



7103 Shiokawa Bunrin (1808-1877)

A pair of sugido (cedar wood doors) painted in ink and colour on both sides.

One side depicts a tiger beneath a pine tree and the reverse depicts two horses standing beneath wisteria.

Both sides signed and sealed Bunrin

Japan 19th century Edo/Meiji period

Dimensions: H. 183cm x W. 97cm (72¼" x 38¼") each; H. 183cm x W. 188cm (72¼" x 74¼") pair

Shiokawa Bunrin (1808-1877). Also known as Zusho. Gō (art names): Chikusai, Kachikusai, Kibutsuan, Kibutsu Dōjin, Kibutsu Koji, Sensei, Tōsai, Unshō.

Shiokawa Bunrin lived in Kyoto, and studied under Okamoto Toyohiko (1773-1845), a leading Shijō School artist. He served as painter in attendance to the Yasui family for much of his career, and had many patrons among the Kyoto aristocracy. Bunrin learned nanga (southern style) painting, and was also influenced by Western style painting. He founded the Jounsha art society in 1866 which served as

an important source of support for Kyoto artists of all schools during the difficult period of transition from the Edo period to the Meiji Restoration.

The tiger is a symbol of strength, courage and longevity and is also accredited with the ability to fend off demons, ill-fortune and disease. Japan's early artistic treatment of tigers is usually highly stylised. With no indigenous specimens to study, artists of the pre-modern period constructed their notions of the tiger from skins imported into the country. This has resulted in a rather cat-like depiction of this noble feline beast.

In the traditional cosmology of China, the tiger is one of the Four Sacred Creatures, it represents the west, autumn and wind. It is thus the compliment of the dragon, which represents the east, spring and water. The interaction of the two, the play of water and wind – is thought vital for creating weather that makes soil fertile and crops prosper.

Horses entered Japan from the continent in the prehistoric period and were used initially for domestic purposes. Military use of the horse in Japan began centuries later, in the end of fourth century.

Thereafter, even in eras of peace, horsemanship was an important attribute of the court and military elite.

In Shinto it is believed that horses carry messages between the temporal and heavenly realms and kami (gods) appear on horses. In this regard, white horses were initially kept at important shrines as sacred animals, but when this became prohibitively expensive, large carvings or paintings of horses were often substituted. Ema (picture horses) are votive plaques where horses are depicted and are placed at shrines and temples to convey one's prayers and petitions to the gods.

Works by the artist are also held in the collections of: The Ashmolean, Oxford; Freer Gallery of Art, Washington; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Tokyo National Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



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