



Japanese Imari dish, 18th century POA

Japanese Imari dish, 18th century, decorated in underglaze cobalt blue, overglaze enamels and gilt to the centre with a landscape scene with a long building and sprays of chrysanthemum, peony and lotus, all shrouded in cloud, within a dark blue band with large chrysanthemum heads and scrolling gilt lotus, the wide rim with three lobed cartouches each containing a pair of quails underneath millet, against a ground densely decorated with flowerheads, grasses and foliage, the reverse with three large floral sprays and concentric circles in underglaze blue.

Condition: Very slight wear to enamels

Notes: The depiction of quails with autumn grasses, including millet, gained popularity during the Song Dynasty in China. One notable court painter in particular, Li-An-Chung, became associated with this motif during the Southern Song (1127-1279). As part of the significant cultural exchange between the two countries during this period, quail paintings made their way to Japan, finding a place in the collections of Buddhist temples and the residences of wealthy Muromachi military families. In Japan, artists began creating quail paintings inspired by these Chinese models, leading to the widespread popularity of the motif in various art forms such as screens, lacquerware and ceramics, as seen here. During the 17th century the Tosa school, in particular, produced exquisite examples of quail paintings, likely influenced directly by Chinese precedents. Quails, known for their adaptability and resilience in diverse environments, symbolise vitality. Paired with the motif of autumn grasses, which signifies the changing seasons, these paintings and ceramic designs express harmony with nature and the beauty of impermanence (mono no aware).

Material and Technique	Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration in the Imari palette
Origin	Japanese
Period	18th Century
Diameter	38.3cm. (15 1/16in.)

Antique ref: U284