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Eleven Turtles

Murata Seimin (Japanese, 1761-1837) (Sculptor)

ca. 1818-1829 (late Edo)

cast bronze

(Japan and Korea)

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Turtles were attractive as display objects in Japan because they were seen as symbols of long life and happiness. These appear to be cast from actual specimens of the semi-aquatic species *Mauremys Japonica*. Each was cast separately, then pinned to the others.

Murata Seimin was highly acclaimed as a master metal caster and was famous for these turtles. According to legend, the turtles that he used were alive, and one of his heirs suffered a painful death because of the turtles' curse.

INSCRIPTION

bunsei nen seimin chu; [Translation] Cast by Seimin, Bunsei era (1818-29)

PROVENANCE ?

Kay Collection Sale, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 1913 (?); William T. Walters, Baltimore, prior to 1884 [pictured in 1884 gallery photograph] [mode of acquisition unknown]; Henry Walters, Baltimore, 1894, by inheritance; Walters Art Museum, 1931, by bequest.

EXHIBITIONS

1995 The Allure of Bronze. The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.

CONSERVATION

DATE	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
4/7/2014	Examination	Examined

GEOGRAPHIES

Japan, Tokyo (Edo) (Place of O

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MEASUREMENTS

H: 5 7/8 × W: 14 9/16 × D: 12 in. (14.9 × 37 × 30.5 cm)

CREDIT LINE

Acquired by William T. Walters, before 1884

LOCATION IN MUSEUM

Not on view

ACCESSION NUMBER

54.1376

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LOCATION

600 N. Charles St.

Baltimore, MD

21201

PHONE

410-547-9000

HOURS

Wednesday—Sunday: 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Thursday: 1–8 p.m.

Monday—Tuesday: Closed

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