

## **【Japanese Paintings】**

Like many of Japan's traditional art forms, such as *gagaku* and tea ceremony, painting was heavily influenced by Chinese culture at its inception. In addition to hand scrolls, interior furnishings like folding screens, hanging scrolls, and the sliding panels (*fusuma*) that divide the rooms of a traditional residence were often decorated with paintings that today are viewed as artworks. Because the medium (paper or silk) for these images was the same, it was not uncommon for them to be shifted from one form of display to another. Paper from a sliding door could be cut out and transferred to a folding screen, and if a hand scroll became damaged, a portion could be cut out and hung on the wall. Traditional Japanese paper and ink can survive for centuries if properly maintained, and so art was regularly moved or repurposed.

For centuries, paintings drew mostly from religious themes and scenes for their content, but beginning at the end of the Muromachi period (1336–1573), scenes depicting everyday life became common as well. The changing seasons are a common motif in Japanese art, and in the case of large-scale artworks, such as on a folding screen, the passing of the seasons is shown from right to left. Just like a hand scroll, these artworks can be “read” by scanning the eyes across them.

## **Ii Family Collection**

As indicators of their status, the families of the shogunate and daimyo were expected to collect and display fine artworks (*karamono*) imported from the Asian mainland, and it was common for noble families to commission these pieces themselves. The Ii family employed painters mostly from the Kano school, which was also favored by the shogunate, to create works for their residences.