



7001 A four-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a silver ground with blue and white kakitsubata (iris).

Seal: Ueda Kōho

Japan 20th century Taishō /Shōwa period

Dimensions: H. 35" x W. 109" (88.5cm x 276.5cm)

Ueda Kōho (1860-1944) was born in Osaka, the son of the Maruyama School painter Ueda Kōchū (1819-1911). Kōho was a follower of the Nanga School and was active throughout the Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa periods.

Kakitsubata (iris) has long been used as a design motif and is praised in Japanese literature for its beauty. In art its appearance can allude to the Tale of Yatsunashi (lit. Eight Bridges) made famous in episode 9 of Ise Monogatari (Tales of Ise). In this scene the hero who is often identified as Ariwara no Narihira (825-880) composes a poem while admiring the blooms.

‘Back then there was this man. Disgusted by his life, he decided not to stay in the Capital but set out instead for the East, to find a province to live in. One or two old friends went with him. None of them knew the way, and they often got lost. They came to a place called Yatsunashi in the province of Mikawa. The name described the way the river fanned out there, spiderwise, into eight streams with a bridge over each one. Under a tree beside the marsh they dismounted and ate some parched rice. The marsh was full of irises in magnificent bloom. The sight moved a companion to say, “Make a poem about our journey, with one of the five syllables of ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta at the end of each line. So he did:

KArakoromo

KItsutsu narenishi

TUma shi areba

HAru-baru kinuru

TABi wo shi zo omofu

Robe from far Cathay (China)

Long and comfortably worn

Bound by love to stay

I cover these distances

Shrouded in melancholy.

At this, they wept onto their parched rice till it got all wet.'

(Tales of Ise, excerpt from episode 9, translated by Joshua Mostow and Royall Tyler)

For other examples of this subject matter in the collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art both with and without bridges see: *Unfolding Beauty*, p.40, pl.17, and in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York see: *Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting*, p.65, 67, 68, 69 and 70.

