

6741 A four-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a buff and gold ground with scenes of men at leisure.

Japan 17th century early Edo Genroku period (1688-1704)

Dimensions: H. 35.5cm x W. 200cm (14" x 78¾")

From the right:

A group of men are enjoying an odori (dance), some holding ko-tsuzumi (small, two-headed drum with an hour-glass shaped body) one with a flute and several with fans. Red momiji (maple leaves) in the background indicate that the season is autumn.

In the next panel, we can see a scene where a young boy is receiving instruction in the art of ikebana (flower arrangement). Freshly picked kikyō (bellflower) and red momiji (maple leaves) are being brought to add to the arrangement and another boy reclining leisurely on the veranda admires the kiku (chrysanthemum) flowers he holds in his hand. Specimens of all the plants present on this panel are decorated together in an ikebana arrangement placed in the tokonoma (display alcove) behind the instructor.

The following scene shows a young man styling his hair using a comb while looking into his hand-held mirror. His grooming set sits next to him, just inside the room. A gō board with two pots of counters and a shōgi board with a money pouch placed on top can be seen inside the interior. In the adjacent room, a group of men are seated, one of them playing the shamisen (three-stringed Japanese musical instrument) and another, possibly a priest, tuning his instrument.

A young man is seated on the veranda next to a smoking set and is emptying his pipe into an ashtray. Kikyō (bellflower) grows in front of the veranda, and fuji (wisteria) is painted on the walls of the interior, on a gold ground.

In the final scene on the left, a more official scene is taking place. A man sits, bowing, opposite a young

lord who is writing on a scroll in calligraphy. Several other men of various ages sit around the edge of the room, which is decorated in sombre toned Chinese-style suibokuga (ink wash paintings). A kakemono (hanging scroll) with a scholar painted in ink hangs in the tokonoma (display alcove), and a single branch of ume (plum) with white blossom is displayed in an ornate bronze kabin (flower vase).
A large pine tree grows outside this room, partially obscured in the painting by golden clouds. The matsu (pine tree) symbolises longevity, but also steadfastness and courage due to its ability to remain green and fresh even during the fiercest of winters. It is for this reason that matsu are often used in paintings in association with rulers in Japan, as it is an auspicious symbol that the ruler will enjoy a long and steady reign.
*This screen was originally in the form of four small fusuma (sliding doors).





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