

UCHIYAMA, Jun'ichi

“Falconry Folding Screens by Kusumi Morikage: With a Focus on the Relationship to the Kaga Family”

The *Falconry Folding Screens* (Nitto Boseki Co., Ltd.) are a pair of eight-panel screens considered one of Kusumi Morikage's major works. They presents hunting scenes across a central expansive rural landscape, with the farmhouse that was the temporary residence of a supervisor-like person seen on the right edge of the right screen, and two groups of hunters advancing towards the center from the left edge of the left screen.

Earlier studies regarding the painting's production background state that the work was created with some connection to the Tokugawa family, given the fact that falconry was originally a specially privileged right granted to authority figures; the conspicuous depiction of cranes and swans whose capture was limited to the shogun and the three Tokugawa families, and the use of the Tokugawa family *mitsuba aoi* crest on the decorative metal fittings on the screen edges. Conversely, another theory suggests a connection with the Maeda family based on the fact that these screens are said to have been handed down in the Maeda family, and several of the figures depicted in the screens wear garments adorned with the Maeda family *umebachi* crest.

Uchiyama considered these last two factors and noted the relationship between the Tokugawa shogunal family and the Kaga Maeda family. In this relationship Uchiyama focused on the existence of the third and fourth Tokugawa shoguns Iemitsu and Ietsuna, and in the Maeda family the third family head Toshitsune and the young fifth family head Tsunanori who was under the tutelage of Toshitsune, framing the creation of these screens in the context of the close relationship between these men. First, he explored the records related to the falconry exchanged between these two families and the exchange of falconry catch as gifts between the families found in the *Tokugawa jikki* and the *Kansei chōshū shokafu*. Uchiyama indicates the special privileges related to falconry granted by the shogunal family to the Maeda family as seen in the 113 relevant records dating to the 24 years from 1636 (Kan'ei 13) when Tokugawa Iemitsu granted hunting grounds to fourth generation *daimyō* Maeda Mitsutaka until 1659 (Manji 2), the year after Toshitsune's death. Further, stating that the Jōō era was the period in which the relationship between the Maeda family and Ietsuna, who had assumed the role of shogun, was forged and using as a guideline 1654 (Jōō 3), the year that Toshitsuna accompanied Tsunanori to the coming of age ceremony in Edo Castle, Uchiyama posits that Ietsuna presented these screens to the Maeda family as a coming of age gift. He then further suggests that the young lord at the head of the group on the left screen should be identified as Tsunanori, and the master of the farm on the right screen as Ietsuna

This is truly fascinating reasoning, and he has fully arrayed his textual sources supporting this argument. The most consequential questions—such as why was Morikage commissioned to paint a work for the high-ranking shogun, and why was he allowed to sign and seal the work—remain as issues that require more detailed examination.

Uchiyama himself touches on these issues in his article, stating that this article remains a working theory. Even so, his hypothesis that these screens were produced during the Jōō era and marked the start of the previously unclear connection between Morikage and the Kaga domain, is an extremely important suggestion. It is also deeply meaningful for its positioning of this work as one of the few datable works among Morikage's still undetermined oeuvre chronology.

Uchiyama focused on the deeply meaningful iconography of the presence of a lord in the farmhouse suggested by the noble white horse, and the young lord at the head of the falconry hunting group making their way towards the farmhouse. We can also recognize Uchiyama's great achievement in linking these two through a rich array of textual materials and evidence. This effort by Uchiyama is one example that could open up great possibilities in the explication of falconry pictures that by nature include elements related to authority.

For these reasons we have awarded the *Bijutsushi* Article Prize to Uchiyama Jun'ichi.