

## Chapter II

### Hanging Scrolls

#### Hang Them Anywhere

When you hear the term “painting”, you might imagine a framed painting. A framed painting can be displayed anywhere you like.

In Japan, people have long admired hanging scrolls as paintings. Hanging scrolls can be rolled up when not in use, making them easy to carry and change. Sometimes, several hanging scrolls are displayed together, and their combinations are admired.

It is said that hanging scrolls were introduced to Japan from China, along with Buddhism, during the Asuka period. At that time, divine objects of worship, including Shinto and Buddhist deities, were primarily depicted to be used in worship and religious observance. With the establishment of the *tokonoma* (an alcove) style, various subjects began to be depicted, including people, landscapes, flowers, and birds. Hanging scrolls need to be unfurled when displayed. Therefore, they are appropriate for presenting things in a space, such as entities that do not exist in the world of the living, including Shinto and Buddhist deities, deceased individuals, or imaginary ideal mountains. Hanging scrolls enhance the feeling that these objects are almost present in the space. They are easy to change, so they are often switched according to the seasons. Even today, people choose suitable hanging scrolls for tea ceremony rooms based on the season.

The main paper of a hanging scroll painting is mounted on other paper or cloth, like a picture frame. This is called *hyoso*. Some hanging scrolls are mounted with hand-painted patterned paper, such as the portrait of Ki no Tsurayuki (II-4). *Hyoso* serves as a boundary between the painting and the surrounding space, and the scroll is admired as a complete artwork.