渡山

41. **Mori Tetsuzan** (1775-1841)

森徹山

"Hawk Killing a Rabbit"

鷹捉兔圖

Hanging scroll, ink and color
53 x 68.2 cm.

Inscription:
"Tetsuzan."

Artist's seal:
Shushin no yin

Gripped by strong talons at head and foot, a hapless rabbit offers up its soft and meaty stomach to the pleasure of a huge and powerful hawk, which spreads its wings for balance as it dips its head for the first piercing bite. Painted in strong strokes and in dramatically contrasting colors, the bird and its prey form an oval shape that is scissored between two outcroppings of rock which appear capable of crushing them both. Realistic in conception, and manifesting the artist's clear understanding of the creatures' physiognomies, the image is also extremely dramatic and demonstrates the artist's committment to a baroque style of expressionism.

This work is representative of the realistic approach taken to especially animal painting by a group of painters active in Ōsaka from the later Edo into the Meiji era. Called the Mori school, its major members include Mori Sosen (1747-1821), Mori Tetsuzan (1775-1841), Mori Ippō (1799-1871), and Mori Kansai (1815-1894.) The eldest of the group was Mori Shūhō (1738-1823), a competent follower of the Kanō tradition and Tetsuzan's father. In one of the bewildering switches so frustrating to later biographers, Tetsuzan was adopted by Sosen, Shūhō's younger brother, and Sosen's son, Mori Yūsen (1780-1851), was adopted by Shūhō. The result of these changes was that the two most talented artists in the group, Sosen and Tetsuzan, were also father and son.

In the *Naniwa Kyōyu Roku* of 1790, Shūho, Sosen, and Tetsuzan were all listed, with Tetsuzan recorded as Sosen's son. Already by age fifteen, then, Tetsuzan had acquired some reputation as a painter. During the same year Tetsuzan visited Kimura Kenkado (1736-1802) in company with his mother, and his name appears frequently thereafter in the diary of that sake brewer and important collector and patron of the arts.

In 1795 Tetsuzan contributed to the work done at Daijō-ji in Kyōto by Maruyama Okyō (1733-1795) and his disciples; Tetsuzan painted sparrows in the Guest Hall while Nagasawa Rosetsu (1794-99) painted monkeys for the same hall. By age twenty-one, Tetsuzan had thus become a pupil of Ōkyo, and he cemented the relationship even further by marrying the sister-in-law of Maruyama Ōzui (1766-1829), eldest son and eventual successor of Ōkyo. Tetsuzan's wife, named En, was the daughter of Tanaka Hironori, a well-known Buddhist sculptor in Kyōto.

Fig. 1. Sosen, Yūsen, Shūhō, Tetsuzan: "Monkeys and Wisteria" 1814, after Jack Hillier: *The Uninhibited Brush*, London, 1974, p. 252, fig. 192.

Through the introduction of his father-in-law, Tetsuzan was commissioned to paint the Study Room of the Kompira Shrine in Shikoku, and the painter maintained close ties with the shrine's head in later years. Tetsuzan's two sons were both adopted into the Tanaka family and both became sculptors of Buddhist images. His eldest daughter married Mori Ippō, who had studied with Tetsuzan, who was adopted by him, and who succeeded to the Mori lineage in Ōsaka; Tetsuzan's youngest

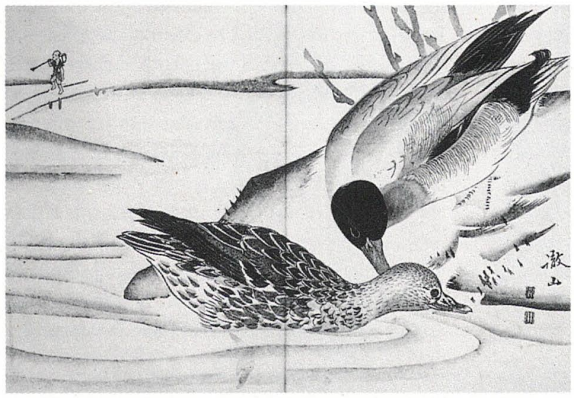

Fig. 2. Mori Tetsuzan: "Two Ducks," print published in 1806, after *ibid.*, p. 259, fig. 199.

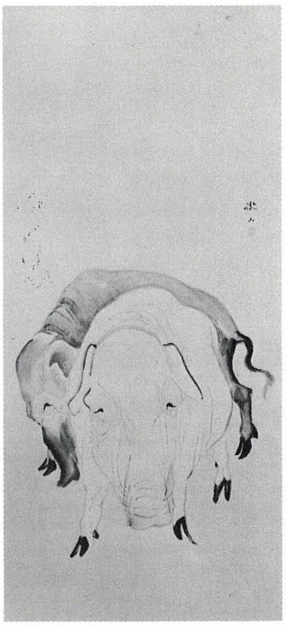

Fig. 3. Mori Tetsuzan: "Two Pigs," after *ibid.*, p. 260, fig. 200.

daughter married a merchant.

Tetsuzan lived in Kyōto during the latter part of his life and, after Maruyama Ōshin (see catalogue 39) died in 1838, he played an active role in the affairs of the Maruyama school. Having no one to succeed him in Kyōto, Tetsuzan adopted another pupil, Mori Kansai, who continued the family line well into the Meiji era (see catalogue 45). On Tetsuzan's death, two markers testified to his achievements, one in the Kimei-in in Kyōto and the other at Seifuku-ji in Ōsaka. The first of these states that Tetsuzan had served the Hosokawa clan at some point, as did Mori Ippō, one of his adopted sons. Perhaps only Kanō Tanyū was as successful as Tetsuzan in extending the influence of his family through art.

The Mori approach to painting can be seen in a work done jointly in 1814 by Sosen, Yūsen, Shūhō, and Tetsuzan (figure 1). Tetsuzan contributed the spider and web in the upper left, a few deft and simple strokes that yet serve to characterize his subject fully. One of Tetsuzan's earliest datable works is his print of "Two Ducks" published in 1806 (figure 2.) The close-up view is similar to that in the present painting and in both the impact of the image is heightened by that degree of concentration. Tetsuzan in fact was a master at composing even ordinary scenes, such as one of two pigs (figure 3), in such a way that the subject is seen in new light. Tetsuzan's "Tanuki in Rain" (figure 4) demonstrates his impressionistic approach to brushwork; as in the feathers of the present painting, the elements are not depicted individually as the eye knows them to be but rather as the eye grasps their general surface and structural features.

In 1877 Mori Kansai noted that Tetsuzan had once copied a Western painting, showing his interest in the techniques of that approach to picture making. In the present "Hawk Killing a Rabbit," there is perhaps some kind of shading on the rabbit but Tetsuzan was mainly concerned with a realistic portrayal of the protagonists of his drama and in embuing his actors with emotions appropriate to their roles.

Fig. 4. Mori Tetsuzan: "Tanuki in Rain," after *Kyōto Gadan no Jūkyūseiki*, Kyōto, 1994, pl. 23.