



# Sōtatsu





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Yukio Lippit and James T. Ulak

With contributions by  
Furuta Ryō, Nakamachi Keiko, Noguchi Takeshi,  
Okudaira Shunroku, and Ōta Aya

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,  
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## FOREWORD

Nineteen hundred and six was a banner year for Charles Lang Freer and for the people of the United States. In 1906, after protracted negotiations, the industrialist turned art collector and philanthropist pledged his burgeoning collection of Asian art to the nation. In 1906, he acquired what is now acknowledged as one of his most noteworthy acquisitions—Sōtatsu's *Waves at Matsushima*. He instinctively sensed that Sōtatsu, little known in Freer's day, would emerge as a figure of singular importance in the history of Japanese art. In pledging his collection, Freer also sought to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of Asia and its artistic traditions among his fellow Americans.

In the foothills of northwest Kyoto sits the temple of Kōetsuji where its eponymous founder Hon'ami Kōetsu is buried. This was where Kōetsu founded his artisan colony in 1615. Freer visited this temple, and his passion for Kōetsu's work led him to Kōetsu's collaborator, Sōtatsu. It is a signal honor that adjacent to Kōetsu's grave is a monument dedicated to Freer. Placed there in 1930, it acknowledges Freer's part in introducing Kōetsu's artistry to the wider world, his prescient understanding of Sōtatsu's genius, and his role in furthering mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

Several years ago we were greatly honored when representatives of the Japan Foundation asked us to co-organize an exhibition on Rinpa painting, by joining major holdings in the Freer Gallery of Art with complementary works from Western and Japanese collections. We enthusiastically agreed and, as dialogue continued, focus fell increasingly on Sōtatsu, whose work is generally acknowledged as the fountainhead of the anachronistically named Rinpa style. The decision was reached to dedicate an exhibition to Sōtatsu, his immediate antecedents, and his reemergence in the early twentieth century.

Our friends at the Japan Foundation, Ambassador Andō and his staff, have shown an unwavering commitment to this project, and I would like to express our profound thanks. The exhibition and catalogue are the work of an international team of scholars, whose knowledge of Sōtatsu and his era is surpassed only by their joy in this project and camaraderie. It was a pleasure to hear them share the plans for this exhibition with an enthusiastic audience at a symposium organized by the foundation and Tokyo University of the Arts in Tokyo in March 2015.

This exhibition, then, is a celebration of Sōtatsu's contribution to Japanese art and a celebration of all that international collaboration can bring to better understanding and appreciation. It is fitting that it is happening three hundred years after that artisan colony was founded in Kyoto.

Julian Raby  
The Dame Jillian Sackler Director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art,  
Smithsonian Institution

## FOREWORD

I am delighted that the Japan Foundation is able to collaborate with the Smithsonian Institution's two museums of Asian art, the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, to present *Sōtatsu: Making Waves*.

Through initiatives to strengthen the partnership between Japan and the United States, the Japan Foundation is involved in a cultural-exchange program that presents modern art exhibitions in major museums across the United States. One example is *Tokyo 1955–1970: A New Avant-Garde*, a fall 2012 collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, which was seen by four hundred thousand visitors. The year 2015 marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II, and to mark this important juncture, the foundation has organized a number of opportunities for the American people to discover more about Japanese art, from classical to contemporary. These include *Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga*, a retrospective of the two central figures of the Gutai group, at the Dallas Museum of Art, and *Raku: The Cosmos in a Tea Bowl* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. *Sōtatsu: Making Waves* is perhaps the highlight of the year's projects.

When Charles Lang Freer, founder of the Freer Gallery of Art, developed an interest in Japanese art, he established connections with Japanese tea ceremony masters, art collectors, and art dealers. Through such relationships, he acquired artworks of great quality, assembling one of America's top collections of Japanese art. When he donated his collection to the Smithsonian, he stipulated that none of the works could be taken outside the museum; thus, they can be seen only in Washington, DC. This exhibition unites exquisite works by Sōtatsu from around the world in an unprecedented and perhaps never-to-be-repeated event. Works from the Freer significant enough to be considered national treasures if they had remained in Japan are presented along with top-class works from collections in Japan and Europe. I hope that large numbers of American and Japanese art lovers will take advantage of the opportunity to see this exhibition.

These wonderful examples of Japanese art crossed the seas many decades ago as a result of connections and relationships between individuals. Now, in the twenty-first century, this joint US-Japan project reminds us that cultural exchanges are passed down over the years from person to person. Representing the Japan Foundation, I have the earnest desire to see the exhibition become a foundation for further exchange between Japan and the United States.

*Sōtatsu: Making Waves* was realized due to the dialogue and collaboration between specialists in Japan and the United States. I express my deepest gratitude to the curators—Furuta Ryō, associate professor, University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, on the Japan side, and



James T. Ulak, senior curator of Japanese art at the Freer and Sackler Galleries on the US side. I also thank Nakamachi Keiko, Jissen Women's University; Okudaira Shunroku, Osaka University; and Yukio Lippit, Harvard University, for their expert advice as members of the organizing committee.

I thank Tokyo University of the Arts for the particular cooperation we received in preparation for *Sōtatsu: Making Waves*. We also are indebted to All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd., for its support through the transportation of artworks and people. Finally, I thank the collectors and everyone involved for their generosity and efforts to realize this exhibition. Their contributions are much appreciated.

Andō Hiroyasu  
President,  
The Japan Foundation

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

International collaborations are complex. The Japan Foundation is an ideal partner. We share a dedication to presenting to our audiences the best possible representations of Japanese visual culture, always within a rigorous scholarly framework. From the beginning, Ambassador Andō and his excellent staff endorsed the exhibition concept and worked tirelessly, attending to the myriad details inevitable in a project of this ambition. We thank in particular Obake Miki and Yamada Etsuko in the foundation's Tokyo office.

H.E. Sasae Kenichirō, Japan's ambassador to the United States, and his staff are enthusiastic and effective supporters of this project and our institution at large. Shimatani Hiroyuki, director, Kyushu National Museum, offered significant advice, and Kitō Satomi of the Tokyo National Museum was a generous facilitator.

My co-curator and mentor in this project was Professor Furuta Ryō, Tokyo University of the Arts. With scholarly expertise and extensive museum curatorial experience, he negotiated key loans in Japan, instructed on all things Sōtatsu, and was sympathetic to the realities of exhibition design. We thank his university and its president, Miyata Ryōhei, for helping to promote this endeavor. Our other team members—Professors Nakamachi Keiko (Jissen Women's University), Okudaira Shunroku (Osaka University), and Yukio Lippit (Harvard University), all distinguished in their research about Sōtatsu and his era—brought immeasurable knowledge to the project. Professor Lippit's translations, added to by Harvard graduate student Mycah Brazleton-Braxton, were sensitive and nuanced. Ōta Aya, Sannomaru Shōzōkan, Museum of the Imperial Collections, and Noguchi Takeshi, Nezu Museum, added to the breadth of our interpretation.

Throughout the course of this project, we were greeted with enthusiasm by lenders, private and public. The Imperial Household Agency graciously accommodated our request to exhibit its "floating fan" screens. Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs agreed to lend the Important Cultural Property, *Saigyō monogatari (Watanabe bon)*; special thanks go to Ambassador Watanabe Makoto for his good counsel concerning this painting. The passing of our friend Mary Griggs Burke in December 2012 set into motion a process that eventually sent selections from her magnificent collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. We knew that circumstances surrounding loans from the foundation might change before the exhibition opened, and indeed they did. But in a wonderful display of collegiality, all parties—the Burke Foundation, the Met, and MIA—made the process absolutely seamless.

At the Freer and Sackler Galleries, thanks go first to Director Julian Raby and Chief Curator Massumeh Farhad, strong supporters at every step. Every department contributes to an exhibition in

many unsung ways. Acknowledging that, and begging forgiveness for oversight, I thank Lee Glazer, who offered a wealth of information on Charles Lang Freer and his circle, and Louise Cort, for providing abundant information on Freer and Kōetsu. The library staff filled my office with relevant books, and archivist David Hogge procured obscure documents from our extensive holdings.

For the details of exhibition logistics, my thanks go to Cheryl Sobas, Alan Francisco, and Katie Fow. Our collections managers Tim Kirk, Christina Popenfus, and Brian Abrams always found a way to fit us into a complicated schedule. Conservators Jenifer Bosworth, Andrew Hare, and Jiro Ueda lent their consummate craft to the project; their superb international reputation put lenders at ease.

Karen Sasaki offered an understanding ear and invaluable advice in the overall design process. The skills and patience of editor-in-chief Jane Lusaka, graphic designer Adina Brosnan McGee, exhibition designer Jeremiah Gallay, and photographer Neil Greentree have been exemplary. Digital media is now integrated in most of our exhibitions, and Courtney O'Callaghan, Liz Cheng, Melda Washington, and Hutomo Wicaksono aided immensely in disseminating these great artworks. The sheer physical production of creating a space sympathetic to the exhibited art was achieved by a cast of talented people. Special thanks go to Bill Bound, Scott Coleman, John Piper, Teak Lynner, Bill York, and Tony Sanders. When the lights go on, they do so thanks to the careful adjustments made by Richard Skinner, Amber Meade, and Lee Weaver.

This exhibition took on new dimensions with an extensive public-relations effort in Japan. Katie Ziglar, head of external affairs, and Nancy Micklewright, head of public and scholarly engagement, endorsed this direction, offering counsel and assistance, as did Laura Willumsen, institutional major gifts officer. Allison Peck, head of public affairs and marketing, and her colleagues—Ellie Reynolds, Miranda Gale, and Vennesa Yung—made new connections with our Japanese partners. Yamasaki Toshikuni of Dentsu Inc. and his knowledgeable team offered superb direction.

Takako Sarai, curatorial assistant, was simply tireless and brilliantly anticipatory in all manner of correspondence and communication. Motoko Shimizu was an indispensable research assistant; many of the best ideas in this project are hers.

My exceptionally long absences from the home front were tolerated by Kim Sammis and Claire Ulak with grace and affection, for which I acknowledge them gratefully.

James T. Ulak  
Senior Curator of Japanese Art  
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Furuta Ryō** (FR) is associate professor of art history at the University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, and specializes in early modern Japanese art history. He has curated numerous exhibitions, including *Rinpa* (2004) and *Natsume Sōseki and the Arts* (2013). His award-winning book, *Tawaraya Sōtatsu*, was published in 2010.

**Yukio Lippit** (YL) is professor of history of art and architecture at Harvard University. He is the author of *Colorful Realm: Bird-and-Flower Paintings by Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800)* (2012) and the award-winning *Painting of the Realm: The Kano House of Painters in Seventeenth-Century Japan* (2012). His current research explores the relationship between Zen Buddhism and monochrome ink painting in medieval Japan.

**Nakamachi Keiko** (NK) is professor of art history at Jissen Women's University. She has studied the painting of the Rinpa school for years and is the author of *Ogata Kōrin* (2008). Her other book-length publications include “Genji Pictures from Momoyama Painting to Edo Ukiyo-e: Cultural Authority and New Horizons” (2008) and “Japanese Female Painters from the Heian Era to the Edo Period” (2012).

**Noguchi Takeshi** (NT) is chief curator at the Nezu Museum, with an interest in medieval and early modern Japanese painting. He recently organized a special exhibition commemorating the three-hundredth anniversary of Ogata Kōrin's death, *Iris and Red-and-White Plum Blossoms: The Secret of Kōrin's Design*. He wrote “Kitagawa Sōsetsu and the Formation of His Style: Focusing on Screens of Seasonal Flowers with the I'nen seal at the Nezu Museum” for *Bijutsushi*, the Journal of the Japan Art History Society (March 2015).

**Okudaira Shunroku** (OS) is professor of art history at the Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University. His area of specialty is medieval and early modern Japanese painting. He has written several books, including *Tawaraya Sōtatsu* (1996) and *Rinpa: Four Hundred Years of History Traced through Chronological Records* (2015).

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**James T. Ulak** (JU) is senior curator of Japanese art for the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. A specialist in the history of narrative painting production in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Japan, he has published on a wide range of topics in Japanese art and organized numerous exhibitions. In 2010, the government of Japan awarded him the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, in recognition of his efforts to strengthen cultural ties between Japan and the United States.

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## NOTE TO THE READER

Unless otherwise noted, all artworks illustrated in this exhibition catalogue are of Japanese origin. The images should be read in a right-to-left (or top-down) sequence, as they would be in Japan.

Captions in the essay and catalogue sections provide minimal information about the artworks. For complete information about each object—including dimensions, medium, and credit line, etc.—please see the exhibition checklist and the credits pages at the end of the book.

Dimensions are given by height (h) × width (w).

Japanese proper names are given in the traditional order, last name followed by first name, except for some modern instances where the name holders use the Western form.

Definitions and translations of Japanese terms can be found in the glossary.

In the traditional way of counting age in Japan, newborns begin life at year 1 rather than year 0, as is the practice in the West.

### Chronology of Japanese Historical Periods

Asuka	552–645
Early Nara (or Hakuho)	645–710
Nara	710–94
Heian	794–1185
Kamakura	1185–1333
Muromachi	1333–1568
Momoyama	1568–1615
Edo	1615–1868
Meiji era	1868–1912
Taishō era	1912–26
Shōwa era	1926–89
Heisei era	1989–present



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