

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 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

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Love Affairs: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art

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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.

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Gallery 237: The Tale of Genji in Japanese Art

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).

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Frontispiece: The Genji Room at Ishiyama Temple (Hattan: Ishiyamadera Genji no ma), from the series *Lasting Impressions of a Late Genji Collection (Genji goshū yojō)*,

second lunar month 1858

Published by Sakanaya Eikichi

Carved by Yokogawa Takejirō

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This is the single-sheet frontispiece to a remarkable series of diptychs (two prints that together form a single image), which was collaboratively issued by four publishers. The



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diptychs were produced luxuriously, with thick paper and special effects like blind printing (designs or lettering formed by depressions in the material). The prints are enhanced with a pattern of scattered squares printed in yellow and brown in imitation of the cut gold and silver leaf used in paintings. While the diptychs illustrate characters and scenes from *A Rustic Genji*, the serialized parody of *The Tale of Genji*, this opener features Murasaki Shikibu writing *The Tale of Genji* at Ishiyama Temple.

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, 1839–1892

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Moon over Ishiyama (Ishiyama no tsuki), from the series *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon (Tsuki hyakushi)*, 1889

Published by Akiyama Buemon

Carved by Enkatsu

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

In this print by the renowned Meiji-period print designer Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, Murasaki Shikibu gazes out over a moonlit mountainscape from her perch at the temple Ishiyamadera, where legend tells us she began writing *The Tale of Genji*. Turned away from us, she rests her elbows on a low writing table, on top of which is an open scroll.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797–1858

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Murasaki Gazing at the Moon at Ishiyamadera, c. 1847–48

Published by Mikawaya Heiroku

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

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. P.78.65.69

For this fan print, Utagawa Hiroshige depicted the noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu, author of *The Tale of Genji*. It is said that Murasaki began writing her novel while viewing the harvest moon over Lake Biwa during a stay at the Buddhist temple Ishiyamadera. For this print, Hiroshige imagines Murasaki gazing at the moon and lost in thought, perhaps conceiving of her would-be novel and about to begin writing. Seated at a low writing desk, she holds a writing brush in her right hand and rests her left elbow on a blank sheet of paper. Visible at lower left is the edge of an inkstone.



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

Wedding robe (*uchikake*) with design of carriages and bridges, 20th century

Silk with embroidered and dyed designs

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture

2013.29.1140

The carriages shown on this wedding robe, which illustrates a scene from *The Tale of Genji*, call to mind aristocratic culture of the Heian period (794–1185), when they served as vehicles for wealthy elites in Kyoto. This is the same narrow slice of classical Japanese society highlighted in *The Tale of Genji*. This type of carriage appears frequently in all manner of Genji pictures. Arched bridges, the other primary motif on this robe, may suggest the famous arched bridge over the Uji River, which serves as a setting for parts of *The Tale of Genji*.



Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Writing box with design of bridge and waves, 18th century

Black lacquer with sprinkled gold and inlaid metal and mother-of-pearl

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.395a–e

This lidded box is a *suzuribako*, a box designed to hold an assortment of writing tools, including an inkstone, water dropper, ink sticks, an ink-stick holder, and brushes. The lid features a design of an arched bridge rendered in inlaid metals and mother-of-pearl over rough waves, made by applying powdered gold. These motifs may refer to the famous bridge over the Uji River in the town of Uji, a site celebrated in poetry since the 700s and used by Murasaki Shikibu as a setting for parts of her *Tale of Genji*. The inside of



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this box features an unrelated design of geese on a beach. The original inkstone and water dropper remain intact.



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.”



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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.



Gallery 252: *Genji-e*: Picturing the Tale of Genji

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.

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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.



“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.

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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.



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 71.56.37

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. This screen shows the noblewomen with their multilayered robes enjoying the garden from exotic pleasure boats with phoenix and dragonhead prows. The other screen pictures the following morning, when Murasaki dresses several of her young



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attendants as birds and butterflies and has them dance for the empress.

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1603)

The “Butterflies” Chapter of The Tale of Genji, late 16th

century

Folding fan mounted as a hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.38

This folding fan, which was converted to a scroll format by a previous owner, illustrates an episode from chapter 24 of *The Tale of Genji*, titled “Butterflies,” in which Genji organizes springtime festivities at his own mansion in the garden of Murasaki, his favorite consort. On the first day of the party, boats decorated with phoenix and dragon mastheads transport musicians and noblewomen around the palace lake. Early the next morning, Murasaki dresses several of her young attendants as birds and butterflies and has them dance for the empress. In this small painting, the two scenes are conflated, with the nose of an ornate boat visible at upper left, while dancers perform for an audience of men. Pink and white cherry blossoms peeking through the gold clouds mark the season as spring.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Sadahide, 1807–1873

Publisher, Maruya Tokuzō

Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**Illustration of Uncommon Guests at the Gankirō (*Gankirō
ikyaku no zu*)**, eleventh lunar month 1860

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This imaginative scene takes place at the Gankirō, the foremost brothel in Yokohama. The “butterfly dance” (*chōchō odori*), performed here in its theater, alludes to the dance in volume 34 of *A Rustic Genji*, which in turn is related to chapter 24 of *The Tale of Genji*, in which attendants dressed as butterflies dance for the empress. As the port town Yokohama was heavily frequented by foreigners at the time this print was produced, the room is equipped with Western-style chandeliers, and foreign guests are depicted on the right and left.



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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.



Gallery 251: *Genji-e*: Picturing the Tale of Genji

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.

Attributed to **Tosa Mitsuoki**, 1617–1691

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

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Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.39.1-2

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 also could have served simply as a luxurious backdrop for some gathering.



Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)

Scenes from The Tale of Genji, 18th century
Six-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.42

This screen features six scenes from the first 34 chapters of *The Tale of Genji*, ranging from Genji's youth to age 41, aligning more or less with what is considered the first of three parts of the *Tale*. The scenes, which are each framed by gold clouds, architectural motifs, or both, are not presented sequentially.



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Upper right: Chapter 1, “The Paulownia Pavilion”

In Genji’s coming-of-age ceremony, 12-year-old Genji sits on a platform with a small audience before him, while his father, the emperor, sits behind him but is mostly concealed by gold clouds.

Lower right: Chapter 3, “The Cicada Shell”

From a veranda, a teenage Genji spies on two young girls playing a board game indoors. Genji is in pursuit of one of them, but she catches a whiff of Genji’s perfume and runs away. Genji instead forces himself on the girl’s companion.

Lower middle: Chapter 7, “Beneath the Autumn Leaves”

Genji, still a teenager, performs an autumn dance with his friend and sometime rival, Tō no Chūjō.

Upper left: Chapter 14, “The Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi”

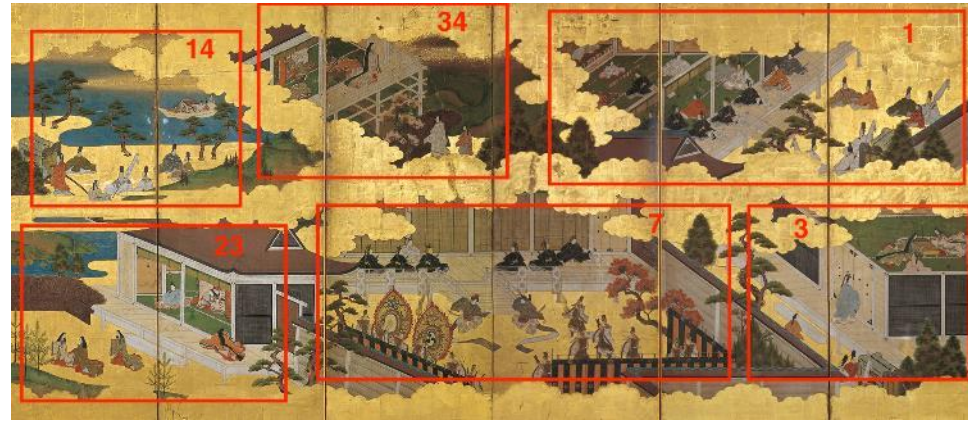
Genji is on a pilgrimage to the grand shrine at Sumiyoshi. Unbeknownst to Genji, one of his former lovers arrives by boat, but the magnificence of Genji’s entourage puts her to shame, so she retreats without announcing herself.

Lower left: Chapter 23, “The Warbler’s First Song”

Genji exchanges New Year’s greetings with the women living at his mansion.

Upper middle: Chapter 34, “Spring Shoots I”

Genji reluctantly marries his young niece, the Third Princess, who is soon thereafter raped by an acquaintance named Kashiwagi and gives birth to an



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illegitimate son that will be raised as Genji's. This pivotal chapter sets the stage for the final 20 chapters of the *Tale*.

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1603)

Scene from the “Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi” Chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, late 16th century

Folding fan mounted as a hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on paper

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.37

The scene on this folding fan is from chapter 14 of *The Tale of Genji*. Genji makes a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi Shrine to thank the gods after the end of a period of exile. Genji and his entourage have parked their elegant carriages near Sumiyoshi's pine-lined beach. Illustrations of this scene, including several in this exhibition, often show a single boat floating off the coast, signaling the simultaneous arrival of Genji's former lover, the Akashi Lady. The magnificence of Genji's entourage makes the Akashi Lady painfully aware of her own lower social status, so she retreats without ever announcing her presence. When Genji learns she is nearby, they exchange a series of poems.

The vertical lines visible on this painting are from creases made by bamboo slats when the painting was earlier mounted as a folding fan. A later owner removed the painting from the bamboo structure and converted it to its present scroll format, thus assuring its preservation.



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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 Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861

Publisher, Sanoya Kihei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Wood: The Ivy” (*Motsu: Yadorigi*), from the series ***Visual Parody of the Five Elements (Mitate gogyō)***, 1851
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The “Five Elements,” or “Five Phases” (*gogyō*), was a fundamental concept of cosmology in ancient China. There are several models describing how one element influences another; for example, water extinguishes fire, fire melts metal, metal cuts wood, wood emanates from earth, and earth constrains water.



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Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861
Publisher, Sanoya Kihei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Fire: The Cressets” (*Ka: Kagaribi*), from the series
Visual Parody of the Five Elements (*Mitate gogyō*),
1851

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This set of three prints unites subject matter from both the historical *Tale of Genji* and a later parody. The flares (the reference to “fire”) used by the fishermen in the background refer to a scene from *The Tale of Genji*. In the foreground, sitting underneath blossoming trees, Mitsuuji (the main character in the parody *A Rustic Genji*) and two beautiful women inspect a basin filled with eel and catfish, while a third woman approaches from the left with a bucket of water for the fish.



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Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861
Publisher, Sanoya Kihei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**“Earth: The Pink” (Do: Tokonatsu), from the series
Visual Parody of the Five Elements (Mitate gogyō),
1851**

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861
Publisher, Sanoya Kihei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

**“Water: A Drifting Boat” (Sui: Ukifune), from the
series *Visual Parody of the Five Elements (Mitate
gogyō)*, 1851**

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Representing the element “water” and *The Tale of Genji* chapter “A Drifting Boat,” this scene depicts Mitsuuji in a boat before a snowy landscape. He and his two companions watch the ducks on the lake. Here, “parody” refers to the juxtaposition of elements from different sources, not to humor. In this series, the five elements are paired with themes and scenes from *The Tale of Genji*.



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Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861

Publisher, Sanoya Kihei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Metal: The Perfumed Prince” (Kon: Niou miya),
from the series *Visual Parody of the Five Elements*
(*Mitate gogyō*), sixth lunar month 1852

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

It is spring, and Mitsuuji (the main character in the parody *A Rustic Genji*) is seated on a veranda looking out onto a garden with large peonies. The fragrant flowers connect the scene with *The Tale of Genji* chapter entitled “The Perfumed Prince.” The metal lantern hanging above Mitsuuji refers to the element “metal.”



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

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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.

Gallery 253: *Genji-e*: Picturing the Tale of Genji

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.

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, 18th century

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

Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture
2013.29.301.1-2



While many Japanese artists featured heavy use of gold paint and gold leaf on folding screens, the artist of this pair used silver leaf instead. Over time, silver leaf oxidizes and turns a smoky gray shade but retains its metallic sheen. The screens present a selection of scenes from *The Tale of Genji*

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in no particular order. The upper middle of the left screen, for example, shows 12-year-old Genji at his coming-of-age ceremony. The courtier's cap he will wear as an adult male rests on a low table before him. The scenes around him and in the right screen are from varying stages of his life.



Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Scenes from “The Tendril Wreath” and “The Typhoon” Chapters of The Tale of Genji, 18th century

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

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.43



Genji's palace had four quadrants, each with its own seasonal garden and living quarters for a specific woman. Each quadrant, and thus each woman, was associated with a season: Murasaki, Genji's favorite consort, was in the quadrant associated with spring; Akikonomu, an empress and Genji's adopted daughter, with autumn; one of his lovers, the Akashi Lady, winter; and another of Genji's lovers, the Lady of the Orange Blossoms, summer. This small

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screen shows two scenes, both of which take place at Genji's palace and feature one of these women. In the right-hand scene, Genji and Murasaki gather in spring to examine robes laid out on lacquer trays to determine which ones to send to the other women of Genji's mansion. At left, Genji's son visits Akikonomu to check on her after a storm hit the palace one autumn night. Her young attendants set out insect cages near the flowering grasses in her garden. This screen's mate, now missing, may have depicted scenes associated with the other two women residing at Genji's palace, the Akashi Lady and the Lady of the Orange Blossoms.

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Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Sakai Hōitsu, 1761–1828

Fan with Akikonomu from “The Maidens” Chapter of The Tale of Genji, early 19th century

Ink, color, and gold on silk (obverse); ink, color, and silver on silk (reverse); bamboo and lacquer (frame)

Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation 2015.79.45

In adulthood Genji built a palace designed with a seasonal garden for each of the four women who lived with him. Depicted on this fan is Akikonomu, an empress and Genji’s adopted daughter, who lived in the “autumn” quarter of the palace. Her name literally means, “Loves Autumn.” When her garden was at its peak one autumn, she collected maple leaves and presented them to Murasaki (Genji’s favorite consort who lived in the spring quarter) along with a poem celebrating the beauty of autumn. Here she wears the luxurious, layered robes of a court lady. In front of her, maple leaves fill the upturned lid of a lacquer box. This theme of autumnal beauty carries over to the back of the fan in the form of bush clover, a grass that flowers in the months before the onset of winter.



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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.



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.

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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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Ryūryūkyō Shinsai, 1764?-1820

Poet, Wakintei Uraginu, dates unknown

Poet, Washōtei Uyō, dates unknown

Poet, Wahōtei Manrai, dates unknown

Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)

The Chapters "The Twilight Beauty," "Young Murasaki," and "The Safflower,"
from the series *Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari)*, c. 1819-1820

Woodblock print (*surimono*); ink, color, and metallic powder on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. P.78.63.17

The objects depicted below and three poems above make reference to three successive chapters of *The Tale of Genji*, chapters 4, 5, and 6, each of which details Genji's initial encounter with a girl. In chapter 4 he meets Yūgao ("Twilight Beauty"), who dies soon after they've made love, having been possessed by the spirit of one of Genji's earlier lovers. In chapter 5 he meets Murasaki, a young girl who resembles Genji's own stepmother, with whom he had an earlier affair. Genji abducts Murasaki and, though they never marry, she becomes the most important love of his life. In the next chapter Genji meets Suetsumuhana ("The Safflower"), a girl of high rank but who lacks grace and thus does not attract Genji.



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Ryūryūkyō Shinsai, 1764?-1820

Poet, Wagyokutei Kijō, dates unknown

Poet, Shinkyōtei, dates unknown

Poet, Hōshōtei Yumekichi, dates unknown

Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)

The Chapters "At the Pass," "The Picture Contest," and "Wind in the Pines,"
from the series *The Tale of Genji*, c. 1819-1820

Woodblock print (*surimono*); ink, color, and metallic powder on paper

Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. P.75.51.98

As in the other print by Ryūryūkyō Shinsai displayed here, the objects depicted and poems inscribed refer to three successive chapters of the original *Tale of Genji*, in this case, chapters 16, 17, and 18. In "At the Pass," Genji's entourage has a chance encounter with one of his former lovers and her current husband. Chapter 17, "The Picture Contest," details a painting competition among imperial consorts with Genji assisting his ward, the future Empress Akikonomu. And in chapter 18, a daughter is born to Genji and one of his lovers, the Akashi Lady. Because of the Akashi Lady's relatively low status, Genji decides that their daughter will be raised instead by Genji's favorite lady, Murasaki.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Yamamotoya Heikichi
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“The Twilight Beauty” (*Yūgao*) [L] and “The Cicada Shell”
(*Utsusemi*) [R], from the series *Genji Incense Signs (Genji-
kō no zu)*, 1844–1845

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



In a pictorial style based on paintings by the Tosa school, which played a large role in standardizing Genji pictures, this series features 54 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” 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 kagibana* (literally, “slit eyes, hooked nose”), don the voluminous robes of the aristocracy of the Heian period (794–1185), and are encircled by a cloud-shaped frame. At right Prince Genji is shown spying on Utsusemi, the wife of a provincial governor, as she plays a game of go with her sister; Genji will later force himself on both. In the other print, Genji's attendant Koremitsu receives a fan covered with flowers from Yūgao, a woman he will steal away to his country villa where she later dies.

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Utagawa Hiroshige III, 1842–1894

Publisher, Shimizuya Tsunejirō

Carver, Asajirō

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Complete Illustration of the Eight Views of Ōmi: View from Ishiyama (Ōmi hakkei zenzu: Ishiyama o miru), December 1890

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Murasaki Shikibu, the author of *The Tale of Genji*, is pictured standing at the temple Ishiyamadera looking out over Lake Biwa. Murasaki Shikibu is often depicted in this way, because a legend held that she began writing *The Tale of Genji* at the picturesque temple. While the location of the temple is at a high elevation, it is in reality not so far up that the lake would be visible as it is depicted here.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Tsuruya Kiemon
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Tasogare”, 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, took the risk of issuing prints on the subject of *A Rustic Genji*. To test the waters, Tsuruya launched a series in 1838 by Kunisada with the same title as the novel, *A Rustic Genji by a Fraudulent Murasaki* by Ryūtei Tanehiko. These prints have their design origins in the book scenes he made for Tanehiko’s serial novel and retain the same title that was still published at that time.



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. 4 ge, 1831
Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Utagawa Kunisada II, 1823–1880

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

“Evening Snow at Mount Hira” (Hira no bosetsu), from the series
The Eight Views of Ōmi (Ōmi hakkei no uchi), 1851
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Utagawa Kunisada II chose a popular snow scene from *A Rustic Genji* (a parody of *The Tale of Genji*) as a model for this triptych. It also relates to the theme of evening snow from the “Eight Views of Ōmi,” a popular motif in Japanese art. The center and left sheets are connected to a scene in volume 30 when, at Mitsuuji’s (the main character’s) suggestion, Yamabuki (center) makes an enormous snowball in the garden with the children of the household. Mitsuuji is depicted on the right sheet, taking in the spectacle.



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. 30 jō, 1839
Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Kagaya Kichibei

Carver, Matsushima Masakichi

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Entertainment at Futamiya Villa after Snow
(*Futamiya no bessō setsugo no kyō*), second lunar month 1864

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Mitsuji, the main character in *A Rustic Genji*, wishes to lift his wife's spirits and directs the wet nurse Yamabuki to take the children out into the garden to make a giant snowball.



Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861

Publisher, Sumiyoshiya Masagorō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

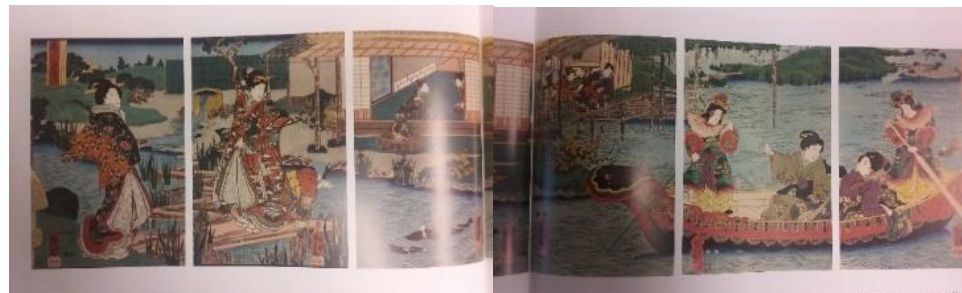
Right: *Junk Boating (Junkan funa asobi)*, 1847–1850

Left: *Beauties Enjoying a Garden (Bijin niwa asobi)*, 1849–1851

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Junk Boating closely follows a scene in volume 34 of *A Rustic Genji* (the parody of *The Tale of Genji*), in which a flamboyant pleasure boat carrying two young



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maidservants is rowed by two young girls in Chinese costumes. Added to this composition is the figure of the main character, Mitsuuji, who has made arrangements for the showy boat to impress the maidservants of a woman he is after and thus help to ingratiate himself with her. He sits on the veranda in the background to survey the scene.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi designed the right triptych in the late 1840s, inspired by the scene described above. Shortly thereafter he created a second triptych to be placed on its left. The second triptych portrays only women, since Mitsuuji already appears in the first. It also has its own title in the event that the publisher wished to market it as a separate set.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Hiroshige II, 1826–1869

Publisher, Moriya Jihei

Carver, Koizumi Minokichi

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Moon over Paddy-fields in Shinano Province (Shinshū Tagoto no tsuki), third lunar month 1861

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This is a collaborative work by two artists; Utagawa Hiroshige II designed the landscape, and the senior Utagawa Kunisada the figures. The representation of the rice fields at Mount Kyōdai, Shinano province, on a moonlit night is also seen in Hiroshige's celebrated series *Famous Places in the*



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Sixty-odd Provinces of 1853. Here Mitsuuji, the main character from *A Rustic Genji*, gazes at the moon, the flooded fields behind him rendered in blue. This scene is completely imagined and unrelated to any episode of *The Tale of Genji* or *A Rustic Genji*.

Ikeda Eisen, 1790–1848
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Two Lovers after Reading, from the book *Konotegashiwa*, 1836

Woodblock printed book page; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Two booklets of a serial novel, which could be the Genji parody *A Rustic Genji*, are lying in front of this couple. The reading seems to have inspired them to engage in sex. This is a double page from an erotic book.



Gallery 227: Editions and Variations

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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Izumiya
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Snow,” “Moon,” “Flowers,” from the series *The Elegance of Snow, Moon, and Flowers (Fūryū setsugekka no uchi)*, second lunar month 1853
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Each of the three prints in this set shows a single half-length figure inspired by *A Rustic Genji* (a parody of *The Tale of Genji*), however, they are not based on any particular scene. A title is not included but rather implied by the background design.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Iseya Magobei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

A Garden in the Third Month (Yayoi no niwa), 1849–1850
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

The survival rate of fan prints is considerably lower than other formats because they were intended to be cut out and glued onto the ribs of fans. Most of the fan prints related to the Genji theme were designed by Utagawa Kunisada, as is this example. Fan-print diptychs were hardly ever created, and this set might have been aimed at a pair of fashionable lovers who would fancy the idea of carrying matching fans.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Ibayama Senzaburō
Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Playing the Koto”, from the series *From a Picture Contest (Yukari no e-awase)*, 1847–1850
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Utagawa Hiroshige 1797–1858
Publisher, Iseya Kanekichi
Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“The Picture Contest: View of Saga” (*E-awase: Saga no fūkei*), from the series *An Elegant Genji (Fūryū Genji)*, fourth lunar month 1853
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



The “picture contest” referred to in the title of this print corresponds to an episode of the original *Tale of Genji* that is parodied in the later serial novel *A Rustic Genji*. In the original tale, women show off their skills in a painting competition in an effort to gain favor at court. In this triptych, which features characters from the parody version, a young attendant sits on a balcony with a telescope in her hands looking toward the town of Saga.

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This print is a joint design by two artists. The figures were designed by Utagawa Kunisada and the landscape by Utagawa Hiroshige.

Toyohara Kunichika, 1835-1900

Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797-1858

Publisher, Kodama Matashichi

Carver, Ōta Kosaburō

Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Portrait of Beautiful Women in Kyoto (*Miyako utsushi bijin sugata-e*), December 1888

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This print was made 35 years after the original displayed nearby, and it is strikingly similar. All earlier seals were removed from the printing blocks for each of the three sheets. Yet the artist Utagawa Hiroshige's original signature on the far right was retained as a marketing ploy (he designed the landscape in the background). Modifications were also made to the colors: the mountain in the far distance is no longer gray, and the kimono of the young attendant with the telescope is now light blue rather than red. Most noteworthy, however, is the change of title: the generic sounding *Portrait of Beautiful Women in Kyoto* no longer refers to Genji, as the popularity of this subject seems to have dwindled at that time.



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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797–1858

Publisher, Iseya Kanekichi

Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Garden at Night” (*Yoru no niwa*), 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



Toyohara Kunichika, 1835–1900

Utagawa Hiroshige, 1797–1858

Publisher, Kodama Matashichi

Carver, Ōta Kosaburō

Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

Golden Age: Night View at a Villa (*Zensei Bessō yoru no kei*), August 1889

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Toyohara Kunichika eliminated the references to a character from *The Tale of Genji* from the 36-year-old original version (on view nearby) and replaced him with a beautiful woman and child. The seals were removed, and only Utagawa Hiroshige’s signature cartouche retained. The composition of the left sheet appears mostly unaltered, apart from the moon that is now visible behind the large tree. The center and right sheets were completely recut and are less dynamic than the original:

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the lantern no longer casts a diffused light; instead, a strong, direct beam extends to the upper edge of the print.

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

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.



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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. 12 ge, 1834
Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Kikuya Ichibei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

An Eastern Genji, Evocation of Flowers and Birds (Kachō, yojō, Azuma Genji), “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 the parody, *A Rustic Genji*.



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Utagawa Kunimori, act. c.1840–65
Author, Miyagi Gengyo, 1817–1880
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

A Critical Study of the Charms of Women (Enshoku shina sadame), vol.
Waste of Weeds (Yomogiu), 1852
Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

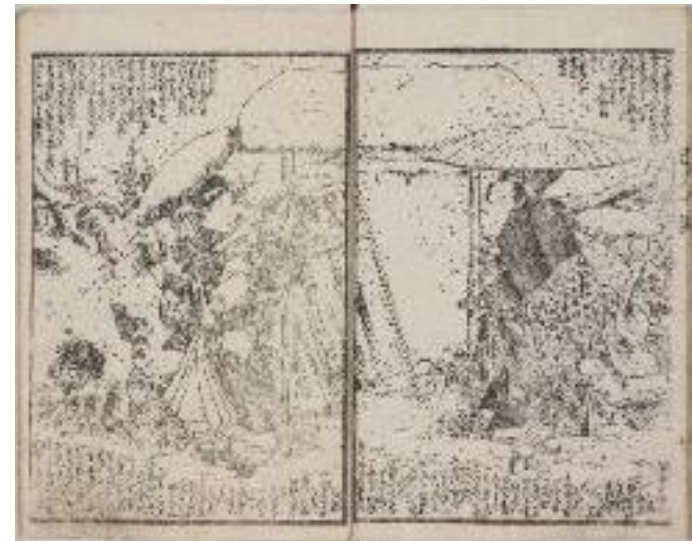
This is the most impressive illustrated erotic book on the Genji subject by a student of Utagawa Kunisada. It was presumably issued in response to a new wave of interest in *The Tale of Genji* initiated by two rival Kabuki theater dramatizations of *A Rustic Genji* (a parody of *The Tale of Genji*) in 1851. This scene is adapted from volume 10 with the important addition of Mitsuuji, the main character in *A Rustic Genji*, reaching into the woman's kimono



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 jō, 1833
Woodblock printed book; ink on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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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. 2, 1851

Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Realistic Portraits of Genji was a grand finale after a 14-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 the government reforms in the 1840s had dissipated, and public enthusiasm for Genji-related merchandise was likely to be reaching a new peak. The dramatic tussle between the hero and his concubines, in which a folding screen depicting an oxcart is knocked over, refers to the fight between two of Genji's lovers.



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Koikawa Shōzan, 1821–1907
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Fifty-four Chapters of a Floating World Genji (Ukiyo Genji gojūyōjō), vol. 3, 1860s
Woodblock printed book; ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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*, which 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.

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Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, 1839–1892
Publisher, Tsujiokaya Bunsuke
Carver, Watanabe Eizō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Chigogafuchi on the Island of Enoshima” (*Enoshima Chigogafuchi*), from the series *Stylish Genji (Imayō Genji)*, fifth lunar month 1864
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

This is a scene from *A Rustic Genji*, a parody of *The Tale of Genji*. The main character, Mitsuuji, stands on a rocky promontory that juts into the sea. Two abalone divers struggle with the large crested waves, while two others onshore offer Mitsuuji abalone. Abalone is an edible sea snail whose shell is lined with opalescent mother-of-pearl.



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Utagawa Kunisada II, 1823-1880

Publisher, Maruya Kyūshirō

Carver, Tanaka Ushi

Japan, Edo period (1603-1868)

A Rustic Genji's Poetry Comparison: Illustration of Lord Mitsuuji's Excursion to Abalone Picking at the Seashore (Inaka Genji shikishi awase: Mitsuuji-kimi kaihen ni te awabi wo torase yūran no zu), fifth intercalary lunar month 1865

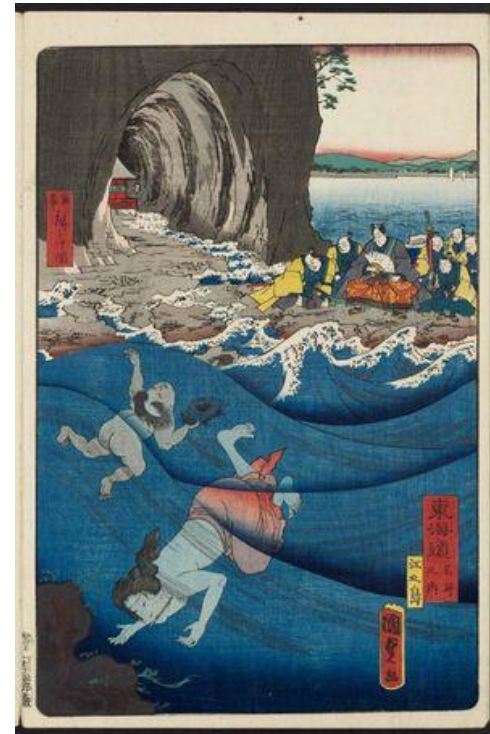
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Much like Utagawa Kunisada's second divers' triptych (on view nearby), Utagawa Kunisada II's work depicts Mitsuuji aboard a roofed pleasure boat drinking sake and watching the abalone divers. Unusual for a triptych of divers, however, Kunisada II's composition includes a naked boy. The design references his popular single-sheet print "Enoshima" from the series *The Famous Places along the Tōkaidō (Tōkaidō meisho no uchi)*, published two years earlier.



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Enoshima, from the series Scenes of Famous Places along the Tôkaidô Road (Tôkaidô meisho fûkei), also known as the Processional Tôkaidô (Gyôretsu Tôkaidô), here called Tôkaidô meisho no uchi

Japanese

Edo period

1863 (Bunkyû 3), 4th month

Utagawa Hiroshige II (Shigenobu)

Artist Utagawa Kunisada II

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

2009.5009.29

Museum of Fine Arts Boston

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Utagawa Yoshitora, c.1836–1882
Publisher, Sawamura Seikichi
Carver, Katada Chōjirō
Japan, Meiji period (1868–1912)

The Excursion to Mountains and Seas: Illustration of the Shining Lord and Abalone Picking (*Sankai yūran no uchi: Hikaru no kimi awabi toru no zu*), seventh lunar month 1868
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



The print edition of Utagawa Yoshitora's triptych of Mitsuuji, the main character in *A Rustic Genji*, and abalone divers, was smaller than that of other prints of this subject, making it quite rare. This piece was perhaps intended as part of a series called *The Excursion to Mountains and Seas*; however, no other triptych with this title is known.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Spirited Romance (*Iki na enji*), 1850s
Woodblock prints (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

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Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Utagawa Hiroshige 1797–1858

Publisher, Moriya Jihei

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Eastern Genji: The Garden in Snow (*Azuma Genji yuki no niwa*), twelfth lunar month 1854

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

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G239: Genji Games - Entertainment and 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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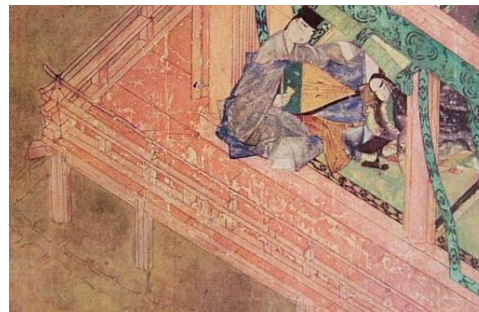
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

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, Maruya Jinpachi

Carver, Tsuka Shōjirō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Illustration of Elegant Play” (*Miyabi asobi no zu*), from the series *An Eastern Genji (Azuma Genji)*, seventh lunar month 1854

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Princess Akashi, the daughter of Mitsuuji, the main male character of *A Rustic Genji*, and his wife, Asagiri, plays on a toy boat pulled by Murasaki’s



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attendant. Asagiri's maid sits before the boat, and the child's wet nurse sits near the stern.

Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865

Publisher, Hayashiya Shōgorō

Carver, Yokogawa Takejirō

Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

“Broom Tree” (Hahakigi) [L] and “Chapter Number 2” (Dai ni no maki) [R],
from the series *Lasting Impressions of a Late Genji Collection (Genji goshū*
yojō), ninth lunar month 1857

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

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



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 Yoshitora, c.1836–1882
Publisher, Yorozuya Magobei
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Eastern Flower Genji Sugoroku (Azuma no hana Genji sugoroku), seventh lunar month 1871
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



This is a *tobi-sugoroku* (“jumping sugoroku”), a version of a race game similar to snakes and ladders and consisting of 24 sections named after *Tale of Genji* chapters, although the images refer to *A Rustic Genji*, an illustrated parody of Genji. The image representing “The Paulownia Pavilion” and “The Broom Tree” chapters, located immediately beneath the finish at the center top, for instance, corresponds to the seduction scene between Mitsuuji and his father’s concubine, Fuji no Kata. Similarly, the image for the chapters “The Twilight Beauty” (Yūgao) and “Heart-to-Heart” (Aoi) has an affinity with the relevant illustration in *A Rustic Genji*.

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Toyohara Kunichika, 1835–1900
Publisher, Echizenya Kajū
Carver, Ōta Tashichi
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Pale Purple Genji Dyed Various Colors (Usumurasaki Genji no somewake),
eleventh lunar month 1862
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection



Utagawa Kunisada, 1786–1865
Publisher, Fujiokaya Keijirō
Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

Stylish Game with Flowers (Imayō hana no tawamure), first lunar month
1864
Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper

Paulette and Jack Lantz Collection

Mitsuuji, the main male character in *A Rustic Genji*, observes an amusing mock sword fight with branches from a cherry tree. Even today inhibitions are cast aside for such unconventional activities during springtime cherry-blossom season.

