



7148 A two-fold paper screen painted in colour on a gold ground with take (bamboo)

Japan Taishō/Shōwa period 20th century

Dimensions: H.40" x W.78½" (101.5cm x 199cm)

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.

Haiku by Otagaki Rengetsu (1791-1875) written at the age of 80 (1870)

This gentleman

Grows and grows

Most auspiciously

Learn from him and

You, too, will flourish for ever.