

怪々奇々

Kaikaiki



Thematic Exhibition

Ghosts, Ghouls, and Goblins: Strange and Fantastical Figures in Japanese Art

Hōsa Library Exhibition Room 1 & 2
From July 18 (Sat.) to September 13 (Sun.), 2020

In the afterlife, at night after everyone is asleep, beyond the darkest darkness, in places you usually don't enter, within the minds of others ...

The terror that lurks in these invisible territories has always been manifest in the form of strange creatures, commonly called *yūrei* (ghosts), *oni* (ghouls), and *yōkai* (goblins). People have long been frightened hearing tales of their exploits and have also been entertained seeing their unique figures depicted in pictures.

This exhibition presents the world of uncanny creatures such as ghosts, ghouls, and goblins from the unnatural phenomena written about in classical literature.

Section 1 Strange Happenings

The fact that in the human mind fear and anxiety have always sprung forth out of strange events and occurrences that lie outside of our ordinary, everyday experience was no different in the past than it is today. Before scientific reasoning advanced enough to bring order and reason to these mysteries, we could only explain the inexplicable as "strange happenings" caused by ghosts, demons, goblins or ghouls.

The Heian period (794–1185) was a time of many disasters and wars, from which written records of various strange happenings survive. Such writings bear witness to the scope of people's fears in those times and document how they came to terms with the unknown.

Ghosts, Ghouls, and Goblins-01

Section 2 Oni



Oni (鬼) were ghoulish demons with horns on their heads, fangs for teeth, and frightening expressions. Featured in fairy tales and playing the familiar villains of the annual Setsubun festival, oni tend to be cast as "bad guys," but that was not always necessarily the case. In China, the character for *oni* originally referred to the soul of a deceased person, but in Japan, it came to signify something that was hidden and did not show its form. The standing of oni varied widely depending on the tale, ranging from harbingers of plague and guardians of levels of hells that might be reached in the afterlife to serving among the legions of guardian figures surrounding the various Shinto and Buddhist deities.



Section 2 Grudges and Vengeful Ghosts

Fantastical beings such as *mononoke* (restless spirits), *oni*, or *yōkai* (goblins) were not the only causes of fear and anxiety. It was sometimes believed that natural disasters were caused by troubled human souls.

When a large-scale natural disaster or plague occurred, it was sometimes feared to be the result of the curse of a vengeful spirit, such as that of a person like Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) whose political struggles had left him filled with unresolved resentment upon his death. Many tales also recounted episodes of the spirits of people tormenting others while they were still living, as epitomized by the character of Lady Rokujō in *The Tale of Genji* (11th century). Sometimes people can become quite scary.



Section 4 Yōkai Figures



People can be driven to such fear and anxiety that they don't even know the cause of their fear. On the other hand, identifying the cause can ease that same fear and anxiety. By imagining *mononoke*, *yōkai*, and other monsters as the causes of mysterious phenomena that cause fear and anxiety, and by drawing them and giving them physical form, people have managed to coexist with their fears and anxieties.

Yōkai were first illustrated beginning in the Muromachi period (1336–1573), and by the middle of the Edo period (1503–1868), they had been individually named and welcomed as unique characters with an almost scientific attention. They were no longer simply scary; they were also interesting and even unexpectedly cute. Please enjoy these different monsters in all of their uniqueness and individuality.



Section 5 Kaidan: Ghost Stories



In the Edo period, collections of ghost stories based on strange tales compiled in Ming-dynasty China were published frequently, and ghost stories such as the *Hyakumonogatari* "One Hundred Ghost Tales" became very popular.

In the latter half of the Edo period, amid the rise of printing technology, *kaidan* tales came to be enjoyed in the lavish multi-color *nishiki-e* woodblock print format, particularly in the form of *yomihon* books that appealed to readers with their fascinatingly complex and fantastical plots. Their macabre countenances and dramatic action invite you to enter the eerie world of *kaidan*.



© The Tokugawa Art Museum
1017 Tokugawa-cho, Higashi-ku, Nagoya, 461-0023
TEL: 052-935-6262 / FAX: 052-935-6261
E-mail: info@tokugawa.or.jp

Ghosts, Ghouls, and Goblins-02

Special Exhibition

Urushi Extraordinaire Lacquerware Masterpieces from the Tokugawa Art Museum Collection

漆

The Tokugawa Art Museum Main Building Exhibition Rooms
From July 18 (Sat.) to September 13 (Sun.), 2020



About urushi (lacquer)

We know that everyday implements made with lacquer have been used since the Jōmon period. These items have been a part of Japanese life over the 12,000 years since that time.

The lacquer tree of the Anacardiaceae family is native to Japan, China, the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia, and India. The sap from this tree was applied to various objects, giving them exceptional moisture-repellant and antiseptic qualities as well as good durability. Lacquer is also a strong adhesive when dried and hardened.

The colors that immediately come to mind when thinking of lacquerware are black and vermilion, which are made by mixing pigments—such as soot from lamps, burnt pine, and other sources for black (today iron oxide is used for this purpose), and mercury powder or cinnabar for vermilion—into the refined sap from the lacquer tree. These lacquerwares were then decorated in a great variety of designs, according to their function and purpose. For instance, after the lacquer coating was applied to the vessel, images could be painted on the surface with colored lacquer; the lacquer surface could be carved in relief; or decorations could be added in gold, silver, or mother-of-pearl inlay. More than anything, the true charm of lacquerware is its gorgeous luster.

This exhibition showcases lacquer techniques and designs with a focus on the Tokugawa Art Museum's world-famous collection of *karamono* lacquerware from China, and including works from the Korean Peninsula, the Ryūkyū Islands of Okinawa, and Japan. It introduces the appeal of lacquer craft, which we use less and less often in our modern lives, while tracing the history of lacquer's role in daily life.

Urushi Extraordinaire-01

VARIOUS USES FOR LACQUER

No.5 - No.21

Lacquer has exceptional moisture-repellant and antiseptic qualities, durability, and adhesive properties, as well as a beautiful luster. It has been used on buildings that are exposed to rain and wind, as well as for making implements such as tableware, chests and other travel accessories, and containers for storing important items. It was also utilized as an adhesive for repairing ceramic wares and other items.

LACQUERWARE BOWLS FOR BEAUTIFUL DINING

No.22 - No.32

Everyday lacquer items, such as furniture and tablewares, were essential components of weddings, tea gatherings, and other occasions when entertaining visitors, as well as during the New Year and seasonal festivals and other ceremonial occasions. Many modern people still feel a relative familiarity with lacquer tableware in particular.



THE CHARM OF CHINESE LACQUERWARE

No.35 - No.85

CHINESE LACQUERWARE: THE DEMAND FOR KARAMONO LACQUERWARE AND COLLECTION RECORDS

No.33 - No.34

Starting in the Kamakura period, a great number of *karamono* (precious foreign objects) were brought to Japan from China and the Korean Peninsula. These included lacquerwares, paintings, books, ceramics, and dyed and woven textiles. They were prized as treasures by the Muromachi shogunal family and other statesmen. As many as 179 *karamono* lacquerware items were transmitted in the Owari Tokugawa family, and many of their histories can be traced through storehouse records.

CHŌSHITSU: THE BEAUTY OF RELIEF-CARVED LACQUERWARE

No.35 - No.73

In the *chōshitsu* technique, multiple layers of lacquer are applied to the surface of an object to make a thick coating, then the lacquer is carved to create decorative designs. In Japan, lacquerwares carved in the *chōshitsu* technique are classified under different names according to the colors and methods used. Some examples include: *tsuishu* (vermillion), *tsuikoku* (black), *kōka ryokuyō* (vermillion flowers and green leaves), and *chōsaishitsu* (polychrome).

The *chōshitsu* technique is thought to have been perfected during China's Southern Song dynasty. It takes about fifteen to twenty coats to make a one-millimeter layer of lacquer. A moderate level of humidity is also required to dry the lacquer, which takes from around half a day to two days. These pieces required a great deal of lacquer and were time- and labor-intensive to produce.

MYSTICAL SPIRAL PATTERNS: GURI

No.35 - No.41

The most common *guri* patterns are connected curving lines shaped like *warabi* (bracken ferns), but other variations include heart and eyeglass shapes. Much of the surviving *guri*-design lacquerware is from the Southern Song to Yuan dynasties, but it also continued to be made in the Ming dynasty. *Guri* patterns are particularly common on *chōshitsu* pieces known as *saihi* (rhinoceros skin design technique).

Saihi refers to patterns that are carved into multiple layers of mainly vermillion and yellow lacquer of equal thickness. The *Kuntaikan sōchōki* (catalogue of the shogunal collection with display instructions), written in the 15th century, explains that *saihi* pieces mainly had *guri* patterns. With this technique, the carving is done at a shallow angle to broadly reveal the colored lacquer in cross section. It is used effectively on *guri*-patterned pieces as well.



PARADISES OF FLOWERS AND BIRDS

No.42 - No.51

Many Chinese-made *tsuishu*, *tsuikoku*, and other carved lacquerwares bear designs combining certain flowers and birds. The flowers include auspicious plants like peony, plum, camellia, rose, lotus, gardenia, and chrysanthemum. The birds include auspicious Chinese phoenixes and peafowl, long-tailed birds like red-billed blue magpies and pheasants, and mandarin ducks. These express wishes for good fortune, including fertility, family prosperity, wealth, rank, splendor, and longevity.

Urushi Extraordinaire-02

AUSPICIOUS FLOWERS AND TREES

No.52 - No.59

Surviving *chōshitsu* pieces include many relief carvings with flower-themed designs. The peony, which symbolized wealth and rank, was regarded as the most beautiful of all flowers and was attributed with the "fragrance of heaven." Wishes for good fortune were represented by other flowers, including the Chinese rose, which blooms for a long period starting in spring; camellia; lotus; orange daylily; and chrysanthemum.



RŌKAKU JINBUTSU: ANCIENT TALES

No.60 - No.64

Many *chōshitsu* (including *tsuishu* and *tsuikoku*) and *raden* pieces feature designs commonly called *rōkaku jinbutsu zu*, or "images of pavilions and human figures." Pieces with designs that have clearly identifiable subjects are referred to by specific names, such as "The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars," "The Four Accomplishments (Zither, Chess, Calligraphy and Painting)," and "The Orchid Pavilion Gathering." However, pieces with unidentified subjects in general are called *rōkaku jinbutsu* pictures.

Just like objects decorated with birds, flowers, and plants, many works with *rōkaku jinbutsu* motifs are thought to have auspicious meanings.

CHŌSAISHITSU

No.66 - No.68

In this style of carved lacquer, multiple layers of colored lacquer are applied and then patterns are carved into them. The carving reveals vivid stripes of color. *Chōsaishitsu* is a general term for objects made using this technique. In a broad sense, *saihi* and *kōka ryokuyō* carving techniques are also included in the *chōsaishitsu* category.

KŌKA RYOKUYŌ

No.69 - No.73

The Japanese term *kōka ryokuyō* means "vermillion flowers and green leaves." As the name suggests, this technique uses red lacquer to portray flowers and green lacquer to portray leaves. Red and green lacquer is applied in thick alternating layers then carved away at varying depths to reveal flower, bird, and leaf patterns. Although the *kōka ryokuyō* style was popular during the Ming dynasty, almost none of it remains in China, and most surviving examples are those that have been brought to Japan.



RADEN

No.74 - No.84

Raden is a technique in which shavings of the inner coating of conch shells, such as turban and abalone, are affixed to or inlaid into the surface of lacquered objects.

Thicker pieces of roughly one millimeter or more have a pearl-gray color with a whitish luster. Thinner pieces of less than one millimeter—which are cut small and then delicately inlaid into vessels—sparkle in colors like blue, green, purple, pink, and yellow. Chinese *raden* reached its peak in the Tang dynasty. *Raden* pieces made with thin, cellophane-like shavings of turban shell also appeared in the latter part of the Ming dynasty.



HAKU-E

No.85 - No.86

In the *haku-e* technique, lacquer is used to draw patterns, then when it is partially dried, gold and silver leaf is placed onto it and scratched with a tool known as a *kido* to create detailed lines and patterns. After drying, the leaf is rubbed away to reveal the lacquer-painted patterns below. These works feature the gorgeous, metallic glitter of gold and silver leaf.



Urushi Extraordinaire-03

ULTIMATE DELICACY: RADEN FROM KOREA (GORYEO)

No.87 - No.88

Ceramic ware, lacquerware, metal objects, and other crafts reached a high level on the Korean Peninsula during the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. These had a significant impact on neighboring countries as well.

An account written by a Chinese envoy, who was sent to Goryeo by Emperor Huizong during the Northern Song dynasty, records the envoy's impressions of Korean *raden* as exceptional in its exquisiteness and fine detail.

Raden on the Korean Peninsula drew influence from Chinese *raden*, but it reached heights that seemingly surpassed the Chinese. Its unique features include patterns made from combinations of shell pieces cut to astoundingly small sizes, the presence of metallic wire, and the occasional use of hawksbill sea turtle shell in some parts.



LACQUER CRAFT OF THE RYŪKYŪ DYNASTY

No.86
No.90 - No.94

The history of Ryūkyūan lacquerware is said to begin around the 14th to 15th centuries during the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Lacquerware techniques were brought from China as a result of the flourishing trade between Ryūkyū and China. Ryūkyūan lacquerwares were given as gifts to people inside and outside the kingdom, and were utilized in rituals by the Ryūkyū royal family and warrior class.

When the Ryūkyū Kingdom was unified in the 15th century, a specialized office was established to produce these gifts, leading to the further development of distinctive Ryūkyūan lacquerware.

Ryūkyūan lacquerware employed a wide range of decorative techniques including *chinkin* (etched gold), *haku-e*, *raden*, *mitsuda-e* (lead decoration), and *tsuikoku* (appliqué). At times, multiple techniques were used on the same object.



JAPANESE LACQUER CRAFT: MAKI-E

No.95 - No.121

AN INVITATION TO ARTISTIC SENSIBILITIES

No.95 - No.106

Maki-e is a uniquely Japanese technique in which gold and silver powder is sprinkled on the surface of an object, adhering only where it has been painted with lacquer in order to create pictures and writing. This technique started during the Nara period. It is thought that the technique and designs were refined in the Heian period, then the technology was perfected in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.

Afterwards, *maki-e* underwent changes during the Momoyama period and a wide range of pieces were produced in varying techniques, designs, and forms, making *maki-e* one of Japan's most renowned crafts.

Japanese people favored designs rooted in their artistic sensibilities. Many *maki-e* motifs came from *waka* poetry, as well as from *The Tale of Genji* and other narrative tales.



A VARIETY OF MAKI-E TECHNIQUES AND EXPRESSIONS

No.107 - No.121

Demand for *maki-e* lacquerware grew among people of various levels of society during the Edo period, not just the *daimyō* and warrior classes. All sorts of elaborate, delicate works were produced. Viewing these *maki-e* pieces, which added a touch of richness to daily life, can hopefully provide a way to explore the aesthetic taste of the Japanese people.



Urushi Extraordinaire-04