

Japanese Art: Inrō, Netsuke, and Okimono



**Sordoni Art Gallery
Wilkes College**

Japanese Art: **Inrō, Netsuke, and Okimono**

*From Collections Previously Formed by
Senator Andrew J. Sordoni*

Catalog and Selection by Emoretta Yang

Exhibition organized by Judith O'Toole,
Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes College

Sordoni Art Gallery

Wilkes College

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Cover

2. Boar

Signed: Toyomasa

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Acknowledgements

This exhibition has been more than a year and a half in the making and represents an important new step for the Sordoni Art Gallery. For the first time, we have the capability to show small objects and we hope that this will open possibilities for many exhibitions for which we did not have the facility before.

The exhibition initially evolved through discussions with Andrew J. Sordoni, III about his grandfather. Senator Sordoni's interest in European art was well known and recognized, but his interest in and knowledge of these Japanese objects was not. The objects themselves, and the collecting of them, became more intriguing with each consideration. Their tiny, intimate format invites and, indeed, intices further investigation. They seem to exist in another world; a world full of myth and legend, aesthetic beauty and diligent craftsmanship.

Later, the idea for an exhibition was presented to Joseph Jacobs of the Center Gallery, Bucknell University since Bucknell is caretaker of a part of the collection given to the University by Andrew Sordoni. With Bucknell's agreement to participate in the exhibition, we proceeded to contact the other collectors who had acquired parts of the collection at the time of its dispersal.

This exhibition, then, represents a reassembling of a part of the exceptional collection formed by Senator Sordoni. We would like to thank the Center Gallery of Bucknell University and the private collectors whose generous loans have made this exhibition possible. We would also like to extend gratitude to our guest curator, Emoretta Yang of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Cornell University, whose love for these objects is infectious and whose care and diligence in preparing this catalog has been deeply appreciated. We invite the reader to share in the delight of the following pages.

Judith H. O'Toole
Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes College
October, 1985

Andrew J. Sordoni 1887-1963

Senator Sordoni was a man of many talents, moods and accomplishments. His distinguished career in business, public service and philanthropy has been documented by his material accomplishments, leadership and vision — especially at the two institutions (which he served simultaneously as a Trustee), Bucknell University and Wilkes College, which have joined in the presentation of these oriental objects.

Netsuke and *inrō* were very esoteric, even obscure collectibles on the American scene in the 1920's and 1930's. Nevertheless, Senator Sordoni undertook to collect these items of Japanese art with all of the energy and passion for which he was noted in his other endeavors. During that period he studied all of the available material that was printed in English and conferred regularly with major dealers, collectors and curators in New York City as he began to assemble his own collection and reflect his growing knowledge and taste.

Andrew Sordoni assembled important collections of 19th century academic paintings and 19th century oriental rugs; yet neither of these collections represented the depth and care that was required in assembling the Japanese collection of *inrō* and netsuke (later augmented by *okimono* and other items).

Other than his gift to Bucknell in 1943, there has never been an acknowledgement of this collection nor the role of Senator Sordoni in preserving these fine Japanese pieces. In fact, since World War II the collection has not been shown. It is, therefore, a particular joy that the collection be shared by Bucknell and Wilkes, opening in Wilkes-Barre with special enthusiasm for the 75th anniversary of the businesses that Senator Sordoni created.

Andrew J. Sordoni, III
Wilkes-Barre
October 19, 1985

Introduction

2. Boar
Signed: Toyomasa



Why should miniature arts interest us? An anthropologist might remark the number of ways that the miniaturizing impulses in art has found expression in a diverse range of cultures. Miniature art possesses qualities that ally it with the exotic, so that even when it is found in our own culture — for example, in dollhouses, or in miniature Bibles — one feels it as something *other*, coming, strangely enough, from another world.

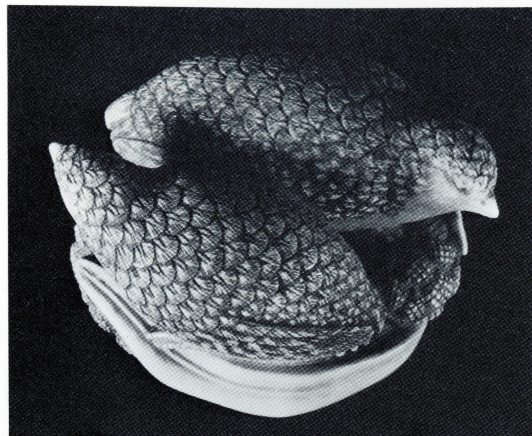
Perhaps it is not just historical contingency, then, that has made the miniature arts of Asia as fascinating to the west. Ever since the opening of Japan to general international trade in the middle of the nineteenth century, Japanese miniature arts have engaged western audiences. For those audiences, the miniature pieces of sculpture call *netsuke* were like charming cultural ambassadors. Appropriately enough, some of the first large collections of netsuke were assembled by individuals sent on the first diplomatic missions. Men such as Robert H. Pruyn, who served as an American minister to Japan from 1862 to 1865, were fascinated by netsuke and were able to collect hundreds of them to send back to relatives in the States, even in spite of the unsteady fortunes of foreigners in Japan in the years before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. One of the initial interests of these collectors seems to have been as much an anthropological one, since netsuke sparked curiosity about the Japanese folk legends and customs which they illustrated.

Traditional Japanese dress provided only sleeves or the natural folds of the robe in which to carry personal items. **Netsuke** are toggle ornaments, fastened by means of a cord to any of those personal objects that could be suspended from the belt, such as tobacco pouches, keys, wallets, talismans, sake

cups, medicine boxes, or other objects. The first Chinese toggles of this type were simply pieces of natural root. Objects serving this function were in use in Japan in the fourteenth century, but it is in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that netsuke reaches a zenith in the variety and beauty of its sculptured forms.

Inrō are boxes used to carry various types of pills or powdered medicine. They are usually designed as a series of stacked cases, each compartment with a raised lip that fits trimly into the compartment above. When closed, the *inrō* is usually about four inches high, three inches wide, and one inch front to back, dimensions that suit the *inrō*'s purpose, since it was desirable to have a form from which would not be too bulky and which would hang flat against the body. The wearing of highly decorated lacquered *inrō* seems to have begun in the late sixteenth century, and was initially popular with young members of the samurai class. During the extended period of peace in Japan under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate (A.D. 1613-1867), the merchant class prospered and began to consolidate its power. *Inrō*, which were often the only objects of personal adornment worn by men, were also commissioned and purchased by members of the newly empowered commercial classes.

Though the netsuke and *inrō* are, literally, bound together in function — and ideally the two would be bound also by thematic connections (see the *inrō*-netsuke combinations in Nos. 51 and 57) — the two forms stand in slightly different relation to the miniaturizing impulse. The *inrō*, in its typical form and proportions, offers two “faces” for decoration, and its designs are largely pictorial. Decorations on lacquer *inrō*, though it often branches off in its own



1. Two Quail with Millet
Signed: Okatomo shichijushichi okina ("77-year old man Okatomo")

directions, almost as frequently takes its models from the traditions of pictorial art, from the history of painting and prints. The landscape on the reverse of Number 84 imitates the atmospheric effects and designs of paintings in the Mayuyama-Shijo school of painting; the depiction of the Death of Buddha on Number 51 is directly taken from the iconographical tradition of Buddhist religious painting in Japan; the actor portrayed on Number 83 is patterned after a print used to advertise and commemorate well-known kabuki theater actors. Lacquer comes from the sap of a tree found in China and Japan, and working it is a complex and time-consuming process. The Japanese developed techniques that went far beyond those developed in China. (For a brief explanation of two of these techniques, see the discussions for Nos. 51 and 58; for more elucidating discussions, see the Jahss, Pekarik, or Okada works cited in the bibliography.) Humor plays a role in lacquered inrō design, but, partly because the medium demands so much more time than miniature carving, the miniature designs on inro tend toward a more reverent treatment of its subjects.

Netsuke has its lyrical expression as well, as in the early abstract design of three peapods (No. 10), or in the monumentality of the boar (No. 2), in the domestic intimacy of the three puppies (No. 4), or in the evocative quiet of the mouse or cicada (Nos. 7 and 8). But just as often, and perhaps more frequently as the nineteenth century goes on, netsuke designs show a humor best caught by a sculpture form, as in the examples of the unsuccessful rat-catcher in No. 37, or in the frightened grave visitors in No. 25. Psychological observation plays with imagination to humorous

effect, as in the disgruntled penitence of the demon in No. 21. Netsuke carvers could ally themselves with the underdog: contrast Zeshin's inrō design of two demons fleeing from Shoki, the deity in charge of getting rid of demons (No. 86) with the netsuke showing a demon getting the best of the smugly sleeping demon-queller (No. 22). The irreverence of a design such as that in No. 17, where one turns the netsuke around to fine a little demon goosing the exorcist was an irreverence available only to an artist working in a form already marginal to loftier cultural claims.

It lies within the power of the miniature to astonish; we are all familiar with the dizzying effect that the meticulous execution of detail, in miniature produces. When one speaks of the "telling detail" in a narrative, one means a single minute part that seems to reveal the whole. Susan Stewart writes, in her engaging book, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, of "the hand being the measure of the miniature," reminding us that the impulse to miniaturization in art is also connected to a dream of total comprehension: a world encompassed in one's hand, a cosmos under control. "There are no miniatures in nature," she writes; "the miniature is a cultural product, the product of an eye performing certain operations, manipulating, and attending in certain ways to, the physical world." By its scale and the craft of its execution, by its pious and its irreverent representations, by its framing of detail which seems to originate in a world always anterior to it, miniature art can only remind us of the miniature — and cultural — nature of all art.

Emoretta Yang
Ithaca, New York

Checklist of the Exhibition

Japanese Netsuke Birds, Animals, Plants

*All dimensions in inches: height
preceeds length.*

1. Two Quail with Millet

Signed: Okatomo shichijushichi
okina ("77-year old man Okatomo")
Ivory

Dimensions: $1 \times 1\frac{11}{16}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Okatomo was a Kyoto carver whose first works were notice before 1781. His name is mentioned in the *Sōken Kishō*, a late eighteenth century work published in Osaka, which dealt with fine sword accessories and included netsuke. Okatomo's work, generally in ivory, depicted animals, birds and vegetables and was greatly admired and copied during his lifetime and after. In particular, examples of his various designs on the theme of "Quail on Millet" provided models for later carvers.

The fine articulation of feathers and the subtle counterpoint of the two quail in this netsuke are equal to any of Okatomo's best productions. The two birds, turned in opposite directions, define a trim revolving space between them; but there is something equally strange and distant in their hunched, glowering presences that recalls the same emotional quality in the bird paintings by the eccentric seventeenth-century Chinese painter Chu Ta, whose work was known and collected in Japan.

2. Boar

Signed: Toyomasa
Wood, with eyes of inlaid horn
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The boar is one of the emblems in the Japanese zodiac, the twelve animals of which were favorite netsuke subjects, being depicted alone or in pairs, or in the entire group. The sign system that governs them is complex, since each animal could stand for a year, a month, or a time of day. Symbolic associations for these zodiac subjects could thus be quite personal; it was common, for example, for a netsuke owner to choose netsuke representing the animal of the year of his birth.

Stunning in its execution, this boar offers a clear testimonial to the reputation of its maker. Toyomasa (1773-1856) was a Shinoyama carver whose work, almost all in wood, is known for its vigor and boldness. In this example, the deliberate meticulousness of the boar's fur, the solidity of the animal's body and the sweep of its movement combine to produce a form that is monumental in vision.

3. Water Buffalo with Calf

Signed Yukoku, in
rectangular reserve
Wood
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

4. Three Puppies

Signed Kaigyokusai (incised),
Masatsugu (seal form)
Ivory with eyes of inlaid black coral
(*unimatsu*)
Dimensions: $1 \times 1\frac{3}{8}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Kaigyokusai (1813-1892) is regarded as one of the master carvers of netsuke.

He was born in Osaka, a pre-eminent city in netsuke carving, living there all his life, but apparently was never formally apprenticed to any teacher. He had a reputation for selecting the best materials for his work; his carving style was distinctive and influential.

This group of three puppies is typical of Kaigyokusai in the care and elegance of its execution. The composition shows that he carefully worked out the design from all angles, probably making many preliminary sketches of the front, back and underside. The *himotoshi* are formed by the natural configurations in the subject, and the fur is carved in raised ridges instead of simple incised lines.

5. Dog with Abalone Shell

Signed: Okatomo, in reserve
(probably a follower)
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

6. Dog

Unsigned
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

The dog, too, is one of the twelve animals of the zodiac (see no. 2); its popularity as a netsuke subject must have been amplified by the closeness dogs have with the human family. In netsuke they are usually shown seated, frequently with an object, such as a ball, toy, or, as in No. 5, with an abalone shell. One version of this subject shows a more macabre side to the canine affinity with man, as in No. 15, where the dog becomes a jackal and the toy becomes a skull mask.



3. Water Buffalo with Calf
Signed Yukoku, in rectangular reserve

7. Speckled Mouse Unidentified

Ivory with eyes of inlaid dark horn
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{5}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

In Japanese decorative arts of the Edo period, mice were an emblem for wealth; any middle-class household with the means to keep a full pantry could afford to support a few mice. This mouse netsuke is so lovingly rendered, one feels that the emblematic meaning of the well-stocked cupboard is of less interest to the carver than the gentleness of the animal itself, in its compact, rounded form, and the sleek, soft texture of its fur.

8. Cicada

Signed: Naoaki, in oval cartouche
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The cicada is appreciated in Japan as one of the group of "insect musicians"; its song evokes the stillness and heat of summer. An acoustic charm supplements the sculptural grace of this netsuke. The brittle paperiness of the two ginkgo leaves underneath frames the insect's carefully veined wings in all three dimensions.

9. Wasp Inside a Pear

Signed: Sangetsu
Wood
Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{5}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

An interest in the aesthetics of decay is not restricted to Japan; certainly by the end of the nineteenth century, French Symbolist writers had found in Japanese art a kindred attitude toward the beauty of the decaying object.

The nineteenth century netsuke-maker Sangetsu followed the style of realistic wood carving of Bazan, and both are known for their renderings of rotting pears. The subject of a wasp inside rotting fruit attracted several artists. In its challenge to represent different surfaces — the nubby texture of the *nashi* pear, the curling edges of the skin, the gauzy veined wings of the insects — it expresses a piquancy not found in more conventional insect-and-flower subjects.

10. Three Peapods

Signed: Kiyokatsu
Ivory
Dimensions: $1 \times 2\frac{3}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

The work of Kiyokatsu (early 19th century) depicted groups of nuts or vegetables, designed so that the netsuke cord could pass through openings in the composition. It is typical of his work to take advantage, as he does here, of the color and smooth rich surfaces of unstained, natural ivory. The mute elegance of this piece seems also to derive from an underlying geometry. The three peapods overlap in such a way as to recall the *mitsu-tomoe* ("triple-comma") crest design, with its Buddhist connotations of a cosmos in complementary flux. This self-contained abstract quality finds its own complement in the asymmetrical particulars of stems, bulges and enfoldings.

11. Tortoise Retracted in Shell

Unsigned
Polished tortoise shell
Dimensions: $\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The tortoise is a popular figure in Japanese iconography, being associated with longevity, endurance, and the foundations of the world. This netsuke, showing a tortoise retracted in its shell, is simple and compact in its design; in a punning, reflexive use of material, the unknown carver has here carved his tortoise netsuke out of polished tortoise shell.

12. Octopus

Signed: Chokuminsai (?), incised
Ivory with inlaid eyes
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

Though this carver is not included in standard references, it is possible that he is the same as the Chokusai born in 1877, whose work, though rare, is noted for its high quality. This octopus netsuke with its fully rounded and intricate design of curled tentacles indicates a carver of great skill and sensitivity.

13. Snail

Signature unread
Ivory; okimono
Dimensions: $\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The extreme delicacy of the snail's antennae and the absence of cord-holes indicate that this piece is not a netsuke but an *okimono* (niche ornament); its life-like size and the naturalistic precision of carved scales, coloring, and shell striations suggest that the carver here is aiming not so much for the pleasures of miniaturizing, but rather for those of deceiving the eye.

Though netsuke were ornamental, their primary purpose lay in their function as toggles, and many collectors still judge the value of a

netsuke by how well it serves that function, balanced against considerations of imagination or beauty in design. Apart from miniature sculpture designed for religious or votive purposes, *okimono* were exclusively ornamental. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Japan was eager to assert its place in the burgeoning world trade community, many *okimono* were made to send to the International Expositions. Genre and not mythical subjects were favored for these *de facto* ambassadors to the West, and it is not surprising that their manufacture became an arena for virtuosic displays in the execution of detail. This snail was probably **not** intended for export; its intimate scale and the reverent treatment of its attributes aim at a Japanese audience.

14. Jackal with a Skull Mask

Signed: Yoshimasa
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{5}{8} \times 2$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

Yochimasa was a late eighteenth century carver whose work is associated with the style of Yoshinaga in Kyoto. For the subject, see Nos. 5 and 6.

15. Frog on a Skull

Signed: Ichiyusai (Active mid-19th century)
Ivory with dark rust-red stain
Dimensions: $1\frac{5}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Starting in the middle of the nineteenth century and continuing to the beginning of the twentieth, a new twist appeared in traditional Japanese taste for ghost and demon tales; an interest in macabre subjects and their

15. Frog on a Skull
Signed: Ichiyusai (Active mid-19th century)



graphic representation in netsuke paralleled the rise in popularity of these subjects in prints. Some of that interest found expression in netsuke representing human skulls. A dramatizing touch was often added by including a creature closely associated with the earth, such as a snake curling through the skull's openings, or in this case, a toad, to make the *memento mori* message all the more potent.

Mythical Creatures and Tales

16. Demon Weeping on a Severed Arm

Unsigned
Ebony, ivory and lacquer
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

There are several legends in Japanese history about Watanabe no Tsuna, a retainer of Minamoto no Yoritomo. One of the best-known recounts an incident at the gate of Rashomon, where a large demon (*oni*) was said to be threatening villagers and passers-by. Watanabe took up the challenge to investigate but after spending a weary night waiting by the gate in the rain, he began to doze. Something tugged at his helmet, and abruptly he slashed at a dark mass at the top of the gate. The monster escaped, but in the morning Watanabe found a huge arm at his feet.

The legend is illustrated in netsuke, often, as here, with the added presence of a smaller *oni* who sits on the severed arm, mourning. The carver has utilized three different materials in this netsuke. The ivory and the wood make rich compliments; lacquer bracelet and ring provide the means by which a cord could be attached to the netsuke.

The sheen of dark wood highlights the skillful carving of the arm, with its muscles and veins still bulging as the three fingers clench. A severed arm in itself would be a macabre object; the weeping *oni* turns the old legend around by adding a sympathetic and humorously poignant touch.

17. Exorcising Demons

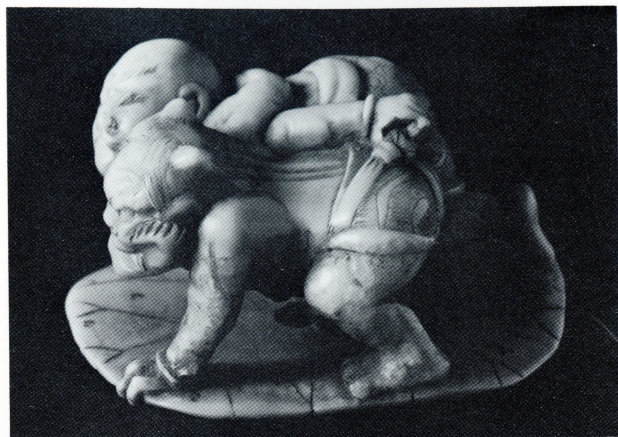
Signed: Ikkosai (probably Toun, active 1830-43)
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

The first day of the New Year in Japan is traditionally the time when demon (*oni*) are cast out of the house in a ceremony called the *Oni Yurai*, or *Oni Tsuina*. In this ritual, the chanting householder throws handfuls of dried, roasted beans around the room. Netsuke carvers seem to have been particularly engaged by the idea of the *oni* fleeing those potent legumes, for they found an infinite number of ways to represent the exorcism, many of them with humorous twists.

In this piece, a man of authoritative bearing dressed in dignified ceremonial robes performs the exorcism. Holding a tray of beans on a lacquer table, he gets ready to throw more from his upheld right fist, and his success can be seen in the poses and scared faces of the two demons running from him. Not to be outdone, however, a third demon crawls behind and gives the man a clear poke in the rear.

18. Demon Hiding in a Box

Signed: Masatoshi
Wood
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre



22. Sumo Wrestler and Demon
Signed: Zemin

The design seen here became a standard representation of the *Oni Yarai* ("demon-exorcising") ritual (see No. 17): a terrified *oni* trying to cram himself into a box too small to hide him, nearly bursting the joints, several of the exorcism beans scattered around.

18a. An identical piece in the Sordoni Family collection, with inlaid ivory eye, bears the signature *Isshin*, and it is possible that both are the work of a nineteenth century carver, Isshinsai Masatoshi of the Nagoya school, about whom little is known (see Davey, p. 200; Meinertzhagen, p. 46).

19. Demon with Injured Knee
Signed: Kincho (?)
Wood
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

More roughly carved, but no less expressive, this netsuke shows a demon grimacing in disgust at an exorcism bean stuck to his knee.

20. Sleeping Shōki and Demon-Thief
Signature unread
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

21. Demon Grinding with Mortar and Pestle
Unsigned
Wood
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

At first glance, this netsuke does not seem to possess the elegance or dazzling surface effects recognized in the work

of master netsuke carvers. A second examination, which ought to include holding it in one's hand, would convince one otherwise; it possesses all of the qualities that go into making a delightful piece of miniature sculpture and a perfect netsuke. The olive-color wood is light in weight, with more than enough volume for the netsuke to be tucked securely and comfortably into a sash. The design is compact and carved fully in the round, and there is a pleasing way the figure cradles the mortar bowl between his feet. The rough, stylized musculature of the demon is articulated through sharp cuts, but the extreme contours show a rounded softness and patina that are the unreplicable marks of ordinary handling. Last but not least is simply the humorous expressiveness of the figure. One does not have to know that a traditional way to dispose of *oni* was to grind them with mortar and pestle (this *oni*'s assigned punishment is milder than that) — the disgruntled and disobliging look on the demon's face in accomplishing his penance would be familiar to anyone.

22. Sumo Wrestler and Demon
Signed: Zemin
Ivory
Dimensions: $\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The work of Zemin (19th century) is rare; he is believed to have been a pupil of Suwa Keimin.

23. Kappa on a Clam
Signed: Suketada
Cherrywood with eyes of inlaid dark horn
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{7}{16}$
Lent by Private Collection, Wilkes-Barre

In Japanese lore, a *kappa* is a mythical amphibian who lives near rivers, attacking and devouring human beings. *Kappa* were thought to be wise, though, and even civil in their ferociousness. The eighteenth century carver Suketada has represented a *kappa* here with all its standard attributes: the scaly body of a tortoise, frog-like limbs, and the head of a monkey. At the top of its head, surrounded by long lanky hair, is a concavity, which, according to myths, contains the fluid that gives the creature its strength. To deflect the attack of a *kappa*, children are told to bow deeply in front of it; its reciprocal bows will cause its vital fluid to spill out.

In netsuke, *kappa* are sometimes shown, as here, with a foot caught in a clamshell, rendered harmless and the comical butt of a joke. In this piece both *kappa* and clam are carved from one piece of wood; Suketada has given us a nicely rendered contrast between the smooth surface of the clamshell and the rough, scaly body of the *kappa*.

24. Ashinaga and Tenaga
Signed: Tomochika
Ivory
Dimensions: $3 \times \frac{7}{8}$
Lent by Private Collection, Wilkes-Barre

Tomochika is the name signed by a family of Tokyo netsuke carvers whose work appeared from the middle of the nineteenth century to the later part of the century. One of the pupils was known in particular for his ivory *okimono* which were exported to Europe and America.

Ashinaga ("Long-legs") and Tenaga ("Long Arms") are two mythical breeds of men whose names identify their

curious characteristics. They were said to live on the coast in northern China and subsisting on fish, which the Tenaga catches with his exaggeratedly long arms. In order to get out to sea, the Tenaga rides on the back of the Ashinaga, whose long legs allow him to wade out a considerable distance. Ashinaga and Tenaga had a distinct didactic role to play in Japanese mythology in illustrating to children the importance of social cooperation. For netsuke designers, they were a source of great amusement, by the variety of entanglements of limbs and torsos that could be envisioned. Here, a Tenaga, perched on the shoulders of an Ashinaga, leans backward to grasp the ankles of his carrier, who opens his mouth in dismay? or delight? at the head now thrust up between his legs.

25. Ghost Over a Tombstone
Unsigned
Dimensions: $2 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Though the carving of this piece is not as outstanding as others in the exhibition, the imagination that informs it deserves being acknowledged. Two men by a tombstone are startled and frightened by a ghost issuing from a vapor behind the stone: one raises a hand and foot in a cry of surprise, the other covers his neck and buries his face in the ground. The carving is oriented against three planes, including the bottom. Turning the piece upside down, one gets a worm's-eye view of the clenched eyes and furrowed brow of the second man, not even safe from a spectator's scrutiny.

Masks

26. Noh Theater Mask
Unsigned
Ivory with eyes of inlaid abalone shell
Dimensions: $2\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{7}{16}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

27. Noh Theater Mask
Signed: Gyokuzan (?)
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

28. Noh Theater Mask
Signed: Issan
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

There are many netsuke based on theater masks; in fact the earliest netsuke carvers were probably professional theater mask carvers, who whittled netsuke from scrap material when theater work slackened. Identifying a mask is usually difficult, since the number of roles in Noh theater, and in the older drama forms of Gigaku and Bugaku, is enormous. Furthermore, many netsuke mask carvers designed new masks simply for their comic effect, with no allusions to classical drama, so, except for a handful of very well-known types, it becomes nearly impossible to identify most netsuke masks.

The scowling mask here, and the mask with tongue stuck out may be from the more light-hearted Gigaku theater; the devilish mask could be from the Noh. Note that the eyes of the latter are lined with an iridescent material, probably abalone.



29. Eleven Masks of the Noh Theater
Signed: Tomochika

29. Eleven Masks of the Noh Theater

Signed: Tomochika
Ivory; ryusa netsuke
Dimensions: $\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Objects from Daily Life

30. Knotted String of Cash
Signed: Mitsuhiro, incised and ink-filled in oval reserve
Ivory
Dimensions: $1 \times 2\frac{1}{8}$
Lent by Private Collection, Wilkes-Barre

Metal currency in Japan, minted after the pattern of Chinese coins, was strung together and knotted to facilitate carrying and counting. As toggles for *inrō* and sash pouches, netsuke were closely associated with coins. The netsuke, too, had other connections with money: the use of netsuke reached the height of its popularity during the peaceful Tokugawa era, when most netsuke patrons belonged to the rising middle-class. It's not surprising that netsuke representing strings of coins should have become popular during this period; the wish for continuing wealth expressed itself in the personal adornments of a class consolidating its newly acquired economical and commercial power.

Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875) was one of the master artists of netsuke carving; his work is often copied. The suppleness of the rope in this piece and the care in the texturing of each strand suggest a master of keen observation and sculptural skill.



31. Boy and Mouse
Signed: Homei (late 19th – early 20th century)

Figures

31. Boy and Mouse

Signed: Homei (late 19th – early 20th century)

Ivory with various inlaid materials, including abalone shell and hornbill; *himotoshi* lined

Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$

Private Collection, Wilkes-Barre

32. The Story of Urashima Tarō

Signed: Rantei, in oval reserve; Hogen (honorary title), in rectangular

Ivory with inlaid eyes (one missing)

Dimensions: $1\frac{5}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Rantei was a late eighteenth century carver whose work was highly recognized. He received the honorary title of *hogen* for his carving in ivory, which was his chief material.

This small figure is a radiant piece of sculpture, above all for the psychological conviction of the face and head; the hair, the ears, the high cheeks, the creased brow, the open mouth — these features are all modeled, not incised.

The subject illustrated is probably the story of Urashima, a popular Japanese folktale. Urashima, a fisherman, catches a tortoise, whom he frees. The tortoise returns to him in the form of a beautiful woman, and at her request, he returns her to her home, in the palace of the Dragon-king. After three years, the homesick Urashima begs to be allowed to visit his earthly home. His wife tries to dissuade him but finally relents, giving him a box which she tells him he must not open if he wants to see her

again. Urashima returns home, but is unable to find any trace of his friends or family. In his confusion, he opens the box, and immediately realizes that he has been away not for three but for three hundred years. A puff of smoke rises from the box, and in that instant Urashima ages and dies as the last strands of smoke disappear.

In Rantei's depiction, Urashima has not quite opened the box, and his features, expressing consternation, are still those of a younger man.

33. Girl with Rabbit-Shaped Cake

Signed: Seiga, late 19th century

Ivory with red highlight

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

34. The Immortal Tekkai with a *karashishi* Lion

Unsigned

Wood

Dimensions: $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Tekkai (Chinese, Li T'ieh-kuai) is one of the Eight Taoist Immortals; he is usually represented as a crippled beggar. Legend relates how the Taoist sage Lao Tzu gave him an iron crutch, from which his name (meaning "iron crutch") derives.

35. Kadori Myojin and the Namazu

Unsigned

Wood

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The Namazu, according to Japanese lore, is the mythical catfish on whose back lie the islands that make up Japan; the creature's movements explained the phenomenon of earthquakes. Kadori Myojin is the deity charged with keeping the catfish calm, a task he accomplishes by stroking it with a gourd. This netsuke alludes to that grand task, but once again, the carver treats his subject with an amusing, domesticating humor. The catfish's barbels are a gentle parody of the man's extended "handlebar" moustache, which he sports with a bemused, slightly smug expression. The carver has borrowed from an old Japanese legend to make his own bemused comment on the new European styles and fashions so intently cultivated in Japan in the 1860's and 70's.

36. Man Seated in a Hat

Signed: Mitsutoshi (19th century)

Ivory

Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

37. Rat-Catcher

Unsigned

Ivory

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$

Lent by Private Collection, Wilkes-Barre

38. Pot-Mender with Box-Bellows

Signature unread

Wood

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Another theme found in netsuke is labor and the occupations. In this netsuke, a tinker holds a piece of heated metal in his brazier as he prepares to fix a cooking pot.

39. Wrestlers in the Kawazu Hold

Signed: Masatoshi (?)

Wood

Dimensions: $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The wrestler Matanogoro Kuni Hisa threw his opponent, the celebrated Kawazu no Saburō Sukeyasu, by lifting him up by the loincloth. The hold became famous and was named the Kawazu throw. It became a popular subject for netsuke.

40. Manzai Dancer

Unsigned

Wood with polychrome; *ittabori* style carving

Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Ittabori, or "single-knife carving", designates a style of wood netsuke carved in angular planes. The sharp contrasts and deep shadows thus achieved make the pieces appear rough and simple; the style manifests a cubist impulse. The subjects of *ittabori* were usually dancers, and this style of carving is particularly good at conveying the stiff, angular folds of the heavy brocades used in dancer's costumes. The makers always animated the surfaces by painting or lacquering them in colors. Over time, the polychromed surfaces acquired a comfortable patina which, joined to the reticent vigor of the carving, gives these pieces a charm belying their sophistication.

Manzai (literally, "10,000-years", an abbreviation for a congratulatory phrase) dancers were street entertainers who often went around in groups of two or three, dancing and entertaining for patrons.

41. Figure in a Mask with Basket

Unsigned

Ivory

Dimensions: $2 \times \frac{3}{4}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

42. Man, Woman and Child with Three Blind Men

Signed: Masatami, in oval reserve

Ivory, with etched and stained textile decoration

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The carver who made this and No. 43 is probably the Masatami (1853-1928), who lived in Nagoya. His lifetime spanned a period which encompassed the opening of Japan to the West, the restoration to Imperial rule, and the early stages of industrialization. The market for netsuke declined, as Japanese began to adopt western dress, and some netsuke makers turned to the making of *okimono* (alcove ornaments) instead.

These two pieces by Masatami reflect some of the changes in form and subject that came about; they are still netsuke, since they possess the requisite cord-holes, but the conception underlying them is closer to that of *okimono*. Both pieces are studies in how groups of figures may intertwine and deserve to be examined in the round — no. 43 of Hotei and the children, however, is oriented toward



39. Wrestlers in the Kawazu Hold
Signed: Masatoshi (?)

one plane, while no. 42 of blind and seeing figures, is more like a whirl, sometimes moving outward, sometimes moving in.

43. Hotei and Children

Signed: Masatami, in red kakihan Ivory with red lacquer accents and textile decoration in gold

Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Hotei, one of the Seven Household Gods in Japan, and the god of good fortune in China, is placed here among a group of Chinese children, all dressed in elaborate robes with gold and red lacquer patterns simulating brocade. One of the children bends over a low table writing with a brush.

See No. 42, for another piece by Masatami.

44. Aboriginal Man with Two Toads

Signed: Chikusai, in inlaid rectangular cartouche

Wood

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$

Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

45. Smiling Aboriginal Boy

Unsigned

Wood

Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

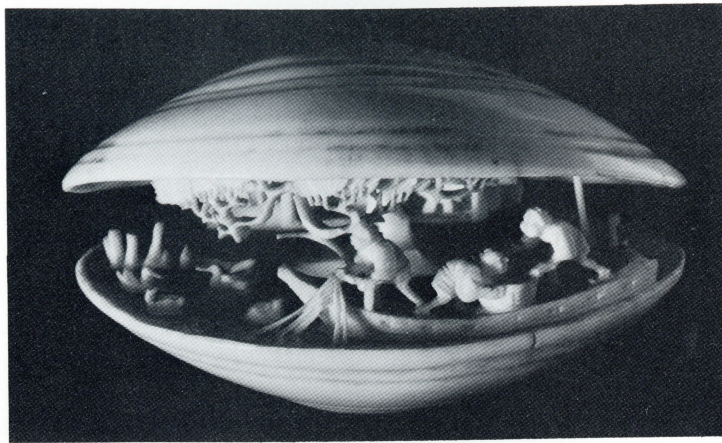
46. Japanese Child Dressed in Dutch Clothing

Signed: Tomomitsu (?)

Ivory

Dimensions: $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University



50. Miniature Landscape in a Shell
Signed: Masayama (?)

47. Momotarō Emerging from a Basket

Unsigned
Wood; ryusa-type
Dimensions: $\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

48. Dragon

Unsigned
Ivory; ryusa-type
Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

49. Swarm of Mice with Drum, Tengu Masks and Daruma Toy

Signed: Masamitsu (late 19th century)
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$
Lent by Private Collection,
Wilkes-Barre

50. Miniature Landscape in a Shell

Signed: Masayama (?)
Ivory
Dimensions: $1\frac{1}{6} \times 1\frac{7}{16}$
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Miniature landscapes, carved as if contained in clamshells, allude to the beautiful sea kingdom of the Dragon King Ryūjin. According to Chinese legend, the castle of the Dragon King would appear in a vapor issuing from an open clam, and many netsuke carvers took this subject as a natural opportunity to display their miniaturizing skills. By the middle and later nineteenth century, specific reference to the Dragon King's Palace in these "clamscapes" had softened, and the landscapes depicted became more generalized, still retaining their

pastoral feeling but sometimes becoming more mechanical in execution. In this finely carved example, fishermen stand in a boat,

drawing their nets and gathering their catch, while swans swim nearby. The lines of the nets, and the limbs of the trees are carved with a fine delicacy.



10. Three Peapods
Signed: Kiyokatsu



5. Dog with Abalone Shell
Signed: Okatomo, in reserve (probably a follower)



6. Dog
Unsigned



14. Jackal with a Skull Mask
Signed: Yoshimasa



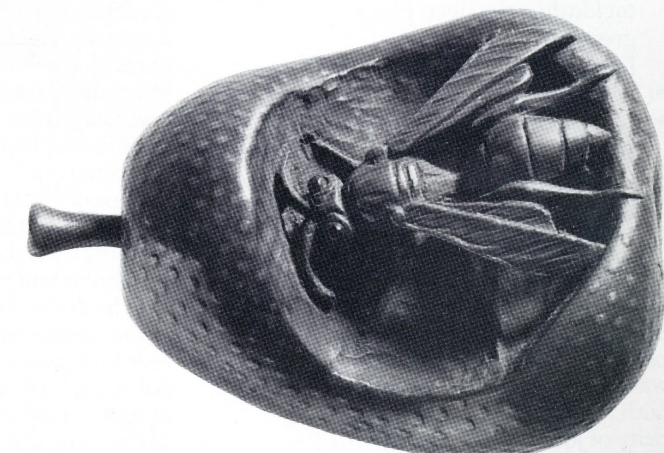
4. Three Puppies
Signed: Kaigyokusai (incised), Masatsugu (seal form)



7. Speckled Mouse
Unidentified



8. Cicada
Signed: Naoaki, in oval cartouche



9. Wasp Inside a Pear
Signed: Sangetsu

Netsuke cont. on page 44

Japanese Inrō

All dimensions in inches: height precedes length. If only one dimension is given, it represents height.

Hasegawa Shigeyoshi

51. Amida Raigō

*Five-case *saya*-inrō (sheath inrō), with design on exterior case of Amida Buddha descending on a cloud, the design continuing on the reverse with two attendants accompanying him. The inside cases bear a design of lotus flowers.

Signed: Hasegawa Shigeyoshi, in gold, with red pot-form seal. Lacquer; gold *hiramakie*, *takamakie* and polychrome *togidashi* on a deep black ground.

Dimensions: $2\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$

*Ojime: Round bead. Gold lacquer.

*Netsuke: Figure of a flying *tennin* (Buddhist angel) carrying a mendicant's bowl. Unsigned. Carved ivory with painted gold textile design.

Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

The Jōdō, or "Pure land", sect of Buddhism became one of the most popular in Japan, since one of its tenets was salvation through simple devout faith. Amida Buddha is the principal deity of Jōdō Buddhism, and the Pure Land of his realm, located in the direction of the setting sun, was known as the Western Paradise. Paintings dating as far back as the eleventh century show Amida descending from

the Western Paradise to welcome the soul of the believer, and it is this event, called *Amida Raigō*, that is depicted here. The figure of Amida is shown on one side, a ray of light emanating from the sacred mark on his forehead. On the other side, two bodhisattvas precede Amida: Fugen with palms pressed in reverence, and Kannon, bearing the lotus that will receive the new soul. All three deities stand on lotus pedestals borne on clouds, while lotus petals drift about, an allusion to the important Buddhist scripture known as the Lotus Sutra. In a particularly felicitous combination, the netsuke attached to this inrō shows a *tennin*, the Buddhist equivalent of an angel, carved in ivory and decorated with gold with a delicacy that matches the delicacy of the inrō.

Hasegawa Shigeyoshi was a well-known lacquer artist of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; he came from the famous Kajikawa line of lacquer workers, setting up his own workshop. He was particularly skilled in all the techniques illustrated here, including gold *takamakie* (raised relief) and polychrome *togidashi* work. *Togidashi* ("to bring out by rubbing") involves a process of filling in the design with pulverized metal or colored lacquer, building up layers of black lacquer over the design and polishing down to bring out the design before covering the entire surface with a clear lacquer. This repeated process of layering and polishing down is what makes *togidashi* images appear deeper than the surface of the inrō. The radiant and subtle coloring of this piece comes from the various angles and depths from which light is reflected by the minute gold particles, suspended at different levels in the lacquer. Modulations in the light

depend on the size of the particles and on how they are applied, whether sprinkled as in the halo or in the beam of light coming from the Buddha's forehead, or graded from dense to sparse as in the cloud-texture (a technique called *mura-nashiji*), or layered thickly as in the denser gold powdering of the bodies.

Jōkasai

52. Duck in Flight

*Three-case *saya*-inrō (sheath inrō), with exterior sheath design of duck taking flight from a shore with grasses and various colorful stones. Inside design of a red-leaved poinsettia plant.

Signed: Jōkasai

Lacquer; sheath design with inlaid ivory, coral, abalone, and other stones, and cloisonné-like treatment of duck; inside design in polychrome *togidashi* on a deep brownish-red ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$

*Ojime: Oblong bead with carp in relief. Silver.

Lent by Shep Brozman

Yamada Jōkasai was an outstanding lacquer artist of the late seventeenth century training under the Kajikawa family. He established the Yamada line of lacquerworkers; most of them, who signed "Jōkasai", worked, as he did, for the shōgunate.



55. Rescue of an Awabi Diver
Kajikawa Family



52. Duck in Flight
Jōkasai

cont. on page 22

51. Amida Raigō
Hasegawa Shigeyoshi



60. Rōsei's Dream
Koma Kansai



front

62. The Death of Buddha
Koma Koryū



back

56. Blackbirds in Winter
Kajikawa Family



61. Chinese Woman at Loom
Koma Kansai



63. Raiden, the Thunder God
Koma Koryū.



front

64. The Rokkasen ("The Six Poets")
Koma Koryū.



back

58. Fishes of the Sea
Koma Kansai



Kajikawa Family

53. Sporting Falcons

*Four-case inrō, showing a falcon tied to a perch with lion-mask base; on the reverse, there is another falcon tied to a drum perch with lion's-head finial. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold and silver *takamakie*, with polychrome and mother-of-pearl inlay on a deep black ground.

Dimensions: 3⅜

*Ojime: Oval base with flying cranes in red on a white ground. Porcelain with overglaze red enamel.

*Netsuke: Pierced *manju*-form, with design of lion among clouds, with whisk. Unsigned. Ivory.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Members of the samurai class hunted birds, and the subject of a tethered hawk or falcon is found in traditional Japanese painting, going back to Chinese models. It was a persuasive emblem for the values samurai placed on physical strength, military savvy, and loyalty of service. The motif seems to have become even more popular in the late Edo and Meiji periods (for examples, see Baekeland and Young [1980], pp. 174-178), as Japan began to grapple with its own image in the international community. As an object of personal adornment, the image expresses an individual pride that would readily ally itself to the growing national pride fostered in late nineteenth century Japan by its military leaders.

The Kajikawa family produced some of the finest lacquer artists, specializing

in inrō. They were patronized by the shogunate from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century and were, along with their contemporaries, the Koma family, the best-known lacquerers of their day.

[See Wrangham collection catalogue (1972), no. 18 for a Kajikawa school inro dated to the 18th century, with identical design.]

54. General Kuan-yu and his attendant Chou-ts'ang

*Five-case inrō, showing the Chinese general Kuan-yu and his horse, the landscape continuing on the reverse, showing his scowling attendant Chou-ts'ang bearing his halberd. Signed: Kajikawa tsuku, in gold on *nashiji* ground, with red pot seal.

Lacquer; figures in gold and polychrome *takamakie*, on a gold ground.

Dimensions: 3⅜

*Ojime: Bead with butterfly motifs, metal.

*Netsuke: Cowherd playing flute on back of water buffalo. Signed: Tomotada Wood.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

General Kuan-yu (Japanese, *Kwanyu*) was one of the three military heroes of the Period of the Three Kingdoms in China (see No. 94). On this inrō, he is represented, dismounted, with his horse, in a wilderness landscape. On the other side, his valet, the gruff Chou-ts'ang, holds his master's halberd, a scowl on his face. Both figures are rendered in a sculptural *takamakie* (see No. 58, for a brief explanation of the technique), the horse in more level relief, to show them

as the prominent personages in the tableau, much as actors stepping forward from a stage setting.

55. Rescue of an Awabi Diver

*Three-case inro, showing four men in a boat pulling on a rope, with scene continuing on reverse, hauling in an awabi-diver from the water.

Signed: Kajikawa tsuku
Lacquer; silver, gold and polychrome *togidashi*, with *mura-nashiji* effect on a deep black ground with streaked red undertones.

Dimensions: 3⅜

*Ojime: Bead with floral designs. Pierced metal.

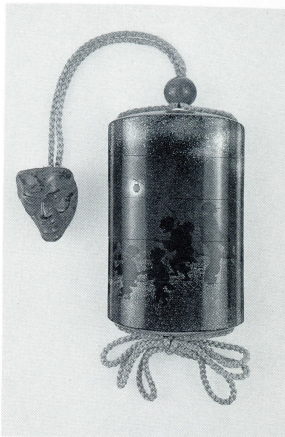
*Netsuke: *Manju*-form with butterfly designs. Gold *togidashi* on a dark to light brown lacquer ground.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Awabi, or abalone shellfish, is still considered a delicacy in Chinese and Japanese cuisine. The abalone shell, along with mother-of-pearl, is also used in decorative art as inlay material. The shells were gathered by women divers, and one of the most famous print designs by the eighteenth century artist Utamaro depicts the abalone divers at Ise. The design of this inrō, executed in a fine *togidashi* (see No. 51 for explanation of the technique) could have been based on an unknown print treating *awabi*-divers. It shows four men in a boat pulling an awabi-diver from rough waters. One of the men is dressed in a noble's clothes, and the illustrated event is probably an episode from a folktale.

cont. on page 30

65. Silhouetted Strollers
Koma Koryu



70. Drum-gong on a Dragon-stand
Masanaga



67. Shōjō Drinking Sake
Koma Yasuhide



72. Insects
Ryushin



76. Daruma Stretching
Shinmin

68. Irises
Korin School



back

73. Daikoku Watches Mice Hauling a Radish
Shibayama School



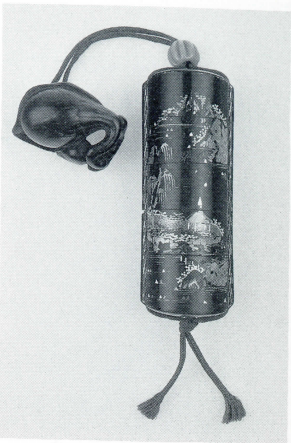
front

74. Raiden the Thunder God and Shoki the Demon-Queller
Shibayama School



75. Birds and Flowers Among Hills and Streams
Shibayama School

79. Landscape
Somada School



front

78. The General Kato Kiyomasa
Shunshui



back

88. Archer and Young Woman
Zeshin



front



back

80. Sparrows
Tōyō [Kanshōsai]



91. Cockatoos in a Cage
Zeshin



92. Demonstration/sampler intro
Zeshin

83. Ichikawa Actor in a *Shibaraku* Rōle
Tōyō [Kanshōsai]



56. Blackbirds in Winter

*Four-case inrō, showing blackbirds perched on a wintry branch silhouetted against a silver moon among vines, the design continuing on the reverse, showing a barren branch with red leaves and tendrils. Signed: Kajikawa
Lacquer; red, black, gold
takamakie on smooth gold ground.

Dimensions: 3¼

*Ojime: Red bead

*Netsuke: *Kagamibuta* with design of moon and bamboo. Signature illegible. Carved ivory.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Kōami Chōko

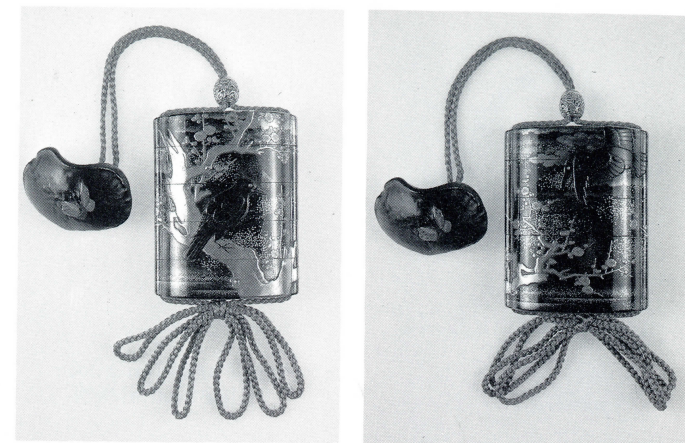
57. Illustration to the Tongue-cut Sparrow

*Five-case inrō, showing on one side a man with an open basket of treasures; on the reverse, a person confronting an opened basket full of demons. Signed: ("the standing branch of the name, 15th generation")
Koami Gen Chōko, with *kakihan*
Lacquer; *takamakie* and polychrome *togidashi*, and with mother-of-pearl inlay, against a matte black and gray checkerboard ground.

Dimensions: 3¾

*Ojime: Small bead. Gold lacquer.

81. Crows in A Night Landscape
Tōyō [Kanshōsai]



*Netsuke: Figure of a peasant digging up a sack while a dog looks on (illustrated to the folktale, "The Old Man Who Made Withering Trees Flowre")
Unsigned. Polychrome lacquer.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The story of the tongue-cut sparrow (*Shitakiri Suzume*) is a popular Japanese fable illustrating the themes of humility rewarded because of the actions of his neighbor, an ill-humored old woman; after a long search in the forest, he finds the sparrow, who now receives his former owner with great hospitality. When the old man is getting ready to leave, the sparrow offers him the choice of two baskets, one large and heavy, the other small, as a gift to take home. The old man chooses the smaller, saying that he will find it easier to carry because of his age. He opens the box at home and finds it full of an inexhaustible supply of precious things. Hearing of the old man's fortune, his bad-tempered neighbor goes to the forest. She finds the sparrow, who receives her politely, and who offers her the choice of two baskets at the end of her visit; the woman chooses the larger, which she can barely lift. Unable to wait, she opened it on the way home, and a host of demons and goblins fly out to torment and torture her.

On one side of the inrō, the old man looks on with surprised pleasure at his box, opened to reveal the various treasures known as the *Takaramono*. The lacquer artist has clearly and painstakingly represented these conventionalized emblematic objects, which include the hat of invisibility (*kakuregasa*), scrolls (*makimono*) the brocade purse of gold (*kanebukuro*), and, strewn around, horn-cups, the

sacred *tama*-jewels, cowrie-shells (used as cash), and Daikoku's mallet (*tsuchi*). On the reverse, the neighbor's box is opened, from which issues a variety of demons and goblins.

The Kōami family of lacquer makers was founded in the fifteenth century and continued successfully through the Momoyama period (1573-1615) and Edo period (1615-1868) into the twentieth, receiving commissions from both the shogunate and from the imperial court. Choko, who worked in the nineteenth century, is designated as the fifteenth generational head of the family. This inrō is exquisitely rendered in a low raised gold relief, making it as golden as the riches in its theme.

The theme of virtue rewarded is aptly extended in the accompanying netsuke which illustrates the folktale known as *Hanasaka Jiji* ("The Old Man who makes withering trees blossom"). It too tells of an old couple rewarded through the interventions of an animal, in this case, a dog, who leads them to a sack of money buried in the ground; and also of envious neighbors whose greed leads them to a more disastrous end. Lacquer netsuke are rarer than ivory or wood pieces, and figural lacquer work as masterful as that in this example even rarer.

Koma Kansai

58. Fishes of the Sea

*Four-case inrō, showing varieties of ocean life, including a lobster, flying fish, sea bream, blowfish, flounder, and sea robin, among waving underwater plants, barnacles, rocks.
Signed: Koma Kansai
Lacquer; gold and silver
takamakie

Dimensions: 3½

*Ojime: Bead in form of shell cluster, Carved ivory.

*Netsuke: boat with removable thatched roof. Gold lacquer.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The technique called *takamakie* (literally, "high, sprinkled picture") involves building up selected figures in the ground design through a repeated process of lacquering, sprinkling of gold-powder, drying and polishing. Since the ground is executed in the same way, *takamakie* is really a way of extending the same process in chosen areas, to make a three-dimensional, sculptured effect against the surrounding flat surface. Each fish and specimen of sea life illustrated here is executed in a sharply articulated *takamakie* that projects the figure forward in its space, isolating it, giving it the feel of a precious gem in a golden setting.

The Koma family of lacquer artists was, with the Kajikawa family, one of the most skilled and best-known families of lacquer makers. They were founded in the seventeenth century and worked from then until the nineteenth under the patronage of the shoguns. The first Koma Kansai (?-1792) was not born into the family, but was allowed to use the family name by his teacher, Koma Koryū (see Nos. 62-65); his own son and grandson continued to use the name Kansai.

59. Ferryboat

*Four-case inrō, showing a ferryboat bearing a monk, a courtesan, a samurai, a monkey showman, and an old man.
Signed: Koma Kansai
Lacquer; polychrome *togidashi*
takamakie

and gold *takamakie* on a deep black ground.

Dimensions: 3½

*Has cord but no ojime or netsuke.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The theme of the ferryboat is one that occurs in Japanese painting; it offers the picture-maker an occasion to gather together representatives of several classes of Japanese life, an allegory for Japanese society. It is said that the theme of five characters from different walks of life assembled in a boat is derived from a type of popular entertainment in which one actor plays, in quick succession, the roles of several different characters as represented in *otsu-e*, a type of folk-painting in which certain figures were humorously caricatured.

The social classes represented here are the boatman; a street entertainer with his trained monkey and perch-staff; a dancing-girl; an old man; a *komuso* (a type of traveling priest, who wore a basket over his head, and played the *shakuhachi* flute); and a samurai.

60. Rōsei's Dream

*Inrō in the form of a writing-box (*suzuribako*), with a sliding side-lid and three-cases opening from the side.

Signed: Kansai and Jugyoku, with *kakihan*
Lacquer with a *nashiji* ground, with inlaid polychrome ivory and lacquer.

Dimensions: 4×3

*Ojime: Bead with design of flying bird. Gold lacquer relief against dark metallic ground.

*Netsuke: *Kagamibuta* with metal relief plaque showing a woman, probably the Immortal Benten, holding a peach and prunus blossom. Ivory with metal. Signed.

Lent by Shep Brozman

A Chinese myth recounts the story of Rōsei (Chao Lu-sheng), a poverty-stricken scholar, who, hearing of the emperor's call for councillors, sets out for the capital. Stopping at an inn on the way, Rosei falls asleep at the table and dreams. Accounts of the dream vary, but Rosei understands it to be a cautionary dream, warning of the transitoriness of earthly possessions and accomplishments.

This elegantly designed inrō is made in the shape of a *suzuribako*, a box that is used to store letters and carry writing implements, and its thematic subject, that of the sleeping Rosei, was illustrated many times in inrō and netsuke.

61. Chinese Woman at Loom

*Six-case inrō showing a Chinese woman dressed in black robe and green trousers, seated in a leopard skin at a loom, cutting the wrap with a knife. A young boy in red robe attends beside the loom.

Signed: Kansai and Jugyoku, with *kakihan*

Lacquer; inlaid polychrome ivory and colored stones on a gold "mud-hut" textured ground.

Dimensions: 4×2

*Ojime: Round bead, white with blue bands. Porcelain.

Lent by Shep Brozman

Koma Koryū

62. The Death of Buddha

*Four-case inrō depicting the mourners attending the death of Buddha: sages, monks, pilgrims, samurai, and animals including deer, elephant, dog, cat, white fox, birds, and on the reverse: rat, peacock, ram, snake, rooster, rabbit, boar, tortoise, crane, tiger, horse.

Signed: Koma Koryū

Lacquer; gold and polychrome *togidashi* on a smooth black ground.

Dimensions: 3⅞×2¼

*Ojime: Bead, gold lacquer

Lent by Shep Brozman

Paintings representing the death of the historical Buddha, called *Nehan no Buddha*, or Buddha entering Nirvana, have existed in Japan for centuries. The delicately executed design on this inro follows the iconography established by the painting tradition. Stretched on his right side on a platform under a moonlit sky, the figure of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, is attended and mourned by a host of figures: sages, monks, pilgrims, *tennin* (Buddhist angels), samurai. Animals have come as well, including the animals of the zodiac, and each one is rendered in specific, individuated form.

63. Raiden, the Thunder God

*Four-case inrō depicting the Thunder God beating his drum and sending out flashes of lightening which, on the reverse, partially reveal figures running from the storm.

Signed: Koma Koryū.

Lacquer; gold *hirame nashiji* and polychrome *togidashi* against a deep red-brown ground.

Dimensions: 2⅞×2½

*Ojime: Round bead. Coral (?)

Lent by Shep Brozman

The Thunder God takes on the features of a demon, with a red body and clawed hands. When the Mongols attempted to invade Japan, they were repelled in the midst of a fierce storm, from which only three men escaped.

The Japanese victory is often celebrated in inro and netsuke designs by representations showing Raiden in the clouds throwing lightening bolts at the invaders.

64. The Rokkasen ("The Six Poets")

*Three-case inrō depicting half-length portraits of the six famous poets of Japanese literature, three on each side, with raised chrysanthemum crest and pawlonia crest in the background.

Signed: Koma Koryū.

Lacquer; gold and silver *hiramakie* on a black ground; crests in raised black lacquer relief, as if embossed, on smooth black ground.

Dimensions: 3⅞×2¼

*Ojime: Carved ivory.

Lent by Shep Brozman

The Rokkasen are the six most famous poets in Japanese literature. They are: Sojo Henjo, Ariwara no Narihira, Bunya no Yasuhide, Kisen Hoshi, Ono no Komachi (the only woman in the group), and Otomo no Kuronoshi. The six are frequently

encountered as a group subject in many of the decorative arts.

The Koma family of lacquer artists were court lacquerers for many generations, and the first Koma Koryū is known as a highly skilled lacquerer working from about 1764 to 1789. The sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum is the crest of the Emperor and the pawlonia crest is associated with the Empress; given the high quality of this inrō, it would not be surprising if it had been made for the imperial family.

65. Silhouetted Strollers

*Four-case inrō, showing a samurai and woman silhouetted in a night scene, looking up at a bat; the design continuing on the reverse, showing a woman with a baby on her back and holding a red lantern. A man smoking and three children in procession accompanying her. The moon is shown on top of the lid.

Signed: Koma Koryū, with *kakihan*

Lacquer; black and red *togidashi* on a *mura-nashiji* ground.

Dimensions: 3⅞

*Ojime: Bead of red stone

*Netsuke: Noh theater mask.

Negoro-lacquer. Cinnabar red lacquer burnished to a black ground.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

This is a delicate example of the effects of light possible in lacquerwork. A night scene, it shows people of different ages silhouetted as they stroll about in the night air: a woman holding a lantern partially lights the way, a couple pause to gaze upward at a bat. The black figures gradually

become visible against the dark background in much the same way that figures at night gradually take shape as the pupils of the eye adjust to the surrounding dimness. The varying depths at which light is reflected in lacquer make subtle light effects such as these much more successful in lacquer than in painting or prints. It is clear that the artisans from a family as accomplished and established as the Koma lineage knew this and deliberately exploited these effects in their work.

[See Jahss (1971), no. 228 for a three-case inro of nearly identical design, signed by Koma Koryū.]

Koma Yasuaki

66. Cats

*Four-case inrō, showing a cat scampering under a floral festoon; on the reverse, the design shows a cat crouching before a bamboo screen with another cat silhouetted on the screen.

Signed: Koma Yasuaki

Lacquer; cats in a high silver *takamakie*, other elements in gold and polychrome *takamakie*, against a flat gold ground.

Dimensions: 4

*Ojime: Bead with floral motifs. *Tsuishu* (carved red cinnabar) lacquer.

*Netsuke: Crouching cat holding mouse in mouth. Unsigned. Wood.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University



82. Crows and Wintry Trees
Tōyō [Kanshōsai]

The sculptural effects of a pronounced *takamakie* technique bring the two cats to the foreground of this festive *inrō* (see No. 58 for an explanation of *takamakie*), but it is the third cat, masterfully executed in a more subdued relief, shown through the bamboo slats of a curtain, whose shadowy presence makes the scene into a more amusing drama. Varying the relative heights of the *takamakie* layers, the lacquer artist is able to incorporate natural light and shadow in creating the illusion of space. The sophistication in the detail of the figure behind the slatted curtain is understated but typically Japanese in the way it plays with the values of foreground and background space.

Koma Yasuaki was a lacquer artist of the late eighteenth century.

Koma Yasuhide

67. Shōjō Drinking Sake

*Five-case *inrō* with wrap-around scene showing a Shōjo at a large sake jar.

Signed: Koma Yasuhide; on opposite side: Hōin Tanyū gasha (See Jahss, p. 391-2; and p. 441) Lacquer; gold and polychrome *takamakie* on a dark silver ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$

*Ojime: Round bead, red-colored ivory (?)

*Netsuke: Box-form with design of old-man Noh mask on lid. Gold and silver lacquer.

Lent by Shep Brozman

In Japanese mythology, Shōjō are beings who live near the sea, and who have weakness for sake. They are

sometimes shown with faces like monkeys or, as here, are made to look like wild human beings, with their long, straight hair. Here a Shōjo is seen dressed in a richly decorated robe, leaning over a large wine jar and drinking from a red lacquer cup. His patterned kimono shows patterns of waves, of overlapping lappets, flowers and fence design.

The additional inscription indicates that the design was copied from a picture by the well-known seventeenth century painter Kano Tan'yu.

Kōrin School

68. Irises

*Four-case *inrō*, showing iris plants in bloom

Unsigned: Kōrin style. Meiji period.

Lacquer; gold *takamakie*, with inlaid abalone shell on a deep black ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{8}$

*Ojime: Round bead. Coral-colored ivory.

*Netsuke: *Manju*-shaped with cross-hatching. Ivory with gold *chikin-bori* (incised lines filled with gold.)

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

This *inrō* is the only example in the exhibition which illustrates the distinctive Kōrin style of decoration. Ogata Korin (1658-1716) was an eccentric, many-talented, original artist whose designs in painting and lacquer were to influence much of later Japanese decorative arts. In lacquerwork, he continued and extended the aesthetic first explored by

Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637), and his own pupil Ritsuo followed him.

Irises were a favorite subject of Kōrin, and the unknown maker of this *inrō* has followed Kōrin's lead in subject as well as technique. Characteristic of Kōrin-style design is the boldness of this pattern, the high contrast in level of the inlaid encrustation, and the use of relatively large pieces of abalone shell for the inlay material. The pattern of the relatively flat gold in the repeated clumps of iris leaves, and the sparkling, raised mosaic effects of the iris blossoms create a surface rhythm that is almost musical in its abstraction. The effect has been called impressionistic, and such designs indeed were to go on to influence European art of the late nineteenth century.

Kōzan

69. Painted Folding Fans

*Four-case *inrō* with curved corners, bearing on each side three folding fans opened to show a landscape painting.

Signed: Kōzan, with pot seal in red

Lacquer; gold *takamakie*, with *nashiji* ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{2}$

*Ojime: Octopus climbing into a *tsubo* (pot-trap). Various metal alloys: iron, gold, brass, shakudo, ashibuichi

*Netsuke: Karashishi (Buddhist lion) with ball in mouth. Unsigned. Wood.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Masanaga

70. Drum-gong on a Dragon-stand

*Three-case *inrō* showing two red cinnabar dragons encircling a drum set on a stand, the face of the drum bearing the *mitsu-tomoe* (triple comma) crest, and the dragons grasping the finial in the form of a green *tama* (sacred jewel) with flame aura. On the reverse: a white phoenix.

Signed: Masanaga

Lacquer; gold and cinnabar lacquer, with inlaid ivory and stones; different *oki-hirame* ground on each case, of gold, silver, copper, or mother-of-pearl.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$

*Ojime: Bead with Hannya mask (character of the evil hag in Noh theater), gold lacquer in *takamakie*.

*Netsuke: In the shape of a round-cornered box, showing a feather, a cosmetic box and a brocade bag. Gold and polychrome lacquer on an *oki-hirame* ground.

Lent by Shep Brozman

Ryūsai

71. The Twelve Animals of the Zodiac

*Six-case *inrō*, showing the animals of the zodiac, placed on alternating compartments, starting at top with rat; snake, hare, and ram; tiger, dragon,

and dog?; rooster and boar. On reverse, on alternating compartments, starting with second from top: monkey; spotted horse; ox. Top and bottom in gold swastikas.

Signed: Ryūsai, on bottom.

Lacquer; gold *hiramakie* diaper patterns, animals in gold, silver and polychrome *takamakie* (imitating *menuki*, or hilt ornaments)

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{8}$

*Ojime: Four-cornered flat bead. Metal.

*Netsuke: Box and lid cherry blossom motif. Lacquer on wood. Worn.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Ryushin

72. Insects

*Four-case *inrō* depicting various insects, including a stag beetle, dragonfly, lightning bugs, grasshoppers, lady bug and, on the verso, a praying mantis.

Signed: Ryushin

Lacquer; gold and silver *takamakie* with polychrome lacquer on a bright gold *nashiji* ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$

*Ojime: Oblong bead with plum blossom design. Silver.

*Netsuke: *Manju*-form with design of grasshopper and fly. Gold lacquer *takamakie* on a smooth gold ground.

Lent by Shep Brozman

90. The Carriage of Prince Genji
Zeshin

Shibayama School

73. Daikoku Watches Mice Hauling a Radish

**Saya-inrō* (sheath *inrō*) with scene depicting Daikoku, seated with his mallet and bag, looking on while four mice dressed in coats pull on a rope, the design continuing on the reverse to show the rope tied around a white root vegetable, as three mice celebrate the proceedings. Signed: Shibayama

Lacquer; inlaid ivory, abalone shell and other substances on a smooth *kin-fundume* (gold-powder) ground.

Dimensions: $3 \times 2\frac{1}{4}$

*No ojime or netsuke.

Lent by Shep Brozman

One of the most popular of the Seven Household Gods of Japanese lore, Daikoku is the god of wealth and prosperity. His domain is the kitchen, where he guarantees a well-stocked pantry. He is often shown with his messengers, rats and mice. Since these household rodents eat foodstores, in particular, the staple rice, their representation in art serves as a constant reminder to watch over one's storehouses and to husband one's wealth. The jovial Daikoku is often shown with bales of rice and a treasure bag, which contains the *takaramono*. His other important attribute is his mallet, whose strike is believed to bring riches and luck.

On this *inrō*, Daikoku sits with his bag and mallet, watching with amusement as a group of mice dressed up in clothing haul off a white turnip. The figures are all inlaid with small



encrustations of various colored stones and bits of shell, some of which are incised with geometric patterns.

The technique was made popular by the Shibayama family of lacquer artists, founded in the eighteenth century. Increasingly popular over the nineteenth century, Shibayama work became more and more elaborate in its decoration, the encrustations more minute, with the carving of the encrustations themselves aiming at an absolute miniaturized realism.

74. Raiden the Thunder God and Shoki the Demon-Queller

*Four-case inrō showing, on one side, the Thunder God, Raiden, with his thunder drum slung in a tree, rolling his sleeves up in preparation for an arm-wrestling match with a samurai. On the other side, Shoki the Demon-Queller, seated in a white robe and black hat, and a trained dressed monkey holding a double-gourd look toward the match.

Signed: Shibayama
Lacquer; inlaid polychrome ivory, shell and other substances on a smooth gold ground.

Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$

*Ojime: Round bead. Coral.
Lent by Shep Brozman

75. Birds and Flowers Among Hills and Streams

*Three-case inrō shaped like an *uchiwa* fan (oblonged lobed fan), decorated with scene of birds (flying geese, plover, quail, magpie, partridge), among trees and plants (daisy, camellia,

hibiscus, prunus, etc.).

Unsigned: Late Shibayama school style.

Lacquer; inlaid bits of colorful shell and stone on a black and gold *togidashi* ground.

Dimensions: $4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$

*Ojime: Round bead. White translucent stone.

Lent by Shep Brozman

Constructed in the shape of an *uchiwa*, the oblong, lobed fan which was considered an emblem of authority, this inrō is decorated in the nineteenth century style typical of the late Shibayama school. In contrast to inlay work of the Kōrin school (see No. 68), the encrustations used in this style are themselves incised or carved in order to match as closely as possible the textures and shapes of the subjects represented. In this piece, for example, each leaf is separately carved and is incised to show the veining; feathers on the bodies of the birds are etched.

Shinmin

76. Daruma Stretching

*Four-case inrō, showing the monk Daruma stretching, inside a partial circular reserve; on the reverse, a fly whisk lying on the open pages of a Buddhist book. Signed: Shinmin, carved on an inlaid abalone reserve.

Lacquer; inlaid bits of abalone shell, coral, and polychrome ivory on a smooth gold ground.
Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{2}$

*Ojime: Round bead with black spiraling lines on a brown ground.
Lacquer.

*Netsuke: *Manju*-form with nine theater masks. Unsigned. Carved gold, black, red lacquer.

Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Daruma (or Bodhidharma) was a sixth century Buddhist adept, the twentieth-eighth patriarch of Buddhism, who was said to have introduced the Zen sect of Buddhism into China. The most famous legend about Daruma is of his nine years spent meditating in a cave, and both netsuke and inrō artists found amusing ways to treat the subject. In the design of this inrō, the sage is seen through a curved aperture, yawning and stretching, a particularly humanized and funny figure when contrasted with the austere portraits of the scowling Bodhidharma known from Zen painting.

Shiomi Masanari

77. Fishing Boat and Mount Fuji

*Four-case inrō, showing a fishing boat with set net; on the reverse, Mount Fuji.

Signature in seal-characters: Shiomi Masanari, on back among rushes.

Lacquer; Boat in *sumi-e* (ink painting) *togidashi*, Mount Fuji in silver *togidashi* on a brilliant gold surface; *nashiji* interiors.
Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{4}$

*Ojime: Pewter-colored lacquer bead

*Netsuke: *Manju*-form with three birds in clouds; ivory with *chikin-bori* (incised lines) filled with gold).

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Shiomi Masanari was a famous lacquer artist born in Kyoto in 1647. He learned lacquermaking under the Koma family, specializing in *togidashi* (see No. 51 for an explanation of the technique), and worked there until the early 1720's. His followers maintained a level of high quality in their work throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, so it is difficult to assign any pieces with certainty to any individual in the lineage. This inrō possesses the qualities associated with Masanari's work: refinement of design, delicacy in execution and a brilliant transparency of color. The fishing boats and nets are rendered in an ink-black *togidashi* which imitates painting in the monochromatic painting tradition (*sumi-e*) and their asymmetrical placement on the inrō is extremely well conceived. The subtlety of the silver, hazy Mount Fuji accentuates all the more the lucidity of the gold ground.

Shunshui

78. The General Kato Kiyomasa

*Five-case inrō depicting a samurai wrestler warrior with raised halberd leading a charge through a building in ruins with fallen beams, rubble and smoke, the design continuing on the reverse.

Signed: *Shunshui*, inside top case
Lacquer; gold and black *hiramakie* and *takamakie* with polychrome highlights.
Dimensions: 4×2

*Ojime: Round bead. Coral.
Lent by Shep Brozman

Military events from Japanese history are more commonly encountered on sword furnishings than on inrō, so the subject of this inrō along with its stunning condition make it doubly unusual. The hero shown leading his warriors into a building in ruins is Kato Kiyomasa, a celebrated sixteenth century general, who gained fame for his role in directing under Hideyoshi the conquest of Korea in the 1590's. He later served the Tokugawa shōgun Iyasu, but his impetuous, wild courage and ambition made him suspect to some, and he was later poisoned in a teahouse. In this scene, Kiyomasa is depicted probably in an episode during the Korean campaign. He is said to have possessed a helmet three feet high, and the ring-like crest on his breastplate identifies him easily.

The design of this inrō is also unusual in that it represents a continuous "wrap-around" scene of an interior space: the fallen beams and posts, the smoke and dust of debris, hide and reveal the entering warriors, heightening the drama by the density of the space.

Shunshui was known as a talented lacquer artist of the early nineteenth century.

Somada School

79. Landscape

*Four-case narrow inrō, showing a landscape with islands and distant mountains, continuing on the reverse. Geometric designs on the top and bottom. Unsigned: Somada school style.
Lacquer; gold and mother-of-pearl inlay on a black ground.

Dimensions: 4

*Ojime: Scored and lobed bead.
Olive-colored lacquer.

*Netsuke: Eggplants on a leaf.
Unsigned. Wood.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The Somada family of lacquermakers continued a tradition which originated in China and which consisted of inlaying thin bits of iridescent mother-of-pearl in designs on a dark, usually black, lacquer ground. Abalone shell, as well as other kinds of shell, was also used. The French term for this type of lacquerware is *laque burgatée*. Its popularity increased throughout the nineteenth century. Most pieces are unsigned, and the term Somada is now used as much to refer to the technique as the family or specific individuals who practiced it.

Tōyō [Kanshōsai]

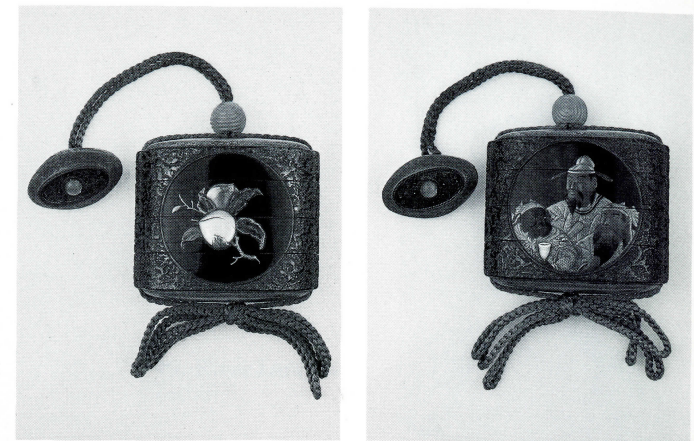
80. Sparrows

*Four-case inrō, showing a pair of spotted sparrows among flowers; on the reverse, a large spider spinning its web.

Signed: Tōyō
Lacquer; polychrome *takamakie* with inlaid abalone shell; copper and gold *hiramakie*, on a fine *nashiji* ground.
Dimensions: $3\frac{1}{2}$

*Ojime: Bead with design of pomegranate and leaves.
Carved ivory.

*Netsuke: Sparrow. Polychrome lacquer.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University



94. Gentoku, Kwanyu and Chohi
Zeshin

Tōyō Lezuka was a master lacquer artist who worked in the 1760's and 70's. He was skilled in all techniques, particularly *togidashi*. The pieces in the exhibition demonstrate a wide range of techniques. The first Tōyō was made a samurai by his patron Lord Hachisuka, the feudal lord (or *daimyo*) of Awa province. Tōyō's pupils and followers continued to use his name and his art name, Kanshōsai. Their work is similar to his and maintains the high quality of his pieces.

81. Crows in A Night Landscape

*Four-case inrō, showing a crow seated under the moon on the branch of a prunus tree, red flowers in bloom; the design continues on the reverse to show a crow in flight against night clouds.
Signed: Kanshōsai, in gold, with red kakihan.
Lacquer; black and gold *takamakie*, silver moon, inlaid cinnabar red lacquer, gold *mura-nashiji* and *jirame* on a deep black ground: *nashiji* interior, separate lidded boxes fitted inside each compartment.
Dimensions: 3⅜
*Ojime: Oval bead with pierced floral designs.
*Netsuke: Seed pot with butterfly, moth, wasp. Signed Yoyūsai. Gold.
Lacquer and gold foil on seed pod (some foil missing).
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

82. Crows and Wintry Trees

*Five-case inrō, showing crows perched on barren branches, amid red maple leaves.
Signed: Kanshōsai, in gold, with kakihan.
Lacquer; *sumi-e* (ink painting) technique on flat rose-hued metallic gray ground.
Dimensions: 3⅝
*Ojime: Oval bead with design of butterfly and flowers.
*Netsuke: *Kagamibuta* with design of quail and flowers.
Ivory and metal alloys.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

83. Ichikawa Actor in a Shibaraku Role

*Four-case rounded-corner inrō, depicting a masked kabuki actor dressed in reddish-brown robes bearing crest of three concentric squares in gold, with his sword thrust behind him.
The actor image overlaps another rectangle behind with geometric design.
Signed: Kanshōsai
Lacquer; actor image in gold and polychrome *togidashi*, against a fine *nashiji* ground; lapped square in inlaid gold and silver; the entire design set against a smooth deep cinnabar red ground.
Dimensions: 3½ × 2⅛
*Ojime: Round bead. Gold lacquer.
Lent by Shep Brozman

The crest on the actor's sleeve identifies him as a member of the Ichikawa family of kabuki actors. One of the family's special roles, as created by the great Ichikawa Danjurō I at the end of the seventeenth century, was the *shibaraku* role; in order to stop the villain, the protagonist at a certain moment calls out "*Shibaraku*" ("Wait a moment!"). As the role provided an occasion for elaborate declamations and posturings, it became popular with the public, and was re-created many times by subsequent Ichikawa actors.
The design of the actor's pose is similar to that of Ichikawa Ebizō in a print dated to 1772 by Katsukawa Shunshō, and it is possible that the inrō artist based his design loosely on that print.

[See Stern (1972), no. 64, for an 18th century inrō from the Greenfield collection, with a similar design by Koma Kyūhaku. The pose of the actor is identical, and the background roughly the same color, but the composition in the present piece frames the actor against a *suzuribako*-like box lid.]

84. The Three Sake Tasters

*Four-case inrō, showing three sages representing Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. On the reverse, a landscape with returning fisherman in the painting style of the Maruyama-Shijō school.
Signed: Kanshōsai, with kakihan.
Lacquer; *togidashi*, *sumi-e* techniques
Dimensions: 3½
*Ojime: Round bead. Variegated stone.

*Netsuke: Three monkeys. Signed Miwa. Wood.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Tōju (pupil of Tōyō)

85. Buddha Meditation/Benten Playing the Biwa

*Three-case *saya*-inro (sheath inro), with design of Buddha seated in meditation, visible through a circular window in the sheath; on the reverse, the female Immortal Banten playing the *biwa* (Japanese lute) seated on an elephant.
Signed: Tōju
Lacquer; gold *hiramakie*, *takamakie*; gold, silver, and polychrome *togidashi*.
Dimensions: 4
*Ojime: Round bead with floral motifs on a light blue ground. Cloisonne enamel.
*Netsuke: Figure of a *karashishi* (Buddhist lion) with a drum. Unsigned. Carved ivory.
Lent by Sordoni Family Collection

Zeshin

86. Shōki the Demon-Queller

*Four-case inrō, showing Shōki framed within a moon-shaped light, as he glares to the right, the design continuing on the reverse to show two demons fleeing.

Signed: Zeshin, on bottom.
Lacquer; silver *fundame* ground with dull matte finish; Shōki in gold *hiramakie*; demons in ink *togidashi* outline.
Dimensions: 3⅛
*Ojime: Scored oval bead.
*Netsuke: Demon squatting by washtub washing cloth. Unsigned. Wood.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University
Shōki the Demon-Queller is the Japanese form of the Chinese Ch'ung-k'uei. The myths of his origins vary, but for lacquer and netsuke artists, Shōki's most important function was in his charge to get rid of demons, or *oni*. In Zeshin's finely wrought inrō, an angry and intimidating Shōki is seen framed and lit by a large moon, while two demons scurry away in fright. Netsuke artists often played humorously with the theme, showing a demon getting the best of Shōki (see No. 20), but in Zeshin's work, Shōki still has the upper hand.

87. Grasses

*Tobacco-box shape inrō, showing a design of grasses with a ceremonial Shintō image hung on a bamboo staff.
Signed: Zeshin
Lacquer; polychrome and gold *takamakie*, on a matte gray metallic ground.
Dimensions: 2⅞
*Ojime: Bead in form of a triple-section seed. Silver.
*Netsuke: Branch slice with cherry blossom motif; wood with gold lacquer and *kirigane* (gold foil).

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

Shibata Zeshin (1807-1901) was one of the most gifted and innovative Japanese artists; he is known for his paintings and prints as well as his lacquer work. These two inrō employ some of the forms he was known for in lacquer, the tobacco-pouch shape, and the dark-gray olive-hued matte surface he achieves, known as "tea-dust green".

88. Archer and Young Woman

*Four-case inrō showing the scene of a young woman in a rose-colored kimono bowing and kneeling by a wattle fence-gate, offering a tray of flowers; the design continuing on the other side to show a huntsman-archer acknowledging her offering, in elaborate hunting dress of straw hat, animal skin, with sword, bow and quiver.
Signed, but unread.
Lacquer; gold and polychrome *hiramakie*, on a fine gold-powder ground.
Dimensions: 4 × 2⅛
*Ojime: Round bead, gold lacquer.
Lent by Shep Brozman

89. Buddhist Temple Bell

*Four-case inro in the shape of a Buddhist temple bell, with a double dragon-head handle, four rows of bosses on top and a lotus design on bottom; figural scenes in four reverses, including deer, demons in procession, monkey, demon pulling rope on



99. River Landscape
Zeshin

a banner, Chinese archaic style inscriptions.
Unsigned.
Lacquer; imitating the texture of bronze, with overall dull dark green patina.

Dimensions: 3 7/8

*No ojime.

*Netsuke: A *kappa* (a mythical seaside creature) in a turtle shell. Unsigned. Wood with inlaid eyes, ivory fangs. Silver-lined concavity in head.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

This unknown artist has succeeded in rendering in lacquer the texture of an ancient bronze patina.

90. The Carriage of Prince Genji

*Four-case inrō, showing an unhitched nobleman's chariot with harness and ribbons, under a pine tree, the design continuing on the reverse to show a walled house and pine tree.

Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold *takamakie* on a black ground with red undertones.

Dimensions: 3 3/8

*Ojime: Bead in shape of a woven vase. Metal.

*Netsuke: Two drum-carriers with child, while another child holds a lion mask. Ivory. Signed, on lower drum surface.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

91. Cockatoos in a Cage

*Four-case inrō in the shape of a bird cage on a red-lacquer stand. On the bottom of the cage is a panel showing chrysanthemums on a *nashiji* ground. On the upper three cases and lid, the design gives the illusion of two cockatoos or parrots perched behind bars, one in silver, one in gold. Gold finial at top of cage. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold *hiramakie* on a deep smooth black ground, gold *takamakie* on the base on a *nashiji* ground. *Hirame* treatment of perch and ground. Dimensions: 2 3/4 x 1 3/4

*Ojime: Round Bead. Gold lacquer.

*Netsuke: Peacock preening on a block. Carved ivory.

Lent by Shep Brozman

92. Demonstration/sampler inro

*Nine-case inrō, with each decorated in a different cloisonne-like diaper pattern, and with each case interior executed in different styles. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold *hiramakie* and polychrome *togidashi*.

Dimensions: 4 x 2

*Ojime: Round bead. Red-colored ivory.

*Netsuke: *Manju*-form with design of a tree-landscape inside a reverse framed by eight scallops of alternating geometric design. Somada-style,

inlaid mother-of-pearl on black lacquer ground.

Lent by Shep Brozman

An inrō such as this, with its virtuosic variety of diaper grounds and patterns, was probably made as a demonstration piece for the artisan to show to prospective patrons. The patron could commission his inrō, choosing from the patterns shown, or view the demonstration piece as a kind of credential, as a testimonial to the craftsman's skill.

93. The Foxes' Wedding Procession

*Four-case inrō, showing a night scene with red torii gate amid pine trees, the design continuing on the reverse, showing a procession of silhouetted foxes, bearing a wedding palanquin, lanterns and banners.

Signed, but unread.

Lacquer; *togidashi* and *hiramakie* in black, red and gold on a matte silver *fundume* ground.

Dimensions: 3 3/4

*Netsuke: Figure of a *karashishi* (Chinese lion) with ball.

Unsigned. Ivory with staining.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The fox in Japanese lore is considered the master of special magical powers, including human possession. Tales of fox-spirits abound, and one of them, *Kitsune no Yomeiri* (The Fox Wedding), is illustrated here. Some of the same registers of light and nightly atmosphere are achieved here as in No. 65, but to eerier effect, as in the lonely isolation of the forest setting

and in the foxes' dream-like procession.

94. Gentoku, Kwanyu and Chohi

*Three-case inrō, the front showing imperial intendant Gentoku with his generals Kwanyu and Chōhi taking the oath of brotherhood, enclosed in a circular reserve; on the reverse, a branch bearing two peaches, in circular reserve; on the top, a dragon in gold waves. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold, silver and polychrome *takamakie*, inlaid abalone shell and other substances, in black reserves, framed by a mottled red and black ground imitating the texture of tree bark.

Dimensions: 3

*Ojime: Bead with carved spirals. Coral.

*Netsuke: Flattened *manju*-form with design of flowers and leaves, with inset bronze filigree lid, held with a clear translucent stone. *Tsuishu* (carved red cinnabar) lacquer.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

The epic struggles that took place at the end of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) in China assumed a special place in the popular imagination of the Chinese and, later, of the Japanese. *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, written by a fourteenth century Chinese drawing on official documents and oral tradition, is a vivid retelling of those military exploits and intrigues, and central to that story is the

fraternal bond between the three heroes, Gentoku, Kwanyu, and Chōhi (Chinese names: Hsuan-te, or Lie Pei, Kuan-yu, and Chang-Fei). The latter two were commoners, each endowed with a native military intelligence; they became generals to Gentoku in his attempt to restore the country to Han rule. It is the values of fraternity and loyalty within military struggle that seems to interest later Japanese, for the scene of the three heroes taking the oath of brotherhood in the peach grove recurs in painting as well as in the decorative arts.

Inside the circular reserve, Gentoku is seen behind his two generals with the winged cap of a noble or official; at the lower right, a red-skinned Kwanyu stroking his long pointed beard, and to the left, a blue-skinned Chōhi with his short fan-like beard, holding the goblet with which the three make their vow. On the reverse in a circular reserve, a peach sprig bearing two fruits alludes to the peach grove setting in which the heroes made their fraternal vows. The jewel-like inlay of the pictorial reserves contrasts with the rusticated red and black texture of the framing ground, made to resemble tree-bark; the material contrast is perhaps in some way intended to underscore another contrast: the jewel-like endurance of the vow framed against the rougher military values of struggle and conquest.

95. Illustration to "The Red Cliff"

*Three-case inrō, with two reserve scenes, one showing scholars in a boat by a cliff, a crane in flight under the moon, framed by a six-point star diaper pattern; on the reverse, a boat

by cliffs under moon and clouds, framed by a swastika/keyfret diaper pattern. Dragon on top, crosses and octagons on bottom. Wood carved in *tsuishu* style. Unsigned.

Dimensions: 3 3/8

*Ojime: Two hares on fret background.

ivory. Signed Kozan. Wood.

*Netsuke: Theater mask. Signed Gyoku do. Wood.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery, Bucknell University

This inrō is interesting because it is carved out of wood in the *tsuishu* style, which is normally executed in red cinnabar lacquer. Japanese lacquer artists learned *tsuishu* techniques directly from Chinese sources and examples. The production of carved red cinnabar lacquers in China goes back to the Ming dynasty.

The theme, too, is Chinese and illustrates a famous prose-poem by the scholar Su Shih (Su Tung-po, 1031-1101). A boat excursion the writer takes with friends to the place called Red Cliff becomes the occasion for a poetic meditation and reflection on the natural world. The scene of scholars in a boat by a cliff, watching a passing crane, became familiar and repeated in both Chinese and Japanese painting and decorative arts.

96. Lobster

*Four-case inrō, showing a dark lobster among water plants. Unsigned.

Lacquer; black *hiramakie* on red ground. One leg chipped.

Dimensions: 3 3/8

*Ojime: Green bead.



101. Sparrows Struggling in Flight
Zeshin

*Netsuke: Fan dancer. Ittobori style.

Polychrome wood.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

97. Mountain Landscape

*Large three-case inrō, showing a mountain landscape, the design continuing on both sides. Unsigned.

Lacquer; red-toned *sumi-e* (ink-painting) lacquer *togidashi* on smooth rose-hued metallic gray ground.
Dimensions: 4

*Ojime: Bead in form of a tiger in a bamboo grove. Unsigned. Carved ivory.

*Netsuke: Box stand with Chinese style landscape of sage and attendant watching bird. Unsigned. *Tsuish*

(carved red cinnabar) lacquer.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

98. Pilgrim

*Five-case inrō, showing a pilgrim with pack, staff, sword; the design on the reverse shows a bag of cord. Unsigned.

Lacquer; polychrome *togidashi* on a black ground.
Dimensions: 3 1/8

*Ojime: Round bead. Agate.

*Netsuke: Three children with bag and drum. Unsigned. Carved ivory.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

99. River Landscape

*Four-case inrō, showing a lush river landscape, with pine and wisteria along banks, the design continuing on the reverse. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold *hiramakie* with *nashiji* on a glossy deep black ground.
Small cracking on bottom.
Dimensions: 3 3/4

*Ojime: Figure of Bodhidharma. Carved ivory.

*Netsuke: Fisherman in a kilt of dried leaves, with pole and basket, holding hand of woman with fan, an allusion to Ebisu and Benten, two of the Seven Household Gods.

Unsigned. Carved ivory.
Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
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100. Shōjō and Sake Jar

*Two-case inrō in the shape of a flattened wine jar with simulated dripped glaze; on one side, a long-haired Shōjō sits leaning on a jar. Unsigned.

Lacquer; gold, silver and polychrome *takamakie* on a flat gold ground.
Dimensions: 3

*No ojime.

*Netsuke: Momotarō emerging from a peach with leaves. Unsigned. Gold, silver and polychrome lacquer.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

For Shōjō and their fondness for sake, see No. 67.

101. Sparrows Struggling in Flight

*Three-case inrō, showing two sparrows struggling in flight; on the reverse, a sparrow in flight carrying a grass blade. Unsigned.

Lacquer; black, brown, *hiramakie* with gold on a silver gray matte ground.
Dimensions: 3

*Ojime: Round bead. Amber.

*Netsuke: Quail and millet. Wood. Signed: Okatomom, in inlaid rectangular cartouche.

Lent by the Center Art Gallery,
Bucknell University

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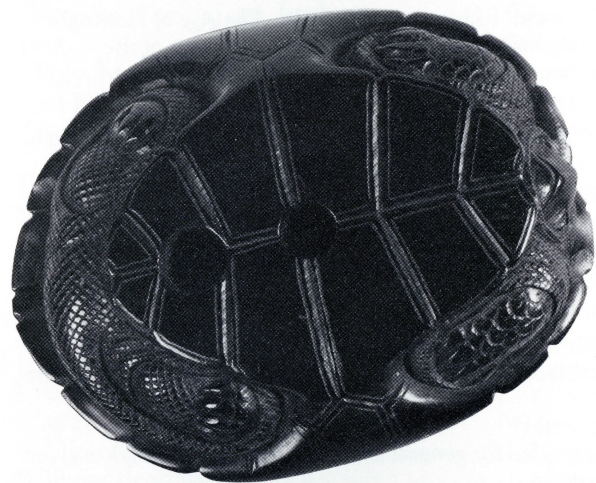
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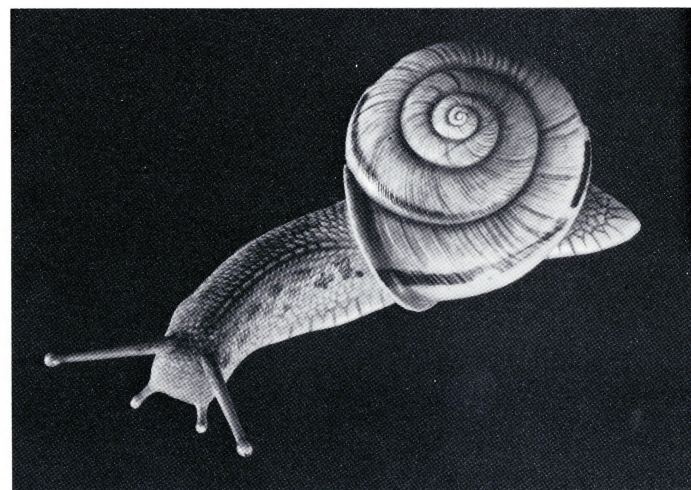
*Recommended for general introductions to the subjects given in the titles.



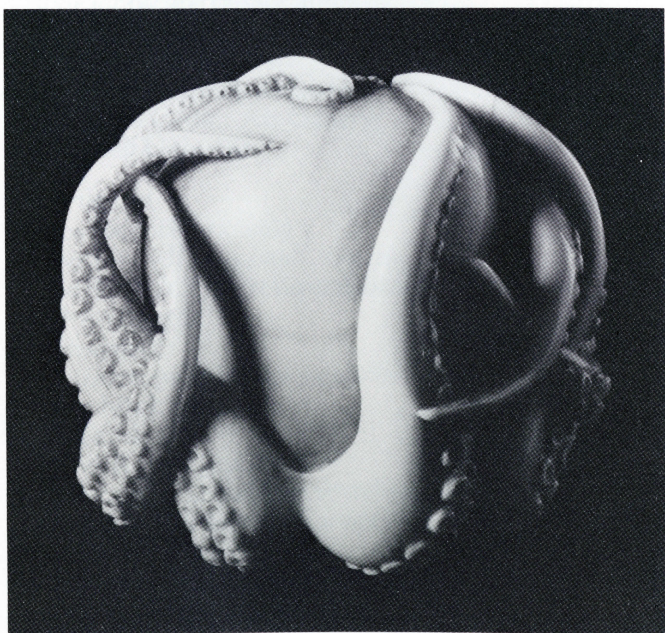
20. Sleeping Shōki and Demon-Thief
Signature unread



11. Tortoise Retracted in Shell
Unsigned



13. Snail
Signature unread



12. Octopus
Signed: Chokuminsai (?), incised



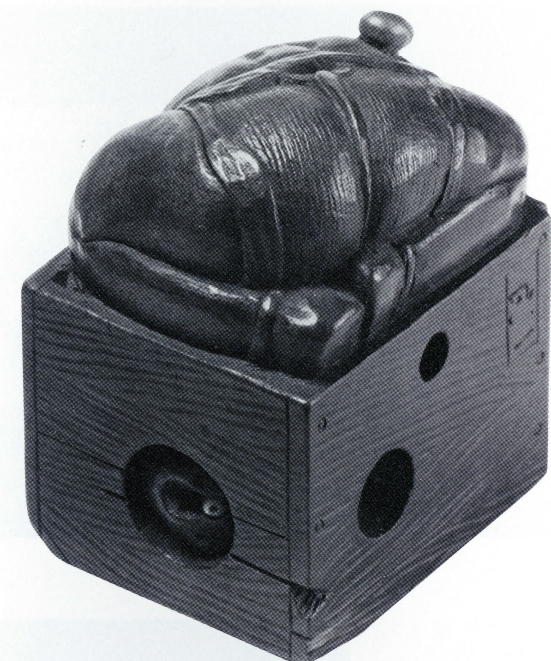
17. Exorcising Demons
Signed: Ikkosai
(probably Toun,
active 1830-43)



24. Ashinaga and Tenaga
Signed: Tomochika



23. Kappa on a Clam
Signed: Suketada



18. Demon Hiding in a Box
Signed: Masatoshi



19. Demon with Injured Knee
Signed: Kincho (?)



32. The Story of Urashima Tarō
Signed: Rantei, in oval reserve; Hogen (honorary title), in rectangular



28. Noh Theater Mask
Signed: Issan

26. Noh Theater Mask
Unsigned

27. Noh Theater Mask
Signed: Gyokuzan (?)



25. Ghost Over a Tombstone
Unsigned



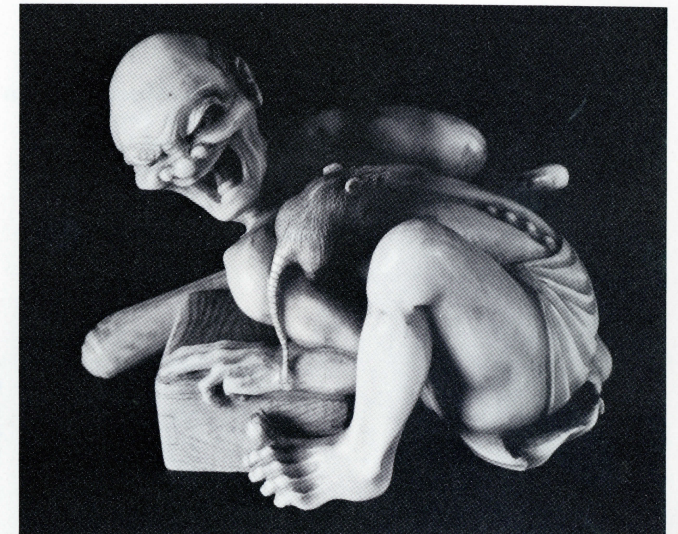
30. Knotted String of Cash
Signed: Mitsuhiro, incised and ink-filled in oval reserve



33. Girl with Rabbit-Shaped Cake
Signed: Seiga, late 19th century



36. Man Seated in a Hat
Signed: Mitsutoshi (19th century)



37. Rat-Catcher
Unsigned

40. Manzai Dancer
Unsigned



43. Hotei and Children
Signed: Masatami, in red kakihan



38. Pot-Mender with Box-Bellows
Signature unread



35. Kadori Myojin and the Namazu
Unsigned



44. Aboriginal Man
with Two Toads
Signed: Chikusai,
in inlaid rectangular
cartouche



46. Japanese
Child Dressed
in Dutch
Clothing
Signed: Tomomitsu (?)



45. Smiling
Aboriginal Boy
Unsigned



49. Swarm of Mice with Drum, Tengu Masks and Daruma Toy
Signed: Masamitsu (late 19th century)

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