

The Sumida Hokusai Museum (Sumida City, Tokyo) will hold  
**The Exhibition “The Courty Hokusai: Heian Literature in Edo”**

from September 18 to November 24, 2024



Depictions of imperial court customs and literature flourished during the Edo period (1603-1867), in the context of research on the Heian period (794-1185) and education in the classics, a thriving publishing industry, and the widespread circulation of books. Hokusai and his students created many works that envisioned Murasaki Shikibu and other Heian-period figures and life in the imperial capital and that took their subjects from court literature, including *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of Ise*. These artists went beyond simply turning scenes from tales into paintings or depicting the meanings of poems. They also created works that incorporate designs associated with court literature in kimonos and accessories. This exhibition presents works related to the Heian period or court culture by Hokusai and his associates, Edo-period painters. It also introduces those artists' images of the Heian period and of the world of court literature, and their ramifications. Please enjoy the courtly grace of the Heian world alive and well in Edo.

## ■ The Essence of the Exhibition

Hokusai and his students in the Edo Period picturized the lifestyle of the Heian Period and their images on court literature. You can totally enjoy the exhibits filled with the courtly grace.

## ■ Composition

◆【Introduction】 The People of Edo's View of Heian

◆【Section 1】 Formation of a Courty Image Part 1 : Living in the Capital Part 2 : Fear of the Bizarre

◆【Section 2】 Court Literature Depicted

◆【Section 3】 Designs Related to Court Literature Part 1 : Motifs with Literary Associations Part 2 : A Scene Becomes a Design

## ■ Highlights of Each Section

### ≡ ≡ 【Introduction】 The People of Edo's View of Heian ≡ ≡

During the Edo period, copies of classic literary works such as *The Tale of Genji* or *The Tales of Ise* and books explaining them circulated widely. With advances in scholarly research and education for the masses, the *Kokin Wakashū Poetry Anthology* and other collections of Heian-period poetry became generally available, and paintings of the poetic immortals became a popular theme. With classical literature and legends inspiring Kabuki and other forms of entertainment, people in Edo formed their own images of what life was like in Kyoto, back in the Heian period. Here we introduce works that present the background behind the formation of those Edo-period images of Heian.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Young Woman Reading Makura no Sōshi (The Pillow Book)*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

A beautiful woman is shown in a *furisode*, a type of formal kimono worn by young women, and reading a book. It appears she has just graduated from being a little girl attendant to a courtesan to becoming a nearly grown up, young courtesan. *Oiran* and other high-ranking courtesans were required to be educated in the classics. Since we can see *Makura no Sōshi (The Pillow Book)* on the title slip of the book this woman is reading, we can grasp how widely that book had circulated.





【Section 1】 Formation of a Courty Image

The courtly works that Hokusai and his colleagues creatively take events at the imperial court and everyday life in the capital as their themes. The capital was also where ideas and scholarship transmitted from the Asian mainland and Japan's ancient beliefs and legends became connected. In this section, please observe how the lifestyles and culture of the Heian-period capital, and legends of ghosts, goblins, and the bizarre, were imagined and the resulting images widely shared.

◆ Part 1 : Living in the Capital ◆



This print is from Hokusai's series depicting the stations on the Tōkaidō road; the subject is its destination, Kyō (today's Kyoto). Here, two children are performing the *Butterflies bugaku* dance, which appears in *The Tale of Genji*. It is likely that Hokusai chose to depict the *Butterflies* dance as symbolizing the courtly image of the place called Kyō, the

Katsushika Hokusai, *Kyō*, from the series *The Fifty-three Stations, Coming and Going to Edo*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)



This painting depicts a nobleman getting a glimpse of lavishly clothed ladies. A nobleman peering over a fence at women in a residence became a standard composition in paintings taking their subject matter from, for example, "Young Murasaki" (Chapter 5) or "The Maiden of the Bridge" (Chapter 45) of *The Tale of Genji*. Hokusai has depicted the garments, the bamboo blinds, and the plants with fine brushwork.

Katsushika Hokusai, *Nobleman and Court Ladies*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

◆ Part 2 : Fear of the Bizarre ◆



Katsushika Hokusai, *Kakinomoto Kisojō*, from *Sketches by Hokusai*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)

Katsushika Hokusai, *Nue, a Japanese Chimera*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

Right : A *nue* is a legendary monster with the head of a monkey, the body of a raccoon-dog, a tail like a snake, and the legs of a tiger, and magical powers. The creature was also depicted with the body of a tiger, as in this example.



【Section 2】 Court Literature Depicted

During the Edo period, court literature, including *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of Ise*, was depicted far and wide. Hokusai and his students were among those who took themes from Heian literature and created a wide range of works, each in his own style. In some, while the subject was taken from Heian court literature, the people were given Edo-period hairstyles and clothing, combining the traditional and the contemporary. This section presents a wealth of works by Hokusai and his students with court literature as their theme.

◆ Works related to *The Tale of Genji* ◆



Katsushika Hokusai, *Fashionable The Tale of Genji Poem Card*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)

\*Different cards are displayed in 1st term and 2nd term.

These poem cards contain poems from *The Tale of Genji*. The cards with blue edges contain the first half of a poem, the yellow-edged cards the second half. Paintings related to the content of the relevant chapter of the novel adorn each card. Their case has a cover sheet depicting Murasaki Shikibu writing *The Tale of Genji* while in seclusion at Ishiyama Temple attached. While the cover image becomes simplified in later printings, this example is probably from very nearly the first printing.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Court Fan*, from the series *The Immortal Poets*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)



Katsushika Hokusai, *Miyasudokoro (Lady Rokujō)*, from *Sketches by Hokusai, Vol. 5*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)



Katsushika Hokusai, *Onnasannomiya (Third Daughter of Retired Emperor Suzakuin): A Parody*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

Left : This work, one of five in the series *The Immortal Poets*. The birdcage behind the beautiful woman and the *kyōka* verse added to the image indicate that the subject is probably "Young Murasaki".

Center : The subject of this sketch is Miyasudokoro (Lady Rokujō), a character in *The Tale of Genji*. After her husband, the heir apparent to the emperor, died, she was on intimate terms with Hikaru Genji (the Shining Prince). Her jealous nature, however, led her to appear before his wife, Aoi, as a vengeful spirit and kill her; then her ghost caused the women in Hikaru Genji's circle great suffering. In the Noh play *Lady Aoi*, based on this tale, she appears as an ogress, as she is depicted with disheveled hair. The black haze generates an ominous atmosphere.

Right : This work is a parody picture addressing Onnasannomiya (the Third Princess), who appears in Chapter 34 ("Young Shoots, I") and thereafter in *The Tale of Genji*. Here the creature is shown a monkey, not a cat of her pet, probably the zodiac animal of the year in which Hokusai created it.



◆ Works related to *The Tales of Ise* ◆

Katsushika Hokusai, *Old View of the Yatsushashi Bridge in Mikawa Province*, from the series *Remarkable Views of Bridges in Various Provinces*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)  
\*Different print of the same title is displayed in 1st term and 2nd term.

◆ Works related to *Makura no Sōshi (The Pillow Book)* ◆

Katsushika Hokusai, *Blossoming Plum Branch*, from the series *The Immortal Poets*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

Left : Yatsushashi (eight-plank bridge) was a familiar place name long used as a geographical allusion in poetry. Ariwara no Narihira, who is presumed to be the protagonist in *The Tales of Ise*, is said to have composed a poem about Yatsushashi. That place, and its eight-planked bridge, is believed to have been in what is now Chiryu City, in Aichi prefecture. "Old View" in the title of this work indicates that the bridge was already gone in Hokusai's day. Hokusai has addressed the theme as though in the Edo period, depicting people enjoying the irises blooming in the marsh as they cross the bridge.

Right : This work, one of five in the series *The immortal poets*. The subject is thought to be Sei Shōnagon and her *The Pillow Book*. The Japanese plum blossoms and the motifs of kimono printed in silver can be seen.

### ≡ ≡ [Section 3] Designs Related to Court Literature ≡ ≡

Designs based on motifs associated with court literature or inspired by those tales were used on accessories. In work by Hokusai and his students, we can see motifs associated with *The Tale of Genji* and clothing and accessories decorated with motifs resembling poem cards. Some works also turned one scene from a tale into a design for accessories. Part 1 of this section presents works containing motifs associated with court literature. Part 2 introduces works in which a scene from one of those literary works is used as a design.

## ◆ Part 1 : Motifs with Literary Associations ◆



Katsushika Hokusai, *Beauties Playing the Poem Card Game*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)



Several beautiful women are depicted playing the poem card game. The woman resting her chin on her hands is wearing a kimono with *Genjiguruma* motifs. The *Genjiguruma* is said to have developed as a motif from Japan's medieval period to the Edo period; these designs are stylized versions of the wheels of the oxcarts used only by members of the imperial family and noblemen in the Heian-period. The conflict over the oxcarts in "Heart to Heart" (Aoi), Chapter 9 of *The Tale of Genji*, probably locked in an association of that motif with the novel.



◆Part 2 : A Scene Becomes a Design◆



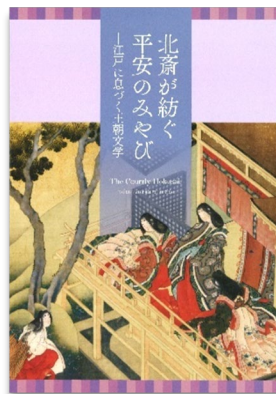
Katsushika Hokusai, "Ukifune" Chapter in *The Tale of Genji*, from *Modern Designs for Combs and Tobacco Pipes*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)

This book is a drawing manual filled with designs for combs and pipes. The designs shown were inspired by the "Ukifune" chapter in *The Tale of Genji*, Chapter 51. The main characters in "Ukifune" are Kaoru, a son of Hikaru Genji and Niō Miya, a grandson of Hikaru Genji; the story develops around them and the Uji sisters. Here Niō Miya sets off for Uji. The scene in which he brings Ukifune, the half sister of Naka no Kimi, to a secret residence on the opposite side of the Uji River inspired these designs.



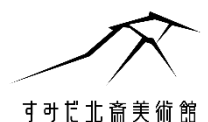
■ The Exhibition Leaflet

- Full Color/A4 size/8 pages in all
  - Price : ¥ 350 (tax included)
  - Release Date : September 18, 2024
- Available at The Sumida Hokusai Museum Shop



Contact Us

The Sumida Hokusai Museum  
Global Media Relations  
TEL 03-6658-8991 / FAX 03-6658-8992  
Email hm-global@hokusai-museum.jp



## Summary of the Exhibition

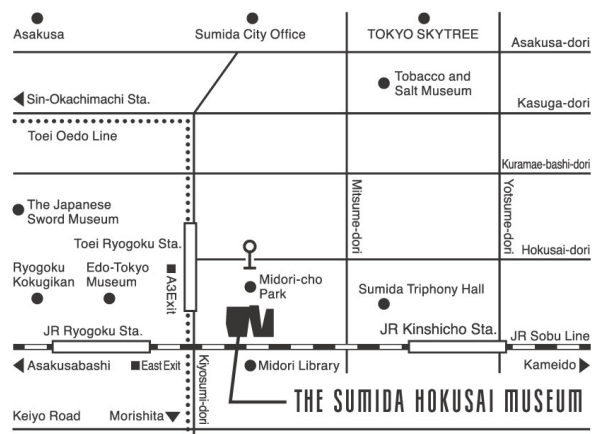


- ◎Exhibition : The Courty Hokusai: Heian Literature in Edo
- ◎Term : Wednesday, September 18 - Sunday, November 24, 2024 \*Some exhibits will be changed during the period.  
The First Term : September 18 - October 20, 2024  
The Second Term : October 22 - November 24, 2024  
Closed: Mondays  
\*Open on the following substitute public holidays on Monday: September 23, October 14, November 4  
Closed on the following Tuesdays: September 24, October 15, November 5
- ◎Venue : 3rd floor Exhibition Room in The Sumida Hokusai Museum
- ◎Hours : 9:30 am -5:30 pm (last entry 5:00 pm)
- ◎Organizers : Sumida City, The Sumida Hokusai Museum
- ◎Admission : Adults ¥1,000, Students (high school and college) ¥700, 65 and over ¥700, Students (Junior high) ¥300, Disabled Visitors ¥300, Children in primary school and younger Free
- ◎Website : <https://hokusai-museum.jp/HokusaiHeianEN/>

- Visitors can also enter AURORA (Permanent Exhibition Room) and Permanent Exhibition Plus on the same day
- Identification card is necessary to get a discount ticket. ● Admission for disabled visitors is also available for one accompanying person.
- Please see the latest information about the starting date of ticket sales and the way of purchase for same-day tickets and other discount tickets on our website.

### [The Sumida Hokusai Museum]

The Sumida Hokusai Museum was opened in 2016 in Sumida City, Tokyo where Ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) was born and where he spent most of his life. The museum has provided information about Hokusai and his artworks through the periodical exhibitions and educational events since then.



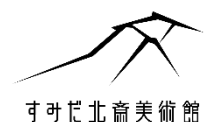
### < Information >

- Open : 9:30am - 5:30pm (Last admission 5:00pm)
- Closed : Mondays (The following day if it is a national holiday), New Year holidays (December 29 - January 2)
- Address : 2-7-2 Kamezawa, Sumida-ku, Tokyo,130-0014
- Tel : 03-6658-8936 (9:30 am - 5:30 pm \*except on closed days)
- Website : <https://hokusai-museum.jp/>
- X : <https://twitter.com/HokusaiMuseum/>
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Contact Us

The Sumida Hokusai Museum  
Global Media Relations  
TEL 03-6658-8991 / FAX 03-6658-8992  
Email [hm-global@hokusai-museum.jp](mailto:hm-global@hokusai-museum.jp)



## The Exhibition “The Courtly Hokusai: Heian Literature in Edo” Request Form to Use Images

Please read the following notes before requesting the images. All points are required for use.

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- Copying, lending, distributing for a charge or for free and selling images are not permitted.
- Please use the images as the whole image. Partial use is not permitted.
- Please delete the data after use.
- Some exhibits might be changed for some reason.

Please check a box to request the image and complete the following form.

- The Exhibition “The Courtly Hokusai: Heian Literature in Edo” flyer front page (A4)

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- The Exhibition “The Courtly Hokusai: Heian Literature in Edo” square visual (1080px×1080px)

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- Katsushika Hokusai, *Young Woman Reading Makura no Sōshi (The Pillow Book)*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

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- Katsushika Hokusai, *Court Fan, from the series The Immortal Poets*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)

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- Katsushika Hokusai, *Beauties Playing the Poem Card Game*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)

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The Sumida Hokusai Museum  
 Global Media Relations  
 TEL 03-6658-8991 / FAX 03-6658-8992  
 Email hm-global@hokusai-museum.jp

