**Chinese-style Paulownia Chests with a Design of Phoenixes and Karakusa in *Makie* Lacquer (*Kiri hoomon makie karabitsu and Kiri karakusamon makie karabitsu*)**

These extremely decorative chests were used to store Hideyoshi’s (1537–1598) personal effects, and they clearly display his extravagant artistic preferences. The decoration is an example of the technique known as *hira makie* (also called *Kodaiji makie*), in which gold and silver powder is sprinkled over and embedded in black lacquer. Footed chests are called *karabitsu* in Japanese, meaning “Chinese-style chest,” and are distinguished from those without feet, which sit flush on the ground.

The design of phoenixes and paulownia is an auspicious pairing related to a belief that phoenixes who consume paulownia fruit will appear when a leader emerges who will unite the realm. This motif is particularly fitting for Hideyoshi, whose family crest featured an image of a paulownia. These two chests, and a third companion chest in the collection of Kyoto National Museum, have been designated Important Cultural Properties. The contents formerly kept in these chests are listed in a catalog and provide us with a good sense of the objects Hideyoshi used in everyday life. The chest with the scrolling floral design known as *karakusamon* is thought to have been used by Hideyoshi himself.