



KYOTO NATIONAL MUSEUM

Vol. 127

Special Exhibition
Rinpa: The Aesthetics of The Capital
Feature Exhibition
Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER, 2015

Special Exhibition

Rinpa: The Aesthetics of The Capital

October 10–November 23, 2015

Heisei Chishinkan Wing

2015 marks the 400th anniversary of the origins of Rinpa and nearly 300 years since the death of its eponymous artist Ogata Kōrin. Among the various anniversary celebrations taking place in Japan this year, the Kyoto National Museum's commemorative special exhibition is perhaps the ultimate presentation of this subject, tracing the transmission of the Rinpa aesthetic from its inception through the Edo period (1615–1868). Significantly, it is also the first major show of its kind to be held in the birthplace of Rinpa—the ancient capital of Kyoto.

Rinpa (alternatively spelled Rimpa) is a revivalist aesthetic style based on classical artistic and literary traditions. Rinpa works are often characterized by subject matter taken from nature or classical Japanese literature; they frequently have a decorative sensibility and sometimes abstracted design elements and distinctive techniques.

The Rinpa tradition is best represented by three master artists who lived and worked at different periods in early modern Japan: Tawaraya Sōtatsu (active early 1600s), Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), and Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828). The term Rinpa—which is combined from the second character in Kōrin's name and the character for "school" or "style"—was coined in modern times and did not exist during the Edo period. Though sometimes described as a school, Rinpa is less a direct lineage of teachers and their disciples than a lineage of personal artistic influence: Sōtatsu's work inspired Kōrin, whose oeuvre, in turn, influenced Hōitsu. Of course, these three artists never actually met: most artists working in the Rinpa mode discovered the aesthetic for themselves and pursued it out of admiration for their artistic predecessors. The Kyoto National Museum's exhibition features the National Treasure screens *Wind God and Thunder God* by Sōtatsu as well the very important later *Wind God and Thunder God* screens produced by Kōrin (Important Cultural Property) and by Hōitsu in homage. This is the first time in seventy-five years that all three sets of screens have been brought together for an exhibition in Kyoto.

While Rinpa is most closely associated with a few famous masters, its influence can be seen across a broad range of Japanese artistic genres. These diverse traditions are tied together by an aesthetic preference for decorating the arts of daily life. The man who established the aesthetic framework of Rinpa is Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), a calligrapher who was also deeply involved in the arts of lacquer and ceramics. Outstanding works by Kōetsu and his fellow Rinpa founder Tawaraya Sōtatsu form the cornerstones of this exhibition. Visitors will receive a thorough introduction to the works of Kōetsu, who came from an elite merchant family of sword polishers and appraisers, and to those of Sōtatsu, the consummate master about whom much remains unknown. Kōetsu and Sōtatsu's collaborative masterpiece *Anthology with Cranes* (also known as *The Crane Scroll*, designated as an Important Cultural Property) will be shown in its 13.56-meter-long entirety for the duration of the exhibition.

Next up are masterworks by the brothers Ogata Kōrin and Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743), who were born into the wealthy merchant family owners of the Kyoto textile emporium Kariganeya. One highlight of this section is a close examination of Kōrin-related materials in the Kyoto National Museum collection, which help elucidate the lives and personalities of these two men and give background on Kōrin's career. (Continued on next page.)



National Treasure
Writing Box with Pontoon Bridge in Makie
By Hon'ami Kōetsu
Tokyo National Museum



Important Cultural Property
Kosode (kimono) with Autumn Plants
By Ogata Kōrin
Tokyo National Museum



Eight Bridges (Yatsuhashi) and Irises, detail
By Sakai Hōitsu
Idemitsu Museum of Arts





National Treasure
Wind God and Thunder God by Tawaraya Sōtatsu
Kennin-ji Temple, Kyoto

(Continued from previous page.) Late in their lives, both Kōrin and Kenzan left Kyoto for Edo (present-day Tokyo), inspiring a new branch of Rinpa-style art in eastern Japan. The most important name associated with Edo Rinpa is Sakai Hōitsu. Born the younger brother of a Sakai daimyo lord in Himeiji, Hōitsu had an unusually noble rank for an artist. After deciding to devote himself to Rinpa, he spent his life painting as well as researching and honoring his artistic predecessors, even organizing a centennial anniversary of Kōrin's death. Today, Hōitsu's efforts form the foundation of modern Rinpa scholarship.

The presence of Rinpa in Kyoto this autumn is not limited to the Kyoto National Museum's exhibition galleries. Directly in front of the museum is the temple of Yōgen-in, whose interior is decorated with paintings by Sōtatsu. Farther north in Kyoto is the temple of Myōken-ji, home to the graves of Kōrin and his brother Kenzan. And on the northwest edge of the city is Takagamine, where 400 years ago Kōetsu established a spiritual and artistic community on land granted to him in 1615 by Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu.

The Kyoto National Museum shows Rinpa in its birthplace, surrounded by the geographic and cultural context that nurtured it. This exhibition follows the aesthetic path of Rinpa—founded on the courtly arts and culture of Japan's ancient capital—over the course of its development, its veneration, and its reinvention by new personages during the Edo period.

(By Yamakawa Aki, Chair, Department of Education, and Senior Curator of Textiles; translated by Melissa M. Rinne)

Feature Exhibition

Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey

December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016, Gallery 2F-1 to 5

2016 is the Year of the Monkey according to the Chinese Zodiac. This zodiac system, which is also used in Japan and other places in Asia, features a cycle of twelve animals. In honor of the Year of the Monkey, the Kyoto National Museum is bringing out a variety of paintings and decorative art objects with representations of this zodiac animal.

The most frequently seen monkey in Japan is the indigenous Japanese macaque (*nihonzaru*). With their pink faces, grey-brown fur, and short tails, macaques are instantly recognizable, appearing in various forms of traditional Japanese culture. In the mid Edo period (1615–1868), such illustrious artists as Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800) and Soga Shōhaku (1730–1781) painted these monkeys with idiosyncratic charm. Works by Mori Sosen (1747–1841), the renowned master of macaque painting, are a special highlight of this exhibition.

Another kind of “monkey” found in Japanese and Chinese art is the gibbon (*tenagazaru*), which is actually a kind of long-armed, long-legged ape. Though indigenous to China, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, it became a common subject matter in medieval Japanese ink painting.

Also on view are handscrolls featuring monkey characters, lacquered *netsuke* (decorative toggles) with extraordinary monkey designs, and other works from Japan and China showing the prevalence of this creature in East Asian culture.

(By Inami Rintarō, Associate Curator of Illustrated Handscrolls Paintings; translated by Melissa M. Rinne)



Monkeys and Crab
By Sesson

海老原好仁

海老原好仁

**3F-1
Ceramics**

Closed until January 1, 2016.

**3F-2
Archaeological Relics**

Closed until January 1, 2016.

**2F-1 to 5 Feature Exhibition
Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey**
December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016

1F-1 Sculpture
Sculpture of Japan and Asia
Sculpture of Jizō (Ksitigarbha) and the Ten Kings of Hell
December 15, 2015–March 13, 2016

1F-2 Feature Exhibition
Legendary Blades: Meibutsu and Other Outstanding Japanese Swords
December 15, 2015–February 21, 2016

1F-3 Calligraphy
Elegant Kana Calligraphy and Waka Poetry
December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016

1F-4 Textiles and Costumes
Auspicious Motifs in Japanese Textiles
December 15, 2015–January 31, 2016

1F-5 Feature Exhibition
Guardian Lions and Lion-Dogs
December 15, 2015–March 13, 2016

1F-6 Lacquerware
Lacquered Tablewares for the Elegant Banquet
December 15, 2015–January 31, 2016

Upcoming Exhibitions

Feature Exhibition
Imperial Treasures
January 26–February 21, 2016

Feature Exhibition
Hina Matsuri and Japanese Dolls
February 27–March 21, 2016

Special Exhibition
The Art of Zen from Mind to Form
April 12–May 22, 2016

ADMISSION

Rinpa: The Aesthetics of The Capital
Adult ¥1500 (¥1300)
Univ. Student ¥1200 (¥1000)
High-School Student ¥900 (¥700)

Admission is free for youths age and below.
Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20+

The Collections Galleries fees
Adult ¥500 (¥420)
Univ. Student ¥260 (¥210)

Admission is free for youths of high school age and below.
Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20+

HOURS

Tue., Wed., Thu., Sat. and Sun.
9:30 am– 6:00 pm (Entrance until 5:30 pm)
Fri.
9:30 am– 8:00 pm (Entrance until 7:30 pm)

The Collections Galleries hours are 9:30 a.m. –5:00 p.m.,
admission ends thirty minutes before closing time.

CLOSED ON MONDAY

When Monday is a national holiday, the museum remains open on Monday and closes the following Tuesday.

The Museum will also be closed:
until October 9, 2015
November 24 to December 14, 2015
December 26, 2015 to January 1, 2016

ACCESS

Via JR or Subway

Get off at Kyoto Station. From bus platform D2 in front of the station, take City Bus #206 or #208 to "Hakubutsukan Sanjusangendo-mae" bus stop. One-minute walk to the Museum.

Via Keihan Railway

Get off at Shichijo Station. Walk east along Shichijo/Nanajo Street (about seven minutes) to the Museum.

Via Hankyu Railway

Get off at Kawaramachi Station. Walk east over the bridge to the Keihan Railway Gionshijo Station. Take Osaka-bound Keihan train to Shichijo Station. Walk east along Shichijo/Nanajo Street (about seven minutes) to the Museum.



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