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The Origin of Zen



Zen is a school of Buddhism that emphasises the practice of meditation as the key to awakening one's true nature and uncovering one's innate wisdom and compassion.

Martine Batchelor, *Zen*, London, 2001, p.1

The practice of meditation (Sanskrit: *Dhyana*; Chinese: *Chan*; Japanese: *Zen*) as a means of attaining Enlightenment is an ancient Indian tradition. In the sixth century BC the historical Buddha attained Enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi-tree. According to tradition, the Buddha, in a sermon to his followers, answered an important question by silently raising a lotus flower. Only Kasyapa understood that the Buddha's gesture symbolised the highest truth and he smiled acknowledging his insight. Thus, the 'wordless transmission' of Zen from 'mind to mind' began from Buddha to Kasyapa, who became the first Patriarch of Zen Buddhism.



Fig. 1
CHINESE
Dish
Ming dynasty, Tianqi period
1621–27
Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province,
South-east China
porcelain, enamel
3.6 x 16.7 cm diameter
Gift of H. W. Kent, 1938
(3739.a-D3)

Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth Patriarch, is said to have introduced *Chan* (Zen) Buddhism to China from India in the sixth century. During his audience with the Chinese Emperor Wu of Liang, the Emperor asked the Indian monk how much Buddhist merit he would receive for having built temples, copied sutras (Buddhist Scriptures) and supporting monks. The Bodhidharma replied, 'none at all'. The astonished Emperor asked, 'Well then who is standing before me?'. To this, Bodhidharma replied, 'I know not'. Bodhidharma then left the Liang State and sailed across the Yangtze River standing on a reed (fig. 1). He went north to the Shaolin temple in the State of Wei, where he sat in meditation for nine years, facing the wall of a cave.

Zen is one of the schools of Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism was introduced to China via Central Asia in the first century AD. Zen approached Buddhism in the most direct, simple and practical ways. It grasped that Enlightenment (or Awakening) was the most fundamental aspect of Buddhism and did away with sacred Scriptures, rituals and objects of worship—aspects of Mahayana Buddhism. The Bodhidharma is reported to have said, 'To point directly at the mind and to know its true nature [Enlightenment] is to achieve Buddhahood'. He also said, 'There is a transmission apart from the teachings; there is no need for words or writings'.

In other words, 'Enlightenment is not found in books or in the performance of empty rites; Zen is none other than your own mind so look within and wake up!'

Spiritual truth was to be transmitted not by words but by spiritual enlightenment. Zen masters used *koans* (*gong'an* in Chinese), a form of 'question and answer', to trigger the 'sudden enlightenment or awakening' of their students. *Koans* or 'Zen riddles' are usually enigmatic, paradoxical and even nonsensical—'to hear the sound of one hand clapping'. *Koans* are used to awaken or shock the student out of the conventional way of logical thinking—distinctions, duality and definition that becloud the mind. The student at the instant of 'awakening' (or sudden illumination like a flash of light) sees their own pure, original nature (Buddha nature) that is free of worldly illusions and delusions.

One famous *koan* is about the meeting between Bodhidharma and the Chinese Buddhist monk Huike. Having heard of Bodhidharma, Huike went to the Shaolin temple to ask the master to accept him as a student. The Bodhidharma in deep meditation ignored Huike, who was waiting outside the cave in the dead of winter. With snow rising to his knees, Huike took his sword and cut off his own left arm to show his sincerity in seeking Enlightenment. At this, Bodhidharma asked Huike what he wanted. Huike answered that he had no peace and asked the master to pacify his mind. Bodhidharma replied, 'Bring out your mind before me and I will pacify it'. Huike said, 'But when I seek my mind, I cannot find it'. 'There!', snapped Bodhidharma, 'I have pacified your mind!'. At that very moment, Huike attained his sudden Enlightenment. As he experienced the inner peace of his original (inherent) mind, he was awakened to the realisation that the restlessness (fears and worries, for example) in his mind was an illusion. The illusory fears suddenly disappeared and dissolved. Huike later became Bodhidharma's successor as the second Patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China, with the latter recognised as the first Patriarch.

Zen masters also used gestures, shouts, or even beating with a stick to trigger the 'sudden awakening' of their students. They also came to rely on Zen poetry, painting and calligraphy as vehicles to Enlightenment or as 'fingers pointing to the moon' (spiritual enlightenment).

Zen in Art (China)



Fig. 2
DONG Qichang
Chinese 1555–1636
Mountain landscape
1617, China
ink on paper
167.5 x 53.0 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased, 1978 (AS4-1978)

Zen Buddhism flourished as a dynamic intellectual force during the Tang dynasty (618–906 AD) in China. The philosophy of Zen was embraced by Chinese scholar-officials, poets and scholar-amateur painters. Scholar-amateur and monk painters executed highly original, spontaneous and abbreviated ink paintings, the so-called ‘untrammelled class’ (*yibin*) of painting.

Zen also influenced aesthetic theories in Chinese painting. In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the scholar-amateur painter Dong Qichang (1555–1636) drew on the division of the Northern and Southern schools in Zen Buddhism as an analogy to distinguish between the lineage of the scholar-amateur painters (Southern School) from the professional and court academy painters (Northern School).

In the seventh century, when it was time to choose a successor, the fifth Patriarch, Hongren, announced that he would choose the one who had submitted the best poem expressing his understanding of Buddhism. During the night, the learned monk Shenxiu from the north posted the following lines in the corridor near Patriarch’s quarters:

The body is the Bodhi Tree;
The mind like a bright mirror standing,
Take care to wipe it all the time,
And allow no dust to cling.

On the following day, a poem by the monk Huineng from the south appeared beside the first:

There never was a Bodhi Tree,
Nor bright mirror standing.
Fundamentally, not one thing exists,
So where is the dust to cling?

Although said to be illiterate, Huineng, who revealed a fundamental understanding of Buddhism in his verse, was chosen by Hongren as his successor and became the sixth Patriarch. To Huineng, the mind is not a tangible entity or object like a mirror. Enlightenment cannot be achieved in a gradual process (bit by bit) like wiping a mirror. It has to be a sudden and complete awakening to one’s original or true nature (‘no mind’) that is fundamentally empty, clear and pure. Thoughts and sensations come and go in this ‘original mind’ like birds flying through the sky, leaving no trace.

Thus, Dong Qichang used Zen concepts to distinguish between ‘art’ (spontaneous Southern School) and ‘craft’ (academic Northern School). Like Zen, art cannot be defined or described. Like a Zen awakening, the artist creates with originality from within. ‘Art’ is not measured by achievement in the gradual mastery of technical academic skills and conventions, which are characteristics associated with ‘craft’. Moreover, there is no ‘gradual enlightenment’ in the Northern School; it is rather a ‘gradual advancement’.

In the *Mountain landscape* (fig. 2), Dong has created a highly original and revolutionary work. The austere, solitary, semi-abstract landscape does not so much represent an actual place as express the artist’s inner spiritual world. In this inner landscape, the human figure, a reminder of the banal and dusty world, is excluded. The work is refreshing in its strength, intensity and apparent child-like awkwardness.

Zen in Art (Japan)



Zen Buddhism reached Japan in the seventh century but was not firmly established until the twelfth century. Descending from the Southern School of Zen, the two principal schools of Zen, the Rinzaï and the Soto, continue as a living tradition in Japan. Chinese Zen monks of the Rinzaï sect left China in the seventeenth century and founded the Obaku Zen sect in Japan.

In the joint work, *Sparrow on a blossoming plum tree* (fig. 3), the Chinese Obaku Zen monk Mokuan (1611–84) has written in Chinese (calligraphy in the semi-cursive script) the poem: 'The snow has brought forth the blossoming of the plum branch' and inscribed the date as 1661. In 1655 Mokuan (Muan Xintao in Chinese) followed his teacher Ingen Ryuki (Yinguan Longqi in Chinese) to Japan, where he helped found the Obaku Zen sect and became the second abbot of the Manpuku-ji (temple) near Kyoto.

Kano Tan'yu (1602–74), a Japanese artist of the Kano school, expressed Mokuan's poetic sentiment in a calligraphic painting in ink. Probably as a compliment to Mokuan, Tan'yu, who became a priest in 1636, painted the sparrow on a blossoming plum tree with a few quick suggestive brushstrokes in the abbreviated, 'untrammelled' style popular among the tenth century Chinese monk painters.

Zen permeated the aesthetic sensibilities of everyday life in Japan, in particular the simple act of drinking tea. Towards the end of the twelfth century, powdered green tea was brought back to Japan from China by returning Zen Buddhist monks, who drank tea to stay awake during long hours of meditation. The spirit and etiquette of serving tea was transformed into the art of the tea ceremony (*cha-no-yu*, hot water for tea), first performed by Zen monks for the military class in the fifteenth century.

In the Momoyama period (1573–1615), the tea ceremony was developed into its classic form or informal style by the tea-master Sen no Rikyu (1522–91). Rikyu advocated the aesthetic experience of *wabi* (rustic simplicity) as the essence of the tea ceremony. In a small, dimly lit room reminiscent of a rustic hut, the host served tea to a small group of guests who quietly shared a spiritual and aesthetic experience. A scroll of monochrome ink painting or calligraphy and a simple arrangement of flowers in a vase were displayed in an alcove to induce contemplation.

In an age of feudal wars, the samurai warriors, acutely aware of the shadow of death following them from one battle to the next, sought refuge in the tearoom, just as they found solace in Zen. One is made acutely sensitive to the delicate changes and impermanence in Nature – life and death as a natural process.

In the sixteenth century, the tea-masters, whose tastes were influenced by Zen, became arbiters of aesthetic taste. They began to use local rustic wares, such as *Shigaraki* ware, selected for its natural beauty. The rough and dynamic *Shigaraki Jar* (fig. 4), originally made to store grain, was adopted as a container for tea leaves. The tea-masters' aesthetic taste and spiritual perception of beauty included the familiar and commonplace objects of humble origin. The Japanese love of nature extends to the appreciation for natural textures and rough accidental effects. A flaw or apparent imperfection is appreciated as *wabi* ('beauty of poverty').

Fig. 3
KANO Tan'yu
Japanese 1602–74
Mokuan Shoto calligrapher
Chinese 1611–84, lived in Japan
1655–84
Sparrow on a blossoming plum tree
1661, Japan
ink on paper
32.7 x 56.2 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art
Foundation of Victoria with the
assistance of Mr S. Baillieu Myer
AC, Founder Benefactor, 1993
(AS29-1993)



'Beauty of poverty' is the essence of *Paper robe, Kamiko* (fig. 5). Made of paper and lined with silk, robes like this were worn by men and women of all classes during the Edo period (1615–1868). Paper was used for garments in Japan from about a thousand years ago. The poor, who could not afford silk or cotton, used paper as a cheap material for clothing. But the paper was not durable; it could be easily damaged and torn and would disintegrate if washed. Buddhist monks adopted the paper garments of the poor, associating it with 'holy poverty'. In emulation of the monks, other members of society from samurai and nobility to wandering poets and tea-masters adopted paper clothing, which had come to symbolise a life of detached simplicity, humility and vulnerability.

The use of silk on sections of the robe's exterior is also evocative of the patchwork of the poor. Like the *kesa* or the patchwork vestments of Buddhist monks, the robe is reinforced and embellished with sections of fine and exquisite silk recycled from kimono (*kosode*) worn by the wealthy and upper classes. The orange lining is reminiscent of the colour of Buddhist monks' robes. Underlying the apparent poverty is sophistication, refinement and elegance. These characteristics, together with the mellowness of age the robe has acquired through use, show qualities in harmony with the aesthetic sensibilities of the tea ceremony that stem from the philosophies of Zen.

Beauty brought about by use and age is highly appreciated by Japanese connoisseurs, for it exemplifies *sabi*, a love for old and faded things. The aesthetic principle *sabi*, which has found expression in the tea ceremony, comes from the belief that respectful use of an object in its proper function can only enhance its beauty.

Fig. 4 (above)
JAPANESE
Jar
 15th century – 16th century, Muromachi period, Japan stoneware (*Shigaraki ware*)
 46.0 x 42.8 cm diameter
 Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1984 (AS1-1984)

Fig. 5 (right)
JAPANESE
Paper robe, Kamiko
 late 18th century – early 19th century, Edo period, Japan paper lined with silk
 134.0 cm (centre back)
 116.2 cm (sleeve length)
 Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria, 1994 (AS2-1994)



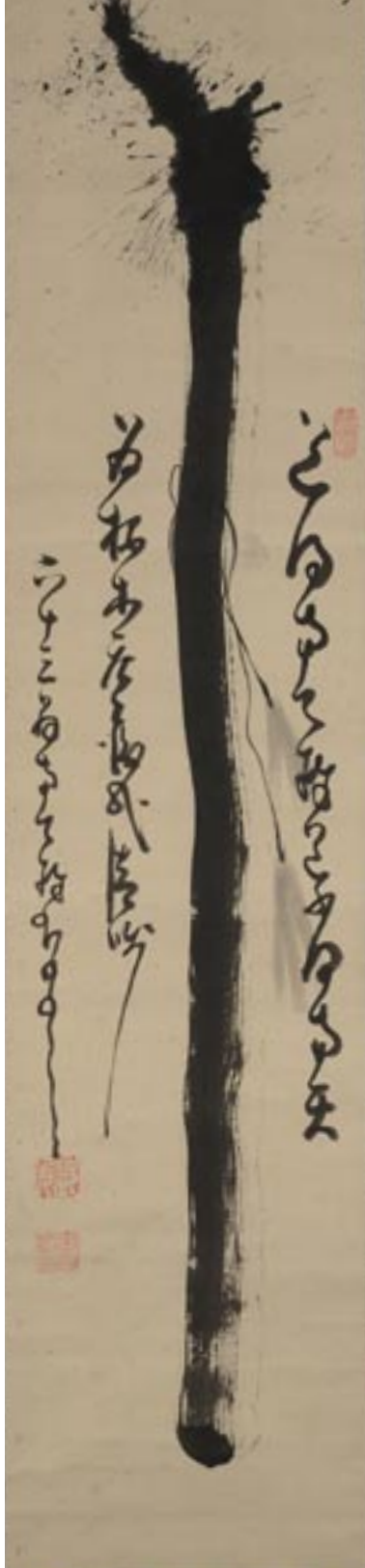
Zen – A Living Tradition



Fig. 6 (below)
Nakahara Nantenbo
Japanese 1839–1925
Enso with a poem
1922, Japan
ink on paper
32.8 x 58.7 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest,
2003 (2003.268)

Fig. 7 (right)
Nakahara Nantenbo
Japanese 1839–1925
The stick of Nantenbo
1901, Japan
ink on paper
137.6 x 31.8 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest,
2003 (2003.685)





Zen Buddhism continues as a living tradition in Asia and more recently in Western countries.

Nakahara Nantenbo (1839–1925) was a Japanese Zen monk of the Rinzai sect. A disciplined Zen teacher and prolific Zen painter, Nantenbo learned to use painting and calligraphy as means of expressing the Zen spirit that lies beyond words. He created most of his paintings and calligraphy in his late seventies and early eighties. In the painting *Enso with a poem* (fig. 6), the *enso* (circle), accomplished in one continuous brushstroke, is accompanied by a poem written in cursive calligraphy and translates: 'If that moon falls, I will give it to you. Now try to take it.'

The *enso* is one of the deepest symbols in Japanese Zen. When man becomes empty of illusion, he appears to himself in the clearest light—effectively grasping his own nature. This state in Zen is called 'spiritual poverty'. The *enso* is also the simplest representation of the experience of the Absolute Void; it encompasses the universe with one endless line. The *enso* is the revelation of a world of the spirit without beginning and end. As such, it also serves the purpose of *koan* (Zen riddle) for the Zen initiate. The Zen circle of Enlightenment reflects that transforming experience—perfectly empty yet completely full, infinite, shining brightly like the moon-mind of Enlightenment.

The most intriguing subject of all for Nantenbo is the nanten staff (*nantenbo*), which is made from a branch of the nanten tree. The severe master who employs this stick is known as Nantenbo. Often students are presented with a *koan* and when they approach Nantenbo, who is always armed with a heavy stick, they had better have a good answer ready—Nantenbo's trademark was 'whether you speak or not, thirty blows from my staff!'. Silence also earns the student a sharp crack on the head. Zen masters must be very severe with their students, for Zen training is indeed a matter of life or death.

In the painting *The stick of Nantenbo* (fig. 7), the stick is depicted by one powerful calligraphic brushstroke that moves from the top to the bottom of the hanging scroll. The artist begins at the top with one energetic brushstroke from which the ink flies off in all directions, evocative of a dragon—the mouth and horns and dynamic movements are restrained by the tassels at its waist.

The calligraphic inscription on either side is translated:

If you speak – [blows of] Nantenbo.

If you don't speak – [blows of] Nantenbo.



The *Awakening* (fig. 8) is a highly powerful and original work by Kim Hoa Tram (Shen Jinhe in Chinese), who was born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1959, to a family originally from Fujian province in China. He came to Australia in 1984. For more than ten years, Kim has immersed himself in Zen Buddhism. The *Awakening* deals with the Buddhist concept of impermanence. Two birds, one living and one dead, are repeated in a sequence as the narrative unfolds in four panels that are read from right to left. It progresses from a baby bird crying beside a dead bird; a young bird crying out in shock; an older bird staring at the dead bird, coming to some kind of realization. In the last panel, the wise old bird is perched on a branch with an enigmatic expression of acceptance. The silence conveyed by the void in the fourth panel is as emotionally intense as the cry in the second panel. The bird has been used as a symbol to represent the emotions in the confrontation of death. The images express what is beyond words. As in the Zen saying 'borrowing the finger to point at the moon', these images are the 'finger' pointing to the moon, 'spiritual enlightenment'.

Fig. 8
Kim Hoa TRAM
 Chinese, born in Vietnam 1959,
 arrived in Australia 1984
Awakening
 2002 Australia
 ink and watercolour on paper
 (1-4) 89.9 x 21.4 cm (image) (each)
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest,
 2002 (2002.421.1-4)

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Checklist



DONG Qichang

Chinese 1555–1636
Mountain landscape
1617, China
ink on paper
167.5 x 53.0 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased, 1978 (AS4-1978)

ZHANG Ruitu

Japanese 1570–1641
River landscape
1628, China
ink on silk
172.8 x 50.5 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased, 1994 (AS12-1994)

Kuncan

Chinese 1612–c.1674
Walking through a pine forest in moonlight
1660, China
ink and pigments on paper
207.2 x 97.6 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Westpac Banking Corporation, Founder Benefactor, 1978 (AS7-1978)

Bada Shanren

Chinese 1626–1705
Landscape in the style of Huang Gongwang (1269–1354)
c. 1694, China
ink and colour wash on satin
174.5 x 45.0 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rachel & Freda Goldenberg Memorial Trust, Governor, 1983 (AS3.1-1983)

Bada Shanren

Chinese 1626–1705
Landscape in the style of Ni Zan (1301–74)
c. 1694, China
ink and colour wash on satin
167.3 x 44.9 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rachel & Freda Goldenberg Memorial Trust, Governor, 1983 (AS3.2-1983)

Bada Shanren

Chinese 1626–1705
Landscape in the style of Wu Zhen (1280–1354)
c. 1694, China
ink and colour wash on satin
174.8 x 45.1 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rachel & Freda Goldenberg Memorial Trust, Governor, 1983 (AS3.3-1983)

Bada Shanren

Chinese 1626–1705
Landscape in the style of Wang Meng (c. 1309–85)
c. 1694, China
ink and colour wash on satin
174.5 x 45.0 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rachel & Freda Goldenberg Memorial Trust, Governor, 1983 (AS3.4-1983)

KANO Tan'yu

Japanese 1602–74
Mokuan Shoto calligrapher
Chinese 1611–84, lived in Japan
1655–84
Sparrow on a blossoming plum tree
1661, Japan
ink on paper
32.7 x 56.2 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Mr S. Baillieu Myer AC, Founder Benefactor, 1993 (AS29-1993)

Mokuan Shoto

Chinese 1611–84, lived in Japan
1655–84
With the arrival of spring, one hundred flowers open
17th century, Japan
ink on paper
122.2 x 30.0 cm (image and sheet)
Felton Bequest, 1991 (AS6-1991)

Ingen Ryuki

Chinese 1592–1673, lived in Japan
1658–73
Mountain bright, like snow
17th century, Japan
ink on paper
121.5 x 39.8 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Jardine Matheson Australia Limited, Fellow, 1994 (AS3-1994)



Kosen Shoton

Chinese 1633–95, lived in Japan
1661–95
Brushing against flowers fragrance permeates garments
17th century, Japan
ink on paper
132.0 x 30.2 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Pacific Dunlop Limited, Fellow, 1992 (AS9-1992)

Kogetsu Sogan

Japanese 1574–1643
Facing the flowers, facing the moon
early 17th century, Japan
ink on paper
25.0 x 59.3 cm (image and sheet)
Felton Bequest, 1976 (AS129-1976)

Hishin Gikaku

Japanese active 18th century
Nourishing the chicks makes great cranes
18th century, Japan
ink on paper
110.7 x 55.0 cm (image and sheet)
Purchased, 1990 (AS2-1990)

Shinzen Kakukai

Japanese late 18th century – 1830
Skull and goddess of fortune, Kitchijoten
early 19th century, Japan
ink and pigments on paper
79.0 x 58.5 cm (image and sheet)
Felton Bequest, 1991 (AS8-1991)

SENGAI Gibon

Japanese 1750–1837
(1) *Kanzan*
(2) *Jittoku*
late 18th century – early 19th century, Japan
ink on paper
97.3 x 30.1 cm (image and sheet) (each)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003 (2203.665.1-2)

Nakahara Nantenbo

Japanese 1839–1925
Enso with a poem
1922, Japan
ink on paper
32.8 x 58.7 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003 (2003.268)

Nakahara Nantenbo

Japanese 1839–1925
The stick of Nantenbo
1901, Japan
ink on paper
137.6 x 31.8 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003 (2003.268)

Nakahara Nantenbo

Japanese 1839–1925
Procession of monks
1921, Japan
ink on paper
137.8 x 22.8 cm (image and sheet) (each)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003 (2003.666.1-2)

Patrick LAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1950, arrived in Australia 1980
The Heart Sutra
1997, Australia
ink on paper
138.5 x 69.0 cm (image and sheet)
Kaiser Bequest, 2001 (2001.140)

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1959, arrived in Australia 1984
Lost in the world of delusion
2001, Australia
ink on paper
122.2 x 46.8 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2002 (2002.419)

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1959, arrived in Australia 1984
Delusion
2002, Australia
ink and watercolour on paper
(1-4) 89.9 x 21.5 cm (image and sheet) (each)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2002 (2002.420.1-4)

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1959, arrived in Australia 1984
Awakening
2002, Australia
ink and watercolour on paper
(1-4) 89.9 x 21.4 cm (image and sheet) (each)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2002 (2002.421.1-4)

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1959, arrived in Australia 1984
Tea Zen (Chan)
2002, Australia
ink on paper
120.8 x 61.0 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2002 (2002.422)

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born Vietnam 1959, arrived in Australia 1984
Zen (Chan)
2003, Australia
ink on paper
116.4 x 57.4 cm (image and sheet)
Private collection

CHINESE

Dish
Ming dynasty, Tianqi period 1621–27
Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, South-east China
porcelain, enamel
36.6 x 16.7 cm diameter
Gift of H. W. Kent, 1938 (3739.A-D3)

JAPANESE

Paper robe, Kamiko
late 18th century – early 19th century, Edo period, Japan
paper, silk
134.0 cm (centre back), 116.5 cm (sleeve length)
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria, 1994 (AS2-1994)

JAPANESE

Jar
15th century – 16th century, Muromachi period, Japan
stoneware (*Shigaraki* ware)
46.0 x 42.8 cm diameter
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1984 (AS1-1984)

JAPANESE

Jar, Chatsubo
1573–1615, Momoyama period, Japan
stoneware (*Tamba* ware)
44.6 x 39.4 cm diameter
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1981 (AS1-1981)

JAPANESE

Sake bottle
early 16th century, Muromachi period, Japan
stoneware (*Bizen* ware)
17.3 x 17.0 cm diameter
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1985 (AS38-1985)

JAPANESE

Dish
16th century – early 17th century, Momoyama period, Japan
stoneware (*Bizen* ware)
3.9 x 31.0 x 30.8 cm
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of CRA Limited, Fellow, 1985 (AS39-1985)

KANESHIGE Michiaki

Japanese 1934–95
Tea bowl
 1960s–90s, Japan
 stoneware (*Bizen* ware)
 8.6 x 12.7 x 11.0 cm
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
 (2003.269)

KAWASAKI Tsuyoshi

Japanese 1942–
Incense container
 1970s–90s, Japan
 stoneware
 17.6 x 10.3 cm diameter (overall)
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
 (2003.270)

KANETA Sanzaemon VII

Japanese 1920–
Tea bowl
 1950s–90s Japan
 stoneware (*Hagi* ware)
 8.0 x 14.7 x 14.3 cm
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
 (2003.272)

KOREAN

Tea bowl
 12th century, Koryo dynasty, Korea
 stoneware
 5.7 x 12.1 cm diameter
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
 (2003.273)

KOREAN

Tea bowl
 15th century, Choson dynasty, Korea
 stoneware
 5.9 x 14.4 cm diameter
 Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
 (2003.271)

JAPANESE

Basin
 14th century, Nanbokucho period,
 Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 16.5 x 33.4 x 32.7 cm
 Purchased through The Art
 Foundation of Victoria by Mr S.
 Baillieu Myer, Founder Benefactor,
 1985 (AS34-1985)

JAPANESE

Dish
 15th century, Muromachi period,
 Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 3.3 x 32.8 cm diameter
 Presented through The Art
 Foundation of Victoria by Mr S.
 Baillieu Myer, Founder Benefactor,
 1989 (AS1-1989)

JAPANESE

Lidded jar
 15th century–16th century,
 Muromachi period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 14.8 x 19.0 x 18.3 cm (overall)
 Purchased through The Art
 Foundation of Victoria with the
 assistance of Mr S. Baillieu Myer,
 Founder Benefactor, 1986 (AS4a-
 b-1986)

JAPANESE

Bottle
 16th century, Momoyama period,
 Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 27.5 x 16.3 cm diameter
 Gift of Sir Roderick and Lady
 Carnegie, 1979 (AS7-1979)

JAPANESE

Hot water container
 16th century, Muromachi period,
 Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 35.3 x 36.8 x 24.1 cm
 Gift of Sir Roderick and Lady
 Carnegie, 1979 (AS8-1979)

JAPANESE

Table
 c. 1530, Muromachi period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 32.5 x 38.0 cm diameter
 Purchased with funds donated by Mr
 S. Baillieu Myer, 1983 (AS4-1983)

JAPANESE

Bowl
 1590s, Momoyama period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 17.7 x 34.0 x 32.7 cm
 Presented through The Art
 Foundation of Victoria by Mr S.
 Baillieu Myer, Founder Benefactor,
 1988 (AS2-1988)

JAPANESE

Basin
 17th century, Edo Period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 16.0 x 37.8 x 32.2 cm
 Gift of Sir Roderick and Lady
 Carnegie, 1979 (AS9-1979)

JAPANESE

Cake-stand
 18th century, late Edo Period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 39.7 x 48.0 x 48.0 cm
 Purchased, 1977 (AS5-1977)

JAPANESE

Altar table
 18th century, Edo period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 14.1 x 54.7 x 30.4 cm
 Purchased from Admission Funds,
 1989 (AS4-1988)

JAPANESE

Circular tray
 18th century, Edo Period, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 17.3 x 54.2 cm diameter
 Purchased through the NGV
 Foundation with the assistance of Sir
 Roderick and Lady Carnegie, Fellow,
 2001 (2001.45)

JAPANESE

Armrest
 19th century, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Negoro* lacquer)
 27.5 x 29.0 x 43.1 cm
 Purchased through the NGV
 Foundation with the assistance
 of The Peter and Susan Rowland
 Endowment, Governor, 2001 (2001.1)

SUGANUMA Michiko

Japanese 1940–
Dish
 1977, Kamakura, Japan
 lacquer on wood (*Kamakura bori*
 lacquer)
 5.8 x 30.3 x 24.6 cm
 Purchased, 1984 (AS3-1984)

The art of Zen

from the Asian collection



Cover detail:

Kim Hoa TRAM

Chinese, born in Vietnam 1959,

arrived in Australia 1984

Tea Zen (Chan)

2002 Australia

ink on paper

153.0 x 81.5 cm

Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest,

2002

(2002.422)

The exhibition *The Art of Zen* focuses on the art and aesthetics that were inspired by the philosophy of Zen Buddhism. It draws upon materials from China, Japan and Korea. The exhibition shows objects from the twelfth to the twenty-first century, including calligraphy and painting by Zen Buddhist monks, Negoro lacquer used in Zen temples and ceramics used in the Japanese tea ceremony.

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Brochure text and exhibition prepared by: Mae Anna Pang, Senior Curator of Asian Art, National Gallery of Victoria

Exhibition Design: Angela Chang

Graphic Design: Cameron Midson

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