

Animals, Animals, Animals !

From the Edo-Tokyo Museum Collection

Commentaries

Daimyō's procession

One of Edo's New Year's traditions was a daimyō's (feudal lords) procession who went to greet the Shōgun for the New Year. The higher ranked daimyō's processions were accompanied by a *Kiba-tomo* (a person who accompanies a procession of daimyō on horseback). [No.10-12]

Nishiki-e

Nishiki-e is the general term for polychrome woodblock prints of *ukiyo-e*, which were established in the mid-Edo period in Japan. The prints are produced by a four-person division of labour: the publisher, the painter, the engraver and the printer. The development of a technique known as "register", which corresponds to today's "register marks" in printing, made it possible to produce a wide variety of colours and mass production.

Utagawa Hiroshige (I)

One of the most prominent *ukiyo-e* artists of the Edo period. He became a very popular artist for his woodcuts of landscapes, and his work later influenced Western painters such as Van Gogh and Monet. *Meisho Edo hyakkei* (One Hundred Famous Views of Edo), a compilation by Hiroshige, is highly regarded for its excellent capture of the scenery and lifestyles of the people living in Edo.

[No.22, 23, 25, 27, 40, 62, 73, 78, 79]

Machi-inu (Town dogs)

Only a few dogs in the Edo period were kept by private individuals; in cities, most were "town dogs", which were taken care by townspeople. Town dogs lived off food from the residents of tenements and shops, played with children and sometimes acted as a watchdog by barking at strangers. They were recognized as a member of the community. [No.1, 25-28]

The Twelve Zodiac Animals

The twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac established in Japan are the rat (子), ox (丑), tiger (寅), rabbit (卯), dragon (辰), snake (巳), horse (午), sheep (未), monkey (申), rooster/chicken (酉), dog (戌) and boar (亥), and are a calendar system that originated in China.

These signs were rooted in daily life as a unit of measurement of year, month, time and direction. [No.82-86]

Tiger

Tigers were not native to Japan, but they were widely known through hearsay from China. Only few Japanese had seen the actual thing, and as in this work the leopard was wrongly perceived as a tiger. Also leopard were believed to be female tigers. In 1860, a leopard imported to Yokohama became a spectacle in Edo. [No.94-97]

Katagami (Nagaita Chūgata [Resist Dyeing Technique] Stencil)

Katagami (*Nagaita Chūgata* [Resist Dyeing Technique] Stencil) is a tool for *Katazome*, the Japanese traditional method of dyeing fabrics. After placing *Katagami* (*Nagaita Chūgata* [Resist Dyeing Technique] Stencil) on a fabric and placing anti-staining glue over it, the fabric is dyed, and when the glue is washed away, the area where the glue was placed remains white and the pattern appears. Throughout the Edo period, it was used as a dyeing technique for the clothing of samurai families and townspeople, and the technique remains in use today. [No.112-116]

Hōsō-e (Prints used as Anti-Smallpox Charms)

During the Edo period, coloured prints in red became popular. These were called *Hōsō-e* (Prints used as Anti-Smallpox Charm), as smallpox was raged at the time. In those days, smallpox was more likely to affect young children. When they fell ill, red paintings were pasted on the pillars of houses and other places to pray for the disease to disappear. Animals were often depicted in these type of paintings. [No.175-178]

Imado Dolls and Owari-ya

Imado dolls are clay figures produced in Imado, which is located north of Asakusa, on the Sumida River coast. Its history records dating from the Genroku period (1688-1704). They were produced using molds, fired in a kiln, then coloured. *Owari-ya* is a family line of Imado doll makers since the Edo period, who continued to produce them until 1945. Imado dolls were sold as souvenirs in Asakusa and other places, and were widely popular with the general public. [No.183-198]

[0427]