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Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)

born Katsushika ward, Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan;
died Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan

cranes in pine tree, circa 1805, Edo period (1600–1868)

color woodcut

William Bridges Thayer Memorial, 1928.7805

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Chen Shaomei (1909–1954)

born Hengshan, China; died Beijing, China

Cultivating Longevity in a Mountain Pavilion, 1940

ink, color on paper

Gift of Stan and Patsy Wisdom, 1991.0156

This painting was a gift from the artist to a friend on the friend's sixtieth birthday. The inscription on the painting includes a birthday greeting for the recipient and a poem that leads the viewer through the painting's various layers.

Inscription:

*The clouds and mists are good for longevity,
The rays of sunlight are splendid at twilight;
The drifting water blocks the boat on the Shan River,
Where there is a famous mountain,
There is a Peach Blossom Spring.*

*In the painting, an ocean of spring,
In the mountain, a scene of paradise;
On the peak and in the valley,
Gather together the young and the wise;
All unaware that blossoms and birdsong,
Are prevailing over the Chan Temple on Mimo Cliff.*

Longevity, or a long life, is an important concept in Chinese culture and an appropriate theme for a sixtieth birthday present. Respect for one's elders is another important value in Chinese culture. Therefore longevity—or even immortality—are frequently depicted in art.

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after **Maruyama Ōkyo** (1733–1795)
 born Anafuto, Japan; died Kyoto, Japan
Longevity Triptych, 1782
 ink, color on silk
 Gift of Jay Gates, Director, Spencer Museum of Art, 1984–1987,
 2012.0608.a,b,c

In this triptych, or three-part painting, longevity is represented by different animals. In the center panel, the elderly god of longevity has a long white beard and leans on a white deer, a symbol for youth. The left panel depicts turtles, which are revered for their long lifespans. Some of the turtles depicted in Japanese art, known as *minogame*, are so elderly that they have seaweed growing on their shells. The right panel depicts cranes, which are the constant companions of immortals and symbolize luck as well as longevity. East Asian folklore has many tales about cranes, including the Japanese story *The Crane Wife*.

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Yoshida Hiroshi (1876–1950)
 born Kurume, Japan; died Tokyo, Japan
Misty day in Nikkō, 1937
 color woodcut
 Bequest of R.C. Moore, 1974.0032

In this print, religious travelers dressed in traditional white clothes visit a group of Buddhist and Shinto shrines in Nikkō, Japan. The shrines at Nikkō were constructed in honor of the powerful military ruler Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), who was later worshipped as the god Toshō Daigongen, or the “Great Deity of the East Shining Light.” The artist who made this print is especially well-known for his skill in creating atmospheric effects, as seen in the trees that fade into the mist behind the shrine.

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Li Huayi
 born 1948, Shanghai, China
 lives and works in San Francisco
The Silence of Pines on Remote Peaks, 1999
 ink, color on paper
 Museum purchase: R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Fund
 in honor of Professor Chu-tsing Li, 2000.0011

The looming peak cloaked in swirling mist in this painting lifts a single, resilient pine tree above the gloom. The artist, Li Huayi, often works while listening to the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), which has a dramatic but persistent strength similar to the composition of this painting. The perseverance of the pine tree, growing in such an unlikely place, illustrates the Chinese idea of *qi*, or the vital life force that is part of all living entities.

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Totoya Hokkei (1780–1850)

born and died Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan

Painting of the Daoist Immortal Huang Zhuping and sculpture of a goat, 1823

color woodcut

William Bridges Thayer Memorial, 0000.1416

According to a Chinese legend, Huang Zhuping was a Daoist hermit who could transform stones into goats. Although this print was made in Japan, this deity is very popular in modern-day Hong Kong, where charitable foundations honoring the mythic healer operate free health clinics for low-income populations.

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San-shin (mountain spirit), 1800s

Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910)

ink, mineral color on silk

Museum purchase: R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Art Acquisition Fund, 2014.0052

San-shin, or mountain spirit, is a Korean deity who represents fertility and abundance. In Korea, where approximately 70 percent of the geography is mountainous, the tiger is the king of the mountain animals and is a constant companion of San-shin. A young boy in the background carries a tray of ripe peaches, a symbol of longevity in East Asian cultures. According to legend, the mountain spirit is the aged Dangun, the legendary founder and god-king of the first Korean kingdom known as Gojoseon.

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Fūgai Ekun (1568–1654)

born Hijishio, Japan; died Lake Hamana, Japan

Daruma crossing the river, late 1500s–early 1600s

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1615) or Edo period (1600–1868)

ink on paper

Museum purchase, 1984.0135

Inscription by Tetsugyu (1628–1700):

The water in the Liang River becomes shallow,

There is no place to moor a large boat.

Watch him go by on a single reed—

His legacy continues to increase and increase.

Typically depicted with glaring eyes and his hands tucked into his robe, the image of the monk Daruma evokes serious Zen Buddhist practices as well as a sense of humor, inviting viewers to laugh at the unpredictability of this world. This painting recalls an episode from Daruma's life when his dedication to spreading Buddhism propelled him across the Yangtze River in China on a thin reed. Like Daruma, the artist Fūgai Ekun was a monk, but did not find satisfaction in temple life and became a hermit, living alone in caves in northern Japan and trading his paintings for food and supplies.

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Gekko

active Japan, Edo period (1600–1868)

Oiwa (The Lantern Ghost), early 1800s

ink, color on silk

R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Art Acquisition Fund,
2010.0025

In this hanging scroll, the lantern ghost Oiwa appears formless, fading into the dark background and obscured by her long messy hair. The story of the lantern ghost first appears in a 19th-century Japanese Kabuki play. In the story, Oiwa is betrayed and poisoned by her husband Iyemon and turns into a vengeful ghost who haunts her husband relentlessly. Wherever he goes and whatever he does, Oiwa's disfigured face appears before him. When the story of Oiwa was first performed in 1825, lanterns were already a motif associated with ghost stories. This motif was creatively employed by Kabuki actors, who played Oiwa emerging from a burning lantern. In Japan, ghost stories like this are often told at the height of summer heat in order to cause a terror-induced cold sweat.

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Shakyamuni with Ananda and Kashyapa, 1200s

Korea, Goryeo dynasty (918–1392)

woodcut, restrike

Anonymous gift, 2011.0035

Depicted here on bright yellow paper is Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha who lived sometime around 480 BCE in northern India. The Buddha is flanked by two of his first disciples: Ananda and Kashyapa. Today, Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion, with more than 520 million followers that encompass a wide variety of traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices largely based on the original teachings of the Buddha.

This woodblock print is from the Korean Buddhist temple known as Haiensa, which is famous for being the home of the 600-year-old *Tripataka Koreana*, a collection of Buddhist scriptures carved onto over 81,000 wooden printing blocks, from which prints like this one were made.

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Vairocana, 1454

China, Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

ink, color on silk

Museum purchase: R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Fund, and Helen Foresman Spencer Art Acquisition Fund, 1996.0106

Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha, is the central figure in the Buddhist pantheon. This painting on silk was likely the central image of the set of similar depictions of popular Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian deities. They would have been used in a sacred procession as part of a Buddhist mortuary or funeral ceremony known as the Water-Land Ritual. This service was conducted for the salvation of all the souls of the dead on land and in water.

This depiction of Vairocana comes from a set of more than sixty scrolls, of which thirty-four are now in the Musée Guimet, Paris, and two are in the Cleveland Museum of Art. The locations of the remaining scrolls are unknown. According to the inscriptions on these paintings, they were made in imperial workshops for the use of the imperial households in 1454, under the supervision of Chinese court eunuchs. Although the Water-Land Ritual was sponsored by families of all levels of society, the set that this Vairocana comes from represents the intimate involvement of the Ming imperial household in the production of Buddhist ritual art.

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