

KORIN Ogata. 1658-1716. Unquestionably one of the most eccentric, brilliant, and original artists as well as the best-known impressionist of the 17th century in Japan, he was born in Kyoto into a family of cultured and artistic background. His great-grandmother was a sister of Koetsu; his grandfather worked for the shogun Ashikaga Yoshiteru; his father Soken was a silk weaver in one of the imperial factories and was also a noted painter of the Koetsu school; and his younger brother Kenzan was a talented artist and an expert potter.

Korin became interested in painting when he was young and studied under Yamamoto Sotei. Later he moved to Edo, where he studied under Kano Tsunenobu and still later under the masters of the Tosa school. He was also greatly influenced by the styles of Sotatsu and Koetsu, whom he admired. In his paintings he displays freedom and originality. His brush strokes are firm and bold; his colors are usually brilliant but in perfect harmony. His works are impressionistic. He loved to paint animals and flowers and was particularly fond of the iris and the chrysanthemum, which we often find depicted in his paintings.

Korin's artistic interests lay in many directions, for not only was he an excellent painter but he was also well versed in the complexities of the tea ceremony and was a miniature-landscape gardener, a gifted potter, a talented designer, and, of course, a master lacquerer. Perhaps one of the most important reasons for the originality of Korin's work was the fact that, unlike most of his contemporaries in art, Korin was not under the patronage of any shogun. Therefore he was free to develop his artistic tastes as he desired instead of being required to manufacture art objects in accordance with the tastes and traditions admired by his sponsors.

Korin's style is one of great freedom, boldness of conception, and