

THE COLLECTIONS OF MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK AND BEDŘICH FEUERSTEIN IN THE NÁPRSTEK MUSEUM

Adéla Tůmová¹

ABSTRACT: The paper deals with two collections in the Náprstek Museum, the collection of M. R. Štefánik, a Slovak politician, soldier and astronomer, who visited Japan in 1919, and the collection of Bedřich Feuerstein, Czech architect, who lived in Japan in 1926–1930. These collections, similar in size and in the time of creation, reflect different reasons for obtaining the objects. Both collections are only a small part of the objects originally belonging to Štefánik and Feuerstein, and had been unpublished for long time.

KEYWORDS: Bedřich Feuerstein – Milan Rastislav Štefánik – Japan – Náprstek Museum – museum collections

Introduction

The Japanese collection of the Náprstek Museum was acquired mainly from donations and purchases of objects from private collectors. These individual collections are often influenced by the personality of the collector, his or her personal interests, social backgrounds, interest in Japan, as well as financial means or the way in which the Japan art was purchased.² Some of the donors never visited Japan and expanded their collections mainly through trading houses that imported Japanese objects such as woodblock prints, lacquerware, porcelain, and Japanese textiles to the European market at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the second half of the 19th century, the interest in the cultures of regions outside Europe increased. This was caused by multiple factors, one of them being political changes in the Far East, where China and Japan were forced to open to the world. The goods imported from Japan to Europe by The Dutch East India Company (mainly porcelain and lacquer) weren't unknown in Europe but were luxurious and expensive, available only for wealthy families. Through World's Fairs,³ which served as political propaganda displaying not only western inventions and technologies but also the spread of the west influence around the world; Japanese items were presented to the broad public and these objects, considered exotic and beautiful aroused collectors' interests.⁴

1 Contact: Adéla Tůmová, National Museum – Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, Prague, Czech Republic; e-mail: adela.tumova@nm.cz. This work was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (DKRVO 2019–2023/19.II.d, National Museum, 00023272).

2 Hánová 2010, pp. 40–42.

3 One of the first presentations of Japanese objects were World's Fairs in London (1862), Paris (1867), and Vienna (1873).

4 Hánová 2010, pp. 18–20.

These interests were manifested even in the Czech lands, where they were reflected in art and literature; in 1884 Julius Zeyer⁵ published his novel inspired by Japanese story.⁶ Also the lectures and travelogues of the first travellers to Japan were positively received in the Czech society. The travelogues, lectures or first exhibitions of Japanese objects, shaped the image of Japan as exotic and romantic country, and this image lasted even during the first half of the 20th century.

In the Japanese collection of the Náprstek Museum there are two collections that are similar in size, and time of their creation, but which were created under entirely different circumstances. These include the collection of Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880–1919), an important Slovak politician, soldier, scientist, and astronomer, one of the founders of Czechoslovakia, who visited Japan briefly during a diplomatic mission in 1919, and the collection of Bedřich Feuerstein (1892–1936), a Czech architect, painter, and scenographer who lived and worked in Japan from 1926 to 1930. Both collectors also lived for a time in Paris, the cultural centre of Europe, where Japonisme emerged, and may have been inspired to collect Japanese art and artefacts.⁷ Although the collections themselves are separated by only a short period of time, they reflect different ways of acquiring objects. The collection of the Štefánik consists of 40 objects, while Feuerstein's of seventy-five objects. Both collections belong to the smaller ones and have been neglected in the past, but in recent years Bedřich Feuerstein and his work were researched and published in the books by Helena Čapková.⁸

Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Milan Rastislav Štefánik was born on 21 July 1880 in the village of Košariská⁹ into the family of an evangelical pastor. In 1898 he graduated with honours from the Lyceum in Szarvas¹⁰ and then went to Prague to study. First, he studied at the Czech Technical University, but in 1900 he moved to the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, where he studied physics and astronomy. Already during his studies in Prague, Štefánik became involved in academic life, being a member of various associations and devoting himself to the Slovak national movement as well as to the question of Czechoslovak rapprochement.¹¹ In Prague he also met Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk,¹² who lectured at the Faculty of Arts.

5 Julius Zeyer (1841–1901), a Czech poet and writer, was one of the first donors to the Náprstek Museum. He never visited Japan but bought the objects through the trading houses.

6 Zeyer 1884.

7 Wichmann, pp. 18–19.

8 Helena Čapková published two books (Čapková 2014; Čapková 2021) and several articles about Feuerstein and his work. She is also the curator of the exhibition about Feuerstein (*Bedřich Feuerstein, architect. Prague – Paris – Tokyo* in National Technical Museum).

9 Košariská is a village in the north-western Slovakia.

10 Szarvas (Sarvaš) is a town in the north-eastern Hungary.

11 Štvrtecký 1990, pp. 18–21.

12 Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) was a Czechoslovak statesman, philosopher, and sociologist. Along with Štefánik and Edvard Beneš, he was one of the co-founders of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938). He served as the President of Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1935.

After passing his doctoral exams, Štefánik went to France, where he managed to start working with Professor Janssen,¹³ a prominent French astronomer. Štefánik took part in several observations at Janssen's observatory on Mont Blanc,¹⁴ observed a total solar eclipse and led a French expedition to Turkistan, also publishing a number of papers that were favourably received in academic circles. In 1910 he was sent to Tahiti, where he observed the passage of Halley's Comet. Štefánik spent ten months in Tahiti, where he laid the foundation for the extensive collection of objects from Oceania that can now be found in the collections of the Slovak National Museum in Martin, as well as woodblocks created by Paul Gauguin¹⁵ during his stay in Tahiti.

Štefánik's academic career was disrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. As he was already a French citizen at that time, he enlisted in the French army, where he completed a pilot course and became a pilot in the French 10th Army. Štefánik's scientific abilities, where he quickly grasped the importance of meteorology in military planning, won him the recognition of the French army command.¹⁶ It was Štefánik's contacts with army officers, as well as politicians and prominent French figures, that enabled Masaryk to present his vision of the organization of Central Europe with Czechoslovakia as one of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the French government. In the newly formed Czechoslovak National Council, which represented the Czechoslovak resistance, Štefánik held the post of vice-chairman, but above all he was instrumental in the formation of the Czechoslovak Legions,¹⁷ for which he made several trips to Italy, Russia, and the United States.

In the autumn of 1918, Štefánik was sent to Siberia, where he accompanied the commander of the Czechoslovak troops, Maurice Janin.¹⁸ The journey was made via the United States and Japan, where Štefánik arrived on 12 October. Here Štefánik held talks with the French envoy, but was also received by the emperor and members of the Japanese government, where he mainly discussed the support of the Czechoslovak legionaries in Siberia. While in Japan, Štefánik was also involved in the purchase of various Japanese antiquities.¹⁹ The Japanese objects in the Náprstek collection may thus be dated from the time of his visit to Japan, but the possibility that some of the objects were acquired in the department stores in Paris cannot be ruled out. After his return from Siberia, Štefánik continued diplomatic negotiations, first in France and later in Italy. On his return to Slovakia on 4 May 1919, his plane crashed near Bratislava.

13 Pierre Janssen (1824–1907), also known as Jules Janssen, was a French astronomer, in 1868 he discovered helium.

14 Podhorský 2013, pp. 81–87.

15 Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), a French painter, leading figure of post-Impressionism. He lived in Tahiti from 1890 until 1893, and later in 1895.

16 Mlynárik 1991, pp. 98–100.

17 The Czechoslovak Legion (Československé legie) were volunteer armed forces from Czechs and Slovaks on the side of the Allies of World War I.

18 Maurice Janin (1862–1946), general of French army. During Russian Civil War (1917–1923) he was the chief of the Allied Military Mission and the commander-in-chief of the Czechoslovak Legion.

19 'During illness he bought many nice Japanese art products, especially antique ones. He chose with great taste.:' Pišecský 1929, pp. 40–42.

Štefánik's collection of Japanese art in the Náprstek Museum

Štefánik's entire collection of objects, which included photographs, archival materials, examples of Slovak lace and objects from outside Europe, reflects the turbulent political and social development of the 20th century. After Štefánik's death, both the Czechoslovak state and the family took an interest in Štefánik's estate. The Japanese collection was acquired in Japan with state money and was to become part of the collections of the Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia,²⁰ but the Czechoslovak state failed to claim it within the court-imposed deadline.²¹ The first division of Štefánik's collection took place at that time, when some of the Japanese objects were given to family members, but a smaller part of the Japanese objects was taken to Prague in 1920 and stored in Troja Chateau, where they became part of the collections of the Resistance Memorial.²² After the break-up of Czechoslovakia in 1939, at the request of the Slovak authorities, the objects still stored in Prague were taken back to Slovakia and became part of the collections of the Slovak National Museum in Martin.²³ Some of the non-European ethnographic objects, however, remained in Prague, be it Gauguin's woodblocks (now in the collection of the National Gallery) or some objects from Asia and Oceania, which are in the Náprstek Museum.

It is not clear why some of the objects were not taken back to Slovakia, whether they had already been transferred to other institutions or whether their return was prevented by external circumstances. The accession books do not record the objects until 1951,²⁴ but this date may have been caused by the complicated wartime and post-war situation and does not exclude the possibility that the objects had reached the museum earlier.

In total, 40 items are listed in the accession registry book, these are accession nos. 81/51–120/51, but under some headings multiple sets of objects are listed (this applies mainly to sets of porcelain). Sixteen of the increment numbers refer to objects from outside Japan, mainly from Oceania. Not all of the objects have survived in the museum; some (e.g. object 107/51, described in the accession book as a mirror with variegated tassels) were handed over to the Klenoty [Jewellery] store. The reason why these objects were handed over is unknown.

There are now 40 items in the Japanese collection that originally belonged to Štefánik, and some of the items can still be found with their original inventory number from the Resistance Memorial. The objects can be divided according to their material into two large groups – lacquer and ceramic objects. Only four objects are outside this

20 Now known as the National Museum.

21 Králiková 2017, pp. 85–88.

22 Originally it was an artistic advisory body to the Ministry of National Defence that collected objects and archival materials related to the Legionnaires.

23 The Slovak National Museum in Martin is a branch of the Slovak National Museum, focused on ethnographic objects. Part of the collection are ethnographic objects of Štefánik's collection, not only from Tahiti and Asia, but also from Slovakia. Some of the objects are exhibited in other branch of Slovak National Museum, namely Museum of Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Košariská. In Králiková 2017, pp. 207–209.

24 Acquisition book of the Náprstek Museum, years 1933–1956, pp. 166–171.

classification. A Japanese woodblock print by Toyokuni,²⁵ which is marked on the back with a label bearing the name of a French shop and was thus probably acquired in Europe; a metal clock of European type decorated with a dragon, but instead of Arabic numerals the dial is marked with Chinese numerals; an undecorated stone for spreading ink; and a *netsuke* button, which was used for hanging decorative boxes from the *obi*. The *netsuke* in the collection is of the *kagamibuta* type, a decorated metal disc set in ivory.

The ceramic collection consists of 25 objects, a set of cups and bowls with lids, two teapots and two porcelain incense burners. Japanese porcelain, heavily influenced by the demands of the Dutch East India Company (active 1602–1799), was imported to Europe from the second half of the 17th century.²⁶ These were mainly products from Arita,²⁷ decorated with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels with gold.²⁸ After the Meiji Restoration, Japanese potters introduced richly decorated, often crackled products, known as Satsuma porcelain, to world markets. In the Štefánik collection we find mainly porcelain of the Arita ware. The porcelain objects come from different time periods and include examples of 18th century Arita porcelain as well as a number of products created during the Meiji period (1868–1912) and inspired only by the original Arita products. Earlier examples of Arita porcelain include a circular bowl decorated with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels with gold (Inv. No. 48020)²⁹ from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, or a pair of incense burners with metal lids dating from the 18th century (Inv. Nos. 16436,³⁰ 16437³¹). Both the circular bowl and some of the more recent works are apocryphally signed *Dai Min Banreki Nensei*.³²

Objects covered with lacquer from the lacquer tree (*Toxicodendron vernicifluum*) have a long tradition in Japan, with the earliest attested objects dating back to the Middle Jōmon period (2500–1500 BCE).³³ The lacquer formed a protective layer, while at the same time it could be decorated in various ways. It was the wide range of decorative techniques that made it popular with foreigners who admired the elaborate Japanese decoration. Lacquerware was one of the luxury goods that the East India Company imported to European markets as early as the early 17th century.³⁴ After the opening of Japan, lacquerware became a popular commodity even among the broader bourgeoisie.

25 Utagawa Toyokuni (1769–1825) was one of the great masters of Japanese woodblock prints. The print in the Štefánik's collection depicts a woman in kimono from the series Modern Six Poets (*Imayō rokkasen* いまやう六花せん)

26 Shimura, pp. 25–26.

27 The town located in Saga Prefecture, Japan, where the porcelain was made.

28 Idekawa, pp. 116–117.

29 Suchomel and Suchomelová 1997, p. 104.

30 Suchomel and Suchomelová 1997, p. 137.

31 Suchomel and Suchomelová 1997, p. 156.

32 Japanese ceramists thus claimed the tradition of Chinese porcelain, where the *Dai Min Banreki Nensei* mark refers to the period 1573–1620. Japanese porcelain was made later and the mark was used from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. The bowl (Inv. No. 48020) is signed with *Dai Min Banreki Nensei* 大明萬曆年製, but used older version of *kanji* 曆. The bowl is dated to 1680–1720; see Suchomel and Suchomelová 1997, pp. 21–22.

33 Matsuda, pp. 52–55.

34 Suchomel and Suchomelová 2002, pp. 20–21.

There are only eleven lacquerware items in the Štefánik collection. These are small lacquer decorated boxes (4 pieces), a wooden bowl with a carved decoration of a snail and a cucumber, wooden trays lacquered and decorated with golden chrysanthemum motifs (3 pieces). The collection also includes two *inrō*, decorative boxes with several pieces, which Japanese men during the Edo period wore hanging from their *obi* and placed small items such as a personal stamp in each piece. During the Meiji period, the Japanese began to favour Western dress, and the *inrō* lost its significance. However, the decorated *inrō* became a popular souvenir brought back from Japan by foreigners. The *inrō* collections found in European museums are often made up of products that were made for foreigners during the Meiji period.

The first *inrō* (Inv. No. 23184) in the Štefánik collection is covered in gold lacquer, with a decoration of sparrows and pine trees on one side, and a bird of prey perched on a branch over a river on the other. The trunk of the pine tree is decorated with *kirikane*³⁵ inlay, the bird of prey and the trio of small birds are formed by the metal inlay. The second *inrō* (Inv. No. 23183) is covered in black lacquer and a flowering rose, including stems with thorns, is carved and depicted in relief in coloured lacquer. The motif and decoration technique are very unusual, probably dating back to the second half of the 19th century, influenced by Western designs. The decoration shows similarity to the technique typical of the archipelago Ryūkyū.³⁶

The decorative figure of a *bugaku*³⁷ dancer (Inv. No. 23175), which combines ivory carving and lacquer decoration, also dates from the second half of the 19th century. While the head and hands are carved from ivory, the actor's clothing and mask are made of wood covered with lacquer. The figure is highly detailed, including the clothing, which is decorated with *mon*³⁸ on the sleeves and a detailed decoration of dragons in clouds. While we can only guess whether the *inrō* were used as ornaments, the actor's figure is documented in one of the photographs of Štefánik's Paris apartment where it was displayed.³⁹

The Japanese objects stored in the Slovak National Museum in Martin were not yet been fully evaluated or published, but from the list of objects in Eva Králiková's book, we can assume, that the Japanese collection consists of similar type of objects as in the Náprstek Museum, mostly from the porcelain and lacquer. This collection also includes eight Japanese prints and four examples of Japanese textiles.⁴⁰ The reasons, why some objects were given to the family members while others were transported to Prague and then back to Slovakia remain unknown.

35 A decorative technique using thin sheets of gold or silver.

36 In the Ryūkyū Kingdom men did not wear kimono and *inrō* were made only as gift for Japanese officials and later as souvenir for foreigners; see Kress and Kress 2002.

37 A Japanese traditional dance.

38 Japanese stylized emblems used as family crests or as fabric patterns.

39 Králiková 2017, pp. 73–74.

40 Králiková 2017, pp. 157–180.

Bedřich Feuerstein⁴¹

Bedřich Feuerstein was born on 15 January 1892 in the village of Dobruška⁴² and spent his childhood at Loučň Castle, where his father Constantin worked as a caretaker. In 1910 he graduated from the school in Nymburk⁴³ and in 1910–1917 he studied architecture at the Prague Technical University. During the First World War he served as an engineer in the Army Reserve. In April 1919, he was again drafted into the army, serving as an interpreter in the French mission in Slovakia. In March 1920, Feuerstein was assigned to the Resistance Memorial, where he was in charge of organizing and installing legionary exhibitions, which were housed in Queen Anne's Summer Palace and the Troja Chateau,⁴⁴ which also contained objects from the Štefánik collection.

In 1920 he received a scholarship to l'École du Louvre, during which time he also studied theatre. In 1923–1925 Feuerstein worked in the studio of the important French architect Auguste Perret (1874–1954). He combined his work in France with his work in Czechoslovakia, where he worked in stage design, during which time he designed the sets for seven plays staged at the National Theatre. He also collaborated with other Czech artists, for example, he designed the pedestal for the Monument to Freedom statue in Domažlice, the author of the sculpture was Feuerstein's friend Otakar Švec.⁴⁵ The most successful of Feuerstein's architectural designs were the Crematorium in Nymburk (on which he collaborated with Bohumil Sláma) and the building of the Military Geographical Institute in Prague, a number of successful, though ultimately unrealized, designs not to be forgotten.

In 1926 Feuerstein accepted an offer from Antonín Raymond (1888–1976),⁴⁶ a Czech architect working in Japan, and for the next four years he lived and worked in Japan. In the studio of Antonín Raymond, Feuerstein was involved in the construction of buildings such as the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo and the International Hospital of St. Luke.⁴⁷ In Japan, Feuerstein was in the social circles of the Czechoslovak embassy, and the Raymonds also introduced him to the Japanese intellectual circle *Garakutashū*.⁴⁸

In 1930, Feuerstein and Antonín Raymond came into conflict, probably influenced by the deteriorating economic situation and Antonín Raymond's fear of possible competition. Bedřich Feuerstein thus returned to Prague, where he devoted himself mainly to the stage design of plays at the National Theatre and the Osvobozené divadlo (Liberated Theatre or Prague Free Theatre). As an architect he experienced only minor successes. It was his professional failure, together with a nervous illness, that probably caused him to commit suicide on 10 May 1936.

41 A detailed biography of B. Feuerstein and an assessment of his work may be found in Čapková 2014 and Čapková 2021.

42 The town in the Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic.

43 The town in the Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic.

44 Čapková 2014, pp. 161–162.

45 Otakar Švec (1892–1955) was a Czech sculptor whose most famous works include the Sunbeam Motorcycle (1924) and the Stalin Monument at Letná.

46 Antonín Raymond, born Antonín Reimann, was born in Kladno into a Jewish merchant family. From 1910 he worked in America, where he collaborated with leading American architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959). He served as honorary consul in Japan from 1926–1939.

47 More details about the architecture of the hospital are found in Čapková 2014, pp. 71–93.

48 Čapková 2021, p. 72.

Feuerstein's collection of Japanese art

The collection of objects from Feuerstein's estate, which is housed in the Náprstek Museum, contains seventy-five items. Most of them, sixty-eight items, were donated to the museum in 1981. In 1998, 2004, and 2008, the museum received only individual items. Most of the collection consists of items of Japanese provenance, but the 1981 gift also included two Chinese embroideries and a leaf with an inscription in Arabic.⁴⁹ The objects from the Feuerstein collection can be divided into everyday objects, which were most likely used on a daily basis, and decorative objects, which were most likely used to decorate the interior but could also serve as a souvenir or gift.

Everyday objects include textiles, here represented mainly by items of clothing, and various clothing accessories. Clothing items include Japanese *tabi* socks (3 pieces), two *obi* and a ladies' summer kimono⁵⁰ with a now unusual geometric pattern. The interesting object is the *happi* coat (Inv. No. A29959). This is a traditional coat with trumpet sleeves, which is usually worn in Japan today during various festivals, and was a typical garment worn by firemen in the Edo period. Feuerstein's coat is made of thick fabric and is decorated with a *mon* on the back, and the name of the owner is embroidered in *katakana* on the lapels of the coat. However, it cannot be ascertained whether Feuerstein had the coat made for himself or whether it was a gift. Other textile items include a pair of *furoshiki* scarves, which were used to wrap goods and gifts in Japan, and *tenugui* towels (6 pieces). *Tenugui* towels, made of thin cotton, are popular souvenir items and they are also used as tea towels, hand towels, or tied decoratively around the head. They often serve an advertising function. One of the towels is directly linked to the *Garakutashū* circle.

Clothing accessories include Japanese traditional *zōri* slippers (3 pieces) made of straw, folding *ōgi* fans (5 pieces), a handbag, and a Japanese umbrella made of bamboo and oiled paper. The collection also includes a set of four cufflinks decorated with a steamer motif. These are the only cufflinks in the Japanese collection. Also included is a set of small fabric pouches that could have served as a wallet, paper case, or *meishi*⁵¹ card case. Handing out business cards is still part of the ritual of introductions today, and Bedřich Feuerstein, who lived and worked in Japan for many years, certainly owned *meishi* cards.

Decorative objects are a diverse collection of items that could have been used to decorate an interior. Among them we find calligraphy on decorative paper, small lacquer boxes and trays, a bowl with fine craquelure, a Noh theatre mask representing the face of a young person – *Jidō* type, and a traditional Japanese mirror, a popular souvenir from Japan, decorated on the reverse with the symbols of good luck – a peony and two cranes, housed in an ornate lacquer case. The metal *shippō* stands (3 pieces), which are used in one of the styles of the Ikebana school, were also used to decorate the interior. There are also several toys in the collection that were probably acquired as souvenirs. These include a miniature lion's head mask called *shishigashira*, made of wood and covered in red and black lacquer, with a movable mouth, a pair of miniature dolls made of wood to be displayed at the Maiden's Festival, and the still popular souvenirs of *kubi*

49 Acquisition book of the Náprstek Museum, years 1980–1982. pp. 208–219.

50 Feuerstein's kimono is made from *meisen*, a silk fabric popular in Japan in 1920s and 1930s. *Meisen* was made from silk noils and dyed with aniline dyes; see Cliffe 20117, p. 51.

51 A Japanese business card.

ningyō (clay heads on a stick) and *kimekomi* dolls. The *kimekomi* doll is an example of a long tradition of Japanese toys, dating back to the mid-18th century near Kyoto. The doll's head is made of clay, but the doll's body, including its clothing, is carved from wood and then covered with a thin layer of cloth.⁵²

There are also several books in the Feuerstein collection. These are both popular examples of woodblock prints in albums and books that capture their owner's interest in foreign architecture; three volumes are Japanese treatises on traditional Japanese architecture as found in Japanese temples and shrines. The books are written in Japanese, but accompanied by several detailed drawings that may have also served as inspiration for Feuerstein's work.

Conclusion

Although the collections of Feuerstein and Štefánik are similar in many ways – they are smaller collections that were created a short time apart – they differ significantly in the composition of their objects. While Bedřich Feuerstein's collections are mainly practical objects and various trinkets he collected during his four years in Japan, which he could either use personally as decoration or inspiration in his work, or intended as a gift or souvenir, Milan Rastislav Štefánik bought typical examples of Japanese craftsmanship, under which porcelain and lacquerware were perceived in Europe.

The M. R. Štefánik's collection is not complete and was divided several times, first after the sudden tragic death of the owner between family members and the Czechoslovak State, which exhibited them in the Liberation Memorial in Prague, and secondly in 1940, when some of the objects were removed for unknown reasons and given to the Náprstek Museum, which included several objects from Tahiti, while the rest of the collection was transferred to Slovakia, where it became part of the collections of the Slovak National Museum in Martin. While there are no textiles in the Náprstek Museum, which Europeans also liked to acquire as examples of Japanese textile techniques, the Slovak Nation Museum has several examples of Japanese textiles, as well as a beautifully embroidered dragon robe from China.⁵³ Judging by the trademark referring to the Parisian trade on the back of the print, it is not impossible that some of the items were acquired before the trip to Japan, and Štefánik's personal interest in Japanese art may in turn have been the reason why his trip included the acquisition of Japanese objects, perhaps intended to enrich the collections of the National Museum. In the collection we can find export goods that were made primarily for Europeans, as well as several examples of objects from the Edo period (Arita porcelain from the first half of the 18th century) and the beginning of the Meiji period, which are very elaborate examples of Japanese craft techniques (lacquer boxes, *inrō*, a figure of an actor made of lacquer and ivory).

Bedřich Feuerstein lived in Japan for a long time and his aim was probably not collecting per se; the objects fulfilled various functions, whether practical, decorative or souvenir. His collection is made up of objects of various types, rather than comprehensive collections of similar objects. Some of the objects reflect Feuerstein's personal interests (books on Japanese architecture, a Noh theatre mask), while others

52 Kitamura 1990, p.18.

53 Milan Rastislav Štefánik. *Generál – Osloboditel*, 2020, p. 143.

show that they were used. Despite the practical use of the objects, they are often well crafted and reflect Japanese aesthetics.

The different nature of the objects in these two collections is a testament to the diversity of museum collections, which reflect the different interests, characters and capabilities of the original owners. They are also a testament to the different possibilities of acquiring objects, which was also influenced by the political situation in the 20th century, when objects from the collection of M. R. Štefánik, a prominent politician, were moved according to the political situation and were often insensitively divided during these moves, which does not allow us to objectively reflect on the original character of the Japanese collection.

No. 1

Three round bowls with lids

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Dimensions: bowl – h. 7.6 cm, ø 11.5 cm, lid – h. 2.8 cm, ø 10.1 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. Nos. 48002–48004

Porcelain painted in underglaze blue, and overglaze enamels with gold. Decorated with peonies blossoms and leaves.

No. 2

A bowl

Japan, Arita, 1680–1720

Dimensions: h. 8.6 cm, ø 12.8 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. No. 48020

Deep round bowl decorated with three medallions in the shape of two circles with peony decor. Around medallions are clouds, phoenixes and dragons. The inner part is decorated with a rock and a pine above water. Porcelain, painted in underglaze blue, and overglaze enamels with gold.

No. 3

Two small boxes

Japan, early 20th century

Dimensions: h. 3.3 cm, 4.3 × 3.2 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. Nos. 23181, 23182

Miniature boxes with lids, coated with black lacquer and golden peonies.

No. 4

Inrō

Japan, 19th century

Dimensions: h. 9.3 cm, w. 5.1 cm, *netsuke* – ø 5.2 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. No. 23184

The four-case *inrō* covered with golden lacquer. On one side is decor with an eagle on the pine above a stream, on the other a pine on a rock and two flying birds.

No. 5*Inrō*Japan, Okinawa, late 19th centuryDimensions: h. 11.5 cm, w. 4.5 cm, *netsuke* – ø 4.1 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. No. 23183

The five-case *inrō* covered with black lacquer, decorated with carved coloured lacquer in the shape of the rose.

No. 6

A statuette

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Dimensions: h. 24 cm

Acquisition: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Inv. No. 23175

A figurine of *bugaku* dancer made from lacquered wood; the head and the hands are carved from ivory.

No. 7The *happi* coat

Japan, 1926

Dimensions: l. 107 cm

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. A 29959

A traditional Japanese tube-sleeved coat made of indigo-dyed cotton with grey squares. On the front side is the name of Bedřich Feuerstein written in Japanese *katakana* alphabet. On the back side decorated with red *mon* – two crossed hawk feathers in the circle.

No. 8A *tenugui* towel

Japan, 1920s

Dimensions: l. 88 cm, w. 31 cm

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. 29382

A *tenugui* towel from cotton, decorated with *Takarabune*⁵⁴ motif.

No. 9

Three purses

Japan, 1920s

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. 29392 – A purse made from brocade (on the black cloth golden, brown, beige, and green threads), decorated with a phoenix and leaves; dimensions: 10.2 × 8 cm

⁵⁴ *Takarabune* or 'Treasure Ship' is a mythical ship with the group of Seven Gods of Fortune. A popular motif of Japanese Traditional New Year celebrations.

Inv. No. 29393 – A purse combining black silk and red *shibori*⁵⁵ pattern; dimensions: 10.2 × 8 cm

Inv. No. 29395 – A case for paper, made from golden brocade with traditional decoration of ‘distant mountain’ in golden, blue, green, and red colours; dimensions: 12.8 × 7.8 cm

No. 10

A Noh Mask – *Jidō*⁵⁶ Type

Japan, 20th Century

Dimensions: h. 20.4 cm, w. 14.7 cm

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. 55055

No. 11

A Japanese bronze mirror in the lacquered case

Japan, early 20th century

Dimensions: l. 35 cm, w. 24.2 cm

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. 55063 a–d

A bronze mirror decorated with symbols of longevity – the herons, the turtles, and the pines. The case is coated with black lacquer decorated with golden peonies.

No. 12

Kimekomi Doll

Japan, 1920s

Dimensions: h. 7.5 cm, w. 5.8 cm, l. 4.3

Acquisition: Bedřich Feuerstein

Inv. No. 55043

The doll represents man in traditional Japanese dress with *omamori* (protective charm) in the hands. The head and the hands are made from clay, but the body of the doll is carved from wood and covered with cloth inlay.

Acknowledgements

Photographs by Jiří Vaněk.

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55 A Japanese tie-dyeing technique.

56 A young male spirit.

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Pl. 1



No. 1



No. 2



No. 3



No. 4



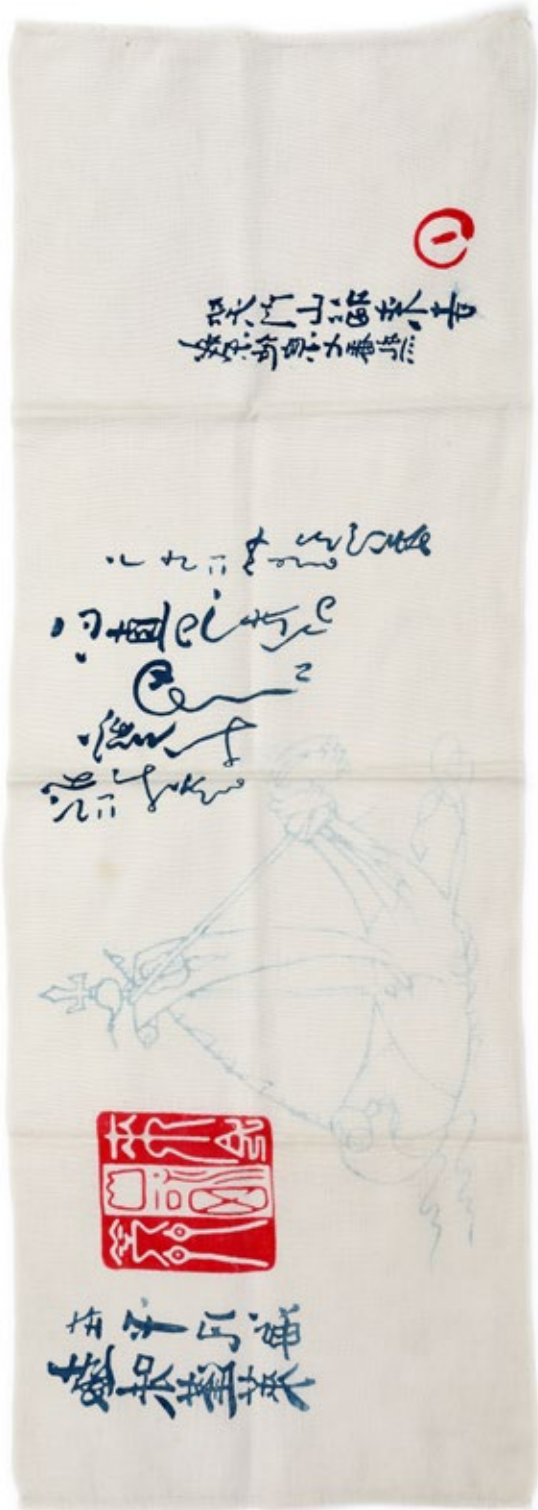
No. 5



No. 6



No. 7



No. 8

No. 9



No. 10



No. 11





No. 12