

Basic Detail Report



Miss Yamaguchi-Saga

Date

ca. October 1927

Primary Maker

Yoshitoku Doll Company

Medium

Gofun (white pigment made from shells for face and body), wood underneath, human hair, glass (eyes), pigment. Silk and cotton for clothing.

Description

Miss Yamaguchi is one of the original 58 Japanese Friendship Ambassador Dolls, formally known as Torei Ningyo (Dolls of Gratitude), sent to the United States in 1927 as part of a cultural exchange organized by former missionary Dr. Sidney Gulick. Concerned about the diplomatic strain caused by the Immigration Act of 1924, which barred Japanese immigration to the US, Dr. Gulick sought to foster goodwill by organizing the shipment of over 12,000 “blue-eyed” dolls to Japanese schoolchildren. In response, Japan commissioned the creation of dolls, including Miss Yamaguchi, to be sent as tokens of gratitude to the US. Miss Yamaguchi was accessioned into the Museum of International Folk Art’s (MOIFA) permanent collection in 1951, following a donation from the Children’s Museum at the Art Institute of Chicago, facilitated by MOIFA founder Ms. Florence Dibell Bartlett. When gently squeezed at the rib area, the doll emits a ‘mama’ squeaker sound, identifying her as a product of the Yoshitoku Doll Company in Tokyo, Japan, circa 1927. Her body is crafted from wood with a thick layer of gofun (a powdered mixture of oyster and clam shells), and she features glass eyes and human hair. She wears a silk kimono ensemble with intricate embroidery. The doll is accompanied by various accessories under different accession numbers, including several original items such as chests and tea ceremony tools, as well as a passport. However, not all items have survived over time. It is possible her passport was mistakenly switched with another doll’s, as this was a common occurrence, and it remains unconfirmed whether she is indeed Miss Saga. The passport and original stand are attributed to Miss Yamaguchi. (RCover 2024). She wears a green kimono adorned with various types of floral patterns. Waves of kanako shibori design appear at the bottom, behind the florals. A crest featuring a circle with two horizontal bars is also present. She is dressed with an orange obi and has short hair. A1-13 1. Doll without any clothing | A. 1951.16.328a-1 2. Underwear onesie | A.1951.16.328a-2 3. Under apron | A.1951.16.328a-3 4. Under kimono (Haneri) | A.1951.16.328a-4 5. Outer kimono (Kimono) | A.1951.16.328a-5 6. Red tie 1 | A. 1951.16.328a-6 7. Red tie 2 | A.1951.16.328a-7 8. Red tie 3 | A.1951.16.328a-8 9. Obi sash, red “kanoko” (very small circles tight together) shibori design (Obiage) | A.1951.16.328a-9 10. Obi belt, orange (Obi) | A. 1951.16.328a-10 11. Decorative Obi String, white (Obijime) | A.1951.16.328a-11 12. Tabi Sock | A. 1951.16.328a-12 13. Tabi Sock | A.1951.16.328a-13 B1-8 1. Wallet with inner mirror (Hakoseko) | A.

1951.16.328b-1 2. Wallet outside tie with toggle | A.1951.16.328b-2 3. Ornamental Hair Pin 1 (kamikazari or kanzashi?) | A.1951.16.328b-3 4. Ornamental Hair Pin 2 (kamikazari or kanzashi?) | A.1951.16.328b-4 5. Hair pin cover 1 | A.1951.16.328b-5 6. Hair pin cover 2 | A.1951.16.328b-6 7. "Kushi" Comb | A.1951.16.328b-7 8. White "kaishi" paper napkins in outer pocket | A.1951.16.328b-8 Archival Papers: 1. Goodwill Passport on pink paper 2. Nyk Line Ferry Card 3. Nippon Yusen Kaisha First Class Ticket for NYK Line 4. Please note! Climatic conditions 5. In addition note from Art Institute of Chicago (not original to doll) see accession #s at bottom 6. Japanese Children and Dolls' Tea Parties foldout x4

Dimensions

33 7/8 × 17 5/16 × 7 5/16 in. (86 × 44 × 18.5 cm)