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China 2000 Fine Art (1556 Third Avenue Suite 601 in Manhattan) is pleased to present *Hands Across The Water: Japanese artists who found inspiration by studying with Chinese master painters.* The two featured works are **Taihu Stone** by Yasuda Rozan 安田老山 (1830-1883) and **Painted Album** by Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 (1881-1963).

Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 (1881-1963), original name Nishimura Wasaku 西村和作, was born in Oda City in Shimane prefecture, Japan. He moved to Kyoto where he studied Nanga (Southern school of Chinese painting) under Yoshitsugu Haizan 吉嗣拜山 (1846-1915) in Japan. In 1914, Nishi went to China to study painting. First, he studied with Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864-1957). After meeting Wu Changshuo 吳昌碩 (1844-1927), he moved to Shanghai and studied with Wu. In 1930, he founded the Shanghai Nan art studio. In 1946, he returned home to Japan after the war, and continued painting. In 1958, he painted a mural for the Chofukuji temple in his hometown.

Painted Album by Nishi Seiun is a dual-sided folding album titled Yoshin 養神 (Spritual Cultivation), mounted with 100 tanzaku-form (poem paper) colorful sketches in ink and color on paper, painted in the style of the artist Qi Baishi, consisting mainly of flowers, poems, birds and landscapes of China, including Choko (The Yangtze River), spring wind, a radish and red peppers, lotus flowers and a fisherman on a boat, all signed Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 / Shanhai Nishi Seiun 上海西晴雲 / Shanhai Hekiso Nishi Seiun 上海碧莊西晴雲 except for one, all with a seal Seiun 晴雲, majority signed with a second seal Tozan 東山; with brocade-covered outer cover.



Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 (1881-1963) | Painted Album

Early 20th century | Ink and color on paper | Each page 15.5 x 7.125 in. (39.37 x 18.1 cm) | 100 slips, each slip approx. 14.25 x 2.375 in. (36.2 x 6 cm)



CHINA
2000
FINE
ART

PRESS RELEASE



Nishi Seiun 西晴雲 (1881-1963) | Painted Album (details)

Yasuda Rozan 安田老山 (1830-1883) was born in Mino, Japan. Yasuda Rozan did not adopt his father's medical career and instead traveled to Nagasaki to study literati painting under Hidaka Tetsuo 日高鉄翁 (1791-1871) and Xu Yuting 徐雨亭 (1824-?). Disguised as a Chinese merchant, he traveled to Shanghai in early 1867, becoming one of the first Japanese artists to study art techniques in China, a dangerous undertaking since he could have been executed for defying the exclusionary policies of Shogunate rule. In Shanghai, he committed himself to his studies with Hu Gongshou 胡公壽 (1823-1886), soon becoming his top disciple. After six years of study, Rozan returned to Japan in 1873 (Meiji 6) where he achieved almost instantaneous acclaim and wealth in Tokyo as one of the most important painters of the early Meiji period, even requested to paint in front of the Meiji emperor. After his early death in 1883, at the age of 53, his reputation



CHINA
2000
FINE
ART

PRESS RELEASE

eventually diminished due to the nationalistic fervor beginning to permeate Japanese society in the Taisho and early Showa eras. His works were criticized for their 'contemporary Chinese style' partially derived from the Shanghai school (Haipai) with its bold, casual quality. Still a figure of controversy, Rozan's paintings have recently been the subject of reassessment by numerous scholars of Japanese literati painting in Japan and the West.



Yasuda Rozan 安田老山 (1830-1883) | Taihu Stone

1880 | Ink on silk | Large hanging scroll 84.25 x 70.5 in. (214 x 179 cm) with Zitan scroll ends | Signed with four artist seals



CHINA
2000
FINE
ART

PRESS RELEASE

Inscription

Chinese poem by the Tang dynasty literati Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) entitled *In reply to Chancellor Sian (Niu Sengru 牛僧孺, 779-848)'s Twenty Rhymes composed for the strange and unequaled Taihu rock sent by Li Suzhou (Li Daoshu 李道樞)*. Presented to Mengde (Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫, 772-842) as well, followed by a Chinese colophon – *Painted in the late autumn of gengchen year (1880), with the poetic intention of Bai Letian (Bai Juyi), and in the fourth hour written under the southern window of hanxuelou (House of Containing Snow) for the elegant enjoyment of Wusanweng.* (庚辰晚秋做白樂天詩意於四時含雪樓之南窗下寫。五三翁大雅之賞。老山安養)

Signed Rozan An Yo [Chinese: Loshan An Yang 老山安養], with four seals:
[two in Japanese] Nihon Yasu Rozan shoga no in (Japan Yasu Rozan book and painting seal 日本安老山書畫之印), Banri-o (courtesy name 萬里翁),
[two in Chinese] *Yun shan wo shi* (cloud and mountain are my teachers 云山我師),
Ting che zuo ai feng lin wan, shuang ye hong yu er yue hua (I stop my carriage and sit in appreciation of the maple grove in twilight; the frost-covered leaves are redder than the spring flowers. 停車坐愛楓林晚，霜葉紅於二月花。 - Two verses excerpted from a poem written by Tang dynasty poet Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852)

Literature

Paul Berry, "The Meeting of Chinese and Japanese Literati: Hu Gongshou, Yasuda Rozan, and the Controversy over National Style," in *Literati Modern Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan: The Terry Welch at the Honolulu Academy of Arts*, by Paul Berry and Michiyo Morioka (Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008), pp. 16-27.

Joshua A. Fogel, "Lust for Still Life: Chinese Painters in Japan and Japanese Painters in China in the 1860s and 1870s," in *Acquisition: Art and Ownership in Edo-Period Japan*, edited by Elizabeth Lillehoj (Warren, CT.: Floating World Editions, Inc., 2007), pp. 149-168.

Museum Collections

Indianapolis Museum of Art
Honolulu Museum of Art

The poem by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) in the inscription:

《奉和思黯相公以李蘇州所寄太湖石奇狀絕倫因題二十韻見示，兼呈夢得》
錯落復崔嵬，蒼然玉一堆。峰駢仙掌出，罅坼劍門開。
峭頂高危矣，盤根下壯哉。精神欺竹樹，氣色壓亭台。
隱起磷磷狀，凝成瑟瑟胚。廉棱露鋒刃，清越扣瓊瑰。
岌嶸形將動，巍峨勢欲摧。奇應潛鬼怪，靈合蓄雲雷。
黛潤沾新雨，斑明點古苔。未曾棲鳥雀，不肯染塵埃。
尖削琅玕筍，窪剜瑪瑙壘。海神移碣石，畫障簇天臺。
在世為尤物，如人負逸才。渡江一葦載，入洛五丁推。
出處雖無意，升沉亦有媒。拔從水府底，置向相庭隈。



CHINA
2000
FINE
ART

PRESS RELEASE

對稱吟詩句，看宜把酒杯。終隨金礪用，不學玉山頹。
疏傅心偏愛，園公眼屢回。共嗟無此分，虛管太湖來。

Title: *In reply to Chancellor Sian (Niu Sengru 牛僧孺, 779-848)'s Twenty Rhymes composed for the strange and unequalled Taihu rock sent by Li Suzhou (Li Daoshu 李道樞). Presented to Mengde (Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫, 772-842) as well.*

Rugged, precipitous, it's a heap of greyish jade.
The crests emerge like the Immortal Palm; the crevices resemble the Sword-split Pass.
The peak is steep; the root is robust.
The bamboo-like essence shines; the semblance refined as a pavilion.
Conceals a gleaming appearance; condenses a jewel-like embryo.
The sharpness of edges in tune with a precious gemstone.
The towering block seems about to move, with an overwhelming momentum.
It is as peculiar as if it holds spirits of the occult, and as divine as if it harbors the god of cloud and thunder.
Inky as it is moistened by the new rain; variegated as it is glittered with the ancient moss.
Never has it been a perch of birds. It refrains from being tarnished by secular dust.
Tips are pointed as jade bamboo shoots; pits are deep as amber wine jars.
The god of the sea moves away the splendid rocks. While, as beautiful as the painted screen, some are amassed for the governor.
Existing as a rare creature, it compares to the scholar.
Shipped on a small boat and then hauled to Luoyang by the legendary Five Warriors.
Although there is no intention of where it will be, its rise and fall was conducted (by Li Suzhou)¹.
Uprooted from the bottom of the water mansion, it is then placed at the meandering courtyard of the Chancellor.
It prompts one to recite a poem, and raise a wine glass.
Finally, it settles down with the right lord, and does not become a fallen jade mountain.
*Shufu*² would be fond of it; *Yuangong*³ would not withdraw his glance from it.
Alas, we both do not have the luck to have it, although we⁴ once worked in Taihu.

Note:

When Chancellor Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779-848), was appointed to work at Luoyang, he received a Taihu rock from the Suzhou prefectural governor Li Daoshu. Niu invited poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and poet Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) to view the rock, and he also wrote a Twenty Rhymes poem about the rock to share with Bai and Liu. Later Both poets wrote a poem in reply to Niu's.

¹ Li Suzhou, aka Li Daoshu, the Suzhou prefectural governor during that time. He sent the Taihu Rock from Suzhou to Luoyang and presented it to the Chancellor Niu Sengru, a scholar rock aficionado.

² *Shu Guang* and *Shu Shou*, grand tutors at the Western Han court, they both chose to retire from fame and success.

³ A famous late Qin and early Han dynasty hermit, who was secluded in a village near Suzhou.

⁴ We means Bai Juyi, the poet himself and Liu Yuxi (772-842); each was once the prefectural governor of Suzhou.



CHINA
2000
FINE
ART

PRESS RELEASE

Seals

