

Netsuke (net-skay) and intro (in-row) were common accoutrements in Edo. The intro was a palm-sized box with multiple chambers. The chambers might hold any tiny personal object or possibly medicine. These were hung from a cord that was passed under a belt or sash. The other end of the cord carried a netsuke to keep the cord from slipping from the belt. These small objects were meticulously designed and minutely crafted. The netsuke and intro might share a place hanging from a chonin's belt with a smoking accessories such as a tobacco pouch, pipe case or lighter.

Certain birds and animal appear in Japanese art and ornament because of their positive associations. Cranes and turtles, for example, represent longevity, and rats and mice prosperity. Other creatures had associations with classical literature and the court cultures of Japan and China. Whether or not the animal had particular literary or folklore associations, there was a deep vein of appreciation for imagery of nature and its corresponding associations with the changes of the seasons, and the beauty of the natural world.

The seven gods of good fortune have their origins in ancient Chinese and Japanese religions as well as Buddhism. By the Edo period, they had largely shed their more complex identities to become simpler, more direct evocations of happiness, wealth, and long life. Often shown as a group sailing on a calm sea, they were also shown as individuals. Daikoku carries a mallet that confers wealth and usually stands or sits beside or on rice with his rice bales, to signify prosperity. Jurojin is usually depicted as a tall, aged figure with a high forehead and strong associations with longevity and wisdom.

The city dwellers themselves became emblems of prosperity of Edo, the most fashionable city in Japan. Carvings of the denizens of Edo, for instance, the street criers, would evoke the sounds of their performances. Enjoyment and revelry were frequently invoked. A man dozing drunkenly under the cherry blossoms immediately called to mind the sounds of singing and the taste of sake as well as the visual beauty of the trees. A sumo wrestler evoked not only the personal power of wrestlers themselves, but the festive atmosphere of the matches.

The vitality of publishing and widespread literacy made stories of all sort available, from classical literature to medieval warrior tales to folktales. Figures and images from these stories found their way into objects of adornment, in a grand display of the wearer's consumption of Japanese culture. For instance, Momotaro, the Peach Boy, miraculously born from a peach, was a favorite story that lent itself to reproduction. The tale of the monkey, the crab, and the persimmon provides an opportunity for the netsuke carver to display his skills in creating detailed images of objects from the natural world.

Theater was a very popular form of entertainment for the chonin. Performances ranged from the popular dramas of the kabuki theater, to the traditional masked plays of the noh theater, in addition to the song-and-dance performances of the geisha and traveling entertainers. The various entertainments gave rise to many images of performances and a popular culture surrounding the performers.