Reflections of the Japanese society through Illustrated Handscrolls

Examining societal views in Japan through painting techniques and story contexts within illustrated handscrolls

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs

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Leiðbeinandi: Gunnellaorgeirsdóttir

Maí 2019
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Abstract

This thesis will investigate Japanese societal views from the late Heian period (794 – 1185) to the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) through the most popular illustrated handscrolls during each respective time-periods. The development of an artistic identity will be examined through different painting techniques and story contexts, corresponding to different time-periods. The ‘Tale of Genji’ handscroll will be analysed in regards to the Heian period (794 – 1185) societal views, the ‘Shigisan-engi’, ‘Choju jinbutsu-giga’, and ‘Ban Dainagon’ handscrolls for the cultural shift during the late Heian period (794 – 1185), and the ‘Tale of Heiji’ for the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) aesthetics. There is a significant difference between the handscrolls, where a shift in an ideal art style is prominent according to each social shift. The shift goes from the aristocratic lifestyle of elegance, to the comedic and satiric lifestyle of the commoners, and finally to the warrior ethics of the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). This essay will examine whether it is possible to determine the cultural shift in Japanese society by examining the progression of the Japanese handscrolls from the Heian period (794 – 1185) to the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333).
**Introduction**

The history of Japanese art is extensive, and extremely rich in content. Japanese artisans showed early on skills in sculpting, pottery, and architecture even before the introduction of fine arts. After the appearance of an independent written language, there was a bloom in poetry writing and other literary works where the Japanese people were able to express themselves in a much more personal manner. Whilst literature blossomed, so did illustrations that had a connection to the literary works being made. Literary works would come in many different forms, but one of the most famous way of displaying these narrative illustrations were on an elaborately decorated *emaki-mono*, which means handscroll. The Buddhist Sutras, romantic novellas such as the ‘Tale of Genji’, and war tales during the warring-state period are amongst the most commonly known handscrolls from Japan. There are a vast amount of different tales, and a large variety in themes that were available in the form of narrative illustrations.

I have always been a big art enthusiast and seeing the handscroll illustrations intrigued me. I was impressed by the precision and carefully thought out compositions in the illustrations that made the narrative flow incredibly smoothly. Yet, I noticed unmistakable differences in art styles which corresponded to different kinds of narratives. These differences reminded me of the two different *manga* (Japanese comics) styles; the feminine *shoujo* comics, and the masculine *shounen* comics. The modern Japanese comics, *manga*, is often thought to reflect different tastes for narratives in the Japanese society, giving insight to the ideal aesthetics for different target groups. Therefore, I decided to investigate the illustrated handscrolls of the 11\(^{th}\) to the 14\(^{th}\) century, researching the different ideals and tastes of the Japanese people.
I will look at the development of narrative illustrations, beginning with the Japanese people finding their own personal identity through the decline of Chinese influences. As the Japanese people were finding their voice in art, there were different views on what was more entertaining during different time periods. Romantic tales were extremely popular during the early and middle Heian period (794 - 1185), satiric comedies gained interest in the late Heian period (794 – 1185), and war tales were the most sought-after narratives in the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). These three different types of illustrated narratives will give light to how the Japanese people viewed their own society, whether the focus being on the aristocratic lifestyle or the cultural shift towards the commoner lifestyle. Different kinds of narrative illustrations will be examined corresponding to the time-period, where art styles and focal points will be studied and criticized. How did these handscrolls have an impact on the Japanese society at the time, and what kind of reflections can be conducted from examining the different varieties of topics depending on the time-period they were made in?
1. **Developing an art style**

There is a very strong connection between Japanese poetry and the way illustrations and paintings were created. It is thanks to the mastering of poetry writing during the Heian period (794–1185) that illustrated narrative handscrolls came to be made, becoming a deeply rooted impression of Japanese artistic aesthetics. Yet, it was not until in the 9th century that the Japanese people finalized a writing system which corresponded to their spoken language.

Pre-Heian period (794 and before) Japan relied solely on oral transmission and dances of stories and poetry, with no writing system even existing for the Japanese people. There was no need for a writing system until the introduction of a centralized government and diplomacy by the Chinese people in the 5th century and onwards (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 99). Thus, the import of Confucian classics, Buddhist sutras, and the need for official documents led to the adoption of the Chinese written language by the Japanese court members. In the 6th century, Prince Shotoku, an influential politician at the time, decided to write down the newly reconstructed government in Chinese, making the Chinese written language the official language learned only by the ruling class (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 99). However, the Chinese language limited expression for the Japanese people.

The Chinese and Japanese language are linguistically alien to one another, where Chinese is monosyllabic and non-inflected, Japanese is polysyllabic and agglutinative. The way both languages are used and expressed differ greatly. Thus, making the use of a monosyllabic written language for a polysyllabic oral language required a lot of effort to learn (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 99). It was a great deal of trouble when it came to translating and transcribing literary works because of how fundamentally unrelated linguistically the two languages were. The Japanese people were not able to convey the same depth of emotion as expressed in the stories, originally spread orally, due to the differences
between the two languages. The options for a Japanese script was to either adopt the Chinese writing system or create a completely new script that suited the Japanese oral language more. The Japanese courtiers decided to simply rely on the Chinese written language for the time being (K. Peter Takayama, 1995, 482).

It was not until the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907, which is around the middle of the Heian period (794 – 1185) in Japan, that the Japanese people started to develop a better idea of what identified Japan as an independent nation (K. Peter Takayama, 1995, 483). The Japanese aristocrats began to experiment with the already present written language introduced to them by the Chinese court. The Chinese characters were used phonetically, instead of the written characters, and were written in a much simpler and abbreviated form (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 3). This experimentation in turn led to the creation of the kana, the Japanese’s phonetic alphabet. Kana is a general term for the Japanese writing system consisting of two different kinds of syllabic alphabets: katakana and hiragana. Katakana is the more angular variety of the syllabic alphabet, used to transcribe unknown words to the Japanese oral language, whilst hiragana is the more cursive variety of the syllabic alphabet. Both alphabets consist of 46 characters following the phonetics of the Japanese language.

This document shows a distinct difference between the Japanese kana (left side of the document) and the Chinese characters (right side of the document), where the Japanese kana look simpler and more cursive compared to the complex Chinese characters. However, the Chinese written language would continue to be in use for some time by the Japanese male courtier for the purpose of writing official
documents. The kana was mainly used by the women of the court. Later in the 9th century, hiragana became the accepted written language, as well as the medium for free-flowing native literature such as diaries and poems (K. Peter Takayama, 1995, 484).

The freeing of the Japanese language from the dependence of the Chinese writing system paved a path for a stream of literary works that could express a view of the world from the Japanese’s perspective. All of the literary works that were created after the perfection of the kana during the 11th century were solely written in hiragana, and mainly by aristocratic women (K. Peter Takayama, 1995, 468). However, the first vernacular tales, or monogatari, were written by male scholars. The writing of a monogatari was considered to be a “lowly activity directed towards women and children”, so the male scholars would write these tales anonymously (De Bary, W, 2011, 212). Therefore, there is very little evidence of male authors during the Heian period (794 – 1185). The increase in narrative prose fiction led to a development of the Japanese calligraphy, which in turn affected the Japanese painting style (McCullough, H, 1999, 411). The Japanese were able to look inwards into their personal aesthetics, and create content corresponding to their tastes. Instead of copying Chinese painting styles, the Japanese created their own distinct form of painting called yamato-e.

Yamato-e is a term for the Japanese pictorial tradition during the Heian period (794 – 1185). During the Heian period (794 – 1185), the Japanese would call their home-land, which was centred on the Kansai region, ‘Yamato’. It was also the name of the imperial family at the time. Therefore, yamato-e directly translates to Japanese pictures. It conveys a “deep familiar resonance” for the Japanese because the paintings “possess the clearest artistic representation of [our] Japanese personality” (Yan, Yang, 2018, 53). The foundations of yamato-e are unmistakably influenced by the Chinese painting style of the Tang dynasty. Yet, there are clear distinctions between Chinese and Japanese paintings:
…contrasting features including classically Chinese knobbly trees with the simple pine trees of Japanese paintings, the complex mountain formations found in Chinese paintings to the simpler hills in Japanese works, the mushroom-like clouds that proliferated in Chinese paintings with the misty patches known as *yarikasumi* that covered Japanese paintings… (Yan, Yang, 2018, 49)

The differences between the two paintings styles give light to the Japanese’s appreciation for simplicity, whereas the Chinese focus more on complexity. There is also an acknowledgement of the foreground rather than the background in *yamato-e* illustrations. The Japanese artists would want the viewer to be moved by what is on the foreground of the painting, whether it be through “fresh and harmonious colour effects” or the “blossoming trees” and “flowering grasses and vines”, or simply by “the sunset and the moon on new-fallen snow” (Soper, Alexander C, 1942, 376).

This screen painting (figure 2) is an example of a *yamato-e* illustration. The focus is on the crane and the snow that rests on the tree and leaves, where the colours of the flowers and pines are extremely vivid. Yet, the background is simply a shade of gold, where golden mist slightly obscures the foreground to the right, giving a sense of the passing of summer.

Two distinctive secular painting styles emerged from the development of the *yamato-e* style: *onna-e* (feminine pictures), and *otoko-e* (masculine pictures). These two styles mark two different views of Japanese society and reflect what was popular at the time the illustrations were made. However, the styles are not gendered as a result of women creating
feminine pictures and men creating masculine pictures, but as a result of what was more visually pleasing to the viewers. *Onna-e* is feminine due to its elegance and gracefulness, whilst *otoko-e* is masculine due to its robust liveliness and aggression. The foundations for *onna-e* is considered to be the noblewomen’s inspiration to create their own pictorial works, creating a painting style in accordance to their “refined sensibilities” (Yan, Yang, 2018, 50).

The themes of the *yamato-e* illustrations were mostly drawn from the imagery of nature provided in the poems written during the 9th to 11th century (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 112). The increased production of literary works led to a rise to *yamato-e* illustrations. Soon after, *yamato-e* illustrations were made to follow subject-matter narrative tales, and were most prominently featured in *emaki-mono*, or picture scrolls. Although *yamato-e* was a popular format for folding screens in Japan and were considered to be a part of the public lives of the Heian aristocrats, whilst picture scrolls were from the aristocrats’ personal lives, representing Japanese creativity and artistry (Yan, Yang, 2018, 48).
2. The handscrolls

Illustrated handscrolls, or *emaki-mono*, is a delicate art form that peaked during the late Heian period (794 – 1185) and Kamakura period (1185 - 1333). They were composed and painted by the artists of the aristocracy, and the project of creating an *emaki-mono* would be divided between many painting masters. The artists would select the scenes to paint, make the compositional drawings, and then indicate the desired colours that were to be used. The handscroll consisted of sheets of paper, sometimes silk, that were joined horizontally. The left end of the handscroll would be attached to a dowel for means of easy storage, whilst the right end of the handscroll would bear a frontispiece. The frontispiece, usually made of decorated paper, backed with a fragment of silk to protect the scroll when it is not being used, where a string of braided silk would be holding the handscroll together (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 115). The *emaki-mono* would be unfurled with the left hand, and rerolled with the right hand, showing only a small section of about 30 to 80 cm in length of the illustrated story at a time. With the freedom to move through the scenes at his or her own pace, with the artist and viewer communicating one on one about what was happening in the illustration, the viewer could “physically experience the progression of time and space as the past (from the right side) is rolled away, the present slowly uncovered (from the left side), and the future awaits to be seen.” (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 28-29).

The lateral movement of the unrolling and rerolling of the handscrolls offers an aesthetically satisfying narration of the story, whether with or without accompanying texts. In the beginning, the handscrolls were illustrated along with texts, yet the alternation between
illustrations and blocks of texts did not offer the full capabilities of the scroll, and gradually the creation of a handscroll absent of text was practiced (Ienaga, S, 1979, 71). An illustrated handscroll could be presented in two different formats: continuous or episodic. A continuous illustrated handscroll consists of long and continuous band of an illustration with small sections with texts. Occasionally the texts would be in the beginning and the end of each painting. This format is where the illustration dominates the space with almost no interruption to the pictorial flow from the small texts. However, an episodic illustrated handscroll is divided into short episodes divided by frames of text. This format makes the reader pause between illustrations to read the context shown in text form (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 29+32). Yet, there are illustrated handscrolls that do not contain any text, where the artist tells the story to the reader, or a different handscroll with the tale is unfurled along with the illustrated handscroll.

A high degree of precision is needed to make an illustration progress smoothly and chronologically without interruptions from texts or dividers in the painting. Many emaki-mono make use of certain motifs to divide scenes with pictorial devices: “the repetition of key motifs to manipulate the spatial and temporal sequence of the narrative” (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 33). There are multiple techniques that were used to signal the start of a new scene in the illustration, but only few were more frequently used in most of the emaki-mono. Sometimes the emaki artists would use buildings to separate scenes, or a technique called ‘gauzy mist’ where the artists show the passing of time by having a scene fade out into a misty cloud or area, and the new scene beginning on the other side of the mist. Another technique used was the ‘different-time-same-figure’ method, where a specific figure, or a group of figures, would appear between two different scenes. These figures would always look the same, so the reader would be able to distinguish them from the main characters, realizing that a new scene is starting (Nelson, Wendy Strauch, 2008, 26).
The *emaki-mono* blossomed from the 12th to the 14th century and is an incredibly rich section of Japanese art. The picture scrolls show a certain kind of “twelfth century nostalgia and melancholy for the passing of the old Heian order of poetry and peace” (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 79), and was favoured greatly by the aristocrats as interior decorations. From the hundreds of surviving *emaki-mono*, whether still intact or separated as hanging scrolls, the illustrations can be divided into several groups in accordance to the time period and subject matter; illustrations of novels, folk tales and historical narratives, and military novels (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 100). These three categories correspond to the prevailing cultural views in Japanese society. The illustrations show the preferred aesthetics, as well as cultural shifts that were occurring.
3. **A time of elegance**

Secular narrative paintings became a popular means of portraying literary works of the late Heian period (794 – 1185). The illustrations would be derived from diary entries, poetry, and novels. The early vernacular tales were highly romantic and fantastical, whilst personal and confessional based on the noblewomen’s private lives (De Bary, W, 2011, 212). The noblewomen’s way of illustrating the stories and poems to coincide with their taste would be closely related to a ‘feminine’ way for novel-reading, where the illustrations were specifically meant to flatter the noblewomen. Therefore, skilled professionals would adopt this ‘feminine’ style, maturing and refining it until the onna-e was created, a style that reflects the “graceful atmosphere of the imperial court of the Heian period (794 – 1185)” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 74). Onna-e can be thought of as the expression of the ‘inner-world’ of Japanese aristocratic life, with an emphasis on introverted emotions within literary works. The way in which a Japanese noblewoman of the 10th and 11th century lived could be a reason for this increased attention on the interior world. Their lives cannot be considered an eventful life, where the noblewomen were required to remain indoors at most times, and “hidden from the eyes of all men except for her father and her husband” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 105). Thus, most emaki-mono were made to provide entertainment for the ladies of the court.

Amongst the many illustrated handscrolls that were made in the 11th century, the ‘Tale of Genji’ emaki-mono stands out the most and is considered a classic literary masterpiece as well as ‘the supreme embodiment of the Heian spirit’ (McCullough, H, 1999, 414). The tale consists of fifty-four chapters about the romantic affairs of Prince Genji, and was written by the Lady Murasaki, a lady-in-waiting for the imperial court. Murasaki Shikibu was able to combine the monogatari aspect of early vernacular tales with the personal and confessional tradition of female writing to create the ‘Tale of Genji’. The emaki-mono’s psychological insight and portrayals of noblewomen’s dilemmas in aristocratic society firmly
roots it in the onna-e tradition (De Bary, W, 2011, 212). The content of the story reflects mainly on the aristocratic life, with the characters dressed in lavish and colourful apparel, the interior of large mansions is revealed, and the ideal aesthetics for noblemen and women can be explored.

One of the aspects visible in the ‘Genji’ scrolls is the tsukuri-e painting method. Tsukuri-e translates to ‘built up’ or ‘constructed’ picture, meaning that the colours would be built up. The colours would be applied in thick and opaque layers over an under-drawing of the scene. Once the paint had dried, outlines would be painted on top of the rich coat of colours. The colours would be applied so opaquely that no part of the paper could be seen after the painting process. This painting process is considered to be a “fitting mode of representation that reflected the vibrant lifestyle of the Heian period (794 – 1185)” (Yan, Yang, 2018, 50). Tsukuri, in textual form, was referred to women applying layers of makeup. In Murasaki’s diary, she mused that a scene of women frantically painting their faces to look presentable resembled onna-e, linking the technique of layering opaque paints with layering of makeup (Yan, Yang, 2018, 51).

Another aspect of the ‘Tale of Genji’ emaki-mono is the way in which figures were drawn. A popular technique called hikime kagihana was used during the late Heian period (794 – 1185) to draw the characters’ faces, hikime representing slashed lines for eyes and kagihana a hook for a nose (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 42). There are no other characteristic facial features in the figures. These mask-like faces do not identify the individual nor express the figures’ emotions of the scene.
being depicted. Only a slight change in the characters’ posture indicates what the character is feeling. Figure 4. shows Genji holding the baby born as a result of the Third Princess’s affair, where Genji does not express his sadness. The only indication to his dissatisfaction is the slight tilt of his head (Shirane, H, 2008, 120). This way of painting facial features could be a way for the reader to readily identify themselves with the heroes or heroines of the story (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 73). However, a bigger and more influential compositional feature of the illustrations manipulate the intensity of emotions in the literary work.

One of the most noticeable aspects of the ‘Tale of Genji’ emaki-mono is the narrative framing of each scene. The setting for almost all scenes that are illustrated are drawn from above, revealing the interior space of a mansion. The interior is manipulated in such a way that action taking place indoors can be easily seen by the reader. The interior would be tilted at a slightly odd angle in a very two-dimensional manner and be viewed from a high vantage point. This sort of compositional technique is called fukinuki yatai, or ‘blown-off roof’, where the scenes are drawn as if the roof had been taken off so that the viewer could see what was happening inside. However, it is not how the scenes were drawn that catches most of the attention, but why each scene is framed in this manner with a blown-off roof.

The artists composing these scenes also made use of the placement of walls, sliding doors, and folding screens in order to convey a metaphor for the emotions of each scene. The relative absence of space between characters, the placement of each figure, and the amount of space that the figures would be able to move all contributed to an insight to how each character was feeling during that
scene (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 117). Figure 5. gives an example of how elements in the area surrounding the characters can give light to the emotions felt by the figures. Genji’s grandson is seen playing the biwa, a stringed instrument, to his wife. The most apparent indicator of the turbulent atmosphere between the married couple are the rustles of the ‘transparent’ bamboo curtain, and the distortion of the grass. The autumn wind that moves the grass is in this case a metaphor for discord (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 73). The manipulation of the interior served as a window to the “psychological state or emotion of the characters”, where the scene signified the “nature of the interior of the character’s thought and mind” (Watanabe, Masako, 1998, 116).

The fukinuki yatai narrative framing technique also lets the viewer observe multiple smaller events taking place while the main scene is about to take place. The fukinuki yatai technique “opens the private space behind the barrier to the viewer’s prying gaze” (Watanabe, Masako, 1998, 138). It allows the reader to engage with the secrets that are occurring in the scene, as well as be a private observer of the romantic tension without any interruptions, giving the viewer “the pleasure of seeing that which is intimate and kept secret” (Watanabe, Masako, 1998, 131).

All of these aspects of the ‘Tale of Genji’ emaki-mono represent the onna-e painting style; the rich and careful use of colours, the way the figures are presented, and the manipulation of the interior space. The aspects also contribute to the central aesthetic of the Japanese called mono-no-aware. The concept of mono-no-aware is literally translated as the pathos of nature, or the ‘ah’-ness of things (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 77). The Japanese have a strong love for the ‘fleeting beauty of nature’ and are able to portray emotions of mono-no-aware perfectly through literary works. However, the process of creating illustrations with the same sense of pathos for things is a challenge that most do not undertake. An example of mono-no-aware are:
The cherry blossoms – the quintessential image of Japanese aesthetics even today – were loved by the Heian poets not only because the delicate, multipetaled flowers reminded them of the glories of this world but because the same blossoms, in a matter of days, turned colour, faded, and scattered in the wind like snowflakes, a sorrowful reminder not only of the brevity of life and fortune but of the uncertainty and fickleness of the human heart (De Bary, W, 2011, 216).

The ‘Tale of Genji’ emaki-mono heavily reflects on the society of the late Heian period (794 – 1185). The Japanese literary works focused mostly on the aristocratic lifestyle, which the ‘Genji’ picture scrolls is microcosm of, “there is a small place in this romantic, dreamlike world for ill-bred assertions of individuality or violent outpouring of emotions” (McCullough, H, 1999, 413). The lack of individual features on the characters’ faces portrays the ideal elegance in appearance in the Fujiwara imperial court. The typical noblewoman would have to have long and straight black hair, with a round face and small features (eyes, nose, and lips), her skin powdered pale and eyebrows redrawn. She was to wear many layers of voluminous and heavy silk robes of extravagant patterns. The typical nobleman would have similarly small and round facial features, with similarly voluminous and heavy silk robes but of a different cut and pattern (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 104). There was also a popularity in the contribution of the courtly aesthetics, being the creation of poetry and literary works, as well as using their past-time to enjoy the pathos of things with the concept of mono-no-aware. The gracefulness and beauty of the aristocratic lifestyle is prominently portrayed in the ‘Tale of Genji’ illustrated handscroll.
4. **A time of miracles and laughs**

The portrayal of Japanese society in the Heian period (794 – 1185) in the illustrated handscroll of the ‘Tale of Genji’ is very limited, and shows a large gap separating the aristocrats and the common folk in Japan. Yet, the gap between these two distinct societal views began to close with the increasing power of the common folk, and with the militia wanting to take control in later years (Ienaga, S, 1979, 79). This strong cultural energy that brought change to the way the Japanese society was portrayed in literary and illustrated works can be prominently examined through the narrative illustrated handscrolls that would be made in the coming years after the creation of the ‘Genji’ scrolls. The styles of these *emaki-mono*, which were made even during the time that ‘Genji’ scrolls were highly popular, reflected the “spirit and substance of Japanese life” of a different view than of the aristocratic lifestyle (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 74). This perspective of life was of the common folk, and of every-day life, and could be considered to be more popular than the graceful romances of the late Heian period (794 – 1185). It is the “intrusion of the culture of common people” in narrative illustrations that “symbolizes the advance of a popular power that can never be suppressed” (Ienaga, S, 1979, 73).

The end of the Heian period (794 – 1185) showed a flourishing of *emaki-mono* at the imperial court, with the ‘Genji’ scrolls being illustrated and continued to be popular as Japan reached the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). Yet, a different style of illustrations began to emerge and later surpass as the dominant way of depicting Japanese life at the time. The new style of illustrating narratives, compared to the elegant style shown in the ‘Tale of Genji’, is filled with realism and the robust life of the Japanese society. This style is called *otoko-e* and could be considered as the opposite of the previously mentioned *onna-e*. *Otoko-e*, or masculine paintings, is sometimes referred to the monochromatic or lightly coloured pictures with the use of calligraphic outlines to convey a narrative illustration (Mason, Penelope E,
The masculine paintings are also connected to the exterior world, focusing on the happenings of outdoor activities in Japan, as well as historical events, wars, and non-secular events that may have occurred (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 84). One of the biggest aspects of the okoto-e style is that the inspiration for the illustrated handscrolls come from the tradition of spreading short stories, called setsuwa, orally and through performances. The way one of these setsuwa’s were performed has a huge impact on the way the illustrations were later made. Another aspect that makes the otoko-e style stand out how the illustrations are presented in a continuous narrative, with no interruptions of texts in the middle of the scenes. The way these illustrations were made in the continuous manner will be explained alongside examples from several scrolls.

However, there is not much evidence of otoko-e handscrolls being made during the time when onna-e illustrations were at its peak of popularity. This lack of comparable document does not eliminate the possibility that the aristocrats were creating lively illustrations at the time, but that the feminine painting style was the preference for illustrations during the Heian period (794 – 1185) (McCullough, H, 1999, 413-14). In the 11th century, the noblemen in Japan began to show interest in the lower-class life where legends and folk tales from different provinces were collected and written down, creating compilations of stories such as the ‘Konjaku-monogatari’. Another similar compilation is the ‘Kohon-setsuwa-shu’ scroll, where the illustrations created closely resemble the masculine illustrations being made in the late Heian period (794 – 1185) (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 76). This interest in the peasant-life and the folk tales of the common people shows a shift in the views of society in Japan, whereas before the spotlight shone mostly on the interior world of the aristocrats and the members of the imperial court. There was a lack of depictions of life outside of the palace walls. However, as the aristocrat’s influence and grip on society began
to decrease, and the energy of the common people began to increase, many illustrated handscrolls began to appear that depict the most popular of the folk tales.

One of the earlier extant examples of the *otoko-e* painting style, and an introduction to a new type of narrative illustrations that later became extremely popular in the late Heian (794 – 1185) and early Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) is the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ (Legends of the Mount Shigi). Briefly summarized, the tale is about the founding of the Chogoson-shiji temple which is located in the mountains north of Nara. The founder of the temple, Myoren, experiences multiple miraculous events that lead to the creation of the Chogoson-shiji temple. This narrative theme at the time was called *engi*, which is the “history of the founding of a particular Buddhist establishment” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 119). The popularity of these *engi* themed narrative tales tells us a lot of the increasing interest in Buddhism, and that the religion was starting to make its way from Sutra scrolls and immersing itself into regular fictional narrative handscrolls. This new narrative style also shows a mixture of ‘fact and fiction’, where the ‘Shigisan-engi’ is about an existing temple, yet the events leading to the creation of the temple is purely fictional (Shimizu, Y, 1985, 117).

The way the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ illustrations were drawn is distinctly different from the illustrations done in the famous ‘Genji’ scrolls and depict a great example of the jump from the feminine *onna-e* paintings of the aristocrats to the more robust *otoko-e* paintings of the common people. The ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ is a “far cry from the fashionable life of the imperial court” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 76) that can be seen in the ‘Genji’ scrolls, where characters in the ‘Genji monogatari’ have no individualized facial features, and very little actions takes place in any of the scenes. The scenes in the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’, however, are “intensely human, wholly popular in their appeal, featuring peasants, a farmer and his family, a hermit-monk and an aged nun, his sister” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 76).
Almost all of the characters in the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ are of lower-class, where their feelings are expressed through exaggerated movements of their bodies and facial expressions. Yet, the lively expressions are not limited to the lower class. Even the upper-class characters that are portrayed in the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ are drawn with ridiculous faces and bodily reactions to the events.

An example of this sort of scene is during the event where an aristocrats’ rice storehouse is magically flown off his property with the help of Myoren’s magic flying rice bowl. In the flying rice storehouse scene, the common folk, including the young monk Myoren, in the bottom left corner of the illustration are rejoicing in both excitement and amazement whilst the characters look up at the flying rice storehouse. Meanwhile, on the right side of the illustration, the rich man is depicted as if he were shouting in amazement whilst mounting his horse, whilst his workers are running after the flying rice storehouse with dismay and awe captured in their expressions. The scene shows a kind of simplicity in narrative, where the expressions of the figures give a clear sign as to the happenings of the scene. Instead of complex manipulations of the scene’s compositions to portray emotional metaphors in the ‘Tale of Genji’ scrolls, the message in the ‘Shigisan-engi’ illustrations is simply stated by the movement of the characters. This simplicity in narration gave the artist of the ‘Shigisan-engi’ illustrations a sort of freedom in painting, allowing a personal development in his pictorial narrative that deviated from the ideals of aristocratic life (Shimizu, Y, 1985, 118).
Another striking aspect that can be seen in the flying rice storehouse scene is the use of lines in the illustration. The artist of the ‘Shigisan-Engi emaki’ uses expressive and dynamic lines of varying degree of thickness (Munsterberg, H, 1977, 166). As opposed to the thin and stiff outlines done in the ‘Genji’ scrolls as a response to the “thematic repertory imposed by the aristocratic taste” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 78), the freedom given to the artists by the increasing power of the common people helped to develop a better medium to portray movement and life through a more calligraphic style of outlining. There is also a major difference in the way the ‘Shigisan-Engi emaki’ illustrations are painted. Compared to the rich and opaque colours used in the onna-e illustrations, the ‘Shigisan-Engi’ illustrations only use washes of colour instead of thickly laid on paints. The technique was to paint the outlines of the figures and the scenery with dark-grey brush strokes, where the colours would then be applied thinly on top as to not obscure the previously drawn outlines. This allowed the artist to “depict figures in active stances” and to “utilize the character of the calligraphic stroke to suggest movement” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 120).

Another important scroll from the late Heian period (794 – 1185) that shows masterful work of the calligraphic outlining is from the ‘Choju-jinbutsu-giga’ handscrolls (Scroll of Frolicking Animals and Humans). The ‘Choju-giga’ scrolls do not narrate a specific story, nor does it have a linear storytelling aspect to it. The handscrolls consist of four different scrolls which seem to be unrelated due to the contents of each scroll, yet are still considered to be a part of the ‘Choju-jinbutsu-giga’ scrolls. There is neither an opening of closing text in the handscrolls which makes it difficult for the reader to know what is happening within the scenes. The illustrations are
monochrome and have amazingly lively outlines, depicting animals “engaging in human behaviours such as picnicking, sumo wrestling, and engaging in religious rituals” (Stalker, N, 2018, 177). Figure 7. is a scene from the ‘Choju-giga’ scroll, where it is thought that the frog on the right side and the rabbit are in a wrestling match, whilst the three frogs to the left are observing and reacting to the match. One of the frogs in the audience group may be laughing, raising his arms hysterically, whilst the frog beside him has jumped onto his feet in shock, flapping his arms around in surprise.

These humorous scrolls are often thought to be drawn by the common folk, since performance and visual arts was becoming more popular in the lower-class life. Thus, the ‘Choju-giga’ scrolls could be the lower-class artists poking fun at the aristocrats, making fun of “the rites and concerts of the aristocrats and clergy” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 119). Due to the lack of colour in the illustrations, it can be deduced that the scrolls were not made to please the reader through complicated illustration techniques such as the ‘Genji’ scrolls. Instead the means was to please the reader with simple and funny interpretation of life at the time of the cultural changes through the influence of varying brush strokes. The simplicity can also be seen in the way the figures and backgrounds were painted. Instead of colours, the artist used varying washes of ink to shade, or sometimes blacked out an area to indicate a shift in values. The background is also painted with minimum brush strokes to indicate the natural environment that the animals are in. Looking back at the illustration of the animals’ wrestling match (figure 7.), the frogs are lightly shaded on their backs with washed out ink. The environment of the wrestling match is established by a line sketchily drawn across the top of the illustration, with minimum addition of vegetation in the upper right corner, as well as the bottom left corner to frame the setting of the match.
5. **A time of conflict**

Another important *emaki-mono* created in the late Heian period (794 – 1185), and probably the most influential narrative handscroll is the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ (Story of the Courtier Ban Dainagon). The story in the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ is not about a miraculous event revolving around Buddhism like the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’, nor does it satirically point at the aristocrats like in the ‘Choju-giga’ handscroll. The ‘Ban Dainagon’ handscroll shows the power struggle between different aristocratic families in the late Heian period (794 – 1185), where the subject is “purely profane and a historical one” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 79) instead of fiction like most of the previous handscrolls. The story is about a political intrigue where the Great Councillor Tomo-no-Yoshio sets fire to the Ota Gate of the Imperial Palace, where he then puts them blame on one of his rivals in order to discredit him (Munsterberg, H, 1977, 167). The ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ “left their impress on the Heian period” (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 79). The way the illustrations were composed, as well as the historical documentation aspect of the narration, set the stone to how later handscrolls in the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) were presented.

Like a film, the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ unrolls as an uninterrupted and continuous illustration. This manner of illustrating a narration became extremely popular in the late Heian period (794 – 1185) and was still being used in the beginning of the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). The ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ and ‘Choju-giga’ handscrolls were also illustrated in this way. In the opening scene of ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’, there is a short description of the events taking place, essentially explaining what happened before the illustrated scene is unfurled. As the scroll is unrolled (figure 8.), the scene of the Imperial Palace’s gate on fire immediately catches the attention of the reader, setting the atmosphere for the entire narrative. The reader becomes intrigued and feels the need to unroll the scroll further where a scene of panicked civilians over-takes the page, looking as if the civilians are running away
from the fire. A crowd of bystanders in alarm is then portrayed with lively expressions, some of which are looking at one another or with their mouths open as if gasping in surprise.

This compositional technique of continuously holding the reader’s attention and leading the reader to always wanting to unroll more of the illustration is unique compared to previous handscrolls. The lack of interrupting text in the illustrations allows for a faster and smoother tempo of the narrative. The tempo is controlled in relation to the narration where the illustration “engages our viewing to the extent of conditioning the speed at which we unroll the scroll” (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 97). As opposed to the ‘Genji’ scrolls, where the illustrations are interweaved with textual information which allows the reader to pause at each painting to “savour every detail of the meaning” behind the illustration and text, the ‘Ban Dainagon’ illustration rushes through the event to allow the reader to feel the quick pace of the action. This rush is also different from the actions in the ‘Shigisan-engi’ illustration, where the feelings of amazement is dominant in the narrative whilst tragedy and deceit prevail in the ‘Ban Dainagon’ narrative. The ‘Shigisan-engi’ continuous illustration unrolls with humour and a light heart, whilst the ‘Ban Dainagon’ painting is unrolled with the surge of tragic curiosity.

However, despite the lively and action-filled style uniquely to otoko-e was used in the ‘Ban Dainagon’ illustrations, there are hints at the adaptation of some onna-e techniques in the paintings. Firstly, the ‘Ban Dainagon’ illustrations are rich with colour. The paintings use the tsukuri-e technique of layering opaque colours as can be seen in the ‘Genji monogatari’ illustrations. Along with the rich paints, the artist still uses the otoko-e calligraphic outlines...
which can be seen in the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ and ‘Choju jinbutsu-giga’. Yet, the outlines are not as robust as in the other two *otoko-e* handscrolls, where the lines are more elegant and controlled as if the artist were leaning more towards a less-stiff *onna-e* lines. Furthermore, the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ include interior scenes using the blown-off roof technique which was mastered in the ‘Genji’ scrolls (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 121).

A remarkable scene that depicts both feminine and masculine painting styles is the indoor scene depicting Lord Otomo’s family’s reaction to the announcement of his execution. Their expressions are of varying depths of grief. One of the women in the scene is “so overcome that she rolls on her back with her mouth open, as if she were shouting out her feelings” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 121). Lord Otomo’s wife and son, painted in the lower left corner, openly weep whilst Lord Otomo’s wet nurse, painted above the wife and son, hugs her legs with her hair in disarray whilst she grimaces in pain over the news (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 121).

This intense portrayal of emotions is unmistakably the use of the *otoko-e* style, yet the way the illustration deals with the scene as an indoor event whilst using spatial compositions to convey a metaphor for the emotions being felt is specific to the *onna-e* style. Thus, ‘Ban Dainagon’ is not considered to be specific to *onna-e* nor *otoko-e*, but is often thought to be a blend of the two, and masterful at that. This mixture of these two distinct *yamato-e* styles is what follows on to the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) narrative handscrolls.
The depiction of “unidealized human behaviour” is a large motif that is used in the ‘Shigisan-engi’ and ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’. There is also an acknowledgement of both higher- and lower-class societies in the two stories. However, by the end of the Heian period (794 – 1185), the aristocrats lost their power and perhaps “the awareness and interest in a greater society […] can be seen, at least on the part of some of the aristocracy, as an attempt to break through the bars of their gilded cage” (Mason, Penelope E, 2005, 122). By observing the illustrations of ‘Ban Dainagon’ in more detail, we can see signs of the cultural and power shift in society in both the subject matter of the narrative and the way the figures are drawn. The story itself is about the power struggle between two different aristocratic clans, where the Great Councillor Tomo-no-Yoshio tries to eliminate his rival, Minamoto no Makoto, through arson. This subject matter gives unwavering evidence of the power struggles between the aristocratic clans since the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ is considered to be more of a historical documentation of real events rather than fiction. Previous handscrolls that can be examined do not contain as much political intrigue, nor do they contain as many factual aspects to their narratives.

Regarding how the figures are drawn, the character’s styles of clothing give an insight to the changes taking place during the cultural shift. As can be seen in ‘Genji Monogatari’, the aristocrats wore richly coloured fabrics in multiple layers. The typical noblewoman would wear what is known as the “twelve-layered garment”. This sort of attire “consists of an unlined robe worn over loose crimson trousers, over which there were a number of colourful lined robes, a luxurious silk top robe, and a pleated train, all topped with a short cloak”. The garments would be arranged in a specific manner to display colourful bands of silk at the hems and sleeves (Stalker, N, 2018, 97). The typical nobleman would similarly wear multiple layers of richly coloured silk robes, but with a different cut from the female robes (Mason,
Penelope E, 2005, 104). Yet, in the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’, the aristocrats do not wear as extravagant clothing as seen in the ‘Genji’ scrolls.

By the end of the 11th century, around the time that the Heian period (794 – 1185) was ending, and the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) was starting, “the way of life of the common people became a norm for all classes of Japanese society” (Ienaga, S, 1979, 79). Since the warrior class was considered lower rank than the aristocrats, the same kinds of fabric as the common folk was mainly worn. Thus, once the warrior class “attained the position of maximum political power”, the every-day clothing became the norm whilst the Heian clothing of low-ranking aristocrats became the official formal and ceremonial attire (Ienaga, S, 1979, 79). The clothing that the noblemen wore were called sokutai, where the colours of the court dress correlated with the wearer’s rank (Kenji, M, 2001, 118). Around the 10th century, the higher ranked aristocrats wore clothing in deep purple and lavender purple, whilst the lower ranking would wear scarlet clothing. However, in the end of the 10th century, both ranks began to wear black outer robes (Kenji, M, 2001, 119). This can be seen by examining the clothing of Tomo-no-Yoshio and Minamoto-no-Makoto in ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’. Both are depicted in dark robes with grassy patterns on them. Despite being members of two high-ranking aristocratic families, Tomo-no-Yoshio and Minamoto-no-Makoto wore the attire that would be mandatory for a low-ranking aristocratic family during the Heian period (794 – 1185).
6. **A time of war**

In the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) the warrior clans seized all power over the aristocrats, ending the graceful Heian period (794 – 1185). This led to an alteration on narrative aesthetics once again, which had been in the development during the cultural shift in the late Heian period (794 – 1185). Illustrations in the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) were mostly based on literary tales and historical chronicles of specific events (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 97). The most popular theme of tales were historical documentations of war, where there would be an emphasis on the “code of the warrior”, or bushido. There are little to no survive illustrated handscrolls from the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) that do not contain historical accounts of the power struggles between warrior clans. The major and most important *emaki-mono* from this tumultuous period are the ‘Heiji monogatari’ and the ‘Heike monogatari’.

Originally these war tales were narrated orally by blind monks, publicly performing on the streets whilst playing on a stringed instrument. With time, these oral stories would be transcribed, and then later be illustrated. The way the oral stories were performed influenced greatly how the texts were transcribed and illustrated, and it is thought that many variations of each *monogatari* had been made. It is through the storytelling by the oral tale singers that the tales have a deep sense of realism. The oral singers had a specific ‘oral composition’, where they would reminisce on details of the warrior’s armour and names of heroes. This manner of performance allowed for realistic and detailed descriptions (Butler, K, 1969,106). The stories were then compiled together and be re-written several times before creating a final narrative to be used for the illustrations. Thus, the narration of the illustrations of the ‘Heiji’ and ‘Heike monogatari’ are a response to the way the tales were performed (Watanabe, Masako, 2011, 18). This sort of narration differs greatly to the Heian period (794 – 1185) literature, where the tales were written by famous authors as pure fiction and were
for a limited audience (Ienaga, S, 1979, 83). Meanwhile, the wars that were retold in performance were for all classes of society, since these wars affected everybody in Japan.

The ‘Heiji monogatari’, or the ‘Tale of Heiji’, tells of the battle in 1159 between the Minamoto and Taira clans. This narrative handscroll captures the fall of the Fujiwara family which had been in control of the court for a long time, where there are detailed descriptions of the clashes between the two military clans “who shaped the destiny of the nation (Japan)” (Murase, Miyako, 1975, 77). The emaki-mono is opened to reveal a short text which explains briefly the events that occurred, which leads in to the beginning scene of the ‘Burning of the Sanjo Palace’. This scene is a perfect example of the popular illustration aesthetics at the time. The illustration begins with a group of courtiers running towards the Sanjo Palace in fear. Carriages dragged by rampant horses are seen running into a crowd of aristocrats, where in several cases civilians had been run over by the carriages. As the scroll is unrolled further, the rebels are seen within the Sanjo Palace, group together on horseback in a calm manner. Once the story is unfurled more, a burst of flames appears, along with a large crowd of warriors on horseback running out of the Sanjo Palace.

The illustration is painted with vivid detail, focusing on expressions and movement. ‘The Burning of the Sanjo Palace’ scene is compact and complex, and is packed with action in a simultaneous and continuous narrative. The artist created an extremely fast and urgent pace for the illustration by beginning the scene with the urgency of the figures as they run towards the Sanjo Palace. The artist manipulates the use of space in the illustration to let the
narrative flow smoothly and comprehensively by grouping the crowds in triangles or on lozenges leading to the left (Baker, Joan Stanley, 2000, 98). Despite being crowded and complex, the illustration is very well thought out and balanced, giving the reader a sense of “oh, no!” The presentation of the illustration is meant to interpret the emotions of the events, where

our senses respond to the deafening noise of the fast-moving, heavy carts and the louds cries of their grooms intermingled with the hoof-beats of horses; to the intense and destructive heat of the fire; to the shrieks of women in terror and agony; to the grim determination of the men-at-arms; and to the suppressed joy of the triumphant marchers. (Tomita, Kojiro, 1925, 54)

This sort of narrative illustration prevailed in the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333), where the theme of fast and urgent tragedy was a popular theme.

There are also minute elements in the illustration, where the artist has lingered on armour and weapons, showing an appreciation for the workmanship put into armour creation at the time (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 96). There is strong use of colour, with the flames painted vividly with quick yet elegant strokes in shades of red, bursting with life with splatters of bright red paint.

The armour of the soldiers glistening with reds and blacks, the clothing of the aristocrats in shades of green, blue, and cream. The carriages gilded with small intricate patterns, the palace’s roof painted with an opaque brown (Tomita, Kojiro, 1990, 54). These colours are then correlated with elegant calligraphic lines, a mixture of the onna-e and otoko-e style that can also be seen in ‘Ban Dainagon’. Despite the content of the emaki-mono
being tragic, the execution of the illustration focuses on visually pleasing the reader. It reflects the desired aesthetics of the time after the fall of the aristocratic families, where the illustrations are no longer a form of reflection for the court life but for Japanese life.

The ‘Heiki monogatari’, which is about the following conflicts between the Minamoto and Taira clans in obtaining power over Japan after the fall of the Fujiwara family, was also illustrated in the same manner. The emphasis being on the tragic events of battles, and the victory or loss of the military clans, portrayed in a lively yet elegant manner. However, not many emaki-mono were made after that, and slowly the art of scroll painting began to decline in the end of the Kamakura period (1185 - 1333). One could say that the 14th century brings an end to the creation of emaki-mono. The decline of emaki-mono production could be a cause of the popularization of small booklets called otogi-zoshi, where illustrations of novels and tales would be grouped and bound together. Later, the Nara-ehon, meaning picture books of Japan, would be made once print-making is introduced to the Japanese. However, the decorative aesthetic of painting in narrative illustrations lingered on in the following centuries and became a long-standing tradition of secular painting, despite the decline of its production in the emaki-mono form (Terukazu, Akiyama, 1990, 102).
Conclusion

Narrative illustrations in the handscroll format (*emaki-mono*) from the Heian period (794 – 1185) to the Kamakura period (1185 - 1333) are one of the richest and most important aspects of Japanese secular art. The inspiration taken for the narrative illustrations come from the way the Japanese viewed their society and life. These views differed greatly depending on the events taking place during different centuries. During the Heian period (794 – 1185), when the Japanese writing system was still fresh and in development, the illustrations focused on the life of the aristocrats. This was partially due to a lack of access for commoners to the writing system, where only the courtiers were able to write in *kana*, the Japanese syllabic alphabet.

Painting was also limited to the aristocrats, where the Japanese created their personal painting style called *yamato-e*, which reflects on the Japanese aesthetics. The *yamato-e* paintings are split into two different styles; the feminine *onna-e* style, and the masculine *otoko-e* style. The *onna-e* style prevailed in the Heian period (794 – 1185), accommodating the romantic novels being written at the time. The most popular *emaki-mono* of the Heian period (794 – 1185), and often considered a literary masterpiece, is the ‘Tale of Genji’. The illustrations in the ‘Genji monogatari’ *emaki-mono* shows the graceful and elegant lifestyle of the noblemen and noblewomen. The artist masterfully manipulates spacing and indoor objects as metaphors to portray emotions within each scene.

However, as the aristocrats began to lose their power, and the energy of the common folk began to rise, a new style of scroll painting developed. The *otoko-e* style started to develop, with its appearance in illustrations about miraculous events such as ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ and satiric tales such as ‘Choju jinbutsu-giga’. These two handscrolls reflect on the cultural shift in the late Heian period (794 – 1185), rather than solely the elegant lifestyle of
the courtiers. An extremely important emaki-mono, the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’, was also made during this cultural shift, and portrays a unique view of the Japanese society. It is the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ that sets the stone for the defining of yamato-e, and heavily influences the narrative illustrations to be made in the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333).

Once the aristocratic way of life gave way, and the warrior class rose to power, a different kind of emphasis began to appear in narrative illustrations. There was a decrease in comedy and romance tales, and an increase in historical documentations specific to war tales. The ‘Heiji monogatari’ is an excellent emaki-mono that portrays this emphasis on battles and gives an insight to the facts of events that took place. Yet, this was also a time when the creation of the emaki-mono began to decrease, and by the end of the 14th century, the production declined rapidly. The emaki-mono is an important part of Japanese art history and had a large impact on many kinds of art forms in term of narration.

In conclusion, the illustrated handscrolls from the late Heian period (794 – 1185) to the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333) show a gradual cultural shift in the Japanese society. Features such as the use of colour, outlining styles, narrative techniques, and story context give an insight to the tastes of the Japanese people. The elegant linework and rich colours of the ‘Tale of Genji’ illustrations, with the lack of individual characteristics and an abundance of indoor scenes, indicate the ideal lifestyle of the aristocrats. The calligraphic linework and thin washes of colour in the ‘Shigisan-engi emaki’ and ‘Choju jinbutsu-giga’, along with the humorous and satirical tales in the outdoor world of the Japanese people, give light to an increased interest in commoner folk tales. The historiographical documentations of conflict and battles in the ‘Ban Dainagon ekotoba’ and the ‘Tale of Heiji’ show the cultural shift from the aristocratic life towards the warrior ethics of the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). These illustrated narratives give a deep insight into Japanese society of the time through art.
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