

STORYTELLING IN JAPANESE ART





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STORYTELLING IN JAPANESE ART

MASAKO WATANABE



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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

In 2002, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired a rare masterwork of Japanese art—*A Long Tale for an Autumn Night*, a set of three illustrated handscrolls, each more than ten meters long, dating from the medieval period. This major acquisition gave rise to the exhibition “Storytelling in Japanese Art,” organized by Masako Watanabe, Senior Research Associate in the Department of Asian Art. Together with this publication, the exhibition traces the rich history of Japanese painted narratives with examples in a range of formats, including illustrated books, folding screens, hanging scrolls, and even playing cards. These objects, which date from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, vividly capture the life and spirit of their time. The popularity of Japanese comics, or *manga*, and the pre-eminence of the graphic arts in contemporary Japan attest to the enduring legacy of these traditions.

Central to any exploration of this subject is the illustrated handscroll, or *emaki*, a narrative format that has been essential not only to the dissemination of Japanese tales but also to the very ways in which they are crafted. The more than twenty handscrolls on view in the exhibition, a selection of which are reproduced in arresting detail in these pages, invite viewers to explore myriad subjects that have preoccupied the Japanese imagination for centuries—Buddhist and Shinto miracle tales; the adventures of legendary heroes and their feats at times of war; animals and fantastical creatures that cavort within the human realm; and the ghoulish antics of ghosts and monsters.

The exhibition brings together outstanding works from public and private collections both local and from farther afield. We are especially indebted to the New York Public Library for their loan of more than ten precious medieval handscrolls from the Spencer Collection. Joined by a selection of objects from the Metropolitan Museum’s own rich holdings in Japanese art, they offer a rare opportunity for visitors of all ages to experience the pleasures and intellectual challenges inherent in Japanese narrative painting.

We extend our deep gratitude to each of our lenders and equally to our generous funders. For its support of the exhibition and accompanying publication, we thank The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation. Additional support from the Japan Foundation and from the J.C.C. Fund of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York also contributed to the successful realization of this project.

Thomas P. Campbell

Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was as a student of art history that I was first drawn to illustrated stories, finding their intricate pictorial language a powerful embodiment of the complexities of human nature. “Storytelling in Japanese Art” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art presents the results of my subsequent exploration of Japanese illustrated narratives, which has developed in tandem with an innate understanding of Japanese culture. I am extremely grateful to many of my colleagues, both at the Museum and in Japan, for their contributions to the exhibition and this accompanying publication.

I would first like to thank the lenders to the exhibition: the Art Institute of Chicago; Jane and Raphael Bernstein; Mary Griggs Burke and the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation; the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University; Rosemarie and Leighton Longhi; the New York Public Library; the John C. Weber Collection; and several private collectors. For his generous loan of a fragment of *The Handscroll of Frolicking Animals*, whose parent scrolls are a National Treasure in Japan, I extend my deep gratitude to Robin B. Martin, and to the Brooklyn Museum, New York, for facilitating the loan. For their help throughout the project, special thanks are also owed to Joan M. Cummins, Rachel Danzing, and Toni Owen at the Brooklyn Museum; Gratia Williams Nakahashi and Stephanie Wada at the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation; Ria Koopmans-de Bruijn and Sachie Noguchi at the C. V. Starr East Asian Library; Margaret Glover, Thomas Lisanti, and Deborah Straussman at the New York Public Library; and Julia Meech, independent scholar and curator of the John C. Weber Collection.

The exhibition and accompanying publication would not have been possible without the generous support of The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation. I am also grateful to the Japan Foundation and to the J.C.C. Fund of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York for their role in bringing this project to light.

I am much indebted to several institutions in Japan for facilitating my research: the Old University Library at Shidō-Bunko, Keiō University, Tokyo; the Museum Yamato Bunkakan; the National Research Institute of Japanese Literature, Tokyo; and Tokyo National Research Institute of Important Cultural Property. I also extend my thanks to several of my Japanese colleagues, beginning with Komine Kazuaki and Kojima Naoko, both of Rikkyo University, and Yamamoto Hideo, Curator and Chair of Fine Arts at Kyoto National Museum, to whom I am especially grateful for sharing an advanced copy of his recently published article on a pair of *Tale of Genji* screens attributed to Kano Sōshū. Following the Metropolitan’s acquisition of *A Long Tale for an*

Autumn Night, Ishikawa Tōru and Sasaki Takahiro of Keiō University led a workshop at the Museum from which emerged incisive new information on this important set of scrolls. I am grateful to them and to Midori Oka for her translation and transcription of the day's events.

At the Metropolitan Museum, I would first like to thank our director, Thomas P. Campbell, for his generous support of this project, which was initiated under James C. Y. Watt, formerly Brooke Russell Astor Chairman of the Department of Asian Art. His successor, Maxwell K. Hearn, Douglas Dillon Curator in Charge, has proven equally supportive, and I am grateful for his continued guidance. Special thanks are also due to John Carpenter, Curator of Japanese Art, whose enthusiasm and advice contributed enormously to both the exhibition and this publication.

I extend my deep gratitude to my colleagues across the Museum who have contributed to this project, particularly Sofie Andersen, Gregory Bailey, Christine Begley, Allison Bosch, Lesley Cannady, Clint Collier, Martha Deese, Sophia Geronimus, Patricia Gilkison, Joan Horn, Daniel Kershaw, Andrey Kostiw, Oi-Cheong Lee, Richard Lichte, Cristina Linclau, Paco Link, Nina Maruca, Taylor Miller, Sung Kevin Park, Stella Paul, Jennifer Perry, Jennifer Russell, Linda Sylling, Naomi Takafuchi, Elyse Topalian, and Eileen Willis. For their continued support, assistance, and camaraderie, I extend warm thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Asian Art, particularly Imtikar Ally, Lori Carrier, Joyce Denney, Sinéad Kehoe, Crystal Kui, Soyoung Lee, Denise Leidy, Luis Nuñez, Beatrice Pinto, Judith Smith, Jill Wickenheisser, and Hwai-ling Yeh-Lewis, as well as my intern, Anna Willman, and our departmental volunteers, Machiko Kimball and Michiko Kitaoka. Special mention must be made of Alison Clark, whose efforts were integral to the successful realization of this project.

For the production of this book, I am indebted to the talents of Peter Antony, Judith Calder, Penny Jones, Mark Polizzotti, Gwen Roginsky, Michael Sittenfeld, Robert Weisberg, and Elizabeth Zechella. Marcie Muscat brought greater clarity and readability to the text through her thoughtful and constructive edits. Sally Van Devanter expertly guided the book through all stages of production, and Makiko Katoh was responsible for its handsome and intelligent design.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my colleagues in the Department of Asian Art, and to my friends and family, who together have provided me with much-valued spiritual support to pursue my work at the Metropolitan Museum.

Masako Watanabe

Senior Research Associate, Department of Asian Art
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



STORYTELLING IN JAPANESE ART



THE ART OF JAPANESE STORYTELLING

Masako Watanabe

Japan is a land of fascinating tales, with a long and rich tradition of pairing narrative texts with elaborate illustrations—a tradition that continues to this day with *manga* and other forms of animation and graphic art. Though often fantastic and steeped in magical overtones, Japanese stories tell of as many historical figures as invented characters, and the physical geography of Japan features prominently in settings that oscillate between the waking and imaginary worlds. Located off the easternmost edge of the Eurasian continent, the islands of Japan have had close contact with China and Korea since prehistoric times, absorbing from their neighbors the multifarious ethnic, sociopolitical, and cultural influences that made their way across the sea. With time, these inherited customs were modified to suit the cultural climate of the Japanese archipelago, blending with local traditions to create a distinctively Japanese aesthetic.

Cultural influences from foreign sources—beginning with the Chinese system of writing, which was adopted for official purposes in ancient Japan—had a determining impact on the development of Japanese tales and the ways in which they were told. Over the centuries Chinese characters (*kanji*) began to be used phonetically (rather than as ideographs) and transcribed in highly abbreviated form, resulting in the Japanese syllabary system of *kana* (or *hiragana*). *Kana*, used either on its own or in combination with *kanji*, allowed writers and poets to express themselves more freely in the vernacular and led to a flowering of Japanese literature in the Heian period (794–1185). Among works of Heian literature is an impressive corpus of tales and diaries by women writers, including *The Tale of Genji*, that are now counted among world classics. The special characteristics of Japanese storytelling, especially the mixing of poetry and prose to express subtle but complex emotional states, was formulated at this time and had a lasting influence on subsequent works.

Perhaps the most significant foreign influence on Japanese storytelling was Buddhism, which was introduced to Japan via Korea by the early sixth century and has flourished since then in various sects. Buddhist teachings, thought originally to have been spoken by the historical (Shakyamuni) Buddha to his devotees, are recorded in texts known as sutras, and indeed, the



earliest extant illustrated handscroll in Japan is an eighth-century version of the *Sutra of Past Causes and Present Effects* (*Kako genzai inga-kyō*), which presents episodes from the life of the Buddha.¹ The illustrations appear in the upper register of the scroll, while the text, written in Chinese characters, appears in the lower register. Sutras originally were composed as alternating passages of prose and verse, the prose portion presented as a dialogue between the Buddha and a disciple (often the youngest, Sariputra); both portions, however, offer the same lesson. Parallels to the dual structure of the sutra might be identified in later Japanese poem tales (*uta monogatari*), which feature exchanges of poems between characters. *Poetry Match from the Tale of Genji* in the John C. Weber Collection, for example, presents *The Tale of Genji* not as a sequential narrative but as a series of eighteen poetry matches among thirty-six paired characters (fig. 1). More directly, the brief, episodic teachings put forth in sutras are well suited for presentation in illustrated formats. For instance, the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (one of the earliest known sutras, compiled about the second or third century A.D.), which expounds the teachings of the bodhisattva

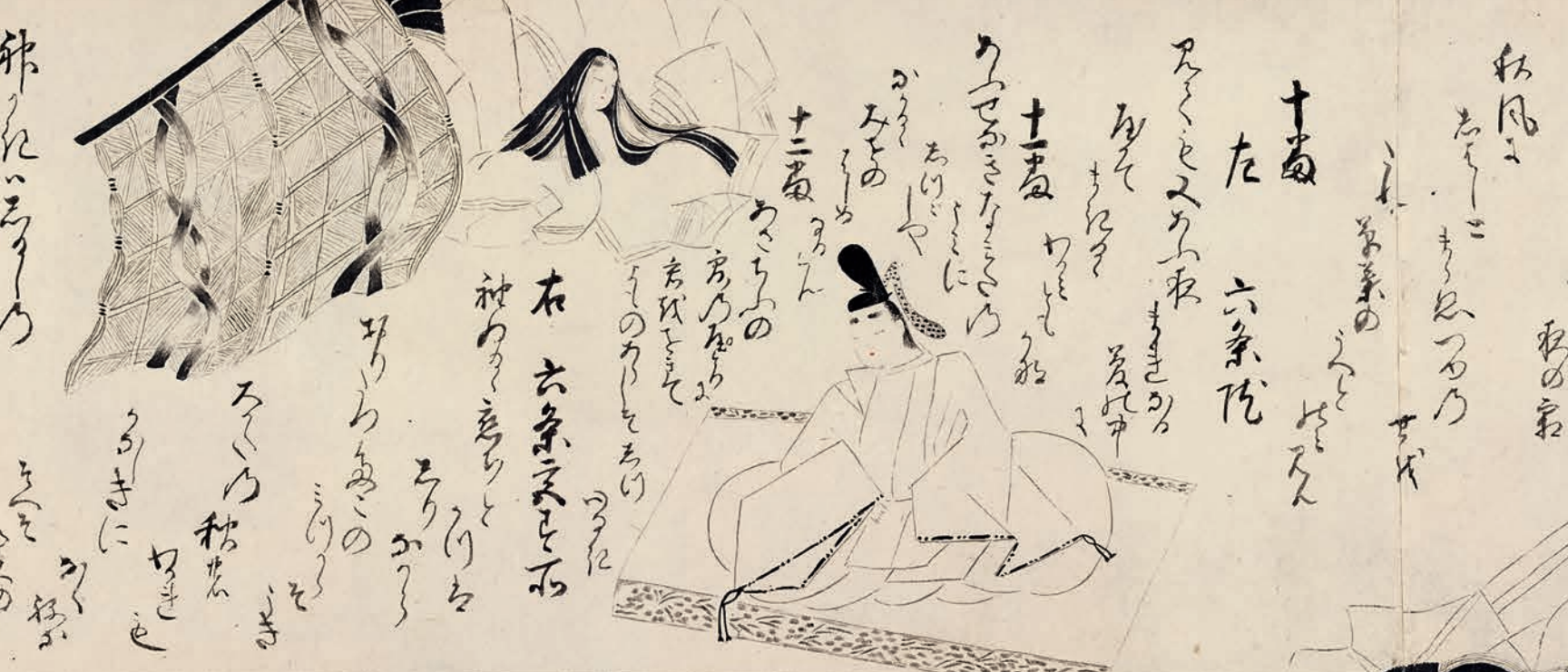


Fig. 1. Detail of *Poetry Match* from the *Tale of Genji*. Muromachi period (1392–1573), first half of the 16th century. Handscroll; ink on paper with touches of red, H. 6 1/8 in. (15.5 cm). The John C. Weber Collection, New York

Avalokiteshvara (Kannon Bosatsu in Japanese), was singled out and illustrated often in East Asia. In one scene in the Metropolitan Museum's handscroll *The Illustrated Miracles of Kannon* (a Japanese copy after a Chinese original), shipwrecked men are attacked by demons disguised as beautiful women. The men chant the name of Kannon, praying for the intercession of the bodhisattva, who comes to their rescue in the guise of a flying white horse (fig. 2).

Illustrated stories recounting the life of the Buddha were popular, not only establishing his life as one to be emulated but also providing a compositional and thematic model for texts that detailed the lives of noted devotees, such as Prince Shōtoku (574–622). A talented statesman credited with establishing a successful centralized government, Shōtoku was also an ardent follower of Buddhist teachings, composing scholarly commentary on various sutras and commissioning the construction of Buddhist temples. A pair of hanging scrolls in the Metropolitan's collection (fig. 3) presents the prince's biography, drawing parallels between him and Shakyamuni Buddha. For instance, while the Buddha's mother, Queen Maya, had a vision of Shakyamuni as a white



elephant with six tusks, Empress Hashihito (d. 665) dreamed of her son Shōtoku in the guise of a golden monk (fig. 5).

The lives of monks, who strove to model themselves after the Buddha, were another popular source for illustrated narratives. The first biography of Shinran (1173–1263), who founded the Pure Land (Jōdo Shinshū) sect, was written centuries after his death by his disciple Rennyo (1415–1499); the earliest illustrated versions of the text appeared in the handscroll format. Later, these illustrations were copied in horizontal registers, though without their accompanying texts, and mounted as hanging scrolls (fig. 4), which were displayed in temple halls during the annual memorial service commemorating Shinran's death. For this event the entire set of scrolls (four in this case) was made visible to the public, allowing all the episodes in Shinran's life to be seen simultaneously, while a monk recited Shinran's life story—a type of performance known as *etoki* (picture explanation).

A somewhat idiosyncratic subgenre of Buddhist tales focused on the tragically romantic relationships that sometimes formed between monks and young male acolytes (see, for example, *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night*, pp. 88–91). Although these stories tend to end with the death of the acolyte, or *chigo*, through lovesickness, suicide, or murder, a divine message is embedded in the tale, for the boy is usually revealed to be a manifestation of Kannon. While the idea of a romantic relationship between a monk and an acolyte might seem strange to Western audiences, the concept most likely stemmed from myths surrounding the cult of the boy (*dōji*), which was popular within the East Asian cultural tradition.²



Buddhism permeated Japan's native cult, Shinto, originally a nonsystematic faith that relied on neither scriptures nor icons. Shinto deities were believed to dwell in natural forms such as mountains, trees, and rocks. Eventually, shrines were built to house their spirits. After Buddhism became the dominant religion in Japan, Shinto began a process of syncretism, adopting Buddhist deities, particularly those from the Esoteric pantheon, to correspond to local Shinto deities. With time, Shinto deities were regarded as manifestations of Buddhist ones. As exemplified by the top register of the Kumano Shrine mandala (fig. 6), in which Buddhist and Shinto deities appear prominently alongside one another, the confluence of Shinto and Buddhism extended even to the sacred area of Kumano, at the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula (see map, p. 106). The legend surrounding the origin of the three-shrine compound at Kumano became a popular tale in Japan, illustrated in a number of magnificent handscrolls (see, for example, pp. 54–57). Stories concerning the origin and miracles of temples and shrines represent a type of tale known as *engimono*, while those that refer specifically to the workings of Shinto deities are known as *honjimonono*. Usually commissioned by patrons, these illustrated scrolls were presented as gifts to the religious institutions whose stories they told. *Illustrated Legends of Kitano Shrine* (pp. 50–53), for example, offers a fictionalized account of the life of Sugawara Michizane (845–903), a talented statesman, poet, and scholar whose wrongful death, brought about by slanderous political rivals, was believed to have set into motion a series of extraordinary events that led to the establishment of Kitano Shrine.

Fig. 2 (above and overleaf). Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra*: "Universal Gateway," from *The Illustrated Miracles of Kannon*. Text inscribed by Sugawara Mitsushige (active 13th century). Kamakura period (1185–1333), dated 1257. Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, H. 9⁷/₁₆ in. (23.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Louisa Eldridge McBurney Gift, 1953 (53.7.3)



若復有人臨當被害
觀世音菩薩
者彼所執刀杖
尋段段壞而得解脫



是諸人等皆得解脫羅刹之難於是時
緣名觀世音









Fig. 3 (p. 10). *Illustrated Biography of Prince Shōtoku*. Kamakura period (1185–1333), early 14th century. Pair of hanging scrolls; ink, color, and gold on silk, each $67\frac{3}{4} \times 33\frac{1}{4}$ in. (171.8 × 84.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.470, .471)

Fig. 4 (p. 11). *The Illustrated Life of Shinran*. Edo period (1615–1868), 18th century. Two hanging scrolls from a set of four; ink, color, and gold on silk, each approx. $52\frac{1}{4} \times 30\frac{1}{2}$ in. (132.7 × 77.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, in honor of James C. Y. Watt, 2010 (2010.366b, c)

Religious practitioners known as *yamabushi*, who propagated a traditionally Japanese cult of mountain-based asceticism known as Shugendō, further promoted the conflation of Buddhism and Shinto. Mount Katsuragi, located west of Nara, the ancient capital, was believed to be the homeland of the legendary ascetic En no Gyōja (see pp. 58–59). Because he could fly, he was able to visit numerous sacred places, and many shrines and temples, including Jin'ōji Temple, located southwest of present-day Osaka, were thereafter associated with him. Originally comprising two handscrolls, *The History of Jin'ōji Temple* now exists as a series of hanging scrolls, many of which are preserved in collections throughout the United States. The example in figure 7 shows the ascetic ordering the local deity Shikigami to guide the Korean deity Boseung gwanhyeon (Hōshō Gongen in Japanese) to Jin'ōji. Hōshō Gongen appears as an armed guardian atop a pine tree, while one of En no Gyōja's servant-demons kneels before him in adoration. The ascetic's prayers lead to the manifestation of Zaō Gongen, a composite of three Buddhist deities (Shaka, Miroku, and Senju Kannon) and the tutelary deity of Shugendō, who endows En no Gyōja with his magical powers. As with Buddhist icons, the creation and amalgamation of Shinto deities were thus validated through illustrated stories, which became fundamental instruments in authenticating the existence of deities and sacred sites.

Classical and Medieval Tales

Japanese storytelling reached its apogee during the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods (1336–1573), and Muromachi tales became the main source for illustrated handscrolls, books, and screens from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century. Muromachi tales are known as *otogi zōshi*, a term coined in the early eighteenth century to refer to the didactic stories of the late medieval period.³ Numbering more than four hundred, these short tales range widely in

theme—from religious to secular, romantic to epic—and feature not only human characters but also animals and supernatural figures. They are a world apart from the courtly romantic tales of the Heian period, the heyday of aristocratic society, and stem from the epics of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), a time of marked military ascendancy and the rise of a powerful warrior class.

Most classical romantic tales of the Heian period are in the form of *uta monogatari* (poem tales), which provide a platform for exchanges of *waka* (poems of thirty-one syllables), through which emotion is expressed. *Waka* were a fundamental instrument of the cultural, social, and ritual communities of Japan. Poems were composed by women and men at court and sent as notes to lovers and friends, and *waka* composed on formal occasions were recorded and compiled into imperial compendiums.

Among the most famous texts to feature *waka* is the tenth-century *Tales of Ise*. Most versions of *Ise* comprise one hundred twenty-five short tales accompanied by about two hundred poems. Each narrative begins with a brief prose passage that sets up an exchange of *waka* between the aristocratic hero Ariwara no Narihira (825–880) and, for the most part, the numerous women with whom he is romantically involved (not all his interlocutors are love interests; his friends and a few other characters figure in the tale as well). The poems reflect upon the famous places and beguiling scenery that Narihira encounters during his travels, thus appealing to the tastes of the cultivated elite. *The Tales of Ise* has remained influential, serving as a source for illustrations in various media, as exemplified by a pair of early seventeenth-century screens in which selected poems are inscribed within golden clouds (fig. 8) and a late seventeenth-century set of cards (Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library) that asks players to match the first part of a poem with the second.

Overwhelmingly important within the romantic genre is the early eleventh-century *Tale of Genji*. In fifty-four chapters, the story recounts the life of the handsome Hikaru Genji, who, graced with remarkable literary talents, has romantic entanglements with many women. This work of



Fig. 5 (opposite). The Empress Hashihito dreaming of her son, Shōtoku, in the guise of a golden monk (detail of fig. 3, right-hand scroll)

Fig. 6 (above). Topmost register of the Kumano Shrine mandala showing an assembly of Buddhist and Shinto deities. Nanbokucho period (1336–92). Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk, overall 52 × 22 7/8 in. (131.9 × 57.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Gift of Dr. Mortimer D. Sackler, Theresa Sackler and Family, 2006 (2006.521)



Fig. 7. Scene from *The History of Jin'ōji Temple*. Kamakura period (1185–1333), 14th century. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper, overall $13\frac{1}{2} \times 22$ in. (34.3 × 55.9 cm). Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

fiction, written by Lady Murasaki (Murasaki Shikibu; ca. 973–ca. 1020), pairs long prose chapters with nearly eight hundred poems. The latter play a critical role in the narrative—distilling emotion, revealing complex states of mind, and bringing each episode to its climax. The first illustrated versions of *The Tale of Genji* appeared not long after the text's completion. The earliest to survive, fragments of what were originally handscrolls, date from the first half of the twelfth century (now in the Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya, and the Gotoh Museum, Tokyo) and are celebrated for their suggestive expression of the characters' inner emotions.⁴ *The Tale of Genji* has since been illustrated

in various media, including handscrolls (fig. 1), books, and screens (p. 93); later versions are thought to have been executed by both male and female artists.⁵ Scenes singling out characters or episodes were frequently cut from handscrolls or albums and appeared occasionally and much later remounted as hanging scrolls (fig. 9). Ownership of paintings based on *The Tale of Genji* was a sign of elite status, and copies were sought out by the imperial, shogunal, samurai, and other aristocratic families, as well as by Buddhist temples. Its many poems were instrumental in educating both men and women, especially as propagated by the great Kamakura-era poets Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204) and his son, Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241). Their efforts helped foster a profound reverence for poetry in Japan. Saigyō (1118–1190) was an aristocratic monk-poet whose itinerant, literati lifestyle was much admired by subsequent generations of cultivated gentlemen. There are several extant illustrated biographies of Saigyō in the handscroll format, one of which (formerly in the collection of the Manno Museum of Art, Osaka) bears a close visual connection to a pair of sixteenth-century screens of the same subject (see fig. 10). The right-hand screen focuses on a single episode from the scroll and shares with it an almost identical setting. On the left-hand screen, however, the landscape has been elaborated, and both the building and the figures have been disproportionately diminished.

In the Kamakura period the warrior class rose to power over the aristocracy, and vernacular tales, once suppressed, became prominent. Minamoto no Yoritomo (also known as Raikō; 948–1021) led the most famous group of warriors in Japanese lore; he was joined by five other heroes: Urabe Suetake (950–1022), Usui Sadamitsu (954–1021), Watanabe no Tsuna (954–1033), Sakata no Kintoki (ca. 956–1012), and Fujiwara no Yasumasa (958–1036). This legendary group defeated demons in such stories as *The Drunken Demon* (see pp. 70–77) and *The Ibaraki Demon*. The latter became a favorite subject for the painter Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891) in the late nineteenth century, when *musha-e* (warrior pictures) became explosively popular. In the story the hero cuts off the Ibaraki demon's arm at Ichijō Modoribashi bridge, which sits at the border between this world and the next. Ibaraki, disguised as an old woman, returns to retrieve the arm. Zeshin painted a pair of screens on the subject as well as a large painting for a shrine (fig. 11).

The early thirteenth-century *Tale of the Heike*, one of the best-known examples of Japanese epic literature, chronicles the rise and fall of the powerful Heike, or Taira, clan and its battles

Fig. 8 (overleaf). *The Tales of Ise*. Edo period (1615–1868), early 17th century. One of a pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, 36¹/₁₆ in. × 8 ft. 7¹/₄ in. (93.2 × 262.2 cm). Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation





with the rival Minamoto, or Genji (a warrior clan not to be confused with the aristocratic clan to which the hero of *The Tale of Genji* belonged). By underscoring the stark contrast between the family's staggering successes and equally rapid decline, the story illustrates the ephemeral nature of the phenomenal world—a principle at the core of Buddhist practice and a common thread running through many Japanese tales. Originally, *The Tale of the Heike* was narrated orally, usually by blind monks who performed publicly on the street accompanied by a *biwa* (a four-stringed instrument similar to a lute). Beginning in the fourteenth century *The Tale of the Heike* and other military epics became a major source for *noh* drama and, later, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for *kōwakamai* (theatrical performances that featured song and dance); *kojōruri* and *sekkyōbushi* (sung-chanted dramas accompanied by the *samisen*, a three-stringed instrument similar to a banjo); and *kabuki*. The influence of performance on these narratives was significant to their retelling in other formats, and in fact, many subsequent illustrated versions of these tales were not based on the original stories but on modified narratives as performed onstage.

With time, spoken stories were transcribed so that they could be read instead of heard. Some of these tales first appeared as smaller-format handscrolls and books, which were reserved for private viewing, but as readers became more familiar with the stories, they were illustrated without accompanying text in larger formats such as screens and sliding panels, which were displayed at gatherings or public ceremonies. The latter were customarily commissioned by the high-ranking and wealthy for celebratory occasions and therefore had auspicious subjects. The way a narrative was illustrated responded acutely to the format through which it was told. For instance, a handscroll version of *The Great Woven Cap* (pp. 62–65) permits a more complete telling of the tale, allowing all imagery relevant to the climactic scene—the boat, the diver, and the dragon—to be spaced evenly at intervals across the long roll of paper. By contrast, when the story is told in book format (fig. 12), the primary motifs are depicted at the center of the picture plane with the figures of the diver and the dragon taking precedence over the boat, which is cropped by the borders of the page. On a pair of folding screens (p. 60), the figures are less prominent than the boat, which is enormous and ornately rendered, surrounded by golden clouds. Here, truth to the narrative has been subordinated to visual splendor, no doubt to underscore the magnificence of the occasion for which the screens were commissioned (in this case, probably by a *daimyo* from Kyūshū).⁶



Fig. 9. Tosa school. Scene from
The Tale of Genji: "Rack of Clouds."
 Momoyama (1573–1615)–Edo (1615–1868)
 period, 17th century. Album page
 mounted as a hanging scroll, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
 (24.4 × 21.3 cm). Jane and Raphael
 Bernstein Collection



The Great Woven Cap screens demonstrate the ways in which that format could be effectively exploited to offer a panoramic composite of several scenes, which was advantageous when describing epic military tales. A pair of seventeenth-century screens depicting *The Battles of Ichinotani and Yashima* (fig. 13) conflate several episodes from *The Tale of the Heike*, all of which appear against a panoramic battlefield. One of the vignettes on the right-hand screen shows the Genji warrior Kumagai Naozane (1141–1208) pursuing the Heike fighter Atsumori (1169–1184) as he retreats to his ship, while on the left-hand screen, the famously deft Genji archer Nasu no Yoichi (ca. 1169–1232) demonstrates his prowess by taking aim at a fan held aloft by a Heike lady in a boat. Both episodes were well known by the time the screens were made—the story of Atsumori was also the subject of a popular *noh* drama—and they would have been easily identifiable to viewers. Similarly, the important battles of Hōgen and Heiji, also from the *Heike*, were another favored theme among the warrior elite of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as indicated by the numerous screens of these battles that were produced at the time. One such pair, from



the Metropolitan's collection (57.156.4, .5), presents a spatially and temporally sophisticated composition that emphasizes two central motifs—the attack on Shirakawa Palace and the burning of the Sanjō Palace—surrounded by many smaller scenes from various other episodes in the *Heike*.

The *Heike* screens take a markedly different compositional approach than the *Saigyō* screens (fig. 10), which date from the previous century and which, as noted above, reveal an indebtedness to earlier handscroll traditions, not only in their stylistic similarity to the scroll on which they were modeled, but also in their focus on a single vignette, clearly chosen on account of its priority within the tale. That the *Heike* screens feature an array of scenes illustrating episodes from throughout the story suggests a more widespread knowledge of certain tales by the seventeenth century and, concomitantly, a public capable of reconstructing a familiar narrative from recognizable visual clues, without the help of an accompanying text.

Quite rare is a pair of screens (pp. 80–83) that illustrates a brief episode from *The Chronicle of the Great Peace* in which a princess is abducted. This particular vignette was singled out for the

Fig. 10. *The Tale of Saigyō*. Momoyama period (1573–1615), 16th century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, each 59¹³/₁₆ in. × 11 ft. 7⁵/₁₆ in. (152 × 353.8 cm). Property of Mary Griggs Burke



Fig. 11. Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891).
The Ibaraki Demon. Edo period
 (1615–1868), ca. 1839–40. Ink and colors
 on paper, 51 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 62 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (131.1 × 159.7 cm).
 The John C. Weber Collection, New York

noh drama *Takebun* and the *kōwakamai* drama *Shinkyoku* and reflects a trend that began in the Muromachi period to illustrate tragic episodes from the lives of women. In particular, women living through the tumult recounted in *The Tale of the Heike* became favorite subjects for theatrical performances and illustrated stories, highlighting that work's primary theme of impermanence and pathos. These subjects were embraced as an embodiment of *mono no aware* (the pathos of things), a notion underlying much Japanese literature of the era that posited the transitory nature of beauty and, thus, its inescapable association with sorrow. Also exemplary of this motif is a pair of *Heike* screens from the early Edo period (1615–1868), *The Imperial Procession to Ōhara* and *Kogō* (fig. 14). The right-hand screen illustrates the story of the Empress Dowager Kenrei (1155–1213) as she mourns the death of her son, the Emperor Antoku (1178–1185); the left-hand one tells of two

lovers, separated by a jealous rival, who eventually find each other through the help of a mournful tune. Appearing alongside these narrative episodes are scenes of early summer and autumn, which exemplify another essential motif within the East Asian iconographic tradition: the presentation of the seasons. Individual seasons bear immediately readable connotations—spring, for example, represents the beginning of life; winter, the end—while inclusion of all four seasons simultaneously is a sign of eternity and the otherworldly (see, for example, the multiseasonal motifs on pp. 74–77, which are used to suggest the supernatural nature of the demon's realm in *The Drunken Demon*).

The supernatural is explored further in anthropomorphic tales whose protagonists are animals and fantastic creatures. One of the earliest, though elusive, examples of such a story is the twelfth-century *Handscroll of Frolicking Animals*. Attributed to the celebrated monk Toba Sōjō (1053–1140) and designated an official National Treasure in Japan, the story comprises four handscrolls (owned by Kōzanji Temple, Kyoto) as well as various fragments that are now scattered among several collections (see fig. 15). Anthropomorphic stories became especially popular in the fourteenth century as both a clever way to satirize contemporary society and a purely capricious

source of amusement. Additionally, animal protagonists could be read as symbols or talismans (the rat, for example, is a sign of prosperity, while the fox is known for its presumed ability to take human form; see *Tale of a Strange Marriage*, pp. 102–5). One spectacular example of such a scroll, *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons*, in the collection of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

Fig. 12. *The Great Woven Cap* (vol. 3 of 3). Edo period (1615–1868), second half of the 17th century. Ink and color on paper, each page $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{16}$ in. (23.4 × 17 cm). Japanese MS 106, Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations













Fig. 13 (pp. 24–27). Kano Jin'nojō (1580s–ca. 1630). *The Battles of Ichinotani and Yashima*. Edo period (1615–1868), first half of the 17th century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, each (framed) 69¹¹/₁₆ in. × 12 ft. 5⁵/₈ in. (177 × 380 cm). Private collection

(fig. 17), illustrates a popular folkloric belief that manmade objects such as kitchen utensils, musical instruments, and religious implements, which are generally discarded when they wear out, are in fact sentient beings with souls. Late at night the souls rebel, angry that they have not been buried according to ritual and therefore cannot be reborn in heaven, consigned instead to a lifetime of suffering in the phenomenal world. The Burke scroll—which, like most versions of this subject, has no accompanying text, allowing viewers to devise their own narratives—presents a menagerie of fantastical creatures that carry out mischief throughout the night before dispersing at first light.

The Handscroll Tradition and Narrative Flow

In the East Asian cultural tradition the handscroll, a major format for painting and writing, has been given great credit for the development of image making. Illustrated handscrolls, or *emaki*



(picture scroll), represent an artistic tradition stretching back to the eighth century in Japan, and extant *emaki* from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represent the quintessence of narrative presentation in this highly developed format. Handscrolls, which are about one foot high and can extend for more than thirty feet, are meant to be unrolled laterally and read in temporally and spatially sequential segments of about two feet each.⁷ The scroll is unrolled with the left hand, while the right hand rolls the part already viewed so that the story emerges from the left and disappears to the right (fig. 16). With the freedom to move through the scenes at his or her own pace, the viewer physically experiences the progression of time and space as the past is rolled away, the present is slowly uncovered, and the future waits to be seen.

Illustrated handscrolls appear in either of two formats: continuous or episodic. In the first type, long segments of the scroll are presented as continuous bands of illustration preceded by relatively small sections of explanatory text. The illustration thus dominates the space, and the text never interrupts pictorial flow. The Metropolitan Museum's *Illustrated*

Fig. 14 (above). *The Imperial Procession to Ohara (right) and Kogō (left)*. Edo period (1615–1868), early 17th century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on gilded paper; each 60 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. \times 11 ft. 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (154.7 \times 360.4 cm). Property of Mary Griggs Burke





Fig. 15. Fragment of *The Handscroll of Frolicking Animals*, now mounted as a hanging scroll. Heian period (794–1185), 12th century. Ink on paper, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 21\frac{1}{8}$ in. (28.9 × 53.7 cm). Collection of Robin B. Martin, courtesy the Brooklyn Museum, New York (L55.12)

Legends of Kitano Shrine (pp. 50–53) and *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (pp. 88–91) masterfully maintain the continuous narrative tradition, inviting viewers to participate in the pictorial space of the *emaki*. An episodic composition, by contrast, is divided into short episodes framed by text (see fig. 2). The viewer is thus prompted to pause at intervals and read the inscriptions that accompany each illustration.

As text generally either precedes or frames its corresponding illustrations, inscriptions within pictures are rare unless serving to label or identify figures. However, beginning in the Nanbokuchō and continuing through the Muromachi and even into the Momoyama (1573–1615) and Edo periods, text was more frequently interspersed with images, generally for one of three reasons. First, in a manner consonant with modern-day *manga*, the inscriptions could represent dialogue, as in *The Tale of the Chinese Mountain Goblin Zegaibō* (fig. 18), in which inscriptions are embedded between images. Alternatively, lengthy introductory texts might overrun their prescribed parameters and encroach upon existing illustrations, as in *The Nun Who Lost Two Sons at the Battle of Yashima* (pp. 68–69). In still other cases, the decision to inscribe relevant portions of the primary text over the image (usually in the clouds and mist bands, for which, see below) was deliberate, as in *The Battles of the Twelve Animals* (pp. 84–87) and *The Chronicle of the Great Peace* (fig. 19).

The ravages of time or the elements, or the desire of collectors to have a section of a famous work, has led to the division of many handscrolls and the remounting of the resulting fragments as hanging scrolls. While admirable as independent works of art, these paintings lose resonance when divorced from the experience of unrolling a scroll in a narrative progression. The portion of *The History of Jin'ōji Temple* (fig. 7) in the Burke Foundation collection is one of twenty-seven extant fragments; since 1945, when the fragments first entered the market, sixteen have been acquired by various collections in the United States.⁸ The scholar Akiyama Terukazu identified all the fragments by comparing them to a handscroll version of the story preserved at Jin'ōji Temple.⁹ Reuniting a fragment with its source is rare but not impossible. Not long after the Metropolitan Museum acquired a set of three scrolls recounting *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (pp. 88–91), a missing portion of the first scroll was discovered, having previously been mounted as a hanging scroll. Conservators in the Museum's Department of Asian Art were able to successfully restore the fragment to its original place within the set of scrolls.

When the nature of a tale corresponds to the lateral movement of an unfurling *emaki*, the scroll can offer a descriptive and aesthetically satisfying narrative, readable even without text. The theme of a journey through a landscape, such as that of the itinerant monk Nichizō (1269–1342) in *Illustrated Legends of Kitano Shrine* (pp. 50–53), is perfectly suited to the handscroll format, which allows for the continuity required to recount the lengthy tale. The story makes use of a popular pictorial device: the repetition of key motifs to manipulate the spatial and temporal sequence of the narrative. The monk journeys into the mountains to undertake Buddhist practice in a cave. He falls ill and dies, but a priest brings him back to life with healing water. The monk, the priest, and the cave appear multiple times across the picture plane, defining a series of discrete episodes, but the landscape background presents a seamless continuum, challenging rational notions of time and space. Nichizō's journey takes place in the middle ground, loosely framed by mountains and caves in the background and trees in the foreground. The various episodes are both delineated and connected by the landscape and architecture, as well as by distinctive bands of mist and clouds—another pictorial device of Japanese *emaki* that not only provides visual continuity between episodes but also concentrates a viewer's focus on key points of the narrative. Sometimes clouds and mist are thickly arranged at top and bottom like a frame, drawing attention to the



Fig. 16. Japanese handscrolls are meant to be unrolled from right to left and read in segments of about two feet each.



百鬼夜行



Fig. 17 (above and overleaf). Detail from *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons*. Edo period (1615–1868), 19th century. Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, H. 9 1/8 in. (23.2 cm). Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation









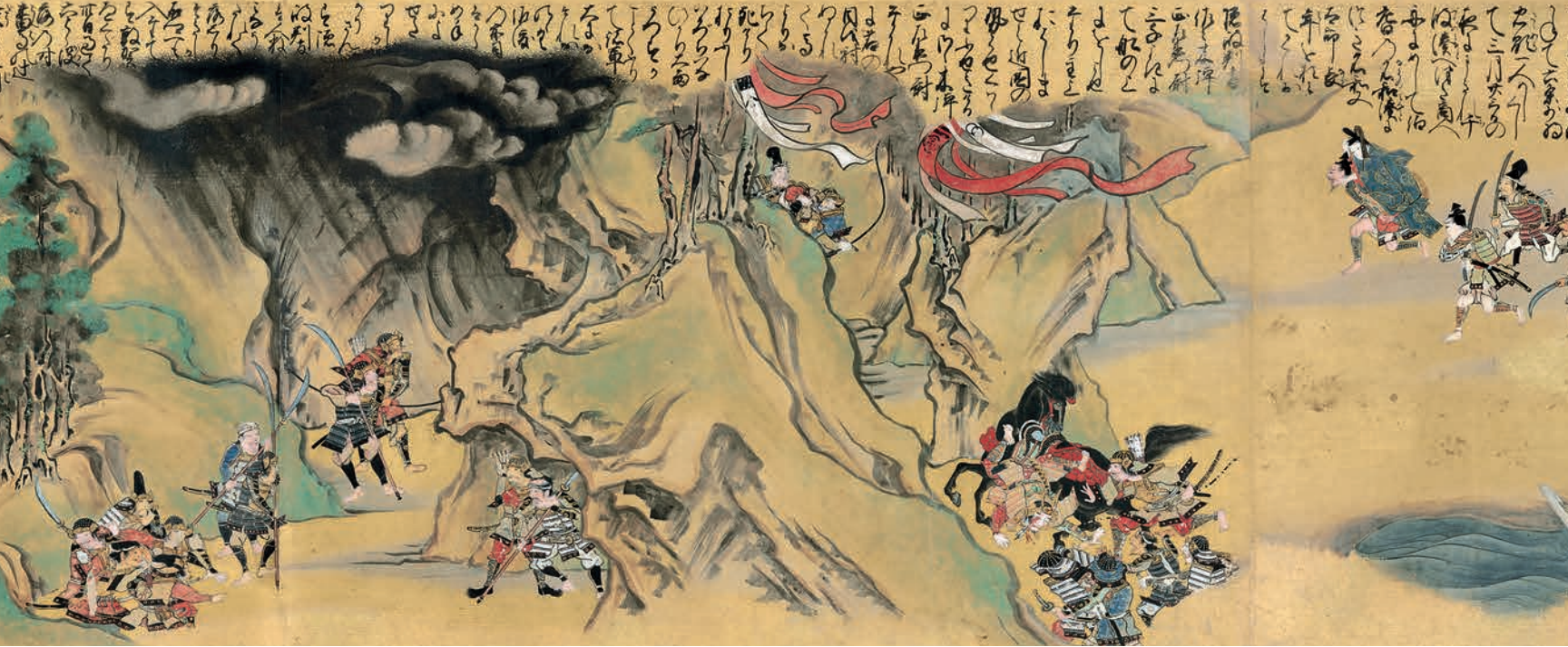


Fig. 18 (pp. 40–41). Details of *The Tale of the Chinese Mountain Goblin Zegaibō*. Momoyama period (1573–1615), 1587. Handscroll; ink on paper, H. 10½ in. (26.7 cm). Japanese MS 40, Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Fig. 19 (above). Detail of *The Chronicle of the Great Peace*. Edo period (1615–1868), mid-17th century. One handscroll from a set of two; ink, color, and gold on paper, H. 12¼ in. (32.8 cm). Japanese MS 89b, Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

action taking place in the narrow rectangular picture plane they enclose (see fig. 20). Alternatively, these motifs can be used to fill gaps in the illustration and subtly structure and balance the space.

To illustrate interior scenes, a distinctive pictorial device emerged in the Heian and Kamakura periods: rooms are shown roofless and from a very high vantage point, allowing full visual access to the action taking place inside. The trope is known as *fukinuki yatai* (blown-off roof) and is used to full effect in a scene from *The Drunken Demon* (see pp. 74–77). In it, two episodes of the story are successfully told simultaneously, for the viewer can peer into a room where the demon holds a group of women captive, while at the same time an assembly of brave warriors can be seen outside the room, poised to rush in and rescue the maidens. The characters' faces are depicted in a seemingly naive manner, with simple slashed lines for eyes and hooks for noses. This pictorial convention, known as *hikime kagihana*, also emerged during the classical period as a way of portraying upper-class individuals (see fig. 1). Such a nondescript style of presentation frees the viewer to use his or her imagination to identify—or identify with—a story's characters.



Artists and Patrons

Illustrated scrolls and screens were commissioned only by people of high rank: the shogun, elite samurai, monks from wealthy temples, and members of the imperial and aristocratic families. It was only in the early seventeenth century, when printing techniques came into wide use in Japan, that first wealthy merchants and then people of more modest means could afford illustrated narratives. Indeed, by the late Edo period, the widespread availability and popularity of printed books fostered even more imaginative and fantastic tales.

The calligraphers who inscribed *emaki* were usually learned members of the imperial or other aristocratic families. Before the seventeenth century, calligraphers rarely signed or sealed their work, though on some occasions a list of calligraphers was recorded on a separate sheet, as was the case with *The Tale of Genji* attributed to Kaihō Yūsetsu (1598–1677).¹⁰ However, during the seventeenth century a few calligraphers added their seals and signatures to the ends of their scrolls. A mid-seventeenth-century version of *The Great Woven Cap* in the New York Public



Fig. 20. Detail of *The Great Woven Cap*. Edo period (1615–1868), first half of the 17th century. One handscroll from a set of three; ink, color, and gold on paper, approx. H. 22 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (58.2 cm). Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

Library (pp. 62–65) bears the signature and seal of Asakura Jūken (fig. 21). Jūken’s background is relatively unknown but he is thought to have been a member of the warrior elite. Through stylistic comparison, scholars recently were able to attribute to Jūken the calligraphy of several unsigned scrolls, including *The Tale of Urashima Tarō* (pp. 66–67) and *The Chronicle of the Great Peace* (fig. 19).¹¹

Like calligraphers, Japanese illustrators seldom added their signatures or seals to their work. It is generally understood that narrative illustrations were executed almost solely by painters of the Tosa school and its later offshoot, the Sumiyoshi school. The Kano school, which emerged about 1500 under Masanobu (ca. 1430–ca. 1530) and his son Motonobu (1476–1559), was also active within the genre, specializing in illustrated tales of Chinese lore, as opposed to the Tosa’s focus on classical and vernacular Japanese subjects and *waka*. Tosa painters produced mainly smaller-format



Kano school and the Kano's movement toward *yamato-e* to illustrate Japanese, rather than Chinese, tales. A clear example of this trend can be seen in the work of Tanshin (1653–1718), a son of Kano Tanyū's (1602–1674), whose screens *Mountain Roses along the Ide River* unequivocally embrace the *yamato-e* style, offering not a hint of the original Kano technique (fig. 22). These screens and many other paintings by major Kano artists indicate that the Kano school, like the Tosa, was committed to the telling of Japanese tales—and what tales they were! From romances both sweeping and tragic to grim battles and glorious victories to the extraordinary lives of mythic characters, be they gods or demons, the stories that make up the Japanese narrative tradition reflect a culture steeped in legend and defined by multivalent layers of meaning. The following pages present a selection of classic Japanese tales as told in a number of exceptional illustrated handscrolls and screens at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and in other noteworthy collections.

Fig. 22 Kano Tanshin (1653–1718). *Mountain Roses along the Ide River*. Edo Period (1615–1868), 17th–18th century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on gilded paper, each 55¹/₁₆ in. × 11 ft. 7³/₈ in. (141.5 × 354 cm). Private collection

1. The scroll now exists in several fragments that are dispersed among various temples and museum collections, including Jōbonrendaiji Temple, Rendaiji Temple, the Hō'onji subtemple at Daigoji, the Nara National Museum, the Tokyo University of Fine Arts Museum, and the Idemitsu Museum, Tokyo, among others.

2. For the cult of the *dōji*, see Yamaori Tetsuo, *Kami to okina no minzokugaku* (Folkloric Studies of Gods and the Old Man) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1991).

3. The earliest mention of the term *otogi zōshi* occurs in *Otogi bunko* (Companion Library), an anthology of Muromachi tales published by the Osaka bookseller Shibukawa Seiemon in the early eighteenth century.

4. See Masako Watanabe, "Narrative Framing in Handscrolls and the *Tale of Genji* Scrolls" (PhD diss., Columbia University, New York, 1995).

5. According to Ishikawa Tōru's *Nara ehon, emaki no tenkai* (The Development of Nara Illustrated Books and Handscrolls) (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2009), pp. 4–41, the painter and calligrapher of the fifty-four-book set in the Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, can be identified as the seventeenth-century female artist Isome Tsuna.

6. See Janice Katz, *Beyond Golden Clouds: Japanese Screens from the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 131.

7. Smaller illustrated handscrolls known as *ko-e* (small picture), which can measure between four and eight inches in height, emerged during the late Muromachi and Momoyama periods; see Melissa McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

8. The Metropolitan Museum owns the longest fragment of *The History of Jin'ōji Temple* (1975.268.36).

9. Akiyama Terukazu, "Jin'ōji engi emaki no fukugen to kōsatsu: Iwayuru Kōnin Shōnin eden wo megutte" (A Reconstruction of the Illustrated Scroll of the Legend of Jin'ōji Temple), in *Zaigai Nihon no shihō* (Treasures of Japanese Art in Foreign Collections), edited by Yamane Yūzō, vol. 2, *Emaki-mono* (Illustrated Handscrolls) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun, 1979), pp. 98–113.

10. See Miyeko Murase, "Kaihō Yūsetsu hitsu Genji monogatari Emaki" (*The Tale of Genji* Handscroll by Kaihō Yūsetsu), *Kokka* 1358 (2008), pp. 39–40; Gunhild Avitabile, *Die Kunst des alten Japan: Meisterwerke aus der Mary und Jackson Burke Collection*, New York (The Art of Ancient Japan: Masterworks from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection, New York), exh. cat. (Frankfurt:

Kulturgesellschaft Frankfurt mbH, 1990), pp. 104–6; Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), pp. 190–94.

11. Tokuda Kazuo, *Otogi zōshi kenkyū* (Study of Otogi zōshi) (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1988), pp. 625–30; Ishikawa Tōru, *Nara ehon emaki seisei* (The Development of Nara Illustrated Books and Handscrolls) (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2003), pp. 236–40.

12. During the Edo period, the Kano established four branches in Edo (present-day Tokyo). The branch that remained in Kyoto, the Kyō-Kano, served the Tokugawa shogunate and founded an official painting academy.

ILLUSTRATED LEGENDS OF KITANO SHRINE

KITANO TENJIN ENGI | 北野天神縁起

Sugawara Michizane (845–903) was not born in the usual way but appeared miraculously as a grown boy to the Sugawara family. His talents as a poet were revealed early on. He would become a distinguished statesman, enjoying great favor with the Emperor Daigo (885–930) and receiving numerous important appointments, which inevitably roused the jealousy of other aristocrats. Michizane's political rival, the courtier Fujiwara no Tokihira (871–909), of the powerful Fujiwara clan, slandered him to the emperor and persuaded him to banish Michizane to Dazaifu, in Kyūshū.

Michizane was thus forced to sail with his entourage away from his beloved home. Pondering his fate and lamenting his banishment, he composed a series of poems that captured the grief of a life spent in exile and sent them to his dearest friend, Ki no Haseo, in the New Year, the season when Michizane's favorite plum tree was in bloom. He went to Mount Tenpai to appeal his innocence to heaven, but to no avail: Michizane died of a broken heart on the twenty-fifth day of the second month of 903. As the carriage was transporting his body back to Kyoto, the ox suddenly stopped at Tsukushi and refused to move any farther. Michizane's retainers interpreted this to mean that his soul wished to be buried there, and they complied.

Extraordinary natural disasters followed the death of Michizane, whose vengeful spirit, in the guise of the thunder god, unleashed hail, lightning, and gales of wind against his slanderers. As the overflowing Kamo River threatened the windswept palace courtyard, the magician-monk Son'i rushed through the swirling deluge, while another Buddhist monk chanted prayers in the hope that he could forestall disaster. Waving a sword in a futile attempt at defense, Fujiwara no Tokihira received the god's full wrath. He was seized by a hideous affliction: two serpents, manifestations of Michizane's anger, sprang from the sides of his head, exclaiming to the courtier Miyoshi Kiyotsura (847–918), "I was ordered by the Buddhist protectors Bonten and Taishakuten to destroy my enemy! Command your son, [the Shingon monk] Jōzō, known far and wide as a powerful miracle worker, to cease his prayers that seek to defeat me!" Tokihira and his family were thus left to suffer their fate.

Another courtier, Kintada, who had been miraculously revived from death, visited Emperor Daigo to report that he had seen Michizane in the underworld, appealing his innocence to the King of Hell. Fearing a dreadful fate for having banished Michizane and hoping to appease his fury, the repentant emperor granted Michizane a posthumous promotion and then devoted himself to life as a Buddhist monk. In the end, however, Daigo was unable to save himself.



Checklist no. 1

The tale now shifts to the itinerant monk Nichizō, who, accompanied by a young practitioner, descended Mount Kinpusen in Yoshino, south of the ancient capital of Nara, to the cave of Shō. Tragically, he fell ill and died, but water from the hand of a mysterious priest—who was, in fact, Shukongōjin (Vajradhara), the protector of Buddhist law, in disguise—brought him back to life. Nichizō was led through the mountains by an old monk, a manifestation of the god Zaō Gongen, to the foot of Mount Kinzan, where an assembly of one hundred twenty monks was gathered. Afterward, Michizane, in the guise of the general Dajō Itokuten, led Nichizō to his palace in Tsushita Heaven, encountering various celestial beings along the way. The monk passed through a jagged terrain to the palace of Enma, the King of Hell. Beyond a gate guarded by an eight-headed beast was a terrifying inferno in which he



saw the Emperor Daigo and his servants being tormented by flames and blackbirds. The besieged emperor explained to the monk how to pacify Michizane's angry spirit, and Nichizō reported back to the imperial court upon his return to the human realm.

As other oracles delivered similar messages, a girl named Ayako came forward, claiming that Michizane's spirit had ordered her to build a shrine in his honor at the Ukon horse-riding grounds. Alas, she was unable to do so and instead erected a small shrine at the corner of her garden, where she prayed for several years. The boy Tarōmaru was the next to hear Michizane's message, which was delivered near Hiramia Shrine, at Lake Biwa. Tarōmaru's father, Yoshitane, reported back to the gathering of monks, and soon after, construction of a shrine to Michizane began at Ukon.



Michizane's spirit, however, remained unsatisfied. When the imperial palace mysteriously burned down, a wooden plank appeared in its place. It was inscribed with a poem from Michizane, who vowed to repeatedly raze the palace until he was fully avenged. The high ministerial post of Dajō-daijin (Chancellor of the Realm) was therefore conferred upon Michizane, and he was named a *tenjin*, or heavenly spirit. His anger finally quelled, peace returned to Kyoto. Thereafter, the *tenjin* of Kitano Shrine was worshiped as the god of learning and calligraphy, as well as a protector of the unjustly persecuted.







THE LEGEND OF THE ORIGIN OF KUMANO SHRINE

KUMANO HONJI | 熊野本地

Zenzai, the king of Magadha in India, lamented not having any sons despite having one thousand consorts, one of whom, a lady of great beauty, wished desperately to win his affections. She went to the Five Emancipations Palace and prayed to Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara (Jūichimen Kannon). She soon became pregnant, and the king was so pleased that he vowed to never leave her side. Overcome with jealousy, his 999 other consorts bribed a fortune-teller to predict falsely that the woman would give birth to a wicked prince, but the king paid no heed to the prophecy. The enraged women wreaked havoc on the Five Emancipations Palace, forcing the embattled king to flee.

In the king's absence, the malevolent consorts fabricated a royal order to have the woman taken to the mountains and executed. At first forced to walk, she soon grew exhausted, and the soldiers showed clemency, permitting her to make the rest of the journey on horseback. As they prepared to execute her, she prayed to Kannon, chanting the *Kannon Sutra*. The bodhisattva sent his protection, and the soldiers' swords could harm neither her nor her unborn child. Alas, the woman met her dreadful fate after the prince was born. Her head was carried back to the other consorts and hastily buried; the child remained in the mountains until he was three years old, nurtured by the animals that lived there.

One day, a monk chanting sutras at the foot of the mountain received a divine message to search for an abandoned prince living in the mountains nearby. He and other monks found the boy, who told them of his tragedy. The monks took him to King Zenzai. Finally reunited with his father, the boy recounted his mother's fate. The king summoned and dismissed the 999 wicked consorts and performed the proper funerary rituals to honor the boy's mother. The prince wished to renounce the world and become a Buddhist monk, but the king did not approve. Together, father and son built a hall and placed the woman's ashes on the altar. Seven days later, she miraculously came back to life.

The family flew to Japan on a magic winged vehicle, leaving the 999 wicked consorts behind. They settled in Kii, by the Otonashi River, where they became the three gods of the three shrines in the sacred Kumano compound.



Checklist no. 2

THE STORY OF THE ASCETIC EN NO GYŌJA

EN NO GYŌJA | 役行者

In the village of Uhara, at the foot of Mount Katsuragi, in Yamato (between present-day Osaka and Nara prefectures), there lived a diligent young man named Kamo no Kozumi, later known as En no Gyōja (b. 634). He abandoned village life to settle in a mountain cave, where he practiced Shugendō for more than thirty years, eventually attaining the same magical abilities as Kujaku myō-ō, the Peacock King. Attended by two demonic spirits, En no Gyōja flew on five-colored clouds to the palace of the immortals.

Some time later En no Gyōja moved to Mount Kinpusen, in Yoshino. After seven days of ascetic practice, he had a vision of the bodhisattva Kshitagarbha (Jizō) holding a *cintamani*, a jewel to illuminate the darkness of unenlightenment. He flew west to Mount Daisen to rouse the deity Zaō Gongen, who resided in the mountain. He prayed for seven days before an enraged, blue-faced spirit emerged from the ground, wielding a staff with six rings. He was a manifestation of the famous Zaō Gongen of Mount Kinpusen, the tutelary deity of Shugendō who endowed all mountain ascetics with their powers.

One day, En no Gyōja met the bodhisattva Nagarjuna (Ryūju) at the Mino'o Waterfall, in Osaka. He built a temple compound,

celebrated today as Mino'o Temple, and made a sculpture of Ryūju to enshrine within it. En no Gyōja ordered the local god Hitokotonushi to build a bridge that traversed the great distance between Mount Katsuragi and Mount Yoshino, but progress was frustratingly slow, for Hitokotonushi was hideously ugly and could only come out to work at night. Upset, En no Gyōja threw him into a valley.



A vengeful Hitokotonushi slandered En no Gyōja to the emperor, claiming that the monk had plans to rebel. The emperor sent the army to arrest En no Gyōja, who used his powers of flight to escape. The soldiers seized his mother instead, and En no Gyōja had no choice but to give himself up to rescue her. Unwilling to face his banishment to Izu, on Ōshima Island, En no Gyōja snuck away and flew to Mount Fuji. He was spotted by the ever-watchful Hitokotonushi, who again reported him to the emperor. En no Gyōja was finally captured by officers who had been sent from the capital to kill him. Their swords and arrows, however, could not hurt him.

As En no Gyōja languished in exile, natural disasters befell the capital. A voice thundered forth from black clouds hovering above the palace, declaring, “En no Gyōja did nothing wrong and yet he was persecuted—worse, he was almost executed! I will destroy the world if he is not set free!” An imperial messenger went to the island to pardon En no Gyōja and summon him back to the court. En no Gyōja remained in Yamato for a short time, until one day he and his mother flew on a grass mat across the ocean to China. It is said that monks who went to China to study Buddhist teachings learned from En no Gyōja. He is revered as the first of the mountain priests, or *yamabushi*—literally, “those who bow down in the mountains.”

Checklist no. 3





THE GREAT WOVEN CAP

TAISHOKAN | 大織冠物語

Fujiwara no Kamatari (614–669), the founder of the powerful Fujiwara family, was given the illustrious title of Great Woven Cap (Taishokan) by the Emperor Tenchi (626–671). Kamatari (Fukito) paid homage at a private shrine, Kasuga, and vowed to build a Golden Hall at Kōfukuji Temple in Nara. He had several daughters; the eldest, Kōmyō, was already married to Emperor Shōmu when Emperor Taizong (599–649) of China sent an imperial envoy to Japan to seek the hand of his second daughter, Kōhakunyo, who was renowned for her exceptional beauty. Kamatari accepted the proposal and sent his daughter to China. He prepared three hundred ships, two of which had richly embellished interiors and gorgeous prows, one in the shape of a dragon's head, the other, a phoenix's head. Together with his Ministers of Right and Left, several ladies-in-waiting, and one hundred officials, the Emperor Taizong greeted Kōhakunyo at the Chinese port of Mingzhou and escorted her to his palace in the capital, Chang'an.

Years passed, and Kamatari fulfilled his promise to build a Golden Hall at Kōfukuji, in which stood a golden statue of Shakyamuni Buddha. The Empress Kōhakunyo wished to send her father a precious jewel to place within the whorl of white hair on the Buddha's forehead, so as to illuminate the universe that emanated from his being. Led by the general Wanhū, the Chinese soldiers sailed to Japan with the jewel, but the Eight Great Dragon Kings were lying in wait, plotting to steal it. First, they sent Asura fighters to attack the soldiers, who bravely persevered through several fierce sea battles. Determined to steal the jewel, the kings sent the Dragon Princess Koisainyō in a wooden boat to seduce Wanhū. Her boat approached the soldiers' ship near Sanuki, in Shikoku. The Chinese general was distracted by Koisainyō's beauty, and she cunningly escaped with the jewel, taking it with her into the depths of the sea to hide in the Dragon Palace. Dismayed, Kamatari went to Fusazaki, in Sanuki, with the hope of retrieving his daughter's gift to the temple. Settling there, he married a diver; she did not know his true identity. He lived with her in a cottage for three years and together they had a son. When she realized that her husband was the Great Woven Cap, she volunteered to dive into the Dragon Palace to look for the jewel, which was under heavy guard.

Kamatari hatched a plan: he staged a lavish celebration on a beautiful ship, tricking the Dragon Kings into thinking that it was the Buddhist Pure Land paradise and luring them away from their lair. While they were gone, Kamatari's wife attached a five-colored rope (*goshiki no ito*) to her waist and jumped into the sea to retrieve the jewel. On her way back to the ship, she was spotted by a dragon guard. She fought valiantly against the dragon but could not overcome him. However, she did not fail in her endeavor, for when her body was pulled from the water, it was discovered that she had bravely opened her chest with a knife to hide the jewel inside. Thanks to her heroic act, the jewel made its way to Kōfukuji and was placed in the forehead of Shakyamuni Buddha, illuminating the temple with his wisdom.

三子とくわく
うきとくわく
うきとくわく







THE TALE OF URASHIMA TARŌ

URASHIMA TARŌ | 浦島太郎



Checklist no. 5

In a village in Tango, north of Kyoto, there lived the young fisherman Urashima Tarō. He took care of his parents by catching fish and gathering clams and seaweed. One day, Urashima caught a turtle. He released it back into the sea, saying, “Turtles and cranes have long lives. If you died here, it would be a great pity. I will save your life, and you should remember this debt of gratitude.”

The next day Urashima went fishing again and saw a beautiful woman in a boat. She explained that she was the sole survivor of a shipwreck, and Urashima decided to accompany her home. After ten days, Urashima and the woman reached Ryūgūjō, the underwater palace of the dragon god of the sea. The woman showed Urashima the garden, where flowers of the four seasons bloomed simultaneously, for the palace was an eternal world. There, she declared it their fate to marry.

Urashima spent three happy years in Ryūgūjō with his bride, but he missed his parents and wished to return to his village. Before he left, his wife confessed that she was a manifestation of the turtle whose life Urashima had saved. She gave him a box as a memento, warning him not to open it. Urashima went back to Tango and asked an old villager about his family. To his surprise he learned that Urashima Tarō had left the village seven hundred years before—not three, as he had believed. Bewildered, he opened the box his wife had given him. Three streams of smoke poured out, and Urashima immediately turned into an old man with wrinkled skin and shockingly white hair, for his wife had locked away his aging within the box. Urashima was then transformed into a crane and flew away, while his wife, the Princess Otohime, turned back into a turtle. She now supports the immortal Mount Penglai (Mount Hōrai) upon her shell. The two became the *myōjin* (Shinto deities) of Tango and continue to watch over all sentient beings—a happy ending indeed!

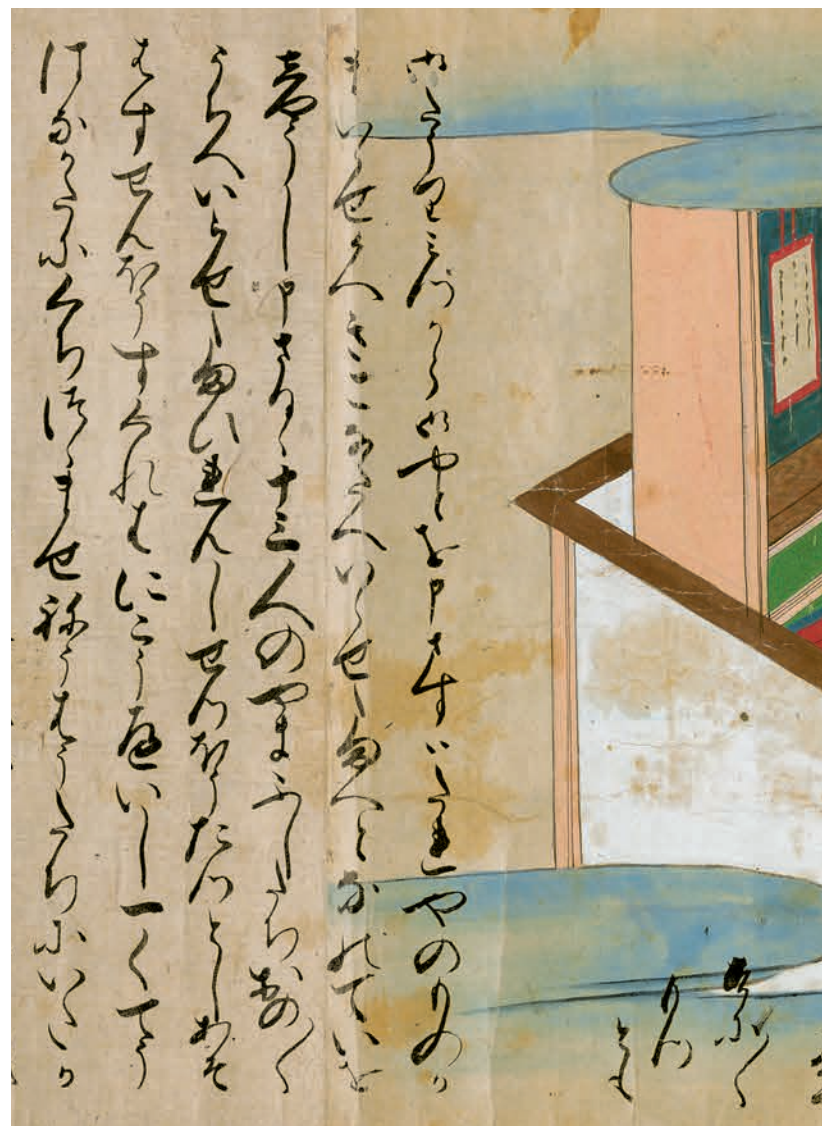


THE NUN WHO LOST TWO SONS AT THE BATTLE OF YASHIMA

YASHIMA NIKŌ MONOGATARI | 屋島尼公物語

Toward the end of the Heian period, in the late twelfth century, power shifted first to the Heike (Taira) clan and then to the Minamoto (Genji), which was led by Yoritomo (1147–1199). His brother, the young general Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189), led the Genji army to victory against the Heike at Yashima (present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture, in western Honshū). With time, Yoritomo began to fear that his brother's power exceeded his own, and he embarked upon a campaign to suppress him.

Enemies were closing in on Yoshitsune and his twelve retainers, including his lifelong protector, the brave monk-soldier Saitō Musashibō Benkei (1155–1189). In an attempt to evade capture, Yoshitsune and his men disguised themselves as mountain priests (*yamabushi*) and set off on a treacherous journey from Yoshino, south of Nara, to Hiraizumi, in northeast Japan, where Yoshitsune had once enjoyed the protection of the Fujiwara clan. Late one afternoon, they arrived at a ruined mansion in Shinobu. They asked a Buddhist nun who had been living there if they could take shelter for the night. The nun, recently widowed, welcomed the “priests,” telling them about her family's decline and about her two sons, Tsugunobu and Tadanobu, who had joined Yoshitsune's army to fight against the Heike at Yashima. She asked for news of their fate, not knowing that she was talking to their commanding general. Yoshitsune remembered the two young men, who had stood with him on the field and fought bravely to their deaths. While defending his general, the elder son, Tsugunobu, had been felled by an arrow



from the bow of the Heike warrior Noritsune. To avenge his brother, Tadanobu had killed Noritsune's retainer Kikuōmaru; wounded in the struggle, he, too, expired on the field. Following this tale of her sons' valor, delivered by Benkei in the declamatory language used to praise the bravest of men, Yoshitsune revealed his true identity to their mother, thanking her for her sons' courageous service. The next morning the troupe continued their journey to Hiraizumi.

Checklist no. 6



THE DRUNKEN DEMON

SHUTEN DŌJI | 酒吞童子

On Mount Ōeyama, northwest of Kyoto, there lived a giant demon who terrorized the capital, abducting all the beautiful maidens. When a daughter of the aristocrat Ikeda Kunimasa disappeared, he consulted the famous seer (*onmyōshi*) Abe no Seimei (921–1005) to learn where his daughter had been taken. Seimei revealed that she was imprisoned within the demon's mountain palace.

The emperor ordered Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948–1021), known as Raikō, and his five trusted retainers to rescue the maidens and rid the land of this scourge. Before setting out they made a pilgrimage to three shrines—Hachiman, Sumiyoshi, and Kumano—to pray for a successful mission. They were rewarded for their piety, encountering avatars of the gods of these shrines who guided them deep into the mountains and gave them powerful tools with which to carry out their task: poisoned sake and a golden helmet. The gods created a tree bridge over a deep ravine and led Raikō and his men to the bank of a rapidly flowing river. Just before departing, the gods instructed the warriors to climb the adjacent mountain. During their ascent, they met a woman washing bloody clothes who told them the location of the demon's residence.

Strange-looking creatures led them inside the compound, where they were greeted by the demon. He was gigantic—nearly ten feet tall—but had a boyish *kamuro* hairstyle. The demon, who was flanked by two maidens, one





of whom was Kunimasa's daughter, treated them to a macabre feast of sashimi made with human flesh, washed down with goblets of blood. The demon's subjects entertained the guests and were even joined by one of the heroes, Sakata no Kintoki, who was a gifted dancer. Having earned the demon's trust, Raikō offered him and his retinue the poisoned sake. The host became drunk and disappeared into his chamber, while his subjects fell ill from the poison.

With their captors incapacitated, the terrorized maidens told the warriors their story and offered to lead them deep inside the mansion to find the sleeping demon. The warriors donned their armor and took up their weapons. The three gods who had helped them along the way reappeared to break through a strong iron gate that stood in their way. The warriors found the demon sleeping in his chamber, attended by an abducted maiden. Raikō chopped off the demon's head, which flew into the air and landed on his own, but his life was saved by the gods' golden helmet. Raikō and his entourage conquered the demon's subjects and rescued scores of maidens who had been imprisoned in caves throughout the compound. The brave warriors and maidens returned to the capital, carrying the vanquished demon as their trophy, and the ladies of Kyoto could thereafter sleep in peace.













THE TALE OF GIŌ

GIŌ MONOGATARI | 祇王物語

Taira no Kiyomori (1118–1181), the ruler of Japan at the end of the twelfth century, held Lady Giō, a dancer, in high favor. Giō prospered from Kiyomori's gifts, and she was able to take good care of her mother and sister. One day, another dancer, Lady Hotoke, invited herself to Kiyomori's mansion and offered to perform for him. At first Kiyomori declined, but the generous Giō persuaded him to let Hotoke dance. Hotoke's beauty and talent impressed Kiyomori, and it was not long before he sought to replace Giō with Hotoke, who had a kind soul and was dismayed that she had caused Giō's banishment. Before she left, the brokenhearted Giō wrote a farewell poem on a sliding door:

*Since both are grasses
of the field, how may either
be spared by autumn—
the young shoot blossoming forth
and the herb fading from view? **

* Translation by Roberta Strippoli



Years passed, and Giō was once again summoned to Kiyomori's palace. She was reluctant to go, but her mother urged her to obey his command. He requested that Giō dance for Hotoke. Ashamed, Giō retreated to a remote cottage in Sagano, near Kyoto, with her mother and sister. They became nuns, dedicating their lives to praying for rebirth in the Buddhist paradise.

One night they had a visit from Hotoke, who expressed sympathy for shaming Giō. Admiring their pious, ascetic lifestyle, she renounced the material pleasures of the world and joined them in devotion to the Pure Land faith. The four nuns lived peacefully together, fulfilling their religious vows in a place now revered as Giōji Temple.

Checklist no. 8



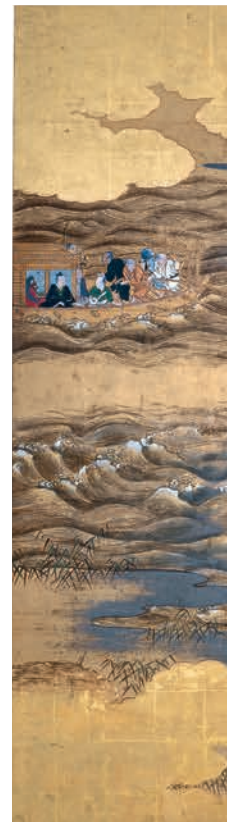
THE NEW PIECE

SHINKYOKU | 新曲

The Emperor Go-Daigo's (1288–1339) eldest son, Prince Takayoshi (Takanaga), married the great love of his life, Princess Imadegawa Kin'aki, whose father was the Minister of the Left. In 1331 the prince and his father fought the Kamakura regime at Mount Kasagi-yama, ultimately losing the battle. The prince was exiled to Tosa, in Shikoku, for taking part in the uprising. Longing to be with his wife, he sent Takebun, his most loyal retainer, to Kyoto to escort her to Shikoku, which could only be reached by sea. They arrived at Amagasaki (near present-day Kobe) and waited for the winds to change before sailing to the island. As they waited, the pirate Matsura Gorō, who hailed from Tsukushi, in Kyūshū, spotted the beautiful princess and plotted to abduct her. He first plied Takebun with drink before making his attack in the dead of night. The brave Takebun defended the princess's honor, running with her on his back as he escaped from a smoking fire and hiding her in a boat docked at the shore. Alas, the boat belonged to Matsura, and when Takebun left her to return to the burning building and rescue other maidens, the pirate escaped with his prize.

Takebun realized he had been tricked when he got back to the shore to find the boat gone. He chased after the pirate ship in a small boat, shouting, "Stop, stop!" and waving a fan, but to no avail: Matsura's boat was picking up a strong tail wind and advancing swiftly. Angered, Takebun exclaimed, "If I were the dragon god of the sea, I would not let them escape!" Standing determinedly in his tiny boat, he performed *seppuku* (ritual suicide) and threw himself into the ocean.

Meanwhile, surrounded by villains, the princess wept in the galley of the pirate ship as the wind pushed the boat toward Kyūshū. In the early evening, as they were passing the whirlpools at Naruto, in Awa Province, the boat spiraled out of control. The pirates made an offering of the princess's clothing to appease the angry sea, which seemed at first to work: the white waves turned red, and the whirlpools fell calm. However, the boat stalled in the same spot for three days and nights. Before long, Matsura realized that he was being punished by the dragon god for abducting a noble lady. One of his sailors said, "The Naruto whirlpools are located at the eastern gate of the Dragon Palace. We must make an offering to the dragon god. I believe he loves the princess—let us cast her into the ocean to save one hundred lives!" As the princess was about to be thrown overboard, a monk shouted, "The dragon god has already achieved enlightenment, he will not accept the offering of a woman! Instead, we must chant the *Kannon Sutra* and *darani* (mantras) to appease him." As they chanted Kannon's name, mysterious men in pink robes emerged from the ocean before disappearing back into the water. Then a white horse led by eight horsemen appeared and disappeared. Finally, Takebun, wearing red armor and



a warrior's helmet, emerged from the sea, riding a horse and wielding a bow. He raised a red fan and repeated his plea—"Stop, stop!"—before returning to the bottom of the ocean. The sailors appealed to Matsura, "To pacify Takebun's furious spirit, we must build a boat for the princess and set her free!" Matsura agreed and set the lady adrift in a boat. As soon as she was safe from her captors, the pirate ship was blown furiously toward the west, smashing against the rocks and sinking into the ocean. The princess's boat floated to the island of Mushima, alighting on a beach dotted with shacks. Children splashed water in her face to revive her. She remained on the island for one year.

All the while, the exiled Prince Takayoshi mourned for his beloved princess, thinking her dead after a sailor reported finding her robes floating in the sea. Before long, in 1333, Takanaga found his way back to the capital after fighting another ferocious battle against the Kamakura, this time emerging victorious. There, he heard news of his wife's true fate. He rushed to Mushima, where he was reunited with the princess, and together they returned to their home.

Checklist no. 9













うさぎ
うさぎ
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THE BATTLES OF THE TWELVE ANIMALS

JŪNIRUI GASSEN | 十二類合戦

The twelve animals of the zodiac—rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar—who guarded Yakushi Nyorai (the Buddha of healing), had a poetry competition on the theme of the moon. A deer, who offered to be the judge, came with his friend the badger. The twelve animals were delighted; only the dog made trouble, for he did not approve of the deer. After completing six rounds of competition, the animals feasted, and the monkey performed a celebratory dance of longevity. It was a grand party, and everyone had a marvelous time.

Several days later, the animals held another poetry contest, this time at the foot of a mountain colored by autumn foliage. The deer politely declined to serve as judge, and the badger, eager to attend another rollicking party, offered to replace him. The twelve animals, however, spurned him. Feeling slighted, the proud badger plotted his revenge, enlisting the help of several fearsome animal protectors: the old fox of Inari Shrine, the young bear of Kumano Shrine, the wolf of Rendai Field, the old kite of Atago Shrine, the white heron of the Yurugi Forest, the crow of Futsukaichi Garden, and many others. A cat served as his general, a weasel and a horned owl as his deputies. They planned to attack on a dark, moonless night.

The twelve animals caught wind of the plan and ambushed the badger's army. The dragon surged forth from dark clouds and defeated the wolf, forcing the army to retreat. The twelve animals celebrated through the night, the rooster performing a dance of longevity. The tiger and the dragon, paired as always, danced together. The old kite noticed that the animals' defenses were down, and he urged the badger to stage another attack. The kite flew off to assemble the remnants of the army, which this time emerged victorious and set up camp at Mount Atago. The twelve animals reorganized and assailed the badger encampment, the dragon attacking from behind and the others attacking from the front. Finally, the enemy army surrendered.

The badger disguised himself as a monk to escape to Gachirinji Temple, but still desirous of revenge, he took on the guise of a demon. Peering at his reflection in the water, he was convinced his more fearsome disguise was foolproof, but not so: the dog recognized him and barked, forcing him to run for cover, and he barely escaped with his life. He repented his arrogance, bid farewell to his wife and children, and devoted himself to the Buddhist monkhood, receiving the name Kejōbō. Each night the badger hit his belly like a drum to accompany his dancing and chanting at the hall of Tan-amidabutsu in Kyoto. Afterward he left for Nishiyama, north of Nara, where he devoted himself to religious practice and continued to compose poems reflecting on the snow and the moon.

A LONG TALE FOR AN AUTUMN NIGHT

AKI NO YO NAGA MONOGATARI | 秋夜長物語

Long ago on Mount Hiei lived the Tendai Buddhist monk Keikai, who excelled in the literary and martial arts. In the season of the cherry blossoms, Keikai descended from the mountain to the shores of Lake Biwa, where he went to Ishiyamadera Temple to pray to the bodhisattva Kannon. One night he dreamed of a beautiful boy standing beneath the trees, cherry blossoms falling over him like snow. Imagine his astonishment when, the next day, he saw such a youth standing in the temple compound of Miidera (Onjōji). He learned from the boy's attendant, Keiju, that his name was Umewaka and that his father was the Minister of the Left. Keikai was immediately enamored of the boy and stayed close to Miidera, asking Keiju to deliver a love poem.

The monk knew his affections for Umewaka were leading him astray from his religious devotion, and he resolved to leave Miidera. He headed back to Mount Hiei, but with every step he paused to look back, unable to rid his mind of the beautiful boy. Keiju caught up to him en route with a reply from Umewaka, who wished for Keikai to return. Elated, he headed back to Miidera and waited patiently for ten days before he and Umewaka could be together. Afterward he returned to Mount Hiei, but he could no longer focus on his religious practice, for he missed Umewaka too much. Heartsick, he retreated from public life. When Umewaka heard of Keikai's condition, he hurried to Mount Hiei with Keiju at his side. The journey was arduous, and they stopped to rest at Karasaki. A mountain priest approached in a palanquin and offered to take them up the mountain. Exhausted, Umewaka and Keiju accepted his offer, but when they climbed into the vehicle, the man, a Tengu mountain goblin in disguise, abducted them.

Umewaka's disappearance sparked a terrible row, for the monks of Miidera, aware of the relationship between Umewaka and Keikai, suspected that Keikai's fellow monks at Mount Hiei were responsible. Assuming also that Umewaka's father was involved, they burned his mansion to the ground. The monks of Mount Hiei, led by Keikai, retaliated by razing the Miidera compound, sparing only the shrine to their tutelary god, Shinra. Meanwhile, as the battle raged, Umewaka and Keiju were held captive in the Tengu kingdom. Imprisoned with them was an old man from Awaji, the legendary home of the Dragon King. He was, in fact, the Dragon King in disguise, and using his magical powers, he rescued them from the goblins. He flew them on a cloud to the beautiful garden of Shinzen'en, a sacred place where rites were performed to summon the rain.

Freed from their captors, Umewaka and Keiju sought shelter at Shinra Shrine, the only building that had not been razed during the battle, and from there went to Ishiyamadera in search of their abbot, who was nowhere to be found. Umewaka was dismayed to learn of the troubles his abduction had caused, and he wrote a letter to Keikai expressing his intentions of suicide. Keiju delivered the letter, sending Keikai into a panic. Together, they rushed back to Ishiyamadera. On the way there they were



told by a traveler that a youth had jumped from the bridge at Seta, at the southern tip of Lake Biwa, after reciting the *nenbutsu* ten times while facing west. Keikai and Keiju took to the water and found Umewaka drifting in the waves. They pulled him from the water, Keikai cradling his head in his lap and Keiju supporting his legs.

The following day, the boy's body was cremated according to ritual. The priests and attendants left one by one, but Keikai and Keiju stayed and sobbed. Keikai, overcome with sorrow, never returned to Mount Hiei. He became a pilgrim and traveled with Umewaka's ashes. He later settled in Nishiyama, near Kyoto, to pray for Umewaka's salvation. Meanwhile, Keiju took the tonsure and spent the remainder of his days in the temples of Mount Kōya.

While performing a final ritual for the deity Shinra Myōjin, the monks of Miidera learned from their dreams that Keikai had reached enlightenment through sorrow, and that Umewaka had been a manifestation of the bodhisattva Kannon. Umewaka's sacrifice was thus a manifestation of Kannon's compassion, and the destruction of the temples was but an expedient (*hōben*) to guide men to salvation. Thereafter, many devotees went to Keikai's retreat in Nishiyama to become his students, and he was revered as a saint, Sensai Shōnin.

Checklist no. II







THE TALE OF GENJI

GENJI MONOGATARI | 源氏物語

Hikaru Genji was the son of the emperor and his consort Lady Kiritsubo. Poisoned by the other consorts' jealousy, Kiritsubo fell ill and died, but her son grew to become an ideal man—handsome, and with exceptional artistic talents. He was much admired by others. Genji could not be made crown prince, a designation conferred upon the eldest son of the emperor and his official wife, Lady Kokiden. Instead, our hero was assigned membership in the nonroyal Genji clan. At the age of twelve, he was married to Aoi, the daughter of the Minister of the Left.

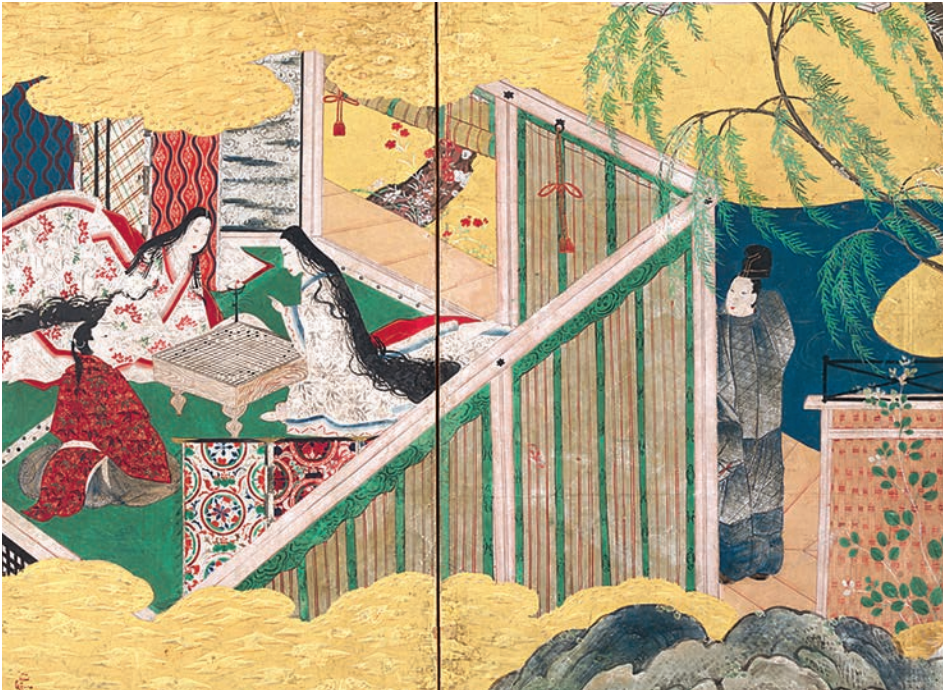
Because of his extraordinary gifts, Genji was no stranger to romance. Early on, he embarked upon a relationship with a married woman, Utsusemi (Lady of the Locust Shell), entering her bedroom after spying her playing a game of go with her sister. Then, there was Yūgao (Evening Face), a young woman he met while on his way to visit his former nurse, who was ill. He had stopped before a small house surrounded by beautiful *yūgao* flowers, and a little girl handed Genji's trusted retainer a white fan upon which a flower had been placed—a message from Yūgao. Some time later, when Genji entered her bedroom, an apparition of Lady Rokujō, a spurned lover and the widow of the former crown prince, appeared near the bed. Yūgao died at the hand of Rokujō's jealous spirit. Heartsick, Genji retreated to the mountains, where he caught a glimpse of the girl Murasaki through a thatched fence. She was very young but he was immediately enchanted; she would reappear later in his life and become his greatest love.

When Genji was twenty-one, there was an incident at the Kamo festival. Lady Aoi's carriage pushed its way into a more advantageous spot from which to view the festivities, damaging the carriage of Lady Rokujō and knocking her out of the way. Rokujō, who had already lost Genji's affections, suffered in emotional turmoil, her pride painfully bruised. Her jealous spirit possessed the pregnant Aoi, causing her to fall ill. To express her feelings of neglect, Rokujō sent Genji a poem:

*I knew all too well that no sleeve goes unmoistened by the mire of love,
Yet in the slough of that field I labor in helpless pain. **

Not long after giving birth to a son, Lady Aoi died, leaving Genji to seek solace in the enchanting young woman he had met long ago—Murasaki, who became his wife. Soon, his father the emperor died as well, and Genji's political influence waned. He retreated to a temple, where he lived for a time in seclusion, and from there sent his new wife a poem:





*Having left you there, frailly lodged as a
dewdrop trembling on a leaf,
I am prey to many fears whenever the four
winds blow. **

Before long, Genji found himself in a compromising situation. He had become involved with the Lady Oborozukiyo, the sister of Empress Kokiden. Their liaison set off a political rivalry that left Genji with no choice but to exile himself to Suma. Before departing, he sent Oborozukiyo a poem:

*Did the way I drowned in a sad river of tears
that we could not meet
set running the mighty flood that has now swept
me away? **

At Suma, Genji—not one to remain alone for long—met a lady from nearby Akashi, with whom he had a daughter. He took the two of them home to the capital and persuaded the Akashi lady to send the girl to his palace at Nijō to receive an aristocratic upbringing. She was looked after by the loyal Murasaki and would grow up to become empress.

To house the many women who colored his life—wives, daughters, consorts, and more—Genji built Rokujō Palace, a grand residence consisting of four wards, one for each of the seasons. Murasaki presided over the spring ward, to the southeast; Akashi held court over the winter ward, to the northeast. Genji marked the passing of many seasons at Rokujō, and his clan continued to grow. Before long, however, his prosperity waned and his exploits were taken up by the generations that followed. His son Yūgiri befriended Kashiwagi, who had had an illicit affair with Genji's official wife, the Third Princess. One melancholic autumn after Kashiwagi's death, Yūgiri went to Ono to visit his friend's widow, Lady Ochiba, and to express his sympathies, for her mother had died not long before. Yūgiri paused en route to take in the desolate autumnal scene. He watched a pair of deer sheltering themselves beside a thatched fence, unfrightened by clappers sounding in the rice fields. Yūgiri shielded his eyes from the sunset. He was too timid to intrude upon Ochiba's mourning but before long convinced her to relocate to the capital.

Winter came, and one snowy evening Kaoru, who had been raised like a son by Genji but whose true father was in fact Kashiwagi, traveled to Uji, south of the capital, to pay his respects to the daughters of an imperial prince who had recently died. The sisters lit a fire to warm Kaoru's room on that cold winter's night. Kaoru, who was a gentle man, fell in love with the ladies' half-sister, Ukifune, but he had a rival in love, for Prince Niou, son of Genji's daughter the Empress Akashi, was more aggressive in his pursuit of her. Both men regarded Ukifune as an ideal beauty. Niou tried to woo her by taking her on a boat ride down the Uji River. The lady, distraught by their attentions and unable to choose between them, threw herself into the icy water. Ukifune was saved by a monk of Mount Hiei and thereafter turned her back on the world, living in peace as a Buddhist nun.

* All translations by Royall Tyler





Checklist no. 13

THE TALE OF MICE

NEZUMI NO SŌSHI SHUSSE MONOGATARI | 鼠草紙出世物語

Nehyōe was a handsome, talented, and wealthy white mouse, and his friend, the bat Danjō, helped arrange his marriage to the beautiful daughter of the mouse Kurando. Any woman of beauty cannot help but flaunt her good looks, and Nehyōe's bride was no exception. On the very first night of their marriage, she shed her wedding dress, stole delicacies, and led her maidservants in a campaign of mischief.

Nehyōe doted on his wife, despite her naughtiness, and they were rarely apart; together they had many children. One year, pregnant with another little mouse, she felt a particular craving for goose meat cut from the bird's right shoulder, and she sent her ever-obedient husband to fulfill this unusual request. Nehyōe spotted a goose and slowly approached it from behind, but he mistakenly grabbed hold of its chest instead of its shoulder. The startled goose flew away with Nehyōe still clinging to it, eventually dropping him in a field in Tokiwa, very far north of his home in the capital.

When Nehyōe's friends heard that he had disappeared, they visited his wife and made efforts to find him. Sister Toad suggested she ask Lady Mole, a seer who lived in the Toba Mound, to tell her of Nehyōe's future. Lady Mole predicted that Nehyōe would send his wife a letter and return the following summer. Nehyōe's friend Danjō took to the skies, looking everywhere for Nehyōe from above.

Meanwhile, Nehyōe wandered the countryside. Lonely and far from his family, he composed poems of lament. He ran into a wise local mouse, who sent him down into the village to look for help. En route he met Princess Monkey and her child. Finally, he reached the village and visited a comfortable house, walking along the edge of a fence. The lady of the household saw Nehyōe and was convinced he was the manifestation of a deity. Her husband, Saemon, worshiped Nehyōe as Daikokuten, the god of good fortune, and was blessed with greater wealth.

A full summer passed, and Nehyōe tried desperately to find a bird to fly him back to the capital. Alas, he could not, and he lost hope of ever returning, resigning himself to passing the rest of his days far from home. Local mice tried to cheer him up with a jubilant celebration.

One night Saemon's wife received a message in a dream to send Nehyōe home in a boat. Ecstatic, the mouse finally made it back to the capital, and he immediately ran to Tōji Temple to see his wife and children. Reunited, Nehyōe and his family visited Saemon, bringing him treasures to thank him for his kindness. Blessed by good fortune, Nehyōe's and Saemon's families continued to prosper for many years to come.









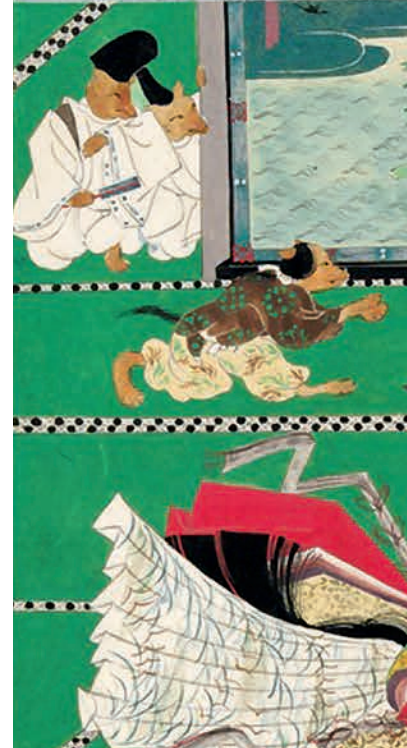
TALE OF A STRANGE MARRIAGE

KONKAI ZŌSHI | 婚怪草紙

A fox sits amid autumn flowers in a desolate garden and contemplates the full moon. Others splash vigorously in a pond, casting spells that transform water plants into robes, like those worn by the foxes on the shore. A female fox—the bride—wears the glamorous twelve-layered costume of a courtly lady. She washes her face at the pond, readying herself for matrimony. Outside, servants receive gifts from the groom, and inside two members of the bride's family are busy preparing for a wedding.

The wedding procession moves from right to left, with the bride riding atop a carriage brimming with delicacies for the banquet. Some of the foxes demonstrate their magical powers by setting the tips of their tails alight (*kitsunebi*).

The bride and groom exchange their vows in a courtly mansion, and the wedding banquet continues until just before the dawn. Foxes frolicking inside are just barely visible behind the green bamboo blinds, and those outside try to escape from the radiance of the sunrise.



Checklist no. 14









The Kii Peninsula
Sacred Sites and Storied Settings

CHECKLIST

1. Illustrated Legends of Kitano Shrine (Kitano tenjin engi)

Kamakura period (1185–1333),
13th century
Three handscrolls from a set of five;
ink, color, and cut gold on paper
H. approx. 11³/₁₆ in. (28.8 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Fletcher Fund, 1925 (25.224b–d)

In the mid-tenth century, Kitano Shrine was built in Kyoto for the worship of Sugawara Michizane. It now has more than twelve thousand branches throughout Japan, and Michizane is revered as a Shinto god of scholarship and material well-being. More than thirty illustrated versions of the legend survive. The Metropolitan Museum's set of scrolls is rare, for it is the only one to recount the monk Nichizō's full journey to heaven and hell. The set, acquired in 1925, originally comprised three handscrolls, but in 1973, for reasons of conservation, it was divided into five. It is likely that the fifth scroll, which illustrates Michizane's oracles and miracles, is still missing several sections. The beautiful quality of line in the first four scrolls, particularly as observed in the celestial beings of Tsushita Heaven, attests to the skills of the painter and recalls gold-painted frontispieces to late twelfth-century sutras.

Yamamoto Satsuki suggests that the incorporation of Nichizō's journey into the legend of the shrine was an attempt to conflate the monk's experience with that of the deified Michizane, thus promoting the Kitano Shrine in the early stages of its development to broaden its appeal and increase its overall credibility.¹ Yamamoto also suggests that, even though the Metropolitan's scrolls date to the second half of the thirteenth century, they reflect an earlier variation of the legend that favored the juxtaposition of Nichizō's and Michizane's stories. This argument might find support in the fact that the composition maintains the continuous

format of narrative presentation seen in early *emaki*, in particular the late twelfth-century scroll *The Legend of Shigisan* (Shigisan Chōgōsonshiji Temple, Nara). Together with the thick brushstrokes delineating the landscape—another element reminiscent of *Shigisan*—and explanatory inscriptions, these devices contribute to a particularly straightforward arrangement of figures within a simple setting that renders the narrative easy to follow.

The portrayal of Nichizō as a mountain priest (*yamabushi*) says much about the process of Buddhist and Shinto syncretism in Japan. In 1792 the virtuoso painter Tani Bunchō made a copy of the Metropolitan's scrolls, which at that point belonged to Izusan Sōtō Shrine in Atami, Shizuoka Prefecture.² Sōtō belongs to the Tōzan school of Shugendō, which was founded at Daigoji Temple by the monk Shōbō (Rigen Taishi; 832–909) in close relation to the school of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism at Mount Kōya. *Illustrated Legends of Kitano Shrine* tells of Nichizō's meeting with Shōbō in Tsushita Heaven, suggesting that the Metropolitan Museum scrolls might have been produced in the context of Shugendō activities at the end of the thirteenth century. The scrolls now bear the seal “Daizanji (known as Ōyamadera) Hōjuin Bunko,” which indicates that, at some point after 1792, the set was transferred to the Hōjuin subtemple in the Daizanji complex, located at the foot of Mount Ōyama in Sagami, Kanagawa Prefecture.

1. Yamamoto Satsuki, “*Nichizō yume no ki to tenjin shinkō no keisei*” (The Relationship between *Nichizō's Dream* and the Cult of Tenjin), *Settsuwa bungaku kenkyū* 39 (2004), pp. 51–64; idem, “*Nichizō setsuwa no henyō to Kitano Tenjin engi*: Meteoroporan Bijutsukan-bon chūshin” (The Development of the Tale of Nichizō and the *Legend of Kitano Tenjin Shrine*: Focus on the Metropolitan Museum Version), *Rikkyō Daigaku Nihon bungaku* 87 (2001), pp. 40–54; Abe Mika, “Jōdo junrekitan to sono kaigaka: Meteoroporan Bijutsukan-bon Kitano Tenjin Engi o megutte” (The Tale of Pilgrimage to the Pure Land and Its Pictorialization: On

The Legend of Kitano Shrine Owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Settsuwa bungaku kenkyū* 45 (1910), pp. 155–65.

2. Tani Bunchō's copy is now preserved in the Museum of Kyoto City University of Arts; see Iwata Yumiko, “Meteoroporan Bijutsukan-bon *Tenjin engi emaki* no denrai ni tsuite: Kyōto shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku zō mohan ni yoru chiken kara” (The Origin of the *Tenjin engi* Picture Scroll in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Facts Revealed by Its Copy in the Kyoto City University of Arts), *Museum* 498 (1992), pp. 22–38.

2. The Legend of the Origin of Kumano Shrine (Kumano honji)

Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
One handscroll from a set of three;
ink, color, and gold on paper
H. 12³/₈ in. (31.3 cm)
Spencer Collection, The New York
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden
Foundations

Kumano, situated at the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula (see map, p. 106), was once thought to be an entrance to hell, yet it was also thought to be a passage to the bodhisattva Kannon's paradise. Consequently, some devotees of Kannon sacrificed themselves by floating across the sea from Kumano to this presumed paradise in closed, coffinlike boats.¹ The legend surrounding the origin of the Kumano shrine complex belongs to a genre known as *honjimonō*—stories that recount the lives of individuals who would ultimately transcend into Shinto gods. During the Heian period (794–1185), the Kumano shrines flourished, with emperors and aristocrats among the devotees making pilgrimages to the compound. When warrior regimes rose to power in the medieval period, however, temples and shrines saw their income from the land decline. To raise funds, the nuns of Kumano became itinerant preachers, traveling with illustrated handscrolls that recounted the legendary origins of the shrine, and with several notable mandalas (mystic diagrams of the universe that aided

Buddhist meditation), namely the Nachi pilgrimage mandala, the Kumano Shrine mandala, and the Kumano kanshin jikkai mandala (Mandala for Contemplating the Ten Realms of Kumano), which depicted successive stages of human life and the ten realms of rebirth. They performed *etoki*, explaining the paintings to congregations for monetary contributions, thereby stoking interest in Kumano.

The New York Public Library handscrolls feature naively rendered illustrations in rich color, continuing the traditions of the sixteenth-century Muromachi style, but the calligraphy dates from the seventeenth century. Moreover, the paper used for the paintings is different from that used for the text, with the former seemingly predating the latter.

1. D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 235 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).

3. The Story of the Ascetic En no Gyōja (En no Gyōja)

Edo period (1615–1868), late 17th century
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 12³/₄ in. (32.3 cm)
Spencer Collection, The New York
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden
Foundations

En no Gyōja was a semilegendary religious practitioner of the late seventh century who dwelled on the sacred mountain of Katsuragi, not far from the ancient capital of Nara. He is said to have been a founder of Shugendō, a sect of mountain-dwelling priests (*yamabushi*) with Esoteric Buddhist affiliations for whom Mount Kinpusen was particularly sacred. Kinpusen, like Yoshino, Kumano, Mount Kōya, and most other major ancient Japanese religious sites, is located deep within the mountain ranges and rain forests of the Kii Peninsula (see map, p. 106).

Traditionally, En no Gyōja wears a hood, a monk's robe, a straw mantle, and

a pair of high-toothed wooden sandals (*takageta*). He holds a *vajra* (thunderbolt sword) and a *shakujō* (jeweled staff with six rings). However, in this scroll En no Gyōja seems more of a Buddhist monk crossed with a layman, most noticeably on account of his untensured head. His prayers are said to have conjured Zaō Gongen, the tutelary deity of Shugendō. En no Gyōja and Zaō Gongen are always portrayed as a pair, and they are believed to bestow *yamabushi* with mystical powers.

Several nearly identical versions of the story of En no Gyōja survive. While the one told in this scroll from the New York Public Library ends with the ascetic flying with his mother to China, others go on to recount the period following their return. Here, mountains and rocks are treated with thick, perfunctory outlines, suggesting that the scroll dates from the second half of the seventeenth century.

4a. The Great Woven Cap

(Taishokan)

Edo period (1615–1868), 1640–80

Pair of six-panel folding screens;

ink, color, and gold on paper

Each 68½ in. × 12 ft. 3¼ in. (173 × 374 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Restricted Gift of Charles C. Haffner III and Muriel Kallis Newman; Alyce and Edwin DeCosta and Walter E. Heller Foundation Endowment; through prior gift of Charles C. Haffner III (1996.431.1, .2)

4b. The Great Woven Cap

(Taishokan)

Text inscribed by Asakura Jūken

(active mid-17th century)

Edo period (1615–1868), mid-17th century

One handscroll from a set of three;

ink, color, and gold on paper

H. 12½ in. (32.1 cm)

Signed: “Ichinojō Asakura-shi Jūken kore o kaku”; sealed: “Matsuda”

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The Great Woven Cap became one of the most popular dramas in the sixteenth-century *kōwakamai* theater; in fact, the

text of the handscroll at the New York Public Library is based on an onstage retelling of the original narrative, itself probably adapted from the fourteenth-century handscroll *The Origin of Shidodera*. The story’s themes of military valor, romance, and self-sacrifice made it particularly popular among samurai and the warrior elite.

The screens from the Art Institute of Chicago effectively enclose a vibrant space. Paradisiacal representations of China and Japan on the right-hand screen are paired on the left with scenes of turbulent sea battles, which are set on a compositional diagonal to images of the hero Kamatari’s palace. The balanced arrangement of episodes on each of the screens is perfectly controlled to dramatize pictorially the tale’s themes of festivity and victory.

The New York Public Library’s version of the tale, comprising three handscrolls, also boasts a spatially sophisticated composition. Motifs in alternating close-up and distant arrangements create a sense of depth; even the varied placement of gold mist bands serves to delineate readable foreground and background areas. Key motifs, foremost among them the boat, are arranged diagonally and cropped, drawing viewers directly into the scene. The signature identifies Asakura Jūken as the calligrapher. Four other known scrolls bear Jūken’s inscription, and stylistic analysis of the calligraphy of several unsigned scrolls has since led scholars to attribute them to him (see p. 44 and p. 47, note 11)

5. The Tale of Urashima Tarō

(Urashima Tarō)

Edo period (1615–1868), late 17th or

early 18th century

Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

H. 18½ in. (48 cm)

Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian

Library, Columbia University

A familiar story among today’s Japanese, *The Tale of Urashima Tarō* was heavily modified during the Meiji period

(1868–1912). The tale was introduced in the eighth century, with various versions of the narrative appearing in such seminal texts as *Nihon shoki* (The History of Japan), *Man’yōshū* (The Ten Thousand Leaves), and *Tango fudoki* (Account of the Province of Tango). The text of the Starr Library version, the calligraphy of which was probably executed by Asakura Jūken (see p. 44), is close to the version that appears in *Otogi bunko*, an eighteenth-century compendium of popular stories from the medieval period (*otogi zōshi*).

6. The Nun Who Lost Two Sons

at the Battle of Yashima (Yashima

nikō monogatari)

Muromachi period (1392–1573), first half of the 16th century

One handscroll from a set of two;

ink and color on paper

H. 12½ in. (31.8 cm)

Spencer Collection, The New York

Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden

Foundations

The text of this tale is drawn from *Yashima*, a *kōwakamai* musical drama. The two scrolls in this set from the New York Public Library feature a scant eight illustrations—five in the first scroll, three in the second—that are nestled among copious inscriptions. Figures appear against a simple background, and crucial motifs are described in-text. The naive style of illustration is consonant with other stories of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that illustrate *kōwakamai* and *noh* dramas.

The most distinctive feature of this particular *emaki* is the unusual fusion of text and image. In some areas the text serves to fill empty spaces at top and bottom, at times to the extent that it overruns the illustrations; in other cases, an illustration might interrupt an inscription mid-sentence. These characteristics indicate that the paintings were executed prior to the inscription of the text, which clearly took precedence. While a number of illustrated books recounting this story are known, the Library’s set of scrolls

represents the only extant version of this tale in the *emaki* format.¹

1. Izami Mari, “Kōwaka bukyoku Yashima to sono kaiga” (The Kōwakamai Yashima and Its Painting), *Yamato Bunka* 113 (2005), pp. 1–19; Nara Ehon Kokusai Kenkyū Kaigi, ed., *Zaigai Nara ehon* (Illustrated Literature from Medieval and Early Modern Japan) (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1981), pp. 471–73.

Kaihō Yūchiku (1654–1728)

7. The Drunken Demon

(Shuten dōji)

Edo period (1615–1868), second half of the 17th century

One handscroll from a set of three;

ink, color, and gold on paper

H. 12¾ in. (32.4 cm)

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The literal translation of *shuten dōji* is “drunken boy,” alluded to in the scroll by the boyish haircut of the demon, who becomes monstrous when he consumes alcohol. There are two versions of the tale, one that identifies Mount Ōeyama, situated between Tanba and Tango provinces (northwest of Kyoto; see map, p. 106), as the demon’s mountain abode, and another that suggests he lives on Mount Ibukiyama, located between Ōmi and Mino provinces (southwest of Kyoto). Recent scholarship has suggested that the demon’s original residence might have been at Oi-no-saka (The Slope of Aging), at the northeast entrance of Kyoto on the border between Tanba and Yamashiro provinces.¹

Numerous illustrated handscrolls of *The Drunken Demon* have been produced since the Muromachi period. The story entered the Kano school’s repertory in the early sixteenth century with a version of the subject by Kano Motonobu (now Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo), and it remained popular among Kano artists throughout the Edo period. However, this version from the New York Public Library exhibits an

animated quality that belies the academic style of the Kano. The painter, identified by the seal “Motosada,” is Kaihō Yūchiku (1654–1728), a grandson of the artist Kaihō Yūshō (1535–1615) and son of Kaihō Yūsetsu (1598–1677). The vivacious movements and exaggerated forms created by the third generation of the Kaihō school perfectly embody the gruesome story.

1. Ōshima Tatehiko and Watari Kōichi, eds., *Muromachi monogatari sōshi shū* (Compilation of Tales from the Muromachi Period), Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 63 (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2002), pp. 471–73.

8. The Tale of Giō

(Giō monogatari)
Momoyama period (1573–1615), late 16th century
One handscroll from a set of two;
ink, color, and gold on paper
H. 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (32 cm)
Spencer Collection, The New York
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden
Foundations

The Tale of Giō is but one of many stories of female tragedy in the thirteenth-century *Tale of the Heike*, the most celebrated work of Japanese epic literature. While the episode has been interpreted variably in the noh, *kōwakamai*, *sekkyō bushi*, and *ko-jōruri* theaters, it was recounted more or less in its original format as a Muromachi tale (*otogi zōshi*); more specifically, the text was drawn from performances by the Yasaka and Ichikata schools of *biwa hōshi*—itinerant, usually blind, monks who, accompanied by musicians playing *biwa* stringed instruments, recited the *Heike* publicly on the street.¹ There are at least eight existing *otogi zōshi* of *The Tale of Giō*, all of which feature illustrations, but only this one at the New York Public Library is in the handscroll format (the others originally were made as books).

Illustrating eleven episodes in two scrolls, the Library's *Giō* is based on the story as told by the Ichikata monks.² Pictorial episodes and their

accompanying texts vary in length; some are elaborate, horizontal compositions, as though illustrating an onstage performance. The painting style is typical of *nara-e* (literally, “Nara picture”), a genre of popular illustrated tales.³ While the origin of the name *nara-e* is shrouded in mystery, the style itself is characterized by a charming naïveté, with relatively large paper-doll-like figures stacked upon the picture surface. The lack of illusionism and the schematically rendered bands of heavy mist invite the viewer into the world of drama.

1. Shibata Yoshinari, “Giō kaidai” (Explanatory Notes on the *Tale of Giō*), in *Kyōto Daigaku zō Muromachi monogatari* (Muromachi Tales) (Kyoto: Daigaku bungakubu kokugogaku kokubungaku kenkyūshitsu, 2002), vol. 4, pp. 427–38; Roberta Strippoli, “Dancing through Time: Transformations of the Giō Legend in Premodern Japanese Literature and Theater” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2006); Mori Satoko, “Tokuda Kazuo shi zō *Giō Gijo monogatari* emaki kaidai honkoku” (Study and Transcription of the Illustrated Handscroll *The Tale of Giō and Gijo* Owned by Tokuda Kazuo), *Bunken tankyū* 45 (2007), pp. 1–21.

2. Shibata, “Giō kaidai,” p. 431.

3. Miyeko Murase, *Tales of Japan: Scrolls and Prints from the New York Public Library* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 111.

9. The New Piece (Shinkyoku)

Edo period (1615–1868), early 17th century
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink,
color, and gold and silver leaf on paper
Each 60 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. × 11 ft. 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.
(154.7 × 360.4 cm)
Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

Shinkyoku, which translates variously as New Piece, New Repertory, or New Music, was added to the most recent *kōwakamai* repertory, a compilation of thirty-six dramas, in the sixteenth century. The story derives from a tragic episode in *The Chronicle of the Great*

Peace (*Taiheiki*) in which the romance of Prince Takayoshi (Takanaga) and his wife ends with their deaths soon after they are reunited.¹ The same episode was adapted into the noh play *Takebun*, so named for the prince's most loyal retainer who, though a secondary character in the *Taiheiki*, has been reinterpreted as a heroic central figure. *Shinkyoku* ends with the happy reunion of the prince and his wife, while the noh drama ends with Takebun's spirit taking revenge on the pirate abductors. Neither work focuses on the romantic aspects of the tale, instead drawing attention to Takebun's bravery and loyalty to Takayoshi.

The scenes illustrated on these screens are set in the vast Seto Inland Sea (see map, p. 106), and the composition is arranged so as to emphasize the primacy of the water and to establish the sea as a setting for spectacle. On the right-hand screen the boats are nearly lost amid the vastness of the sea, while on the left, violent waves and whirlpools lend drama to the action. Setting the scenes in the Seto Inland Sea, a site associated with various auspicious tales of a supernatural bent, enhances the celebratory nature of the story.

Scholars have observed that the painting is stylistically similar to the work of Kaihō Yūshō (1535–1615), particularly in the treatment of the fishing nets and reeds, the decorative mist bands, and the skillful brushwork.² However, the pines are rendered in a style more similar to that of Yūshō's son Kaihō Yūsetsu (1598–1677). In the absence of a concrete source of identification, it seems reasonable to attribute the screens to a painter who worked closely with the Kaihō school.

1. *Chusho-ō monogatari*, believed to have been written by the nobleman Ichijō Kanera, recounts a similar story that remains faithful to the account given in *The Chronicle of the Great Peace*, without further modification.

2. See, for example, Miyeko Murase, *Jewel Rivers: Japanese Art from the Burke Collection*, exh. cat. (Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1993), pp. 202–3.

10. The Battles of the Twelve Animals (Jūnirui gassen)

Edo period (1615–1868), ca. 1620–40
One handscroll from a set of three;
ink and color on paper
H. 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (35 cm)
Spencer Collection, The New York
Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden
Foundations

By showing humans in the guise of animals, this and other anthropomorphic tales offered an objective review of contemporary society, providing a vivid reflection of the socio-cultural climate of medieval Japan. It is tempting to interpret *The Battles of the Twelve Animals*—which is known to have existed in illustrated format by 1438, the year in which Prince Fushimi Sadafusa (1372–1456) claimed to have seen a painting on the subject—as a parody of the actual political climate of the early Muromachi period, in which case the treacherous badger would be a composite representation of Imagawa Ryōshun (1346–1420) and Ōuchi Yoshihiro (1356–1399), who led the Ōei Rebellion (1399–1401) against the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408) and his military governors (or *shugo daimyo*, represented by the zodiac animals).¹

It is likely that the prince had seen *Poem Matches and Battles of the Twelve Animals*, a set of three fifteenth-century *emaki* (formerly Dōmoto Collection, Kyoto; now in a private collection) that may have served as a model for these seventeenth-century scrolls at the New York Public Library, as well as a contemporaneous set of scrolls in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.² None of the three versions has an independent text; rather, the inscriptions, which take the form of poetry and dialogue, are integrated into the illustrations, further driving the narrative progression.³

The Battles of the Twelve Animals embodies three strong currents in medieval Japanese culture: the prominence of poetry, the omnipresence of war, and the renunciation of worldly desires for a lifestyle of contemplation and reclusion.⁴ The tale is, moreover, steeped in readily recognizable

iconographic connections: the deer (*shika*), for example, who in this tale is chosen to judge the poetry contest, is widely considered a sacred messenger for the Shinto gods of Kasuga Shrine, while the badger (*tanuki*) is seen as sly and contemptible. That the zodiac animals—who are themselves upheld as an elite group within the animal kingdom—respect the deer and spurn the badger is in keeping with cultural conventions. Moreover, even though the badger leads a rebellion against his enemies, his valor is counteracted by his ineptitude, setting him up as a laughable character. For instance, following his defeat by the twelve-animal troupe, he disguises himself as a demon so as to take revenge on his enemies, but his real identity is revealed easily by a dog's bark (an ancient belief held that a barking dog could expose deceit). Then, retiring to remote mountains, he composes verses, beating the cadence on his protuberant belly, his quintessential characteristic. The badger's poem paints a clearly negative image of a self-pitying buffoon: "Filling my potbelly with suffering from misfortune, I am mortified./Hitting my belly drum, I am surprised."

1. In *Kanmon nikki* (*Kanmon gyoki*), his diary of the years 1416 to 1448, Prince Fushimi Sadafusa writes of seeing such a painting in 1438, and of showing it to the shogun in 1441. For possible political meanings of the story, see Sarah E. Thompson, "The War of the Twelve Animals (Jūnirui kassen emaki): A Medieval Japanese Illustrated Beast Fable" (PhD diss., Columbia University, New York, 1999), pp. 299–328.

2. There are slight variations among the three versions, for which see Komine Kazuaki, "Jūnirui emaki o yomu" (Reading the Picture Scroll of Twelve Animals), *Tokutei kenkyū nenpō Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan* (1995), pp. 30–55; Nakano [Saitō] Maori, "Muromachi kuge no gagukei to kichi: Jūnirui-e o megutte" (Art, Literature, and Witticisms by Nobles of the Muromachi Period: The Painting of Twelve Animals), *Kokubungaku* 50, no. 10 (2005), pp. 44–53; Katsumata Takashi,

"Dōbutsu setsuwa to iruimono: Jūnirui emaki o megutte" (Tales of Animals and Iruimono: The Picture Scroll of Twelve Animals), *Kokubungaku* 50, no. 10 (2005), pp. 34–42.

3. Komine Kazuaki, "Gachūshi no uchū: Monogatari to kaiga no hazama" (The World of Text and Images: Between Tales and Paintings), *Nihon bungaku* (1992), pp. 24–37.

4. Nakano [Saitō] Maori, "Jūnirui uta awase oboegaki" (Notes on the Poetry Matches of the Twelve Animals), *Nara ehon emaki kenkyū* 1 (2003), pp. 35–47; Komine Kazuaki, "Otogi zōshi iruimono no keisei to kankyō: Jūnirui emaki e no michi" (The Development and Environment of Animal Tales in the *Otogi zōshi*), *Bungaku* 9, no. 3 (2008), pp. 70–83.

II. A Long Tale for an Autumn Night (Aki no yo naga monogatari) Muromachi period (1392–1573), ca. 1400 One handscroll from a set of three; ink, color, and gold on paper H. 12³/₁₆ in. (30.9 cm) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Funds from various donors, by exchange, Fletcher Fund and Dodge Fund, 2002 (2002.459.3); Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 2005 (2005.312)

Typical of Japanese wordplay, the character for "long" in the scroll's title can modify both the noun that precedes it—"tale"—and the one that follows—"night." Thus, an alternative translation of the title is *A Long Tale for a Long Autumn Night*, though the story is more commonly known by the shorter title used here. The narrative was probably composed in the fourteenth century, with several variations of the text appearing thereafter. However, very few illustrated versions of the tale survive. The Metropolitan Museum's set of handscrolls, one of the earliest on record, is quite rare. The text follows closely the earliest known version of the tale, which dates from 1377 and was executed by the Kōjō school. According

to Sasaki Takahiro, the calligraphy probably dates to the Ōei era (1394–1427).¹ Photographs taken by conservators at the Metropolitan Museum revealed traces of smaller characters adjacent to the main text, most of which were phonetic readings of ideographs. These diminutive characters appear to have been scratched out at an earlier date.

The brushstrokes, in particular those used to describe the rocks, show an unskillful and heavy technique; modeled after Chinese brush idioms, they seem to have been intended as texture strokes, evoking the hard, rough surface of the terrain. Even though the technique is somewhat underdeveloped, the strong, inky black quality of the line is reminiscent of the Chinese Zhe school of painters, active during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), as well as the Muromachi-period landscape *Hidden Cottage by a Mountain Brook*, dated to 1413 and attributed to Kichizan Minchō (1352–1431), a recognized master of Chinese brushwork. Clearly, the painter of the Metropolitan Museum's set of handscrolls was not a landscapist but a figure painter: note, for example, the smooth strokes of the flowing robes. The rendering of figures is similar to that in *The Tale of Fukutomi*, an early fifteenth-century *emaki* preserved in the Shunkō'in subtemple of the Myōshinji Temple complex, Kyoto, particularly as observed in a comparison between the downward-sloping eyebrows and thick eyelids of the monk Keikai in the second scroll of the Metropolitan's set and those of Hidetake, the hero of *Fukutomi*.²

The set features a pictorial device—used in the art of both the East and the West, and known in Japan as *iji dōzu*—whereby the same motifs are repeated within a single pictorial episode, allowing for the simultaneous depiction of several events and contributing to a more coherent narrative sequence. Here, the images do not all appear on the same horizontal plane; rather, there are clear shifts in perspective between certain motifs that render the illustrations somewhat more rational in terms of temporal and spatial sequence. For

example, as Keikai walks along the shore toward Mount Hiei, he looks back from a distance at the place where he had first seen the beautiful boy Umewaka, but not long afterward within the same episode, Keikai and the servant Keiju are seen in a rather close-up view, just beyond the lake in the foreground (see p. 89). The difference in perspective thus help the viewer read the sequence of events as they are meant to occur in the narrative.

1. A workshop on the illustrated handscrolls *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* was held on March 28, 2011, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, at which Professor Sasaki Takahiro of Keiō University, Tokyo, suggested that the text was likely inscribed during the Ōei era.

2. See Komatsu Shigemi et al., *Nihon emaki taisei* (Illustrated Handscrolls), vol. 25, *Nōe Hōshi ekotoba, Fukutomi zōshi, Hyakki yagyō emaki* (The Life of Monk Nōe, The Tale of Fukutomi, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1979).

Kano Sōshū (1551–1601)
12. The Tale of Genji
(Genji monogatari)
Momoyama period (1573–1615)
Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold and silver leaf on paper
Top: 64³/₁₆ in. × 11 ft. 8¹/₁₆ in. (163 × 357 cm); bottom: 69¹/₄ in. × 12 ft. 2¹/₁₆ in. (175.9 × 372 cm)
Collection of Rosemarie and Leighton Longhi

At its peak in the Momoyama and early Edo periods, the Kano school executed dynamic large-scale illustrations on a number of noteworthy screens, including these screens with scenes from *The Tale of Genji*. They bear the seal "Genshū" (Motohide), which was used by both Kano Sōshū (1551–1601), the artist of this pair, and his son, Jin'nojō (1580s–ca. 1630).¹ The paintings demonstrate a blend of traditional Kano (Chinese-inflected) and Tosa (Japanese *yamato-e*) painting styles, yet the compositional

scheme is reminiscent of the bold, close-up style of Eitoku (1543–1590), Sōshū's elder brother and the greatest exponent of the Kano style.² Sōshū's screens demonstrate the Kano school's characteristic manipulation of space, employing an organic arrangement of fences, trees, golden clouds, and rocks to indicate a rational recession from the foreground into the distance. Somewhat less characteristic of the Kano school, however, are the small figures, slender trees, and round rocks reminiscent of traditional *yamato-e*. It is interesting to note that the *Genji* screens share similar motifs with a set of ten handscrolls recounting *The Lives of the Yūgyō Monks* (now preserved in Kōmyōji Temple, Akita), which Sōshū copied in 1594. Through this exercise, he no doubt became proficient in the Tosa style of *emaki* painting. As *The Tale of Genji* is a purely Japanese tale, Sōshū might have thought it the exercise to execute the *Genji* screens in a traditionally Japanese way, thus explaining the departure from the Kano style.

1. Yamamoto Hideo, "Genshū-in *Genji monogatari* zu byōbu" (A Pair of Folding Screens of the *Tale of Genji* with the Genshū Seals), *Kokka* 1388 (2011), pp. 26–33.

2. See, for example, Eitoku's *Tale of Genji* screens that bear the seal "Kuninobu" in Yamane Yūzō et al., *Nihon byōbue shusei* (Compilation of Japanese Folding Screens), vol. 5, *Yamatōe-kei jinbutsu* (Figures from Japanese Tales) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979) pls. 85–86.

13. The Tale of Mice (Nezumi no sōshi shusse monogatari) Edo period (1615–1868), second half of the 17th century
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 13½ in. (34.4 cm)
Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

In Japan, animals of rare coloration—white deer, red or blue bears, white or

black foxes—were considered especially auspicious.¹ White mice like Nehyōe, the hero of this tale, were believed to be messengers from Daikokuten, one of the seven gods of good fortune. It was customary to read Nehyōe's auspicious story on the occasion of the New Year to usher in a new era of success and prosperity. The celebratory nature of the story is further emphasized by the elaborate depictions of a wedding in the opening scene and a banquet in the closing scene.

Nehyōe's animal friends, particularly the bat, the mole, and the toad, play distinctive roles in the story, perhaps because they share with the mouse a small stature and a nocturnal lifestyle.² As matchmaker for Nehyōe and his wife and as leader of the search for the missing mouse, Danjō the bat is especially important to the story. Indeed, he embodies the most positive qualities of the animal characters that populate Japanese tales, who are usually imbued with far more complex, symbolic meanings than their counterparts in the didactic allegories and fables common in the West.

The skillfully executed illustrations in this scroll from the New York Public Library have a lyrical quality that is, nonetheless, difficult to attribute to a particular painter. It is interesting to note that the female characters, be they mice or human, are depicted in the same style as the ethereal beauties who populate the "floating world" of seventeenth-century *ukiyo-e* paintings.

1. Amino Yoshihiko et al., eds., *Ima wa mukashi, mukashi wa ima* (Present Is Past, Past Is Present), vol. 3, *Chōju gigo* (Whimsical Tales of Birds and Animals) (Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten, 1995), pp. 49–50.

2. See Matsunami Hisako, "Otogi zōshi *Yahyōe nezumi* no shomondai" (Problems in the *Tale of Yahyōe*, a Muromachi Tale), in *Denshō bunkano tenbō: Nihon no minzoku, koten, geino* (Studies in Oral Culture: Traditional Folklore and Performance in Japan) (Tokyo: Miyai Shobo, 2003), pp. 449–59.

Ukita Ikkei (1795–1859)
14. Tale of a Strange Marriage (Konkai zōshi)
Edo period (1615–1868)
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
H. 11¾ in. (29.8 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1957 (57.156.7)

Tale of a Strange Marriage is believed to reflect the artist Ukita Ikkei's biting criticism of the Tokugawa government and its attempt to shore up its waning authority by marrying an imperial princess to the shogun. The handscroll has no text, even though sheets of paper decorated with gold mist bands, which may have been intended as a platform for calligraphic inscriptions, are inserted between illustrations. The text was never added because Ikkei was arrested, likely for defamation, and died in 1859. In the same year a treaty forcing Japan to open its ports to the West took effect, precipitating the eventual collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate and the restoration of imperial rule after seven hundred years of military government.

The colorfully painted scene of a wedding ceremony is very similar to an interior scene from the fourteenth-century *Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*, a set of *emaki* recounting the legends surrounding the tutelary god of the powerful Fujiwara clan.

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