

Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

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Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

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Upcoming in Japanese and Korean Art

EXHIBITION

Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art

JKA Galleries 226, 227, 237, 238, 239, 251, 252, 253

Part 1: 8/18-11/25/2018

Part 2: 12/1/2018-3/10/2019

EXHIBITION

Living Clay: Artists Respond to Nature

3/23/2019-TBD

PERMANENT GALLERY ROTATIONS

Early February, 2019—Partial rotation of galleries 206, 220, 221, 222, and 223

Mid-March, 2019—Rotation of galleries 226, 227, 237, 238, and 239

Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art

Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

Love Affairs—the *Tale of Genji* in Japanese Art

It's no wonder that the *Tale of Genji*, sometimes called the world's first novel, has charmed audiences for more than 1,000 years. Despite its vast cast of characters, complex storyline, and ancient setting, at its core this Japanese tale is about sex, romance, scandal, heartbreak, and beauty—things that never go out of style. At the center of it all is Genji, the “Shining Prince,” the shockingly handsome man of noble blood and insatiable sexual appetite, whose lifetime of romantic entanglements and scandalous love affairs, and personal dramas (as well as those of his heirs) play out over fifty-four chapters. Offering an intimate look at the lives of courtiers in ancient Kyoto, with rich visual descriptions and poetic interludes, the *Tale of Genji*—and its beloved female author, Murasaki Shikibu—inspired generations of artists, poets, writers, and commentators, who have adapted and refashioned the *Tale* in diverse and extraordinary ways.

Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

Gallery 237: Genji-e: A Kaleidoscope of Genji Pictures

Pictures of the *Tale of Genji* and its derivatives are called “*Genji-e*,” or “*Genji pictures*.” The pictures’ forms and artists’ approaches to them are diverse. Small-format paintings like albums, fans, and handscrolls featuring pictures of iconic scenes and textual passages were common in the early years and also popular among aristocrats. As large folding screens became increasingly popular, artists looked to the earlier small-format paintings for inspiration but covered their large painting surfaces with many scenes divided by golden clouds. Mostly abandoning text, artists often brought order to these large paintings by applying an overarching theme or seasonal scheme. Other types of art, particularly textiles and lacquer works, remove both text and human figures entirely and rely on subtle references. A combination of only two or three motifs—a drum, some curtains, and maple leaves, for example—may awaken in the knowledgeable viewer’s mind a pivotal moment in the story or a certain character’s emotional state.

Murasaki Shikibu, author of the *Tale of Genji*

The *Tale of Genji* was written in the early 1000s by the celebrated writer and imperial attendant Murasaki Shikibu. Murasaki was born into a noble family and was extraordinarily well educated for a woman of her time. She studied the classics in Chinese—a language women rarely learned—and was also fond of poetry and romances written in Japanese. Legend has it that Murasaki retreated to Ishiyamadera, a Buddhist temple overlooking picturesque Lake Biwa near Kyoto, and one autumn night with a full moon she began writing the *Tale of Genji*. After penning the *Tale of Genji* in her twenties, Murasaki became a minor literary celebrity among the nobility of Japan’s ancient capital, Kyoto. This renown meant that in her thirties, Murasaki was invited to the imperial court to serve as a lady-in-waiting to the young Empress Shōshi (988–1074).

Ikeda Ayaoka, 1817–1887

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Genji Picture-matching Cards (*Genji karuta e-awase*), November 1888

Published by Wataya Kihei

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The first edition of this game board for an illustrated race game that resembles the Western snakes and ladders was published in the 1860s with a central image of the temple Ishiyamadera, where Murasaki Shikibu is said to have begun writing *The Tale of Genji*. For this later edition of the game, the temple was replaced with a portrait of Murasaki Shikibu herself.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, c. 1797–1858

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Murasaki Shikibu, from the series *Thirty-six Immortal Poetesses* (*Onna sanjūrokkasen no uchi*) c. 1843–6

Published by Enshūya Matabei

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. P.75.51.326

This print is part of a series featuring the so-called Thirty-Six Immortal Poetesses, a celebrated group of ancient women poets that includes Murasaki Shikibu, the author of *The Tale of Genji*. The red cartouche at upper right includes one of her poems, which reads, “Ever since the evening / my dear friend / turned to smoke, / even the name of Shiogama Bay / brings back memories.” In this poem, Murasaki draws a link between the cremation of a friend and the smoke that hangs over the famous northeastern salt-making town of Shiogama. For this print, Utagawa Hiroshige reimagined the typical depiction of Murasaki on a temple veranda overlooking Lake Biwa (where she is said to have begun writing *The Tale of Genji*), replacing Lake Biwa with a scene of smoke rising from huts along the coast of Shiogama.



Watanabe Seitei, 1851–1918

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Murasaki Shikibu at Ishiyamadera, c. 1900–1910

Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk

The Louis W. Hill, Jr. Fund 2009.8.2

This painting imagines the autumn night at the Buddhist temple Ishiyamadera when Murasaki Shikibu is said to have begun writing *The Tale of Genji*. Sitting on a veranda overlooking the lake, she gazes at a misty moon. The soft pink outer robe she wears in the painting is decorated with an overall pattern of blooming eulalia grasses, whose feathery seed spikes turn silver in autumn and are closely associated in Japan with moon viewing.



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Taketsugu, active late 16th–mid-17th century

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1603) or Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, late 16th or 17th century

Three hanging scrolls; ink and color on paper

Bequest of Richard P. Gale 74.1.6a–c

These three scrolls each illustrate a single scene from *The Tale of Genji*. The left scroll probably represents chapter 12, in which Genji is exiled to the desolate shore of Suma Bay. The center scroll illustrates a scene in chapter 28, in which the empress's ladies-in-waiting carry cages with cicadas into the garden to give the insects a sip of morning dew. The right scroll may depict chapter 14, in which Prince Genji travels to Naniwa Bay in an ox-pulled carriage.

These three scrolls were originally panels of a six-panel folding screen that was reformatted at some point. The three companion panels are in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Nothing is known about the artist, whose large round red seal reads simply “Taketsugu.”



Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Wedding robe (*uchikake*) with design of standing curtains, maple trees, and large drum, late 19th century

Silk with gold embroidery

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture; formerly given to the Center by Koji Wada 2013.29.374

The owner of this robe wore her love of *The Tale of Genji* on her sleeve, so to speak. Instead of an illustration, however, the combination of nonfigural motifs on this robe represents a collective evocation of a specific moment from the *Tale*. In this case, maple trees and a large drum, along with standing curtains (a type of room divider) point to a scene early in the *Tale* in which 19-year-old Genji and a friend perform a dance in a palace garden beneath a maple tree. Genji's youthful beauty and talent are so magnificent that his dancing partner is rendered inconsequential: “A nondescript mountain shrub beside a blossoming cherry,” as recounted in the *Tale*. The scene is also rife with unspoken emotions and drama. For starters, the performance has been organized by Genji's father, the emperor, for the enjoyment of his pregnant wife, Genji's stepmother. Unbeknownst to the emperor, she is carrying Genji's child.



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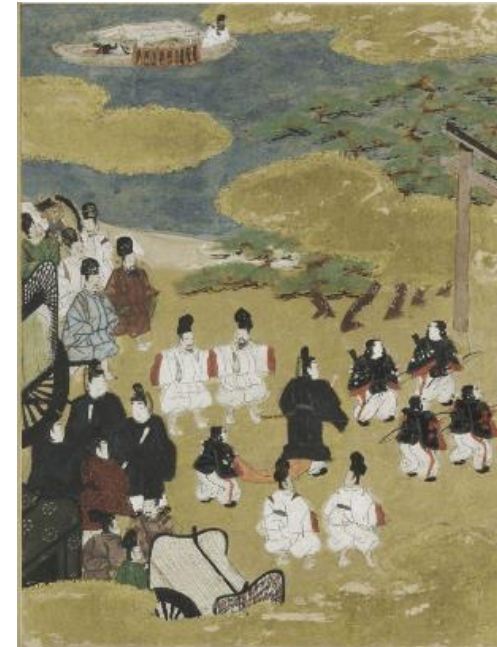
Edo period (1603–1868)

Accessories box with scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, 17th–18th century

Black lacquer with gold *maki-e*, silver flakes, sheet metal, and pictorial pear-skin ground (*e-nashiji*); metal fittings

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.394a–m

Genji imagery was particularly common on women's furnishings like this cosmetics and accessories case. Here, the motifs on the box's exterior allude to scenes from chapter 14, only they do so without human figures. On the lid, the carriage, shrine gate, and arched bridge collectively suggest Genji's pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi shrine, while the boat on the front of the box points to the arrival of one of Genji's former lovers who, by chance, was also on a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi. These same four elements can be found on many painted illustrations of this scene, such as the well-known example illustrated below.



Tosa Mitsunobu (Japanese, active c. 1469–1522), *The Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi*, c. 1509–10, album leaf; ink, color, and gold on paper. Harvard Art Museums, 1985.352.14.A

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Suzuki Shōnen, 1849–1918

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Fireflies at Uji River, late 19th or early 20th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.31

This painting by Suzuki Shōnen, showing only a handful of fireflies above a rushing river, is a subtle reference to chapter 45 of *The Tale of Genji*. In this chapter, 22-year-old Kaoru—who was raised as Genji's son despite being the product of a love affair between Genji's wife and his friend Kashiwagi—visits a stepbrother of Genji in the nearby town of Uji through which the Uji River flows. One autumn night, Kaoru hears the man's two daughters playing music and sneaks off to listen to them, but the sound of the rushing Uji River prevents him from doing so. Later in the chapter Kaoru becomes acquainted with the daughters and their teacher, who, in a twist of fate, knows the reality of Kaoru's paternity and reveals the true identity of his father.



Yamamoto Tarō, Japanese, born 1974

Emerging from the Robe, 2012

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.1318

This painting depicts a scene from a Noh play called *Lady Aoi (Aoi no ue)*, a play written in the 1400s and the first ever to be based on *The Tale of Genji*. The play centers on jealousy between Lady Rokujō, a mistress of Genji, and Lady Aoi, his first wife. Neglected by Genji, Lady Rokujō becomes jealous, and her spirit leaves her body to possess Lady Aoi. In the play, Lady Aoi never actually appears on stage but is instead represented through her robe alone. Towards the end of the play a priest is trying to exorcise the evil spirit of Lady Rokujō, which finally appears on stage as a female figure emerging from within Lady Aoi's robe. Eventually the spirit is defeated and disappears.



Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

Gallery 252: *Genji-e*: A Kaleidoscope of Genji Pictures

Pictures of the *Tale of Genji* and its derivatives are called “*Genji-e*,” or “Genji pictures.” The pictures’ forms and artists’ approaches to them are diverse. Small-format paintings like albums, fans, and handscrolls featuring pictures of iconic scenes and textual passages were common in the early years and also popular among aristocrats. As large folding screens became increasingly popular, artists looked to the earlier small-format paintings for inspiration but covered their large painting surfaces with many scenes divided by golden clouds. Mostly abandoning text, artists often brought order to these large paintings by applying an overarching theme or seasonal scheme. Other types of art, particularly textiles and lacquer works, remove both text and human figures entirely and rely on subtle references. A combination of only two or three motifs—a drum, some curtains, and maple leaves, for example—may awaken in the knowledgeable viewer’s mind a pivotal moment in the story or a certain character’s emotional state.

Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from The Tale of Genji, 17th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; Purchase from the Collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.66.1–2

In some ways, this pair of screens is quite typical of Edo-period (1603-1868) paintings of *The Tale of Genji*. The artist frames each individual scene with scalloped-edge gold clouds. He also uses the *fukinuki-yatai* (literally, “blown-off roof”) method of depicting architectural spaces, so that viewers gain an unobstructed birds-eye view of interior spaces. This convention can be traced back to the earliest depictions of *Genji* from the 1100s. The content of these screens, however, is anything but conventional. While many artists of *Genji* screens arranged scenes from right to left in more or less sequential order or in seasonal order from spring to fall, this artist developed a far more sophisticated organization where the relationships between illustrated scenes is not easily understood without vast knowledge of the original novel. Indeed, the organizing principle of this painting is not yet fully understood.



Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

“Absent Designs:” Genji Pictures without Figures

The *Tale of Genji* was so well-known in Japan—and its illustrative tradition so consistent—that certain combinations of nonfigural motifs can easily stand in for a more detailed illustration. A cherry tree with a boat and drum points to the well-known boat party scene from Chapter 24. Maple leaves, a drum, and curtains evoke a dance performance that takes place in Chapter 7. Recognition of the meaning of the motifs brings with it recollection not only of a certain scene in the *Tale*, but also its role within the greater plot, the human drama surrounding it, and the emotional condition of relevant characters. Artists used this pictorial device—known in Japanese as *rusu moyō*, or “design without figures”—frequently in decorative arts, especially lacquer and textiles. Objects hinting at episodes from the *Tale of Genji* were an especially common feature of young women’s wedding trousseaus.

Tosa Mitsusada, 1738–1806

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Episode from the “Butterflies” Chapter of The Tale of Genji, late 18th century

Six-panel folding screen, one of a pair; ink, color, and gold on paper

Gift of Frederick Van Dusen Rogers, Nancy Rogers Pierson, and Mary Rogers Savage 71.56.36

This screen, along with its mate displayed in this same gallery, illustrates an episode from “Butterflies,” Chapter 24 of *The Tale of Genji*, in which Genji organizes springtime festivities in the garden of Murasaki, his favorite consort. The other screen shows the noblewomen with their multilayered robes enjoying the garden from exotic pleasure boats with phoenix and dragonhead prows. This screen pictures the following morning, when Murasaki dresses several of her young attendants as birds and butterflies and has them dance for the empress.



Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

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Mitsuyoshi, 1539–1613

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1603)

The “Butterflies” Chapter of The Tale of Genji, c. 1585

Pair of album leaves mounted as a hanging scroll; ink, color, gold, and silver on paper

Gift of funds from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Zelle, and The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund 80.40

This pair of album leaves presents a textual passage from and illustrations of the “Butterflies” chapter of The Tale of Genji. The text is written in flowing script on paper decorated with gold and silver powder and flakes. The accompanying illustration, rendered in minute detail and using brilliant mineral pigments, combines two passages in the chapter. Spring festivities have been organized at Genji’s mansion, the Rokujō Palace. Boats decorated with phoenix and dragon mastheads transport musicians and noblewomen around the palace lake. Early the next morning, Genji’s most beloved consort, Murasaki, dresses her young attendants as birds and butterflies and sends them to dance in front of the quarters of the Empress Akikonomu, who lives at Genji’s mansion. The text comes from a passage describing the festive scene near the close of the day’s events:

The birds resounded bravely amid warblers' sweet carolings, while here and there upon the lake waterbirds sang their own songs, and the effect of the rapid conclusion was endlessly delightful. How lightly, then, the butterflies flitted about, to flutter into the hedge at last among cascading kerria roses!

-translation after Royall Tyler



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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Box with scenes from The Tale of Genji, 18th century

Ink, color, and gold on wood

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.46a,b

Artists depicted iconic scenes from The Tale of Genji in a variety of formats, including round and folding fans, painted hanging scrolls, folding screens, albums, and containers for personal items. This box for personal items features scenes from chapters 17, 20, and 49. The scenes depicted were seemingly chosen not for their narrative content but rather for the season in which each scene takes place, with a winter scene on the lid and autumn scenes on the sides. The autumnal theme extends to the inside of the box where fringed dianthus (also known as “pinks”) and white chrysanthemums dance across an area of gold paint.



Toyohara Chikanobu, 1838–1912

Publisher, Sawamura Seikichi

Carver, Asai Ginjirō

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Stylish Genji: Butterfly Dance (Imayō Genji kochō no mai), 1879

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

A blossoming cherry tree creates a canopy over Mitsuuji (the main character in the parody *A Rustic Genji*) in this garden setting. He attends a performance of a “butterfly dance” (*chōchō odori*) on a stone bridge surrounded by impressive peony bushes. In chapter 24 of the original *Tale of Genji*, called “Butterflies,” Genji’s favorite consort, Murasaki, dresses her young attendants as birds and butterflies for a springtime party held in his garden. Volume 34 of *A Rustic Genji* has an illustration of butterfly dancers, and several triptychs with this subject exist.



Japanese Art—Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art Exhibition 2018

Gallery 251: *Genji-e*: A Kaleidoscope of Genji Pictures

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Tosa Mitsunari, 1648–1710 Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

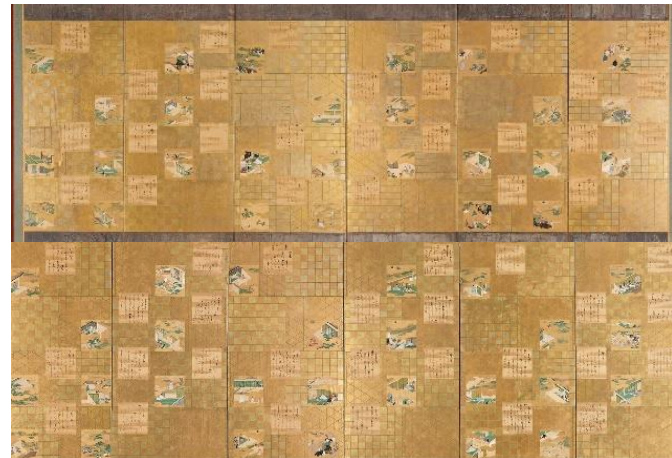
Scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, before 1710

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, gold, and silver on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

2015.79.40.1–2

Pictures and short passages of text brushed on 108 small squares of paper arranged on the surface of these screens represent the entirety of *The Tale of Genji*, with a text-image pairing for each of the *Tale*’s 54 chapters. Reading the passages of classical Japanese written in elegant calligraphy, or identifying a specific scene from the *Tale* and recalling the characters and dramas involved, could provide hours of fun for the screens’ owners and guests. But the screens could just as easily serve simply as a luxurious gold-and-silver backdrop for a gathering.



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Tosa Mitsunari, 1648–1710

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from *The Tale of Genji* representing months of the year, before 1710

Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper

The John R. Van Derlip Fund; purchase from the collection of Elizabeth and Willard Clark 2013.31.56

The time of year is usually specified in *The Tale of Genji*, and the author takes pains to describe seasonal indicators such as weather and seasonal plants. This screen, once part of a pair, features illustrations and textual passages representing the six months of summer and autumn in order from right to left. The fourth panel from the right, for example, is titled “10th month” and shows an appropriately autumnal scene: 19-year-old Genji and his friend (and sometime rival) Tō no Chūjō dance in a palace garden beneath a maple tree whose crimson leaves fall and scatter. Or, in the *Tale*’s lyrical description: “Under tall autumn trees [the music] mingled with the wind’s roaring and sighing as it swept gale-like down the mountain, while through the flutter of bright falling leaves [the men’s dancing] shone forth with awesome beauty.”



Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573)

The “New Herbs, Part II” Chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, 16th c.

Fragment of a handscroll mounted as a hanging scroll; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.36

Although it is now mounted as a hanging scroll, this painting is one small section of a set of handscrolls illustrating *The Tale of Genji*. The painter, likely a woman, depicts a scene from chapter 35, “New Herbs II,” when Genji accompanies several women on a pilgrimage. The women are shown in interior spaces defined by diagonal walls and screens. At far right two men are seated on a veranda. The three principal female characters at left are each identified by name.

Monochrome drawings like this represent a style of painting known as *hakubyō*, or “white drawing.” *Hakubyō*-style pictures of *The Tale of Genji* were popular during the Muromachi period (1392–1573) and were created by amateur women painters in a private, aristocratic setting, in stark contrast to the colorful folding screens usually commissioned by powerful men and done by professional painters.



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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Album with scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, 17th century

Album with 20 leaves; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.41

This album includes 20 scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, but not in order. The scene at right is one of the most frequently illustrated scenes from the third chapter, in which two young women and a young boy (Genji's younger brother) are shown indoors playing a board game by lamplight, while Genji himself spies on them from the veranda. Genji is in pursuit of one of these girls, Utsusemi, who ends up running away after catching the scent of Genji's perfume on the breeze. His pursuit halted in this way, Genji instead has sex with Utsusemi's companion.



Utagawa Kunitaru, 1808–1876

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Autumn Joy (*Aki no tanoshimi*), from the series **Set of Poems for the Four Seasons (*Shiki no nagame*)**, second lunar month 1853

Published by Sanoya Kihei

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

In early Japan the seasons played an even more important role in daily life than they do today, and seasonal change often governed specific activities in the annual calendar. It is no surprise that the four seasons were popular in the arts. The falling maple leaves and moon above are hints that this is an autumnal evening that is enjoyed by a group of women surrounding Genji or Mitsuuji, the main character in *A Rustic Genji*.



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Utagawa Kunitaru, 1808–1876

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Winter Joy (Fuyu no tanoshimi), from the series **Set of Poems for the Four Seasons (Shiki no nagame)**, second lunar month 1853

Published by Sanoya Kihei

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

A plum tree, a reference to late winter, is captured in full bloom outside the window on the right. The scene is taken directly from the serial novel *A Rustic Genji*, a parody of *The Tale of Genji*, and shows Ashikaga Kumoinojō Ujinaka, son of the protagonist Mitsuuji, having returned to the Akamatsu mansion to show off his new trappings as minister of academics, an honor bestowed on him for his elegant poetry.



Utagawa Kunitaru, 1808–1876

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Spring Joy (Haru no tanoshimi), from the series **Set of Poems for the Four Seasons (Shiki no nagame)**, twelfth lunar month 1853

Published by Sanoya Kihei

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Cherry blossoms indicate that it is spring. Five female attendants perform a “butterfly dance,” and Mitsuuji, the main character of the parody *A Rustic Genji*, watches them from the inside of a house. This scene is related to a scene from the “Butterflies” chapter of the original *Tale of Genji* describing spring festivities at Genji’s mansion. These events include a dance performed by children dressed up as butterflies.



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Kuniteru, 1808–1876

Publisher, Sanoya Kihei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“**Summer Joy**” (*Natsu no tanoshimi*), from the series *Set of Poems for the Four Seasons* (*Shiki no nagame*), twelfth lunar month 1853

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Mitsuji, the main character in *A Rustic Genji* (the popular parody of The Tale of Genji) relaxes on a deck in the summer warmth, looking on as the women in the garden admire the flowers. A young servant behind him pours water, and a smoking set is brought in from the left.



Genji Manga

The comic books displayed here represent just a portion of the comic books (*manga*) based on The Tale of Genji that have been published over the past 40 years. Some are only loosely based on the original novel or take liberties with its plotlines. Others, like Maki Yamato’s extremely popular series—the later bilingual version of which is displayed here—follow the original plotlines so closely that Japanese students (and forgetful adults) frequently turn to it as a study guide to the ancient tale.

In Japan, comic books, or manga as they are better known, are popular among people of all ages. In fact, nearly 30% of all books sold in Japan are manga.

Koizumi Yoshihiro, born 1953

Published by Gentōsha

Japan, Heisei period (1989–)

Getting the gist of The Tale of Genji, chestnut, I? [Ōzukami Genji monogatari, maro, n?], 2002

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Maki Miyako, born 1935

Published by Shōgakkan

Japan, Heisei period (1989–)

Tale of Genji [Genji monogatari], 1997–98

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

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Tsuboi Kō, born 1951

Published by

Japan, Heisei period (1989-)

Tale of Genji [*Genji monogatari*], 1989

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Egawa Tatsuya, born 1961

Published by Shūeisha

Japan, Heisei period (1989-)

Tale of Genji [*Genji monogatari*], 2001-04

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Hasegawa Hōsei, born 1945

Published by Chūō Kōron Shinsha

Japan, Heisei period (1989-)

Tale of Genji [*Genji monogatari*], 1999

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Waki Yamato, born 1948

Translated by **Stuart Atkin** and **Toyozaki Yoko**

Published by Kōdansha

Japan, Heisei period (1989-)

Tale of Genji [*Asaki yumemishi: Genji monogatari*], 2000-01

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Shimaki Ako, fl. 21st century

Published by Shōgakkan

Japan, Heisei period (1989-)

Gekka no kimi, 2002-04

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Akatsuka Fujio, 1935-2008

Published by Gakushū Kenkyūsha

Japan, Shōwa period (1926-1989)

Akatsuka Fujio's Introduction to the Classics: Tale of Genji [*Akatsuka Fujio no koten nyūmon: Genji monogatari*], 1983

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

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Ogawa Yōko, fl. 21st century

Published by Gakken Kyōiku Shuppan

Japan, Heisei period (1989–)

Reading The Tale of Genji in comic-book form [*Manga de yomu Genji monogatari*], 2014

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

Matsumoto Temari, active 21st century

Published by Enterbrain and Kadokawa Group Publishing

Japan, Heisei period (1989–)

Tale of Genji: BL Anthology, Illustrated Handscroll of A Dynasty of Lustful Men and Love [*Genji monogatari: BL ansoroji aiyoku no otoko ōchō koi emaki*], 2011

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Art Research and Reference Library

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Gallery 253: Genji-e: A Kaleidoscope of Genji Pictures

Scenes from The Tale of Genji in the Four Seasons, mid-17th century

Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.14.1-2

This pair of screens depicts eleven scenes from The Tale of Genji. Rather than presenting the scenes in the order in which they appear in the story, however, the artist presents them from right to left, as Japanese viewers would read them, in seasonal order. The artist begins with mid-spring in the upper right corner, where a group of young men play *kemari* (a popular game similar to hacky sack) in a grove of cherry trees in full bloom, a scene from Chapter 34. Five additional scenes in the right screen take place in late spring and early summer, while autumn grasses and maple leaves announce the arrival of fall in the far right panels of the left screen. Wintry scenes from chapters 6 and 51 are depicted at far left, where trees and rooftops are blanketed in snow.



Scene from the “Spring Shoots I” Chapter of The Tale of Genji, 18th century

Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.12

This screen pictures an extraordinarily pivotal moment from Chapter 34 of The Tale of Genji, one that alters the course of Genji's life and of the novel. 40-year-old Genji has reluctantly agreed to marry his teenage niece, known as the Third Princess. One spring day, a young male acquaintance of Genji named Kashiwagi gathers a group of young men at Genji's mansion to play a friendly game of *kemari* (a game similar to hacky sack) in the garden near the living quarters of Genji's young bride. All of a sudden, the Third Princess' cat rushes out to the veranda, pushing back one of the bamboo blinds that had concealed her from the boys' sporting outside. In that instant, Kashiwagi catches a glimpse of the Third Princess through the opening and falls instantly in love with her. Later, he pursues her, they have an affair, and the Third Princess gives birth to Kaoru, who will be raised as Genji's son and who is the central character of the last section of The Tale of Genji. Kashiwagi, meanwhile, is rife with guilt and eventually takes his own life. In this painting, the Third Princess and her cat are nowhere to be found, though pictures of her with her mischievous cat were very popular, as in the example by Suzuki Harunobu below.



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Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1725-1770
The Third Princess and Her Cat, 1767-68
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786-1865
Publisher, Wakasaya Yoichi
Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)
Right: “**Chapter 50**” (*Gojū no makī*)
Left: “**The Eastern Cottage**” (*Azumaya*), from the series *Lasting Impressions of a Late Genji Collection (Genji goshū yojō)*, twelfth lunar month 1858
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Japan, Taishō period (1912–26) or Shōwa period (1926–89)

Wedding robe, 20th century

Yūzen-dyed and embroidered silk, cotton filled bottom

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.687

This wedding robe, or *uchikake*, does not make direct reference to The Tale of Genji but rather evokes the grandeur of the classical Japanese imperial court with depictions of luxurious items like standing curtains (*kichō*), drums with decorative flame-shaped frames (*kaen daiko*), and court carriages (*gosho-kuruma*) along with golden mist, a pine tree, and assorted flowers.



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Gallery 226: Love Reimagined, The Serial Novel “A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki”

Love Reimagined: Later Parodies of The Tale of Genji

There are numerous later variations, commentaries, and parodies of the original *Tale of Genji*, written in the early 1000s. None is more famous than the serial novel *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki* (*Nise Murasaki inaka Genji*), published between 1829 and 1842 in thirty-eight volumes written by Ryūtei Tanehiko and illustrated by the print designer Utagawa Kunisada. The parody’s hero, Mitsuuji, is modeled on Prince Genji, while its storyline follows Mitsuuji’s quest to track down missing family treasures. Set in the 1400s and delivered in the light and entertaining manner typical of popular fiction of the 1800s. The Japanese public responded with great enthusiasm to *A Rustic Genji*, inspiring a new genre of prints featuring scenes and characters from the parody.

Okumura Masanobu, 1686–1764

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Red and White Tale of Genji (Kōhaku Genji monogatari), vol. 2: Autumn

Excursion (Ni, Momiji no ga), 1709

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke

Foundation, 2015.79.44.1

By the early 1700s when this printed version of The Tale of Genji was published, very few people could understand the complex written language in which the original tale was written 700 years earlier. For this illustrated and modernized version of the tale, Okumura Masanobu wrote in a manner that reflects Japanese as it was spoken in the early 1700s. The text was rendered freely, placing emphasis on conveying the meaning rather than offering a verbatim presentation of the original tale.



Okumura Masanobu, 1686–1764

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Heart-to-Heart” from The Tale of Genji (Genji, Aoi), from an untitled album of parodies on The Tale of Genji, c. 1710

Woodblock print (*sumizuri-e*); ink on paper

Gift of Ruth Lathrop Sikes in memory of her brother Bruce Sikes, 1967,

P.13,927

This is the 9th design from a set of 12 that juxtaposes beautiful prostitutes of the day with The Tale of Genji.



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Suzuki Harunobu, 1725–1770

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Young Samurai Viewing Cherry Blossoms as a *Mitate* of Prince Kaoru, c. 1767

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Bequest of Richard P. Gale 74.1.95

This print shows a young man carrying two swords, one long and one short, indicating that despite his youthful age, he is a samurai. He gazes up at the blossoms of a cherry tree. However, Suzuki Harunobu, the designer of this print, has embedded within his image a riddle that serves as the key to this picture. A small symbol on the man's right shoulder is a so-called "Genji crest" (*Genji-mon*), one of fifty-four geometric symbols that each refers to a chapter of The Tale of Genji. A knowledgeable viewer's recognition of the symbol also means understanding this picture as a parody-picture (*mitate-e*) of Chapter 48, the "Early Ferns," in which Prince Kaoru (the illegitimate son of Genji's friend and his wife who had been raised as Genji's own) regrets having arranged a marriage between his one true love, Lady Nakanokimi, and his friend, Prince Niou. In this witty take on a Genji picture, Suzuki Harunobu transforms Kaoru from classical-period courtier to contemporary samurai.



Suzuki Harunobu, 1725–1770

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Young Woman Viewing Cherry Blossoms as a *Mitate* of Lady Nakanokimi, c. 1767

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Bequest of Richard P. Gale 74.1.89

Probably imagined by Suzuki Harunobu as a companion to the similar parody of Prince Kaoru displayed nearby, this print likely is a contemporary reimagining of Lady Nakanokimi from The Tale of Genji. Lady Nakanokimi is the true love of Prince Kaoru (the boy raised as Genji's son) but is betrothed to his best friend. In Chapter 48, "Early Ferns," Prince Kaoru sends a carriage to transport Lady Nakanokimi to her purification ceremony that comes before the marriage ceremony. The carriages used by aristocrats in classical Japan, however, were the type of stately lacquer, oxen-pulled carriages seen in many of the paintings in this exhibition. Here, the artist Suzuki Harunobu transforms Nakanokimi into a



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contemporary woman, wearing fashionable clothing, smoking a pipe, and riding in the type of palanquin (covered seat carried by servants) commonly seen in the 1700s when this print was created.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Yamamotoya Heikichi
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“The Broom Tree” (Hahakigi) [L] and “The Paulownia Pavilion” (Kiritsubo) [R], from the series *Genji Incense Signs (Genji-kō no zu)*, 1844–45

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Modeled after works created by painters affiliated with the Tosa school, who played a large role in standardizing Genji pictures beginning in the 1500s, this series features fifty-four prints, one for each chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. Each print has a square cartouche that contains the series' title, print title, and a unique symbol used in the “Genji incense game” (a popular game that required players to identify specific scents with scenes in *The Tale of Genji*) associated with the illustrated chapter. Each print also carries a poem from that chapter. The figures have generic faces portrayed with the technique of *hikime kagihana* (literally, “slit eyes, hooked nose”), wear the voluminous robes of the aristocracy of the Heian period (794–1185) when the *Tale* was written, and are encircled by a cloud-shaped frame.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Moriya Jihei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“The Broom Tree Chapter” (Hahakigi maki), from the series *The Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari)*, 1842

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

After the release of the serial novel and parody *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki*, very few print series featured the original *Tale of Genji* as a subject. The prints here are among those few, and they are from one of two series that Utagawa Kunisada designed in the mid-1840s. The small-scale figures dressed in Heian-period (794–1185) court costumes



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and viewed through stylized clouds from a high vantage point give an archaic feel to these images. Indeed, they are based on Genji pictures painted by artists of the Tosa school, one of the most successful schools of painting in Japan's capital Kyoto in the 1500s and 1600s who played a significant role in the standardization of Genji imagery. Paintings by Tosa artists can be seen elsewhere in this exhibition.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Fuji no Kata,” from the series *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki (Nise Murasaki inaka Genji)*, Ca. 1838

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Initially only Tsuruya Kiemon, the publisher of the serial novel *A Rustic Genji* took the risk of issuing prints on the subject. To test the waters, Tsuruya launched a series of prints by Utagawa Kunisada in 1838 with the same title as the novel itself: *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki*. These prints have their design origins in the book scenes Kunisada had made for Tanehiko's serial novel and retain the same title that was still published at that

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842

Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

***A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki (Nise Murasaki inaka Genji)*, vol. 2 jō**, 1830

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Wakau

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Snow, from the series *The Elegance of Snow, Moon, and Flowers*
(*Fūryū setsugekka no uchi*), 1844

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The first triptychs with unmistakable links to *A Rustic Genji*, the popular parody of *The Tale of Genji*, are from the series *The Elegance of Snow, Moon, and Flowers* released around 1844. The representation for “Snow” is derived from a double-page image in the second booklet of volume 10 of *A Rustic Genji*. Depicted on the right is the maidservant Ayanagi, in the center is Mitsuuji, the parody’s main character. Mitsuuji looks to his right at Sayuri, another maidservant, who he has asked to clear the freshly fallen snow from the branches of an orange tree.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842

Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki (*Nise Murasaki inaka Genji*),
vol. 10 ge, 1833

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797–1858

Publisher, Iseya Kanekichi

Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Snow Viewing” (*Yuki no nagame*), from the series *An Elegant Genji* (*Fūryū Genji*), twelfth lunar month 1853

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This evocative triptych remains one of the most popular Genji designs. The scene relates to vol. 10 of *A Rustic Genji*, a parody of *The Tale of Genji*, in which Mitsuuji, the main male character (here on the right) has the maidservant Sayuri clear freshly fallen snow from the boughs of an orange tree. The positioning of the two figures, designed by Utagawa Kunisada, on the two outer sheets enhances the landscape elements, designed by Utagawa Hiroshige, of this collaborative composition by the two most famous print artists at that time.



Utagawa Yoshitora, c.1836–1882

Publisher, Izumiya Ichibei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

***An Eastern Genji Watching a Procession of Beauties Crossing the Ōi River*, seventh lunar month 1862**

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The Ōi River formed the border between two provinces and crossed the Tōkaidō, the main road between the large cities of Edo (present-day Tokyo) and Kyoto. As there was no bridge and no ferry service, all travelers had to be carried across—how depended on one’s status and financial resources. Such a scene as that depicted here does not exist in *The Tale of Genji* or the popular parody, *A Rustic Genji*, but is merely a product of the artist’s imagination. In the far right panel Mitsuuji, the main male character in *A Rustic Genji*, sits on the shore surveying a large entourage of beautiful women being ferried across the Ōi River. Nine women sit on platforms, each carried by four bearers, and a tenth rides in a luxurious palanquin (covered chair) supported by twelve men.



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Toyohara Kunichika, 1835-1900

Kawanabe Kyōsai, 1831-1889

Publisher, Sawamura Seikichi

Carver, Asai Ginjirō

Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The Eastern Genji: Pulling Up Young Pines in a Park before a Suspension Bridge (Azuma Genji no uchi: Komatsubiki sonō no tsuribashi), January 1877

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Toyohara Kunichika portrays characters from the parody *A Rustic Genji* in Heian-period (794-1185) robes (appropriate for the time in which Tale of Genji takes place) and positions them in a setting designed by Kawanabe Kyōsai. The parody's main character, Mitsuji, can be seen at far right, surrounded by his attendants. They participate in a New Year's ritual called *komatsubiki* that involves pulling up young pine trees. The background reflects the modernization of Japan that was taking place when at the time this print was published—note, for example, the inclusion of a Western-style suspension bridge.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786-1865

Publisher, Iseya Ichiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)

The Prostitute Takigawa of the Kukimanjiya Reading A Rustic Genji (Kukimanjiya nai Takigawa), 1838

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The main objective of this print is to provide a portrait, albeit idealized, of the famous prostitute Takigawa who worked for the Kukimanjiya Brothel in Edo (today's Tokyo). Like all the fashionable people of her day, Takigawa is shown reading a volume of *A Rustic Genji*, the serial novel that is a parody of The Tale of Genji.



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Gallery 227: Editions and Variations

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Kagaya Kichibei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Illustration of Divers at Ise Making Long Abalones (*Ise no amana* *nagaawabi tsukuri no zu*), fifth lunar month 1860

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Prints with Genji themes were so popular that some publishers released prints in differing color variants in an effort to appeal to as many customers as possible. The most striking difference between these two variants is the color of the kimono of Mitsuuji, the man pictured in the middle who is the main character of the parody novel *A Rustic Genji*. In the deluxe version his kimono is printed in purple, fading to white below the sash. Purple was a more expensive pigment than the blue used for the plain blue kimono in the variant.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Tsutaya Kichizō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Dew on White Bush Clover at the Lucky Dream Pavilion Door (*Tsuyu fukumu tsumado no shirahagi*), 1849–1851

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This work draws on a scene from the end of volume 4 in *A Rustic Genji*, a serialized parody version of *The Tale of Genji* published between 1829 and 1842. After visiting a brothel the main character, Mitsuuji, calls for hot water to wash his hands, which Katakai brings. Also present is Akogi, who Katakai hopes to present to this illustrious customer; she coyly proffers a towel to Mitsuuji. In one variation of this print the *tatami* mats are green, in another yellow. The latter version also has dark brown gradation at the top of the yellow sliding doors, and the additional woodblocks required for printing this suggest that this is a deluxe edition.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Hiranoya Shinzō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Illustration of Genji Wandering in the Garden (*Genji teichū yūkō no zu*),
fourth lunar month 1862

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Hiranoya Shinzō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Illustration of Genji Wandering in the Garden (*Genji teichū yūkō no zu*),
fourth lunar month 1862

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper, creped (*chirimen*)

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Chirimen-e (“creped pictures”) are prints treated to resemble creped silk, and its crisp, crimped texture. The process involved repeatedly wrapping and compressing dampened prints between sheets of thick paper wound around a wooden dowel, making the paper shrink considerably during the process. It is unclear when previously published prints were first “creped” but it is assumed to have been during the mid- to late 1800s and it was done with prints of any subject, including Genji.

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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Maruya Jinpachi

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

An Eastern Genji amid Pine, Bamboo, and Plum (Azuma Genji shōchikubai),
first lunar month 1864

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Maruya Jinpachi

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

An Eastern Genji amid Pine, Bamboo, and Plum (Azuma Genji shōchikubai),
first lunar month 1864

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper, creped (*chirimen*)

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Gallery 238: Love Undressed—Explicit Genji in *Shunga*

Significant numbers of Genji pictures, including some of the earliest examples, are sexually explicit in content. These were published largely as illustrated erotic books, comprising colorful, luxuriously finished examples printed with high-quality paper and pigments. Mass-produced erotic prints emerged in Edo (modern-day Tokyo), a city dominated by men. The complex references to *The Tale of Genji* and other well-known texts of the time, exquisite quality, and luxurious materials represented in many publications suggest that they were consumed by wealthy individuals. Less luxe versions were also available, so it is clear the content was consumed by a broad cross-section of society. Despite the efforts of government authorities to suppress sexually graphic prints and books, it remained a major genre.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Kikuya Ichibei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

An Eastern Genji, Evocation of Flowers and Birds (Kachō, yojō, Azuma Genji), vol. “Heaven” (Ten), 1837

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This work, also known simply as *An Eastern Genji* (*Azuma Genji*), is one of three erotic books by Utagawa Kunisada that were published in 1837. The work consists of three volumes, titled “Heaven” (Ten), “Earth” (Tsuchi), and “Mankind” (Hito). *An Eastern Genji* is only loosely connected to *The Tale of Genji* or *A Rustic Genji*. Volume 1 begins with a parody of chapter 34, “Spring Shoots 1”, from the classic *Tale of Genji*. The pivotal encounter of the Third Princess and Kashiwagi as her cat opens a bamboo blind is reconceived with mating cats and Kashiwagi’s arm disappearing into the princess’s skirt.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Jokōan Shujin (Shōtei Kinsui), 1795/97–1862

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Realistic Portraits of Genji (Shō utsushi aoi Genji), vol. 1, 1851

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Realistic Portraits of Genji was a grand finale after a fourteen-year hiatus during which time Utagawa Kunisada does not seem to have designed any erotic books on the subject of Genji. By 1851 the strict and severe climate of government reforms in the 1840s had dissipated and public enthusiasm for Genji-related merchandise was likely to be reaching a new peak. The first edition was printed with mother-of-pearl details on lacquered objects such as trays, making it the most lavishly produced of Kunisada's illustrated erotic books on the theme of Genji.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842

Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki (Nise Murasaki inaka Genji), vol. 9
ge, 1833

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842

Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki (Nise Murasaki inaka Genji), vol. 23

jō, 1837

Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Abalone Divers

In 1857, Utagawa Kunisada began to design triptychs that show voluptuous, partially clad abalone divers. Abalone is an edible sea snail whose shell is the source of iridescent mother-of-pearl. At the beginning of volume 19 of the serial novel *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki* (1836), the main male character, Mitsuuji, speaks with abalone divers about their profession. They explain how they swim naked to the sea floor, equipped with buckets and knives. Such sexy divers do not exist in the real world, but they are a fixed visual trope in woodblock prints underlining the image's setting in a fantasy realm distanced from the real world. A year later in 1858, Kunisada illustrated the erotic book *A Rustic Genji's Koto of Suma (Inaka Genji Sumagoto)*, which included a scene of a man and a female abalone diver having sex. Eroticized female divers seem to have been a hit with audiences, and by 1860 Kunisada had designed four such triptychs.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Mikawaya Tetsugorō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Illustration of Mitsuuji's Amusement at the Seashore (Mitsuuji isobe asobi no zu), fifth lunar month 1857

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Utagawa Kunisada pushed the limits of stylistic appropriation in this composition by incorporating figures from Kitagawa Utamaro's renowned triptych of ca. 1797 or 1798 that popularized the subject of female abalone divers in Japanese woodblock prints (illustrated below). The diver standing on the far left and her companion in the water are very similar to those in Utamaro's design.



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Kitagawa Utamaro, Japanese, 1753–1806

Abalone Divers, 1797–1798

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Bequest of Richard P. Gale, 74.1.156a–c



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Mikawayaya Tetsugorō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Mitsuuji's Amusement at the Seashore Two: An Illustration of Abalone
(*Mitsuuji iso asobi sono ni: awabi no zu*), sixth lunar month 1858

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The publisher Mikawayaya Tetsugorō must have been satisfied with the success of Utagawa Kunisada's first triptych of divers, since he commissioned the artist to make a second design the following year. In this work, the main character of the parody *A Rustic Genji*, Mitsuui enjoys sake on a boat, while he watches the divers at work.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Itoya Shōbei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Mitsuuji's Seashore Entertainment: Three (Mitsuuji iso asobi sono san),
second lunar month 1859

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

It appears that the publisher Mikawaya Tetsugorō shut down his business in late 1858, since no publications are known by him after this time. His firm may have been taken over by Itoya Shōbei, who was responsible for this, the third, triptych in this set we are showing here. Mitsuuji, the main character of the parody *A Rustic Genji*, stands onshore next to a palanquin (a covered chair carried by servants) that may have transported him there. Four divers dressed in patterned fabrics are visible to the left.



Koikawa Shōzan, 1821–1907

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Flowers, Moon, and Genji (Kagetsu Genji), vol. 1, 1870s

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Koikawa Shōzan wrote and designed images for at least two illustrated erotic books on the theme of *Genji*. The two-volume *Fifty-four Chapters of a Floating World Genji (Ukiyo Genji gojūyōjō)*, was published in the 1860s. Seen here is *Flowers, Moon, and Genji* that was published in the 1870s as three volumes. It is an example of a “device book” (*shikakebon*), meaning that pages can be unfolded to reveal panoramic designs. In the more spectacular of two fold-out scenes, eleven couples in dancers’ costumes and court finery are scattered across a spread over eight pages, refers to the *Genji* chapter “Butterflies”.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Author, Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Amorous Murasaki Finds Pleasure in Fifty-some Chapters (Enshi gojūyōjō),
vol. *Flowers (Hana)*, 1835

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This is the first sexually explicit book that contains direct reference to the serial novel *A Rustic Genji*, a parody of *The Tale of Genji*. The pictures are detailed and opulent, rendering rich textiles with state-of-the-art printing and production techniques.



Koikawa Shōzan, 1821–1907

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Fifty-four Chapters of a Floating World Genji (Ukiyo Genji gojūyōjō), vol. 2,
1860s

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Gallery 239: **Playing Games with Genji Pictures**



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G239: Playing Games with Genji Pictures

Genji Pictures and Entertainment

At the imperial court of Heian-period (794–1185) Japan, the setting for *The Tale of Genji*, courtiers had ample time for fun and games. Board games, poetry and painting contests, music, dance, theater, sports like *kemari* (similar to hacky sack), and a variety of elegant, sophisticated contests that involved preparing and judging the best perfumes or incense are all featured in *The Tale of Genji*. Pictures of *The Tale of Genji* themselves represent a type of entertainment—imagine gathering around a screen or scroll or painting album and “reading” the classical novel in pictures. Other games involved identifying illustrations of scenes from the *Tale* and playing card-matching games, Genji-themed board games, and “incense-matching” games, which required memorization of incense aromas that occasionally hold hidden meaning, like a reference to a scene from *The Tale of Genji*.

Nakamura Sōtetsu, active late 18th and early 19th century

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Zither named “Flowing Water,” 1794

Wood with black lacquer and mother-of-pearl inlay; silk tassels

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.422

The seven-stringed zither, called *kin* in Japanese, has been played in China (where it is called *qin*) for at least 3,000 years. It was introduced to Japan by the 700s and was a common instrument in the cultural sphere represented in *The Tale of Genji*. This example of a *kin* was created by an artist of the celebrated Nakamura family of lacquerers, all of whom used the given name Sōtetsu. The artist of this zither, which is dated to 1794, was probably the fifth-generation Nakamura Sōtetsu, who lived from 1764 to 1811. The Nakamura lacquerers maintained relationships with Japan’s leading cultural trendsetters and were celebrated for their craftsmanship.



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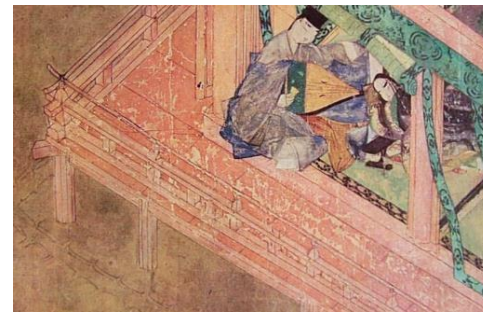
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Four-string biwa, 19th century

Wood with lacquer and gold

Bequest of John Scott Bradstreet 14.101

Though its strings are now missing, this lute originally had four strings, making it a *biwa*, a plucked, stringed instrument with origins in Persia. It was transmitted to China (where it is known as *pipa*) around 2,000 years ago and to Japan by the 700s. The oldest illustrations of *The Tale of Genji* that survive today, which were created around 1130, include a picture of one of the novel's main characters, Prince Niou, playing a similar lute next to his pregnant wife, Nakanokimi.



Scene from "The Ivy," Chapter 49 of
The Tale of Genji, from the *Genji monogatari emaki*, c. 1130
Fragment of a handscroll; ink and color on paper
Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya, Japan

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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Box and assorted implements for the incense game, 17th–18th century

Wood, lacquer, gold; metal utensils

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation
2015.79.398

Incense played a prominent role in aristocratic culture of ancient Japan. Aristocrats were expected to know how to mix aromatic imported woods with other plant products and compound them into burnable, fragrant incense. Popular ingredients included aloe, sandalwood, frankincense, pine, lily, cinnamon, and patchouli, among others. In the 1400s, this artful appreciation of incense developed further into the so-called Way of Fragrance, or *kōdō*, along with the Way of Tea (*sadō* or *chadō*) and the Way of Flowers (*kadō*, better known in the West as *ikebana*). In incense-based games, played with the set displayed here, participants take turns smelling, appreciating, and guessing the ingredients of a certain type of incense. In one variation of the game called “Genji Incense” or *Genjikō*, types of incense or combinations thereof hint at chapters of *The Tale of Genji*.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Izumiya Ichibei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Illustration of the First Month” (Mōshun no zu), from the series
An Eastern Genji (Azuma Genji), eighth lunar month 1860

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Sarumawashi, or “monkey dancing,” was a popular form of street entertainment in which trained macaque monkeys performed acrobatic stunts and comical skits. Here the monkey has climbed a pole and waves a folding fan. The blinds have been opened so that Mitsujūji, the main male character from *A Rustic Genji*, dressed in a lavish robe, is afforded a private viewing.



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Utagawa Fusatane, act. c.1850–91

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Genji Picture Contest Cards (*Genji e-awase karuta*), late 19th century

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This game is called *yobidashi karuta*, or “calling-out” cards, because it has not only a board but also “hand-cards” (*tefuda*) that were called out. Hand-cards from this time rarely survive to today because they were actively used by the players. Dealt out equally among them, the players would not reveal their cards. The player holding the card to the first chapter of *The Tale of Genji* would begin by placing it on the board and then call out another chapter, held by another player. The player who ran out of cards first wins.



Japan, Taishō period (1912–26) or Shōwa period (1926–89)

Wedding robe with design of musical instruments and flowers, 20th century

Dyed and embroidered silk; cotton filled bottom

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture 2013.29.733



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Ebisuya Shōshichi
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

***Newly Published Picture Contest Genji Sugoroku (Shinpan e-awase Genji sugoroku)*, 1849**

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This work is a paper game board, a type of *e-sugoroku* (“pictorial sugoroku”), an illustrated race game that resembles the Western “Snakes and Ladders.” In addition to the “start” and “finish,” the board has fifty-four squares representing each *Genji* chapter with the relevant poem. Each player has only one piece, and the player who first reaches the “finish” (agari) at the top is the winner. The style of this piece is entirely in keeping with the illustrations in *A Rustic Genji*, a parody of The Tale of Genji: each square has a large head portrait of a character from Tanehiko’s novel, identified by a crest with a Sino-Japanese character drawn from their names.



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Kunisada II, 1823–1880

Publisher, Izumiya Ichibei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Three” (San), from the series *His Figure: Related Copies of Other Pictures (Sono sugata yukari no utsushi-e)*, 1850

Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper
Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

In the case of mistaken identity Mitsuuji, the main male character in *A Rustic Genji*, purses Karaginu, a beautiful woman, recently married. Mitsuuji thought Karaginu was her marriageable stepdaughter Muraogi. One sultry evening, Mitsuuji steals into Karaginu’s residence with his attendant to find these two women playing a game of *gō*.



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