

## Introduction

In the year 1510, at a private residence in the capital city of Kyoto, two men raised their wine cups to celebrate the completion of an extraordinary project, an album of fifty-four pairs of calligraphy and painting leaves representing each chapter of Japan's most celebrated work of fiction, *The Tale of Genji*. One of the men, the patron of the album Sue (pronounced Sué) Saburō, would take it back with him to his home province of Suō (present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture), on the western end of Japan's main island. Six years later, in 1516, the album leaves would be donated to a local temple named Myōeiji, where the work's traceable premodern history currently ends. In 1957 it came into the possession of Philip Hofer (1898–1984), founder of the Department of Prints and Graphic Arts at the Houghton Rare Book Library of Harvard University.<sup>1</sup> A prolific collector of illustrated manuscripts, Hofer purchased the album along with numerous other Japanese books and scrolls, which were subsequently bequeathed to the Harvard Art Museums in 1985 (fig. 1). This remarkable compendium has survived intact for over five hundred years, making it the oldest complete album of *Genji* painting and calligraphy in the world.

Authored in the early decades of the eleventh century by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji* is a fifty-four-chapter work of prose and 795 *waka* poems, centered primarily on the life of an imperial son, the “radiant Genji,” who is denied his chance to ascend the throne. The tale's popular-

ity began even before Murasaki had completed the work, and by the late twelfth century it had become so widely admired that would-be poets and litterateurs were advised to absorb its lessons. *The Tale of Genji* quickly became a fixture of the Japanese literary canon and centuries later joined the canon of world literature. With its length (over 1,300 pages in the most recent English translation), complexity, sophisticated writing style, development of character and plot, realistic representation of historical time and place, ironic distance, and subplots that extend thematically across the entire work, it meets every criterion that is generally used to distinguish novels from other forms of literature. Although steeped in the complex belief systems and moral codes of its own era, which complicate any simplistic equation of the work with modern fiction, the tale can be read as a monumental exploration of human nature. No matter how characters may triumph or what virtues they may exhibit, all ultimately confront hardships and grapple with their own fallibility, none more so than the eponymous protagonist Genji. To give voice to her characters' internal conflicts and thought processes, Murasaki Shikibu took unprecedented advantage of two hallmarks of classical Japanese literature: the affective power and ironic distancing effect of *waka* poetry, and a mode of prose narration similar to stream of consciousness and free indirect discourse in Western literature. The shifting perspective of the



Fig. 1 *The Tale of Genji Album*, 1510. Two volumes, remounted in 1998. Paintings by Tosa Mitsunobu (act. ca. 1462–1525), calligraphy by Kunitaka Shinnō (1456–1532), Konoe Hisamichi (1472–1544), Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), Jōhōji Kōjō (1453–1538), Reizei Tamehiro (1450–1526), Son'ō Jugō (d. 1514). Overall mounting, each volume: 34.1 × 44.9 cm; 108 album leaves, 24.3 cm × 18.1 cm each. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge. Credit: Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of the Hofer Collection of the Arts of Asia, 1985.352.

narrator throughout the work also makes for a reading experience surprisingly akin to that of the modern novel.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the tale's evocative description of the imperial court and the rituals of the aristocracy caused it to be regarded as the embodiment of a golden age of courtly life, especially in later eras when juxtaposed against the nobility's waning political authority.

The history of *Genji* pictures in many ways tells the history of the early illustrated book in Japan. The rich tradition of *Genji* illustration began almost four hundred years before the 1510 album came into being, with the earliest known and most famous extant example being the twelfth-century *Genji Scrolls* (fig. 2). These horizontal handscrolls, with alternating texts and pictures, represent the oldest manuscript of the *Genji* text and suggest how images and texts functioned symbiotically to shape a reader's cognitive experience of the work. Several paintings in these earliest scrolls helped establish a *Genji* iconography that endured through the centuries and informed the 1510 album as well, which even a simple comparison of figure 2 with the album's painting for Chapter Forty-Five (p. 200) makes clear. The extravagant treatment of the paper decoration

beneath this earliest *Genji* manuscript, with its dyed sheets, underdrawings, and its surface encrusted with metal in the form of gold dust, and thin slivers of cut silver and gold foil, resembles the sophistication and numinous quality of Buddhist sūtra decoration from the same period. From the thirteenth century, we have vestiges of a more everyday reading experience of *Genji* in the form of small, thread-bound books with scenes from the tale interspersed in their interior pages. As a rule, such books consisted of sets with each of the fifty-four chapters bound separately. This facilitated the circulation of individual chapters for reading and copying, which was essential for creating new manuscript copies before the age of print. Early examples are rare, but one "chaplet" of Ukifune (Chapter Fifty-One) survives partially intact (fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> Its well-thumbed pages convey the enthusiasm of some of the tale's earliest readers, who confessed their preoccupation with the story and who pored over their own cherished copies.<sup>4</sup> Whether extravagantly illustrated scrolls or thread-bound books, both formats tend to reproduce *The Tale of Genji* either in its entirety or in lengthy excerpted passages that approximate the full story.



Fig. 2 *The Divine Princess at Uji Bridge (Hashihime)*, Chapter Forty-Five, *Illustrated Handscrolls of the Tale of Genji (Genji monogatari emaki)*. Late Heian period, early twelfth century. Painting: colors, ink, and shell white on paper; calligraphy: gold and silver foil and dust on dyed paper, height 22 cm. Tokugawa Museum of Art, Nagoya.

In contrast, the album format uses only the briefest excerpts from the tale, either short prose passages or one to three poems, to encapsulate the work in a concise manner. Albums are therefore not digests; their short excerpts never explain the plot, characters, or setting as that genre of paratexts had begun to do by the fourteenth century. That is not to say that the producers of the *Genji Album* did not take full advantage of the various digests, commentaries, character charts, dictionaries, and other tools for understanding the universe of the tale. Indeed, as we shall see, the men who made the album were not only consumers, but producers of such texts. The album, however, works best as a supplement to a full *Genji* manuscript, and for readers already knowledgeable about the tale, allows them to visualize scenes more clearly and to understand familiar passages and poems in a new light. The unique selection and coordination of *Genji* texts and images in all formats, whether scroll, book, or album, are always suggestive of how contemporary audiences understood the tale. The *Genji Album* in the Harvard collection offers a particularly important point of view in this regard, both as the sole surviving album predating 1600 and because of the group of individuals behind its creation.<sup>5</sup>

The *Genji Album* was not mass produced but instead made for a specific patron. Thus its 108 texts and images contain a wealth of information about the values, interests, and aspirations of those who commissioned the work and assisted in its creation in the sixteenth century. Its production was a col-

laborative endeavor, involving a patron, an artist and his painting studio, six calligraphers, and at least two coordinators overseeing the project. The goal was for the selection of scenes and textual passages to encapsulate the story in a compelling and meaningful way for the patron. Most examples of premodern Japanese artworks created before the year 1600 lack documentation, making it hard to say who produced them. In the case of the Harvard *Genji Album*, remarkably, the patron and most details of the work's production are known, having been recorded in the diary of the courtier and one of the coordinators of the project, Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537).<sup>6</sup> And because the creators of this album did not simply have a passing interest or superficial knowledge of the *Genji*, but viewed their commitment to the work as a lifelong scholarly endeavor, their curation of these pairs of leaves enriches our own understanding of the tale.

Although *The Tale of Genji* was originally written by a woman in the context of the imperial court of the Heian period (794–1185), and though it centers on the life of an imperial prince, it enjoyed a healthy readership throughout the medieval period among members of the warrior class. From the twelfth century onward, successive military leaders assumed increasing political control over the central government, while the emperor and nobility remained intact in Kyoto, resulting in a fission of the polity that would continue until the nineteenth century. While the institutional and economic power of the imperial court and the aristocracy



Fig. 3 A Boat Cast Adrift (*Ukifune*), Chapter Fifty-One of *The Tale of Genji*. Artist and calligrapher unknown. Kamakura period, thirteenth century. Thread-bound book, with illustrations in ink on paper, 23.7 × 19 cm. The Museum Yamato Bunkakan, Nara.

waned over time, the spiritual identity of the emperor and thus the court's ideological and symbolic influence survived and remained desirable and valuable to those on the outside. Rulers of the Ashikaga Shogunate, for example, belonged to a lineage of imperial princes turned commoners who took the Minamoto (a.k.a. Genji) surname, like the eponymous hero of *The Tale of Genji*. For warlords like the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408), Genji's ability to achieve the exalted status of *honorary* retired emperor (*jun daijō tennō*) as a commoner was aspirational.<sup>7</sup> Murasaki Shikibu's characterization of her commoner hero as a rightful ruler dispossessed, but with the undeniable radiance of a Buddhist monarch, most certainly played a part in earning the shogun's admiration as he sought his own kingly power. Even for men without a professed Minamoto bloodline, however, the dra-

matic arc of Genji's fortunes, from his privileged position at birth, to his nadir in exile, to his subsequent rise to glory, proved relatable, despite his many flaws, or perhaps because of them.<sup>8</sup> For readers who aimed to be counted among the elite and to engage in cultural discourse, *The Tale of Genji* was simply too important and pervasive to ignore. With its allusions to the Heian and pre-Heian traditions of Japanese and Chinese poetry, prose, folk songs, myths, history, philosophy, and politics, it was a rich source of references and erudition. And as medieval commentators on the *Genji* firmly believed, the tale's underlying narrative structures, if parsed properly, could reveal the profound truths of Tendai Buddhist nonduality, presented in harmony with beliefs in the indigenous gods, or *kami*, that protected the archipelago.<sup>9</sup> With no work of literature before or after approaching it in complexity,

*The Tale of Genji* was widely viewed as miraculous, authored only with the help of divine intervention.<sup>10</sup> The supernatural aura of the tale should not be discounted when considering the attraction that it held for many. At the same time *Genji* has always made for entertaining reading, in no small part because of its memorable female characters. By the sixteenth century, such characters had taken on lives of their own, transformed into protagonists of their own tales in new forms of fiction and Noh plays, making a knowledge of the tale indispensable for full participation in the culture of the day.

## Patrons: Sue Saburō and Sue Hiroaki

The patron of the 1510 *Genji Album*, Sue Saburō, also known as Okinari, hailed from the western province of Suō (present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture), and commissioned the album during a temporary stay in the capital.<sup>11</sup> Although the Sue clan would be remembered for eventually bringing about the destruction of the Ōuchi house, in the early sixteenth century they were still its allies and loyal retainers. The Sue derived countless benefits from their relationship with the Ōuchi clan head, Ōuchi Yoshioki (1477–1528), who in 1508 became one of three military leaders in charge of the government in Kyoto, and who controlled one of only three official trade boats running between the archipelago and the Chinese mainland.

The Sue were also wealthy, and like their Ōuchi lords, had the resources to engage in a range of cultural activities, including the commissioning of paintings and literary works. Sue Saburō arrived in Kyoto in 1508 with Ōuchi Yoshioki and immediately began petitioning the foremost courtier-scholars of the day to mentor him in poetry and classical texts. It was during this time that he commissioned the *Genji Album*, not merely for himself, but on behalf of his father, the estimable warrior and scholar, Sue Hiroaki (1461–1523), who then held the title of Governor of Hyōgo. While the capital continued to be the cultural center of gravity, certain provincial domains had flourished to the point of emerging as “little Kyotos,” especially those overseen by men in the Ōuchi sphere with funds to spend and access to exotic goods from

trade beyond the archipelago. Sue Hiroaki was one such individual living amid material wealth and immersed in elite culture and scholarship. He had a long history of interaction with litterateurs from the capital, including linked verse (*renga*) poets, and his own scholarly activities are legendary, beginning with his collation and copy of the Kamakura-period military chronicle, *Mirror of the East* (*Azuma kagami*).<sup>12</sup>

By 1516, the *Genji Album* leaves were in Hiroaki's possession, and he declared his intention to dedicate them to Myōeiji, the Buddhist mortuary temple he founded on behalf of his deceased mother. This information appears on the backing papers of the leaves of the *Genji Album* in the form of inscriptions by Hiroaki himself (fig. 4), which were discovered during conservation of the album in 1998.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, it was in that year that Hiroaki hosted at his residence a series of lectures on *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji kōshaku*) by the renowned *renga* poet Sōseki (1474–1533) who was traveling throughout the western provinces.<sup>14</sup> Through their peregrinations, *renga* masters not only disseminated scholarship and transmitted esoteric readings of the tale, but also created a “book network” by which texts and classical works of literature circulated. The point of production was most often the capital, from which *Genji* volumes with title slips brushed by prominent calligraphers made their way to distant provinces, including the domains of Suruga, Echigo, and Suō, at the request of regional daimyo, and often, their wives.<sup>15</sup> Sue Hiroaki enlisted Sōseki for just such deliveries, with one conveyance including a copy of the tenth-century *waka* poetry anthology *Collection of Waka Old and New* (*Kokinshū*), as well as chapter title labels for his own copy of *The Tale of Genji*.<sup>16</sup> The *Genji* lectures of 1516 were thus conducted for a man steeped in the tale and who approached it with a certain reverence; they may even have occurred on the fifteenth of the eighth month, the date that according to ancient legend Murasaki Shikibu was said to have begun writing her tale beneath a full autumn moon at the temple of Ishiyamadera.<sup>17</sup> It was not uncommon for medieval *Genji* scholars and aficionados to submit poetic offerings to commemorate the text's mythogenesis on that date.



Fig. 4 Backing paper from *The Tale of Genji Album*, 1510; behind the leaves for Rites of the Sacred Law (Minori), Chapter Forty, with inscriptions by Sue Hiroaki and the dedication date of Eishō 13 (1516). 24.2 cm × 36.5 cm. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.

The album leaves, so carefully acquired in the capital, could very well have been a centerpiece for the *Genji* lectures of 1516.<sup>18</sup> Inscriptions on the backing papers suggest that Hiroaki had the album leaves remounted onto folding screens not long after he received them, and one possibility is that he had done this in anticipation of Sōseki's arrival in Suō.<sup>19</sup> Thus on the third day of the fourth month of 1516, Hiroaki prepared the leaves for mounting by inscribing pertinent information on their backing papers: he carefully noted the numeric order for each pair of leaves, the chapter title, the date, the name of each calligrapher, and the temple dedication (for later donation), followed by his name and seal.<sup>20</sup> Folding screens displaying the leaves could thus be set up during the lectures as an exquisite backdrop with their vibrant polychrome calligraphy papers and paintings and refulgent gold clouds. The *Genji Album* paintings and texts were surely made for some

form of public display. Along with fan paintings, the practice of pasting sets of *shikishi* sheets illustrating courtly tales or verses from poetic anthologies onto screens had existed by the thirteenth century and became more and more common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> As the focal point of a *Genji* exegetical gathering, the leaves were not mere decoration but could be integrated into a culture of discussion and interpretation of the tale, and as such they continue to reward close analysis.

### Coordinators: Sanjōnishi Sanetaka and Gensei

For guidance in creating a *Genji* compendium of the highest order there could be no better expert than Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (fig. 5). As a high-ranking member of the court hierarchy with ties through marriage to the imperial court, Sanetaka had

direct access to the emperor and was a prolific and renowned poet, scholar, and calligrapher.<sup>22</sup> He is remembered as one of the most remarkable historical figures of the Muromachi period (1338–1573) in large part because of his meticulous sixty-year diary in which, among many other things, he recorded the details of Sue Saburō's *Genji Album* project.<sup>23</sup>

Sanetaka had been a cultural advisor and tutor serving members of the imperial family since young adulthood, and by the time he met the warrior from Suō Province had overseen countless projects involving the coordination of texts and images.<sup>24</sup> To his work on Sue Saburō's album Sanetaka brought years of experience studying the tale and making manuscript copies of the entire work for himself and others. He had also devoted considerable time to authoring works that would help readers understand *The Tale of Genji*, including an explanatory chart of the dizzying number of its characters and their complex interrelationships.<sup>25</sup> Nothing attests

to Sanetaka's expertise better, however, than his immersion in the tradition of *Genji* commentaries.<sup>26</sup> These exegetical texts were usually based on previous commentaries as well as *Genji* lectures like those held at Hiroaki's residence, which could consist of several sessions, with a single chapter remaining the topic of discussion for as many as four or five days.<sup>27</sup> The lecturer would usually touch on the biography of Murasaki Shikibu, the genesis of the tale, the origin and meaning of the fifty-four chapter titles, and the structure of the narrative as a whole, as well as carrying out line-by-line readings and exegeses of the text. As mentioned, the album leaves commissioned by Sue Saburō were likely displayed during *Genji* lectures delivered by Sōseki at the Sue residence in 1516, and they may have even been created with this event in mind, which would have made the involvement of a scholar of Sanetaka's caliber invaluable.

Sue Saburō's introduction to the famous courtier came by way of another coordinator overseeing the album's production, the *renga* poet Gensei (1443–1521). Gensei's knowledge of *The Tale of Genji* rivaled that of Sanetaka, and this speaks to the importance of the tale as a source for *renga* poetry.<sup>28</sup> Handbooks provided appropriate "linking" words from *Genji*, boiling the narrative down to discrete units, including chapter titles, character names, and seasonal motifs, that formed the building blocks for new, collectively authored chains of poetry. New genres of *Genji*-specific *renga*, in which poets composed links exclusively related to the narrative and its poetry (*Genji kotoba renga*), came to rival traditional modes of linked verse.<sup>29</sup> There even arose a genre known as "Genji province-name *renga*" (*Genji kokumei renga*), in which poets composed verses based alternately on the names of provinces throughout the realm and the titles of the fifty-four *Genji* chapters.<sup>30</sup> At the same time it would be a mistake to overstate the influence of *renga* over *waka* in terms of medieval *Genji* reception, and the album's creation. *Waka* remained the dominant poetic form when it came to the creation of new poetry inspired by Murasaki's tale, and Gensei and *renga* masters like him left countless examples.<sup>31</sup> As the analyses of the texts and images in the pages that follow will attest, an emphasis on the use of



Fig. 5 Portrait Sketch of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka. By Tosa Mitsunobu. Dated 1501. Single sheet, ink on paper, 41.2 × 25.8 cm. Historiographical Institute, The University of Tokyo.

specific semantic units (derived from *waka* as well as *renga*) to represent *Genji* scenes and the calligraphy of *Genji* texts helped shape the appearance of the leaves in the 1510 album. At the same time, Gensei's expertise extended to the entire content of the tale. Like Sanetaka, he was well versed in *Genji* commentaries and borrowed volumes of a commentary by Yotsutsuji Yoshinari (1326–1402), *Gleanings from the Rivers and Seas [of Genji Commentaries]* (*Kakaishō*, fourteenth century) at the start of the album project, no doubt to help facilitate conversations with the album's patron or to provide him with instruction on the tale.<sup>32</sup> *Renga* masters like Gensei typically rose from humble backgrounds and proved valuable as instructors to aristocrats as well as members of the military elite like the Ōuchi and Sue; they assisted their patrons in the successful navigation of poetry gatherings and regularly corresponded with them, correcting or sending advice on their written poems.<sup>33</sup> As they were not subject to the protocol that accompanied court rank or military status, they could function as mediators, moving among disparate social groups as go-betweens for a variety of transactions, and traveling throughout the country transporting texts and offering their services in distant provinces. Gensei was a disciple of Sōgi (1421–1502), the medieval period's most famous *renga* poet, who had traveled to the Ōuchi domains in 1480, and again in 1489, and had forged strong ties to the daimyo and their retainers, including Sue Hiroaki. Sōgi even counted among his disciples Sanetaka himself; although Sanetaka had been educated since early childhood in the Chinese and Japanese classics, it was Sōgi who trained him in a closely guarded tradition of exegesis of the first imperial *waka* anthology, the *Kokinshū*, as well as *The Tale of Genji*.<sup>34</sup> The shared connection of Gensei, Sanetaka, and Sue Hiroaki to the venerable Sōgi allowed Gensei to introduce his warrior patron to Sanetaka, which he did within six months of Sue Saburō's arrival in the capital.

## Calligraphers: Aristocratic Traces

The album's production began in earnest when Saburō arrived at Sanetaka's residence early in the

eight month of 1509 bearing calligraphy papers (*shikishi*) to accompany a set of *Genji* pictures. These correspond to the fifty-four colorful papers that make up half of the album today. Sanetaka's diary does not mention the preparation of the *shikishi*, but they were certainly decorated by the time Sue Saburō handed them over, painted in five different colors—red, blue, yellow, pink, and green—and embellished with “dragon borders” that appear above, and on the right or left, of each rectangular sheet (fig. 6).<sup>35</sup> The colored papers emulate high-quality imported Chinese paper with similar dragon motifs that had been used primarily in Zen circles since the fourteenth century. Such Chinese-style paper is an interesting choice for the inscription of *The Tale of Genji*, a work of prose fiction (*monogatari*) and *waka* poetry written in *kana*, the phonetic Japanese script, usually considered antithetical to Chinese logographs, which were employed for official writing. The pairing of the five-colored Chinese-style dragon papers with *kana* calligraphy in fact embodies the aesthetic of *wa-kan*, a form of creative expression in art and literature that deliberately juxtaposed Japanese (*wa*) and Chinese (*kan*) cultural objects and practices.<sup>36</sup> In the case of Sue Saburō's *Genji Album*, this aesthetic choice may reflect his family's identity as Ōuchi retainers, men engaged in foreign trade, with claims to continental culture.

Inherent in the juxtaposition of *wa* and *kan* is also an underlying societal and cultural gender structure that associated official Sinitic writing with the masculine gender and vernacular writing in *kana* with the feminine. The latter was literally called “the female hand” (*onna-de*), a gendered mode of writing that, ironically, counted men as some of its most celebrated practitioners.<sup>37</sup> Certain leaves in the 1510 album employ some of the tropes of classical *onna-de* such as “scattered writing” (*chirashi gaki*), in which the *kana* do not appear in syntactical order in regular right-to-left columns but are distributed across the paper in meandering patterns. Chapter Sixteen in the album is the most conspicuous example, with a prose excerpt that begins in the center and zigzags across the sheet



in a dizzying manner. But such leaves are relatively rare in the album. The calligraphy of the 1510 album is not in the quintessential *onna-de* style of Heian calligraphy, characterized by gossamer thin brushstrokes that vertically connect multiple phonemes into long flowing ligatures of contiguous lines of script. The writing is of the Muromachi period, and the six calligraphic hands of the album represent distinct calligraphic lineages of the early sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Even across these distinctive and identifiable stylistic lineages, however, there is a certain consistency in the use of bold strokes brushed in dark, voluptuous ink. The calligraphers primarily limit themselves to the *kana* syllabary, but strategically employ darkly inked and densely tectonic Sinitic logographs to great visual effect. The ink traces on these *shikishi* represent assertive calligraphic expressions brushed with clarity for maximum legibility, perhaps for screens, and

the need to remain discernible when viewed across a room.

It was up to the coordinators of the project to ensure variety in the graphic design of the album's calligraphy. Sanetaka and Gensei both played a role in the organization of the album's texts, which involved selecting the excerpts, procuring the participation of the six calligraphers, and collecting and collating the sheets of writing. They began with the first of these tasks, the selection of texts, which they sent to the various calligraphers, along with instructions or templates.<sup>39</sup> The calligraphers were probably not, in other words, left entirely to their own devices in terms of the layout of their calligraphic assignments. Manuals on protocols for inscription of *shikishi* existed for just this purpose, which the calligraphers themselves may have used.<sup>40</sup> The calligraphers did have some artistic leeway, for example, in the way they responded to the dragon borders of each leaf in a different manner, sometimes ignoring and transgressing them, and other times skillfully using the borders to offset words or phrases of significance. The coordinators did, however, carefully orchestrate the color coordination of the sheets. They sent each of the six calligraphers a total of nine leaves and distributed the colored sheets in such a way that minimized repetition between calligraphic hand and paper hue in the sequence of the completed album.<sup>41</sup> As will be seen in the chapters ahead, the color of a calligraphy leaf often complements the subject matter of the text inscribed on its surface in ways that must have been more than mere coincidence.

The calligraphy of the *Genji Album* is brimming with visual appeal, and yet this effect was no doubt secondary in importance to the sum of the calligraphic and courtly lineages it represented, the "aristocratic body" that is inscribed into the work itself. Each of the hands were as indicative of the identity of the calligraphers as their names and court rank, which in fact endowed the leaves with value. The album becomes, through the hands of its six calligraphers, both a manual reproduction of the *Genji* and a calligraphic representation of



Fig. 6 Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), calligraphy for Leaves of Wild Ginger (Aoi), Chapter Nine from *The Tale of Genji Album*. 1510. Ink on paper, 24.3 × 18.1 cm. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.

courtly society that the Sue household could use to possess “the capital,” even in the distant provinces.

## Painters: Tosa Mitsunobu and the Painting Bureau

Although Sanetaka’s diary does not mention the paintings for the *Genji Album*, there is no doubt that they were entrusted to the artist Tosa Mitsunobu (act. ca. 1462–1525), who had been Director of the Painting Bureau (*edokoro azukari*) since 1469.<sup>42</sup> Mitsunobu held that title (bestowed on him by both emperor and shogun) for over fifty years. It was a coveted post for a professional painter that ensured a certain amount of financial stability and a steady stream of commissions from a varied clientele beyond the court and shogunate for paintings of all kinds, including Buddhist icons, mortuary portraits, narrative handscrolls, fans, and of course *Genji* paintings. The number of extant works by Mitsunobu show him to be one of the most prolific and successful artists of medieval Japan, and his name is associated with several artistic innovations of the period.<sup>43</sup> As Chino Kaori first demonstrated, the unsigned paintings of the 1510 *Genji Album* are stylistically a perfect fit with Mitsunobu’s other known works.<sup>44</sup> Mitsunobu was in many ways the most logical artist to entrust with such a task. His prestigious title and relatively high court rank endowed his paintings with a certain cachet, and to the members of the Sue house his works would have epitomized court culture itself. Mitsunobu was also the painterly counterpart to calligraphers and poets such as Sanetaka and Gensei and had in fact collaborated with both men before.<sup>45</sup> Mitsunobu’s interactions with this coterie of courtier-scholars, which included discussions concerning *The Tale of Genji* and frequent participation in poetry gatherings, resulted in paintings that exhibit a sophisticated understanding of the literary canon that he was so often asked to visualize.<sup>46</sup>

The painted leaves of the 1510 album evoke narrative paintings of the earlier Heian period, with their vibrant palette of mineral pigments, shell white for the powdered faces of aristocrats, and fine ink lines for details (fig. 7).<sup>47</sup> While the clothing of figures is

gorgeously represented, their faces, namely those of elites, are depicted with an economy of means. The preferred vocabulary that has developed to describe them refers to the “lines” employed for the eyes and the “hooks” that delineate the noses (*hikime kagihana*). One of the most striking elements of these paintings is their abundant use of wafting gold clouds to frame and order each composition, and the interplay between the organic shapes of these clouds and the straight lines and zigzagging diagonals of the architectural components. The paintings are divided between outdoor scenes in which typically a group of figures takes part in a courtly ritual or activity, and indoor scenes in which the roofs are “blown off” (*fukinuki yatai*) to provide full visual access to interiors. This technique of direct access to a scene from a high vantage point is part of a mode of representation that differs from paintings that employ a one-point perspective, or that organize a composition along an imagined horizon line. Thus, rather than depicting the action of narrative scenes within a framework of illusionistic space, in which characters and motifs decrease in size and placement according to a coherent, if unseen grid of seemingly quantifiable spatial relationships, these paintings demonstrate other organizational priorities. A figure’s larger size or prominence in any given painted scene is often indicative of a textual emphasis on their interiority in the corresponding narrative passage, or their centrality to the action of the scene. This sliding scale of visual emphasis weighted according to narrative content has been described as a system of “psychological perspective,” which emerged out of the symbiosis of word and image in Heian period literature.<sup>48</sup> Such a pictorial system provides an appropriate counterpart to the reading experience of *Genji*, which affords relatively unmediated access to characters’ thoughts. It continued to be the primary mode of *Genji* representation with modifications in style and format over the centuries. The paintings in the 1510 album thus employed long-standing techniques of courtly narrative painting and established a *Genji Album* tradition that would continue with members of the Tosa and Sumiyoshi schools among others.

Mitsunobu's paintings stand out, however, as qualitatively different from all *Genji* album paintings that come afterward. These differences are manifest in their use of pigments (relatively light and transparent in certain areas), the sketchy quality of faces and other details, and the prevalence of a wavy line to define rocks, hills, and trees. The approach is unique within so-called *yamato-e* (Japanese-style pictures) of the era, and it signals an artist interested in incorporating certain characteristics of Sino-Japanese ink painting, calligraphic line and wash effects, into the realm of polychrome narrative paintings. The very process by which narrative paintings are made, however, renders this a difficult endeavor. They consist of "built-up pictures" (*tsukuri-e*), for which the lead artist provides a master drawing in ink, usually containing notations about color and other details, that other studio artists then complete (see fig. 10). Layers of mineral pigments and gold foil clouds

obscure the artist's hand in narrative paintings and put them at a remove conceptually from ink paintings, which aim to connect viewers viscerally with the energy and persona of the artist through the vitality of exposed calligraphic line. The hand of the master artist could reemerge, however, through the addition of finishing touches in black ink after the color had been applied to the paintings. At this stage, Mitsunobu introduced his signature artistic feature, the tremulous lines that resonate with the indexical brushwork of the ink painting tradition, and they imbue Mitsunobu's paintings with an individuality that seems lacking in many other *Genji* pictures.

Mitsunobu's formal Sinitic pictorial inflections tend to appear only on the margins of the paintings, however, and do not impact the representation of the main characters and motifs, which were expected to maintain the tradition of depicting courtly characters with a degree of sameness. In courtly painting, differentiation occurred through the subtlest of distinctions, like the razor-thin strokes that textured the eyes and eyebrows, the tilt of a character's head, or the relationship of the figure to surrounding figures and motifs. Most importantly, however, difference was *read into* each scene by a viewer informed by an accompanying textual excerpt. Mitsunobu's artistry in the *Genji Album* is most apparent in the way in which he closely calibrates each image with its corresponding inscribed leaf and his larger knowledge of the tale. Such inscriptions, as mentioned, were no longer the long descriptive prose passages excerpted for handscroll illustrations of the *Genji*, as in earlier works, but allusive poems and brief prose passages chosen for their relevance to the body of secondary texts, linked verse gatherings, and Noh dramas that characterized late medieval *Genji* culture. Viewers projected identities onto and thereby individualized the figures within the *Genji Album* by taking cues from the accompanying excerpt and its associations. In other words, while a degree of sameness was integral to Mitsunobu's practice, to informed viewers, these images with their subtle differences were far from repetitive.

The sheer length of *The Tale of Genji* meant that each of the fifty-four chapters offered countless pos-



Fig. 7 Tosa Mitsunobu (act. ca 1462–1525), painting for The Lady of the Evening Faces (*Yūgao*), Chapter Four from *The Tale of Genji Album*. 1510. Ink on paper, 24.3 x 18.1 cm. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.



Fig. 8 *A Contest of Illustrations (Eawase)*, Chapter Seventeen of *The Tale of Genji*. By Tosa Mitsunobu. Circa early sixteenth century. One thread-bound book with paintings on front cover (left), and back cover (right). Ink, colors, and gold on paper, 25.4 × 17.2 cm. Tenri University Library, Nara.

sible scenes for illustration, and though the patron no doubt made his preferences known, he, the coordinators, and Mitsunobu would have worked from preexisting templates. The majority of paintings in the 1510 *Genji Album* in fact depict scenes included in picture manuals and digests of the period, which provided patrons of *Genji* pictures with a menu of text and image options for every chapter in the tale.<sup>49</sup> Sanetaka was known to have borrowed, at least once, a five-volume “*Genji* picture manual” (*Genji eyō sōshi*) for another project years later.<sup>50</sup> Mitsunobu had in fact been catering to patrons and coordinators armed with such manuals since early in his career. In 1476, for example, the courtier Nakanoin Michihide (1428–1494) offered comments on several *Genji* paintings executed by the Painting Bureau

(Mitsunobu), having consulted a “*Genji* picture manual” (*Genji no eyō*) and its “esoterica” (*hiji*) on his own.<sup>51</sup> He mentions scenes of the “Hatsune” and “Nowaki” chapters, for example, and the costumes of their painted figures, demonstrating how patrons or coordinators could critique the smallest details of an artist’s work. By the time Mitsunobu was commissioned to create Sue’s *Genji* pictures, he brought some thirty-five years of experience and feedback from an exacting clientele.

While such manuals gave patrons and coordinators ideas about which scenes and specific elements of *Genji* iconography to request, an artist of Mitsunobu’s stature would have had his own store of drawings to be handed down within his studio to represent its unique approach to visualizing the tale.

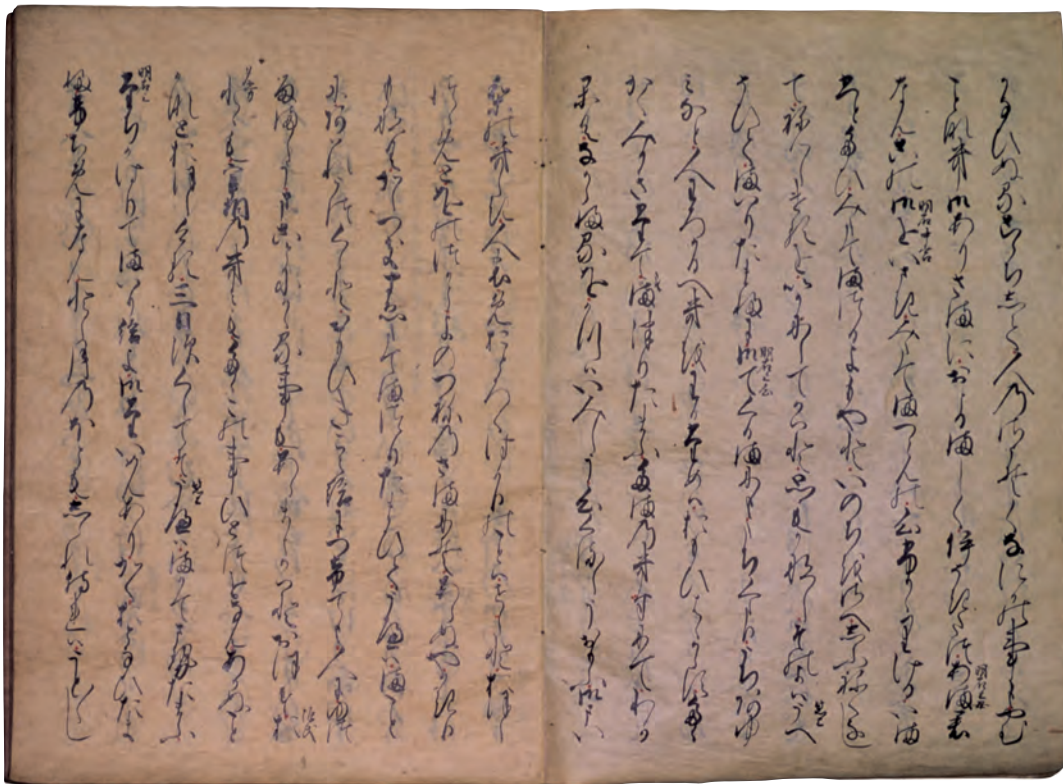


Fig. 9 *Shoots of Wisteria Leaves (Fuji no uraba)*, Chapter Thirty-Three of *The Tale of Genji*. Calligraphy attributed to Kanroji Motonaga (1457–1527), ca. early sixteenth century. One thread-bound book, ink on paper, 25.4 × 34.4 cm. Idemitsu Museum of Art, Tokyo.

Such templates would have been necessary, moreover, because of the sheer number of paintings his studio was called on to produce. He was asked, for example, to create the front and back cover illustrations for sets of individually bound *Genji* chapters, requiring a total of 108 paintings, two for each chapter. Two volumes from an original set of such fifty-four chapter books with Mitsunobu's cover paintings survive today (figs. 8, 9, and ref. fig., Ch. 33) and provide a glimpse of the luxuriousness of these book sets. The calligraphy on the rectangular title slips in the upper left corner of the front covers appears to be in the hand of Emperor GoKashiwabara (1462–1526), while the interior text of the chapters has been attributed to prominent courtiers active in the early sixteenth century.<sup>52</sup> The text of the *Shoots of Wisteria Leaves*

chapter book (fig. 9) has been attributed to the courtier Kanroji Motonaga (1457–1527), and it shows how the calligrapher added the names of characters, as they had come to be known by the sixteenth century, in the margins, where the original text uses only official titles or elides the referent altogether. The handwritten text thus suggests a reader familiar with *The Tale of Genji*, but one who would have been aided by these notes of identification.<sup>53</sup>

While only two volumes from what was likely an original set of fifty-four survive, copies of the front and back covers of additional volumes by Mitsunobu were made in the seventeenth century (fig. 10).<sup>54</sup> Some of the drawings represent *Genji* scenes that are nearly identical to ones of the same chapter in the 1510 album, while others show alter-



Fig. 10 *Copies of Book Cover Paintings by Tosa Mitsunobu*. By Sumiyoshi Gukei (1631–1705). Dated 1675. Section showing the designs for *The Lady of the Paulownia-Courtyard Chambers* (Kiritsubo), Chapter One of *The Tale of Genji*, front cover (left) and back cover (right). Single handscroll, ink and light color on paper, paper sizes differ: sheets 1–10: 27.3 × 348.9 cm; sheets 11–26: 23.5 × 417.3 cm, total width 766.2 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

native compositions. The book-cover drawings also add more to our understanding of what readers in Mitsunobu's day considered to be the most defining moments of a given *Genji* chapter. Take for example the two drawings for the book covers of Chapter One, shown here, where on the front cover we find young Genji meeting the Korean physiognomist whose prognostication about Genji's future hovers over the entire tale. It is in part based on this fortune telling that Genji's father, the Emperor, decides to make him a commoner, and thus his coming-of-age ceremony is held in the private quarters of the imperial residence, rather than the official hall of state,

as depicted on the back cover of the book, and in the first painting in the 1510 album. The book covers show these two events in chronological order, front to back, and alert the reader to scenes that deserve special attention while suggesting intriguing associations, and even causal links between the scenes.<sup>55</sup> The patron and coordinators of the 1510 album may have considered both of these painting options out of a menu of designs, but they ultimately selected the image of Genji's coming-of-age ceremony. By doing so they made sure the first image in the album included a view of the iconic Heian palace, the figure of the Emperor, and a composition that

hints at the political and interpersonal relationships between the sovereign, the Minister of the Left, and Genji.

## Content and Interpretation

Based on these sketches of now lost chapter volumes and extant *Genji* paintings, it becomes clear that scenes that might be construed as inauspicious went unrepresented. As a rule, formal polychrome *Genji* paintings omit scenes depicting episodes of spirit possession, as well as childbirth, or illness (conditions that usually render a person vulnerable to an attacking spirit). The absence of such subject matter hints at the degree to which images were assumed to instantiate the things they represented. Episodes depicting behavior deemed controversial within the world of the story are also avoided in emblematic pictorial representation. Examples include Genji's abduction of the young Murasaki, which shocks the surrounding characters, or his sexual violation of Murasaki four years later at the end of Chapter Nine, the traumatic nature of which is registered through Murasaki's reaction. Given the nature of the function of albums and screens and fans of *Genji*, such complicated scenes might not reflect well on the patrons. And when albums and manuscript sets with illustrated covers were made



Fig. 11 *The Tale of Genji Album*, previous cover. Edo period (1615–1868), silk lampas, with gold and silver threads, 34.1 × 42 cm. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.

as part of bridal trousseaus for young women, there arose a need to recast aspects of *Genji* to suit the ideology of marriage and the importance of wifely duties undertaken for the good of a lineage. That is not to say, however, that difficult passages and emotionally complex episodes do not have a place in the 1510 album or other examples; like *Genji* itself, the pictures accommodate different levels of interpretation.

Often artists would adhere to standard iconography, while in other instances, they eschewed common templates altogether to create unique images customized to the interests or demands of specific patrons. Several scenes in the 1510 album seem tailor-made for the Sue house, those for Chapters Six, Twelve, Eighteen, and Twenty-Five, as will be explained. In general, the album's paintings have the cumulative effect of emphasizing Genji as the protagonist; he is often placed front and center in the composition beneath a floating gold cloud that functions as an emphatic rhetorical device. Such an emphasis is not necessarily a given, despite the centrality of Genji in the narrative. The preponderance of fully realized female characters in the tale, as well as women-centered scenes of dialogue and interaction, meant that patrons, if they so desired, could select illustrations that might make Genji seem like a minor character.<sup>56</sup> The album's focus on Genji therefore represents, if not a deliberate choice, then at least a predilection. Scenes of all-male gatherings are also conspicuous in the album, which aligns with the culture of *Genji* lectures and poetry gatherings from which women were almost always excluded.<sup>57</sup> Knowing the historical context of the patron, these choices seem unsurprising. A preponderance of such scenes not only reflects but also helps shape a narrative world in which the patron may, if he chooses, identify with Genji and aspire toward some of his power and privilege and charm, and perhaps even his self-scrutiny.

That is not to say, however, that the presence and voices of female characters, so well-articulated in the tale by its female author, are diminished in the 1510 album's representation of *The Tale of Genji*; quite the contrary. Many scenes in the album feature female



Figs. 12, 13 *The Tale of Genji Album*. Frontispiece (right), finispiece (left) attributed to Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691). Ink, colors, and gold on silk, 34.1 × 42 cm. Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.

characters on their own, and when read in conjunction with the adjacent prose and poetry excerpts, the pairs of leaves give expression to a panoply of their thoughts, concerns, and actions. The album's producers may not have been especially sympathetic to such characters but may have been simply responding to the centrality of women in the tale and their pivotal role within the marriage politics of the Heian era. It can be just as rewarding therefore to analyze the album's juxtapositions of paintings and texts within the context of Murasaki's eleventh-century tale. In this way, viewers of the album today need not limit themselves to considering only what it meant to its audience in 1510, and it is in this spirit that I offer these analyses of the album's texts and images. While paying close attention to sixteenth-century

concerns and how the creators of the album may have interpreted the story, the pages that follow provide synopses of the chapters and interpretations of each scene in the album based on my own understanding of Murasaki's tale, drawing from and building on the rich tradition of scholarship on *The Tale of Genji* that began in the medieval period and that continues to this day.

The 1510 *Genji Album* was remounted during the Edo period, placed between covers of Chinese brocade (fig. 11) and adorned with frontispiece and finispiece paintings on silk that provide an appropriate visual frame for the world of the story (figs. 12, 13). These newly added paintings are attributed to the artist Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691), and they





depict the famous legend of the genesis of *The Tale of Genji*, showing Murasaki Shikibu composing her masterpiece at Ishiyamadera. As the story goes, she had been charged by Her Highness the Empress Jōtōmon'in (Fujiwara no Shōshi 988–1074) with the task of writing a new tale and traveled to Ishiyamadera to pray to its famous Nyoirin Kannon for inspiration. On the fifteenth night of the eighth month, the night in autumn when the moon was at its fullest and most luminous, she looked out from her temple perch over Lake Biwa, gazed on the glowing orb reflected on the surface of the water, and suddenly the idea was born. She picked up her brush, but with no paper at hand, reached for the scrolls of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (*Daihannyakyō*) resting on the Buddhist altar, turned them over, and began writing the Suma and Akashi chapters of her tale.

Opening the album today, we first see Murasaki at her desk imagining her tale, then turn the pages to experience all fifty-four chapters of her completed work in microcosm. The source of Murasaki's contemplation, the moon reflected on the waters of Lake Biwa, appears in the finispiece, only visible to us after we have turned over the final leaf of the album. There we find a view of the temple in its landscape with the bright white disc of the moon glowing in the sky while its illusory counterpart floats on the water below. The temple's main hall stands to the left, complete with the Chinese-style window that marks the famous "Genji room" where Murasaki was said to have composed her tale. The figure of Murasaki has disappeared from the painting, but her work lives on. The album beckons us to join centuries of readers who have come before to experience and reimagine her tale.

## Notes

1. Philip Hofer, "On Collecting Japanese Manuscript Scrolls," *Book Collector* 7 (1958): 369–80; he mentions the *Genji Album* on p. 375.

2. The style of *The Tale of Genji* was thus especially striking for literary modernists at the turn of the twentieth century experimenting with new modes of narration, such as Virginia Woolf and Raymond Mortimer, who in his review of Arthur Waley's translation of the tale described Murasaki's carefully drawn characters as always "wondering what impression they are making and what is going on in other people's minds." Mortimer, "A New Planet," *Nation and Athenæum* 37, no. 12 (1925), 371. Exceptional scholarship in English on the reception of *Genji* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries includes Michael Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Patrick W. Caddeau, *Appraising Genji: Literary Criticism and Cultural Anxiety in the Age of the Last Samurai* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006); Gaye Rowley, *Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji*, Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies 28 (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000).

3. The *Ukifune* booklet in the Yamato Bunkakan Museum consists of two illustrations and thirty pages of text from the latter half of the chapter preserved in book form; another twenty-three pages of text and three illustrations from the first part of the chapter survive in the Tokugawa Art Museum, remounted as a handscroll.

4. The most famous early reader of *Genji* was a woman known as "Sugawara no Takasue's daughter," author of the literary memoir *The Sarashina Diary* (*Sarashina nikki*). She describes receiving all "fifty-some chapters" of the tale at the age of fourteen in the year 1020, then immersing herself in reading "scroll after scroll." The account is not a simple record of reading habits, but deliberately highlights the author's own formation as a writer through her relationship to *Genji*. See *Sarashina nikki*, in *Shinpen nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, ed. Fujioka Tadaharu et al. (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1994), 26: 298. For a translation and study of the author's relationship to *Genji*, see Sonja Arntzen and Itō Moriyuki, *The Sarashina Diary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

5. The era of *The Tale of Genji* painting and calligraphy album truly began in the Edo period (1615–1868), when artists, primarily those of the Tosa school, produced albums in great numbers, often to be a part of bridal trousseau. *Genji* albums by Tosa Mitsuyoshi (1539–1613), Tosa Mitsunori (1583–1638), Tosa Mitsuoki (1617–1691), and Sumiyoshi Jokei (1598–1670) are characteristic examples, and they differ from the 1510 album in appearance and tone. Important studies on several of these albums include: Sakakibara Satoru, "Sumiyoshi-ha 'Genji-e' kaidai: Tsukusho bon kotobagaki," *Suntory Bijutsukan ronshū* 3 (1989): 5–181; Kawada Masayuki, "'Genji monogatari tekagami' kō," 84–115, in *Izumi-shi Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan Genji monogatari tekagami kenkyū* (Izumi-shi: Izumi-shi Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan, 1992); Sakakibara Satoru, ed., *Edo meisaku gajō zenshū* 5, *Tosa-ha, Sumiyoshi-ha: Mitsunori, Mitsuoki, Gukei* (Tokyo: Shinshindō, 1993); Inamoto Mariko, "Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan

hokan 'Genji monogatari gajō' ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: Chō-jirō ni yoru jūfuku roku bamen wo megutte," *Kokka* 1223 (1997): 7–15; and Kano Hiroyuki et al., eds., *Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan zō Genji monogatari gajō* (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1997).

6. The connection between the diary entries and the Harvard *Genji Album* was first put forth in Melissa McCormick, "Hābādo Bijutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari gajō' to 'Sanetaka kōki' shosai no 'Genji-e shikishi,'" *Kokka* 1241 (1999): 27–28.

7. Mitamura Masako, "Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no seigaiha 'chūsei Genji monogatari' no ryōiki," *Monogatari kenkyū* 1 (2001): 55–70.

8. A number of individuals throughout time, especially writers preoccupied with the tale and with periods of exile or isolation in their histories, explicitly likened themselves to Genji and understood his story as one of redemption. The sixteenth-century courtier Kujō Tanemichi (1507–1594), author of the *Genji* commentary *Mōshinshō* (1575) and grandson of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, is one such example, as pointed out by Ii Haruki, "Kujō Tanemichi to 'Genji monogatari kyōenki,'" in *Genji monogatari chūshakushi no kenkyū, Muromachi zenki* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1980), 1069. In the Edo period, Kumazawa Banzan used a neo-Confucian reading of Genji's character to interpret the tale as a form of protest literature against the authoritarian Tokugawa regime; see James McMullen, *Idealism, Protest, and the Tale of Genji: The Confucianism of Kumazawa Banzan (1619–91)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). At the same time, a male writer's ability to identify with both Genji and Murasaki Shikibu the author could potentially transform his understanding of the self within existing paradigms of gender and literary genre; see J. Keith Vincent, "Purple and White: Shiki and Sōseki's Homosocial *Genji*," forthcoming in *The Tale of Genji: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: Norton, 2019), edited by Dennis Washburn.

9. Melissa McCormick, "Murasaki's 'Mind Ground': A Buddhist Theory of the Novel," in James McMullen, ed., *Oxford Studies in Philosophy and Literature: Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

10. The legend of the tale's miraculous origins is recounted later in this introduction. For more on the way Murasaki Shikibu came to be worshipped as a bodhisattva, see the analysis of the earliest dated Buddhist portrait-icon of the author in Melissa McCormick, "Purple Displaces Crimson: The *Wakan* Dialectic as Polemic," in *Around Chigusa: Tea and the Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan*, ed. Dora Ching, Louise Allison Cort, and Andrew Warsky (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 181–208. For a comprehensive and insightful account of the reception history of the author see Satoko Naito, "The Making of Murasaki Shikibu: Constructing Authorship, Gendering Readership, and Legitimizing *The Tale of Genji*" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), which includes accounts of how the author was said to suffer in hell for the sin of writing fiction.

11. For more detail on the historical and literary context of the album, which can only be partially addressed here, see Melissa McCormick, "Genji Goes West: The 1510 *Genji Album* and the Visualization of Court and Capital," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 1 (2003): 54–85.

12. Hiroaki copied the entire chronicle over the course of twenty years, acquiring various recensions to complete his for-

ty-eight-volume manuscript in 1522, one year before his death. Although it currently lacks thirteen years from the eighty-six-year span of the original, Hiroaki's text contains few errors and is considered one of the best surviving versions of the *Azuma kagami*; see Yamaguchi Kenritsu Bijutsukan, *Muromachi bunka no naka ni miru Ōuchi bunka no ihōten* (Yamaguchi-shi: Yamaguchi Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1989), 140, n. 2.

13. Hiroaki wrote the notations himself on Eishō 13 (1516), 4.3. He carefully recorded in one central line the name of each calligrapher and a statement of donation (“Tōyō dedicates this to Myōeiji”), followed by the name “Hiroaki” and his seal. The same vermilion, intaglio seal appears at the end of Hiroaki's manuscript copy of the *Azuma kagami*. For more details, see the conservation report in Oka Bokkōdō, *Shūfuku*, vol. 6 (Kyoto: Oka Bokkōdō, 2000), 6–16 and 51 for a summary in English.

14. A manuscript copy of *The Tale of Genji* in the Tenri University Library contains a colophon that mentions a written *Genji* commentary (*kikigaki*) based on *Genji* lectures delivered by Sōseki at the residence of “Sue Hiroaki, Governor of Aki Province,” in Eishō 13 (1516). Kido Saizō, in his study on the history of *renga* mentions this text in passing, see his *Renga shi ronkō jō* (Tokyo: Meiji Shōin, 1993), 607.

15. It should be noted that despite the predominately male audience of the *Genji Album* and its immediate milieu of poets and scholars, *The Tale of Genji* enjoyed a continued female readership over the course of the medieval period. Women too authored *Genji* commentaries in the sixteenth century, and the first disciple to receive the “*Genji* teachings” from Kujō Tanemichi (see n. 8) was the woman Kyōkōin Nyoshun'ni (1544–1598); Ii Haruki, “*Mōshinshō no seiritsu*,” in Nomura Sei'ichi, ed., *Mōshinshō*, vol. 6 of *Genji monogatari kochū shūsei* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1978), 505.

16. This copy of the *Kokinshū* was created at Sue's request by Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, as he records in his diary *Sanetaka kōki* on 7.28 in what was likely Eishō 11 (1514); see Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, *Sanetaka kōki*, 4th ed., ed. by Takahashi Ryūzō (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 2000), 10: 673. All subsequent citations refer to this edition. Sōseki may have become Hiroaki's main conduit to the capital after Sue Saburō's return, as he was for other provincial military households, such as the Imagawa. On Eishō 17 (1520) 4.2, Sōseki requests that Sanetaka write a postscript and chapter titles for a copy of *Genji* owned by “Sue, Governor of Hyōgo,” (*Sanetaka kōki*, 10: 711), demonstrating that Hiroaki had a complete copy by this time if not earlier.

17. A collection of excerpted *renga* verses by Sōseki called *Gesson no nukiku* includes verses composed at the residence of “Sue, Governor of Hyōgo,” another title by which Hiroaki was known, on both the Tanabata festival (the seventh day of the seventh month), and on the fifteenth of the eighth month. Kido Saizō surmised that Sōseki was in the environs of Yamaguchi for at least two months on that occasion; see Kido, *Renga shi ronkō jō*, 606–7. The original manuscript of *Gesson no nukiku* can be found in the Archives of the Imperial Household (MS 353–66).

18. The link between the 1516 *Genji* lectures and the Sue *Genji Album* is discussed in McCormick, “*Genji Goes West*,” 65–66, which includes more details on the work's donation to Myōeiji and the familial context.

19. In the upper left corner of each original backing paper for the fifty-four pairs of leaves an inscription reads, “out of the fifty-four total on the screen surface” (*heimen tsugō gojūyon mai no uchi* 屏面都合五十四枚内). Conservators also detected traces of gold leaf on the edges of the backing papers, indicating that they were once pasted onto a ground of gold leaf, common to folding screens; see Oka Bokkōdō, *Shūfuku*, vol. 6 (Kyoto: Oka Bokkōdō, 2000). In addition, Anne Rose Kitagawa determined that the discoloration of certain leaves could only have resulted from their placement on folding-screen panels abutting each other when closed, and posited the placement of the leaves on a hypothetical pair of folding screens; see Kitagawa, “Behind the Scenes of Harvard's Tale of Genji Album,” *Apollo* 154, no. 477 (2001): 38–35; Chino, Ikeda, and Kamei also speculated that the leaves were once affixed to folding screens, based on the popularity of the format in this period, as well as the absence of other albums from the early sixteenth century; see Chino Kaori, Ikeda Shinobu, and Kamei Wakana, “Hābādo Daigaku Bijutsukan zō ‘Genji monogatari gajō’ o meguru shomondai,” *Kokka* no. 1222 (1997): 11–24. This publication, a special issue of the art history journal *Kokka*, presented the first substantial research on the album and was spearheaded by Chino Kaori, who invited the participation of twenty-three other scholars.

20. This information appears in the upper right corner on the backing paper of each pair of leaves and reads, for example, “back 13, Sacred Rites of the Law” (*ushiro jūsan Minori*). The leaves for Chapters 1–27 were labeled “front” (*zen*) 1–27, while those for Chapters 28–54 were labeled “back” (*go*) 1–27, thus “back 13” corresponds to Chapter 40. Although the leaves may have been mounted on screens, the numbering system here would have been appropriate for a single-volume accordian-style album with Chapters 1–27 on the front, and Chapters 28–54 on the back. This was the format of the album when it first entered the Harvard Art Museums, thought to be the result of an Edo period remounting. The sequencing of the calligraphers and paper colors also roughly corresponds to this division (see the Album Calligraphy Key in the appendix herein), suggesting that the album was conceptualized as such and that the inscriptions record the original order in anticipation of a future remounting back to the album format, which is indeed what happened.

21. In one well-known early example, *Genji* paintings on *shikishi* were said to have been mounted onto a pair of folding screens for use by the shogun Prince Munetaka (1242–1274) in the mid-thirteenth century. The earliest reference to fans pasted onto folding screens is an example from 1434 in the diary of Prince Fushiminomiya Sadafusa (1372–1456), *Kanmon nikki* (entry for Eikyō 7.6), which mentions that they were of fans with *Genji* pictures. Sanetaka himself records seeing a screen with *Genji* fan paintings, newly commissioned by a member of the Hosokawa family in Entoku 1 (1489), 12.12 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 3:341), while a pair of screens adorned with sixty *Genji* fans dated stylistically to the fifteenth century in the collection of Jōdōji in Hiroshima provides an important extant example of this practice.

22. Sanetaka's ties to the court were through his wife; her older sister served at the court of Emperor Go-Tsuchimikado (1442–1500), while her younger sister, Fujiko, became the con-

sort of Emperor Go-Kashiwabara (1464–1526) and gave birth to Emperor Go-Nara (1496–1557); Haga Kōshirō, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, Jinbutsu sōsho* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1960), 28.

23. For a thorough account of Sanetaka's life and literary works see Miyakawa Yōko, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka to kotengaku* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1995). It examines each year of the diary, which Sanetaka kept from 1474 to 1536.

24. Sanetaka's cultural output and his collaboration with Tosa Mitsunobu, the artist of the *Genji Album*, is explored in Melissa McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

25. Sanetaka first made a "lineage chart" (*keizu*) of *Genji* characters in 1488 after participating in lectures on the tale by the *renga* poets Sōgi (1421–1502) and Botanka Shōhaku (1443–1527), who assisted him, as did Gensei, the other coordinator of Sue Saburō's album. Sanetaka's *Genji* lineage chart was always in high demand, and he made countless copies of it over the years for various individuals, including Prince Kunitaka, one of the calligraphers of the 1510 album. See Ii Haruki, "Sanetaka no 'Genji monogatari keizu' seisaku," in *Genji monogatari chūsakushi no kenkyū: Muromachi zenki* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1980), 507–63.

26. Two commentaries from the early sixteenth century are attributed to Sanetaka: *Rōkashō*, based on previous commentaries and notes (*kikigaki*) recorded during lectures by leading *Genji* scholars, and *Sairyūshō*, Sanetaka's original commentary completed by his son, Sanjōnishi Kin'eda (1487–1563). See Ii Haruki, ed., *Sairyūshō*, in *Genji monogatari kochū shūsei*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1980), and Ii Haruki, ed., *Rōkashō*, in *Genji monogatari kochū shūsei*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1983); and Lewis Cook, "Genre Trouble: Medieval Commentaries and Canonization of *The Tale of Genji*," in *Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 129–53.

27. A list of the appropriate number of days to spend lecturing on each chapter appears at the beginning of *Rōkashō*; see Ii Haruki, ed., *Rōkashō*, in *Genji monogatari kochū shūsei*, 9.

28. Janet Goff touches on the importance of *renga* to the reception of *Genji* in the medieval period, including the creation of *Genji* Noh plays; see her *Noh Drama and The Tale of Genji: The Art of Allusion in Fifteen Classical Plays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

29. A *Genji-kotobagaki-renga* was held, for example, at the customary ninth-month *renga* gathering at the imperial palace on Daiei 1 (1521) 9.13 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 10:761).

30. A *Genji kokumei renga* was held at the imperial palace on Daiei 5 (1525) 6.3 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 11:290). For a *Genji kokumei renga* manuscript thought to have been composed in 1505, see Ii, *Genji monogatari chūsakushi no kenkyū: Muromachi zenki*, 1131.

31. On the overemphasis on *renga* and neglect of *waka* in scholarship on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Japanese literature, see Steven D. Carter, "Waka in the Age of Renga," *Monumenta Nipponica* 36, no. 4 (1981): 425–44.

32. Gensei borrowed two volumes of the commentary from Sanetaka on Eishō 6 (1508) Intercalary 8.12 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 9:245), roughly one week before they began organizing the calligraphy assignments. The texts he borrowed covered Chapters One

through Four of *Genji*, which Gensei may have used in discussions with Sue concerning the selection of texts for the album.

33. Gensei descended from a warrior clan, the Kawata, and was a retainer of Hosokawa Masaharu, governor of Awa; see Inoue Muneo, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū, Muromachi kōki, kaitei shinpan* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1987), 194–95.

34. Sōgi transmitted to Sanetaka the "Teachings of Poems Ancient and Modern" (*Kokindenju*) in 1488, along with the "Three Great Matters of *Genji*" (*Genji sankaji*), as noted in Miyakawa, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka to kotengaku*, 45.

35. The colored papers appear in the order of red, blue, yellow, pink, and green in the first half of the album (Chapters 1–27), after which the sequence largely follows the order of red, pink, blue, yellow, green, until the end. Exceptions include the two consecutive pink papers of Chapters 34 and 35, which tie these chapters, Early Spring Greens pt. 1 and pt. 2, together. The grouping of the album leaves into two halves of twenty-seven also would have accorded with a double-sided album format.

36. The project seems therefore to pave the way for the blending of "Chinese" and "Japanese" elements in *Genji*-related artworks, which can be seen in the earliest extant portrait-icon of Murasaki Shikibu, dated to 1560 and painted by Tosa Mitsunobu's grandson Tosa Mitsumoto (1530–1569), and commissioned by the grandson of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, Kujō Tanemichi (1507–1594); see McCormick, "Purple Displaces Crimson."

37. The ability to employ both gendered modes of writing was largely the privilege of men, who wrote official documents in Sino-Japanese characters and personal letters and texts in the vernacular using *kana*, while women were by and large encouraged to write only in *kana*. For more on these gendered divisions, see Chino Kaori, "Gender in Japanese Art," trans. Joshua S. Mostow, in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua S. Mostow et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 17–34.

38. Kasashima Tadayuki identified five of the six calligraphers in the album based on stylistic analysis, before the discovery of the diary entries and backing papers that confirmed the names; see Kasashima Tadayuki, "Hābādo Daigaku Bijutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari gajō' kotobagaki no shofū to seisaku nendai," *Kokka* no. 1222 (1997): 53. The Album Calligraphy Key in the appendix to this book is based on the table in his article. Courtly calligraphy during the Muromachi period witnessed the birth of at least seventeen new stylistic lineages; Shimatani Hiroyuki, "Sanjōnishi Sanetaka to Sanjō ryū," *Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan kiyō* 26 (1990): 7–191.

39. Eishō 6 (1509) Intercalary 8.20 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 9:248). It took less than four months to collect all fifty-four completed calligraphy papers, helped by some especially speedy calligraphers, such as Reizei Tamemichi, who brushed and returned his assigned excerpts in two weeks. At least one leaf, Chapter Ten, by Jōhōji Kojō, required a correction, however, slowing down the process. For more on the process of procuring the texts and on the calligraphers, see McCormick, "Genji Goes West," 70–71.

40. Tomoko Sakomura examines the history and meaning of *shikishi* inscription and introduces several manuals on calligraphic practice in *Poetry as Image: The Visual Culture of Waka in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

41. See the appendix in this book for a chart of the album's calligraphers and their assigned paper colors and chapters. The calligraphy portion of the album was completed by Eishō 6 (1509) 11.19, when Sanetaka and Sue examined all of the papers together (*Sanetaka kōki*, 9:283).

42. Kamei Wakana discusses the meaning of the *edokoro azukari* title in Mitsunobu's day in "Hābādo Daigaku Bijutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari gajō' o meguru shomondai," *Kokka* no. 1222 (1997): 15–18.

43. See McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* for information on the artist's oeuvre and patronage. Among Mitsunobu's innovations was a new form of narrative scroll for the representation of short stories (*ko-e* or "small picture") as well as the genre of screen painting now known as "Scenes In and Around the Capital" (*rakuchū rakugaizu*), the first known reference to which describes a work made by Mitsunobu in 1506 for the Asakura daimyo of Echizen (the entry for Eishō 3.12.22 in *Sanetaka kōki*, 8:675).

44. Chino Kaori, "Hābādo Daigaku Bijutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari gajō' o meguru shomondai," *Kokka* no. 1222 (1997), esp. 12–14 for an analysis of his painting style.

45. They all worked on the *Illustrated Legends of the Kitano Tenjin Shrine* (*Kitano Tenjin engi emaki*, 1503), a set of three handscrolls with calligraphy by Sanetaka, title labels by Emperor Go-Kashiwabara, and paintings by Tosa Mitsunobu, all coordinated by Gensei on behalf of the patron. Entries in Sanetaka's diary record the process of production, including discussions between Sanetaka and Mitsunobu that touched on classic examples of scroll painting from earlier periods, providing a glimpse of the presumably numerous conversations that took place regarding the production of the *Genji Album* as well, but that went unrecorded. Entries from Sanetaka's diary related to the *Kitano Tenjin engi* project begin on Bunki 1 (1501) 8.26 and continue until Bunki 3 (1503) 5.12.

46. Mitsunobu discussed *Genji* with the prominent courtier and scholar Nakanoin Michihide (1428–1494), for example, who noted the meeting in his diary in an entry from Bunmei 18 (1486) 6.27; see *Jūrin'in naifu ki*, in *Shiryō sanshū. Kokiroku hen* (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1972), 236. The *waka* gatherings Mitsunobu joined include one in 1491, in which Gensei participated as well, where the focal point was a new Hitomaro portrait painted by Mitsunobu himself. A poem by the artist appears in an original manuscript from the event; see Iwasaki Yoshiki, "Tosa Mitsunobu no bungei katsudō: Yōmeidō Bunko zō 'Sanjō ku' uta to renga," *Gobun* 47 (1986): 36–37.

47. A thorough account of the types of pigments and materials used in the album's paintings and calligraphy papers is Katherine Eremin, Jens Stenger, and Melanie Li Green, "Raman Spectroscopy of Japanese Artists' Materials: *The Tale of Genji* by Tosa Mitsunobu," *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy* 37 (2006): 1119–24.

48. Takahashi Tōru, *Monogatari to e no enkinhō* (Tokyo: Perikan Sha, 1991).

49. One such manual that includes a description of possible scenes for reproduction thought to have been created in the medieval period is translated and discussed in Miyeko Murase, *Iconography of the Tale of Genji* (New York: Weatherhill, 1983).

50. Daiei 6 (1526) 1.20 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 12:130). He borrowed the manual from the courtier Kanroji Motonaga (1457–1527) on behalf of Sago no Tsubune, a female attendant to the Ashikaga Shogunate; for this reference and a historical overview of the process behind *Genji* painting production, see Katagiri Yayoi, "Bijutsu-shi ni okeru Genji monogatari: Genji-e no bamen sentaku to zuyō no mondai o chūshin ni," *Genji monogatari kenkyū shūsei* vol. 14, ed. Masuda et al. (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō), 301–46.

51. For Michihide's letter, see the documents on the reverse of Sanetaka's diary dating to Bunmei 8 (1476) 10.6–8 (*Sanetaka kōki*, 16:156).

52. The calligraphy attributions were made by later connoisseurs but based on stylistic comparison to extant texts by these same individuals, they seem correct.

53. The calligraphy of the text of the Picture Contest, Chapter Seventeen, has been attributed to Nakamikado Nobumasa (dates unknown), the third son of the courtier Nakamikado Nobutane (1442–1525). Nobumasa's participation, combined with his father's well-documented patronage of Mitsunobu, suggests that the project may have been for this aristocratic family. Given the frequency with which women in the provinces requested copies of the tale, one can imagine that the project might have been for someone like Nobutane's daughter, a woman later known as the nun Jukei (ca. 1568), who in 1508 married the warrior Imagawa Ujichika (1471?–1526). If residing far from the capital in the Imagawa-controlled eastern provinces, a copy of *The Tale of Genji* would be something of a lifeline for such a young woman, as a source of entertainment and learning.

54. The copies were done by Sumiyoshi Gukei (1631–1705) in 1675 and consist of forty-one drawings of designs for *Genji* painting book covers and for *shikishi*. The designs appear side by side in a handscroll. For a detailed introduction and analysis, see Ryūsawa Aya, "Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari sasshi hyōshi e mohon' ni tsuite," *Museum* no. 643 (2013): 25–50.

55. Ryūsawa Aya considers the logic of narrative painting scene selection on the front and back of painted fans and book covers in "Genji-e no hyō to ura: senmenga to sasshi hyōshi-e o chūshin ni," *Kinjō Nihongo Nihon bunka* 80 (2013): 1–11.

56. One type of premodern *Genji* painting that tends to include such examples are small handscrolls in the monochrome ink (*hakubyō*) often attributed to female artists, and likely made for female readers. See Melissa McCormick, "Genji no ma o nozoku: Hakubyō Genji monogatari emaki to nyōbō no shiza," in *Genji monogatari o yomitoku 1: Egakareta Genji monogatari*, ed. Kawazoe Fusae and Mitamura Masako (Tokyo: Kanrin Shobō, 2006), 101–29; and "Monochromatic *Genji*: The *Hakubyō* Tradition and Female Commentarial Culture," in *Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 101–28.

57. Before the identity of the patron of the 1510 *Genji* was known, Ikeda Shinobu speculated that it was commissioned by elite men of the courtier or warrior class based on, among other things, the many scenes of homosocial male gatherings in the album; see her essay in "Hābādo Daigaku Bijutsukan zō 'Genji monogatari gajō' o meguru shomondai," *Kokka* no. 1222 (1997): 22.