



The Ise Stories: Ise monogatari

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Ise monogatari is one of classical Japan's most important texts. It influenced other literary court romances like *The Tale of Genji* and inspired artists, playwrights, and poets throughout Japanese history and to the present day.

In a series of 125 loosely connected episodes, the *Ise* tells the story of a famous lover, Captain Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), and his romantic encounters with women throughout Japan. Each episode centers on an exchange of love poems designed to demonstrate wit, sensitivity, and "courtliness."

Joshua Mostow and Royall Tyler present a fresh, contemporary translation of this classic work, together with a substantial commentary for each episode. The commentary explores how the text has been read in the past and identifies not only the point of each episode, but also the full range of historical interpretations, many of which shaped the use of the *Ise* in later literary and visual arts. The book includes reproductions from a version of the 1608 Saga-bon printed edition of the *Ise*, the volume that established *Ise* iconography for the entire Edo period (1600–1868).

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Editorial Review

Review

Mostow and Tyler have provided us with a translation and commentary that offers perhaps the richest imaginable harvesting of the fruits of [previous] scholars' labours in a monograph of this size. . . . The reading experience of this new translation is thoroughly embedded in the newest scholarship. The inclusion of the complete set of illustrative woodblock prints from 1608 not only lightens this reading experience, but is an essential part of the reception history strength of the commentary. . . . Without a doubt, the major contribution of this commentary is its explicit engagement with the extensive Japanese commentary tradition of all periods, ensuring that this will be the reference translation of choice not just for scholars working on the Heian era, but for readers and scholars interested in other eras and in other disciplines. . . . General readers will appreciate the breadth of cultural coverage and the readability of both translation and commentary. Researchers will find it indispensable.-- "*Japan Forum*"

An excellent translation with clear, readable prose, and well-wrought poems. Even more useful is [the] concise description of the long and convoluted reception history of this important but perplexing text.-- "*CHOICE*"

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About the Author

Royall Tyler is the most recent translator of *The Tale of Genji* (Penguin, 2001). He lives in Australia.

Joshua S. Mostow is professor of Asian studies at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

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