

modification, interpretation, and recoding of cultural artifacts. Without a doubt, this knowledge is not definitive. And yet it is very important to record the available results and to communicate them as widely as possible. This allows us to develop and maintain mutual understanding and a constructive dialog between cultures and, on a personal level, to develop the ability of (self-)reflection, understanding, and appreciation of that which is different.

The publication of this book is especially urgent today, during Russia's brutal full-scale war against Ukraine, aimed, among other things, at the destruction and plunder of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Spreading accurate information about Ukrainian museum collections is an effective tool to attract international attention and advocate for the support of their protection from pillage and illegal relocation.

The "Oriental Collection" of Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko

The history of the Khanenko Museum's Islamic and Asian collections—the history of the acquisition, research, preservation, and presentation of artworks—reflects the complex history of Ukraine and its culture, full of achievements and losses. This part of the museum's holdings is one of the oldest. Its foundation is the "oriental collection" of the museum's founders, Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko, prominent Ukrainian collectors of world art and antiquities, patrons of the arts, and founders of modern Ukrainian culture.

In 1874, Bohdan Khanenko, a descendant of an old Ukrainian noble family, married Varvara Tereshchenko, the eldest daughter of Nykola Tereshchenko, a successful Ukrainian industrialist and generous philanthropist. Both passionate about art and dreaming of their own art collection, Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko embarked on a search for rare artworks. In this early period, they were most focused on the fine arts of Western Europe and the antique classics. But later, the Khanenkos' interests and tastes diversified. Following the new trends in European cultural life, they discovered other civilizations, ideas, and forms of beauty and eventually decided to collect Islamic and Asian art. The Khanenkos' ultimate goal was to open a "universal museum" in Kyiv that would tell the history of art from around the world.



Bohdan Khanenko (1849–1917). Photo from the National Art Museum of Ukraine archive.



Varvara Khanenko (1852–1922). Photographic reproduction of the 1896 portrait by Oleksii Kobachuk. The Khanenko Museum Photo Archive.



"Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst" exhibition catalog, Munich, 1916. The Khanenko Museum Library

It was after 1910 that the Khanenko universal art holdings received the most valuable objects and collections of Islamic art: medieval Persian inlaid metalwork, pieces of elite ceramics and textiles, as well as arms and armor from the collections of Pyotr Charkovsky, the Bakrie brothers, and Mikhail Zaitsevsky. 1914 was especially successful, with the Khanenkos acquiring true rarities of Iranian ceramics of the 12th–14th centuries at a sale of the collection of Arthur Sambon, president of the Chamber of Art Experts in Paris. That same year, they bought a dozen precious Persian and Arabic miniatures and calligraphy folios



A page from the Arthur Sambon collection auction catalog with bowls purchased by the Khanenko family, 1914. The Khanenko Museum Library

of the 13th–17th centuries from the collection of Frederik Robert Martin, the famous Swedish connoisseur and collector of Islamic art. Old photographs of the Khanenkos' private gallery show that Islamic art was displayed in at least three of the main halls of the house on Tereshchenkivska Street.

Another key section of the Khanenkos' "oriental" collection was art of Eastern Asia. During the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Bohdan Khanenko served in Harbin (Northeast China) as a representative of the Red Cross mission and oversaw evacuating the wounded. It is very likely that after completing his military service, he brought the first items of what in the future would be the Chinese and Japanese collections.

In 1914, at the aforementioned Parisian auction of Arthur Sambon's collection, in addition to luxury Persian ceramics, the Khanenko family also acquired valuable Chinese paintings of the 16th–17th centuries. According to an article by the art historian Vsevolod Voinov in the first issue of Apollo in 1916, the Khanenkos' Chinese collection included pieces of terracotta burial sculpture, metal temple sculpture, and ritual tableware. Old photographs of the Khanenkos' mansion confirm this. Those photos, as well as Varvara Khanenko's letters preserved in the Institute of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine archives also attest to the presence of Chinese porcelain rarities in the Khanenkos' collection.

Japanophilia, a fascination with the culture and art of Japan, became a major trend of "oriental" collecting in Europe and Russia at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. The Khanenkos, driven by the idea of creating an encyclopedic museum of world arts in Kyiv, couldn't stand aside. Due to the loss of the family's archive, it is difficult to establish the exact time when the Khanenkos' valuable collection of



Miraj of Muhammad. A folio from a manuscript, Iran, 15th century. Acquired by the Khanenko family supposedly from the Frederik Robert Martin's Collection. The Khanenko Museum Photo Archive



A 13th–14th-century artist

Vishnu and Lakshmi on Garuda

India

Copper alloy

Height: 16 cm

Inv. number 565 ДВ

Provenance: probably, the Khanenkos' collection, 1919

Vishnu is one of the main deities of Hinduism, the ruler and preserver of the Universe. His wife Lakshmi is considered the goddess of spiritual and material prosperity.

Vishnu and Lakshmi are depicted in a relaxed regal pose: the left leg is tucked under and the right leg is lowered. Vishnu's head is decorated with a crown, and he holds a shell and a lotus. The divine couple is supported by the eagle Garuda, Vishnu's riding animal, the legendary leader of the heavenly army of birds that defeated the earthly army of *nagas*, serpent creatures. Garuda has no wings and often appears in artworks in human form. At the same time, Garuda's pose is canonical and symbolizes flight.

On the right hand of Vishnu, we see a young man holding a conch shell, an attribute of a god. A similar figure used to be on the other side of the group, but it has been lost. Below, on the front

part of the pedestal, are two small figures of donors.

The worn facial features and other details suggest that the sculpture was once part of a home altar. Believers anointed it with pastes and aromatic substances to worship Vishnu.

The graceful curves of the silhouettes and rounded shapes indicate that the artwork belongs to Indian medieval sculpture, the canon and style of which began to take shape in the 7th century AD. The history of the artwork's appearance on Ukrainian land dates to 1908. It was found in the soil near Poltava when a field was being plowed. The sculpture may have belonged to a merchant who lived in the Indian trading colony in Astrakhan in the 13th and 14th centuries. It was through the ports on the Caspian Sea that trade between the Rus principalities and Asian countries was conducted. ■■

Kanglings, Wind Musical Instruments

Tibet

18th-19th century

Copper alloy, carving, engraving, silvering

Length: 44 cm

2124 ДВ, 2125 ДВ

Provenance: bought from Vasilii Velichko's collection, 1969

Kanglings are ritual trumpets that Tibetan Buddhists traditionally made from the thigh bones of dead people. The trumpets were used in rituals of worship of angry Enlightened Beings. It was believed that the sound of instruments made of such material was pleasant to their ears, while evil spirits, terrified, ran away. Later, *kanglings* were also made with metal, primarily copper alloys, but the symbolism of the original material and form has been preserved.

Buddhist musicians often used a pair of *kanglings*. This made it possible to achieve a special sound that arises from the slight

difference in the sound frequencies of the two instruments.

Decorated with embossed relief in the form of dragon heads or *makaras*, fantastical sea monsters, the two metal *kanglings* became part of the museum's collection in 1969 from a collection of Buddhist art that once belonged to the artist Nicholas Roerich. A label on one of the trumpets indicates it was a gift made to Roerich in 1913 by the traveler, ethnographer, and naturalist Pyotr Kozlov, presumably to commemorate the opening of the first Buddhist temple in Russia in St. Petersburg. 



Kanglings, Wind Musical Instruments

Tibet

18th-19th century

Copper alloy, carving, engraving, silvering

Length: 44 cm

2124 ДВ, 2125 ДВ

Provenance: bought from Vasilii Velichko's collection, 1969

Kanglings are ritual trumpets that Tibetan Buddhists traditionally made from the thigh bones of dead people. The trumpets were used in rituals of worship of angry Enlightened Beings. It was believed that the sound of instruments made of such material was pleasant to their ears, while evil spirits, terrified, ran away. Later, *kanglings* were also made with metal, primarily copper alloys, but the symbolism of the original material and form has been preserved.

Buddhist musicians often used a pair of *kanglings*. This made it possible to achieve a special sound that arises from the slight

difference in the sound frequencies of the two instruments.

Decorated with embossed relief in the form of dragon heads or *makaras*, fantastical sea monsters, the two metal *kanglings* became part of the museum's collection in 1969 from a collection of Buddhist art that once belonged to the artist Nicholas Roerich. A label on one of the trumpets indicates it was a gift made to Roerich in 1913 by the traveler, ethnographer, and naturalist Pyotr Kozlov, presumably to commemorate the opening of the first Buddhist temple in Russia in St. Petersburg. 





Calligrapher Abdullah ibn al-Fadi, who worked in the early 13th century
A 13th-century painter

Preparing Medicine


A folio from an Arabic translation of *De Materia Medica* by Dioscorides, 1224
Iraq, Baghdad
Gouache, gold and ink on paper
33 × 23,9 cm
452 ГРБ
Provenance: from the Khanenkos' collection, 1919

This miniature on a manuscript folio illustrates what researchers believe to be the process of preparing (filtering) medicine. We see an experienced doctor and his young assistant. The ethnic features of the characters are conveyed economically yet clearly, as well as their postures, gestures, clothing, utensils, and furniture of a doctor's office or pharmacy. Only a couple of deep and bright colors give the composition a vibrant style.

The page with the miniature is a part of the manuscript of an Arabic translation of *De Materia Medica* by the Greek physician and scientist Pedanius Dioscorides, who lived in the 1st century AD and served in the Roman army. His famous 5-volume encyclopedia featured descriptions

of many plants and recipes for preparing medicines to treat a variety of ailments. From antiquity until the 17th century, Dioscorides' work was the basis of knowledge in pharmacology in both European and Middle Eastern medicine.

The most famous Arabic manuscript of the treatise was completed by the calligrapher Abdullah ibn al-Fadi in 1224. The manuscript contained about 30 miniatures representing a separate page in the history of Islamic painting—a tradition of the Baghdad art school of the early 13th century.

The folio was likely purchased by the Khanenko family from the collection of Frederik Robert Martin in 1914 in Paris. 



Screen for a Scholar's Desk

China

Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Qianlong period (1736–1795)

Carved jade, lacquered wood

Height: 7.5 cm; width: 7.5 cm


1090 ДВ

Provenance: acquired from the Jaspars' collection, 1959

In China, the landed gentry, or "shenshi" (Chinese for "scholar gentry") were highly respected. Their education and talent allowed them to hold the top government positions. The interiors of their homes embodied the highest moral ideals and aesthetic tastes. A significant place in the homes of scholars was occupied by stone items: rock crystal, carnelian, agate, and, of course, jade.

The landed gentry traditionally had writing tools on their desks, or the "four

jewels of a scholar's study": paper, a brush, ink, and an inkwell. Another element was a small screen for shaking off the remaining ink from the brush. Gradually, the screens turned into separate valuable works of decorative art.

The artist masterfully revealed and highlighted the characteristic features of jade—elusive tone transitions and the soft glow of the surface. 



Albarello, a Medicinal Jar

Spain, Valencia, Manises or Paterna (?)

Early 15th century

Ceramics, glaze painting

Height: 26 cm

26 EB

Provenance: from the Khanenkos' collection, 1919

■ An *albarello*, a cylindrical vase or jar on a low circular base with narrow, slightly slanting shoulders, a tall neck, and a wide rim, was a common type of Valencia vessel. The shape of the vessel, as well as the word "albarello" (Arabic for "a small tree"), was likely borrowed from Arab ceramists from Syria. Spices and other substances from tropical countries were brought in similarly shaped vessels made of cut-offs from bamboo culms.

This *albarello* features a striking dark-blue painting against a light background. The key motif of one of the vases is large jagged circles—"chestnuts"—surrounded

by plant shoots and dots. This motif is also of Eastern origin. The decor of the second vase is unique: a large lean hare jumping among rambling stems with leaves. The image of the animal is conveyed surprisingly vividly, reflecting natural movement.

Albarellos were intended for storing and transporting various valuable substances: medicines, food essences, and cosmetics. In addition, as can be seen from the paintings of European artists, exquisitely decorated *albarellos* serve as decoration for living rooms. In particular, they were used as flower vases. ■■■



Isoda Koryusai (worked from 1764 to 1788)

Farewell

Japan

Color woodblock print

24.3 × 17.5 cm

18 ГРБ

Provenance: from the Khanenkos' collection, 1919

Isoda Koryusai left his samurai father's family to devote himself to his art and moved to the capital city, Edo, where the most prominent masters of *ukiyo-e* prints were working at the time.

Koryusai felt a special affinity with the art of Suzuki Harunobu (1724–1770), a famous artist who experimented with color by printing a single composition from dozens of boards. The main theme of Koryusai's work, also borrowed from Harunobu, was the beauty of women.

Koryusai was also a famous master of book illustration. Given the small size of the "Farewell" sheet, we can assume that the print was an illustration for a literary work. We are likely looking at the most famous lovers in the history of Japan—the knight Minamoto-no Yoshitsune and his concubine Shizuka. The lovers were separated by the war between the Taira and Minamoto clans in the late 12th century. ■■■

