

Korean Screen, Japanese Botanical Compendium, One-in-a-million Pagoda and a Chinese Day Bed

Chinese and Japanese Works of Art Auction on 14th May



A Korean Chaekgeori eight-fold screen with hidden artist seal, Joseon Dynasty, 19th century. Estimate: £14,000-18,000

London, UK: the sale of 170 lots on 14th May at Olympia Auctions has a strong section of **Japanese Works of Art** ranging from an 8th century miniature pagoda to a private collection of contemporary ceramics by **Kondo Yuzo**, designated a Living National Treasure in 1977. **Chinese Works of Art** include ceramics from the Song to Qing Dynasty, an English private collection of jade and hardstone carvings, a strong textiles section, sculptures and furniture. The sale also includes the outstanding **Korean** screen featured above.

Japanese Works of Art



Extremely rare and hardly ever seen on the market is a complete set of **Honzo Zufu (illustrated book of medicinal herbs)** by Iwasaki Tsunemasa, 1921. Tsunemasa (1786–1842) was a Japanese botanist, zoologist, entomologist and samurai and his Honzu Zufu is considered the greatest botanical work of 19th Century Japan. Comprising 93 volumes, plus a two-volume index, it describes and illustrates in colour some 2,000 plants. Estimate £8,000–12,000.

See image, left.

A **miniature Japanese cypress wood pagoda** comes from the set of 'One Million Pagodas' (*Hyakumanto*), made in the Nara Period (8th Century). In AD 764, the Japanese Empress Shotoku commissioned one million miniature pagodas containing Buddhist prayers, called *darani*, to be placed in temples throughout Japan. The tiered wood pagoda has a detachable finial revealing an aperture for a Buddhist scroll and carries an estimate of £2,000–3,000.

See image, right.



Other notable Japanese works include a beautifully delicate **woodblock print by Paul Jacoulet**, "*Belle de Yap et Orchidées*," with a shimmering silver mica ground. Jacoulet was born in Paris in 1896 but lived in Japan for most of his life. His creative period was from 1939 to 1960 and he is one of the few western artists to have mastered the art of woodblock printing sufficiently to be recognized in Japan. This example from an American private collection is estimated to fetch £400–600.

Three **Mongolian felted wool mosen**, dyed using traditional *shibori* techniques, were made for the Japanese market in the late 19th Century. These large, ceremonial rugs, used in tea gatherings, display striking circular motifs and would have provided a soft and comfortable surface for sitting during the ceremony. Each is estimated at £600–800.

Bringing us into the 20th Century is a small collection of ceramics by the famous potter **Kondo Yuzo (1902–1985)** designated a Living National Treasure in 1977 for his contributions to underglaze blue porcelain. A **sometsuke 'Pomegranate' chawan**, estimate: £200–300, displays the master's typical flowing cobalt brushwork.

Korean Works of Art

A highlight of the sale is a **Chaekgeori eight-fold screen - *image at top of press release*** - with hidden artist's seal from the Joseon Dynasty, 19th Century. In ink and colour on paper, the *trompe l'oeil* painting depicts scholars' possessions, a theme popular among the elite at court from the 18th Century. This example, typically, is illustrated with stacks of books, ink sticks, brushes, scrolls and antiquities, items that scholars had (or wished to have) around them in their studies. Estimate £14,000–18,000.

Also from Korea but revealing a very different aspect of its history, is a **bronze horse warrant (Map'ae)**, Joseon Period, dated 1723. Hand chiselled with a galloping horse and an inscription, such warrants were used from the early 16th century to identify the king's secret mission officer who was dispatched to the countryside to investigate local government officials and military commanders. The warrant enabled the bearer to requisition the number of horses shown on it. (The British Museum has an example with five horses.) Estimate: £300–500

Chinese Works of Art



Highly collectable Chinese furniture includes a handsome Chinese **Ming-style Hongmu waisted bed**, Qing Dynasty, with a hard mat seat supported on sturdy legs. Estimate £1,000-2,000. While from a later period, there is an elegant **black lacquer and gilt-decorated collector's cabinet**, circa 1815, richly adorned with lakeside figures and landscapes. Estimate: £3,000–5,000. *Image, left.*

A strong section of Chinese textiles includes the oldest lot in the sale, a **large and rare embroidered silk fragment**, possibly Warring States Period (475–221 BC), intricately decorated with dragons, phoenix and tigers. Estimate: £500–800. Also unusual is a pair of 18th century silk “sky burial” panels, one embroidered with small dogs, the other with birds. These were most likely made in China for the Tibetan market and are estimated to fetch £3,000-5,000.



A rare and finely embroidered silk and gold thread **'Nine Dragon' robe (Jifu)**, Qing Dynasty, 19th Century, estimate: £1,800–2,000, is one of six robes in the sale while other textiles include two Qing silk chair covers, estimate £800 – 1,200 and an embroidered silk Buddhist pendant, Ming Dynasty, Yongle period, early 15th century. Estimate: £400-600. *Image left.*

CHINESE AND JAPANESE WORKS OF ART AUCTION

Wednesday 14th May 2025, 12pm, precisely

PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

Sunday 11h May: 12pm to 4pm

Monday 12th May: 10am to 8pm

Tuesday 13th May: 10am to 5pm

Contact Antonia Grace for further information or images about this sale

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Editor's Notes

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