

Talking Pictures

"The Life of Xuanzang" in a Medieval Japanese Narrative Handscroll

Paintings can be powerful in many ways. In some transcendent beauty, extreme size, exquisite workmanship, or supreme originality may induce awe in viewers. Others have reputations that precede them and do not even need to be viewed to be effective.

The fourteenth-century illustrated handscrolls known as *Genjō Sanzō-e* (Illustrated Life of Xuanzang), kept closeted within the great temple of Kōfukuji for much of their history, had such a reputation as early as the fifteenth century. However, their power was not confined to their cultural or political currency.



This set of twelve scrolls of inscribed texts and paintings depicting the historical sixteen-year journey of the Chinese monk Xuanzang (c.602–664) to India to retrieve Buddhist scriptures for translation into Chinese, is a landmark work of sophistication and painterly refinement.

This presentation will focus on the orchestration of word-image interaction in these handscrolls keeping in mind both the overall narrative cohesion internal to the scrolls, and the ‘external’ narrative of the life and afterlives of the scrolls as significant objects in the religio-political landscape in which they were commissioned and preserved.

- ◆ **Date** : **October 31 (Thu), 17:00-18:00**
- ◆ **Speaker** : **Rachel Saunders (Visiting Fellow)**
- ◆ **Venue** : **Ground Floor, Tobunken**
- ◆ **Fee** : **Free**

Tobunken/ASNET Seminar

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検索

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