



TITLE: *Untitled*  
 ARTIST: Jun-Hwa, Chinese  
 DATE: Unknown  
 SIZE: 9 x 10 inches  
 MEDIUM: Prints on rice paper held in a folding paper storage box  
 ACQUISITION: 88.1.49.2a – 88.1.49.2e  
 Additional works in the collection by the artist? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Unknown x



### Description:

This object consists of five Chinese prints on rice paper encased in a paper box with a folding page-like cover. The prints are of birds accompanied by various foliage. This is a common subject of Chinese printmaking. The box is adorned with Chinese calligraphy and a repeating sayagata pattern.

### Chinese Printmaking:

The origins of printmaking in East Asia can be traced back to the Han dynasty in China, specifically to 593 AD, which is the date of the first known mention of the art form. Woodblock printing subsequently spread to Japan and Korea. The two main types of printing in the Chinese tradition are woodblock printing and movable-type printing.

The woodblock printing process involves a carved and inked wooden board, which is pressed onto paper to produce an image. The movable type form of printmaking utilizes previously manufactured lettertypes, which are assembled onto a wooden board and then printed. Initially these lettertypes were made of wood and ceramics, but by the 12th century, metal movable type became prominent.

### Bird-and-Flower Painting:

The bird-and-flower subject is one of three main subjects, along with landscapes and figures, that comprise much of traditional Chinese painting. Early Chinese painting is characterized by a preoccupation with flora, fauna, and wildlife.

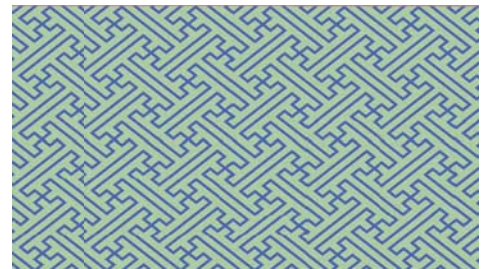
The subject persisted and evolved through the centuries, reflecting many paradigms of stylistic convention: from Huang Quan (903-965), who is credited with developing the early naturalistic style, or *xiesheng*, to Shen Zhou (1427-1509) of the Wu School of painting, which emphasized the role of the literati or the Chinese scholar-painter concerned with the pursuit of knowledge and expressivity over literal representation, and 20<sup>th</sup> century painters like Gao Jianfu (1879-1951) and Gao Oifeng (1889-1933), who fused Japanese and western influence into the “New National Painting” movement.



Top: Bird-and-flower painting on rice paper  
 Center: Box with calligraphy and *sayagata* pattern  
 Bottom: Open box with prints

### Sayagata Pattern Symbolizing Eternity:

*Sayagata* is a traditional repeating pattern of interlocking *manji* or *swastika*, which originated in Indian architecture. It is found in Chinese decorative art and textiles, and in Japanese kimonos. The individual *manji* symbol is found in Sanskrit, Chinese script, and the written languages of other East Asian cultures. More specifically, it is found at the beginning of many Buddhist scriptures. It is also sometimes used to notate the number 10,000, which is associated with the “myriad of things,” or the whole of creation. The pattern, which is comprised of multiple interlocking *manji*, connotes the Buddhist virtue of strength, good fortune, and the concept of eternity. The geometric balance and repetition of the *sayagata* pattern signifies “the inseparability of the one and the many, continuity and multiplicity.”



### Chinese Calligraphy:

The term “calligraphy” is derived from the Greek *kallos* and *graphein*, which translate to “beauty” and “write” respectively. In China, it is commonly referred to as *shūfǎ*, which means “the principle of writing.” In Chinese art, calligraphy is often used as an aesthetic end, as a stand-alone art object, the beauty of the writing deemed substantial enough without the need for any other graphic supplement. Chinese calligraphers seek to express the dynamism of life with their gestures. They aim to cultivate the humanistic character, or the *rén pǐn* of the artist.

### References:

- <http://www.immortalgeisha.com/wiki/index.php?title=Sayagata>
  - [http://www.druckstelle.info/en/holzschnitt\\_china.aspx](http://www.druckstelle.info/en/holzschnitt_china.aspx)
  - <http://www.chinaonlinemuseum.com/painting-birds.php>
  - <https://eaa.fas.harvard.edu/contemplating-nature-chinese-and-korean-bird-and-flower-paintings>
  - <http://www.comuseum.com/painting/schools/literati-painting/>
  - <http://www.cncultural.com/2014/05/chinese-bird-painting.html>
  - <http://asiasociety.org/education/chinese-calligraphy>
  - [http://www.druckstelle.info/en/holzschnitt\\_china.aspx](http://www.druckstelle.info/en/holzschnitt_china.aspx)
- Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation by Roger Ames, David Hall

Completed Fall 2017 by James Oliveros

## K-5 Lesson Plan: Nature Print Box

### Time to Complete: 1-2 Class Periods

**Session Objectives:** Early Chinese bird and flower paintings were primarily decorative naturalistic reflections of the world rather than complex symbols designed to represent specific ideas and traits. Other animals and plants, such as insects and bamboo, were also used in these paintings. Students will be able to create their own naturalistic works of art using a variety of plant and animal species, which they will then store in a patterned box like the one used to store these bird and flower prints.

**Materials:** Flash cards with names and images of different animals and plants, square paper (8x8 inches), 2D medium of choice (markers, crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, etc.), clear tape, a shallow box (at least 8.25x8.25x1.5 inches), and a repeating nature design (printed or on wrapping paper).

**Activity Procedure:** Wrap a shallow box with a repeating nature pattern (e.g. leaves or waves). Prepare two stacks of flash cards: one of animals (e.g. dragonfly, cardinal, etc.) and one of plants (e.g. bamboo, rose, etc.). Students will randomly draw one animal card and one plant card. They will then each use a medium of choice (crayons, markers, colored pencils, watercolors, etc.) to create an artwork of that animal and plant on a square piece of paper. The completed pieces of art can be stacked and stored in the decorated box, or may optionally be taped together into a “quilt” and folded for storage in the box.

### Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (K-5)

**Big Idea: SKILLS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCESSES**

**Enduring Understanding 2:** Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and sequence information.

**VA.3.S.2.2:** Follow procedures, focusing on the art-making process.

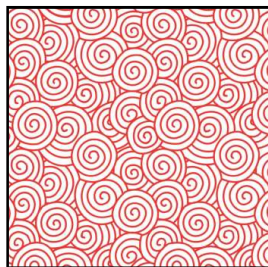
**Enduring Understanding 3:** Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

**VA.3.S.3.1:** Use materials, tools, and processes to achieve an intended result in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.



Left: Swallows often represent spring, success, and happiness. Plum blossoms can symbolize perseverance and virtue.

Right: A red repeating cloud pattern traditionally symbolizes good fortune, success, and holiness.



### Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (6-12)

**Big Idea: CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTION**

**Enduring Understanding 1:** Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

**VA.912.C.1.4:** Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

**Big Idea: HISTORICAL AND GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

**Enduring Understanding 2:** The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

**VA.912.H.2.6:** Analyze artistic trends to explain the rationale for creating personal adornment, visual culture, and/or design.

## 6-12 Lesson Plan: Interpreting Patterns, Symbols, and Meaning in Chinese Art

### Time to Complete: 1-2 Class Periods

**Session Objectives:** Students will be able to conduct research on the meanings and symbolism of repeating patterns, animals, and plants within traditional Chinese art. They will be able to choose designs and symbols they feel best represent themselves. They will integrate these designs and symbols into their own work using traditional Chinese media (e.g. brush and ink or watercolor on rice paper).

**Materials:** Computers with internet access, square sheets of rice paper (8x8 inches), 2D traditional medium of choice (watercolor, ink and brush, linoleum or styrofoam stamps, etc.), clear tape, a shallow box (at least 8.25x8.25x1.5 inches), and a printed repeating design.

**Activity Procedure:** Students will research the meaning of traditional Chinese repeating patterns and the symbolism of different animals and plants in Chinese paintings and prints. The class will collectively decide on a pattern that symbolizes a concept they feel is important to them, such as eternity or good fortune. This pattern will then be printed and used to wrap a shallow cardboard box. Students will individually decide on single animals and single plants they feel best represent themselves (e.g. an oriole for musical ability and joy and a willow branch for adaptability) and choose from traditional Chinese media (watercolor, ink and brush, or stamps) to make pieces of art of their chosen plants and animals on rice paper. Once dry, the students' works can be stacked and stored together in the box.

**Suggestion for Art History Educators:** There is no direct information available on this series of prints, the artist who made them, or even the time period in which they were made. Ask students ways in which they might find out more about a particular object's meaning, purpose, and context if no specific information is readily available. What components would they research (pattern meanings, symbols, medium, etc.)? How could they connect that information to contextualize the artist and work within broader practices?