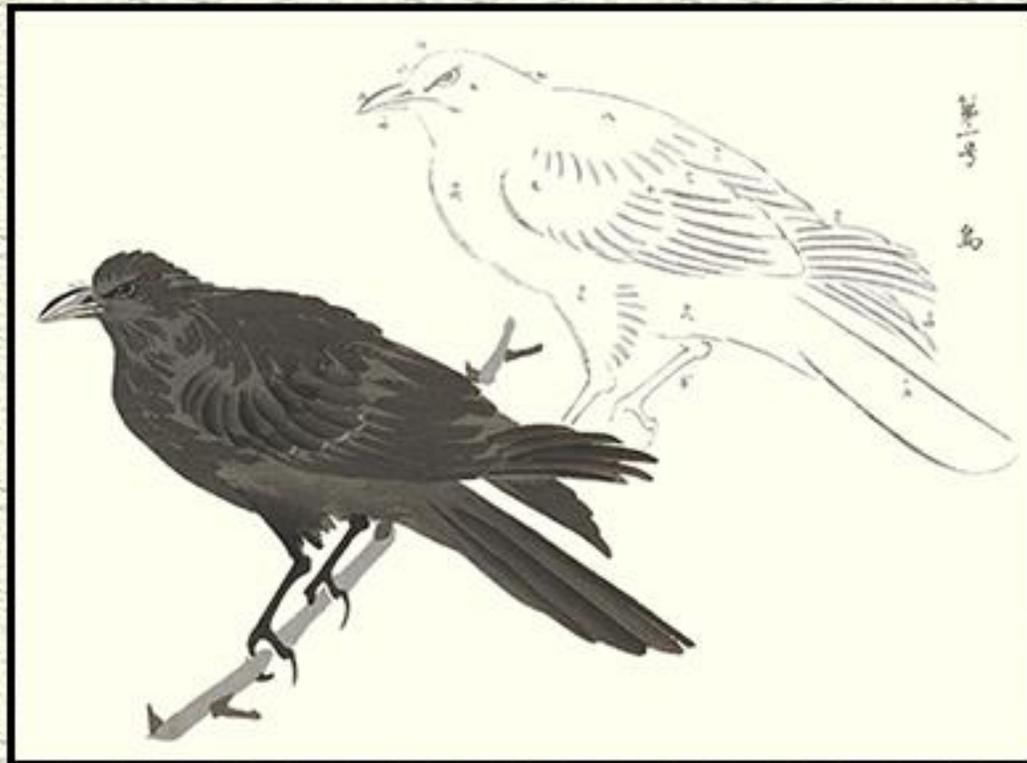


NIHONGA - STYLE COPY BOOKS



LARGE - BILLED CROW (CORVUS MACRORHYNCHOS) BY KANPO ARAKI
INCLUDED IN MŌHITSU ETEHON (PRACTICE BOOK OF BRUSH PAINTING)

Introduction

Starting in the late 1800s Japan underwent a remarkable transformation from a feudal country modelled on China into an industrial nation modelled on European countries. This transformation affected Japanese art in two ways; first, the way in which art was taught and second, the style used by most artists.

Art became a subject taught in academic institutions instead of being taught by individual artists to whom students were apprenticed. This new method of teaching required copy books which students could use to improve their drawing skills. Students would either copy the pictures in a book by tracing or by using pictures as models. The complexity of the pictures they copied varied. The least complex pictures included only a single object (e.g., a single flower or bird) while the most complex pictures included multiple objects (e.g. a flower and bird) plus a background of water and (or) earth. This variation in complexity presumably made a book suitable for both beginning and more advanced students.

The style used by copy book authors to draw pictures blended European realism with Chinese idealism. The word Nihonga (i.e., Japanese picture) is now used to describe this style. Objects were drawn in a mostly true-to-life way (i.e., with accurate shapes and colors). However, features of some objects could be exaggerated and (or) drawn using only shades of gray in the style of Chinese artists whose aim was to reveal an object's inner spirit rather than its external form and color. The more true-to-life features of objects in a picture reflected the influence of European art.

This exhibition includes pictures from eleven Nihonga-style copy books published in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These woodblock-printed books are part of the Reader Collection of Japanese Flower and Bird Art. Two pictures were chosen from each book – one of a flower and the other of a bird. The order in which pictures from the eleven copy books are arranged below is based on the amount of realism used by a book's author to draw flowers and birds, starting with the most realistic pictures.

1 **Mōhitsu Etehon** (i.e., Practice Book of Brush Painting) by Kanpo Araki, published in 1897

Top picture – balloon flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)

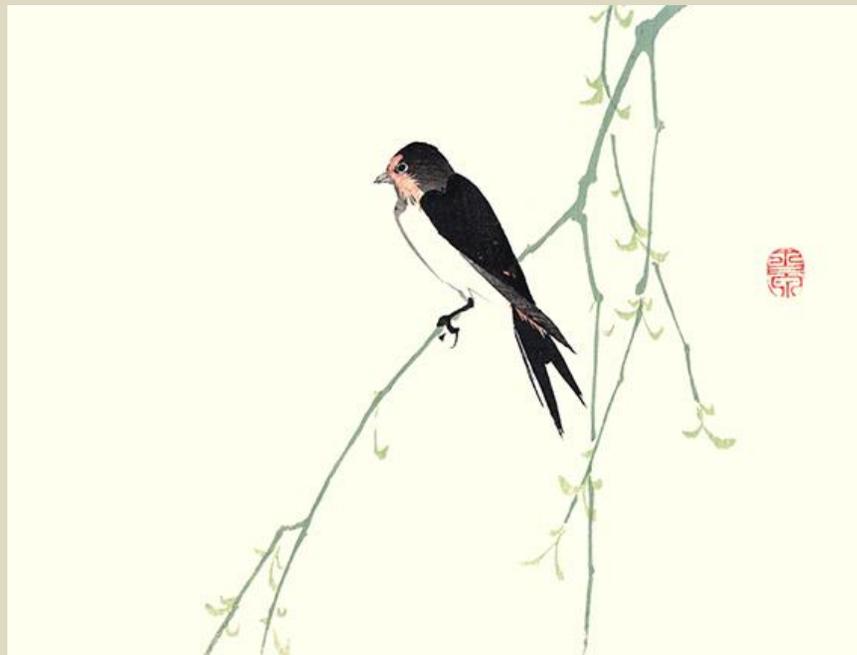
Bottom picture – cherry (*Prunus* sp.) and green pheasant (*Phasianus versicolor*)



2 **Gyokusen Shūgachō** (i.e., Picture Lessons by Gyokusen) by Gyokusen Mochizuki, published in 1891

Top picture – cherry (*Prunus* sp.)

Bottom picture – barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)



3 **Joshi Mōhitsu Gajō** (i.e., Girl's Album of Brush Painting) by Jippo Araki, published in 1902-1909

Top picture – dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.)

Bottom picture – red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*)



4 **Gyokushū Shūgachō** (i.e., Picture Lessons by Gyokushū) by Gyokushū Fujii, published in 1906

Top picture – florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*)

Bottom picture – blue-and-white flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*)



5 **Kōtō Mōhitsuga** (i.e., High Class Brush Paintings) by Seizan Shiga, published in 1901

Top picture – rape (*Brassica napus*)

Bottom picture – plum (*Prunus mume*) and Japanese bush-warbler (*Cettia diphone*)



6 **Shūga Hyakudai** (i.e., One Hundred Subjects for Lessons in Painting) by Gyokushō Kawabata, published in 1898

Top picture – Japanese morning glory (*Ipomoea nil*)

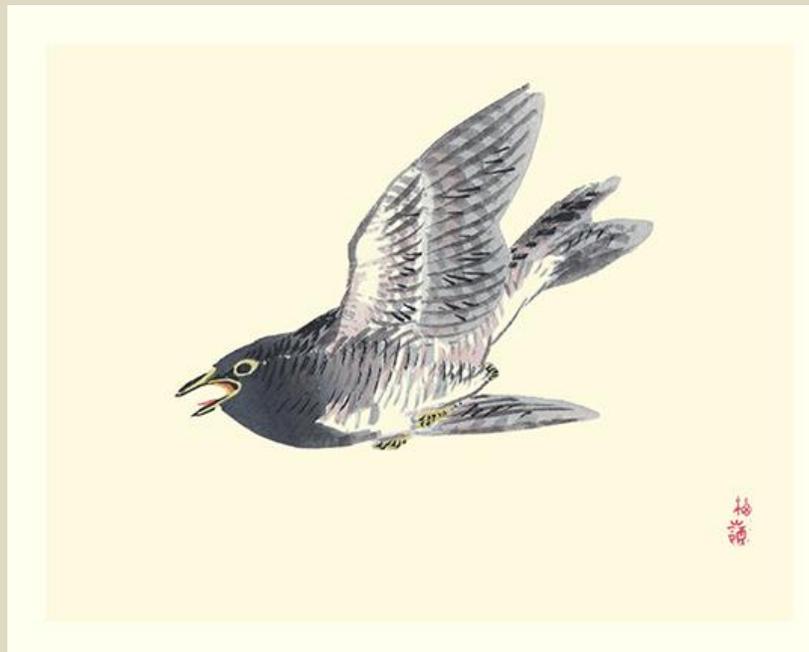
Bottom picture – varied tit (*Sittiparus varius*)



7 **Bairei Gakan** (i.e., Bairei's Drawing Methods) by Bairei Kōno, published in 1913

Top picture – showy Japanese lily (*Lilium speciosum*)

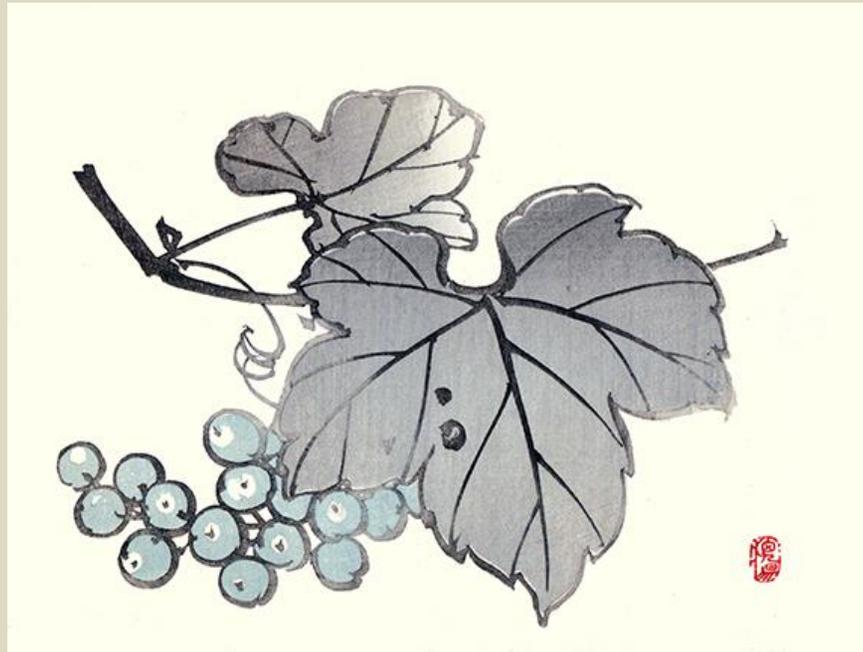
Bottom picture – lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*)



8 **Seihō Shūgachō** (i.e., Picture Lessons by Seihō), by Seihō Takeuchi, published in 1901

Top picture – grape (*Vitis vinifera*)

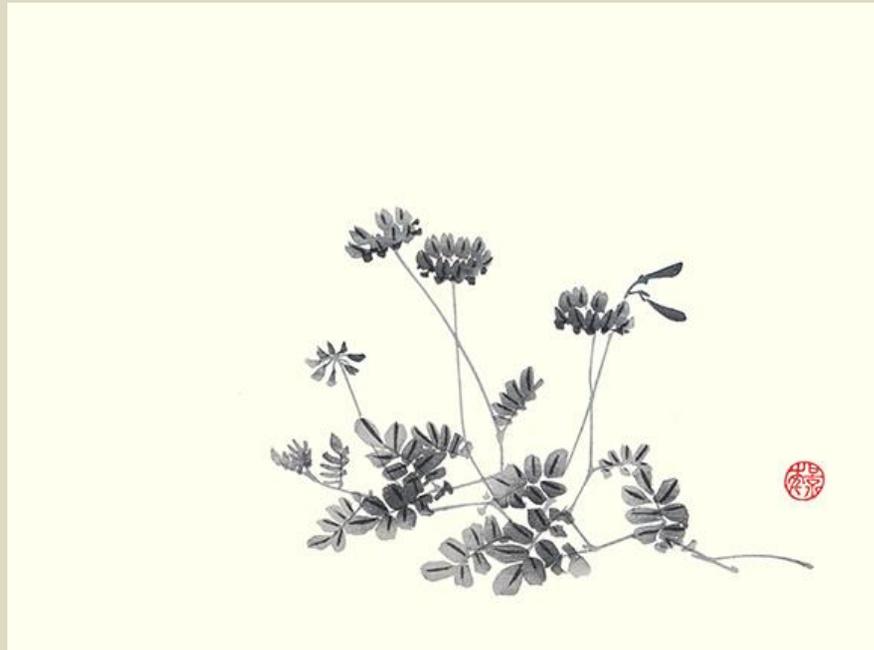
Bottom picture – Eurasian tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*)



9 **Keinen Shūgachō** (i.e., Picture Lessons by Keinen) by Keinen Imao, published in 1906

Top picture – Chinese milk-vetch (*Astragalus sinicus*)

Bottom picture – mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*)



10 **Chūto Mōhitsu Gajō** (i.e., Drawing Book of Brush Paintings for Secondary Grades) by Gahō Hashimoto, published in 1902

Top picture – shallow-flower (*Iris laevigata*)

Bottom picture – willow tit (*Poecile montanus*)



11 **Chūtō Nihon Rin Gajō** (i.e., Picture Album of the Japanese Approach for Secondary Grades) by Akira Shirahama, published in 1898

Top picture – pheasant's eye (*Adonis amurensis*)

Bottom picture – gray wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)



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