



7114 A two-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on silk with a yamadori (copper pheasant) in flight in a bamboo grove with rocks. The background with clouds and mist rendered in sunago (sprinkled gold).

Japan 20th century Meiji/Taishō period

Dimensions: H. 60¼" x W. 61" (153cm x 154.5cm)

A native species to Japan, the yamadori (copper pheasant) is often depicted in art. Early Japanese history credits the bird as being an official messenger during the so called "Age of the Gods", the period prior to recorded history accounted for by myths of the country's divine creation. This early appearance of the bird may reflect its imperial associations in China and, indeed, kinkei (golden pheasants) also became symbols of imperial authority in Japan.

The pheasant is mentioned in the Manyōshū, Japan's first poetry anthology compiled in the 8th century and to this day remains a poetic symbol of spring when its distinctive mating call can be heard.

Take (bamboo) in Taoism and to a lesser extent in Buddhism symbolises the notion of emptiness, this is

due to the tube-like structure of the bamboo. Just as the tao (the ineffable 'way' of Taoism) arises from nothing and returns to emptiness, the bamboo is empty at its core. In East Asian philosophy such emptiness is perceived in a positive rather than a negative light. It is also a symbol of purification.