

*For Immediate Release*

*February 18, 2003*

Contact: *Benedetta Roux*

*212.636.2680*

[broux@christies.com](mailto:broux@christies.com)

***DIVINITY AND HUMANITY: KOREAN BRONZE AND JAPANESE PRINTS  
HIGHLIGHT JAPANESE AND KOREAN ART SALE***

*Japanese and Korean Art ~ An Important Collection of Japanese Prints  
March 24 & March 25*

*New York – The first two days of Asian Art sales at Christie’s will be totally dedicated to Japanese and Korean art. The traditional sale presenting works of art, paintings, ceramics and bronzes from Japan and Korea will open the series of Asian auctions on March 24. The next day will bring a very desirable collection of Japanese prints to the market including several iconic images by highly sought after printmakers such as Hiroshige, Hokusai, Harunobu, Sadahide and Shinsui.*

*Japanese Art*

*A selection of screens is among the highlights of the Japanese segment of the sale. The most important one is a pair of six-panel screens representing the twelve months of the year. It was painted by Uemura Shoen (1875–1949) and bears a date of ‘early summer 1897’ (estimate: \$400,000–500,000). A second beautiful example of the screen making art is a pair of six-panel-screens representing the ‘Battle of Ichinotani’ from the Tale of Heike (\$120,000–180,000). In an ambitious and grand manner, an anonymous artist depicted here the famous 1185 battle between the Taira and the Minamoto. This battle, placed in a somewhat romantic aura, became the model for 17<sup>th</sup> century samurai for articulating their ideal code of conduct.*

*A group of Hasui prints will also be featured. Hasui was reputed for his scenes of everyday life, which he executed in a sophisticated yet simple manner. Some of the prints coming up are pre-earthquake (pre 1923), which makes them particularly desirable for collectors.*

*A small but beautiful selection of lacquer ware also graces the sale. Highlight of the lacquer section is a set of a matching writing and document box from the Edo period, designed with motifs from The Tale of Genji (\$80,000-120,000).*

*Ceramics has become a two-winged area – with both classic and modern pieces appearing at auction. The classic ceramics section features a rare early Nabeshima footed dish from the Edo period (17<sup>th</sup> century) (estimate: \$50,000-70,000). Modern ceramics artists – often gently borrowing from the old sources – include Yagi Akira and Koike Shoko.*

*A group of paintings will also be featured, headed by Kayama Matazo's Flock of birds in a winter forest (estimate: \$50,000-70,000).*

#### *Korean Art*

*Absolutely astounding is the gilt-bronze figure of a seated Maitreya, Three Kingdoms period, Paekche Kingdom (7<sup>th</sup> century) (estimate: \$1,200,000-1,800,000). Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, is seated in a posture of contemplation. This 7<sup>th</sup> century statue is considered a masterpiece of Korea's Three Kingdoms period and it goes without saying that it is exceedingly rare to find a piece of this caliber on the market. The Paekche origin of this example is revealed by features such as the tying of the waist belt with butterfly knots, the style of the lotus flower used as a footrest and the palpable energy of the slightly bent fingers.*

*A second splendid highlight of the Korean session is a rare Punch'ong bottle from the Choson period (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century) (estimate: \$500,000-600,000). Modeled in the form of a rice bale and decorated in a vigorous and quite modern-looking manner, this Punch'ong bottle is another exquisite example of the timelessness so often encountered in Korean ceramics. The decorations show concentric circles and curving vines in underglaze-iron and the whole is covered with a transparent glaze of high luster.*

*From the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Koryo dynasty) dates a hanging scroll representing the Hwaom Pure Land (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). It is an especially rare visualization of the Hwaom Pure Land, a synthesis of the Avatamsaka school of Buddhism and the Pure Land of the Buddha Amithaba. Depicted are fifty-two buddhas, individualized by their postures and gestures, descending on clouds, set against a backdrop of thin horizontal bands of white clouds suggesting distant space.*

*Other paintings include a fascinating series of 50 paintings on silk by Kim Junkeun (estimate: \$50,000-70,000). He was famous for depicting Korean popular culture and the activities represented here include 'Playing a game' and 'Spinning'.*

*Also offered will be Han il (Leisure Time) by Park Sookeun, Korea's most important modern painter (estimate: \$250,000–300,000). The picture depicts a scene in which five men in traditional Korean dress are seated around a chess-board in intense concentration.*

#### *An Important Collection of Japanese Prints*

*Assembled for over more than thirty years, the collection Christie's is offering this season can easily be described as every collector's dream. Many of them have been off the market for decades and their reappearance will certainly ravish many a collector. The passionate collector who was the driving force behind this beguiling group of prints had a fantastic eye and often succeeded in acquiring iconic images that were and are highly coveted. This sale's top-lot is Utagawa Hiroshige's Fireworks, Ryogoku, part of the series One Hundred Views of Famous Places of Edo (estimate: \$70,000–90,000), undoubtedly one of the most famous groups of works in the whole tradition of Japanese printmaking. The halo of light appearing around the fireworks reveals this print to be a first edition and this feature is enhanced by the wonderful wood grain showing in the sky and the three-color cartouche, two elements that point to an early impression. Other delightful images are Courtesan with two kamuro by Suzuki Harunobu (estimate: \$20,000–30,000); Katsushika Hokusai's The Hundred Poems as Explained by the Nurse (estimate: \$10,000–15,000) and an oversized print of the warm-up for a match between two wrestlers by Katsukawa Shunko (estimate: \$25,000–35,000). Also included are several of Utagawa Kunisada's impressive okubi-e or large-head-portraits of famous actors.*

*Auction: Japanese and Korean Art*

*March 24 at 1.30 p.m.*

*An Important Collection of Japanese Prints*

*March 25 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.*

*Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center*

*March 20 – 24*

*More information about Christie's sale of Japanese and Korean Art and An Important Collection of Japanese Prints can be found on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.*

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*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*