



6506 A two-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a gold ground with botan (peony) behind sudare (blinds) and a fence.

Japan 18th century Edo period

Dimensions: H. 56½" x W. 58" (143cm x 147cm)

Botan (tree peony) is considered by the Chinese to be the king of flowers and regarded as a symbol of good fortune, high honour and the spring season. Introduced to Japan from China in the Nara period, the peony was first imported and valued for its medicinal properties; the skin of the root was used to treat illnesses of blood circulation and fever. By Heian times, however, the Japanese also prized the showy flower as an ornamental plant and in succeeding centuries, they devoted considerable effort to its cultivation.

It has been used as a design motif in both the fine and applied arts throughout the centuries, and is also popular as a family crest.