupational groups, in descending order — samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant, with courtiers and monks included in the high-ranking samurai class. Despite the popular esteem they enjoyed, entertainers, as well as those whose work was associated with death, were classified as outcasts. The emperor, believed to be descended from the gods, also stood outside the four-part social hierarchy. Physical mobility and intermarriage between classes was discouraged, although it did occur increasingly in the nineteenth century as impoverished farmers migrated to the city and samurai seeking financial stability married their daughters to wealthy merchants.

Confucian teachings held that peace and prosperity would prevail throughout the land if the ruler was wise and moral and his people lived in conformance with the natural order. This implied acceptance of one's assigned place in society. Pictures of people at work (see fig. 7) are among the array of socio-political symbols that promoted this ideal.

In keeping with Confucian values, the shogunate promulgated the image of Japan as an agrarian society, an ideal that was given artistic expression in the many scenes of farmers at work. Such views often incorporated seasonal markers, such as cherry blossoms for spring and red maple leaves for autumn, both for their visual beauty and to suggest the cyclical nature of life. Long scrolls and screens displaying the rich variety of artisan workshops and commercial trades typical of the urban environment had ideological overtones, but they were also commissioned as emblems of occupational pride.

Because of the rigid social hierarchy, clothes and other attributes of class also took on enormous symbolic importance in Edo society. The government issued guidelines for the materials, colors, and styles appropriate to each class. Only samurai, for instance, were allowed to wear silk and to carry two swords, the hereditary emblems of their identity as warriors. Merchants rebelled against these restrictions by displaying their wealth in cotton garments dyed in costly colors with bold, inventive designs. Even workers' garments bore professional crests and other forms of decoration.

FIGURE 7
Occupations and Activities of Each Month, mid-eighteenth century, detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, each 79.4 x 235.8 (31¼ x 92⅞), The Sakai Museum, Osaka

The adoption of an elevated vantage point provides a panoramic view of a bustling metropolis. Streets teeming with pedestrians flanked by rows of shops suggest the dynamic energy and prosperity of the city. The unruly vitality of street life is in sharp contrast to the disciplined industry of craftsmen and tradesmen at work in their neat, tatami-matted workplaces.

Edo period artists often used a temporal scheme to organize and add interest to their depiction of occupational activities. Here the passage of time is marked by allusions to seasonal festivals and other ritual and secular activities.

SLIDE 8

Kusumi Morikage (c. 1620 – 1690)

Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons

Detail from a pair of six-panel screens;
ink and light color on paper
Each 151 x 347 (59½ x 136⅝)
Kyoto National Museum
Important Cultural Property

The farmer at work was a time-honored theme in Japanese art, evocative of the seasonal beauties of the countryside and of annual ritual cycles. In the Edo period these rituals took on political meaning as well, because of the importance of agriculture in Tokugawa ideology. The idyllic representation of farm life in the visual arts, however, was in sharp contrast to its harsh realities.

In this pair of screens a flowing stream in the foreground and rolling hills in the background link views of farmers ploughing, planting, tending, harvesting, and threshing rice. This detail from the left corner of the left-hand screen shows a farmhouse where the rice is being bundled while a woman with a child on her back looks on. The lightness of touch — especially the deft handling of the pale ink washes and delicate bands of gold mist — is characteristic of the style of Kusumi Morikage, an artist active in the northern domain of the Maeda, one of the wealthiest daimyo families of this era.

How were folding screens used?

Screens, usually designed in pairs of two, four, or six panels each, were a favorite format for the Japanese painter. They had both practical and decorative functions, providing privacy at night and preventing drafts in the winter, while adding visual interest to a room. When the shogun held an audience, his importance was underscored by placing a painted screen behind him. When not in use, screens could be easily folded and put away.

SLIDE 9

Kosode with design of Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons

Early nineteenth century
Paste-resist dye on figured silk satin
167.2 x 124 (65⅞ x 48⅞)
Tokyo National Museum

Rice, the primary standard of wealth in Edo society, was rich in religious, political, and aesthetic overtones that made it a favorite motif in all media. The affluent owner of this robe may have selected this motif for its connotations of prosperity as well as its evocation of the attractions of rural life. By the nineteenth century overcrowding and other conditions of urban life fueled nostalgia for the beauties of the natural world.

Decorative considerations rather than the realities of rice cultivation have guided the arrangement of the scenes on the front and back of this garment. The pale blue of the raised paths separating the rice paddies frames each activity while at the same time serving as a visual thread that weaves together the various scenes in this intricate composition.

SLIDE 10

Fireman's jacket with design of waves and dragon

Paste-resist dye on plain-weave cotton, quilted
81.9 x 94 (32¼ x 37)
Tokyo National Museum

Since many buildings in the Edo period were made of wood and paper, cities were subject to frequent, often catastrophic fires. The firemen who risked their lives to douse these flames, displaying extraordinary bravery, became popular heroes.

Firemen wore heavily padded and quilted jackets, trousers, hoods, and gloves that were doused with water to shield them from heat and flames. These garments were often decorated with motifs believed to provide symbolic protection. Because of their association with rain and water, dragons were deemed an especially auspicious motif for firefighters.

Although Edo society is often described as secular, religious faith permeated many forms of cultural expression. The most direct manifestations of prevailing beliefs and practices are devotional paintings and statues depicting Buddhist and Shinto gods and visualizations of heaven and hell in which sentient beings are reborn according to the deeds they performed during their lifetimes. Such images were created primarily by professional artists specializing in religious subjects, for display, worship, and instruction in temples and shrines. In addition, there also developed a large body of imagery that was more reflective of the daily lives of the populace. These included woodblock prints recounting the lives of Buddhist saints, calligraphic scrolls depicting Buddhist proverbs, panoramic screens of devotees on pilgrimage to or attending the temple and shrine festivals, and even illustrated books poking fun at revered deities. Mythical figures possessed of supernatural powers inspired by Chinese Daoist tradition were also popular in painting and prints (see fig. 8).

Until the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), when Buddhism and Shinto were officially separated, these two faiths were woven together like the warp and woof of a richly textured fabric. While Buddhism had foreign roots, having been introduced to Japan via China and the Korean peninsula, Shinto was of indigenous origin. Most religious institutions included halls where believers could offer prayers to both Buddhist and Shinto gods. Despite considerable overlap, the two faiths fulfilled complementary spiritual functions, with Shinto stressing well-being in this world and Buddhist in the next.

Although many schools of Buddhism flourished in Japan, no single one dominated the cultural life of the Edo period, partly owing to the fact that the shogunate placed all of the Buddhist institutions under its direct control for fear that they might exert

FIGURE 8
Soga Shōhaku (1730 – 1781), **Daoist Immortals,** 1764, detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink and color on paper, each 163.2 x 364 (64¼ x 143⅜), Private Collection, Kyoto

Shōhaku drew on the rich lore of the Chinese tradition for his painting, often investing his subjects with bizarre humor and exuberant energy.

undue influence on the populace. The major religious schools that were in existence at the outset of the Edo period — the Esoteric Shingon, which emphasized the power of ritual; the Pure Land, which promised salvation and rebirth in paradise through faith in the Buddha Amida; and Zen, which emphasized contemplation and self-discipline — all continued to enjoy large followings. Of these, Zen had the most profound impact on the development of the arts. The themes and styles of monochrome ink painting, the aesthetics of the tea ceremony, and the philosophical underpinnings of the martial arts are all indebted to Zen Buddhism.

Religious institutions in provincial and rural regions gained power and influence in the Edo period. In these new centers innovative forms of artistic expression arose, breathing new life into traditional themes and styles. Itinerant monks such as Hakuin (1685 – 1769), Enkū(1632 – 1695), and Mokujiki (1718 – 1810) helped their followers visualize the divine and understand Buddhist teachings through deceptively artless, often irreverent paintings, calligraphy, and sculpture.

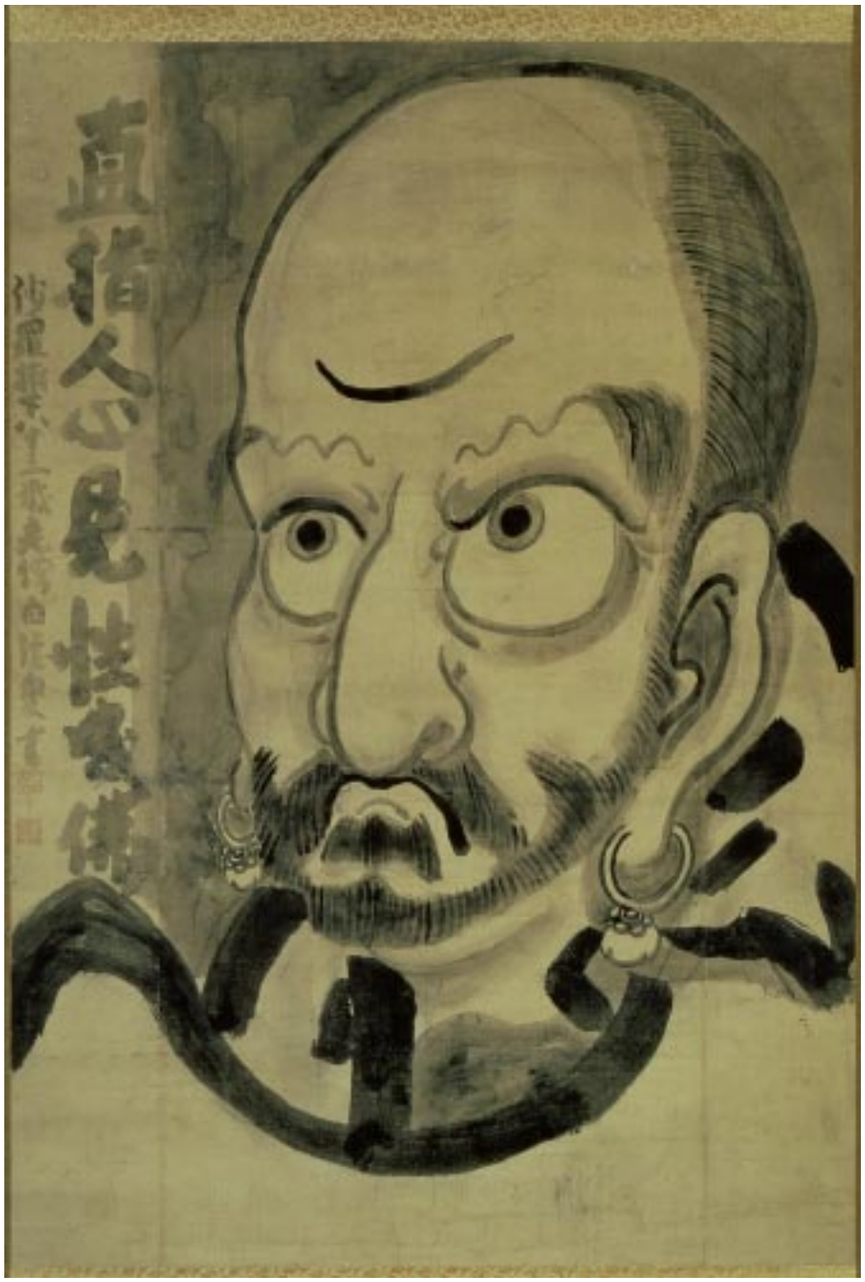
SLIDE 11

Gion Festival

Seventeenth century
Detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Each 152.5 x 356.5 (60 x 140⅜)
Kyoto National Museum

Panoramic views of Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine festivals, crowded with people from all walks of life, were a favorite motif in Edo screen painting. Artists often painted in workshops near the sites depicted to encourage travelers and pilgrims to visit.

The Gion Festival has been held in Kyoto every summer since the ninth century in honor of the god believed to protect the city against pestilence. In the detail of the screen seen here, a parade of large-wheeled, towering floats, the highlight of the festival, winds through the narrow streets of the city. Districts competed with one another in the lavishness and originality of their floats, some even decorated with ornate tapestries from Belgium. Young men today still vie for the honor of participating in this colorful and physically grueling event.



SLIDE 12

Hakuin Ekaku (1685 – 1768)

Daruma (Bodhidharma)

Hanging scroll; ink on paper
134.2 x 91.8 (52 7/8 x 36 1/8)
Seikenji, Shizuoka

His glaring eyes, beard, and earrings, emblematic of his exotic ethnic background and spiritual powers, make Daruma easy to recognize.

Daruma (also known as Bodhidharma) is the legendary Indian founder of Zen Buddhism. Introduced to Japan from China in the twelfth century, Zen became a powerful force in the development of Sino-Japanese literary and pictorial arts. Initially it was patronized chiefly by the nobility and military elite, but during the Edo period provincial Zen temples, such as the Shōinji in Nara, where Hakuin was a monk, began to devote more attention to the needs of the masses.

Hakuin took up painting both as a spiritual exercise and to provide visual aids for explaining Buddhist teachings. Most of his works are painted in black ink, with only a few broad, wet brushstrokes. Despite its reductive style, this portrayal is a convincing evocation of the intensity and steadfastness of the meditations through which Daruma achieved enlightenment.

SLIDE 13

Attributed to Katsushika Hokusai
(1760 – 1849)

Buddhist Priest Warding off a Demon

c. 1845
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper
150 x 240 (59 x 94½)
Sōjiji, Tokyo

Hokusai is best known in the West as a designer of woodblock prints (see slide 16), but he was also a prolific and innovative painter with a taste for the supernatural. Many of his paintings date from the end of his life, and are signed "The old man mad about painting." In this large, striking composition, painted in primary colors with rippling brushstrokes, a Buddhist priest uses the power of prayer to challenge a colossal horned demon. While the demon confronts his prey with the instruments of battle — a staff and rope — the seated monk repels him with the sacred scroll he holds in his raised hands. The jet-black sky and grotesquely deformed dog wrapped around a fungus-encrusted tree enhance the sense of drama and menace that pervades this scene.

Although the identity of the praying monk is uncertain, he has traditionally been identified as Kōbō Daishi (774 – 835), founder of the Esoteric Shingon sect, and one of the most deeply revered monks in Japan. This painting was originally mounted as a framed panel and hung under the eaves of the temple.

TRAVEL

Travel was a recurring theme in Japanese literature and art well before the seventeenth century; it was limited primarily to members of the military and court nobility on official business or pilgrimage, and to Buddhist priests seeking converts. With the advent of nationwide peace, the creation of new roads, and the availability of lodgings, travel became easier and safer. Rising standards of living and newfound leisure also made it possible for ordinary people to travel for pleasure. The volume of traffic on the nation's major highways was so heavy that Engelbert Kaempher, a German physician in Japan between 1690 and 1692, described Japan as a country of people constantly on the move.

Much of this travel was associated with the practice of "alternate attendance," which required daimyo to spend every other year serving the shogun in Edo. But by the eighteenth century many tourists were also on the road. Some set off to see the sights in the nation's three great cities, Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. The southern city of Nagasaki, the sole port officially open to foreign trade, was a special magnet for those eager to learn more about the culture of China, Korea, and the West. Others made pilgrimages to historic religious centers, such as the shrines at Ise, or to Mount Fuji. Still others journeyed to scenic spots celebrated in classical literature. Some even reenacted the travels of famous poets of the past, including the haiku master Bashō's journey into the "Deep North," as the region north of Edo was then known.

Like tourists today, Edo period travelers took to the road with illustrated guidebooks in hand. Purchasing souvenirs and gifts for friends and family along the way was also an

indispensable part of the tourist experience. Shops catering to this clientele could be found in cities as well as along the major highways. Inexpensive woodblock prints from series such as Hiroshige's One Hundred Famous Views of Edo were frequently purchased by visitors to that great metropolis. Popular souvenirs from Kyoto included a rich variety of paintings, ceramics, lacquer, and silks.

Artists shaped and responded to the growth of travel in many ways. They recorded the impressive and colorful processions of daimyo and their retinues — often numbering in the hundreds — en route between Edo and their provincial domains. They set off to see the country for themselves, painting evocative sketches that captured both the poetry and the reality of the people and places they encountered (see fig. 9). In the latter part of the Edo period a growing preoccupation with objective reality led many artists to record their observations using the techniques of Western perspective.

FIGURE 9
Maruyama Ōkyo (1733 – 1795), **Both** Banks **of the Yodo River,** 1765, detail from a handscroll; ink and color on silk, 40.2 x 1690.5 (15⅞ x 665½), The Arc-en-Ciel Foundation, Tokyo

The Yodo River was a major artery for commercial traffic and travel between Kyoto and Osaka. The many scenic sights along its banks also made it popular for pleasure boating.

This scroll reveals Ōkyo's efforts to integrate the results of his personal observations with a more traditional conceptual approach to painting. Using the Western technique of vanishing point perspective in combination with the conventions of Sino-Japanese maps, it shows both the near and far banks of the Yodo River from an elevated viewpoint. The long, narrow format, read from right to left, also enables the viewer to recreate mentally the experience of traveling along the river.

Throughout his career Ōkyo experimented with a wide range of pictorial styles and techniques to produce bold figural, flower-and-bird, and landscape paintings. The founder of one of Kyoto's leading schools of painting, he had a profound and enduring influence. Nihonga, a Japanese style of painting still practiced today, is deeply indebted to his aesthetic vision.

SLIDE 14

Watanabe Shikō (1683 – 1755)

Mount Yoshino

Early eighteenth century
Detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Each 150 x 362 (59 x 142½)
Private Collection, Kyoto

Time-honored religious, literary, and political associations would have made the mountains depicted in this pair of screens easily recognizable to most Edo period viewers. Famous for their purifying hot springs and their many shrines and temples, the Yoshino mountains have been a popular pilgrim destination since ancient times. Generations of poets extolled the beauty of the blossoming cherries, and in 1594 Tokugawa Ieyasu's predecessor, the great military leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536 – 1598), and his entourage made a spring outing there that was later remembered in screen paintings.

The stylized interplay of simplified forms and sumptuous decorative effects of this composition is characteristic of the work of the Rinpa school, which included Ogata Kōrin and his younger brother Kenzan (see figs. 4, 5, and slides 2, 15). Although Watanabe Shikō painted in many styles, this work is especially indebted to Kōrin.

SLIDE 15

Ogata Kenzan (1663 – 1743)

The Eight-Fold Bridge

Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper
35.6 x 40.6 (14 x 16)
Private Collection, Kyoto
Important Cultural Property

Painting, calligraphy, and poetry are masterfully combined here to create a composition of great lyrical power. Its source of inspiration is an incident in the *Tales of Ise*, a tenth-century account of the fictional courtier Ariwara no Narihira's travels in eastern Japan. At Yatsuhashi, so named for the eight-plank bridge spanning a marsh overgrown with irises, Narihira and his friends composed a poem to express their nostalgia for Kyoto, beginning each line with one of the five syllables from the word for iris, *kakitsubata*.

This theme was a favorite of many artists of the Edo period, but especially those residing in Kyoto, which lost its cultural supremacy when Edo was made the shogunal headquarters. Both Kenzan, the creator of this scroll, and his older brother Kōrin rendered it time and again in their painting, ceramic, and lacquer designs.

SLIDE 16

Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849)

Sudden Wind on a Clear Day

from Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji
c. 1830 – 1832
Color woodblock print
Approx 26 x 38 (10¼ x 15)
Tokyo National Museum

Breathtaking in its simplicity and clarity, this woodblock print captures the sweeping view of Mount Fuji that travelers, then as now, hope for but rarely see. As the title indicates, the artist has commemorated this national landmark just as a wind has cleared away the clouds that often hide its snow-covered peak. Although many artists represented Mount Fuji, Hokusai was the first to capture its changing moods, in different seasons, at various times of day, and under different weather conditions, in paintings, prints, and book illustrations. The mountain's red coloring here suggests dawn.

The object of worship since ancient times, Mount Fuji was an especially popular subject in the arts of the Edo period. Since its name sounds similar to the Japanese word for "no death," the sight of Mount Fuji was thought to bring good luck and long life. On a clear day, the volcano's conical form was visible from the city of Edo, and in the summer months, when its upper reaches were bare of snow, many pilgrims climbed it in the hopes of attaining immortality.

Entertainment was an indispensable ingredient in the urban cultural mix of Edo period Japan. Every city had an officially licensed pleasure quarter where men could socialize and be amused by talented courtesans. Edo and Osaka boasted kabuki theaters where the nation's favorite actors performed. Open areas along the riverbanks or surrounding temples and shrines were packed with shops, sideshows, and food stalls that drew people from even the most humble backgrounds. Temporary arenas for sumo wrestling tournaments, a wildly popular professional sport, were set up several times a year in locations throughout the country (see fig. 10). Even the residents of the smallest towns and villages could count on periodic visits from itinerant theater and dance troupes and enjoy the ritual dance dramas performed at temples and shrines.

Affluent merchants played a leading role in creating and supporting the vibrant urban culture that developed in the city. Denied a say in running the country, despite their role in its economy, merchants threw their energies into the practice and patronage of cultural pursuits traditionally monopolized by the elite. They became devotees of the theater, pleasure quarters, and restaurants — fashionable realms where the normal order of society was turned upside down and taste rather than status ruled. Flouting the dress codes imposed on them by the government, they also became arbiters of male and female fashion.

Despite official exhortations that they refrain from such frivolous diversions, samurai also participated in these "popular" activities. Attending performances of stately nō drama, ceremonial teas, and other officially sanctioned entertainments was a duty, but the more free-wheeling diversions available in the heart of the city exerted an irresistible appeal. Many kabuki plays dramatized the all-too-common conflict between duty

FIGURE 10
Katsukawa Shun'ei (1762 – 1819), **The Sumo Wrestlers Kajihama and Jinmaku,** 1790, color woodblock print, approx. 38 x 26 (15 x 10¼), Tokyo National Museum

and human emotions that resulted when a samurai fell in love with a beautiful courtesan.

The **Yoshiwara** pleasure quarter became the hub of the popular culture that flourished in Edo. The women who populated this walled compound, situated at the outskirts of the city, ranged from prostitutes and teahouse waitresses to haughty courtesans, whose beauty, taste in dress, and skill in the arts made them the cultural icons of their day. This was the environment that came to be called the "floating world." As one contemporary writer put it, it was a place where people "lived only for the moment, floating along like a gourd on a stream." The paintings and prints glorifying the lives of courtesans and kabuki actors came to be called **ukiyoe,** or "pictures of the floating world." *Ukiyoe* was originally a Buddhist term with connotations of sorrow and transience, but in its new usage it signified the hedonistic and fleeting delights of the pleasure quarters. Artists who capitalized on the public's fascination with this milieu ignored its darker realities.

Demand for images of the pleasure quarters was widespread and mass-produced woodblock prints were inexpensive enough for everyone to buy. Like modern-day film and television stars, courtesans and actors were glamorous trendsetters whose admirers could take vicarious pleasure in studying their lifestyles.

SLIDE 17

Nō mask: Asakura jō (old man)

Seventeenth century
Carved wood, gesso, and pigment
19.7 x 16.2 (7¾ x 6⅜)
Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art

The masks worn by the protagonists in nō drama are among the finest manifestations of Edo period sculpture. Finely modeled and delicately painted, they portray a wide range of standardized types and emotional states. While masks used for female roles suggest timeless, idealized feminine beauty, those used for male roles are more sharply differentiated and expressive. This mask, worn by a character playing an old man, has deeply furrowed brows, sunken cheeks, and a beard and hair made of horsehair.

Institutionalized as part of the ceremonial entertainments hosted by shogun and daimyo, nō is a theater of stately, elegant understatement that combines mime, dance, and chanting with elaborate costumes and stylized masks. Since nō is performed on a wooden stage with few props, the colors and patterns of the costumes as well as the subtle emotional nuances of the masks are of special importance.

SLIDE 18

Kabuki costume with target and arrows

Nineteenth century
Silk and metallic thread embroidered appliqués with ink on silk satin
110 x 131 (43¼ x 51⅝)
Tokyo National Museum

While the roots of nō can be traced to the patronage of fourteenth-century shogun, kabuki originated in public entertainments first held on temporary stages set up on riverbanks or on temple compounds in the sixteenth century. Initially both sexes performed, but after the Tokugawa shogunate banned women because they were too provocative, men assumed female as well as male roles.

Action-filled and melodramatic, kabuki was a major form of popular entertainment throughout the Edo period. Like nō, it is a highly stylized form, but kabuki actors have far greater liberty in interpreting their roles. Dazzling costumes that could be seen by audiences in dimly lit theaters were an important component of kabuki's dramatic appeal. The arrow-pierced target strategically placed on the back and two additional arrows on the front of this robe make it exceptionally eye-catching.

SLIDE 19

Hikone Screen

c. 1620s – 1640s
Detail from one of six panels (originally connected in screen format); ink, color, and gold on paper
Assembled 94.6 x 274.8 (37¼ x 108⅛)
Hikone Castle Museum, Shiga
National Treasure

These figures, set against a backdrop formed by the application of squares of gold foil, are frozen in a tableau that hints of amorous pleasures and at the same time parodies the traditional cultural pursuits of music, board games, painting, and calligraphy. The only distinct object in the background is a folding screen with a Chinese landscape, but the fashionable attire and hairstyles of the subjects intimate that it is the interior of a house of pleasure. Games are suggested by the men and women playing *sugoroku* (a board game much like backgammon), and music by the *shamisen,* a stringed instrument used primarily by women of the pleasure quarters.

This screen has long been regarded as a pivotal work in the shift from landscape to figural themes in Edo painting. Although it is unsigned, it is likely to have been painted by an artist of the Kano school, whose members served as official painters to the shogun and daimyo. The screen is commonly known as the *Hikone Screen* because it belonged to a daimyo family of the Hikone fief near Kyoto.

SLIDE 20

Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1754 – 1806)

The Fancy-Free Type

from Ten Types of Female Physiognomy
c. 1792 – 1793
Color woodblock print with mica
37.8 x 24.3 (14⅞ x 9½)
Tokyo National Museum
Important Cultural Property

Utamaro, perhaps the most celebrated artist of the floating world, produced many paintings and prints of tall, elegant courtesans dressed in gorgeous robes. He also was the first to explore the female personality in half-length and bust portraits, formats previously used exclusively for the portrayal of kabuki actors, and to enhance them with mirrorlike mica backgrounds. This print, from a series the artist never completed, captures a woman at an unguarded moment, just as she has emerged, glowing and slightly disheveled, from the bath. The caption above her head identifies her as *uwaki,* a word that has connotations of flirtatiousness, fickleness, and even promiscuity. This characterization is revealed through her slightly averted eyes and coquettish pose as well as the disarray of her clothing, hairpins, and combs.

GLOSSARY

Bushidō martial code for samurai, formalized in the Edo period

Confucianism Chinese ethical system adopted as state ideology by the Tokugawa rulers

daimyo feudal lord of one of approximately 250 domains in Edo Japan

kabuki popular theater of the Edo period

Kano hereditary school of painters patronized chiefly by the samurai

kosode garment commonly worn by both men and women in the Edo period; precursor of the modern kimono

nō stately theatrical form patronized chiefly by the court and samurai

Rinpa design approach developed in Kyoto, popularized by Ogata Kōrin and his brother Kenzan

samurai warrior; highest-ranking class of Edo society

Shingon school of Buddhism that stresses secret rituals of the body, mind, and speech

Shinto indigenous religion of Japan that coexisted and merged with Buddhism

shogun title given supreme military leader during the Edo period

Tokugawa family name of the ruling dynasty during the Edo period

ukiyoe "pictures of the floating world," depicting courtesans and kabuki actors

Yoshiwara Edo's major licensed pleasure quarter

Zen school of Buddhism that was especially influential in the cultural realm

CHRONOLOGY

1600	Tokugawa Ieyasu defeats his rivals at the battle of Sekigahara and gains control over Japan.
1603	Ieyasu establishes the Tokugawa shogunate.
1612	The shogunate prohibits Christianity.
1615	Osaka Castle falls to the Tokugawa, making their unification of Japan complete.
1624	The first kabuki theater, Nakamura, opens in Edo.
1629	The government creates the first fire-fighting brigades to protect Edo Castle.
1635	The shogunate demands alternate-year attendance of daimyo in Edo.
	Overseas travel is banned.
1639	The shogunate permits foreign trade with only the Chinese and the Dutch out of the port of Nagasaki.
1657	Great Meireki Fire destroys half of Edo.
1663	Merchants organize an express messenger system of runners between Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka.
1673	Mitsui family of merchants establishes dry-goods stores in Kyoto and Edo.
1688 – 1704	Art, literature, kabuki, and *bunraku* (puppet theater) flourish in the Genroku era.
1707	Mount Fuji erupts.
1718	Townspeople establish fire-fighting brigades in Edo.
1765	Suzuki Harunobu creates color woodblock prints.
1772	Fire destroys more than half the city of Edo.
1788	Great Kyoto Fire.
1794 – 1795	Tōshūsai Sharaku produces kabuki actor prints.
1830s	Katsushika Hokusai's series of prints, Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji.
	Andō Hiroshige's series of prints, Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.
1853	Commodore Perry's ships arrive from the United States.
1860s	Japanese prints, exported to Europe, exert profound influence on Western artists.
1867	Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the last shogun, returns political authority to the emperor.
1868	Imperial rule is restored (Meiji Restoration). Edo is renamed Tokyo ("Eastern Capital").

Detail from **Occupations and Activities of Each Month,** The Sakai Museum, Osaka (see also fig. 7)

ACTIVITIES

Activities are designed for Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced learners. Curriculum connections are suggested for *Art, Language Arts, Math, or Social Studies.*

Robes **Beginner, *Art***

Traditional Japanese robe designs were often based on seasonal motifs, such as *Kosode with net pattern, chrysanthemums, and characters* and *Kosode with design of Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons* (slides 1, 9). Have students create a Japanese robe, selecting a theme for the class as the basis for their designs. Cut two pieces of paper to form the front and back of the garment and join them with glue or tape at the top and sides. Cut an opening at the front. Now create a design that continues from front to back or that combines words and pictures. Be sure to include a belt.

Folding Screens

Beginner/Intermediate, *Math, Art*

Folding screens were often used to tell stories or to show landscapes in various seasons. Usually they were designed in pairs of six panels each. Have students, working in groups or individually, fold two sheets of heavy paper or cardboard like an accordion, each with six "panels," which will allow the screens to stand. Using colored pencils, pens, and markers, they can create scenes that continue across both panels. Remind students to arrange the scenes, Japanese style, from right to left! Experiment with compositions that flow across more than one panel. Keep in mind the visual changes that occur when a painting is lying flat on the table and when it is standing up in a zigzag. For examples, refer to *Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons* and *Mount Yoshino* (slides 8, 14) .

Professions **Beginner/Intermediate, *Art, Social Studies***

Work was a major theme in Edo period art. Many paintings presented bird's-eye views of streets filled with workshops of the professions of the day as seen in *Occupations and Activities of Each Month* (fig. 7). Ask students to select a profession from the list below. Beginner students may write a description or draw a picture of the profession, while intermediate and advanced students may research a profession. Some questions to consider are: What was the profession's status during the Edo period? What was its role in Edo society? Was this profession confined to one area of Edo or did it exist throughout the region? Does the profession exist today? If so, in what form? What are the similarities and differences between Edo and modern U.S. systems of commerce? A good place to begin research is the U.S.-Japan Organization's Web site at http://www.us-japan.org/edomatsu

Actors *(yakusha)*
Blacksmiths *(kaji)*
Bucketmakers *(okeya)*
Carpenters *(daiku)*
Farmers *(nōmin)*
Firemen *(hikeshi)*
Fishermen *(gyomin)*
Gunsmiths *(teppōkaji)*
Hotelkeepers *(yadoya)*
Matmakers *(tatamiya)*
Potters *(yōkō)*
Restauranteurs *(ryōriya)*
Silversmiths *(ginzaikuya)*
Street Vendors *(roten shōnin)*

Vocabulary **Beginner/Intermediate, *Language Arts***

Many Japanese words have entered the English vocabulary. Have students review the glossary and list words they have heard before and put them into context. Discuss other Japanese words they may know — for example, *haiku* or *karate*. Have beginner students look for them in the dictionary. Have intermediate students research individual terms and prepare oral presentations with poster illustrations of their terms — for example, *Zen* or *samurai*.

Poetry **Beginner/Intermediate, *Language Arts***

The most famous Japanese poetic form is the haiku. Haiku poems are only three lines long with a 5-7-5 syllabic pattern. Here is an example originally written in Japanese by Kagami Shikō (1665 – 1731):

Even though afar,
A feeling of coolness comes
From those mountain pines.

By the sixteenth century haiku had become a national fad. Major themes convey the ideas of what, when, and where using symbolic language. For example, clouds connote summer, and frogs connote late spring. Ask students to create a haiku poem, employing symbols to express their ideas.

Souvenirs **Intermediate, *Language Arts***

Edo tourists brought back woodblock prints and other mementos from popular sites such as Mount Fuji, depicted in *Sudden Wind on a Clear Day* (see slide 16). Ask students to bring in souvenirs from trips they have taken, including ticket stubs, snow domes, postcards, etc. Then have students write an essay about their souvenir, discussing its origin, why they keep it, what it means to them.

Motif **Intermediate/Advanced, *Art***

Many Japanese artists worked in more than one medium, adapting the same motif for use in paintings, ceramics, and textiles. Have students select a simple motif such as a flower or an animal and create a design suitable for the square or rectangular format of a hanging scroll. Then, ask students to adapt it to the circular format of a plate, or to the shape of a kimono. Students may discuss the kinds of changes that will make their designs look equally attractive in each format.

Masks **Intermediate/Advanced, *Art, Performing Arts***

Nō masks portray a wide range of standardized types and emotional states, such as *Nō mask: Asakura jō* (see slide 17). Ask students to research nō drama and the role of the mask. Then have students create nō masks out of papier mâché or colored paper and tag board, representing various emotions (reference: Smith and Hazen, 1994).

Style Advanced, *Social Studies*

Review/discuss with students the different components and details of Edo style as described in the teaching packet. Ask students to research style in eighteenth-century America and compare the two contemporaneous cultures. Have students write or discuss the results. Then ask students to imagine how historians, in the year 2150, will describe American style today. It may be difficult for everyone to agree on what defines "American style." Have students, working in groups or individually, create a magazine, commercial, Web site, or music video presenting key characteristics of contemporary American style.

Books

Addiss, Stephen, with Audrey Yoshiko Seo. *How to Look at Japanese Art*. New York, 1996.

Friedman, Mildred, ed. *Tokyo: Form and Spirit*. Minneapolis & New York, 1986.

Guth, Christine. *Art of Edo Japan: The Artist and the City 1615–1868*. New York, 1996.

Mason, Penelope. *History of Japanese Art*. New York, 1993.

Smith, A.G., and Josey Hazen. *Cut and Make Japanese Masks*. Mineola, NY, 1994.

Tsunoda, Ryusaku, et al. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. New York, 1964.

Varley, H. Paul. *Japanese Culture*. Honolulu, 1984.

Web sites

http://www.us-japan.org/edomatsu
http://www.askasia.org

Detail from **Occupations and Activities of Each Month,** The Sakai Museum, Osaka (see also fig. 7)

SLIDE LIST

SLIDE LIST

SLIDE 1
Kosode with net pattern, chrysanthemums, and characters
1668 – 1704
Tie-dyeing, stenciled imitation tie-dyeing, and silk and metallic thread embroidery on figured silk satin
158.5 x 139.6 (62⅜ x 55)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 2
Writing box with crane design in the style of Ogata Kōrin
Eighteenth century
Lacquer
4.8 x 24.2 x 21.8 (1⅞ x 9½ x 8½)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 3
Dish with radish and waves design
c. 1680 – 1690s
Nabeshima ware
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue and overglaze enamels
Diameter 20.4 (8⅛)
Imaemon Museum of Ceramic Antiques, Saga

SLIDE 4
Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797 – 1861)
He Looks Fierce, but He's Really a Nice Person
from an untitled series of composite portraits
c. 1847 – 1848
Color woodblock print
Approx. 38 x 26 (15 x 10¼)
Private Collection, Hyōgo

SLIDE 5
Miyamoto Musashi (1584 – 1645)
Hotei and Fighting Cocks
Seventeenth century
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
71 x 32.7 (28 x 12⅞)
Fukuoka Art Museum
Important Art Object

SLIDE 6
Helmet with rabbit's ears
Sixteenth century
Wood and/or papier mâché, iron, lacquer, and silver foil
Height of helmet bowl 39.5 (15½)
National Museum of Japanese History, Chiba

SLIDE 7
Jinbaori with ship's sails
Eighteenth century
Wool and other textiles
85 x 100 (33½ x 39⅜)
Maeda Ikutokukai Foundation, Tokyo

SLIDE 8
Kusumi Morikage (c. 1620 – 1690)
Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons
Detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink and light color on paper
Each 151 x 347 (59½ x 136⅝)
Kyoto National Museum
Important Cultural Property

SLIDE 9
Kosode with design of Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons
Early nineteenth century
Paste-resist dye on figured silk satin
167.2 x 124 (65⅞ x 48⅞)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 10
Fireman's jacket with design of waves and dragon
Paste-resist dye on plain-weave cotton, quilted
81.9 x 94 (32¼ x 37)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 11
Gion Festival
Seventeenth century
Detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Each 152.5 x 356.5 (60 x 140⅜)
Kyoto National Museum

SLIDE 12
Hakuin Ekaku (1685 – 1768)
Daruma (Bodhidharma)
Hanging scroll; ink on paper
134.2 x 91.8 (52⅞ x 36⅛)
Seikenji, Shizuoka

SLIDE 13
Attributed to Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849)
Buddhist Priest Warding off a Demon
c. 1845
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper
150 x 240 (59 x 94½)
Sōjiji, Tokyo

SLIDE 14
Watanabe Shikō (1683 – 1755)
Mount Yoshino
Early eighteenth century
Detail from a pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
Each 150 x 362 (59 x 142½)
Private Collection, Kyoto

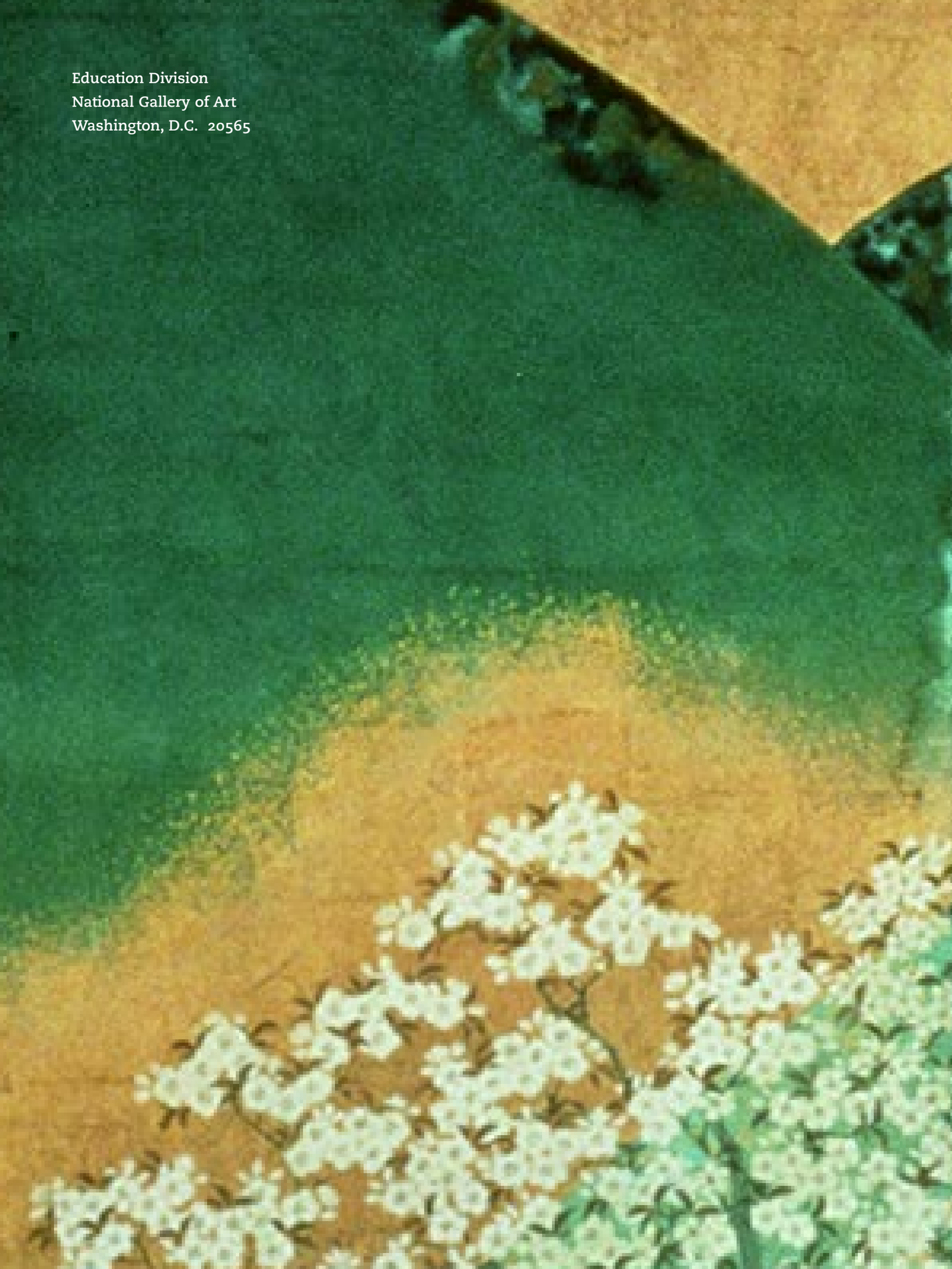
SLIDE 15
Ogata Kenzan (1663 – 1743)
The Eight-Fold Bridge
Hanging scroll; ink and light color on paper
35.6 x 40.6 (14 x 16)
Private Collection, Kyoto
Important Cultural Property

SLIDE 16
Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849)
Sudden Wind on a Clear Day
from Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji
c. 1830 – 1832
Color woodblock print
Approx 26 x 38 (10¼ x 15)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 17
Nō mask: Asakura jō (old man)
Seventeenth century
Carved wood, gesso, and pigment
19.7 x 16.2 (7¾ x 6⅜)
Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art

SLIDE 18
Kabuki costume with target and arrows
Nineteenth century
Silk and metallic thread embroidered appliqués with ink on silk satin
110 x 131 (43¼ x 51⅝)
Tokyo National Museum

SLIDE 19
Hikone Screen
c. 1620s – 1640s
Detail from one of six panels (originally connected in screen format); ink, color, and gold on paper
Assembled 94.6 x 274.8 (37¼ x 108⅛)
Hikone Castle Museum, Shiga
National Treasure

SLIDE 20
Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1754 – 1806)
The Fancy-Free Type
from Ten Types of Female Physiognomy
c. 1792 – 1793
Color woodblock print with mica
37.8 x 24.3 (14⅞ x 9½)
Tokyo National Museum
Important Cultural Property

Education Division
National Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C. 20565