

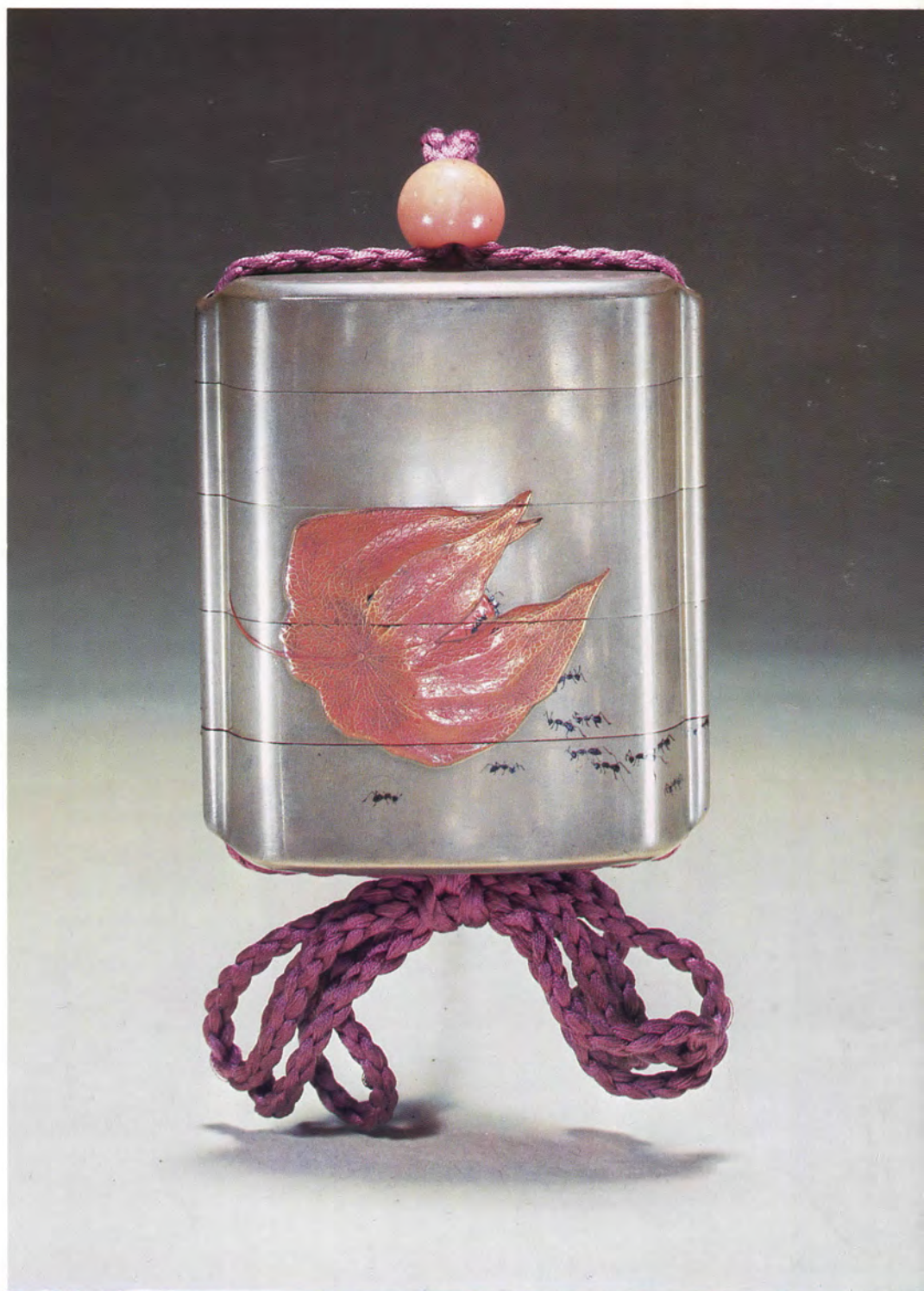


根付研究会

NETSUKE KENKYUKAI

Study Journal

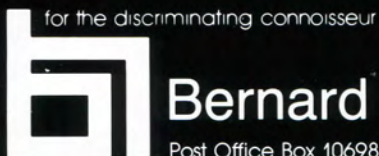
Volume 4, Number 2, 1984



The perfectionist in *KAIGYOKUSAI* is clearly evident. This superb ivory boar illustrates the heralded carvings of his renown golden period. Featured in Bernard Hurtig's newest publication *The Netsuke Hall of Fame's Record Breakers*, figure 33. Osaka School, 19th century. Length 1 3/4".



The rare and unique can always be found within the fascinating world of Bernard Hurtig's spacious galleries in the Kahala Hilton Hotel. We are known for the finest selection of quality netsuke, and you are sure to discover a wanted treasure. Traveling to serve clients around the world, we invite personal appointments. When in Honolulu, do come by and browse.



for the discriminating connoisseur

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根付研究會



Cover:
Four-case inro with design of Chinese lanterns and tiny ants. Signed by Zeshin (1807-1891). From the collection of Elaine Ehrenkranz. Photo by Michael B. Glass

NETSUKE KENKYUKAI

Study Journal

Volume 4, Number 2 Summer 1984

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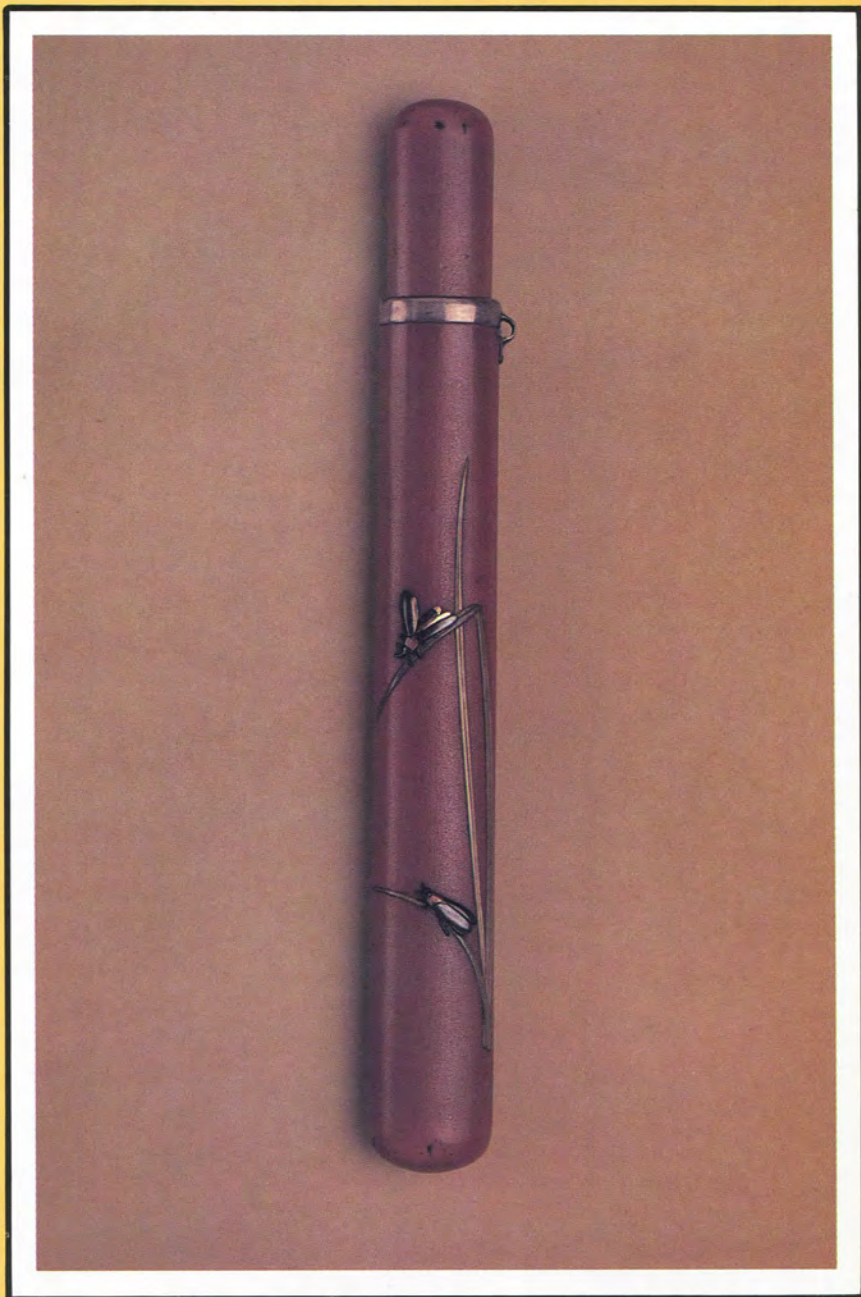
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Netsuke Kenkyukai Society is a non-profit organization. The purpose of the Society, as stated in its By-Laws, is to promote the study of netsuke and their related appurtenances, the artists who created them and the society from which they evolved. Such study is accomplished through conventions, exhibits, lectures, workshops and the dissemination of written materials, photographs and its Study Journal, published four times a year.

A red *sabiji* lacquer ground *kiseruzutsu* of *muso* type, inlaid with gold, copper and *shakudo* flying insects resting on yellow and green-stained stag-antler grasses, with silver mounts. Signed on a gold plaque *Mitsuharu*, for the metalwork.

Mizuno Mitsuharu was a noted maker of *kagamibuta* plates and pipes from *Kanazawa*, *Kaga* province, who died in 1895. A pipecase by him is a rarity.

We are always interested in acquiring fine and unusual pipecases, especially examples from the *Asakusa* school; and currently have on offer fine pieces by, among others, *Kokusai*, *Rensai*, *Hakuzan*, *Tokoku*, *Tessai*, *Tanaka Reigyoku* and *Hasegawa Ikko*.



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In London:

The Martin S. Newstead Collection of Netsuke



Recumbent stallion by Toyomasa of Tamba.

Auction in London: Wednesday, October 24 at 6:30 pm
(to coincide with the London International Netsuke Convention).

An auction of Important Japanese Works of Art, the property of various owners, will be held in London on Wednesday, October 31.

Inquiries: *In New York*, Howard Zar, (212) 472-3525;

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FROM YOUR EDITOR



Virginia Atchley
co-editor

As promised, our Summer issue has a strong emphasis on Japanese lacquer and pipecases, both closely associated in many cases with netsuke, the prime interest of our readers. We think you will

find, as we do, that the comprehensive listing of pipecase artists by William and Betty Parker and the glossary of lacquer terms by Elaine Ehrenkranz are eminently useful and will serve as definitive reference material for some time to come.

We bow deeply in thanks to them and to our other contributors of note to this issue: Michael Bernstein, Barbra Okada, Richard Silverman, and George Lazarnick.

Sorry about those backside-to signatures and errant captions in the Spring issue. If all the signatures on the pipecase artists

appear correctly in this issue and we tried hard—we will feel better at having solved one of the difficulties inherent in our farflung operation.

Please, any of you who feel moved to put pen to paper, or data into word processor, don't hesitate to do so, whether in the form of a letter to the editor, or a long or short article. If you see areas for improvement or expansion, tell us. And don't worry about style or polish. The main *raison d'etre* of an editor is to smooth and correct, and I promise to be a firm but affectionate blue-pencil.

Virginia G. Atchley

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



James Hume
president

this special issue wouldn't be possible. We hope you will be pleased. Do let us hear from you!

You may have questioned the "lateness" of our last two issues. Due to production complications and the fact that our editors, staff workers and publisher do not reside in the same area, we have considerable difficulty in meeting a specific calendar date. Consequently, we have decided to change our publication dates to Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter instead of specific months. We expect that the journals will reach you by the end of the months of April, July, October and January. This change will not affect the advertising deadlines nor the number of issues you will receive as part of your membership.

During my travels I came across the neatest case I've ever seen for *Ojime*. Mr. Pethen, in London, has made these up for a few collectors and has agreed to supply them to any of our

members who are interested. They are constructed of sturdy black plastic, with foam padding covered with soft material inside and are available with one or two layers for *ojime* storage.



Single layer (holds 33 *ojime*)-----\$32.00
Double layer (holds 66 *ojime*) -----\$42.00

You can order them directly from Mr. M. Pethen, 1059 Garrort Lane, London SW170LN, England, by sending him the equivalent in Pounds Sterling or by sending US Dollar checks to Netsuke Kenkyukai (and made out to Netsuke Kenkyukai) and we will forward one Pounds Sterling check for all orders, saving considerable bank charges. These will make excellent gifts!

Hope you all have a great summer!!!!

Best wishes and happy collecting
James Hume



LETTERS

Our Members Are Involved...



On Sunday, June 3, 1984, Brad Blakely, netsuke carver and member of the Los Angeles Chapter of *Netsuke Kenkyukai*, demonstrated the art of carving Japanese netsuke at the International Craft Fair of the Los Angeles Natural History Museum. The Fair featured more than 40 artists demonstrating crafts from around the world. The photograph shows Brad Blakely at work.

Another of the always interesting articles that continue to flow from Raymond Bushell's bottomless reservoir of knowledge about netsuke appeared in the March-April 1984 issue of *ARTS OF ASIA*, entitled "Travels by Netsuke." The article is copiously illustrated with 31 netsuke and a *Hiroshige* print, all pertaining to the journeys of those ubiquitous travelers, the Japanese.

Miriam Kinsey's new book, *LIVING CARVERS OF NETSUKE*, is scheduled for publication in the fall of 1984, by Kodansha International Ltd. The book features 12 of the finest carvers of today, with supplemental information about many others, and is lavishly illustrated.

In July 1985, the Honolulu Academy of the Arts is planning an exhibition of Oriental Art belonging to members of the Oriental Society of Hawaii. The

netsuke in the exhibit, as well as some other pieces, will be from the George and Verna Lazard collection.

Dear Alain Ducros,

I shall try my best to answer your letter in Volume 4, Number 1. (I have included 13 hand-drawn copies of *Kokusai* signatures - eight from my own collection and five from photos of other collections). I have seen the Frances Numano Collection and probably most of the other great collections of *Kokusai* pieces. I wish I could agree with any of your hypotheses, but I cannot. All I can do is substitute my own, based on the great number that I have seen. I think that most of them are valid, but we are talking about a man who was simply unique in most ways.

His simplest signatures are those when he used only *Koku*, BUT the more elegant of these always seem to be on ivory pieces and rarely on his stag antler netsuke (ex. 3, 4, & 5). It seems that the majority of netsuke he carved were signed with *Koku* rather than *Kokusai*.

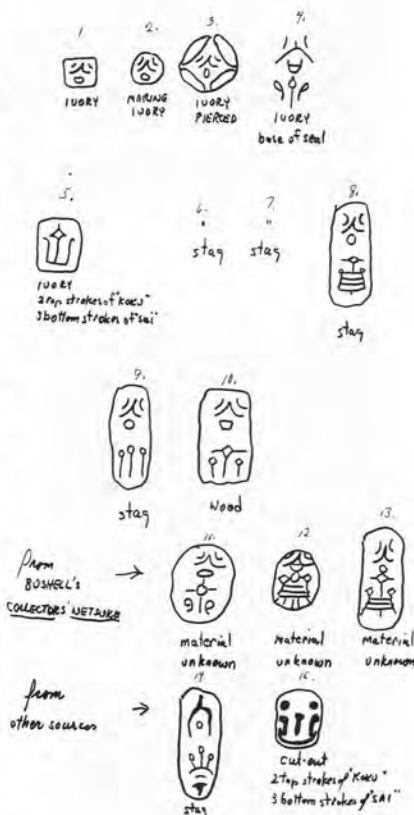
His most elegant signatures seem to be used on those pieces where he signed *Kokusai* and the variations on the *Sai* seem to be endless. These pieces are where his whimsy seemed to come forth. He loved to put the *himotoshi* in between the *Koku* and *Sai* wherever possible. I tried to prove that the longer, more elegant signature was used on his larger pieces, but it didn't work. He managed this signature on some truly small netsuke, while using *Koku* alone on many of his *sashi* netsuke. I also tried to prove that his better signatures were used on his ivory pieces but this, too, did not work.

The only two minor conclusions I think might be acceptable is that he used a cut-out *Koku*

when the piece itself was a *Ryusa* netsuke, or a pipecase with *sukashi-bori*. The other conclusion was that his ivory pieces usually have an elegant signature; those done in stag-antler range from simple to elegant.

One last conclusion of lesser importance: his seal netsuke, of which I have seen few, are usually in ivory and always signed *Kokusai*. I wish that some of your hypotheses could be proven. It would be fun to date his works or know how he personally judged them, but from what I have seen and deduced they don't seem to have any validity. I do hope that this is of some help to you, and I would gladly stand corrected by anyone out there who can prove otherwise.

Richard Silverman



A COMPILATION OF PIPECASE ARTISTS

by
William and Betty Parker



In Tokyo's Asakusa district it is still possible to see traditionally clad Japanese carrying and using the personal smoking set, changing the components with the season. The pipecase is often thrust into the back of a man's obi, in the fashion shown at left. The embers from the previous pipeful are emptied into the smoker's hand and used to light the next smoke. These 3 photos by Gwen Smith, who was visiting Tokyo from Sydney, Australia.



William and Betty Parker, long resident in Japan, are pioneers in the study of pipecases, pipe sets, and the men who made them, including several *netsuke-shi*. Interest in this form of Japanese fine craftsmanship, highly regarded in Europe for years, is now growing among American collectors -- an interest enhanced by recent articles in ARTS OF ASIA by the Parkers and by Raymond Bushell. A goodly number of pipecases, especially in stag antler, are unsigned, and little has been written, even known, about many of the makers of pipecases who signed their work.

We are therefore delighted to offer below the first attempt, so far as we know, to prepare a comprehensive listing of these artists; and we join the Parkers in urging our readers to send in any additional information and photos they may have about pipecases and their makers. (Send to the Parkers, % Virginia G. Atchley, 3470 Mandeville Canyon Road, Los Angeles. CA 90049).

The pioneer article exclusively on pipecases was written by Raymond Bushell under the title of *Kiseruzutsu: The Japanese Pipe Case*, and appeared in the November-December 1980 issue of ARTS OF ASIA. Since that time, more attention has been paid to *kiseruzutsu*, notably in George Lazamick's two-volume work, *Netsuke and Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* which includes many illustrations of pipecases and signatures not only of netsuke artists but also of lacquer and metal artists who made pipecases. In addition, two articles by the authors of this compilation have appeared in ARTS OF ASIA: *The Japanese Personal Smoking Set*, March-April 1983, and *Kano Tessai and His Last Apprentice*, March-April 1984. Other important references on particular artists are given below, but the above-mentioned works are the best sources for illustrations of pipecases and signatures of pipecase artists.

We have compiled the first comprehensive list of pipecase artists in all media--wood, bamboo, ivory, stag, metal, lacquer, woven materials--and all types of inlay, without reference to netsuke or

other work done by these artists. Along with whatever basic biographical data are available, we are including a brief description of one or more pipecases known to have been made by each artist. We are also including photos of signatures and *kakihan* as they appear on pipecases, whenever available. References are provided for signatures, pipecase illustrations, and more extensive biographical information. In the case of some artists on this list, one of the references may record a homophonic artist name, but this reference is not cited here if the *kanji* for the name or other information indicates that it is probably not the name of the artist on this list.

As you can see, we have biographical information for only about half of the artists listed. These are mainly those artists who are also known for their netsuke or lacquerwork or metalwork. It would be interesting to learn more about the other pipecase makers. We will continue to expand this list and would appreciate receiving information and photos of pipecases and signatures from readers of the Journal. Even hard-to-read signatures are welcome.

REFERENCES for SIGNATURES & ILLUSTRATIONS

RBAA *Bushell, Raymond*, "Kiseruzutsu: The Japanese Pipe Case", *Arts of Asia*, Nov-Dec 1980, Hong Kong.
 NKD *Davey, Neil K.*, *Netsuke*, 1974, London, Sotheby Parke Bernet.
 MBJ *Jahss, Melvin and Betty*, *Intro And Other Miniature Forms Of Japanese Lacquer Art*, 1971, Tuttle, Vermont & Tokyo.
 GL *Lazarnick, George*, *Netsuke And Intro And How To Read Their Signatures*, 1982, Reed, Honolulu.
 PMEN *Moss, Paul*, *Eccentrics In Netsuke*, 1982, Moss, Hong Kong.
 PMNK *Moss, Paul*, *Kokusai And His World*, *Netsuke Kenkyukai Study Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1982, USA.
 WBPAA *Parker, William and Betty*, *The Japanese Personal Smoking Set*, *Arts of Asia*, March-April 1983, Hong Kong. Also, *Kano Tessai And His Last Apprentice*, *Arts of Asia*, March-April 1984, Hong Kong.
 UR *Ueda, Reikichi*, *The Netsuke Handbook of Ueda Reikichi*, adapted by Raymond Bushells Tuttle, 1961, Rutland, Vermont, & Tokyo.
 RSNK *Silverman, Richard*, *Kano Tessai and His Followers*, *Netsuke Kenkyukai Study Journal* Vol. 2, No. 3, 1982, USA.
 TTSM Brochure for Exhibition of *Katsura Bungaku Collection*, Tokyo Tobacco & Salt Museum, June 4-July 12, 1981, Tokyo.
 Special reference for pipecase themes: *Joly, Henri L*, *Legend In Japanese Art*, 1967, Tuttle, Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo.

EXAMPLES OF PIPECASES BY VARIOUS ARTISTS



TESSAI



SOKO



GYOKUSHO



HAKUHO. Both sides of Handaka Sonja ivory pipecase.



INDEX OF SIGNATURES
IN
ALPHABETICAL ORDER

*Indicates one photo of signature
**Indicates two photo of signature, etc.



CHOCHO*. Ivory. Iris and Mandarin ducks in mother-of-pearl inlay. RBAA



DOKO*. Woven reed and ivory. Ivory inlay of two puppies and bamboo grasses.

EIGETSU. Metal and stag antler. Applied metal vines with leaves and gourd on stag antler. GL



GEKKEI*. Wood. Chrysanthemums on branch in relief. Signed in metal reserve. RBAA

GETSUMIN. Lacquer. Vegetables. TTSM



GORYU*. Wood. Open-mouthed mask. RBAA



GYOKKO*. Bamboo. Ivory skull in grass.



GYOKUHO*. Lacquer. Black persimmon with bamboo bands. Design of gunpowder bag. RBAA



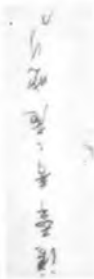
GYOKUMEI**. Inlay. 1) Six poets, ivory inlay in lacquer dated 1923. 2) Manzai performers in shibayama-like inlay on bamboo strips. 3) Goose flying over grasses, shell inlay on bamboo strips. GL



GYOKUSAI*. Wood and ivory. Worked about 1880. Ivory inlay of the skeleton Otsuyu from a Kabuki ghost play, *Botan-doro*. RBAA, UR



GYOKUSHO*. Ivory. 1) Chinese story of *Koshohei*. 2) *Seitaka* (female deity) holding lotus.



AKIYUKI*. Ivory. All-over grass-style calligraphy, with incised traveller's hat and staff.



BAIUN*. Tsuishu lacquer. Warrior women carrying spear, bow and arrow. RBAA



BUNKIDO*. Tsuishu and tsuikoku lacquer. Flowering lotus plants and flying insects in black lacquer on red ground carved in wave pattern.

BUNPOSAI, *Chosetsu*. Inlay on *ajiro* (woven case). Wooden birds and gold lacquer grasses.



CHIKUZAN*. Bamboo. 19th C. Tiger in bamboo and dragon in clouds. WBPAA



HAKU.* Stag antler. Dragon bat. RBAA



HAKUHO.* Ivory. High relief carving. *Handaka Sonja* story.

HAKUO.* (*Kanji* White King). Ivory. Archer on horseback.

HAKUO (SAI), (*Kanji* White-old). Bone. Worked 1830-1843. Tall, slender figure, inlaid eyes. GL, PMNK



HARUMITSU.** Wood. Worked about 1880. 1)Frog standing on lotus. 2)Figure in kimono. 3) Sennin. RBAA, UR



HASHIICHI, Hashimoto Ichizo.* Lacquer. 1817-1882. Lacquer simulating bamboo. Signature in reserve. GL,UR



HASHIICHI II.* Adopted son of *Hashimoto Ichizo*. Lacquer. 1856-1924. Same style as above, but signature not in reserve. GL, MBJ



HIDEMASA, Chingendo.* Stag antler. Worked about 1850-1870. *Daikoku* and *Jurojin*. UR



HIRO.* Stag antler. Bat and seal design. RBAA



HOGYOKU.* Lacquer. Balancing toys (*yajirobe*).



HOHON.* Ivory. *Yoshitsune* as a young lad.



HOKEI, Matsuki.* Lacquer, especially *tsuikoku*, *tsuishu*. Worked about 1870-1880. 1) Insects, frog, snail. 2) Flying crows. GL



HOMIN.* Ivory. Dahlias, wild orchids, plum blossoms, and bamboo fronds among floating clouds.



HOSAI, Oishi.* Horn, ivory, stag antler, and wood. 1830-1900. Bundle of reeds (wood) with horn band and stag antler lip. GL, UR.



HOTO.* Lacquer with metal inlay. Branch and plant on black lacquer.



HOYUSAI.* Stag antler. Seal designs of *kanji* and *shishi*. RBAA

ICHIGYOKU. Wood. 17th C.
Long-armed monkey. NKD, GL

ICHIYA, Sekiguchi. Metal. About
1853-1920. Gold gourd inlay on
copper. TTSM



ICHIYUSAI, Roho.* Stag antler.
Taira capturing the oil thief. RBAA

IKKO, Hasegawa. Inlay in wood.
Worked 1789-1800. Birds and flowers.
GL, UR

IKKOKUSAI, Kashima Mitsunori.
1844-1925. Metal, especially cloth-
weave inlay (*nunome zogan*).
Shibuichi pipecase showing autumn
grasses in gold and silver *nunome*
zogan. Listed under *Mitsuyoshi* in
GL.



IKKOKUSAI, Kinjo.* Simulated bamboo
in style of HASHIICHI. RBAA



IPPO.* Lacquer. Leaves in mother-
of-pearl inlay. RBAA



ISSAI.* Bamboo strips. Miniature
pipecases for women. WBPA



ISSHU.* Lacquer. 1) Weeping cherry
and faint moon, signed in *raden*
reserve. 2) Inlay of bird scarer on
woven case, signed in lacquer reserve.
3) Cherry blossoms inlaid in wood
and shell on woven cane. RBAA,
GL



ITTOSAI.* Bamboo, stag antler,
and water buffalo horn. Magnolia
flowers.



JOHO.* Stag antler. Falcon seizing
monkey.

JOKEI. Lacquer. *Tsuishu oni* and
rakan.



JOSO, Miyazaki.* Wood. 1855-1910.
1) *Ushii Tenjin matsuri*. 2) Various
types of people in same boat. RBAA,
GL, UR



JUKO.* Stag antler. Children with
deer. RBAA



JUZAN.** *Go* used by *Ishikawa*
KOMEI when he carved in wood
and bamboo. 1852-1913. 1) Death of
Buddha. 2) *Junishi*, animals of
Oriental zodiac. 3) Bamboo
showing *Handaka Sonja* story.
GL, UR



KABO.* Bamboo. Various insects.



KAIGYOKU.* Ivory. Pipecase for
woman (*memochi*). RBAA



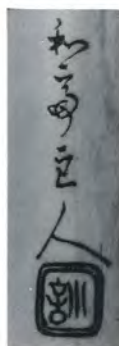
KAIKO.* Wood. Floral arrangement and stand on rosewood. Signature on metal reserve. RBAA

KAITO. Wood, metal, stag antler. Pair of seahorses facing each other. Signed in metal inlay. GL

KANEHIDE. Ivory. *Shishi* head at *himotoshi*.



KANGETSU.** Lacquer. 1) *Togidashi* autumn mountain scene. 2) *Sho* musical instrument, in wood, bamboo, and various lacquer styles.



KATEI.* Walrus ivory. Flower vase on table.



KATEI, Dojin,* Lacquer. Seated *Daruma* inlaid in wood and ivory. RBAA

KISUI. Lacquer. Iris. TTSM



KIYOSHI.* Lacquer. Moon and *chidori* on dark green ground.



KO.* Stag antler. Mid 19th C. Asakusa school. Open-mouthed demon, with water dragon, waves. GL



KOGYOKU.* Inlay. Wooden squid, clams on woven rattan.

KOICHI. Wood. *Bakemono*-shaped pipecase. GL



KOKUSAI, Ozaki or Takeda. ***** Stag antler, also bamboo, and water buffalo horn. Developed *Kokusai-bori* at Asakusa. 1835 to about 1892. Buddhist symbols, mythological animals, flora, and fauna. RBAA, GL, PMNK, WBPAA, UR



KOMEI, Ishikawa. **Ivory with go of *KOMEI*. See *JUZAN* above. 1852-1913. 1) *Tokiwa* Gozen with her children. 2) *Hitomaru*, a famous poet. RBAA, GL, UR

KOSAI. Lacquer. Calligraphic collage of *tanzaku*, *carta*, and *shikishi*.

KOSETSU. Inlay. Tortoise shell, lacquered wood, and *raden* on woven cane.



KOSHIN.* Lacquer. 1) Swallows flying over waves on woven baleen. 2) Bat and silver moon on woven bamboo. GL



KOTOBUKI.* (Seal). Deeply stained ivory with wave and chrysanthemum petals.



KYO.* Stag antler, marine ivory, elephant ivory. 1) Stag simulating bamboo. 2) Temple priest in night rain. RBAA



KYOGAI.* Wood. Genroku figure. RBAA



KYOKA.* Wood. Mask design in TESSAI style. We believe KYOKA was an apprentice of Yamamoto KYOSAI, who worked with TESSAI.



KYOMIN.* Ivory.



KYOSAI, Yamamoto.* Teacher was TESSAI, Kano. Wood. 1872 to about 1935. Noh character wearing tsuru headdress. WBPAA



KYUSAI. Hirai. *(before 1927) *(after 1927) .Bamboo. 1879-1938. Worked in Osaka. 1) Buddha with sutra. 2) Various flora and catfish. GL, WBPAA, UR.



MASATAKA.* Masataka was early name of ITO KATSUMI. Metal inlay on wood. 1828-1910. Studied lacquer with ZESHIN. Moon and goose over pond in silver. WBPAA



MASATERU.* Wood. Grandson of KAIGYOKUSAI, lived in Osaka. Pipecase in form of hossu, with red and black lacquer band.



MASAYUKI, Hoshunsai.* Bamboo. Worked 1801-1818. Man cutting pine branch with sword. UR, NKD

MEBUN. Also known as GANBUN. Wood with metal inlay. Worked 1816-1868. 1) Dark wood with gold lizard. 2) Bamboo with metal ants. GL



MINKO.* Wood. Brush peddler.

MITSUHIRO, Ohara. Mainly ivory. 1810-1875. Bamboo pipecase with wood and metal inlay. Signed on ivory reserve. GL



MITSUNAGA, Toyokawa (with JOSO).* Metal. 1850-1923. Pigeons inlaid in shibuichi on pipecase jointly signed with JOSO. RBAA

MITSUSADA, Ohara. Ivory. Worked early 19th C. Mushrooms among pine needles. NKD, GL, UR



MITSUTAKA.* Lacquer. Silver floral design on black lacquer.



NAGAMITSU.* Stag antler and bamboo. 1) Seven wise men, stag antler. 2) Etched design of *tanuki* on bamboo. RBAA

NAGAMITSU. Metal. Worked mid-19th C. Gold inlay in ivory pipecase of *Chou* hiding *Gentoku* under his cloak. GL

NAOTADA. Lacquer. Pine tree on woven bamboo. TTSM



NOBUYOSHI.* Walrus ivory. Fantasy. RBAA



O.* Stag antler. Dragon and cloud design.



OMIN.* Ivory. Group of blind people. RBAA

OSAI. Lacquer. Walnut pipecase with lacquer flower design, signed in gold lacquer. GL



RAISHIN.* Lacquer and inlay. Sword for shrine ceremony with lapis lazuli inlay and *hiramakie* on basket-weave pipecase.



RAKUYU.* Stag antler. 1) *Samurai* in battle armor and holding a forked pike, under pine boughs. 2) *Fukurokuju*. 3) Buddha with halo and *sutra*. RBAA

RANSHI. Stag antler. Figures under flowering tree, on *saya*, with birds on *sashi*. GL

RANTOKU, Chosei. Cherry bark with gold inlay, *Akita* prefecture specialty. WBPAA



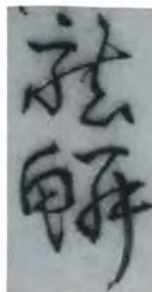
RENSAI, Ishikawa.* Stag antler, ivory, and walrus ivory. Worked about 1850 to about 1880 in Asakusa. 1) Bee on lotus. 2) *Shishi* on stand. RBAA, GL, UR



ROSETSU.*** Lacquer, ivory, stag antler. 1) Ocean wave designs. 2) Simulated weave motif in stag antler. RBAA



RYU.* Stag antler.



RYURIN.* Stag antler. Monkeys in the forest. RBAA



SADAAKI.* Inlay. Mid to late 19th C. Wild goose wood inlay on rosewood strips.



SANSUI.* Wood. Calligraphy design.



SEISHO.* Lacquer. Pine tree in gold on greenish black lacquer. RBAA



SHINMEI.* Bamboo and stag antler. RBAA



SEIA.* Wood. Kannon seated on pedestal.



SEISHU.* Wood. Probably manifestation of Kannon. RBAA



SHINSAI.* Lacquer. Horse in takamakie.



SEIKO.* Lacquer. White heron under willow on striped ebony pipecase.

SEIUN. Lacquer. Words of a play. TTSM

SENKOKU. Metal. Warrior holding halberd inlaid with shakudo and gold. GL



SHIRAYOSHI.* Bamboo. Samurai watching geese in flight. RBAA



SEIRYU.* Stag antler. Devil's hand and arm. RBAA



SESSAI.* Wood. Tiny frog on huge lotus leaf. RBAA



SHOGYOKU.* Wood inlay on ground of twisted paper (gampi). 1) Puppies. 2) Inlaid peach group. 3) Cat and lantern. RBAA, GL



SHIN.* Ivory. Toy peddler. RBAA



SHOKYU.* Stag antler and wood. 1) Stylized butterfly, dragon, and bird on stag antler. 2) Rain dragon on stag antler band around wooden pipecase.



SHOMIN, Ogawa.* Lacquer. 1846-1891. Gold lacquer spider web and spider on ivory. MBJ, WBPAA



SHOSAI, Shirayama.** Lacquer. 1853-1923. 1) Flaming drum from *Horyuji* in *nashiji*. 2) Flowers and grasses in gold and black on natural wood ground. MBJ, GL



SHUGETSU.* Lacquer. Autumn flowers in silver lacquer on black ground. Possibly same SHUGETSU as in MBJ.



SHUGETSU.* Ivory. Seals and traditional patterns.

SHUKO. Ivory. Chrysanthemums and bell. TTSM

SHUMIN. Lacquer. Orange grove. TTSM



SHUNKOSAI with seal Chogetsu.* Ivory, wood, and horn. 1826-1892. *Tekkai* sennin sending soul on a journey. NKD, GL

SHUSAI. Lacquer. Autumn grasses and quail. TTSM



SHUSEI, Tomioka.* Ivory. Puppies playing. Possibly same artist as in GL.



SHUZAN.** *Tsuishu* lacquer. 1) Orchid, wisteria, scroll, and fan in Chinese style. 2) Stylized wave design. RBAA

SODO. Stag antler. *Tenaga*, long-armed mythical creature, reaching for a sparrow in flight.

SOGAI. Stag antler. Early 19th C. Figure leaning against tree, reading.



SOKO, Morita.* Mainly wood. 1879-1942. Teacher was JOSO, Miyazaki. Long bean with stem and leaves. RBAA, NKD, GL, UR



SOKO, Toshiyama.* Wood. 1868-1935. Worked in Osaka. 1) Four rats. 2) *Tafuku* masks. 3) *Tokiwa Gozen* and her children, *ittobori*, in yew wood, on woven rattan. GL, UR



SOKOKU.* Stag antler. RBAA



SOZAN.* Member of SO School specializing in lacquer. Follower of SOKO, Morita. Ten kanji for *Kotobuki* (joy) on one side, chrysanthemums on the other, in *guri* lacquer. NKD, GL.



TAISAI.* Lacquer. 19th C. 1) Gold and black lacquer on brown lacquer ground, nightingale perched on a well bucket. 2) Gourd lacquered on woven wisteria ground. RBAA, NKD, TTSM



TAISHIN, Ikeda.* Lacquer. 1825-1903. Teacher was ZESHIN. 1) Purple chrysanthemums on wine ground. 2) Golden chrysanthemums on light brown ground. 3) Seven autumn grasses on golden ground. RBAA, GL, WBPAA

TAITO. Lacquer. Peony. TTSM



TANIGAWA.* Walrus ivory. Fierce Shoki with halberd. RBAA



TANSAI.* Lacquer. Story of Godoshi and the dragon he painted so realistically that it came to life.



TEIHO.* Lacquer. Chrysanthemums on black ground.



TEKKAN, Ikeno.* Wood. 1885 to about 1930. Early student of TESSAI, Kano. Daikoku and calligraphy. GL, RSNK, TTSM



TEKKO, Watanabe.* Wood. 1875 to about 1935. Early apprentice of TESSAI, Kano; briefly, his successor. 1) Gigaku masks. 2) Momotaro and his band. Name is listed as TEKKA by GL, but with fine illustrations of TEKKO's signature and kakashan. GL, RSNK



TESSAI, Kano.** Wood and bamboo, with special lacquer techniques. 1845-1925. Developed teppitsubori. Temple and shrine masks and statuary, customs, and everyday activities. Worked in Tokyo and Nara. RBAA, GL, PMEN, WBPAA, UR, RSNK, TTSM



TESSO, Nagikawa.* Wood. About 1870 to 1934. Early apprentice of TESSAI, Kano. 1) Designs of four Soken Kisho artists. 2) Chinese fable. 3) Japanese at work. GL, RSNK



TETSUGAI.* Bamboo. Rakan and waterfall. RBAA

TETSUGEN, Hirai. Go of KYUSAI. Bamboo. 1879-1938. Water wheel and farm woman. TTSM



TOEN, Morikawa.* Wood. 1820-1894. Worked in Nara. Ryutoki (demon) holding lantern as offering to Buddha. GL, UR



TOKO.* Ivory. Jittoku and Kanzan. Probably same artist as in GL (Seal: Suzuki)

EXAMPLES OF PIPECASES BY VARIOUS ARTISTS



HARUMITSU



JOSO



JUZAN



JUKO



KO



SHUGETSU



RAKUYU



ROSETSU



SHOSAI



SHIN (seal)



KYOKA



TOKO.* Bamboo. Insect design. RBAA



TOMIN.* Lacquer. *Kannon* on dragon. RBAA

YOSHIMARU. Metal inlay on wood. Black wood pipecase carved to show tree branch knots in relief, and with ants of metal and a gold praying mantis. GL



YOKEI.* Lacquer on *ajiro* (woven case). *Futen*, wind god.



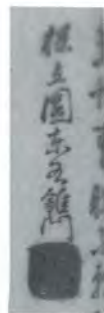
TOKOKU, Fuzui.* Wood and inlays. 1) Rakan holding bowl. 2) Moon and bamboo. 3) Bat in flight. RBAA



TOSEN, Watanabe.* Lacquer. Worked end of 18th C. and beginning of 19th C. Cormorant catching fish, brown lacquer ground. GL



YOTEI.* Lacquer. Cherry blossoms in *raden* with poem about cup with similar design in *Kamakura* temple. WBPA

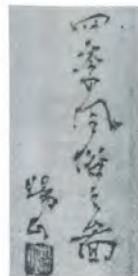


TOKOKU, Bairitsuen.* Stag antler. Sage watching bird fly away. GL, PMNK

TOSHIKATA. Bamboo. Eggplant. TTSM



TOSHU.* Walrus ivory. Flower basket. RBAA



YOZAN.* Wood. Ordinary people in various activities. RBAA

TOKUSAI. Bone. Early 19th C. Pipecase in form of *reishi* fungus and *hossu* to which bats cling. GL

TSUNEMASA. Ivory inlay in wood. Ivory hare and elephant in black wood. Signed on stag antler seal. GL



YUKIYOSHI.* Marine ivory. Plum branch with flower as *himotoshi*.



TOMIAKI.* Wood. Follower of TOMIHARU.

UNKEI. Ivory. Butterflies and chrysanthemums. *Sukashibori* (openwork).



YAMADA.* Walrus ivory. God holding thunderbolt.



YURAKU, Kaneko.* Ivory. 1) Peonies and magnolias, dated 1900. 2) Plum blossoms with gold pistils.


YUSAI. Painted wood. Chinese story.



ZESHIN, Shibata. *Lacquer. 1806-1891. Gold and silver grasses on black ground. GL, MBJ, WBPAA

ZUISETSU. Stagantler. Pipecase in form of *reishi* fungus decorated with a bat. Seal *Setsu* carved in high relief in a square reserve. GL ■

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BOOK REVIEW OF
A SPRINKLING OF GOLD
THE LACQUER BOX COLLECTION OF ELAINE EHRENKRANZ

Reviewed by: Virginia G. Atchley

Written by Barbra Teri Okada. Published by the Newark Museum. 1983. 144 pages. 14 illustrations. 47 color and 55 black & white photographs. (Hard Cover, \$37.00. Soft Cover, \$17.50. Available from Newark Museum. 49 Washington Street. P.O. Box 540, Newark, NJ 07101)



Fig. 1. Incense box (kobako) by Ritsuo (Ogawa Haryu - 1663-1747). Design of hat (*tori-kabuto*) worn in ancient *Bugaku* musical dance drama, beside the musical instrument known as *sho*.

"A Sprinkling of Gold" is the beguiling title of this small book on Japanese lacquer boxes, published late in 1983. Ostensibly a catalogue to accompany an exhibition of Elaine Ehrenkranz's lacquer box collection at the Newark Museum, it is an enduring addition to the literature on the lacquer art of Japan, to which increasing attention is being paid in this country.

Mrs. Ehrenkranz's collection of boxes is surprisingly selective and large (82 at the time of publication) in view of the fact that many of her purchases were made in recent years. It includes 28 different kinds of boxes and containers each carefully labeled, which range from the big document box (*bunko*) to the small box (*kobako*) and the incense container (*kogo*). The two categories most generously represented are the *kogo* (17) and the writing box, *suzuribako* (20).

Of the 56 pieces illustrated and described in the main text--the real meat of the book--seven are dated as 16th and 17th C. work, 15 as 18th C. work, 28 as 19th C., and six as 20th C.

So much for statistics, which are noted here to give a point of reference to the reader who will quite properly find his main pleasure in the abundant and vividly descriptive text and the illustrations accompanying each piece. Many of the colored photographs are superb. So are some of the black-and-whites. But the juxtaposition of the two



Figs. 3A and 3b. Exterior and interior views of portable cabinet (*sagedansu*), unsigned. Panels are decorated with views, like a painting, of a temple in landscape. Interior shows a variety of family crests. 18th C.



Fig. 2. Inkstone box or writing box (*suzuribako*), by Ritsuo, showing his signature seal *Kan*. Design of owl, his back to the viewer, perched on a branch. What appear to be inlays are lacquer, cleverly treated to resemble other materials.

makes dramatically evident the crying need for color in the depiction of lacquer in order to convey anything like the real effect of this luminously beautiful medium. Admittedly and inevitably cost rears its ugly head--color separations are very expensive--but it simply is a fact that more than for almost any other form of art, certainly more than for netsuke, color is a *sine qua non* for lacquer illustration.

In a preface that shows her fascination with the complex and multifaceted variety of lacquer boxes and her determination to collect only those fine pieces that suited her own taste, Mrs. Ehrenkranz states that "the major purpose of this book is to add to the body of knowledge of Japanese lacquer by helping to correct misconceptions and inaccuracies concerning techniques and the dating of styles." She was fortunate to find the able and enthusiastic Barbra Okada to help her to achieve this goal. Mrs. Okada is a student who likes to do her own research and come up with her own findings. In the course of preparing the text for this book, she made several trips to Japan to consult with lacquer authorities and modern practitioners of the art, and carried on an extensive correspondence on several fronts. One result is a detailed and highly informative chapter ("Introduction") about the properties of lacquer (more suitably called *urushi* in connection with art lac-

quers) and its processing; the variety, the types, and the nomenclature of its bewilderingly many techniques which have evolved over many years; and the patient and skilled artisans who work in the medium. Excellent sketches accompany this chapter, which ought to be read carefully by any collector who wants to know (and should know) how his cherished boxes and *inro* were made.

The history of decorated lacquer in Japan is an ancient one, going back as far as the Joman period, B.C. Mrs. Okada gives a concise but sufficiently detailed review of its development from the 6th C. through the Nara, Heian, and Kamakura periods. The very few objects still in existence from these eras remain in Japan, but Mrs. Ehrenkranz has been able to find, despite their scarcity in the market, several boxes from the late Muromachi, Momoyama, and early Edo periods (16th C. into the 18th C.). Her earliest pieces with their lovely subdued gold colorings and their bold flat designs are not the sort of thing favored by most collectors today, but this reviewer finds them highly desirable for their warmth as well as for their historical significance. Two extremely fine boxes from the 18th C., both by Ritsuo (Ogawa Haritsu -- or Haryu, as the author prefers to render the name) are a small incense box (Fig. 1) and a writing box (Fig. 2). Both of these are simple in design and exquisitely worked in a dazzling array of techniques and inlays that are so well wedded to the design that the effect is one of serene simplicity.

Undoubtedly one of the choicest pieces in the entire collection is the portable cabinet (*sage dansu*) shown in Figs. 3a and 3b. It is decorated on all sides with an ongoing landscape, like a painting, in varying hues and heights of gold, with some silver, on a polished black ground (*roiro*). The seven interior drawers are similarly decorated in gold on black on all four sides with a variety of family crests. This cabinet is a splendid example of the best of 18th C. lacquer. Like most works before the 19th C., it is unsigned.

From the many varied types of boxes and lacquer treatments of the 19th C. in this collection it is difficult to single out individual pieces for comment in a brief review. Two, however, would probably be of special interest to our readers: the well-known Zeshin *inro* (see cover) showing the bright red fruits of the Chinese lantern plant (not "jack o'lanterns," as stated in the text) and a procession of tiny black ants, on a brownish silver (*rogin*) ground -- an uncomplicated design consummately executed; and a Koma Koryu *suzuribako* (Fig. 4) with a design of a lacquer *inro* ensuite with *ojime* and *netsuke* on paulownia wood lightly lacquered and polished to show the natural markings of the wood.

One of Mrs. Ehrenkranz's favorites is a singular Zeshin *suzuribako* exhibiting the essence, if one can put it that way, of the Japanese guardian *Nio*

(Fig. 5)-- an unusual and obliquely angled design which is a hallmark of this famous artist. It is strikingly original. Zeshin is well represented in this collection. The author describes his use of stencils to create multicolored designs and grounds; and she cleverly details, with very nice detective work, the way he apparently used molds for some of his oft-repeated designs, especially of *tsuba* and *kozuka*. (She also gives the best simple explanation of his *ishime* technique that this reviewer has yet encountered.) Zeshin is today's golden-haired boy among lacquer collectors, and indeed when he is good he is very very good. But, as Mrs. Okada points out, much of the work stemming from Zeshin's atelier and carrying his signature is questionable, and, in the rush to meet demand, cases were sometimes made of green wood which later warped.

Attention should be called to a magnificently carved red lacquer (*tsuishu*) *suzuribako* made by Yosei Kunihei in 1890 (Fig. 6). Carved lacquers get short shrift from most collectors who would do well to look carefully at this piece and read the accompanying comments.

Excellent lacquer work is still being done today, as is well attested by the recent publication, *Japanese Art Lacquers*, which is also reviewed in this issue of the Study Journal. Of the collection's 20th C. pieces, two are made by a Japanese-American woman, Sadae Walters, now living in Baltimore and an exponent of, among other techniques, the *ranraku* process whereby crushed quail eggshell is set, piece by piece, into a mosaic form. The last box illustrated in color in the book, a cosmetic storage box (*tebako*) is stunning, over-all and in detail (Fig. 7), a prize-winning masterpiece produced by Mizuuchi Kyohei (1910-).

The author presents much interesting information and new material about the subject matter and techniques of each piece in the collection. A fine Glossary and Index are also provided. (For Mrs. Ehrenkranz's own Glossary of Lacquer Terms, see p. 30 in this issue of the Journal.) For reasons of her own, Mrs. Okada chooses to use *Rhus verniciflua* instead of *vernificera* for the sap-producing lacquer tree, *furo* instead of the more commonly used *muro* for the lacquer-hardening cabinet; I believe Nakamura Komin should be Nakayama Komin; inverted corners (*irizumi*) were not "introduced" during the Muromachi period--they appeared earlier but were more frequently used in Muromachi... But these are small matters. Mrs. Okada is to be warmly commended for a most careful and complete exegesis of her subject. And certainly Mrs. Ehrenkranz is to be equally commended for putting together what can only be called a superb collection. Theirs is a worthwhile and rewarding collaboration.

It is unfortunate that their editors failed to maintain the standards they set. Commas are wantonly

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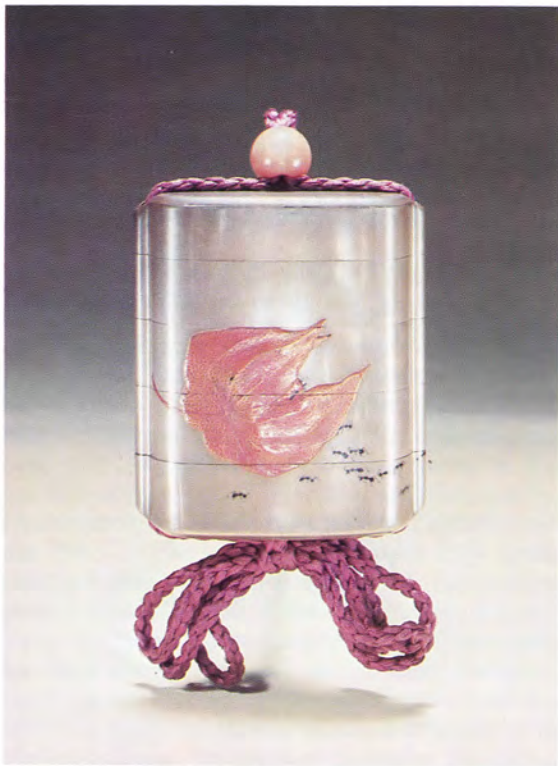


Fig. 4. Four-case inro with design of Chinese lanterns and tiny ants. Signed by Zeshin (1807-1891)



Fig. 5. Narrow-shaped suzuribako, showing sandals, hand, and scarf of a guardian Nio with section of surrounding fence. Signed Zeshin.



Fig. 4. Writing box (suzuribako) with design of inro, ojime and netsuke ensuite, on ground of natural cryptomeria (paulownia) wood, lightly lacquered to show its graining. Signed Koma Koryu saku (made). 19th C.



Fig. 6. Deeply carved suzuribako in Chinese style tsuishu or red lacquer. By Yosei Kunihei (1816-1890) the 18th master in the Yosei line.

inserted into the text with no relation to syntax or meaning; some plural nouns have singular verbs, and vice versa; obvious misspellings are not corrected (e.g. *existance* and *principle* for *principal*): *K'oami* and *Koami* appear side by side; the names of some of the Japanese artists are not consistently

presented; and so on. And, if the reader will permit her to indulge a pet foible, your reviewer wishes she could eliminate once and for all from the English language that gauche, overworked word, "utilize." "Use" conveys exactly the same meaning, and does so simply and gracefully. ■



Fig. 7. Cosmetic storage box (*tebako*) executed in gold *makie* with mother-of-pearl inlay and coarse gold sprinklings on brilliant red ground. Signed Kyohei (Mizuuchi), 1910.

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A GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE LACQUER TECHNIQUES AND TERMS

By
Elaine Ehrenkranz & Joy Epstein



Fig. 1 *Togidashi* technique. Elaine Ehrenkranz Collection.

At the Netsuke Kenkyukai Convention in Washington, D.C. in September 1983, Elaine Ehrenkranz and Joy Epstein presented a workshop on Japanese Lacquer Art. Joy traced the historical development of lacquer beginning with the discovery that the sap of the *urushi* tree was a remarkable hardening and waterproofing agent when applied to many objects: pottery, paper, wood, bamboo, and various materials. The earliest known examples of the use of lacquer, attributed to the late Jomon period (1st millennium B.C.), are simple fragments of lacquer-coated pottery. The application of lacquer for the protection of objects developed in subsequent centuries from this utilitarian concept into a rare art form. But it was not until the middle of the 8th C. that the *makie* technique ("sprinkled design") was developed in Japan. This technique, unique to the Japanese, eventually spread to China and surrounding countries, but most authorities agree that Japanese lacquer work was never surpassed. By the Heian period (794-1185) lacquer decorations had become the rage and were applied to buildings, furniture, screens, eating utensils, and all types of boxes. The Edo period (1603-1868) witnessed the introduction of still another type of lacquer ornamentation, the *inro*. This popular "seal case" was made fashionable in the 17th C. by the *samurai* class, and in the 18th C. was adopted by all groups of

males who enlarged the usefulness of these miniature boxes to include medicines and other small objects. The *inro* was to become the ultimate box—one of the greatest forms of lacquer art expression. By the 19th C. the *inro* had developed from a practical part of the Japanese male attire into a jewel-like addition to his wardrobe. The fashion of wearing *inro* lasted almost three hundred years. The opening of Japan to Western trade and ideas, at the end of the 19th C., brought to a close the need for *inro* as the Japanese adopted the dress code of their Western counterparts. The great tradition of the Japanese lacquer artist rapidly declined in the 20th C.. While fine artists continue to work in this field, their numbers have sadly diminished. The everyday need for lacquer creations has either ceased to exist or has been met by machine-made versions.

Elaine devoted the second half of the workshop to the technical and highly complicated details of lacquer techniques. She had spent many months in researching every known technique, and as a special bonus had incorporated her findings into a Glossary, which was passed around to those in attendance. Since that workshop, there have been so many requests for a copy of the Glossary that the editors of Netsuke Kenkyukai have agreed to reprint it in this article for your enjoyment and future research.



Fig. 2 *Hiramakie* on *Roiro* with *aogai* inlay in orchids.



Fig. 3 Technique illustrates *kiji-huri* (low *taka-makie* on wood ground in this inro).



Fig. 4 *Nashiji* ground. Bolts of material in *takamakie* with *hiramakie* details.



Fig. 5 *Somada* technique on *roiro*.



Fig. 6 Fish inlaid in *raden* on *kinji* ground.



Fig. 7 Red *takamakie* on *mura nashiji* with *kirikane* inlay.

Several of the lacquer terms in this glossary are treated differently by the leading lacquer authorities as to hyphenation and the separating of compound words. For example, the word *makie* is sometimes written *maki-e*, and, in earlier days, *makiye*. The word *takamakie* has also been written *taka makie*, *taka maki-e*, *taka-makie*, and *takamaki-e*. Since I could find no definitive answer to these discrepancies, I have chosen to treat such romanized words as *takamakie*, *hiramakie*, *sumie*, etc. as single compound words in the interest of simplicity and the most common usage to date. I have also chosen this form as a guide to books and auction catalogues of Japanese lacquer, most of which use this simplified and direct construction.

AOGAI (*ao*-blue-green; *kai*-shellfish): Fine shavings of iridescent mother-of-pearl used as inlays in lacquer and associated with *somada* lacquer. Thin layers are cut from the interior of the *awabi* (abalone). *Aogai* is sometimes pulverized and sprinkled into damp lacquer, a technique known as *mijingainuri*.

CHINKIN-BORI: A technique in which lines are incised in hardened lacquer and then filled with gold powder or foil to reveal the incised design.

FUNDAME: A matte gold ground which is achieved by the use of fine *kimpun* (gold powder) which cannot be polished, thus accounting for a matte rather than a shiny finish.

FURO: A humidity-controlled wooden cabinet for drying lacquer pieces (more commonly called *muro*).

GAMBOGE (*Shio*): A yellow or yellowish-red vegetable dye used in *nashiji urushi*.

GIMPUN: Silver powder.

GINJI (*gin-silver*; *ji-ground*): A thickly sprinkled powdered-silver ground that takes on a shiny finish when polished.

GOFUN: Pulverized oyster shell.

GURI: Carved lacquer. Many layers of lacquer in alternating, contrasting colors are built up and then carved at an angle with a U or V-shaped tool to create scroll or spiral patterns in the Chinese style, revealing the layers.

GYOBU NASHIJI: Large gold flakes (sometimes in silver or *koban*) which are individually placed in damp lacquer with a long bamboo or steel needle. The flakes are then covered with four or five coats of *nashiji urushi* and dried, ground, and polished. *Gyobu* is said to be named after the artist who originated the technique.

HEIDATSU: Cut sheet gold or silver applied and inlaid into lacquer to form designs or shapes which may or may not be covered with transparent lacquer. Related to or synonymous with *hyomon*. A technique dating back to the Nara period (710-794).

HIRAMAKIE (*hira-flat*; *maki-sprinkled*; *e-picture*): Decoration of gold or silver powder sprinkled on a design drawn in lacquer while the lacquer is still damp. The design is raised above the ground by one thin layer of lacquer, or nearly flat.

HIRAME (*hira-flat*; *me-eye*): Irregularly shaped flakes of gold, silver, or *koban*, thicker and heavier than *nashiji*. The flakes are either sprinkled on a lacquer bed or individually placed as in *okibirame*.

HYOMON: see *Heidatsu*.

INRO (a seal-case): A compartmented case primarily used for storing and carrying medicines in the form of powders or pellets. Made up of one to several fitted sections strung with a silk cord and suspended from the *obi* (sash) tied around the kimono. A *netsuke* (toggle), attached at the ends of the cord, acts as a counterbalance to the inro.

ISHIME: A technique which imitates the coarse texture of a stone.

KANSHITSU (*kan-dry*; *shitsu-lacquer*): A technique of Chinese origin in which objects are formed from cloth soaked with lacquer and hardened over

a clay form which is later removed.

KIMPUN: Gold powder.

KINJI (*kin-gold*; *ji-ground*): A thickly sprinkled powdered-gold ground that takes on a shiny finish when polished.

KIRIKANE (*kiri-cut*; *kane-gold* (metal)): Pieces of cut metal used for lacquer inlay. Small geometric shapes, primarily in gold and silver foil, cut from large strips of metal foil called *kanagai*. Each piece is individually applied by a sharp bamboo or steel needle.

KOBAN: An alloy, three parts silver, one part gold.

MAKIE (*maki-to* sprinkle; *e-picture*): Sprinkled picture. A technique originating in Japan in which designs drawn in lacquer are sprinkled with gold or silver powders while the lacquer is still damp. The piece is then dried in the drying cabinet (*furo*), then ground and polished. This process is repeated layer upon layer until the desired effect is achieved.

MAKIE-SHI: The lacquer master who sprinkles, grinds, and polishes his design.

MOKUME (*moku-wood*; *me-eye*): A technique imitating wood grain.

MARUFUN (*maru-round*; *fun-powder*): General term for metallic powders of gold, silver, or *koban*. *Marufun* comes in several sizes from very fine to coarse grains.

NASHIJI (*nashi-a* Japanese pear; *ji-ground*): So named because of its resemblance to the granular skin of the Japanese pear. Gold, silver, or *koban* powders are sprinkled on the black lacquer while still damp. After drying, the surface is covered with a thick layer of *nashiji-urushi*, a transparent lacquer of reddish-yellow tone.

NEGORO-NURI: A technique in which the ground is first lacquered black and then red, and polished to produce a mottled effect, the black showing through in places.

NUNOME (fabric): A lacquer surface that simulates the texture of fabric by lacquering over real fabric or pressing cloth on a lacquer surface.

NURI: Coated with lacquer.

OKIBIRAME (*oku-to* set in, apply; *hirame-flat eyes*). A technique in which inlays of *hirame* (shaped gold flakes — infrequently silver or *koban*), are set individually on a lacquer ground to form a distinct pattern. (For further discussion of *okibirame*, see note at end of Glossary; page 33)

RADEN: Mother-of-pearl inlay usually carved from thick shell (as distinguished from *aogai*), and of a milky-white or yellowish-pearl color.

ROIRO (*ro*-wax; *iro*-color): A lustrous, glossy, deep-black lacquer finish produced by repeated polishing of each layer of specially prepared lacquer before the next layer is applied. It is highly reflective. The lacquer master, Katsu Hamanaka, published in 1952 an exact account of the thirty-three processes necessary for the production of *roiro-nuri*.

SHIBAYAMA LACQUER: The wares of the Shibayama family who used inlays of many materials, including colored ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise shell, coral, and metal. The term *shibayama* is now used in a general sense to describe any heavily incrustated lacquer.

SOMADA LACQUER: Somada is the name of a family of artists who perfected a technique in which *aogai* was thinly sliced, shaped, and inlaid, combined with gold and silver foils, on a lacquer ground, usually black. The *somada* technique was originated by the Chinese and taught to and perfected by the Japanese.

SUMIE-TOGIDASHI (*sumi*-black ink; *e*-picture or design): A type of *togidashi* in which the decoration is achieved by sprinkling camellia charcoal powder on the damp lacquer design which, when polished down, gives the impression of a brush-painting.

TAKAMAKIE (*taka*-high; *makie*-sprinkled picture): A technique in which the design is modelled in relief, either high or low, on the lacquer ground, thereby taking on a sculptural quality. Sometimes lacquer alone is sufficient for the raised design. Often, however, various materials such as charcoal powder and *sabi* (a compound of grinding powder and raw lacquer) are used to build up the relief. The surface is then sprinkled with metal powders or colored layers of lacquer.

TOGIDASHI (*togi*-to rub; *dashi*-to cause to appear): A technique in which the design is flush with the lacquer ground. The design is sprinkled onto damp lacquer and is slightly raised above the lacquer ground, as in *hiramakie*. After this stage the entire surface is coated with several layers of lacquer which match the ground color, usually black. After drying, the surface is ground and polished until the design reappears, now flush with the ground.

TSUGARU-NURI (*Tsugaru*-the name of a district in Japan): A lacquer technique in which various colors, usually red, yellow, green, and black, are applied to an uneven surface and polished to a smooth surface, thereby producing a mottled, marbled effect.

TSUIKOKU (*tsui*-to heap or pile up; *koku*-black): Carved lacquer with the layers composed of black lacquer.

TSUIISHU (*tsui*-to heap or pile up; *shu*-red): Carved lacquer with the layers composed of red lacquer.

URUSHI: The sap of the lacquer tree (*Rhus Vernicifera*). A term used for stem lacquer as opposed to *seshime*, branch lacquer. *Urushi* is milky-white in color but, when exposed to the air, quickly turns a brownish-amber color.

WAKASA-NURI (*Wakasa*-a province in Japan): A lacquer ground similar to *tsugaru-nuri*, accentuating yellow and brown tones and adding gold and silver foil.

FOUR DEFINITIONS OF - OKIBIRAME

Okibirame

cf. also: *Kirigane*

oku- to set on or in, to apply; *hirame*- flat eyes.

Inlays of small rectangles or squares of gold (and sometimes silver) set individually on to the lacquer ground (in rows). The whole surface is then covered with clear lacquer and polished. (etc.)

Other definitions: Tsuda, Kummel, and Weber define *okibirame* as *hirame* with large (Weber says explicitly "irregular") flakes of gold set in individually by hand. But the fundamental characteristic is always the distinct, geometric form of the gold particles which are usually square. This technique has been employed since the Fujiwara Period (895-1192).

Several references follow.

ORIENTAL LACQUER - Art And Techniques, K. Herberts

Okibirame: Decorative technique employing precisely-cut, minute shapes of gold leaf accurately placed on a lacquer surface without overlapping, to form a distinct pattern (cat. nos. 14 and 36).

JAPANESE LACQUER in the Freer Gallery of Art - A. Yonemura (in the glossary)

Oki-hirame: Lacquer technique in which relatively large, irregular, flat metallic pieces (usually gold) are encrusted quite regularly next to each other, giving a mosaic pattern.

INRO, and other miniature forms of JAPANESE LACQUER ART - Melvin and Betty Jahss

Okibirame: the term "okibirame" is not the name of a specific type of *hirame* or *ohirame*.

It refers to the placement or setting of the *hirame* flakes. Thus it is the name of the technique or process of fixing the *hirame* flakes in place.

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ADDENDUM

by Richard Silverman

Richard Silverman has provided the following addendum to his article on Japanese Ceramics which appeared in our last issue, Volume 4, Number 1.

Probably 80% to 90% of all ceramic netsuke were produced in the 19 C. It can be assumed that

the vast majority of them no longer exist due to their fragile nature. The quality of those in existence today runs from mediocre to superb—the latter group probably consisting of no more than 1,000 pieces. The pricing, too, runs the gamut from a low of \$50 to \$2,000 or more for a truly superb and very rare subject in perfect condition.

The same criteria of what constitutes quality in Japanese ceramics are used for netsuke—perfection of glaze, color, enamels and brushwork; and condition (chips and cracks). Age *per se* does not really matter much since the production of ceramic netsuke covers a relatively short period of time. ■

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A REVIEW OF THE EXHIBIT

NETSUKE: JAPANESE DESIGN IN MINIATURE

at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum

by
Michael R. Bernstein



All Photos this article courtesy of Peabody Museum and Cooper Hewitt Museum

Fig. 1. Mirror polisher. Ivory Tomoharu. Early 19th C. Katabori.

A large selection of netsuke from the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, has been on display during the past year or so at various institutions in the country. Early in 1984, from January 31 to April 8, the exhibition, under the title, "Netsuke: Japanese Design in Miniature," was presented at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum (the Smithsonian's National Museum of Design) at Fifth Avenue and 91st Street, in Manhattan.

Michael Bernstein visited the display at the Cooper-Hewitt and prepared a detailed and appreciative review for our readers. As he says, the exhibition is of interest to both the novice and the connoisseur. Although the exhibit has now moved elsewhere, we gratefully present Mr. Bernstein's account exactly as he wrote it.

The exhibition is spread over two rooms. The entrance room is a primer for the uninitiated with pictures and printed material which clearly and succinctly explain the history and function of ne-

tsuke. A suite of netsuke, *ojime*, and *inro* is displayed along with a picture of a man wearing a *suite*. Even the stringing of the cords through the *himotoshi* is shown.

An example of each of the major types of netsuke—*manju*, *kagamibuta*, *katabori*, and *sashi*—is in the introductory showcase, and even *ryusa* and *obihashami* are explained. Additionally, there is a presentation of netsuke made from natural materials, some of these primitive netsuke dating from the seventeenth century. These elemental netsuke are made from coral, staghorn, animal tooth, root, brown bean, and turtle plastron (breastplate).

Netsuke of different materials—walnut, vegetable ivory, lacquered wood, metal, ivory, wood, cloisonne, ceramic, horn, soapstone, bone, and

glass—are placed together in an introductory cabinet. This enables the viewer to get a visual fix on the various materials. No mention is made of the fact that netsuke sometimes were the collaborative effort of artists in different media; e.g., the ceramacist *Kenya*, the metalworkers *Tomei*, *Natsuo*, and *Katsumori*, and the lacquerer *Kansai* all worked at times with *netsuke-shi*. Nor is note made that netsuke occasionally were wholly the work of artists who normally worked in other media, e.g., the Buddhist statue carver, *Toun*; the lacquerers, *Hokei*, *Toyo*, and *Zeshin*; the ceramacist, *Zoroku*; and the metalworkers, *Noriyuki* and *Masayuki*. These omissions are minor, but the information is needed to complete the comprehensive presentation.

SAGEMONO

A case is devoted to the different *sagemono* suspended from the netsuke. *Inro* are familiar, as are *kinchaku* (purses), *tonkotsu* (the large, one-compartment, usually wood tobacco boxes of the commoners), and *tabako-ire* (tobacco pouches). Less familiar are *yatate* (writing kits), a brass alarm clock in a wooden case, flasks, and a lantern. Equally fascinating, and a rare treat to see so fully represented, are functional netsuke. Netsuke as ashtray, compass, sundial, container, flint and steel, gourd, seal, and ink case are all displayed.

KAMBAN

Before the netsuke are discussed more fully, mention will be made of *kamban*. These shop signs were used by merchants to indicate their line of business and their prosperity, and became increasingly elaborate during the Tokugawa period in direct contravention of the Shogunate's sumptuary regulations.

Last year, Japan House in New York staged a superb *kamban* show, the signs on exhibit ranging from simple, witty medicine shop signs to ornate sake shop signs. The Cooper-Hewitt exhibit

has selections from the specialized Peabody Museum collections of the *kamban* from tobacconists and stores selling *sagemono*. Notable among the six *kamban* is a 65 cm. lacquered three-case *inro* with *ojime* and *magatama* (Buddhist sacred jewel in a comma shape) netsuke. Spectacular are an 18 C.—19 C. ivory, metal, and embossed leather interior sign featuring a *kagamibuta* with an ivory bowl and a metal plate of a

dragon on a background of gold waves; a leather tobacco pouch and *kizeruzutsu* (pipe-holder); a hinged metal attachment of four segments—*shishi*, tigers, rats, and phoenix; a metal *kanamono* (clasp) of *karako* (children) at play; and a giant ivory pipe carved with a design of the poets in the bamboo grove.

THE ORGANIZATION, QUALITY, AND SCOPE OF THE EXHIBIT

The netsuke are displayed in different cabinets arranged by subject matter in accordance with the first-rate catalog of the Peabody Museum netsuke collection. The classifications include deities and demons, folk tales, people, masks, animals, plants, replicas of man-made objects, foreigners, functional netsuke, and decorative netsuke. From the catalog it can be inferred that the thieves who decimated the collection in California took many of the finer netsuke. The portion of the Peabody Museum's collection on display at the Cooper-Hewitt is of varying quality. The *Meiji* representation is slim and of inferior grade; none of the *Meiji* greats such as *Yasuaki*,

Tokoku, *Yoshihide*, or *Komei* are included. There are no *So School* pieces, very minor representation of *Asakusa* artists, and no *Iwami* netsuke whatsoever. Also, no contemporary netsuke are included. By far the greatest strength of the collection is in its late 18th C. to mid 19th C. pieces, particularly those of *Kyoto* and *Osaka School* artists.

The deficiencies of the collection as an exhaustive survey are partially explained by the deriva-



Fig. 2. A Dutchman, with curly hair and wide-brimmed hat, holds a brass horn. Ivory, brass inlay. mid-late 18th C. *Katabori*.



Fig. 3. This netsuke of a baku was done in the lacquering technique known as *negoro*, a splotted red-on-black layering technique developed by the priests of Negoro Temple. Lacquered wood. 18th C. Katabori.

tion of the collection. It is based on a core of twenty-eight netsuke collected by E.S. Morse in Japan between 1877 and 1882. Various gifts augmented the collection to 790 pieces, the most important donation being a gift of 628 netsuke (79% of the collection) in 1947 from the netsuke collector and scholar, Dr. E.G. Stillman.

1. Occupations

While the gamut from insignificant *mingei* (folk art) to masterpieces is run, as might well be expected in a show of over 400 netsuke, most of the pieces fall into the middle range of quality.

Particularly undistinguished is the section on occupations, but even here there are saving graces.

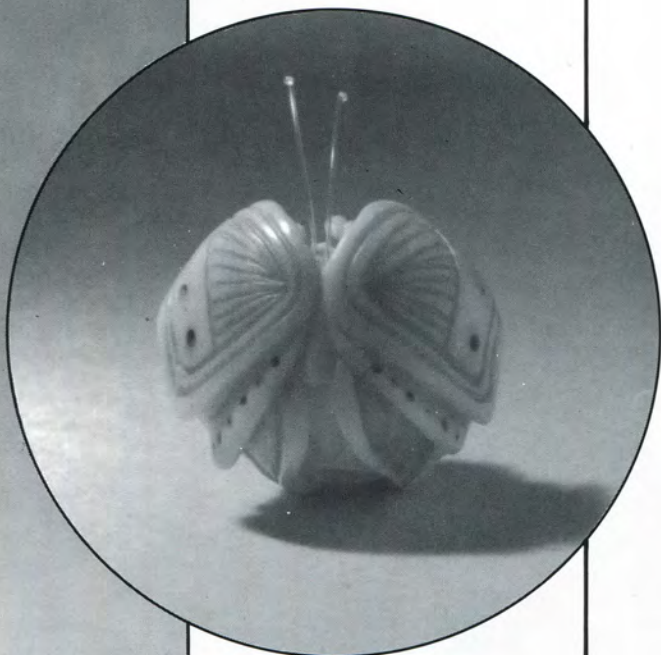
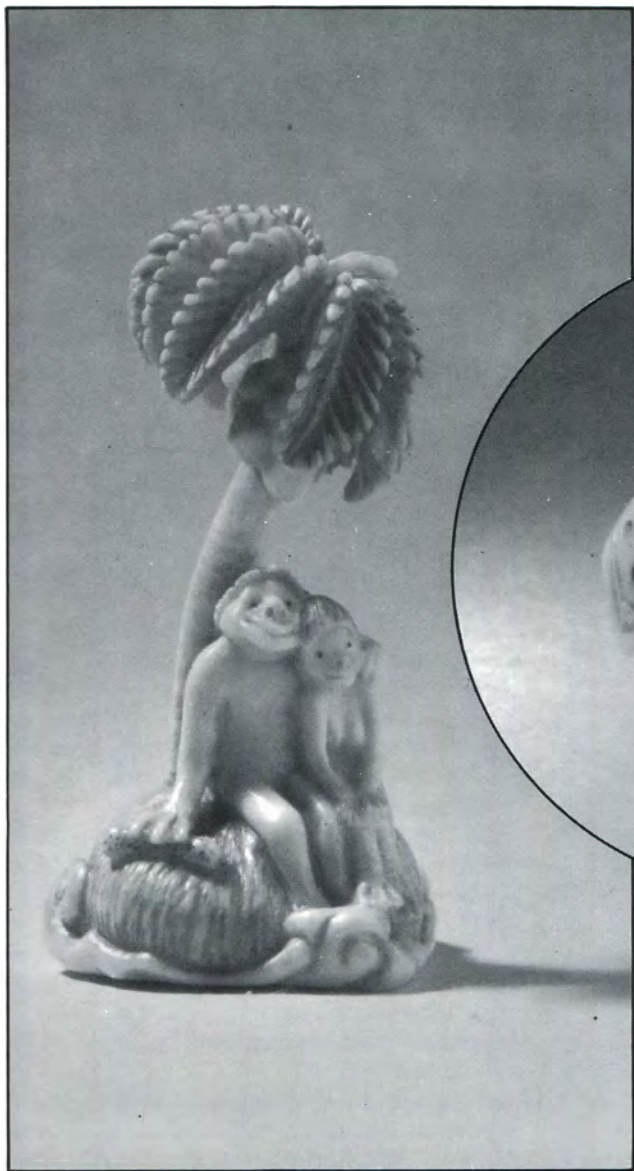
A large (7.5 cm.) powerful portrayal of a *sumo* wrestler applying the "*kawazu*" throw to his opponent is bold and dynamic. The catalog points out that Taoist symbols of duality may be expressed in this sculpture by *Mitsukuni Anrakusai* (19th C.) (This piece, seemingly the artist's master piece, is illustrated in Lazarnick's, *Netsuke And Inro Artists.*)

Likewise noteworthy in the occupation display is a large (7.2 cm.) early 19 C. sculptural netsuke of a whimsical *samurai* wearing crisply carved armor and blowing a *buccinum* (a Buddhist sacred shell) in celebration of victory—a most energetic and unusual netsuke.

Other netsuke of merit in this section include a distracted *amma* complete with *inro* and netsuke, massaging a client; a 9.3 cm. unsigned early 19 C. sculpture of a farmer performing a dance for the *O-bon* (Festival of the Dead) while balancing himself on one foot and playing wood blocks; an elegant ivory Sambaso dancer with a movable red tongue and wearing a wooden hat inlaid with coral, carved by Nobuyasu; and a man polishing a mirror (Fig. 1).

2. Foreigners

The netsuke of foreigners, both *namban* (southern barbarians, *i.e.*, Europeans) and the black South Sea Islanders, are illustrative of the fact that most *netsuke-shi* had never seen a foreigner. (This is reminiscent of the absurd netsuke of tigers, which often were modeled on cats.) Hence, the foreigners usually came out as grotesque caricatures engaged in their odd activities or carrying some of their exotic attributes. The ones in this exhibit are quite ordinary, including a bulbous-nosed, curly-headed Dutchman carrying a brass horn (Fig.2); a large, bearded Mongolian archer in boxwood; a wood musician with a horn in one hand and a child on his back, the figure being married to an oval ivory base subsequently added for display purposes; and the usual mundane assortment of fierce-looking South Sea Islanders holding coral branches.



Delightful honeymoon *kappa net suke* with his bride, resting under a palm tree in Miami, and a beautiful butterfly on a chrysanthemum *ojime*

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Fig. 4. A cat disguised as a woman. Wood. 19th-20th C. *Katabori*.

3. Plants

One of the stronger categories in the collection is the display of plant netsuke. Botanical subjects, a favorite of earlier generations of collectors, are now decidedly out of fashion. Seeing so many noble plant carvings shown at once is a good reminder of the transcendence of beauty over fashion. Also, the plant netsuke emphasize a difference between Japanese and Western aesthetics. The classical Western artist conceived of beauty as a Platonic ideal of perfection. The Japanese artist saw all nature as beautiful, including the so-called "flaws" such as decay, blight, and infestation.

For example, a rotting chestnut with worm holes and a worm, a classical subject most often associated with *Kiyokatsu*, is well executed by *Seishun* here. (The catalog enlightened me as to why chestnuts are so common a subject, e.g., the familiar *School* representations by *Sosui* and *Gyokuso*. The word for chestnut, *kachigiri*, incorporates the word *kachu*, meaning victory. Therefore, chestnuts became a New Year's symbol of good luck.)

Worthy of mention are a classical loquat, leaf, and branch by the master, *Mitsuhiro*; a wood

Chinese lantern plant with red coral fruit; an imaginative marriage of a carved, rotting nut placed in an actual nut with three metal ants crawling on the rotted half, the metal ants being a trademark of *Gambun*, who signs as a "white, aged man."

4. Animals

As is to be expected, the display of animal netsuke is the highlight of the show. An engrossing, small introduction points out the difference between Western and Japanese attitudes toward animals. The religious heritage of Shintoism and Buddhism accounts for a reverence toward animals not found in the West. In Shintoism, animals often are deified or are the attendants of deities. Buddha transformed himself into different animals to instruct his disciples in the animals' virtues. The road to *nirvana* might include lives as different animals. Further, an animal's spirit might possess a human. Finally, the Japanese had the universal fascination with animals.

So many netsuke in one exhibit make apparent the contrast between 18th C. taste, with its preference for stylized mythological creatures like the *baku* (eater of bad dreams), (Fig. 3), and zodiac animals, and 19 C. preference for more Westernized realistic animals. Some of the more striking animal netsuke will be mentioned.

My favorite *kappa* is the fabulous netsuke by the earlier *Shoko* in the Metropolitan Museum collection. The *kappa* in this Peabody exhibit runs a distant second, but second nonetheless. It is a classic model of a *kappa* struggling to free himself from a clam. This exceptional netsuke is by *Hideharu*, who specialized in this subject. The expressiveness and dynamism in this netsuke are captivating.

A graceful cat dressed as a woman is an elegant and sophisticated netsuke (Fig. 4). There are



Fig. 5. A crouching rabbit depicted with very fine details. Ivory, inlaid eyes. *Toyomasa*. Late 18th-19th C. *Katabori*.



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some superior *Tomotadas*, among them a refined model of a deer sitting on grape leaves; a rare comical study of an octopus with all its tentacles on its head (this netsuke could definitely be titled "Excedrin headache number one"); and a vigilant, protective bitch with her puppy—an estimable work capturing both maternal tenderness and the usual bestial muscularity of Tomotada's animals.

Okatomo contributes his own version of a seated deer, characteristically tamer looking than *Tomotada's*, and a superb lifelike rat crouched over a parsnip and scratching his ear with his right hind leg—a dazzler to make any collector drool.

Two clusters of rats, symbols of fertility and wealth, are to be noted. The first is one of the rare ivory netsuke by *Tomokazu* (Meinertzhagen records only five). In this chunky representation of five rats crawling on a bag of grain, the Nagoya master is working very much in his later Kyoto style. The second, by *Tomochika I*, is a marvelous clump of seven black and white rats with ivory, coral, and ebony eyes.

I would be remiss not to mention a highly detailed, alert rabbit, one of the uncommon ivory works by the Tamba master, *Toyomasa*, (Fig. 5); and a comically fierce tiger with gold eyes and a red tongue by perhaps the greatest tiger carver of all, *Hakuryu I*. (Fans of *Minko*, *Tomotada*, *Rantei*, or *Otoman* may take exception to granting *Hakuryu's* preeminence). Finally, there is a pink coral dragon entwined in wooden clouds done in the style of *Toyomasa*. The use of the cheerful pastel coral for such a powerful image is a nice, paradoxical touch. (Oddly, the Peabody collection, extensive as it is, has nary a goat. However, there are several examples of each of the other zodiac animals.)

5. Masks

There are six masks and 24 mask netsuke in the show. This rich representation of mask netsuke is indicative of the large number of mask



Fig. 6. *Ashinaga* and *Tenaga* attempt to catch an octopus. *Tenaga* pulls hard, but the animal clings tightly to *Ashinaga's* foot. Wood, *Masanobu*. 1838-1900

netsuke extant. It is explained that mask netsuke are so plentiful not only because master mask makers as well as *netsuke-shi* commonly made them, but also because the carving of mask netsuke was a standard technique used to train apprentices.

In this show, there are no *Bugaku* or *Gigaku* masks. (*Gigaku* mask netsuke, a subject from the 7th C. religious dances, are associated with *Kano Tessai* and his followers.) The masks here are either *Noh*, *Kyogen* (the comic interlude between *Noh* acts), or imaginative faces. Outstanding netsuke are a boxwood lion mask with articulated jaw by *Minko* (Fig. 7); a happy *Okina* mask complete with the requisite movable jaw and tufts of hair; and a fearsome boxwood *oni* with ivory horns by the incomparable mask carver, *Deme Uman*.

6. Deities and Demons

The "Deities and Demons" display is surprisingly weak, a far cry from the caliber that was represented in the Kurstin Collection exhibit, "Real and Imaginary Beings."

The superb short introduction in the catalog which explains the different influences that Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have had upon Japan is more meritorious than the netsuke themselves. However, among this ordinary group, a couple of gems shine.

The intricacy, obsessive accuracy, detail, and balanced composition characteristic of *Kagetoshi's* work are conspicuous in his netsuke of a Shinto procession. Close scrutiny of this piece reveals that it illustrates well Bushell's point that *Kagetoshi* skillfully incorporated enough protective barriers into his netsuke to make them functional.

A lacquered wood netsuke of the *Karako* of Concord holding an amber jewel is subtly colored and has tasteful pearl inlays. While stiff, this stiffness is advantageous, capturing the iconographic Buddhist image of serenity. See also a jolly *Daikoku* wrapped inside his bag of wealth (Fig. 8).

7. Folk Tales

Somewhat stronger as a group are the netsuke representing folk tales. One of the original "trick netsuke" is a good rendition of *Minko's* model of *Kiyohime* wrapped around the *Dojoji* bell with the face of *Anchin* seen turning from red to white to blue as he burns when the bell is turned. A stylized *Ashinaga* and *Tenaga* by *Masanobu* (Fig. 8), brings an appreciative smile. A painted cypress wood *Ranryo* dancer is executed in the massive, impelling style of *Yoshimura Shuzan*. A large and early painted cypress wood figure of *Kwanyu* by *Horyusai* is impressive in its dignity.

A rare ceramic netsuke by the master ceramacist, *Kenya*, of the *Shiba Onka* story, with the rescued boy's head bursting through the water jar, has an earthy lustrous brown and blue glaze.

Conclusion

The Tokugawa Edict of 1636 banned foreigners from Japan, and the country remained in relative isolation until Perry's coming in 1853. This show is a monument to the historic phenomenon of a major culture developing in a virtually uncontaminated state.

More than a netsuke show, this splendidly organized and annotated exhibit is a record of 17th to 20th C. Japanese culture. The religion, customs, folklore, daily life, and aesthetics of the country are willed to us in perpetuity in these small figures. Particularly well recorded is the mentality of the Japan of the first half of the 19th C the period just prior to Westernization and, by happy coincidence, the period of the greatest output of netsuke.

This highly instructive exhibit is a good place to

sharpen the eye, to become familiar with materials, to do comparative studies of artists' work, to get a feel for the commonplace versus the scarce, and to investigate the evolution of subject matter and style over a period of time. Howard Zar, the Japanese expert at Sotheby's New York, made some keen observations on this subject of stylistic evolution in a lecture on netsuke delivered during the run of the exhibit.

The exhibit's pieces in the *Yoshimura Shuzan* style reflect the stately virile Chinese Ming Dynasty heroic style. The later 18 C. pieces show a more indigenous Japanese influence, both in subject matter and naturalism, epitomized by the *Kyoto* and *Osaka School* netsuke of the period.

In general, the pre-*Meiji* 19 C. netsuke show increasing refinement and emphasis on composition, freely employing artistic license, particularly in the matter of posing and placement. The works of such artists as *Mitsuhiro*, *Kaigyokusai*, and *Toyomasa* exemplify this tendency. Many of the better *Meiji* and 20 C. netsuke show less concern with functionality, since the Japanese were now in Western dress and no longer carried *sagemono*, and more concern with virtuosity in technique and technology. These netsuke were the collectibles and showpieces of the wealthy. Many inferior late pieces often were made for export to the West, and do not mirror Japanese standards of taste and craftsmanship. The scope of the show enables the collector to follow and study the flow of the above-mentioned trends. Since each netsuke is thoughtfully labeled as to type, material, signature, and date, this research is made relatively painless. ■



Fig. 7. A highly-carved lion mask has an articulated jaw. Boxwood. *Minko*, late 18th-19th C. *Katabori*.



Fig. 8. A jolly *Daikoku*, hammer in hand, looks out from inside his bag. Boxwood, 18th C. *Katabori*.

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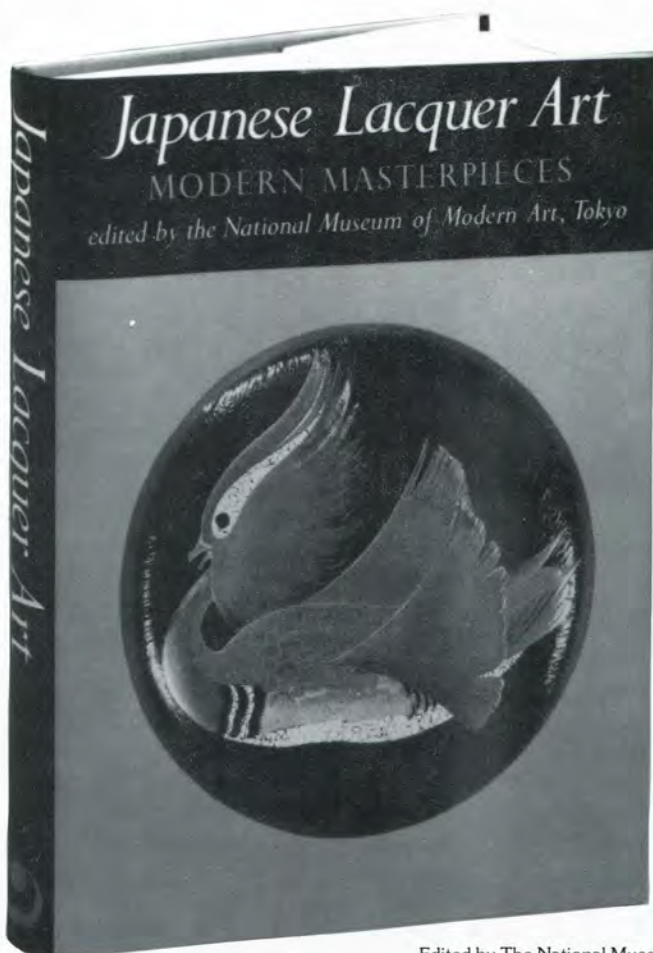
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BOOK REVIEW OF JAPANESE LACQUER ART MODERN MASTERPIECES.

Reviewed by: Barbra Teri Okada



Edited by The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Translated by Richard L. Gage. Weatherhill/Tankosha, New York, Tokyo and Kyoto, 1982. 299 pages; 246 color plates; 230 illustrations. \$150.00 or ¥25,000.

In 1979 the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, in collaboration with the Kyoto National Museum, organized an exhibition titled "Kindai Nihon no Shitsugei," which translates as "Lacquer Art of Modern Japan." The original catalogue was soft-covered and though it had subtitles, some general information, and an index of technical terms all in English, it was principally an exhibition catalogue in Japanese. It was out of print before

the exhibition was finished, and the demand for it was extremely high.

The volume presented here is an extended hard-cover edition which covers over 152 works of art by 37 artisans, some of whom were born in the Meiji (1868-1912) period and worked until very recent times. Essentially the format of this book follows very much that of the original version, with the exception that Mr. Gage's translation makes it

more acceptable to a Western audience. The importance of this publication to the field of lacquer should not be overlooked. The information it provides is essential to anybody interested in Japanese lacquer.

The recently deceased Okada Jo, whose title is translated as "art critic," was the leading scholar of Japanese lacquer of his time, and in his most recent years was "Advisor on the Arts" to the Suntory Museum in Tokyo. In his Introduction to this volume he discusses the history of the artists who worked in the traditional Japanese craft of lacquer, and their struggle to be recognized in this field. Stated in this section is the fact that the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, founded in 1887, included a Department of Lacquer. This would suggest a keen interest in the art form at that time. Yet, incredibly, it was not until the 1950s that Japan really began to recognize the art of lacquer-making as an artistic achievement of major importance. Mr. Okada describes the dissension within the exhibition groups themselves, and then discusses some of the local types of lacquers.

In the second section of the introductory material, titled "The Modernization of Japanese Lacquer Art," Shiraishi Masami, Chief Researcher of the Crafts Gallery at the National Museum of Modern Art, extends Mr. Okada's remarks by going into more detail about the leading lacquer artists who were the founding members of the Japan Lacquer Industry Society in 1890. Among this group were Shibata Zeshin, Ikeda Taishin, Ogawa Shomin, Kawanobe Itcho, Shirayama Shosai, and Uematsu Homin. Mr. Shiraishi talks about the nation-wide art exhibitions which include lacquers and delves more deeply into the problems surrounding the continuous striving for lacquer works of art to be recognized as an art form.

The main body of the book contains 246 color plates of 157 finely photographed works of art created by the leading contemporary lacquer artists of today. Because the surface of lacquer is extremely shiny and offers a high degree of reflection and refraction, photography of this art form is difficult. The clarity of the photography and the angle of some of the photographs, however, allow the viewer a sense of the bulk of the object, while satisfying the visual sense of being able to see the surface designs. Japanese photographers have a style which involves the extreme softening of shadow, and this lends itself to the flattening of a form. Some of this is evidenced in certain sections of the book but, on the whole, where the intention was to focus on detail and texture, the printing is faithful and accurate.

One of the most important sections in this book, which is not available in the smaller, soft-cover version, is the elaboration found in the section titled "Technical Processes and Samples." Takano Shozan (1889-1976), a former National Living Treasure of Lacquer, made a series of samples on small boards to show the fundamental processes known as *hira maki-e*, *taka maki-e*, *kiji maki-e*, *togidashi*, *nashi ji*, and *hirame*. They are kept as treasures by the Government and allowed to be exhibited only by major institutions, by special request. These samples, accompanied by limited subtitles, are well illustrated in this section of the book. Also shown are the various types of mother-of-pearl inlay with thick or thin shell, *hyomon* (metal sheet inlay), the minute detailing and concise step-by-step handling of carved lacquer, as well as a fine-line decoration called *kimma*. Lastly, a large selection of the decorative lacquer patterns found on the surface of *inro* and other types of lacquerwares are clearly and carefully

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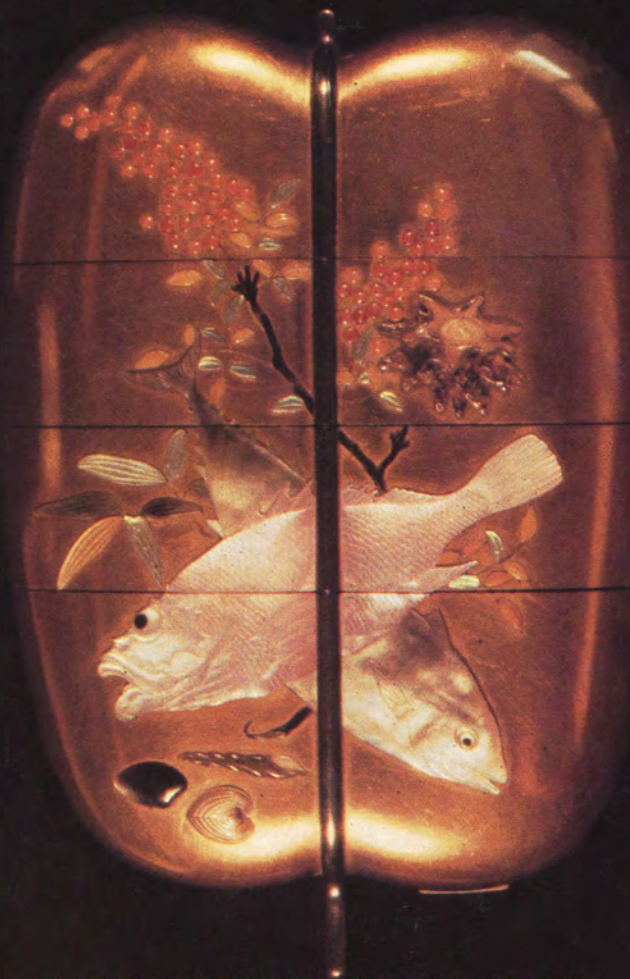
KAIGYOKUSAI MASATSUGU. An outstanding example of this great artist's finest work, this oyster encrusted with barnacles opens to reveal in minute detail the famous Itsukushima shrine at Miyajima, which was built so that it's grounds are flooded at high tide. Signed Kaigyokudo Masatsugu with seal Kagenori (as read by F. Meinertzhagen); Osaka, 19th Century. Length 5.6 cm.



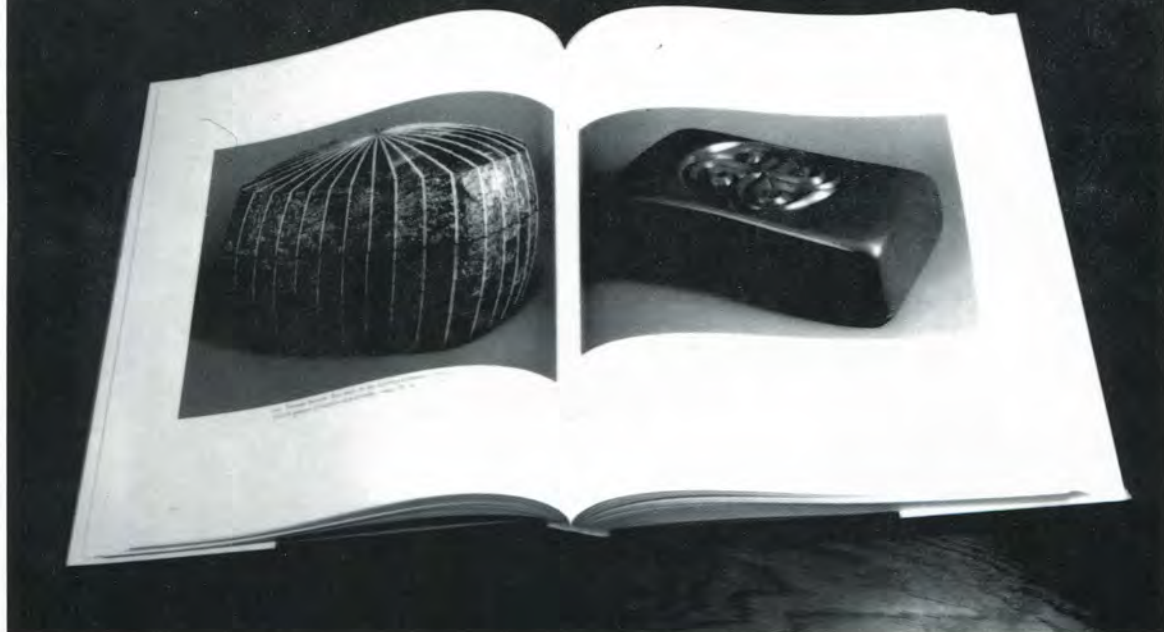
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Continued from page 47
detailed.

Although the book deals principally with Japan's contemporary lacquer artists, it should be remembered that their early training mandates that they first be initiated in all the skills necessary to produce the more antique styles. The contemporary designs pictured in this volume represent the end of a long evolutionary period.

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of this book is a Glossary which can finally settle the problem of "definition of terms." Although the cost of the book seems high (\$150.00), the accuracy of the text and its abundant color illustrations make it a necessary addition to any netsuke or lacquer collector's library. ■

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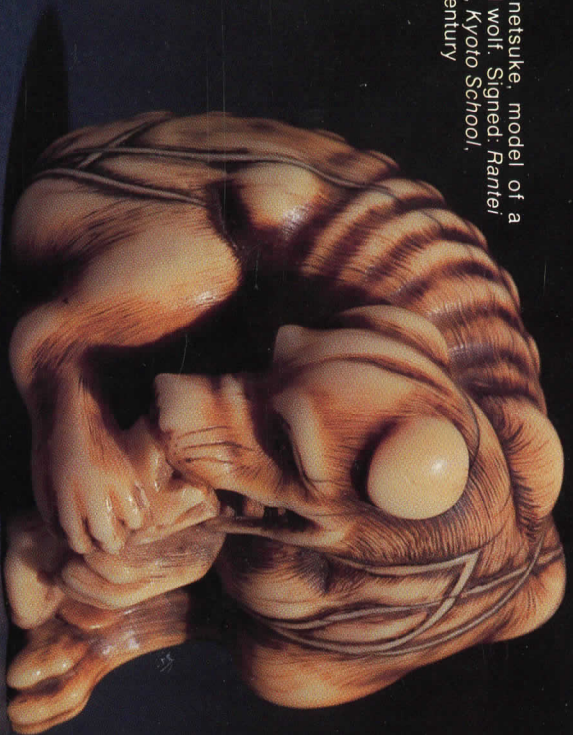
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Ivory netsuke, model of a seated wolf. Signed: Ranter/ Japan, Kyoto School, 18th century



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