

8.

Four Accomplishments

1800-25

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC

Okajuma Toyohiro

1769-1825

Japanese

Fast Facts:

- lived at school from 9yr. old
- took master's name
- became master teacher
- matched set of paintings
- four accomplishments: music, chess, calligraphy, painting



Painting Highlights: The Japanese adopted the Chinese philosophy that one could only be considered cultured if they acquired the four skills of calligraphy, chess playing, music making and painting.

The two panels portray young people demonstrating these skills. In one painting, 2 females are near an instrument called a koto and the boys are playing a game called sugoroku. In the other, a boy paints an orchid plant. He has a brush pot, paper, a bowl of water, an ink stone, ink stick and a box. His painting will be bordered in silk, mounted on rollers and hung on the wall for special occasions. The girl unrolls a sheet of calligraphy signed by an important writer of the time. The paintings are signed (unusual for the period) and also have a seal. The fabric pattern is detailed with the head of a crane. The figures have a special ratio proportion of 1:12 head to body which makes for a graceful appearance. There are no shadows. The women all have the same features. Males have a small shaved or empty spot on their heads, and they wear less elaborate clothing.

Artist Highlights:

- Name at birth: Okajima Tojiro.
- Joined studio school of Utagawa Toyoharu at age 9. Never left. Considered his teacher as a god.
- Followed tradition of adopting the name of the school and one syllable of his teacher's name. He learned to copy, trace, reduce, and finally compose. Headed the Utagawa School after his master's death. The school produced half of the ukiyo-e prints in existence and is still influential today.
- However, Toyohiro limited his own success by refusing to paint actors. His student, Ando Hiroshige, became more famous than he.
- Kano = landscapes, birds, figures, nature.
- Ukiyo = Floating World" described the common urban everyday life style, especially the pleasure-seeking aspects, of Edo Period Japan (1600—1867, an era of peace and prosperity. The city of Edo grew from 100 households to 1 million in less than 100 years. There was much censorship, Japanese were not allowed to travel, and only two ships were allowed to trade per year, and these were Dutch.

Presentation Ideas:

- What country is this?
- Ideas What season?
- How many women (girls) are in this painting?
- Are these play clothes?
- What are the people doing?
- What current games and hobbies are similar to these?
- Which set of accomplishments do you like best?
- What do you think people need to know how to do to be "cultured"?