

The background of the cover is a black and white illustration. In the top left, there is a diamond-shaped lattice pattern. In the center, a woman's face is depicted in a traditional Japanese style, looking slightly to the right. On the right side, a large, detailed dragon's head is shown, with its mouth open, revealing sharp teeth. The dragon's scales and whiskers are intricately drawn. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Japanese woodblock prints or ukiyo-e.

museum rietberg

LOVE, FIGHT, FEAST

THE MULTIFACETED
WORLD OF JAPANESE
NARRATIVE ART

E

Note to the visitors:

1. The object numbers refer to the catalogue numbers. Exhibits not included in the catalogue are numbered according to the sections in the exhibition, e.g. 2-1; 3-1, etc.
2. Due to reasons of conservation, select works will be rotated after four weeks. In these cases, the period of display is indicated after the credit line:
 - September 10 to October 24
 - October 26 to December 5
3. Due to the Covid pandemic, loan works from the Chester Beatty Library could not travel. They have been replaced by digital representations and reproductions.
4. The titles of chapters and translations of prose sections in *The Tale of Genji* are from *Murasaki Shikibu, The Tale of Genji*, trans. Dennis Washburn (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015). The titles of chapters and translations of prose sections and poems in *The Ise Stories* are by Joshua S. Mostow and Royall Tyler, *The Ise Stories: Ise monogatari* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010).

1 A PANORAMA OF JAPANESE NARRATIVE ART

1 Zenzai Dōji's pilgrimage in fifty-five stages

Muromachi period, late 14th century
Fragment of a handscroll mounted as a hanging scroll;
ink and color on paper, 33.8 × 42.5 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

2 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) **The Taira ghosts rising from the sea to attack Yoshitsune's ship at Daimotsu Bay**

Edo period, 1845
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.6 × 75.3 cm
Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels

This triptych offers an imaginative reinterpretation of the actual maritime battle at Dannoura (or Daimotsu Bay) (cf. no. 70). In this conflict, the Heike (Taira) suffered a decisive defeat in 1185 at the hands of their archenemies, the Genji (Minamoto), under the leadership of the young hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189). Kuniyoshi reverses the historical reality by depicting a group of Heike ghosts as they emerge from the ocean depths to attack the Genji ship. Implicitly, the work represents a veiled criticism of the Tokugawa shogunate that claimed direct descent from the Genji as a symbol of their right to rule.

3 Men's short overcoat (*haori*) with scenes from the *Tale of Genji*

Taishō period, 1920–1940
Silk, *yūzen* paste-resist dyeing, 132 × 102 cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

In the late nineteenth century, illustrations of classic tales were disseminated even outside of Japan as they were adapted as designs on export wares. At the same time, nostalgic sentiments for a glorious past developed in Japan. The lining of this men's overcoat (*haori*) features two fan paintings with scenes most likely inspired by the eleventh-century *The Tale of Genji*. They are superimposed on a landscape painting depicting a fisherman and two poems written in cursive script. Interestingly, the edges of the fans are severely torn, perhaps as a reminder that these are objects from a better, bygone era.

4 Folding screens with “scattered” books and scrolls with narrative paintings

Edo period, mid-18th century
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper,
168 × 378 cm (each)
Musée Départemental des Arts Asiatiques, Nice

This pair of folding screens encapsulates the diverse materialities of narrative art in its illustration of handscrolls, bound horizontal-format books, and open or closed folding albums scattered across a brilliant background of applied gold leaf. These books and handscrolls have no script, only paintings that would have been immediately understood by an Edo-period audience. They feature narratives included in the exhibition, such as *The Ise Stories*, *The Tale of Genji*, *The Tale of the Heike*, *The Drunken Ogre (Shuten Dōji)*, *Taishokan*, as well as other notable tales such as *The Tale of Bunshō* and *The Legend of Tanabata*.

5 Scenes of spectacles along the Shijō riverbed

Edo period, first half of the 17th century
Two-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper, 164 × 190 cm
GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig

Scenes from everyday life became increasingly popular as motifs on large-scale paintings from the late sixteenth century onward. This folding screen depicts various scenes from the “Fourth Avenue” (Shijō), a bustling area that offered various forms of popular entertainment in Kyoto. Recognizable in the top left panel is a group of women staging a kabuki play. A performance of a puppet theater unfolds in the top right panel. In the lower left three young male actors present a *kōwakamai* (“ballad dramas”) piece. Reading was just one way to access the rich treasury of narrative tales. People from all walks of life enjoyed as much the various performative presentations of the tales.

6 Style of Iwasa Matabei (1578–1650) The Tale of Muramatsu

Edo period, first half 17th century
Scroll I from a set of three handscrolls (reproduction); ink, color,
gold and silver on paper, 32.6 × 1203 cm
Chester Beatty, Dublin

The story of Muramatsu, the head of a powerful family, was originally told in a multi-part set of handscrolls. In the first scroll, shown here, Muramatsu hosts a lavish banquet to welcome the newly appointed governor of Sagami Province, the young Kane'ie, and his father Kaneuchi. Muramatsu built a magnificent residence for his guests. Subsequently, he gives his daughter's hand to Kane'ie in marriage.

The work is attributed to Iwasa Matabei, one of the most prolific and eccentric painters of narrative scrolls and screens in the early seventeenth century. Characteristics of Matabei style are figures with large, expressive faces, saturated rich pigments, and the generous use of gold and silver.

7 Octagonal storage box for shells (*kai-oke*) with designs from the *Tale of Genji*

Edo period, late 18th–early 19th century
Wood, black lacquer, gold and silver *maki-e*, cut-out gold application (*kiri-kane*), 45.5 × 37 × 37 cm
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg

8 Shells for “shell-matching” game (*kai-awase*) with narrative court scenes

Edo period, late 18th–early 19th century
Ten pairs of shells; ink, color, *gofun* (ground shell-white) on gilded clamshell halves, ca. 9.4 × 7 cm (each shell)
Museo d’Arte Orientale, Venice

The game of matching shells (*kai-awase*) was a popular pastime among twelfth-century Japanese court aristocrats. It can be considered the forerunner of the popular card game “Memory.” A complete set consists of 180 pairs of shells; the two halves are stored separately in two containers (*kai-oke*). At first, the shells were not particularly decorated. From the early seventeenth century onward, it became fashionable to embellish the inside of the shells with floral patterns or scenes from classical literature.

Luxuriously decorated sets of shells were made for the daughters of the social elite. The ability to identify the illustrated episodes or the verses signified erudition and refinement, both desirable qualities in a future bride. Due to the fact that only two matching halves make a perfectly fitting whole, *kai-awase* shells also came to symbolize marital bliss. Ensembles of shells were hence indispensable items in a bridal trousseau.

Great attention was equally paid to the containers for the shells. This *kai-oke* is decorated with three auspicious episodes from the *Tale of Genji*. Wrapped around the body are illustrations from Chapter 5 “Little Purple Cromwell” and Chapter 14 “Channel Markers.” An image drawn from Chapter 7, “An Imperial Celebration of Autumn Foliage,” graces the lid. Roundels containing long-tailed tortoises and alternate on the each of the eight sides of the footed tray.

9 Lidded flask with design of “The grand hunt at Mount Fuji”

Meiji period, 1880s–1890s
Satsuma ware (Yokohama); earthenware, gilded polychromatic overglaze painting, (h.) 61 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

The flattened sides of this lidded flask are decorated with figural scenes. One side illustrates a well-known scene from the legend “The Grand Hunt at Mount Fuji:” While Minamoto no Yoritomo, the founder of the Kamakura shogunate, was hosting a big hunt, a giant wild boar suddenly emerged and attacked the party. The brave warrior Nitta Shirō Tadatsune grabbed the creature by the tail, stabbed it, and jumped onto its back. The boar – actually the embodiment of an evil Shinto deity – then raced through the forest. It was eventually slain but not before the evil deity placed a curse on Tadatsune who, despite being honored by Yoritomo for his valor, soon fell from grace and was exiled. Tadatsune’s daring exploits are described in several literary texts, including *The Tale of the Heike*.

2 THE POWER OF FAITH

10 The illuminated sutra of cause and effect in the past and present

Kamakura period, late 13th century
Fragment of a handscroll mounted as a hanging scroll;
ink and color on paper, 27.8 × 63.7 cm
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (99,27)

The fragment, now mounted as a hanging scroll, was part of a set originally comprising eight handscrolls that are Japanese copies of an original Chinese work from the eighth century. The composition exhibits a unique arrangement in Japanese art in which the expressive script of eight Chinese characters per line appears beneath contiguous painted scenes that are divided by depictions of hills or trees. The text renders a passage from the third chapter in the life of the historical Buddha Śakyamuni. It narrates how King Mara, with the help of his seductive daughters, tries to tempt Buddha away from his meditation under the Bodhi tree. Unfazed by his opponent's advances Śakyamuni continues to meditate.

11 Zenzai Dōji's pilgrimage in fifty-five stages

Muromachi period, late 14th century
Handscroll; ink and light color on paper, 33.8 × 555 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

The youth Zenzai was born into a wealthy family but had since childhood wished to attain Buddhahood. The bodhisattva Monju instructs him to follow the practice of the bodhisattva Fugen and advises him to undertake a pilgrimage. On his journey south, Zenzai encounters fifty-three male and female teachers of diverse ages, professions, and levels of spirituality. None could offer a complete answer regarding

the correct conduct of a bodhisattva, although they all instruct Zenzai in their knowledge of the Buddhist Law and then direct him to the next teacher. Zenzai Dōji's quest for ultimate truth is recounted in the last chapter of *The Flower Ornament Sutra*, the central scripture of the esoteric Kegon lineage of Buddhism. This handscroll is a copy from the late fourteenth century and depicts stations 41 to 51 of Zenzai's pilgrimage. As such, it is only a fragment, like the hanging scroll no. 1 in the exhibition.

12 The illuminated karmic origins of the Heavenly Deity of Kitano

Muromachi period, 1538
Scroll IV from a set of six handscrolls; ink and color on paper,
ca. 31.4 × 832.4 cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris

This handscroll is the fourth from a set of six scrolls which narrate the tumultuous life of the court official Sugawara no Michizane (845–903). Initially celebrated for his erudition, Michizane was exiled from court following unjust allegations. Eventually, he was vindicated and worshipped as the “Heavenly Deity” (Tenjin) after his death. An awe-inspiring deity in charge of all worldly disasters, Tenjin was also the benevolent patron of poetry, calligraphy, and scholarship.

This fourth scrolls reveals one of the most iconic moments in the Tenjin narrative. The God of Fire and Thunder, Karai Tenki Dokuō, attacks the imperial palace conveying a message from Tenjin to those who have wronged him during his life. Even Tenjin's former sovereign, Emperor Daigo, does not escape punishment, even though he has abdicated as reigning monarch to become a Buddhist monk. Infernal fires await the emperor and his retainers after death. The portrayal of the distressed, completely naked monarch counters the common reverential practice of concealing the presence of a sovereign in pictorial depictions.

13 The hagiography of Master Shinran

Muromachi period, mid-16th century
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, 131.4 × 73.6 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst
Klaus F. and Yoshie Naumann Collection

Beginning in the thirteenth century, lineages of Buddhism in Japan created illuminated hagiographies of their founders. Initially, such works were conceived as handscrolls with alternating sequences of script and paintings. They were used in rituals to commemorate the merits of a master or to spread the teachings of a particular tradition. The first hagiography of Shinran (1173–1262), the founder of True Pure Land Buddhism, was produced in 1295 on the occasion of the thirty-third anniversary of his death. After the first version was destroyed in a fire in the fourteenth century, the hagiography began to be illustrated as a set of hanging scrolls, whereby the texts were separated from the paintings. The Berlin painting, a copy from the sixteenth century, is the last hanging scroll in a conventional set of four. Read from the bottom right corner to the top, the scenes represent the following events: The miracle of Hakone; the miracle of Kumano; Shinran's death in Kyoto; transfer of the corpse to the temple Enninji; cremation; establishment of the mausoleum in Yoshimizu.

14 The illuminated karmic origins of Hachiman

Edo period, late 17th century
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 34 × 1600 cm
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The karmic origins of Hachiman is comprised of two distinct parts that are usually allocated a single handscroll each, but this unique piece combines the two in one scroll. They are based on the earliest historical records of Japan and recount the legendary conquest of the Three Kingdoms (57 BCE–668 CE) on the Korean Peninsula by the prehistoric Empress Jingū, her victorious return, and the birth of her son, who would later become Emperor Ōjin. Ōjin is manifested as Hachiman, who from the eighth century on was revered as an

ancestral deity by the imperial household and from the early Kamakura period (1185–1333) by the powerful warrior family, the Minamoto. This high-ranking patronage was matched by local devotion, which resulted in the construction of numerous Hachiman shrines throughout Japan and the creation of Hachiman handscrolls up through the modern era.

15 Kikuchi Yōsai (1788–1878) The illuminated Kannon Sutra

Edo period, 1838
Set of two handscrolls; ink, color, and gold ink on silk;
Scroll I: 33.2 × 1294.5 cm; Scroll II: 33.2 × 1279 cm
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The Kannon Sutra is the title of Chapter 25 of *The Lotus Sutra*. The name is drawn from its principal character, Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. The text enumerates the dangers that an individual might encounter in daily life and demonstrates how Kannon miraculously assists his worshippers. The handscrolls here alternate between the complete text and the illuminations. The paintings very tangibly convey a range of different perils such as a fire, a shipwreck, attacking brigands, and people falling off a cliff. Kannon appears frequently in person, but there are also numerous scenes that do not portray him. Instead, his protective presence is embodied by the text of the sutra that cites his name and “interacts” with the paintings.

2-1 Eleven-headed bodhisattva Kannon

Heian period, 11th–12th century
Wood
Museum Rietberg, Zürich

3 POETS ON THE MOVE

The Episode “Akuta River”

In Episode 6 of *The Ise Stories*, “Akuta River” (Akutagawa), “the man” (presumably Ariwara no Narihira) abducts “the woman” (the later Nijō Empress) whom he has wooed unsuccessfully for many years. They pass the Akuta River late at night where the man hides the woman in a dilapidated storehouse in order to rest before continuing on their journey at dawn. As he stands watch, however, a demon appears and “swallows her in a gulp.”

This poignant story has long captured the imagination of generations of *ukiyo-e* (“pictures of the floating world”) artists. The standard iconography for this episode depicts a man carrying a woman piggyback as they hurry along a stream. A willow tree (not mentioned in the text) is often shown growing along the water’s edge to signal that the setting is summer (nos. 16 & 25). Painters and print designers also made use of the familiar iconography to evoke associations with Heian period courtly elegance for Edo-period audiences (no. 29) or to parody this classical scene (no. 30).

25 The Ise Stories

Edo period, 1608
Book printed with movable type (*Sagabon*), volume 1 of two;
ink on colored paper, 27 × 19.4 cm (each page)
(digital presentation)
Chester Beatty, Dublin

In 1608, the wealthy merchant Suminokura Soan (1571–1632), together with his teacher, the artist Hon’ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), and the courtier Nakanoin Michikatsu (1556–1610), embarked on

an ambitious project to publish texts from Japanese classical literature and libretti for the noh theater using the new printing technologies with movable types brought to Japan in the late sixteenth century from Europe and the Korean Peninsula. The printed books they made are today known as *Sagabon* (“Saga books”), so named after their place of production in the Saga area in Kyoto. The earliest exemplars were deluxe editions, printed on differently colored paper with applied mica. The two-volumed *The Ise Stories* was the first vernacular text done with movable type.

30 Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770) Parody of the “Akuta River” episode in *The Ise stories*

Edo period, ca. 1767
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 27.8 × 20.8 cm
Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels
→ September 10 to October 24

Harunobu’s print is a parodic reworking (*mitate-e*) of established *Ise* iconography. In place of the stylish courtier, Harunobu chooses a middle-aged, low-ranking servant with hirsute legs and burly features, who casts salacious looks at the young girl from an urban household he has abducted. The erotic undercurrents and the humor of the depiction must have appealed to the taste of the hedonistic commoner class in late eighteenth-century Japan.

16 Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792) The syllable “ni,” from the series *The Ise Stories in fashionable brocade prints*

Edo period, ca. 1772–1773
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 22.8 × 15.7 cm
Private collection
→ October 26 to December 5

29 Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806)
**Parody of the “Akuta River” episode in
*The Ise stories***

Edo period, ca. 1801–1806
Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, 87 × 40 cm
The State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow
→ September 10 to October 24

Utamaro’s elegant painting can be understood as a generic genre scene that shows two lovers dressed in Heian period court fashion. The man carries his lover piggyback while she snuggles up to him tenderly. The connection to the “Akuta River” episode in the *Ise* is established in the humorous verse (*kyōka*) composed by Ōta Nanpo (1749–1823), who was also the scribe:

<i>hatanaka ni</i>	In the middle of the field
<i>ohakurotsukete</i>	they stand,
<i>tachitaru ha</i>	those with blackened teeth [aristocrats]
<i>oni hitokuchi ni</i>	It is only natural
<i>kuharu hera nari</i>	to be swallowed up in one gulp by the demon

31 Miyagawa Issho (1689–1779)
**Parody of the “Akuta River” and “Musashi Plain”
episodes in *The Ise stories***

Edo period, before 1752
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, 84.8 × 38.6 cm
The British Museum, London
→ October 26 to December 5

Issho’s hanging scroll amalgamates separate *Ise* episodes into one image. The lower section of the painting shows two couples running in opposite directions. Each of the men carry two swords, identifying them as members of the samurai class, and the women have silk veils traditionally worn by noblewomen to conceal their identities during outings. In the upper section of the scroll two guards carry lanterns, clearly on a search mission. The image of the two men with women riding piggyback would have conjured up the “Akuta River”

episode, while the figures of the guards in pursuit are intrinsically linked to the tale’s “Musashi Plain” sequence.

The episode “Eight Bridges”

The episode “Eight Bridges” (*Yatsushashi*) in Chapter 9 of *The Ise Stories* belongs to the most well-known and frequently illustrated scenes. In this passage of the narrative, Narihira and his entourage set out for the east as his life in the imperial capital Kyoto has become untenable. In Mikawa Province, the group pauses at a marshland overgrown with magnificent irises in bloom. This place is Yatsushashi, so named for its setting by a river that branches into eight smaller tributaries, which are traversed by eight zigzagging wooden bridge planks. Moved by the beauty of the scenery, Narihira composes an acrostic poem of five lines, each headed by a syllable of the word for “iris” (*ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta*):

<i>karakoromo</i>	In this familiar lovely robes, I’m
<i>kitsutsu narenishi</i>	Reminded of the beloved wife
<i>tsuma shi areba</i>	I have left behind, stretching far —
<i>haru-baru kinuru</i>	Sadness, the hem of journeys.
<i>tabi wo shi yo omofu.</i>	

The conventional visualization of this episode shows Narihira and his companions enjoying lunch under a tree along the banks of a marsh lined with irises in full bloom (nos. 22 & 3-1). Even though they have only a marginal appearance in this composition, the irises and the bridge are still the key elements of this episode. This is borne out in later paintings, prints, and the decorative arts in which the figures of Narihira and his entourage are replaced by more contemporary figures or entirely eliminated while the irises and bridge remain indispensable for understanding the literary reference.

In the woodblock prints by Suzuki Harunobu (no. 19) and Utagawa Toyokuni I (no. 20), for example, handsome youths sporting fashionable eighteenth-century garments replace the courtiers of the past. The sword guards (*tsuba*) (nos. 18 & 21) dispense with the

figures altogether, cleverly employing the various intricate techniques such as openwork (*sukashi*) and inlays with precious metals to define the eight-planked bridge and the blooming irises.

22 Pictures of The Ise stories

Muromachi period, ca. 1520–1560
Horizontal folded book (*yokobon orihon*);
ink and color on paper, 16.5 × 35.5 cm (each page)
The British Library, London

19 Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770) “Eight Bridges,” from the series *Parody of The Ise stories*

Edo period, ca. 1767
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 27.7 × 20.9 cm
Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels
→ October 26 to December 5

3-1 Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792) The syllable “ho,” from the series *The Ise stories* *in fashionable brocade prints*

Edo period, ca. 1772–1773
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 22.8 × 15.7 cm
Private collection
→ September 10 to October 24

20 Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825) The courtesan Somenosuke of Matsubaya with the two *kamuro* Wakaki and Wakaba

Edo period, ca. 1795–1800
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 32.4 × 21.2 cm
Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels

18 Sword guard (*tsuba*) with design of the “Eight Bridges”

Edo period, mid-19th century
Copper alloy (*sentoku*), copper-silver alloy (*shakudō*), and copper, 6.5 × 6.1 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

21 Sword guard (*tsuba*) with design of the “Eight Bridges” and irises

Edo period, ca. 1800
Iron, gold damascene, 7.1 × 6.9 × .4 cm
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg

The episode “Musashi Plain”

With its focus on love and romantic liaisons, the *Ise* also provided ample material to Edo-period authors and artists of the “floating world,” *ukiyo*. Next to the episode “Akuta River,” the story of the eloping lovers from the episode “Musashi Plain” counts among the most popular subjects for paintings and woodblock prints. In this text passage, the protagonist (the poet Narihira) kidnaps the daughter of a respected man and flees with her to the plain of Musashi near Edo (now Tokyo). Pursued by the guards, Narihira hides the woman in the tall, dense pampas grass and flees. When the guards want to set the grass on fire to catch the “thief,” the woman desperately calls out:

musashino ha
kefu ha na yaki so
waka-kusa no
tsuma mo komoreri
ware mo komoreri.

Oh no, please, today
do not burn Musashi Plain!
Tender as young grass,
my darling is hiding here,
and I too am hiding here!

17 Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671–1750) **Lovers hiding on Musashi Plain**

Edo period, ca. 1736–1748
Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk, 91.5 × 40 cm
The British Museum, London
→ October 26 to December 5

Sukenobu's hanging scroll depicts a couple in Heian-period court fashion, captured in a close embrace and concealed among autumn grasses. Even though the guards pursuing the runaway lovers are absent in this work, thus imbuing it with a more generic meaning, knowledgeable viewers would nevertheless have readily linked the imagery with the *Ise* “Musashi Plain” episode.

26 Hosoda Eishi (1756–1829) **Young woman dreaming of *The Ise stories***

Edo period, ca. 1795–1818
Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk, 88.7 × 31.2 cm
The British Museum, London
→ September 10 to October 24

Conversancy with the classics for the courtesans of the “floating world” was important, as exemplified in the hanging scroll by Hosoda Eishi. A beautifully dressed and coiffed high-ranking courtesan has fallen asleep while reading a volume of *The Ise Stories*. The speech-bubble rising above the woman's head—a conventional method in visualizing a dream or thought—features the standard iconography for Episode 12 in *Ise*, in which two eloping lovers hide from their pursuers in the tall grasses of the Musashi Plain.

28 Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806) **Parody of the “Musashi Plain” episode in *The Ise stories***

Edo period, ca. 1796
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 39 × 77.8 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

Utamaro's woodblock-print triptych stages a scene from daily life

that reference images established in earlier pictorial and literary sources. Depicted on the right and center sheets is a gathering of four women and a young girl who wear light summer kimono during an outing in a field of pampas grass to enjoy the evening cool. Two of them carry paper lanterns to illuminate the way. This scene is innocent enough to be understood as a typical example of *bijinga* (“pictures of beauties”), a popular sub-genre in *ukiyo-e*. Yet the inclusion in the left sheet of a standing woman, who conceals her crouching lover behind her, betrays the connection to the *Ise* “Musashi Plain” episode.

The episode “Narrow road of ivy”

The lyrical images evoked by the *Ise* not only captured the imagination of painters and print designers but also generations of artisans. *Ise* motifs began to appear as design motifs on lacquer objects from at least the sixteenth century. The pictorial programs on such three-dimensional artworks usually feature the key components of the scene, as established in painting, albeit without figural representations in an aesthetic device described as *rusu moyō*, or “absent motif.” Audiences familiar with the narratives would have easily understood the visual references. The identification of motifs on lacquer boxes, furniture, and other objects used in daily life also served as a sophisticated, intellectual pastime.

Among the most popular designs drawn from the *Ise* are those of the “Eight Bridges” (*Yatsushashi*) as well as iconic elements in the scenes from the same episode (no. 9), variously called “Mount Utsu” (*Utsunoyama*) or “Narrow road of ivy” (*Tsuta no hosomichi*). This passage retells Narihira's encounter with a mountain ascetic on a gloomy, narrow path overgrown with ivy on Mount Utsu. Narihira recognizes the ascetic as a former acquaintance and hands him a poem for the beloved woman he left behind in the capital:

suruga naru Where in Suruga
utsu no yamabe no rise the flanks of Mount Utsu,
utsutsu ni mo neither the senses
yume ni mo hito ni nor dreams ever gladden me
ahanu narikeri with the presence of my love.

The portrayal of the scene in paintings usually render Narihira's encounter with the ascetic on the narrow, ivy-covered mountain path (no. 24). When visually translated onto three-dimensional objects, the story is distilled to the essential elements: the ivy, the ascetic's backpack, and the rocks hinting at the hilly landscape of Mount Utsu (nos. 32&34).

34 Portable picnic set with design of the episode "Narrow road of ivy"

Edo period, 1800–1850s
 Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 27.9 × 28.6 × 15.6 cm
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London

32 Writing box (*suzuribako*) with design of the episode "Narrow road of ivy"

Edo period, ca. 1775–1825
 Wood, gold and silver *maki-e* on black lacquer, 2 × 14.5 × 16.2 cm
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

24 The Ise stories

Edo period, late 17th century
 Illuminated manuscript, two volumes; ink, color, and gold on paper, 24 × 18 cm (each page)
 Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cologny (Geneva)

The episode "Journey to the east"

The third, frequently illustrated passage from Episode 9 shows the moment as Narihira and his entourage pass by Mount Fuji on their journey to the east of the country. The popularity of the scene relies not as much on the literary quality of the poem, which reads:

toki shiranu A peak that ignores
yama ha fuji no ne all seasons: that is Fuji
itsu tote ka What month is it, then,
kanoko madara ni that fawn-dappled flecks of white
yuki no fururan should betray a fall of snow?

Painters, print designers, and lacquer masters were rather intrigued by the fact that Mount Fuji, Japan's highest and most "famous place" (*meisho*) is the protagonist in this scene, enabling them to combine two different pictorial genres in one composition.

3-2 Kitao Masanobu (Santō Kyōden) (1761–1816) Newly selected one poem each by fifty poets in the Tenmei era: A library of Edo-style "mad verse"

Edo period, ca. 1786
 Woodblock-printed book; ink and color on paper, 27 × 18 cm (each page)
 Private collection

23 The Ise stories

Muromachi period, late 16th century
 Illuminated manuscript, volume 1 of three; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, 29.8 × 22.4 cm (each page), (digital presentation)
 Chester Beatty, Dublin

27 Kikugawa Eizan (1787–1867) Fashionable journey to the east

Edo period, ca. 1809
 Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 38.4 × 76.5 cm
 Museo d'Arte Orientale, Venice

Eizan's triptych employs the aesthetic strategies known as *mitate-e* ("parody pictures") to transpose a scene from classical literature in a contemporary setting. Narihira and his male companions are substituted for a group of gorgeously robed women acting out the famous "Journey to the east." The parodic nature of the print is further enhanced by the female figure on horseback, here cross-dressing as a male Heian-period courtier, presumably Ariwara no Narihira.

33 Kajikawa School
Three-tiered birdcage set with design of the episode “Journey to the east”

Edo period, 1786–1800
Wood, gold, silver, and red *maki-e* on black lacquer, 46 × 50.5 × 31 cm
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (E 19)

From the eighteenth century onward, with the broad dissemination of *Ise* iconography as established earlier in *Sagabon*, lacquer masters moved away from the device of “absent motifs” and began to adapt entire pictorial sequences, including figures. Such a “lacquer painting” graces the outermost lid of this three-tiered birdcage. The scene of Narihira and his entourage passing by Mount Fuji on their way east is executed in a painterly mode using gold, silver, and red lacquer along the four sides of the lid.

4 LOVE AND INTRIGUE

Genji-Fragrance

38 Ogyū Tensen (1882–1947)
Chapter 44, “Bamboo River” (Takegawa) from *The Tale of Genji*

Taishō–Shōwa periods, ca. 1915–1940
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink and color on silk, 169.5 × 376 cm (each screen)
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

35 Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792)
Four prints from a set of The “Genji incense (*Genji-kō*) game”

Edo period, ca. 1781
Woodblock prints; ink and color on paper, 15.7 × 21.4 cm (each sheet)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

- a. *The divine princess at Uji bridge*
- b. *Early fiddlehead greens*
- c. *A boat cast adrift*
- d. *A floating bridge in a dream*

37 **Perfumed neck-rest pillow (*kō-makura*) with scenes from *The Tale of Genji***

Edo period, late 17th century
Wood, gold *maki-e*, and *nashiji* on black lacquer, 13.3 × 11.5 × 20.5 cm
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (E 120)

The use of scented woods for personal hygiene as well as for parlor games has a firm place in the courtly culture of the Heian period.

“Fragrance” also plays an important role in *The Tale of Genji*. For instance, the two protagonists in the second part of the narrative are *Kaoru* (“Fragrance”) and *Niou* (“The Perfumed Prince”). Ogyū Tensen’s pair of folding screens (no. 38) illustrates a scene in Chapter 44, “The Bamboo River,” in which a lady-in-waiting bestowed her perfume-soaked robes on the young Kaoru, considered irresistible due to his natural fragrance, for his musical performance.

The elegance and sophistication of a person is manifested, among other things, by their ability to create a personal fragrance from different scented woods. The incense stick is lit and placed in sumptuously crafted containers that release the fragrance. The neck-rest pillow (no. 37) decorated with *Genji* scenes served to perfume the hair.

From the sixteenth century onward, the incense ceremony developed into a popular pastime among the social elite. In the *Genji* incense game (*Genji-kō*), each scent is assigned to one of the 52 chapters (excluding chapters 1 and 54) of the narrative, and participants are asked to identify the scents. Each fragrance is marked with a geometric pattern consisting of five vertical strokes and their various cross-connections, referred to as *Genji-mon* (*Genji* emblem) (no. 36). Detached from their original context, *Genji-mon* came to be used as graphic decorative elements on textiles, lacquer and metalwork, and in series of woodblock prints (no. 35).

The scented woods and writing utensils needed in the *Genji* incense game are kept in small, luxuriously crafted lacquer boxes, usually decorated with scenes from *The Tale of Genji* (nos. 45, 48, 49&53).

36 Women’s unlined long-sleeved kimono (*furisode*) with courtly motifs

Edo period, mid-18th century
Silk gauze, *yūzen* paste-resist dyeing, silk thread embroidery, 127 × 96 cm
Museo d’Arte Orientale, Venice

The “Moriyasu-Handscrolls”

39 Scene 8 from Chapter 10, “A branch of sacred evergreen” (*Sakaki*) from the “Moriyasu handscrolls” of *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, after 1655
Framed fragment of a handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 35.5 × 136 cm
Private collection

40 Scene 27 from Chapter 10, “A branch of sacred evergreen” (*Sakaki*) from the “Moriyasu handscrolls” of *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, after 1655
Framed fragment of a handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 35.5 × 102 cm
Private collection

41 Scene 30 from Chapter 10, “A branch of sacred evergreen” (*Sakaki*) from the “Moriyasu handscrolls” of *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, after 1655
Framed fragment of a handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 35.5 × 136.5 cm
Private collection

An extraordinary set of illuminated handscrolls of *The Tale of Genji* is the “Moriyasu handscrolls,” so named after its commissioner Taira Moriyasu (act. 1626–1682), a member of the upper middle-class with loose ties to the court aristocracy. In a colophon appearing at the end of the first chapter and dated to 1655, Moriyasu explains his intent to illustrate all the 54 chapters of the novel. Had it been completed the original set most likely would have comprised more than 200 scrolls with over 1000 painted scenes. Today around a hundred fragments are extant that are either framed or mounted as handscrolls. The iconography represents a major departure in *Genji* imagery in highlighting all the stages of Prince Genji’s life, from the pivotal to the least notable, from the most moving to the most controversial. The style of the paintings also reflects a singular

sensibility rare in the *Genji* visual tradition, and the individual scenes measure up to 2 m in length.

The three fragments shown here are from Chapter 10, “A branch of sacred evergreen.” **No. 39** takes place following the death of the emperor, Genji’s father. Sitting in and outside a room that opens onto a garden, a lady-in-waiting and the Princes Hyōbu and Genji contemplate the beauty of the snowy landscape and exchange poems to express the sadness over their loss. **No. 40** depicts two men, in mourning robes, who sit face to face in a large reception room perpendicular to a covered hallway. The scene could refer to the imminent fall of Genji and his clan: the moon and the flowers in the garden signal autumn, a season befitting the uncertainty of events. **No. 41** presents an episode that will prove decisive to Prince Genji and his later unfortunate exile. But the tone is equally colored by wry humor. Genji, who is seen peeking out from the bedcovers in his lover’s quarter, eavesdrops on the young woman’s father, who interrogates his daughter on a reputed secret lover. She is actually promised to the emperor.

The *Genji* albums

42 Tosa Mitsunori (1583–1638) (painting) and Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (1579–1638) (script) Excerpts from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, early 17th century
Folded album (*orihon*); ink, color, and gold on paper, 23.5 × 20.3 cm (each page)
Etnografiska museet – Statens museer för världskultur, Stockholm

43 Sumiyoshi Jokei (1599–1670) Excerpts from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, 1663–1666
Folded album (*orihon*); ink and color on paper, 23.4 × 19.9 cm (each page)
The British Library, London

The album format favors the pairing of script and painting to create an intimate viewing experience in which one excerpt from each

chapter of *The Tale of Genji* and a corresponding painting appears on the double-page spread.

The script in the Stockholm album (**no. 42**) is attributed to Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, a foremost calligrapher of the early Edo period, and the painter, Tosa Mitsunori, was a master of pictorial narration executed in small formats. The album from the British Library (**no. 43**) belongs to an album type known as *tekagami* (“mirror of hands”), which gathers the best fragments of ancient calligraphy to be appreciated for their aesthetic qualities. The script passages are by various high-ranking courtiers and imperial princes, whose names and functions are noted on an oblong slip affixed on the right border of the page. The paintings, executed in light colors and soft tones, are by Sumiyoshi Jokei, who was Mitsunori’s disciple and founder of the Sumiyoshi lineage. Painters of this school worked for both the Tokugawa Shogunate and the court aristocracy.

Chapter 7, “An imperial celebration of autumn foliage” (*Momiji no ga*)

44 Women’s outer robe (*uchikake*) with designs in the lining of *bugaku* props and maple leaves

Edo period, mid-18th century
Silk, *yūzen* paste-resist dyeing, silk thread embroidery, 170 × 122 cm
Museo d’Arte Orientale, Venice

45 Small shell-shaped incense box (*kōbako*) with designs of shell-matching game (*kai-awase*) and *bugaku* props

Edo period, second half of the 19th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 5.6 × 12.5 × 9.5 cm
Hopp Ferenc Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum, Budapest

46 Vase with designs of *bugaku* props and maple leaves

Edo period, mid-19th century
Satsuma ware; earthenware, gilded polychromatic overglaze painting,
30.3 × 14.8 (base) × 9.7 (mouth) cm
Hopp Ferenc Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum, Budapest

The festival described in Chapter 7, “An Imperial Celebration of Autumn Foliage,” is organized by the emperor in honor of his father’s fiftieth birthday and is attended by the entire court. The highlight of the lavish ceremony is the performance by the young Prince Genji, who together with his close friend, Tō no Chūjō, presents the “Waves of the Blue Sea” (*Seigai no ha*), an acclaimed piece from the repertory of court dance (*bugaku*). They delight the audience with the elegant choreography that includes graceful dance movements in which the sleeves of the performers’ robes simulate undulating waves.

The outer robe for women, *uchikake* (no. 44), the shell-shaped lacquer box for storing incense (no. 45), and the Satsuma vase (no. 46) recall this auspicious episode through an aesthetic device called *rusu moyō* (“absent motif”). Here, the dancers’ figures are omitted and the composition is reduced to a few iconic objects: a dance stage surrounded by colorful, autumnal maple leaves, as well as instruments and props for the *bugaku* dance, such as a bamboo mouth organ, two large drums representing Chinese and Korean styles of music, and headdresses modeled after the head of a phoenix.

Genji imagery as auspicious symbols

47 Box for personal accessories (*tebako*) with design from Chapter 14, “Channel Markers” (*Miotsukushi*) from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, late 17th century
Wood, gold *maki-e*, gold foil, and black lacquer on *nashiji* ground,
38.5 × 28.1 × 24.7 cm
Hopp Ferenc Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum, Budapest

48 Hexagonal incense box (*kōbako*) with scenes from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, second half of 18th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* on gold lacquer, 8.5 × 13 × 11.3 cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris

49 Writing box (*suzuribako*) with designs from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, second half of the 18th century
Wood, gold and silver *maki-e* on black lacquer, 5.2 × 9.7 × 13.9 cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris

50 Wedding casket with designs from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, 1630–1634
Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 8 × 15.3 × 7.2 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In the first half of the seventeenth century, *Genji* imagery enjoyed high popularity as decorative motifs for dowries, as the female characters in the novel were considered role models and knowledge of the literary classics was considered conducive to the etiquette of future wives. The box for personal accessories (*tebako*) (no. 47) is decorated with a festive scene from Chapter 14, “Channel Markers” (*Miotsukushi*), picturing Genji’s pilgrimage to the famous Sumiyoshi shrine on his return from exile to thank the deity for his restoration to the court.

The adoption of Genji designs is similarly shown on two small lacquer objects that were probably used in incense sets. The hexagonal box to store incense (no. 48) depicts girls digging up young pine trees, an activity performed at the new year to ensure a long and healthy life. The bird on the branch signals a reference to Chapter 23, “First Song of Spring” (*Hatsune*). The many felicitous elements of this chapter—the first song, for instance, is associated with the first cry of a newborn child—frequently appeared as the décor on lacquer objects. The tiered writing box (no. 49), may have been used in a

ceremonial incense game to record the results. Its lid shows a nobleman with a writing box in a setting that appears far from the capital, perhaps Suma where Genji lived in exile. These two miniature objects are from the lacquerware collection of the eighteenth-century French queen Marie Antoinette that included sixty-eight items, the majority of which her mother Maria Theresa, the Archduchess of Austria, presented to her.

The exquisite miniature lacquer chest (no. 50) is another outstanding example of the European vogue for Japanese lacquer. Commissioned as wedding gift for a Dutch aristocratic couple in 1620–1630, the box’s design conflates Japanese figures with a Chinese setting. Such hybrid works were clearly intended to please the European infatuation with the exotic.

51 Bridal palanquin (*onna norimono*) with designs of arabesque foliage interwoven with young pines and wild ginger leaves (*aoi*), with wild ginger pattern family crests

Edo period, late 18th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 100 × 113 × 81 cm (compartment), ca. 18 × 4800 × 7 cm (carrying beam)
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, Deposit at Musée de la Voiture, Compiègne

Horizontal registers of arabesque foliage, interspersed with the crest of the Tokugawa family—a roundel containing three wild ginger leaves—and young pine trees cover the compartment and the carrying beam. On the register along the base of the palanquin, the circular crest is replaced by one composed of six wild ginger leaves (*mutsu-ba-aoi*), the family crest of the Kishū branch of the Tokugawa family. These crests confirm that the palanquin was commissioned for a young woman who was a member of one of the three main branches of the Tokugawa shogunal family. The inside of the carriage has sumptuous illustrations from *The Tale of Genji* painted with bright colors on gold leaf. Scenes from Chapter 23, “First Song of Spring” (*Hatsune*) appear on the front wall and on the left side while the right side has representations from Chapter 24, “Butterflies” (*Kochō*).

The many faces of Yūgao

52 Tosa School Chapter 4, “The lady of the evening faces” (*Yūgao*) from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, early 17th century
Album page; ink, color, and gold on paper, 21 × 17.6 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

53 Shell-shaped incense box (*kōbako*) with designs from Chapters 12 and 4, “Exile to Suma” (*Suma*) and “The lady of the evening faces” (*Yūgao*) from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, mid-18th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 3 × 9 × 7 cm
Private collection

54 Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792) Prince Genji and Yūgao

Edo period, ca. 1780s
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 38 × 50 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
→ October 26 – December 5

55 Chōkōsai Eishō (act. 1790s) Prince Genji and Yūgao

Edo period, ca. 1795
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, ca. 39.1 × 78 cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

56 Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770) Parody of Chapter 4, “The lady of the evening faces” (*Yūgao*) from *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, ca. 1765
Woodblock print, left sheet of diptych; ink and color on paper, 27.3 × 18.5 cm
Fondation Baur – Musée des Arts d’Extrême Orient, Geneva
→ September 10 – October 24

57 Small hand-drum (*kotsuzumi*) with design of blossoming moonflowers (*yūgao*)

Momoyama period, late 16th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* on black lacquer, 26 × 9.8 (dia.) cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst
Klaus F. and Yoshie Naumann Collection

58 Noh robe (*chōken*) with designs of blossoming moonflowers (*yūgao*) and fence

Edo period, second half of the 18th–first half of the 19th century
Silk, gauze weave with gold-leaf thread, 121 × 219 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

59 Chapter 4, “The lady of the evening faces” (Yūgao) from the “Moriyasu handscrolls” of *The Tale of Genji*

Edo period, after 1655
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 35 × 131.9 cm
Private collection

60 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) A rustic Genji by a fraudulent Murasaki

Meiji period, ca. 1882
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 37 × 74.1 cm
The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge,
Purchased from the Rylands Fund with a contribution from The Art Fund

61 Yasutaka (dates unknown) Hannya noh mask

Edo period, late 18th century
Wood, lacquer, and pigments, 24 × 18 × 10.5 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

In Chapter 4 of the tale, Prince Genji is intrigued by a climbing vine with white flowers on the fence of a humble house in a working-class neighborhood. He has his manservant go and pick them, and a young maidservant from the house hands him a fan inscribed with a poem by her mistress upon which to arrange them. The poem

inscribed on the fan arouses Genji's interest about its author. The amorous liaison between Genji and the mysterious woman, who is named after the flowers *yūgao* (“Evening faces”) tragically ends with her sudden death caused by the jealous spirit of one of Genji's former neglected lovers.

Pictorializations of this chapter commonly privilege the opening scene, which summarizes the themes of the chapter that juxtapose the class differences between the two characters (nos. 52–56). The short-lived *yūgao* blooms, flowering only a single day and not typically grown in aristocratic gardens, also serve to reinforce the ephemeral existence of this young woman of lower standing when compared with the aristocratic Genji.

The popularity of the Yūgao-Genji love story was further nurtured by the noh plays, *Yūgao* and *Hajitomi*, and the instruments and robes used in the performances are sometimes decorated with illustrations of the corresponding *Genji* chapter. The small hand-drum (no. 57), for instance, has a design of *yūgao* flowers and a carriage. A wide-sleeved cloak for female roles (no. 58) features *yūgao* motifs rendered with gold thread in the upper section and a pattern of zig-zagging fences along the bottom of the robe and the sleeves.

The fragment from the set known as the “Moriyasu handscrolls” (no. 59) represents an exception in the canonical *Genji* paintings, since it illustrates not the beginning but the tragic end of the love story. The just-deceased Yūgao is seen lying on a futon in a dilapidated country house. Moved by the death of his beloved, the prince strokes Yūgao's hair while her nurse, Ukon, reaches for his sleeve in consolation.

Yoshitoshi's triptych (no. 60) is not based on the classic tale but on its most famous nineteenth-century adaptation, the popular serial novel *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki*. The theatrical work depicts the gruesome death of Tasogare (Yūgao's counterpart) by the attack of her mother Shinonome's vengeful spirit. Yoshitoshi also fuses here the imagery from *Rustic Genji* with the noh play *Lady Aoi* (*Aoi no ue*) by dynamically reimagining Shinonome as a character from this piece. She dons the horned Hannya noh mask (no. 61) and enacts the threatening pose characteristic of vengeful female spirits.

**From Royal to Courtesan: The Third Princess
(Onna Sannomiya)**

62 Tosa School
**Chapter 34, “Early Spring Greens: Part I”
(Wakana [jō]) from *The Tale of Genji***

Edo period, early 17th century
Album page; ink, color, and gold on paper, 21 × 17.6 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

63 Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806)
**Parody of the Third Princess (Onna Sannomiya),
from the series *Siblings Picture***

Edo period, ca. 1795–1796
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 39.4 × 25.7 cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris
→ September 10 – October 24

64 Torii Kiyonaga (1752–1815)
**Young woman with a dog, from the series
*Pictures of Ten Types***

Edo period, ca. 1790–1791
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.8 × 24 cm
Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels
→ October 26 – December 5

65 Suzuki Harunobu (ca. 1725–1770)
**Girl playing with kitten, parody of the
Third Princess (Onna Sannomiya)**

Edo period, 1760s
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 68.6 × 11.4 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst
Gift of James Simon

66 Isoda Koryūsai (1735–1790)
**Girl with kitten, parody of the Third Princess
(Onna Sannomiya)**

Edo period, ca. 1770
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 72.8 × 12 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst
→ October 26 – December 5

67 Yōshū Chikanobu (1838–1912)
**Parody of the Third Princess (Onna Sannomiya)
from *The Tale of Genji***

Meiji period, 1890s
Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk, 114.9 × 44.2 cm
The British Museum, London
→ September 10 – October 24

68 Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
**Bandō Mitsugorō III in the role of the Third
Princess, from the series *Seven Changes***

Edo period, 1811
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 38.4 × 25.8 cm
Museo d’Arte Orientale, Venice
→ October 26 – December 5

69 Kitao Masanobu (Santō Kyōden) (1761–1816)
**Newly selected one poem each by fifty poets in the
Tenmei era: A library of Edo-style “mad verse”**

Edo period, ca. 1786
Woodblock-printed book; ink and color on paper, 27 × 18 cm (each page)
The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

In Chapter 34, “Early Spring Greens: Part I” (*Wakana [jō]*), the young courtier Kashiwagi is secretly enamored with the timid, childlike Third Princess (Onna Sannomiya), who is betrothed to Prince Genji. Disappointed by her immaturity, however, Genji quickly forsakes her. The princess’s tranquil life is then disrupted when a group of young men, including Kashiwagi, arrives in her garden to play a game of kickball (*kemari*). Attracted by this unusual spectacle, she observes

the men well-hidden behind a blind until her kitten is chased by a larger cat. It runs onto the veranda, its leash pushing the blind aside to expose the young woman to Kashiwagi's gaze. This episode of the first eye-contact belongs to the most frequently depicted scene in *Genji* paintings (no. 62). The transitory encounter stirs the young man's imagination, henceforth, he goes to great lengths to win her affections. Their relationship results in the birth of Kaoru, one of the main male protagonists of the second part of the *Genji* novel.

In the second half of the eighteenth-century, the kickball episode inspired a myriad of images of beautiful women dressed in Edo-period fashion that had associations with the Third Princess. In the "pillar prints" by Harunobu (no. 65) and Koryūsai (no. 66), the two girls playing with a cat have a reserve and grace more in tune with the Third Princess in the *Genji* tale. The string and ball in Harunobu's work echoes the cat's leash and the kickball game. In Koryūsai's print the girl's kimono is decorated with cherry blossoms and a pattern of striped lines reminiscent of the blinds.

The prints by Utamaro (no. 63) and Kiyonaga (no. 64), on the other hand, eroticize the protagonist, by showing her as a standing courtesan who coquettishly pulling up her outer robe, ostensibly to get a better view of the leashed dog. In doing so, she affords a glimpse on her exposed leg. Dogs—popular pets in the pleasure quarters—replace the cat in the *Genji* tale.

Sensuality also permeates Chikanobu's hanging scroll (no. 67). A woman, her hair worn loose, has just emerged from the bath. She is simply attired in a diaphanous robe that reveals the contours of her body, perhaps an allusion to the semi-transparent blind in the *Genji* tale. The cat, which here could be a symbol of sexual obsession, is playing with the end of her sash.

Toyokuni I's print (no. 68) depicts the male kabuki actor Bandō Mitsugorō III in the role of the Third Princess. The work belongs to the series *Seven Changes*. This performance type was popular in the first two decades of the nineteenth-century, showcasing the actor's breadth in the kabuki repertory and his skill in changing roles quickly, from the vulgar to the elegant, male to female, classical to contemporary.

The woodblock-printed book by Kitao Masanobu (no. 69) wittily parodies the classical iconographic tradition. Each page of the book features a female or male poet with a *kyōka* (literally "mad verse") of her/his own. The courtesan/poet appearing in the role of the Third Princess (on the left of the double-page spread) is named Tamago no Kakujo, which literally means something like "Square-egging Woman." Opposite her sits Hezutsu Tōsaku, a merchant and active amateur poet from Edo. With his glasses hanging shakily from one ear, he gazes at the woman—a clear allusion to the encounter scene between Kashiwagi and the Third Princess. The kitten in his lap creates another connection with the *Genji* tale because while Kashiwagi languishes for the princess he acquires her cat as her surrogate.

5 POWER AND GLORY

70 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) **The ghosts of the Heike appear at Daimotsu Bay in Settsū province**

Edo period, ca. 1839–1841
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, ca. 36 × 75 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

71 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) **“Taira no Kiyomori seeing the skulls of his enemies in the snowy garden,” from the series *A new selection of strange events***

Meiji period, 1882
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 36.4 × 73.8 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

72 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) **“The moon at the helm of a boat,” from the series *One hundred aspects of the moon***

Meiji period, 1887
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.2 × 25.1 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

73 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) **“Saga Moor moon,” from the series *One hundred aspects of the moon***

Meiji period, 1891
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.2 × 25.1 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

5-1 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) **“The moon’s inner vision,” from the series *One hundred aspects of the moon***

Meiji period, 1886
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.2 × 25.1 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

5-2 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) **“Hōrin temple moon,” from the series *One hundred aspects of the moon***

Meiji period, 1890
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 36.2 × 25.1 cm
The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
Purchased from the Rylands Fund with contribution from The Art Fund

Starting from the eighteenth century, and particularly in the nineteenth century, imagery from the *Tales of the Heike* was further disseminated through the adaptations of the story in popular culture in the kabuki and puppet theaters, and in the visual vocabulary of woodblock-printed books, independent sheets, and series. Woodblock-print designers of the Utagawa lineage, including Kuniyoshi and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, drew on the *Heike* for their dramatic renditions of sea battles and the haunting toil of war on the individual warrior (nos. 70 & 71).

Edo-period printed books and prints tended to shed a favorable light on Taira warriors by emphasizing their aristocratic cultivation and their military accomplishments (nos. 72 & 5-1). This rather compassionate portrayal of the Taira—in paintings usually represented as vainglorious and coward losers—may have indicated a form of covert opposition to the ideology of the ruling Tokugawa shogunate.

Women are by and large seen as marginal figures in military epics such as the *Heike*. Even though they are few in number, the women in the *Heike* story distinguish themselves from the heroines in courtly novels as being paragons of virtue and integrity (nos. 73 & 5-2), strong and brave, uncompromising and dignified. Their depictions in paintings, and above all in woodblock prints, testify to the high respect they commanded.

74 Yoshitoshi (act. mid-19th century)
Sword guard (*tsuba*) with design of Minamoto no Yoshitsune at the battle of Fujikawa

Edo period, mid-19th century
Copper alloy (*shakudō*) with high-relief *iroye* incrustation, 7.7 × 6.9 cm
Fondation Baur – Musée des Arts d'Extrême Orient, Geneva

5-3 Masaharu (act. first half of 19th century)
Sword guard (*tsuba*) with design of Sasaki Takatsuna fording the Uji river

Edo period, first half of 19th century
Copper alloy (*shakudō*) with high-relief *iroye* incrustation, 7.4 × 6.9 cm
Fondation Baur – Musée des Arts d'Extrême Orient, Genève

75 Ganshōsai Shunsui (1822–1880)
Four-tiered *inrō* with design of Taira no Yoshimitsu teaching Toyohira Tokiaki to play the mouth organ on Mount Ashigara

Edo period, late 19th century
Wood, gold and silver *maki-e*, inlay with abalone shell on black lacquer ground, 9 × 7.6 × 1.9 cm
Fondation Baur – Musée des Arts d'Extrême Orient, Geneva

5-4 Ganshōsai Shunsui (1822–1880)
Four-tiered *inrō* with design of Kagekiyo fighting Mionoya Jūrō in the battle of Yashima

Edo period, late 19th century
Wood, gold *maki-e* and kirigane on black lacquer ground, 8.2 × 8.7 × 2.2 cm
Fondation Baur – Musée des Arts d'Extrême Orient, Genève

5-5 **Armor after *dōmaru* type**

Edo period, 19th century
Metal, lacquer and silk, (h.) 80 cm
Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Bruxelles

76 Studio of Kano Sōshū (1551–1601)
The battle of Ichinotani

Edo period, early 17th century
Six-panel folding screen: ink, color, and gold on paper, 169.8 × 372.3 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

77 **The battles of Ichinotani and Yashima**

Edo period, early 17th century
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, 168 × 382 cm (each screen)
Fondazione Torino Musei – MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale, Turin

The rise of the Tokugawa family as the governing shogunate in the seventeenth century coincided with an increase in the production of panoramic images representing the three most crucial battles featured in the *Heike*: Ichinotani, Yashima, and Dannoura. Conventionally, the depictions of Minamoto warriors on such screens typically highlight their courage and loyalty while members of the Taira army are pictured engaging in what can be read as acts of cowardice and treason. This interpretation of the Genpei War is not surprising when we consider that the commission of the screens was principally by members of the Tokugawa family. The Tokugawa claimed ancestry to the Minamoto and thus would have wished to celebrate the victories of the virtuous and brave Minamoto. This functioned to validate the moral authority of their rule.

Typical combinations show the battle at Ichinotani on the right screen with Yashima or Dannoura on the left. The focus of the Ichinotani screens (**no. 76 & right screen of no. 77**) is the two-pronged attack on the Taira's fortress in Ichinotani, today located near the city of Kobe. The first of the two assaults—generally depicted on the first panel on the right—is led by Minamoto no Noriyori. The second is Minamoto no Yoshitsune's surprise attack that unfolds in the upper section of the first three panels; he blindsides the enemy through an audacious strategy of leading his troops down the steep slope of Hidoyori Pass. The Taira army flees toward the shore where ships await them. The tragic demise of the Taira generals, including the most celebrated scene of the death of the young Taira no Atsumori at

the hands of the seasoned Minamoto warrior Kumagai Naozane, is rendered in vivid detail on the three panels on the left.

The topography of the Seto Inland Sea that concludes the right screen on the outermost left panel continues on the right half of the left screen (**no. 77, left screen**). Here, the positions of the two parties are reversed: the Taira forces, having retreated to their ships at Yashima, are portrayed on the first two panels on the right, while the Minamoto, again launching an attack on the Taira stronghold, occupy the four remaining panels on the left. The highlights of this episode are the bold response of Nasu no Yoichi to a challenge by the Taira by targeting a fan held by a woman of the Taira family with his bow (center of second and third panel from right); the mortally wounded Satō Tsubunobu as he shields his leader Yoshitsune against an enemy arrow (center of the third panel from right); and Yoshitsune jumping into the sea to retrieve his lost arrow (upper part of first and second panel from right).

5-3 Albert Lutz Video triptych “The battle of Ichinotani”

2021
Three-channel installation
Duration: 15’

78 Tosa School The tale of the Heike

Edo period, early 17th century
Six pairs of fans from a set of sixty pairs; ink, color, and gold on paper, 8.8 × 24.8 cm (each fan)
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst

- a. *Weasels appearing at the cloistered emperor’s residence*
- b. *Rats living in a horse’s tail*
- c. *Minamoto no Nakakuni searching for Lady Kogō in Saga*
- d. *Kiso no Yoshinaka praying for victory*
- e. *Taira no Kiyotsune playing the flute before his suicide*
- f. *The drowning of the child Emperor Antoku and his grandmother*

The Berlin set of sixty pairs of miniature fans is one of the rare examples of “*Heike* paintings” that feature illuminations of the entire tale. The shape of fan paintings would have demanded a particularly imaginative approach in order to balance the individual pictorial elements in the creation of a visually pleasing composition. An added challenge in the Berlin fans would have been their size, which is half that of a standard fan. Besides dynamic battle scenes, the set also contains compositions involving supernatural forces (a&b) as well as moments of poetic poignancy (c), deep religiosity (d), introspective contemplation (e), and personal tragedy (f).

The range of moods and episodes must have appealed to both male and female audiences. Indeed, reading the *Heike* and viewing its illustrations was considered an essential part in the education of female members of wealthy warrior families. Together with *The Ise Stories* and *The Tale of Genji*, illuminated handscrolls, albums, and hand-copied manuscripts of the *Heike* are known to be among the most popular objects in an aristocratic woman’s trousseau. The diminutive scale, refined brushwork, and sumptuous materials characterizing the Berlin fans hint at this purpose.

79 Men’s short overcoat (*haori*) with designs of medieval and early twentieth-century battle scenes

Taishō period, 1915–1918
Silk, brocade lining, 99 × 128 cm
Völkerkundemuseum der J. u. E. von Portheim-Stiftung, Heidelberg

Simple and unassuming on the outside, the lining of this short men’s jacket raises many questions. The woven lining displays a striking juxtaposition of scenes of a sea battle from *The Tale of the Heike* in the central fan-shaped cartouche with two views of an early twentieth-century war. The portrayal of modern warfare in the two side cartouches is rendered entirely in black and gray within a handscroll shape. What the exact significance of this composition would have been to its wearer is not entirely clear: was it intended as a bellicose statement of patriotism and as tacit support for victory in

war? We can never answer this question but it is known that thousands of kimono with military and martial designs on the inside and occasionally on the outside of kimono were made in the first half of the twentieth century.

80 Attributed to the studio of Kaihō Yūsetsu (1598–1677) **lōgashima, Ibuki, Kiyoshige**

Edo period, ca. 1660–1680
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 33.5 × 1910 cm
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

81 **The Hatmaker**

Edo period, 1660s–1670s
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 33.5 × 1660 cm
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst
Donated by Marie Meyer and Ernst Grosse

Another type of Heike-related paintings are *mai no hon*, illustrated libretti for *kōwakamai* (“ballad dramas”). Single incidents from the *Heike* or episodes from the life of prominent *Heike* figures were adapted for these plays. The storylines, which eventually appeared in written form, were depicted on virtually all script-painting materials from the late sixteenth century onward.

No. 80 deals with three *kōwakamai* plays: *lōgashima*, *Ibuki*, and *Kiyoshige*. The first recounts how three warriors from the *Heike* tale are banished as punishment for their conspiracy against Taira no Kiyomori, the powerful nemesis of the Minamoto family. The second centers on episodes from the life of the future shogun and founder of the Kamakura shogunate, Minamoto no Yoritomo. The last narrative in this handscroll illustrates the play *Kiyoshige*, named after the hero of this piece, Kiyoshige. He is one of the Four Heavenly Kings, who die heroically in service to their lord Minamoto no Yoshitsune.

Yoshitsune, who is Yoritomo’s half-brother, is the most popular tragic hero of Heike and plays a central role in 20 *kōwakamai* plays. For example, he is the main character in the story *The Hatmaker* (**no. 81**), which focuses on various adventurous episodes from his youth:

Yoshitsune performs his coming-of-age ceremony alone, for which he needs a special court cap; he demonstrates his talent at playing the flute at a banquet; and single-handedly defeats a band of bandits.

6 VANQUISHING DEMONS

82 The tale of Ōeyama

Edo period, mid-17th century
Reproduction of Scroll III from a set of three handscrolls; ink, pigments,
gold powder on paper, 33.3 cm × 1041.8 cm
Chester Beatty, Dublin

The oldest surviving depiction of the story of the sake-loving, human-eating giant monster Shuten Dōji dates from the fourteenth century. However, the set of three handscrolls commissioned by the powerful warlord Hōjō Ujitsuna in the sixteenth century and painted by the influential painter Kano Motonobu (1476–1559) is considered to be the most canonical work. Motonobu's set served as a model for generations of painters of the Kano school.

This scroll here is the third in a set of three handscrolls belonging to the Ōeyama iconographic lineage. They differ stylistically from the versions painted by Kano lineage artists. The unknown painter arranges his compositions in an unconventional way, presenting the figures unusually large in relation to the pictorial space and endowing their faces with individual features and expressive eyes. In this key scene of the slaying of Shuten Dōji, the gigantic monster is depicted in a powerful, dynamic composition. His body seems to transgress the pictorial frame of the handscroll.

83 Sumiyoshi Hiroyuki (1755–1811) The tale of Ibukiyama Shuten Dōji

Edo period, 1786
Scrolls I–III&VI from a set of six handscrolls; ink, color, and gold powder on silk;
Scroll I: 41 × 2108.3 cm; Scroll II: 41 × 1946.8 cm; Scroll III: 41 × 1531.1 cm;
Scroll VI: 41 × ca. 2300 cm
GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig

This set associated with the Ibukiyama version of the *Shuten Dōji* tale is noteworthy for several reasons. It comprises six rather than three long handscrolls; it is executed with rich, densely applied pigments on exquisitely woven silk, instead of the usual substrate of paper; and each scroll is signed by the painter Sumiyoshi Hiroyuki. The extraordinary attention to the many narrative details and the luxurious production of this set indicates a high-end commission, here for the Princess Tane (Tanehime, 1765–1794). It was a part of the dowry for her marriage to Tokugawa Harutomi (1771–1853), the tenth daimyo of the Kishū domain. The handscrolls would have been intended as an educational tool for the much hoped-for future sons.

Scroll I to III record the time preceding a boy's birth and his early years before he became the ogre Shuten Dōji. The boy's mother is Tamahime ("Jewel Princess"), and his father is the deity of Mount Ibuki (Ibukiyama), who in the guise of an "eight-headed serpent" is responsible for kidnappings and numerous other heinous acts. Eventually, he is tricked and killed by Susano no Mikoto, the brother of the sun goddess Amaterasu.

The boy is raised by his maternal grandfather. By the age of three, the child loves *sake* so much that his grandfather sends him to become an acolyte at the temple Enryakuji on Mount Hiei ("Shuten Dōji" translates as "the *sake*-loving acolyte"). But the young boy also developed magic powers: For a dance competition of the various temples, he carved 3000 demon masks in seven days, announcing his transformation into a demonic being.

The sixth, and last, scroll shows the climax of the story: the slaying of Shuten Dōji by the brave warrior Minamoto no Yorimitsu (Raikō) and his assistants, the "Four Heavenly Kings."

84 Attributed Kinkōzan Sōbei VI (1824–1884) or Kinkōzan Sōbei VII (1867–1927) Vase with design of Shuten Dōji

Meiji period, 1870s–1890s
Satsuma ware; earthenware, gilded polychromatic overglaze painting, (h.) 91 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

This Satsuma-style vase illustrates the scene from the *Shuten Dōji* tale of the warrior Raikō (Minamoto no Yorimitsu) and his men as they search for the demon lair on Ōeyama. Raikō offers Shuten Dōji *sake* given to him by three Shinto deities, and the composition depicts the monster and his retinue drinking the *sake* while Raikō dances to the accompaniment of a flute. All of the figures wear luxurious brocade robes embroidered with gold.

85 Rajōmon

Edo period, late 17th century
Set of two handscrolls; ink, color, gold and silver powder on paper;
Scroll I: 32 × 1378.3 cm; Scroll II: 32 × 1430.5 cm
Linden-Museum, Stuttgart

The *Shuten Dōji* narrative was so popular that it continued to be recreated and reinterpreted in various literary and visual forms. This set of two handscrolls is one of the spin-offs and recounts two episodes that took place in Kyoto after the assassination of Shuten Dōji, in which Watanabe no Tsuna, one of the “Four Heavenly Kings” was the hero.

Scroll I includes the account that one of the ogres in the retinue of the slain Shuten Dōji escaped and was wreaking havoc at the Rajōmon, or “Demon Gate,” the southern entrance to the capital Kyoto. Watanabe no Tsuna decides to vanquish the demon on his own. He inspects the gate on horseback, posts a signboard with a prohibition notice and keeps a night vigil there. Early in the morning, the demon attacks Tsuna, who severs the creature’s arm with the sword Hizamaru. The demon, however, manages to flee the scene.

In Scroll II, the ailing Raikō presents Watanabe no Tsuna with his sword Higeiki and orders him to cut off the hand of an ox-demon who roams the Uda forest, since this is the only cure for his illness. Yet, the demon takes the disguises of a beautiful court lady and vanishes into dark clouds before Tsuna could confront her. The story concludes with Tsuna and Raikō jointly slaying the ox-demon but only after seven days of chanting *The Sutra of the Benevolent Kings (Niōkyō)*.

They also grant access to the Rajōmon demon who, in the disguise of Tsuna’s mother, retrieves the severed arm from its tightly secured, red-lacquered chest.

86 Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694) Shuten Dōji and Rajōmon

Edo period, 1680s
Ten woodblock prints from a set of nineteen; ink on paper,
27 × 35 cm (each print)
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg

87 Utagawa Yoshitsuya (1822–1866) The slaying of the Ōeyama Shuten Dōji

Edo period, 1858
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 35.7 × 73.9 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

88 Torii Kiyonobu I (1664–1729) Watanabe no Tsuna cuts off the arm of a demon at the Rajōmon gate

Edo period, early 18th century
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 55.5 × 30.5 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

89 Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) Watanabe no Tsuna cuts off the arm of a demon at the Rajōmon gate

Meiji period, 1888
Woodblock print, vertical diptych; ink and color on paper, 70.9 × 23.9 cm
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (R 66.27)

With the emerging production of woodblock-printed books, prints, and albums, and the growing rate of literacy from the seventeenth century onward, the demand for affordable educative and entertaining tales increased remarkably. Woodblock-print designers such

as Hishikawa Moronobu responded to the expanding market with countless innovative pictorial compositions in various formats and sizes. His set of nineteen prints (no. 86) are early examples of woodblock prints depicting the *Shuten Dōji* and *Rajōmon* tales. Audiences in the urban centers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries especially loved the scenes of Shuten Dōji being beheaded (no. 87) or the Rajōmon demon having his arm cut off (nos. 88&89). Their dramatic character inspired woodcut masters to create a series of captivating designs.

90 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The Earth Spider conjures up demons at the mansion of Minamoto no Raikō

Edo period, 1843
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 34.6 × 72.7 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Kuniyoshi's triptych deals with the tale of the *Earth Spider* (*Tsuchi-gumo*), another story about Raikō's heroic exploits. The ailing Raikō is seen on the right border of the composition, being tormented by the Earth Spider, who summons up a procession of specters and demons to disrupt his sleep. Raikō's followers, the "Four Heavenly Kings," are pictured playing *go*, seemingly oblivious of what is unfolding around them.

The triptych is believed to have been a veiled satirical comment on the Tokugawa shogunate. The figure of the ailing Raikō was identified as the inept twelfth Tokugawa shogun Iyeyoshi. Fearful of the authorities, the publisher of the print, Ibaya Senzaburō, recalled the stock and planed the woodblocks. But the popularity of the work was such that pirated printings were produced, some leading to fines imposed on the designers and publishers who issued them.

7 IMAGINING CHINA

91 Kano Sansetsu (1590–1651)
The song of lasting sorrow

Edo period, 1640s
Two handscrolls (digital presentation); ink, color, and gold on silk,
Scroll I: 31.5 × 1048.5 cm, Scroll II: 31.5 × 1070 cm
Chester Beatty, Dublin

Composed in 806 by the pre-eminent Tang poet Bai Juyi, *The song of lasting sorrow* is a riveting retelling of the fateful love story between the sixth emperor of the Tang dynasty, Xuanzong, and his favorite concubine Yang Guifei.

Kano Sansetsu, the head of the main Kano school atelier in Kyoto in the seventeenth century, exploits the narrative potential of the handscroll format to great effect to deliver the most extensive literal translation of Bai Juyi's ballad into visual imagery. The innovativeness of Sansetsu's *The song of lasting sorrow* handscrolls not only rests in his skillful use of the painting format and the close connection with Bai's poem but above all in his ambition to create an authentic "Chinese" painting. The painting substrate of this handscroll is silk, a material more frequently used in Chinese painting. Also, there is no script to elucidate the narrative, counting therefore on the patron's knowledge of the tale.

Each scroll of this almost 22 m long work contains six episodes executed with vigorous brushwork and an almost obsessive attention to detail. The first scroll deals with the "discovery" of Yang Guifei, her installment as palace consort, the couple's idyllic life until the An Lushan Rebellion forced them to flee the palace, and Yang's execution at Mawei. The second scroll conveys Xuanzong's grief over Yang Guifei's death, his difficult journey into exile, and the loneliness

and despair that leads to the engagement of the Daoist wizard to find Yang Guifei's spirit. He finds her in the realm of the immortals, but despite her great longing, a return to her beloved emperor is impossible.

92 The legends of the Emperors Yao and Shun

Edo period, second half of 17th century
Set of three handscrolls; ink, colors, and gold on paper; Scroll I: 32.1 × 962.5 cm; Scroll II: 32.1 × 1151 cm; Scroll III: 32.1 × 1016.5 cm
Linden-Museum, Stuttgart

This set of three handscrolls narrates the story of Yao and Shun, two sage Chinese emperors said to have lived before the Xia dynasty (ca. 2070–1600 BCE). Faced with the decision regarding succession, Emperor Yao decides to hand over the imperial throne to Shun, who is celebrated for his military campaigns against evil demons but, more importantly, for his filial piety. The adaptation of these two figures in narrative handscrolls served to enhance Confucian values at a time when Chinese precedents of rulership were celebrated in various narratives, most notably, the compendium *The Emperor's Mirror*. The illustration of Chinese emperors through the ages (among them also Yao und Shun)—divided into the virtuous and the wicked—in a set of woodblock-printed books was originally composed to educate the young Ming-dynasty emperor Wanli (1563–1620). The books were transmitted to Japan in the late 1590s and were used as models for paintings in all formats.

The Story of Taishokan

93 Portrait of Fujiwara no Kamatari (“Tōnomine Mandala”)

Muromachi period, late 15th – early 16th century
Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk, 81 × 37 cm
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

94 Taishokan, “The great woven cap”

Muromachi period, 1520–1560
Handscroll, previously a folded album; ink and light color on paper, 33 × 135.6 cm
The British Library, London

95 Taishokan, “The great woven cap”

Edo period, first half of the 17th century
Horizontal bound book, two volumes, ink and color on paper, 17 × 25.2 cm (each page)
The British Library, London

96 Taishokan, “The great woven cap”

Edo period, mid-17th century
Reproduction of a handscroll (from a set of *mai no hon* handscrolls); ink, color, and gold on paper, 33.7 × 1840 cm
Chester Beatty, Dublin

97 Taishokan, “The great woven cap”

Edo period, late 17th century
Seven from a set of twelve album pages; ink, color, and gold on paper, 30 × 25.2 cm (each page)
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (A 111, 112, 115, 116, 118, 120, 121)

- a. *Chinese emissaries approaching the gate of Taishokan's residence request his daughter's hand on behalf of the Chinese Emperor*
- b. *Taishokan's daughter Kōhaku'nyo is sent to China*
- c. *Kōhaku'nyo tasks Wanhu to take the jewel to Japan*
- d. *Asura demons attacking Wanhu's ship*
- e. *Taishokan marries the diver and fathers a son*
- f. *The diver investigating the whereabouts of the jewel in the Dragon Palace*
- g. *The diver being chased by a dragon, concealing the jewel in her body*

98 Taishokan, “The great woven cap”
Edo period, mid-18th century
Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper, 39.5 × 93 cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris

Taishokan, or “The great woven cap” is the epithet of Nakatomi Kamatari (614–669), a vassal faithful to Emperor Tenchi (626–672). Emperor Tenchi awards Kamatari’s loyalty on the latter’s deathbed with the bestowal of the court rank of “Taishokan,” or “The Great Woven Cap.” He was also awarded the surname “Fujiwara.” The house Fujiwara would thereafter grew rapidly, to become hugely influential politically, religiously, and culturally—all revered Kamatari as their founding father. Following Kamatari’s death, his eldest son, the monk Jōe, moved his remains to what would develop into the main ritual site of Kamatari worship, the Tōnomine Temple / Tanzan Shrine complex. Numerous hanging scrolls featuring Kamatari’s portrait were created for commemorative ceremonies and private ancestor worship. Some portraits show only Kamatari while others depict him as part of a triad with his two sons (no. 93).

Not least because of his descendants’ power at court, legendary accounts of the founding father Kamatari and his successor of the northern branch were widely circulated. One of the central narratives is the *Taishokan* tale, which was particularly popular in various performative genres and appearing in scribal as well as pictorial materialities from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (nos. 94–98). Key elements are the origin and succession of the northern branch of the Fujiwara house, the celebration of the learned Taishokan, Japan’s rivalry with as well as the domination over China and the dragon world under the sea. Woven into this plot is the legend of the diver who retrieves the symbolically charged Buddhist jewel from the Dragon Realm in the Sea, which was stolen by the dragons on its way from China to Japan. This jewel represents the Buddhist tradition that persists in Japan, while the followers of this religion were persecuted in China with the spread of Confucian values in the fourth century.

99 Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
“Dream of the fisherman’s wife,” from
Young pine saplings

Edo period, ca. 1814
Double-page spread from a wood- block-printed erotic book (*shunpon*);
ink and color on paper, 18.9 × 26.6 cm
The British Museum, London

100 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The young diver from Shido

Edo period, ca. 1847–1848
Woodblock print, triptych; ink and color on paper, 37.8 × 76 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In response to customers’ evolving tastes and types of commissions, unique pictorial interpretations of canonical *Taishokan* scenes were manifest in diverse pictorial formats with or without the written text, whereby the artists of which ignored narrative time and instead followed the *zeitgeist* in updating the plot. In the nineteenth century, the most popular scene was that of the dragon pursuing the diver, and it was repeatedly reinterpreted by woodblock-print designers. Among the most notable reinterpretations is Hokusai’s *Dream of the Fisherman’s Wife* (no. 99). In this reimagining, a large and a small octopus pleasure the naked diver beneath the sea by enveloping and penetrating her with their multiple tentacles. Far from a rape scene, the dense script framing the composition expresses the diver’s sexual delight.

Kuniyoshi’s triptych (no. 100), on the other hand, is a parody of the scene, in which the diver conceals the jewel in her breast protecting it from the pursuing dragons. A giant octopus replaces here the dragon, while the Dragon King is portrayed as a noh actor, dressed in lavish costume with a bright red wig.

8 PARODY AND ENTERTAINMENT

101 The tale of the monkeys

Muromachi–Momoyama periods, 1560s–1580s
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 30.9 × 1329.4 cm
The British Museum, London

In both script and painting this handscroll tells the tale of a young couple who marry and have a son, and recounts the celebrations surrounding this event. The bride is the daughter of the head priest of Hiyoshi Shrine on Mount Hiei to the northeast of Kyoto, and the groom is Yasaburō Yoshinari of the nearby temple Enryakuji. What makes their story special is that they and all the other characters portrayed are monkeys.

Anthropomorphization was commonly used to satirize those attempting social advancement, with paintings portraying upstart animals defeated and humiliated in a human-dominated world. Yet in this work the monkeys inhabit a world without humans and enjoy elevated cultural pastimes within aristocratic surroundings. The scroll's emphasis on both the prestigious history of Hiyoshi Shrine and hopes for its future prosperity invite the theory that it was produced as part of the rebuilding campaign of the temple-shrine complex, which was burnt down in 1571.

102 The poetry contest of the twelve animals

Edo period, mid-17th century
Set of three handscrolls (interactive presentation on Emaki Navigator);
ink, color, gold and silver on paper, Scroll I: 34, 5 × 1036 cm, Scroll II:
34,5 × 936 cm, Scroll III: 34,5 × 1090 cm
Chester Beatty, Dublin

The Twelve Animals of the East Asian zodiac—rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar—gather

to hold a poetry contest in honor of the moon. A passing deer of some erudition is willing to act as judge and is accepted by the group. When a cold prevents the deer from judging a second contest, his *tanuki* associate offers his own services. Rebuffed by the Twelve and beaten for his impertinence, he swears to take revenge. In the second scroll, the *tanuki* seeks out the beasts and birds overlooked in the formation of the Twelve Animals. Together they plan a vicious night attack, but the Twelve hear rumors and strike first to powerful effect. As the Twelve rest on their success, the *tanuki* strikes back. This time he emerges victorious. The war between the *tanuki* and the Twelve Animals concludes in the third scroll. The fighting is fierce and eventually victory belongs to the Twelve. But the *tanuki* is a trickster. Disguising himself as a demon, he plans one last assault. His deception is quickly uncovered, however, as a bark from a dog sends him back into hiding. His pride shattered, he recognizes the futility of his efforts, bids his family goodbye, becomes a Buddhist monk and lives henceforth as a devout eremite in the mountains.

It has been suggested that the *tanuki's* uprising could allude to the Ōei Rebellion of 1399–1400, an unsuccessful rebellion against shogunal authority. The theme of prevailing authority, meanwhile, would have honored the retired shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408), under whose patronage the original story was created in the fifteenth century.

103 Kano School The debate on the merits of *sake* and rice

Edo period, mid–late 17th century
Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, 31.1 × 732.5 cm
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This handscroll, a seventeenth century copy, is based on a sixteenth century text that parodies disputes between competing Buddhist schools. It centers on a monk who follows Nichiren Buddhism; a courtier who practices True Pure Land Buddhism; and a warrior who adheres to Tendai Buddhism. In the text, the criticism of the two exclusivist belief systems (Nichiren and True Pure Land) and praise

for the middle way advocated by the Tendai lineage is humorously embodied in food metaphors: the monk is associated with gluttony, the courtier with drunkenness, and the warrior prevails in his moderation.

As the text is difficult to illustrate, the painter opted to describe scenes from everyday life with a focus on food and its preparation. The four paintings in the scroll show banquet and kitchen scenes at three different venues: a temple, a courtier's residence, and a warrior's abode. In addition to the religious aspects, the work also addresses the preparation of rice and tea.

104 Sumiyoshi Hirotsura (1793–1863)
**Pictures from the land of ten thousand demons
(The night procession of one hundred demons)**

Edo period, mid-19th century
Handscroll; ink and color on paper, 37 × 1482 cm
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

105 Miyagawa Kōzan (1842–1916)
**Pair of vases with design of the night procession
of one hundred demons**

Meiji period, late 19th–early 20th century
Satsuma ware; earthenware, gilded polychromatic overglaze painting,
36 × 13.2 (body) × ca. 20 (base) cm
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet, Paris

The belief that anthropomorphic spirits inhabit the natural world has long been part of Japanese culture. Already the earliest chronicles of the eighth century mention strange, inexplicable incidents by specters that instilled fear in the general population. From the late eleventh century onward, tales of people encountering a parade of one hundred demons at night made the round. They also note that manmade objects reaching one hundred years of age could come to life. These *tsukumogami* (“deities of transformed things”) were anthropomorphized utensils that, having been carelessly discarded by their human owners, would gather once a year in the summer and

cavort through the streets after nightfall. People were warned not to leave their homes or to secretly watch the raucous procession because if one met these spirits they could be killed or might vanish without trace. Only those carrying *The Victorious Buddha Crown Mantra* or able to recite it from memory would be spared.

The oldest surviving painting of the night procession of one hundred demons (the number 100 is not to be taken literally, but means “a great number”) is a handscroll from the early sixteenth century. The fascination with fantastic creatures remains to this day, as evidenced by the countless later copies and adaptations in painting (no. 104), prints, craft objects (no. 105) and film.

月よはわのりろのりこ
 人行事さへ八刻
 よ新橋寺にたてた
 らもかやふむ百の張
 研支佛とらり
 見えありやさしく

