

Kōrin Gafu and the Rimpa Tradition in Japanese Printmaking, March 8, 2002-June 2, 2002

This exhibition focuses on the published picture album (*Kōrin gafu*) of the painter Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) and includes related prints and illustrated books from the Rimpa tradition. In 1802, an admirer of Kōrin from Osaka, Nakamura Hōchū (d. 1819), published the first collection of Kōrin's work, *Kōrin's Picture Album (Kōrin gafu)*. This original edition was republished in 1826 and reissued again during the Meiji period (1868-1911), probably in the late 19th century, as a result of a significant revival of the Rimpa style in 19th-century Edo (premodern Tokyo). The painter Sakai Hōitsu (1761-1828) had become fascinated with the work of Kōrin, who was active briefly in Edo during the years 1704 to 1709. To preserve and transmit Kōrin's style, Hōitsu published the *One Hundred Works by Kōrin (Kōrin hyakuzu)* in 1815.

The Rimpa painting style evolved in the city of Kyoto in the 17th century under the auspices of two very versatile artists, Tawaraya Sōtatsu (active ca. 1600-40) and Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637). In its earliest form, Rimpa drew upon the courtly tradition of painting, calligraphy, and poetry so closely associated with Kyoto, while also emphasizing the craft tradition. The sense of design integral to this style was even more pronounced in the work of Ogata Kōrin and later adherents of the Rimpa school.

Usually, *gafu* (sketchbooks) were used to disseminate an artist's style through his drawings. In the case of the *Kōrin gafu*, however, it seems that Hōchū derived his woodblock-printed designs from paintings attributed to the great master. Rimpa did not have an official lineage, as did the securely-established Kano school of painting patronized by the shogunate. Instead, its adherents identified with the tradition through the process of copying and imitating works by their predecessors. These 19th-century publications by Hōitsu and Hōchū focused renewed attention on the Rimpa tradition in painting and were also an important means of preserving and transmitting Rimpa-style compositions. The appeal of these works lies in their simplicity, their directness, and their outstanding sense of abstract design.

The pairings of different editions of the *Kōrin gafu* on this wall demonstrate some of their differences in quality, specifically in the rendering of the *tarashikomi* technique so characteristic of Rimpa painting. The woodblock artist has attempted to imitate this technique, in which a drop of color would be added to a select area (often green on black) before that area had dried completely, allowing the two pigments to blend together in slightly unpredictable and uncontrolled ways. The technique is seen in a painting from the Mori Kansai album in the case in the middle of the room.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Mori Kansai, Japanese, 1814-1894
Album of Eight Paintings, 1873
ink, color and gold on silk; versos stenciled in blue
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2001.16

This wonderful painting is Kansai's statement in the Rimpa style. Note how effectively he uses the *tarashikomi* technique, in which a drop of color would be added to a select area (often green on black) before that area had dried completely, allowing the two pigments to blend together in slightly unpredictable and uncontrolled ways.

Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Moon and plum, early 1900s
Woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.625

These three renditions of a composition of plum blossoms in moonlight illustrate how closely the subject was identified with Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) and how often it was repeated by artists who worked in the Rimpa tradition.



Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Bush warbler and blossoming plum (Ume ni uguisu), *Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin)*, late 1800s-early 1900s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.401

These three renditions of a composition of plum blossoms in moonlight illustrate how closely the subject was identified with Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) and how often it was repeated by artists who worked in the Rimpa tradition. Here a nightingale has been added and poetry copied over the surface of the composition.



Chishin Motojima
Moon and a Plum Tree, mid-1820s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of George Pierce Metcalf 56.039.86

These three renditions of a composition of plum blossoms in moonlight illustrate how closely the subject was identified with Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716) and how often it was repeated by artists who worked in the Rimpa tradition.



Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Peonies (Botan), *Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin)*, late 1800s-early 1900s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.437

This seal to the right reads “Ryūroku” and appears to be associated with Hōchū.



Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Joruri reciter and musicians (Joruri), *Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin)*, 1802
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1323



Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813

Kinkado of Edo, Japanese

Tampankan, Japanese

Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716

Blind man's bluff (Mekakushi asobi), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), 1802

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1322



Japanese

Chrysanthemums and stream (Kiku to nagare), Meiji period

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.435

The source for this composition is a design form Hōitsu's *Ōson gafu*, on view in the case in the middle of the room.



Sakai Hōitsu, Japanese, 1761-1829

Kamo Suetaka

Matsuzawa Rōsen, Japanese

Ōson's Picture Album: A Book of Pictures by Priest Hōitsu of Universal Phenomena, 1807

Woodcut illustrated book with paper wrappers, sewn

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.408

This illustration is clearly the source for the anonymous print of the same subject included in this exhibition.

RISD MUSEUM

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Courtier and retainers crossing bridge (Kuge to kerai tokyozu), *Korin gafu* (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s - early 1900s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1318



Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
An album of pictures by Korin, ca. 1850
woodblock printed book, accordion-fold with paper covers
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1285

This illustration harks back to some of the earliest works in the Rimpa style, an elegantly painted handscroll of deer by Sōtatsu and Koetsu with calligraphy added over the surface of the picture by Koetsu.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Morning glories and coxcombs (Asagao to oshareno), *Korin gafu* (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s-early 1900s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1316



This print and the one to the right illustrate the differences in quality among different editions of the *Kōrin gafu*. The blotting of color in the flowers is executed with more subtlety in the example at right.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Tampankan, Japanese
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Morning glories and coxcombs (Asagao to oshareno), *Korin gafu* (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s-early 1900s
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.436



This print and the one to the left illustrate the differences in quality in different editions of the *Kōrin gafu*. Note how in this example the blotting of color in the flowers is executed with more subtlety.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Tampankan, Japanese
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Plovers and waves (Nami to chidori), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s-early 1900s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.410



This print and the one at right illustrate the differences in quality among different editions of the *Kōrin gafu*. Note how in this example the blotting of color in the birds is executed with more subtlety.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Tampankan, Japanese
Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716
Plovers and waves (Nami to chidori), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), 1802
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1325



This print and the one to the left illustrate the differences in quality among different editions of the *Kōrin gafu*. Note how in the example at left the blotting of color in the flowers is executed with more subtlety. The Kakō seal on the left of this print appears to be a rather crude imitation of Hōchū's original. Kakō was one of Hōchū's artistic pseudonyms (*gō*).

RISD MUSEUM

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813

Kinkado of Edo, Japanese

Tampankan, Japanese

Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716

Jo and Uba (the Takasago couple) (Jo to uba), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), 1802

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1324



Jō and Uba, the pine spirits who were thought to inhabit two pines at Takasago and Sumiyoshi, are depicted here as an old couple. According to tradition, Jō makes a trip to Sumiyoshi nightly to visit his love. The two spirits symbolize the pines for which these locations are famous; in addition, they also represent eternal fidelity.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813

Kinkado of Edo, Japanese

Tampankan, Japanese

Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716

Ebisu, Otafuku, Daikoku (Otafuku to Ebisu Daikoku), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s- early 1900s

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1320



Daitoku and Ebisu are two of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Daitoku, the jolly, fat man with a large sack, is a god of prosperity; Ebisu with his fishing rod is also identified with wealth and prosperity.

Nakamura Hōchū, Japanese, fl. 1790-1813

Kinkado of Edo, Japanese

Tampankan, Japanese

Ogata Kōrin, Japanese, 1658-1716

Female firewood sellers from Ohara (Oharame), Korin gafu (An album of pictures by Korin), late 1800s - early 1900s

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1319



The costumes of these women and the bundles on their heads identify them as natives of Ohara, an agricultural area northeast of Kyoto. This picture shows how they would walk to Kyoto to sell their produce.