

Feathers, Flowers, Talons and Fangs: Power and Serenity in Japanese Nature Prints,
February 2, 2007-June 10, 2007

Fierce tigers and awe-inspiring dragons - these subjects hardly seem to fit into the same category as delicate songbirds like the nightingale, and blossoms as ephemeral as the cherry. Even so, a wide array of flora and fauna and bugs and beasts appears in Japanese prints of the genre traditionally known as "birds and flowers" (*kacho*). These Edo-period prints (1603 - 1867) reflect the richness and beauty of nature as perceived by some of Japan's greatest printmakers. The profound Japanese appreciation for the natural world is mirrored in many aspects of Japanese art and literature. Matsuo Basho (1644 - 94), considered the greatest author of haiku poetry of the Edo period, sets the stage for appreciation of the works on view here as he explains his understanding of the relation between man, nature, and poetry:

For a person who has the [poetic] spirit, everything he sees becomes a flower, and everything he imagines turns into a moon. Those who do not see the flower are no different from barbarians, and those who do not imagine the flower are akin to beasts. Leave barbarians and beasts behind; follow the ways of the universe and return to nature. (Trans. in Makoto Ueda, *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*. Cleveland: 1967, pp. 147 - 48.)

This selection of approximately 60 works is drawn from the gift to the Museum of about 720 outstanding bird-and-flower prints (*kachoga*) donated by Mrs. John D. (Abby Aldrich) Rockefeller, Jr., in 1934/38. Few collections can rival the depth and scope of RISD's holdings, which are exceptional and span the development of *kachoga* during the Edo period (1603 - 1867). We invite you to take this rare opportunity to savor the lush visual content of these wonderful prints and enrich your understanding of the Japanese printmaking tradition.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Mori Kansai, Japanese, 1814-1894
Fruit and a Taihu Rock, 1873
Ink, color, and gold on silk
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2001.16D

The right-hand page of this album is executed in Rinpa (琳派) style and should be compared with the print. Note the flatness of the water's surface, the overhanging vines of arrowroot (*kuzu* 葛), and the additions of color on the plant leaves in *tarashikomi* technique.



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Mori Kansai, Japanese, 1814-1894
Arrowroot Vine, Shrimp, and Fish, 1873
Ink, color, and gold on silk
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2001.16E

The right-hand page of this album is executed in Rinpa (琳派) style and should be compared with the print. Note the flatness of the water's surface, the overhanging vines of arrowroot (*kuzu* 葛), and the additions of color on the plant leaves in *tarashikomi* technique.



Wu Faxiang, Chinese, 17th century
Duo Yun Xuan, Chinese
Old Letterpapers from the Wisteria Studio, 1981
Woodblock printed book with illustrations in ink and color on paper
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2004.22

These two compositions demonstrate how the Japanese could have learned embossing technique from studying Chinese books. The book is an exact copy of the 1626 edition made from blocks cut from designs traced from the original book.



Hu Zhengyan, Chinese, 1584-1674
Rongbaozhai, Chinese
Shizhuzhai jian pu (Letterpapers from the Ten Bamboo Studio), 1952
Woodblock-printed book with illustrations in ink and color on paper
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2005.1.3

This orange, rendered in beautifully graded tones of ink, demonstrates how the Japanese could have learned gradation printing from studying Chinese books. The book is an exact copy of the mid-17th century edition made from blocks cut from designs traced from the original book.



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Wang Gai

Wang Shi

Wang Nie, Chinese, ca. late 17th–early 18th century

Orchids, Butterfly, and Rock (Jiezi yuan hua zhuan), from the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual (Jieziyuan huazhuan)*, possibly printed in 1701

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.610



This very lovely Chinese print, which is most likely from the 1701 edition of the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*, should be compared with the Kitao Masayoshi (北尾政美) print of Chrysanthemums and Butterflies exhibited nearby, which has a similar subject. Note also the fine quality of the color printing. The *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual* was known and reprinted in Japan by the mid-eighteenth century.

Sumiyoshi

The Tale of Genji, late 1600s

Ink, slight color, gold and gold leaf on paper

Mary B. Jackson Fund, Jesse Metcalf Fund, and Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 82.103.1



In this chapter from the great Heian-period (794-1185) novel, the *Tale of Genji*, the protagonist, Prince Genji, receives a visit from his friend Tō no Chūjō. They catch sight of geese in the sky and compose parting poems on that seasonal theme. As in the print (34.544), most of the composition's detail is compressed into the foreground, with the Inland Sea outspread before the two friends and the geese and autumn moon visible in the far distance.

Kubo Shunman, Japanese, 1757-1820

Hokusai, Japanese, fl. 1789-1818

Pheasants and heath roses (Boke ni kiji), ca. 1810

Color woodblock print with metallic pigments and embossing

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.352



Japanese quince (kusa boke 草木瓜, *Chaenomeles japonica*) blooms in the spring.

Rintei, Japanese, 19th century

Japanese

Camellias and tea-utensil box (Seika: Tsubaki to chabako), 1820's

Polychrome woodblock print with embossing and metallic embellishments

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.386

The lacquered tea box on the right is decorated with landscapes of the "Eight Views of Omi," a well-known landscape subject associated with the region near Kyoto and Lake Biwa; a tea scoop rests on a folded cloth in the foreground. The presence of the camellia (*Camellia japonica*; *tsubaki* 椿) and the words for longevity (*su* 壽) and good fortune (*fuku* 福) on the vase indicate that this was probably a New Year's print.



Niwa Tōkei, Japanese, 1760-1822

Nandina berries and wild roses in snow (Setchu nanten to yamabuki), 1810's

Polychrome woodblock print with gofun

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.411

Nandina is associated with winter and with the floral arrangements displayed at the New Year. The pink blossoms are likely to be *Camellia sasanqua* (sazanka 山茶花), a type of winter-blooming camellia.



Kitao Masayoshi, Japanese, 1764-1824

Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848

Wagtail (Sekirei), From *Raikin zui (Pictures of imported birds)*, 1790

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.524.2

The conceit of this book is that the birds were imported from China via the Japanese port of Nagasaki. In actuality, the wagtail is commonly found in Japan.



Kitao Masayoshi, Japanese, 1764-1824

Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848

Silver pheasants (Hakukan), From *Raikin zui (Pictures of imported birds)*, 1790

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.530.2

The conceit of this book is that the birds were imported from China via the Japanese port of Nagasaki. The silver pheasant is native to the



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mainland of Asia, specifically, to southern China and Southeast Asia. Of the three prints from Kitao Masayoshi's album shown here, this is the only one that depicts a bird that would be truly exotic in Japan.

Kitao Masayoshi, Japanese, 1764-1824
Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848
(Eurasian) Jay (Yokin), Raikin zui (Pictures of imported birds), 1790
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.534

The Japanese name for this bird is cited on the print as *yōkin* (鷓鴣), which is a sparrow hawk. In actuality, the bird is a common Eurasian jay (*Garrus glandarius*; *kakesu* 懸巢). The reason for this misidentification is not clear.

The conceit of this book is that the birds were imported from China via the Japanese port of Nagasaki. In actuality, the jay is common in Japan.

Shunpudo Noshiro Ryuko, Japanese
Matsumoto Zenbei, Japanese
Kitao Masayoshi, Japanese, 1764-1824
Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848
Chrysanthemums and butterflies (Kiku to botan), A mirror of flowers and birds (Ehon kacho kagami), 1789
Polychrome woodblock print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.537

In both China and Japan, the depiction of butterflies symbolizes happiness and long life. In this print, the bodies of the butterflies are drawn using the word for good luck (*kichi* 吉). Butterflies can be represented with a variety of flowers; other prints with this theme are discussed on a nearby wall.

Albums and Surimono (ca. 1790s/1820s)

Mori Shunkei, Japanese, active ca. 1800-1820
Camellia and narcissus (Tsubaki to suisen), ca. 1810'S
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.609

This print was made to celebrate the sixtieth birthday (*kanreki* 還暦) of a man named Seihan (井半). Turning sixty was considered special



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because you had completed a calendrical cycle of the “stems and branches,” the Chinese characters used to name the cycle of sixty calendar years. Both the camellia (*Camellia japonica*, *tsubaki* 椿) and narcissus (*suisen* 水仙) are associated with the New Year.

Kitagawa Utamaro, Japanese, 1754-1806

Tsutaya Jūzaburō, Japanese, 1750 - 1797

Quail, skylark (Uzura hibari), A myriad of birds compared with kyōka poems (Momo chidori kyōka awase), ca. 1790

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 38.001



The playful love poems in this album were the result of a poetry contest. The lighthearted tone of the preface sets the stage for the texts and images in the album: “Now, be it the mating calls of a myriad of birds in spring, or the cries of migrating birds in autumn—do they not equally console the heart and delight the ear?”

Kitagawa Utamaro, Japanese, 1754-1806

Tsutaya Jūzaburō, Japanese, 1750 - 1797

Goshawk, thick-billed shrike (Taka mozu), A myriad of birds compared with kyōka poems (Momo chidori kyōka awase), ca. 1790

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 38.008



The playful love poems in this album were the result of a poetry contest. The lighthearted tone of the preface sets the stage for the texts and images in the album: “Now, be it the mating calls of a myriad of birds in spring, or the cries of migrating birds in autumn—do they not equally console the heart and delight the ear?”

Kitagawa Utamaro, Japanese, 1754-1806

Tsutaya Jūzaburō, Japanese, 1750 - 1797

Mallard ducks, kingfisher (Kamo kawasemi), A myriad of birds compared with kyōka poems (Momo chidori kyōka awase), ca. 1790

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 38.014



The playful love poems in this album were the result of a poetry contest. The lighthearted tone of the preface sets the stage for the texts and images in the album: “Now, be it the mating calls of a myriad of birds in spring, or the cries of migrating birds in autumn—do they not equally console the heart and delight the ear?”

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Maruya Jinpachi, Japanese
Butterfly and peonies (Botan ni cho), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.393



Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Butterfly and peonies (Botan ni cho), *Untitled (known as Large Flowers)*, ca. 1833-1834
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.495



Kitao Shigemasa, Japanese, 1739-1820
Urokogataya Magobei, Japanese
Dragon and Tiger (Ryuko), 1770s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1093

The dragon and the tiger are powerful directional symbols borrowed from ancient Chinese cosmology. The dragon, regarded as the protector of the cosmos and bringer of thunder, rain, and fertility, alludes to spring and to the east, whereas the tiger, which symbolizes courage and physical strength, is associated with the earth, autumn, and the west. As the most powerful animals in their respective celestial and terrestrial abodes, their pairing expresses the balance of forces within the universe.



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Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770
Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
Cat, butterfly and begonias (Kaido ni cho to neko), ca. 1767
Polychrome wood block print with gauffrage
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.421

In China, the cat and the butterfly together convey wishes for long life. The word for cat sounds the same as the word for age eighty to ninety (*mao* 猫), and the word for butterfly sounds the same as the word for age seventy to eighty (*die* 蝶). Even though the words for cat and butterfly do not sound the same in Japanese, the meaning is still the same.



Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770
Cockerels fighting under flowering peach (Niwatori awase to momo), ca. 1773
Polychrome wood block print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.541

Since cocks symbolize martial strength in Japan, the confrontation between these birds is very much in character.



Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
White herons and snow-covered reeds (Yukiashi ni shirasagi), ca. 1773
Polychrome wood block print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.553



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Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
Pheasant, bird and peonies (Botan ni kinkei to kotori), 1770's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.646

Pheasants and peonies (*botan* 牡丹) are often paired in Japanese paintings and prints. The peony alludes to wealth and distinction; this print would convey wishes for worldly success.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Peacock and Peonies (Botan ni kujaku), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.279.1

The association of the peony (*botan* 牡丹) with wealth and high position is clearly articulated by the Chinese philosopher and writer Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-73) in an essay on the lotus. In distinguishing the characteristics of the chrysanthemum, the peony, and the lotus, he describes the peony as "[someone] of wealth and high position." It is this phrase from his text that is cited on the print.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Surugaya Sakujiro, Japanese

*Autumn: Judo's Chrysanthemums in a deep ravine in China (Aki),
Flowers of the four seasons with historical associations, mid 1840's*
Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.332



The imagery of both these fans alludes to the story of Kikujidō (菊慈童, also known as Judō寿童), who is depicted in the cartouche on the lower of the prints. According to Chinese legend, Kikujidō offended the Emperor Muwang 周穆王 (ca. 985 - ca. 907 BCE). But before the emperor sent the culprit into exile, Muwang instructed him in a chant that would protect him and give him long life. The young man found his way to a valley where chrysanthemums grew prolifically and passed his time painting the chant on their petals; thus he is associated with longevity. The upper print cites an alternate name for the chrysanthemum, *okinagusa* (翁草, "old man plant"), making the connection associated with the legend of Kikujidō. The subject matter also makes a seasonal reference to autumn, the time when chrysanthemums bloom.

Okumura Masanobu, Japanese, 1686-1764

Falcon tethered to perch, 1710's

Monochrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.443



This spectacular print is an early, monochrome experiment with bird-and-flower subject matter. Its composition derives from Chinese and Japanese paintings of the same theme.

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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Moriya Jihei, Japanese
Hawk and Cherry Blossoms (Kaido ni taka), From a set of five untitled
prints of animals, ca. 1834
Color woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.498

The tethered hawk is a subject known from Chinese and Japanese painting. This flowering fruit tree, although similar in appearance to a cherry (*sakura* 櫻), is actually *aronia* (*kaidō* 海棠), a kind of crab apple that belongs to the *Malus* family.



Toyohiro Utagawa, Japanese, 1773-1828
Hawk and white plum (Shiraume ni taka), 1810's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.636



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kawaguchiya Shozo, Japanese
Japanese Crane and Wave (Nami ni tanchō), 1830's
Polychrome wood block print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.040



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Tree Sparrows and Japanese Morning Glories (Asagao ni suzume),
1830's
Polychrome woodblock print with gauffrage
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.067



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Sanoya Kihei, Japanese
Bird and loquats (Biwa ni kotori), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.282

The bird may be a black-naped oriole, sometimes known as a "Korean nightingale."

This print imitates the appearance of a Chinese rubbing. In the case of this print, the design was cut into the block, leaving the background in relief. When the block was inked, only the raised areas were printed in blue and the carved areas remained white.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese

Tree Sparrows and Camellia in Snow (Setchū tsubaki ni suzume),
1830's

Polychrome woodblock print with embossing

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.288.1

These prints were both made from the same set of blocks, but the blocks were modified to create the second composition. Which do you think came first?



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese

Tree Sparrows and Camellia in Snow (Setchū tsubaki ni suzume),
1830's

Polychrome woodblock print with embossing

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.288.2

These prints were both made from the same set of blocks, but the blocks were modified to create the second composition. Which do you think came first?



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Iris (Kakitsubata), Six flowers, 1856
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.328

Both of these prints have seasonal references: the iris blooms in early summer, and the autumn-flowering plants in the second fan are seen under a full autumn moon.

These two prints were designed to be used as flat fans, which accounts for their unusual shape.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Maruya Seijiro
Moon, begonias, bell flowers and ominaeshi (Tsuki ni shukaido to kikyō to ominaeshi), 1853
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.329

Both of these prints have seasonal references: the iris blooms in early summer, and the autumn-flowering plants in the second fan are seen under a full autumn moon.

These two prints were designed to be used as flat fans, which accounts for their unusual shape.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Uoya Eikichi, Japanese, 19th century
The hundred thousand-tsubo plain, Susaki, Fukagawa (Fukagawa susaki jumantsubo), Meisho Edo hyakkei, 1857
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.420

In a striking composition that is typical of the unusual views that Hiroshige created in this series of prints, a golden eagle (*inu-washi* 犬鷲) swoops down over the broad plain at Fukagawa. *The One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo* was the last series that Hiroshige worked on before his death.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
*Pampas Grass; Swallows; The Five Virtues, from an untitled series of
"stone-printed pasted picture" (ishizuri-e 石刷絵 harimaze-e 張交絵),
ca. 1850's*
Monochrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.456

This is a "pasted picture" (*harimaze-e* 張交絵), a print combining a group of designs that could be cut out. Pampas grass (*susuki* 薄) is one of the "seven grasses of autumn." The "five virtues" are alluded to in a word play in the composition in the lower left—the name for the overturned three-legged tea ceremony trivet in Chinese characters (kanji 漢字) denotes the five virtues.

This print imitates the appearance of a Chinese rubbing. In the case of this print, the design was cut into the block, leaving the background in relief. When the block was inked, only the raised areas were printed in black and the carved areas remained white.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Peacock and Peonies (Botan ni kujaku), early 1840's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.633

The association of the peony (*botan* 牡丹) with wealth and high position is clearly articulated by the Chinese philosopher and writer Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-73). In distinguishing the characteristics of the chrysanthemum, the peony, and the lotus, he describes the peony as "[someone] of wealth and high position." It is this phrase from his text that is inscribed on another Hiroshige print exhibited behind you. This Chinese symbolism is retained in the Japanese context.

This print was originally mounted as a hanging scroll; traces of the mounting are still visible around the perimeter of the paper.



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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Japanese

Cockerels, chicks and spiderworts (Tsuyukusa ni niwatori), mid 1830's

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.336



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Tsugiya Yasubei, Japanese

Snake, pheasant and canna (Kanna ni kiji to hebi), mid 1830's

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.337



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Cuckoo and azaleas (Hototogisu satsuki), *Untitled (known as Small flowers)*, ca. 1834

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.486.1



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Cuckoo and azaleas (Hototogisu satsuki), *Untitled (known as Small Flowers)*, ca. 1834

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.486.2



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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Shrike and thistles (Mozu oniazami), Untitled (known as Small Flowers), ca. 1834
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.487.2



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Poppies (Keshi), Untitled (known as Large Flowers), late 1820s
Color woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.493



The arc of these poppy flowers as they blow in the wind has sometimes been compared with Hokusai's composition for Under the Well of the Great Wave off Kanagawa, one of the prints from his series of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*. What do you think of this idea?

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Duck in Snow (Setchû ashi no kamo), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.272



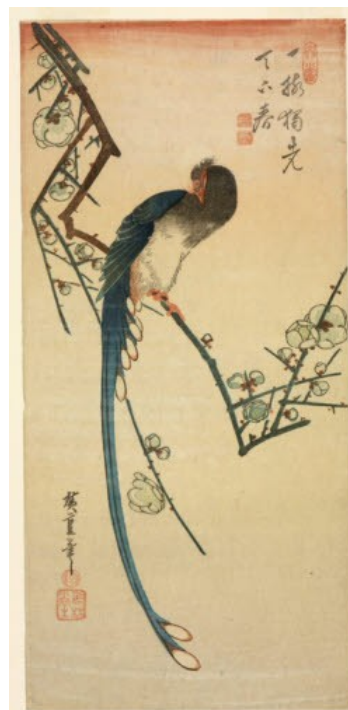
Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese
Barn Swallows and Peach Blossoms under Full Moon (Tsukiyo momo ni tsubame), early 1830s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.286



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese
Long-tailed Bird and Plum (Ume ni tori), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print with embossing
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.290

The bird illustrated here is probably a red-billed blue magpie, which is native to the mainland of Asia and would have been regarded as quite exotic in Japan.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Dragonfly and Hardy Begonia (Tonbo to shūkaidō), 1830's

Polychrome woodblock print, ink and color on paper, embossing (gauffrage)

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.225

In this delicately rendered composition, the leaves of the begonia are overprinted in a sequence of colors to simulate painting. Its evocative sensibility also recalls painting in the Shijō (四条) style.



Utagawa Sadahide, Japanese, 1807-1878 or 1879

Honya Kyusuke, Japanese

Java sparrow and rice plants (Kome no hana ni suzume), A set of birds and flowers, 1834

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.307

The composition of this print is closely related to the Song-dynasty (960-1279) album leaf attributed to the Chinese painter Han Ruo-zhuo 韓若拙 (active 1111-25) reproduced. Song dynasty paintings were known in Japan and their compositions were available through Chinese and Japanese printed books.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Mandarin ducks in stream (Kareashi ni oshidori), 1830's
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.348

The overall patterning in this print recalls the style of Rinpa (琳派) painting. The abstract quality of the water's surface, the incorporation of the calligraphy and the overhanging branches into the print's foreground pattern, and the sharply tilted ground plane all contribute to this effect. Compare it to the painting by Mori Kansai in the case. Although executed after the print, the painting is done in the Rinpa style; note the flatness of the water's surface, the overhanging vines of arrowroot (*kuzu* 葛), and the additions of color on the plant leaves in an ink-puddling technique know as *tarashikomi*.



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Bullfinch and weeping cherry (Uso shidarezakura), *Untitled (known as Small Flowers)*, ca. 1834
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.489

This print reflects the classic Chinese bird-and-flower composition known as "the cut-off branch." In the Song dynasty (960-1279), painters focused on depicting small vignettes from nature in the album-leaf format, moving away from the more full-scale views favored in earlier painting.



Japanese
Murataya Jirobei, Japanese
Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770
Cormorants on boat and pinks (Nadeshiko ni ubune), 1770's
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.544

This print is done in a style associated with the Heian-period (794-1185) court; the sharply tilted ground plane and the sectioned composition with cloud bands used as dividers are typical devices. The seventeenth-century album of the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語) in the case utilizes the same techniques.



RISD MUSEUM

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Black-naped Oriole and Confederate Rose (Fuyô ni kôraiuguisu),
1830's

Polychrome wood block print with gauffrage
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.238

The bird is probably a black-naped oriole, sometimes known as a
"Korean nightingale," a bird not usually seen in present-day Japan.



RISD MUSEUM

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kawaguchiya Shozo, Japanese
Pheasant on snow-covered pine (Yukimatsu ni kiji), 1830's
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.258

The bird is a ring-necked pheasant, which is native to Japan.



RISD MUSEUM

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese
Parrot on Pine Branch (Matsu ni inko), 1830's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.276

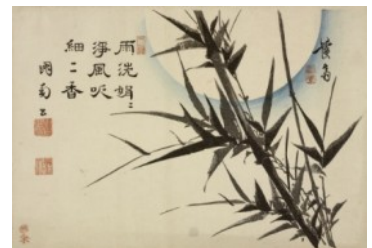
This bird may be a Pennant's Rosella, *Platycercus elegans*, which is native to eastern Australia and would have been quite exotic in nineteenth-century Japan.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Sanoya Kihei, Japanese
Morning Glories (Asagao), 1854
Color woodblock fan print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.442



Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848
Echigoya Chohachi, Japanese
Bamboo and moon (Tsuki to take), 1820's
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.521



RISD MUSEUM

Lu Fu, second half of the 15th century -after 1505

Crane on a Snow-Laden Plum Tree, 1600s

Ink on silk

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.339

In China, crane and plum can allude to the Song poet Lin Bu (林逋967-1028). In this instance, however, it seems more likely that the presence of the crane is intended to convey wishes for long life. Plum blooms in spring, and the snow-covered plum in Chinese painting simply points to the seasonal transition.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Wakasaya Yoichi, Japanese

Crane, wave and rising sun (Kyokujitsu nami ni tsuru), 1830's

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.297

In this instance, Hiroshige has omitted the pine but still conveys the New Year's associations of his subject through the presence of the crane and the rising sun.



RISD MUSEUM

Totoya Hokkei, Japanese, 1780-1850

Cranes and young pines (Komatsu ni tsuru), A collection of 36 birds,
ca. 1820

Polychrome woodblock print with embossing and metallic
embellishment

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.370

This print was a New Year's greeting made for the Ren poetry circle; its emblem (*mon* 紋) is enclosed in a circle above the series title in the upper right. Both cranes and pine allude to the New Year, and pines were used in traditional New Year's decorations. To reinforce further the good wishes conveyed here, the symbols for the Seven Gods of Good Fortune have been printed in gold in the band along the top of the print.



Katsukawa Shunsen, Japanese, 1762-ca. 1830

Izumiya Ichibei, Japanese

Cranes, pines and rising sun (Hinode to matsu to tsuru), 1810's

Polychrome wood block print with embossing

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.404

The fine coloring and special printing effects in this work indicate that it may be a privately commissioned print (*surimono* 摺物). In addition to the typical symbols of cranes and pine, this design includes yet another indicator of the New Year, the rising sun in the distance.



RISD MUSEUM

Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Moriya Jihei, Japanese

Cranes on Snow-covered Pine Branch (Yukimatsu ni tsuru), late 1820s

Color woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.496

Hokusai adds snow to the classical New Year's combination of cranes and pine, enhancing the seasonal aspect of his design.

