

***Maki-e* Bookstand with Wakanoura Scenery**

This seventeenth-century lacquered bookstand is lavishly decorated with *maki-e*—a decorative technique in which metallic powders, such as gold dust, are applied to soft lacquer. It is attributed to Shimizu Kuhei (?–1688), one of the fathers of Kanazawa lacquerware and a master of *maki-e*.

Shimizu was born in Edo (present-day Tokyo) and learned his craft there. He moved to Kaga domain (now Ishikawa and Toyama Prefectures) in the early seventeenth century at the invitation of the lord of Kaga, Maeda Toshitsune (1593–1658). Under the patronage of the wealthy Maedas, lacquerware techniques flourished in Kaga.

Looking closely at the scene, one can see that some elements stand out in relief, creating a textured, three-dimensional effect. This is achieved with a technique called *shishiai togidashi maki-e*, a combination of *togidashi* (burnished) and *taka* (raised) *maki-e*. Other techniques associated with Kanazawa lacquerware, such as gold and silver *kirikane* (the application of cut metal shapes as opposed to powders), were also used.

The image on the bookstand is of Wakanoura Bay in Wakayama Prefecture. It references a tanka poem that appears in an eighth-century poetry collection called the *Man'yōshū*:

Wakanoura ni
shio michi kureba
kata wo nami
ashihe wo sashite
tazu naki wataru

When the tide comes in
at Wakanoura Bay
and the tideland is submerged
the cranes cry out overhead
and wheel toward the reedy shore.

The bookstand was designated an Important Cultural Property in 1998.