Tigers in a Bamboo Grove (Tigers at Play), mid-1630s, by Kano Tan'yū (Nanzen-ji, Kyoto)
Chinese masters.

many sketches from them in order to learn from.

Tan’yu admired Chinese paintings and made

colors brought light and exuberant energy

of natural subjects and use of gold and bright

large-scale paintings for interiors of castles,

was given many important commissions, making

attendance and established an artist workshop in

became the shoguns’ first official painter-in-

he received from his well-connected father, he

the Kano school. With his talent and the support

About the Artist

Tan’yu (1602–1674) was the most prolific artist of

1603–1616). These sliding doors are one of two

were rebuilt starting in 1611 with the support of

Nanzen-ji temple complex. Originally the site of

Nestled in the foothills of the Higashiyama

area of Kyoto is the impressive

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sea of Japan</th>
<th>Kyoto</th>
<th>Edo (modern Tokyo)</th>
<th>Nagoya</th>
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Tigers and Bamboos

In Chinese art, the tiger was traditionally

related to the four directions as the animal of the West, and was often paired with the
dragon, which represented the East. East Asian artists frequently depicted tigers with holy

man, ibis, or monks, reflecting their mystic and exuberant energy.

The bamboo alone stands for resilience and integrity, admired virtues of noble men.

About This Work of Art

The Kano School of Painting

The Kano school was the longest-lived and

most influential school of painting in Japanese

culture, attracting the patronage of the wealthiest

and most powerful classes in Japan. Kano artists were greatly influenced by traditional Chinese

painting, with its focus on monochromatic landscapes and nature-related themes.

Eventually expanding their repertoire, the Kano painters began experimenting with more innovative compositions, bold brushwork, and bright colors. Kano Tan’yū, the artist who painted these sliding doors, was named the shoguns’ painter-in-residence at the age of fifteen and was commissioned to decorate the most prestigious castles and palaces.

Related Works of Art from the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Gambling Lions (1591–1600)

Ink and color on gold paper; mounted as a pair of six-fold screens, framed

Hasegawa Setsurei

Each screen: 51 1/8 x 14 1/4 inches (130 x 36.6 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Frederick Baekeland in honor of Andrea M. Baldeck, M.D., and William W. Hollis, Jr., 2007.57a,b

Originally associated with Indian Buddhism as a symbol of power and protection, the lion later assumed a playful quality in East Asian art, often pictured frolicking in nature. On this screen, Hasegawa Setsurei has painted five dappled lions in blue, green, and white colors. Their full, curly manes and tails are rendered in gold and silver lines, and the creatures are set against a plain gold backdrop. The broad, flat background of gold leaf helps accentuate the colors and movements of the lions, who look more like kittens than kings of wild beasts. Instead of formidable guardians, here they are portrayed as auspicious symbols.

Gamboling Lions

Japanese, active 1789 to 1800

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