## Asia II, Gallery 602

602-1, case type A-10 Shale 861 Label deck = 5”high x 66”wide
**Formed in Clay**

The understated and refined porcelain and stoneware vessels in this case appear simple, yet they are the result of centuries of experimentation with clay types, glazes, and kiln firing temperatures and techniques. They also reflect the training and craftsmanship of their makers.

Kaolin and feldspathic rock, known as china stone or petuntse, are key ingredients in porcelain, which is fired at about 2400°F, a higher temperature than that for earthenware or stoneware. Porcelain wares were first made in northern China around the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE).

Celadon is a translucent glaze applied to porcelain and stoneware. The gray-greens and blue-greens of celadon wares result from varying small amounts of iron oxide, manganese, and quartz and controlling the amount of free oxygen in the kiln, known as reduction firing. The kiln temperature must be carefully maintained; if celadon glazes are fired at too high a temperature, they become transparent.

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Kawase Shinobu
Japanese, b. 1950
**Vase**, 2004
Porcelain with glaze
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2005.29

A flaring, dynamic mouth gives this contemporary vessel a great sense of motion and fluidity. Curvilinear edges accentuated by pinched folds characterize Kawase’s sleek forms. Working with porcelain clays from China or Japan, he throws the basic form on a potter’s wheel then hand-molds details before applying celadon glaze.

Chinese, Song Dynasty, Southern Song Period, 1127–1279
**Bottle with Swirl Designs**, 12th century
Porcelain with glaze
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.186

Chinese, Song Dynasty, Southern Song Period, 1127–1279
**Bowl with Design of Flowers and Boys**, 12th century
Porcelain with glaze
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.432

Gracefully incised decorations of flowers and boys come to life where the glaze has pooled on the interior of this bowl. Boys amidst flowers became popular in China as a motif symbolizing a wish for male heirs.

*Qingbai* (meaning “blue-white” in Chinese) wares are known for their pale blue hues, meant to mimic white jade.

Korean, Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392 CE
**Wine Cup and Stand**, 12th century
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 17.105

Although these designs may look painted, they were carved into the clay while it was still moist. The cavities were then filled with colored slip (thinned clay) and the entire vessel covered with celadon glaze and fired. The combination of celadon glaze with *sanggam,* or inlaid slip decorations, was unique to the ceramics of Korea and was fully developed by the 12th century.

Korean, Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392 CE
**Ewer**, 12th century
Stoneware with glaze
Gift of Charles B. Hoyt 27.044

A subtle design of sprouting bamboo shoots adorns the surface of this ewer. The luminous green celadon glaze, produced by the conversion of ferrous oxide in the firing process, was developed in China in the 10th century and found its greatest expression in Korea during the Goryeo Period.

602-2 case type A-10 Shale 861 Label deck= 5”high x 66”wide
**Decorated in Enamel**

Located in southeast China, Jingdezhen has long been a center for porcelain production, but it was during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) that imperial patronage supported the founding of immense factories there. Advances in glazing and firing techniques, kiln construction, and artistry led to functional wares with a wide range of decoration, including overglaze enamels. Enamels of many colors were painted over a glazed body, then fired at low temperatures.

Traded along the Silk Road, polychrome Chinese porcelains were prized by the courts of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran. Lacking advanced kiln technology and the kaolin necessary for porcelain production, Middle Eastern potters developed their own ceramic traditions, including fritware, a combination of ground quartz, glaze frit, and white clay. Fritware is fired at a lower temperature than porcelain, then decorated with underglazes and fired again.

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Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911; Kangxi Period, 1662–1722
**Plate with Design of Chrysanthemums and Mallow with Incised Leaping Five-clawed Dragon**, 17th–18th century
Porcelain with glaze and enamel
Bequest of John M. Crawford 1989.110.57

Two decorative techniques are combined on this porcelain plate. A design of chrysanthemum and mallow blooms is painted in yellow, green, and purple enamels over a surface incised with a five-clawed dragon leaping for a flaming pearl.

In Chinese design, dragons with five claws are imperial symbols; dragons are otherwise portrayed with three or four claws. A six-character mark (*Da Qing Kangxi nian zhi*) on the base indicates the plate's origin in the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1912, Kangxi Period, 1662–1722
**Two Bowls**, 18th century
Porcelain with glaze and enamel
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.50.1–2

The technical virtuosity of the layered enamels on these bowls exhibits the level of craftsmanship achieved with the support of imperial patronage. Whereas the interior of the bowls is plain with a clear glaze, the exterior displays a profusion of overglaze polychrome enamels on an iron-red ground, with outlines of peonies, hollyhocks, wisteria, and leaves drawn in black and red and filled with color. The bases are clearly marked Kangxi Imperial Manufacture, dating the bowls to a time in which innovation in Chinese porcelain production flourished.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1912, Kangxi Period, 1662–1722
**Pair of Plates with Scenes from the *Gengzhitu***
Porcelain with glaze and enamel
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.58.1–2

These plates feature compositions and seven-character poems taken directly from *Gengzhitu*, a woodblock-printed book illustrating the production of rice and silk. The plates and the book illustrations testify to the importance of rice and silk production to Chinese culture and economy.

Turkish
**Iznik Dish with Floral Design**, ca. 1550–1575
Fritware with underglazes and glaze
Gift of Miss Theodora Lyman 19.271

Potters in Iznik, Turkey, admired Chinese porcelain but worked in fritware, an entirely different ceramic body which provided a bright white ground suitable for elaborate underglaze decoration. The four-color design on this plate merges Chinese motifs such as the wave-and-scroll pattern with depictions of native Turkish plants—tulips, carnations, and hyacinths. The serrated *saz* (reed pen) dominating the middle of the plate and the surrounding blossoms reflect the influence of pen drawing as practiced by painters for the Ottoman court on Iznik ceramic designs.

Chinese for Thai market, Chakri Dynasty, 1809–1824
**Teapot**, 19th century
Porcelain with glaze, enamel, and gilding
Gift of Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection 2004.12.15

Chinese for Thai market, Chakri Dynasty, 1809–1824
**Covered Bowl**, 19th century
Porcelain with glaze, enamel, and gilding
Gift of Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection 2004.12.13

This teapot and covered bowl reflect the relationship between foreign markets and the porcelain producers at Jingdezhen. Blank forms in white porcelain were ordered from Jingdezhen by Thai patrons, sent to Thailand for embellishment, and returned to China for the final firing.

*Lai nam thong* (gold wash) ceramics were a variant of *Bencharong* wares, which were decorated in colored enamels but not embellished in gold. After a form was decorated, it was fired to about 1475°F, which prevented the enamels from burning. Enameled vessels went through an extra firing at an even lower temperature once the gold was applied.

602-3, case type A-10 Shale 861 Label deck= 5"high x 66"wide

**Worked in Metal**

Among the earliest known metal works, elaborate bronze vessels were first created in China almost 3,000 years ago. Chinese metalworkers made bronzes using ceramic models and cores, into which a molten mixture of copper and tin ores was poured. After the metal cooled, the ceramic was broken away and the vessel was polished. During the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), as burial sites were discovered, ancient ritual bronzes came to be appreciated by Chinese scholars as important emblems of their cultural heritage.

While most metalwork from China was cast in bronze, traditions involving other metals and techniques emerged elsewhere in Asia.

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Chinese
***Lei* Vessel**, 1100–1200 BCE
Bronze
Gift of Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, 2007.90.9

Chinese
**Pair of *Jue* Tripod Vessels**, 1100–1300 BCE
Bronze
Gift of Doris Duke Charitable Foundation 2007.90.2.1–2

Created by piece-mold casting, these early Chinese bronzes feature intricate geometric designs formed when their makers pressed pattern blocks into the damp clay molds. Joins between the clay molds are visible as raised ribs on the bronze exteriors. These works were used in important ceremonies in which wine and food were offered to the deceased ancestors of ruling clans and heads of state; wine was stored in the *lei* and heated in the *jue,* whose long legs allowed it to be placed directly over the fire.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Vessel with Elephant-head Handles**, 19th century
Jade
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.36

The shape and mask-pattern design of this jade vessel, produced centuries after the bronzes to the left, illustrates Chinese reverence for earlier styles.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Tripod Censer**, 19th century
Enamel on copper alloy
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.84

This cloisonné censer, or incense burner, was probably the centerpiece of an altar set, surrounded by vases and candlesticks. Cloisonné—French for "partitioned"—is produced in a four-step process. Designs are created by applying copper or bronze wires to a metal form. Each area is then filled with metal oxides mixed with glass paste, and the form is fired to about 1475°F to melt the enamels. Because enamels shrink during firings, the procedure is repeated until the spaces are completely filled, then the surface of the object is rubbed until the *cloisons,* or wire partitions, become visible.

Burmese
**Vessel in the Shape of a Buddhist Begging Bowl,** 19th century
Silver with gilding
Bequest of Martha B. Lisle 67.486

Hammered and punched high-relief repoussé with finely chased details is characteristic of Burmese silver. While the subject matter depicted on this bowl is yet to be identified, similar bowls present scenes from Buddhist *jataka* tales, the Hindu epic *The Ramayana*, or traditional Burmese folk tales.

Due to the austere tenets of Theravada Buddhism, the ownership of silver was originally limited to Burmese royalty, but the 19th-century arrival of foreigners created a new market for works like this one.

Thai
**Ladle,** 19th–20th century
Silver with metal sulfides and gilding
Gift of Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection 2004.12.7

Featured on this Thai ladle, niello is an inlay process in which black mineral sulfides are pressed into an engraved metal surface and heated, fusing them into the depressions of the metal. The excess sulfides are then scraped away and the surface is polished, leaving a contrasting ground.

602-4, case type A-10 Shale 861 Label deck= 5"high x 66"wide
**Made of Jade and Hardstone**

Jade, valued for its smooth polish, extreme hardness, and translucency, is actually two different minerals, jadeite and nephrite. In its purest form, nephrite is colorless; impurities create variations of yellow, brown, black, and the treasured green. In China, nephrite was originally found in boulders in riverbeds and later mined, mainly in the northwest. Mines in northern Burma are the source of jadeite in Asia. Known in Chinese culture as the stone of heaven, jade has for thousands of years carried associations of virtue, wisdom, spiritual power, status, and immortality.

Since the dense structures of jadeite, nephrite, and other hardstones make them difficult to carve, artists form and incise these stones using grinding and cutting tools in conjunction with an abrasive such as sand.

Indian
**Wine Cup Inscribed for Emperor Jahangir (reign 1605–1627)**, dated AH 1021/1612–1613
Aventurine quartz
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 84.163

Because jade was not readily available in India during the rule of the Mughal emperors, jade-like stones were used to make imperial gifts, such as this wine cup.

Although Quranic law forbids the consumption of alcohol, Emperor Jahangir was known for his fondness of wine. The inscription, carved on the borders at both rim and foot, begins, "This is the cup of water [of life], nourisher of the soul / Of King Jahangir [son of] King Akbar." At the bottom is the Hijri date 1021, or 1612, the seventh year of Jahangir's reign.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911; Qianlong Period, 1736–1795
**Mughal-style Bowl**, 18th century
Jade
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.67

A complex design of figures, flowers, and vines was created in relief on this paper-thin bowl, with a mark incised in the base specifying that it was made for the Qianlong emperor (reign 1736–1795), a passionate collector and patron of the arts. The design was inspired by Mughal Indian patterns; Qianlong was known for his cosmopolitan tastes for art from India and Europe.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Snuff Bottle**, 19th century
Jade and coral; silk cord
Anonymous loan 651.32

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Snuff Bottle**, 19th century
Jade and quartz
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 43.505.3

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Snuff Bottle**, 19th century
Agate and coral
Anonymous loan 625.32

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Snuff Bottle**, 19th century
Agate and jade
Gift of Mrs. Walter S. Price 58.177.8

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Snuff Bottle**, 19th century
Quartz
Gift of Mrs. Walter S. Price 58.177.7

Created from glass, metal, porcelain, and hardstones, these miniature bottles were made to contain snuff, a mixture of powdered tobacco and herbs inhaled into the nasal cavity. Snuff was introduced to China from

Europe in the 17th century. Formed to fit in the palm of the hand, snuff bottles often featured elaborate decoration. These examples highlight the natural coloration and inclusions in the stones.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Landscape**, 18th century
Jade
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.43

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Lithophone**, 18th century
Jade with gold paint
Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 37.113

This inverted L-shaped stone, gold accenting its design and calligraphy, was meant to be struck with a wooden mallet during imperial musical rituals at the Temple of Agriculture in the Chinese capital. Originally one in a set of 12 chimes—for the 12 lunar months—each stone had a distinct pitch, tuned to reflect a mathematical relationship with the celestial world.

China, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Double Vase**, 18th century
Carnelian agate
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.65

This vase is elaborately worked to represent a twin trunk of a blossoming plum tree. Demonstrating skillful planning, the craftsmen used the striations of the carnelian agate to describe the woody form and the natural coloration of the stone to represent the icy white plum blossoms.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Hat Stand**, 19th century
Jade and hardwood
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.37

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Brush Pot**, 18th century
Jade
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.47

Unadorned by designs or carvings, the bold cylindrical shape of this brush holder for a scholar's desk imitates brush pots made from wood. It attests to the owner's social standing, yet references the simplicity of the humbler material usually employed for this purpose.

602-5, case type A-10 Shale 861 Label deck= 5"high x 66"wide
**Layered in Lacquer**

The highly toxic sap from the *Rhus verniciflua* tree, indigenous to China, Japan, and Korea, has been used for centuries to produce the finest-quality lacquer. Coatings of lacquer make organic materials such as wood durable and resistant to water, insect damage, and heat. By painstakingly applying and polishing many thin layers of lacquer, artists can build surfaces thick enough for carving, and can make embellishments using mother-of-pearl inlays or sprinkled metal powders.

Sophisticated lacquer traditions also developed in other Asian countries, where artists used sap from trees similar to the *Rhus verniciflua*.

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Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911
**Double Gourd**, 19th century
Gourd with lacquer
Gift of Anna and Louise Case 20.097

After many layers of lacquer were applied to this gourd, designs were carved into the surface. This time-consuming process required several days of drying between each of the coats, which could number as many as 300.

Gourds were used for holding liquids and herbal medicines; in Daoism, the gourd is the symbol for long life. This example is carved with the characters *da ji*, meaning "auspicious."

Japanese, Edo Period, 1613–1868
***Inro* and *Netsuke* with Design of Deer and Bamboo, with *Ojime*,** 18th–19th century
*Inro*: wood with lacquer and gold and silver powder; *netsuke*: ivory; *ojime*: copper alloy; cord
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 15.001

Japanese, Edo Period, 1613–1868
***Inro, Netsuke,* and *Ojime***, 18th–19th century
*Inro*: wood with lacquer and gold and silver powder; *netsuke*: wood with lacquer and paint; *ojime*: coral; silk cord
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.422

*Inro* are small layered cases, generally of three to five sections, originally used for storing seals and inks. Exclusively worn by men, they became popular during the Edo period for holding exotic medicines imported from China and Europe by Dutch traders.

An inro is connected by a cord to a *netsuke*, a small carved ornament which serves as a toggle for hanging the inro from a man's obi, or sash. The *ojime* is a decorative bead located between the inro and netsuke. The inro, netsuke, and ojime typically share a design motif.

Japanese, Meiji Period, 1868–1912
**Box with Design of Mount Fuji**, 19th century
Wood with lacquer and gold and silver powder
Gift of Anna and Louisa Case 20.091

Japanese, Meiji Period, 1868–1912
**Box with Design of Foliage**, 19th century
Wood with lacquer and gold powder

Gift of Anna and Louisa Case 20.092

Japanese, Meiji Period, 1868–1912
**Box with Design of Bridge and Landscape**, 19th century
Wood with lacquer and gold powder
Gift of Anna and Louisa Case 20.096

In the highly intricate and lavish Japanese technique *maki-e,* or "sprinkled pictures," powders or minute pieces of metal are sprinkled onto a damp, usually black, lacquer ground to create designs. Such designs can be flat or raised; reliefs can be made by the application of multiple layers of lacquer mixed with charcoal or clay. In either case, the process requires the repetition of applying, drying, and polishing the lacquer surfaces.

Small Japanese boxes traditionally held incense or women's cosmetics. These boxes, modeled after such prototypes, were probably made for sale to Westerners visiting Japan.

Japanese, Meiji Period, 1868–1912
***Negoro* Ware in the Shape of a Wish-granting Jewel**, 19th century
Wood with lacquer
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1986.154

Originally made for utilitarian purposes within the Buddhist temple setting, *negoro* wares are appreciated for their simple forms and unadorned surfaces. Their "worn" look is particularly desirable: with repeated use, the thin red-lacquer topcoat gives way to the black-lacquer base. Here, irregular black horizontal areas intentionally imitate this effect.

This globular vessel with a pointed tip is shaped like a *hoju*, or wish-granting jewel, often associated with the Bodhisattva Jizo, beloved in Japan as the protector of travelers and children.

602-6, case type A-7 Shale 861 Label deck = 5"high x 42" wide ****Note different case size****

Attributed to Payag, active ca. 1625–1660
***Shah Shuja Hunting Nilgai***, ca. 1650–1655
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
Museum Works of Art Fund 58.068

The orange glow of the sun imbues this landscape with a soft light blurring details and forms. In this setting, the Shah Shuja (1616–1660) and his attendants hunt *nilgai*, a type of antelope. The profile views are characteristic of Mughal painting, and the two small white rabbits at center right are considered the signature of the esteemed artist Payag.

The Shah Shuja was the second grandson of Emperor Jahangir, whose jade cup is on view across the gallery. Hunting was an important pastime at the Mughal court, with depictions of the hunt alluding to military prowess.

Indian, Mughal Dynasty, 1526–1858
**City in a Landscape**, ca. 1600–1625
Ink and color on paper
Museum Appropriation 17.457

In 1580, the Mughal emperor Akbar (reign 1556–1605) received an embassy of Jesuits, and this small, carefully rendered watercolor is an example of the subsequent influence of European art on Indian painting. Stronger blues in the foreground become fainter in the background, expressing spatial recession through a European device. Shading and outlining create more dimensional representations than in earlier Indian images. The walled city is also an Indian-European hybrid, featuring houses with gabled roofs that would not have been indigenous.

Kazim ibn Najaf Ali, Iranian, Isfahan, Qajar Dynasty
**Pen Case**, 1850–1875
Paper with binder, paint, and varnish
Gift of Mrs. William C. Baker 27.119

Iranian, Islamic, A.H. 1320/A.D. 1902
**Pen Case with Bird and Flower Design**, 19th century
Paper with binder, paint, and varnish
Gift of Nelson A., Laurance S. and David Rockefeller 56.066

Iranian, Islamic
**Pen Case**, 19th century
Paper with binder, paint, and varnish
Gift of Nelson A., Laurance S. and David Rockefeller 56.067

Islamic lacquerware technique differs from the tree-sap method used in China and Japan, and is often described as papier-mâché. Layers of paper are pasted onto one another, painted with watercolor designs, and covered with several coats of a glossy protective varnish.

Pen cases were prized for their association with calligraphy, an important art form in the Islamic world. Status symbols commissioned by royalty and social elites, these luxury pen cases originally held reed pens, silver inkwells, and other accessories, such as knives for cutting pen nibs or scissors for trimming paper.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911; Kangxi Period, 1662–1722
**Plate with Design of Chrysanthemums and Mallow with Incised Leaping Five-clawed Dragon**, 17th–18th century
Porcelain with glaze and enamel
Bequest of John M. Crawford 1989.110.57

Two decorative techniques are combined on this porcelain plate. A design of chrysanthemum and mallow blooms is painted in yellow, green, and purple enamels over a surface incised with a five-clawed dragon leaping for a flaming pearl.

In Chinese design, dragons with five claws are imperial symbols; dragons are otherwise portrayed with three or four claws. A six-character mark (*Da Qing Kangxi nian zhi*) on the base points the plate's origin to the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen.

**Asia II: Materials and Techniques**

Center Case: label deck: 6in high; two sides, each 16ft long; two ends, each 3ft10in long

Japanese, Edo Period, 1615–1868
Palanquin (*norimono*) with Tokugawa and Ichijō Crests, late 18th–first half of 19th century
Black lacquered wood with gold paint and incised metal fittings; ink and color on paper
Gift of Brown University 2004.113

This elaborate palanquin, or *onna norimono* ("ride for a woman"), transported a bride of high social standing to the groom's residence on their wedding day. The exterior is constructed in wood and embellished with black lacquer, gold paint, and metal fittings. Two repeated crests serve as decoration and signify that the groom descended from Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the first military ruler, or shogun, of the Edo Period.

The compact interior is embellished with an armrest and scenes from *The Tale of Genji,* an 11th-century masterpiece of Japanese literature, written by a noblewoman about court life. On the back wall is a celebratory depiction of a pine tree, crane, tortoise, and bamboo, all of which are auspicious symbols related to Hōraisan, the island of immortality. The wisteria crest of the Ichijō family, of which the bride was a member, appears on the coffered ceiling, alternating with the three-lobed crest of the Tokugawa family. The slatted windows, covered with silk gauze, allowed the bride to look out without being seen. The long pole threaded through the top brasses was the means by which two or more strong men lifted and carried the palanquin.

One of only a few palanquins in the United States, this example was perhaps the first to enter the country. In 1878 it was presented to Brown University's museum of natural history by Philadelphia minister Elias R. Beadle. When Brown dissolved the museum in 1915, the university lent the palanquin to the RISD Museum, eventually gifting it in 2004. The interior paintings as well as the exterior lacquer and brasses were conserved by a team of specialists in 2010 with the assistance of the Sumitomo Foundation of Japan.

In 1919, Lucy Truman Aldrich (1869–1955)—the eldest daughter of Rhode Island senator Nelson Aldrich and the sister of philanthropist Abby Aldrich Rockefeller—embarked on a voyage to Japan, Korea, and China. This journey activated a lifelong appreciation for the finest examples of textile artisanry and sparked a brilliant collecting career spanning three decades. Aldrich made five more collecting trips during the 1920s, with repeat visits to Japan, Korea, and China and forays to India, Indonesia, and Egypt, amassing many hundreds of spectacular textiles from these regions.

Since Aldrich's return from her initial voyage, the textiles she collected have found a place of honor within the RISD Museum's galleries. In 1951 she dedicated a gallery for their display in memory of her sister. Another of Aldrich's collections, that of early European porcelain, is on display on the Museum's third floor in a gallery devoted to this material.

Between 1934 and 1955, Aldrich gave more than 700 garments and textiles to the RISD Museum, forming the nucleus of the Museum's renowned Asian textile collections. Two of the most significant groupings of Nō theater robes and Buddhist monks' mantles outside of Japan are included in these holdings, as are exemplars of Chinese, Indian, Thai, Indonesian, Persian, and Ottoman court and religious textile arts. The textiles in this gallery span Aldrich's collecting career, from her days as a novice to her choices as a seasoned expert, affording the study of a diverse array of Asian textile traditions and illuminating the skill and effort of the artisans who fashioned these extraordinary objects.

**[LONG CASE ALONG EAST WALL]**

[materials/process text]
**Woven with Gold**

Its irresistible warmth and sparkle and resistance to corrosion have made gold a symbol of purity, indestructibility, and prestige for millennia. One of the earliest uses of gold was as an applied ornament on ceremonial dress. With the development of complex weaving technologies, the gleaming metal was crafted into a thread that could be integrated into the very structure of fabric.

Introduced into the ancient Chinese aesthetic repertoire by Tartar artisans from Central Asia, gilt-paper metallic threads came to prominence as a status symbol in the first millennium BCE. Gilt-paper threads typically were made from sheets of tough mulberry-bark paper covered in lacquer and gold leaf then cut into thin strips and woven as such or wrapped around a silk thread. Chinese weavers introduced gilt paper wefts, or crosswise threads, to Japan in the early 1600s. The Indian process for making gold thread—a specialty of the cities Varanasi and Surat—differed only slightly from Chinese and Japanese production in the use of thin gilded silver wire, flattened and twisted around a yellow silk core.

[object labels]
**[GROUP 1: Japanese kesa and No robe]**

Japanese
Mantle Worn by a Buddhist Monk (*Kesa*), 1786–1838
Silk and gold-leaf gilt-paper discontinuous supplementary weft patterning
Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 35.284

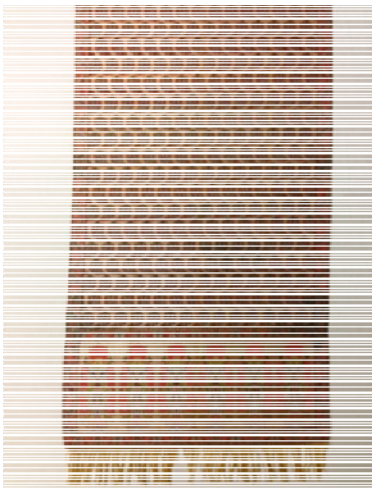
This Buddhist monk's mantle shimmers with life as gilt-paper wefts stream across its surface. The gold threads set off silk squares depicting bamboo leaves and chrysanthemum clusters. Here material luxury translates to the spiritual realm as gold refers to the infinite light of Buddha and the combined motifs express rejuvenation and longevity.

Despite the mantle's lavish materials and technical virtuosity, its patchwork arrangement retains a pointed allusion to Buddhism's Indian origins. Monks following the historical Buddha's teachings renounced all worldly pleasures but their robes, which they stitched together from scraps of cast-off material. Temples often received textiles such as this one as gifts, expressions of the donor's piety.

Japanese
Nō Theater Costume (*Karaori*), late 18th–early 19th century
Silk and gold-leaf gilt-paper twill weave, continuous supplementary wefts, discontinuous supplementary weft patterning
Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 35.474

This robe, patterned with chrysanthemum blossoms and a golden bamboo lattice similar to the adjacent *kesa*, was created as a costume for a character in a Nō play. A theatrical genre developed in 14th-century Japan, Nō uses drama, dance, and music to present stories based on Japanese legend and literature. The complex *karaori* weave structure, characterized by long silk wefts that float over the surface and appear to be embroidered, is an advanced technique that was nurtured in the Nō theater world. Karaori was used so frequently for Nō robes that the term has also come to denote the box-sleeved robes used mainly for female roles.

**[GROUP 2: Indian and Persian chogha, sari, and patka]**



Persian
Man's Sash (*Patka*), 1700–1750
Silk and gold-wrapped thread compound weave (continuous and discontinuous supplementary weft patterning)
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.529

The small floral sprays dancing across the interior of this Persian sash closely approximate those adorning the adjacent Indian woman's sari and man's robe. The designs and the use of gold thread illustrate the fluid exchange between Indian Mughal and Persian court cultures through the 19th century. Royal Indian workshops supported traditional Persian craftsmanship, with Mughal rulers of

northern India importing not only Persian court artisans for their own royal weaving workshops but motifs such as the Persian flowering tree, or *buta*. Over centuries, this realistic floral motif became the stylized, teardrop-shaped mass of swirling vegetation known in Europe as paisley.

Indian, Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi
Man's Coat (*Chogha*), late 18th century
Silk and gold-wrapped thread compound weave
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.264

Indian, Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi
Sari, late 19th century
Silk and metallic-wrapped thread continuous and discontinuous supplementary weft patterning
Bequest of Lucy T. Aldrich 55.319

For centuries, weavers in the northern Indian city of Varanasi produced sumptuous silk and gold fabrics for wealthy patrons, including Mughal royalty. Iconic Indian patterns such as the repeated flowering tree (*buta*) in gold-wrapped silk thread on the man's coat and the meandering vines with ornate buta motifs on the woman's sari reveal the power of Mughal aesthetic influence. The tree of life motif migrated during the 16th century from Persia to India, as did the emphasis given to the motif by weaving it in gold thread. Muslims long have related gold to power and honor. Hindus, too, have an ancient history of associating gold with the sun and its purifying and life-giving properties.

**[SHORT CASE ALONG SOUTH WALL]**

**[materials/process text]**
**Woven with Silk**

About 7,000 years ago, Chinese artisans began domesticating the *Bombyx mori* moth. Its caterpillar spins a gossamer fiber known for its exceptional strength and ability to absorb vivid colors. Silk—the fabric woven from these strands—soon became an emblem of power, social status, and vitality, captivating China's imperial and religious elite.

When silk luxury textiles became the object of regular commerce during China's Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the westward world was similarly enthralled. Circulated along an extensive network of trade routes later dubbed the Silk Road, silk acquired the value ascribed to gold. Over several centuries, the silk trade instigated an exchange of motifs and technologies, both eastward and westward, that continues to influence textile design today.

[object labels]
**[GROUP 3: Chinese jiasha and emperor's robe]**

Chinese
Mantle Worn by a Buddhist Monk (*Jiasha*), 1700–1750
Silk and gold-wrapped thread slit-tapestry weave (*kesi*)
Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 35.273

The bold pictorial design of this Buddhist monk's mantle was created using the slit-tapestry technique known as *kesi* or *k'o-ssu*, a term roughly translated as "carved silk." Weavers in China have used this technique, thought to have migrated from Central Asia, for centuries, as it allows the weaver to "paint" with thread through the painstaking hand manipulation of extremely fine silk weft yarns.

The individual squares contain renderings of Buddhist motifs such as the lotus and flaming jewel, imperial Chinese symbols that include the phoenix and the five-clawed dragon, and antique vessels symbolizing Confucian values of connoisseurship and respect for the past. The lanterns may indicate that this robe was made for the Buddhist Lantern Festival, held the last day of lunar New Year celebrations.

Chinese, Qing Dynasty
Man's Court Robe, 1736–1795
Silk and gold-wrapped thread slit-tapestry weave (*kesi*) with fur trim
Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 35.390

Only artisans working for the Chinese imperial household would have possessed the time and skill required to create this intricately woven silk robe. Strict rules of dress for the 18th-century court reserved a particular hue of yellow—its dazzling brightness meant to evoke sunlight—solely for the emperor and his consort, and the design seen here features the imperial five-clawed dragon and other symbols restricted to the emperor's use. The sun, moon, mountain, and constellation represent the four annual sacrifices made by the emperor, and the *fu* character and axe stand for his power to judge and punish.