

**INOOKA, Moena**

**“Expressional Awareness in the Hitachi Meishozu Byobu”**

This article discusses the recently introduced *Famous Sites of Hitachi Screens* (private collection, on deposit at Ôshû city, Iwate prefecture), which were handed down in the family of Kikuyô Gyomôten, a prosperous merchant in the Mizusawa district of Ôshû city, Iwate prefecture. In addition to analyzing the overall composition of the screens and determining the individual scenes depicted, Inooka also hypothesized about the intentions behind their specific depiction.

First Inooka confirmed the depiction of the following on the right screen, namely the Fukuroda waterfall, Ôtsu harbor, Daiôin, Seiôji, Muramatsu Kokûzôdô, Shizu Jinja, and on the left screen, Nakaminato, Bukkokuji, Kashima Jingû, Katori Jingû, the Tone River and other sites. She then indicated that unlike the *meisho-e* tradition of images based on *waka*-derived literary traditions, visualizations of specific *utamakura* concepts cannot be read in these works.

In these screens Inooka further discerned the extensive depiction of imagery specific to the region, imagery that reflected the society of that region during that period, and imagery of actual industries active in that region, such as saltmaking and female fishing divers, and hence posits that the screens were painted by someone well-versed in the Hitachi domain. Thus the meaning of the places depicted differs completely from that found in screen paintings created by a powerful person depicting the city that they rule. Further she noted that while the inland areas of Hitachi province were omitted, the river and marine transport and their relevant facts and places were carefully depicted. Inooka concludes that there was a clear intention to depict the shoreline area routes of eastbound marine transport and river transport routes within the context of the preparations being made for a nationwide land and marine transportation network.

Inooka used this conclusion as her premise for identifying the commissioner of the screens. Given the interest shown in late 17th century shipping lanes accompanying preparations for land and marine transport network preparations, she proposed that the commissioner was a wealthy merchant actually involved in Hitachi marine transport. Further, she noted that this commoner class, albeit wealthy, commissioner avoided the depiction of anything related to the domain's authorities.

She then delineated a possible production background for the screens by analyzing individual scenes, comparing them with actual sites and revealing the intentional focus on marine and river transport. This type of focused production intention would have required specific agreement from the wealthy merchant commissioner involved in the marine transport industry. All in all she provided a clear, logical development of her arguments to create a compelling thesis.

There is, however, need for a slightly more cautious investigation given that she herself offers a caveat on her conclusions, "to the best of my knowledge, I cannot find appropriate examples in the *funpon*," and, "It is hard to consider that they used earlier examples or *funpon*." We thus look forward to Inooka continuing her research and clarifying issues related to questions of the painter and production dates based on a search for relevant materials in *funpon* and a consideration of elements of the screens themselves, such as the nature of their use of a silk ground and unusual composition size.

For these reasons we acknowledge Inooka Moena's achievements by awarding her the *Bijutsushi* Article Prize.