

TOSA Mitsunari (1646~1710)

Scenes from The Tale of Genji Representing Months of the Year

Collection of Minneapolis Institute of Art

– Genji Painting Granted to TOKUGAWA Tsunayoshi,

Its Tradition and Innovation –

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Summary

This paper provides a detailed introduction to *Scenes from The Tale of Genji Representing Months of the Year* (Folding Screen by TOSA Mitsunari(1646-1710), collection of Minneapolis Institute of Art), and examines its position as The Tale of Genji paintings by the Tosa school in the early modern period.

It was discovered that this work is extremely rare Genji painting , arranged monthly, based on excerpts from the texts of The Tale of Genji called ” *Genji Jyuni-ka-getsu* ”, and that it corresponds to the left panel of a pair of folding screens “*Screens with Pictures and Inscriptions of Twelve Months*” described in the “Tokugawa Jikki”, which was granted by the ex-emperor REIGEN to celebrate TOKUGAWA Tsunayoshi’s transfer to the position of minister of the right. This work should be positioned as one of Mitsunari’s masterpieces, both as a memorial piece in the history of early modern Yamato-e painting, and as a new achievement that paves the way for the future of small - scale Genji paintings in the tradition of the Tosa school. Furthermore, handwriting analysis of the calligraphy for each month has reveals that the six writers were influential nobles and a monk prince of the time, a group of people appropriate to the environment in which this work was created.

Later, the Tosa school have accumulated and inherited *Scenes from The Tale of Genji Representing Months of the Year* as painting examples, and a similar piece, *The Tale of Genji Screen* (collection of Tokugawa Art Museum) by TOSA mitsuzane (1780-1852) still exists. Folding screens by Mitsuzane have revealed twelve scenes for twelve months, including February (*Hana-no-en*, Chapter 8 of The Tale of Genji), and April (Aoi, Chapter 9 of The Tale of Genji), which has no similar scenes in other Genji paintings.