The Mother’s love of beauty found a natural, spontaneous affinity with the artistic sensibility evident in so many aspects of Japanese life. She began to paint again and these appealing works reveal her kinship with the landscape and the people of Japan. During her four years there she not only wore the Japanese dress and studied the language, but also collected many fine examples of painted scrolls, woodblock prints, lacquer boxes, and ceramics. She brought her collection of Japanese objects to Pondicherry with her, and the items shown here demonstrate how she appreciated the Japanese aesthetic of that time.

Clockwise from top right: A well-used wood box with compartments for stationery and a drawer for ink and brushes; a small carrying case for brushes; a lacquer box with water pot, ink, and brush; and utensils for preparing tea as used in a Japanese home (the small table later served as a model for the individual tables used in the Ashram’s dining hall).
Clockwise from top left: A very old, rust-coloured lacquer box with a bird painted in gold on the lid; one of the Japanese dolls collected by the Mother; two small notepads whose individual pages each bear a faint image of the cover design; and a large, black lacquer box with a chrysanthemum design.
Srismriti

All the articles pictured in these pages, except for the Mother’s sketch on page seven and her two paintings on page eleven, are currently preserved or displayed at Srismriti, known familiarly as the Mother’s museum. Housed in four rooms in an upper storey of the main house at Nanteuil, Srismriti is a repository for objects used by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as many artefacts offered to them. One room is dedicated to Japanese items and contains a sizeable collection of objects the Mother brought from Japan in 1920. The museum undertakes conservation work on many of the older pieces that have deteriorated over time. Srismriti is open to visitors from 9 to 11 a.m.
Two paintings done by the Mother in Japan

Japanese Poet Hirasawa Tetsuo
The Mother finished this portrait in one sitting. Hirasawa later visited the Mother in Pondicherry, in October 1924.
Oil on board. 19.5 x 14 cm.

Roof of Daiunji Temple
Oil on board.
Signed: MA (monogram)
15 x 22.5 cm.
1918. Japan.
The Kokka

Revealing of the Mother’s appreciation of fine art is her collection of thirty-nine issues of *The Kokka: A Monthly Journal of Oriental Art*. Nineteen issues are in Japanese and twenty in English. “Kokka” means “flowers of the nation”, and since publication commenced in 1889, it has published thousands of prints that illustrate original pictures, many held in private collections or in temples. Although age has affected the condition of the journals, the excellence of the coloured plates can be discerned even today. The Mother collected back issues from 1909 and 1910 as well as issues current during her stay there. To the left is the cover of an issue in English and below are two reproductions from these journals.