

Kano Eitoku, Japan
by GREG BALAGIAN

Kano Eitoku, formerly Kano Kuninobu (1543 - 1590), was the fifth-generation offspring of the famous Kano family of Japanese artists who created the Kano style of screen paintings of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1574-1600).

Kano Eitoku contributed the “monumental style” (*taiga*) “characterized by bold, rapid brushwork, an emphasis on foreground, and motifs that are large relative to the pictorial space.” *

He also introduced a ground gold-leaf pigment consisting of using brighter colors and making heavier black-ink outlines. His most favorite motifs were large-scale images of nature—birds, animals, trees, flowers, rocks — which he executed on large folding screens (*byobu*) and sliding panels (*fusuma*) used to decorate the interiors of castles and temples.

As the leading artist of the period, he was commissioned to paint for the military rulers Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. He influenced many artists of his time, including his sons Mitsunobu and Takanobu and his son-in-law Sanraku.



Chinese Lions (1580-85) by Kano Eitoku

Among the few original Eitoku paintings which survived are *Chinese Lions* (1580-85) on a six-paneled folding screen which is part of the Imperial Household Collection.

The lions seem angry and are dangerously near the precipice of a steep cliff. Their coats are rich in colors and textures.

In 2016, Sierra Leone issued two miniature sheets depicting various Japanese paintings. One sheet shows a detail from the illustrious *Chinese Lions* by this famous Japanese artist.

The stamp has an inscription error as it lists the name of Eitoku’s painting as “*Chinese Guardian Lions*”.

Eitoku was a popular and much sought-after artist of his time.🐾

art blog: <https://silverandexact.com>

*Britannica

Sierra Leone issued a large set of paintings of various genres in 2016. A detail from Kano Eitoku’s *Chinese Lions* is on Japanese Paintings (Scott 3823c). The Mew Listing is on page 38.

