



6456 Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-1799)

A set of four fusuma (sliding doors) painted in ink on a buff ground. The moonlit landscape shows eleven puppies at play and sleeping on a riverbank.

Maruyama-Shijo school

Signed: Heian Rosetsu sha

Seals: Nagasawa Gyo in and Rosetsu

(Painted by Rosetsu of Kyoto)

Japan 18th century Edo period

Dimensions: H. 168.5cm x 374cm (66½" x 147¼")

Japanese buildings are often made up of rooms divided by fusuma (sliding doors); these are made of paper within a wood frame and gave rise to an important form of interior decoration. Castles, temples and the homes of the rich would employ famous artists to decorate these interiors. Maruyama Okyo and his pupils, including Rosetsu, painted a number of fusuma for temples where they remain to this day; and therefore, are rarely seen on the market. In 1786, on Okyo's recommendation, Rosetsu toured Wakayama to paint fusuma in various temples there; he also received commissions from wealthy families in the area where his works still remain today. It is fair to assume that these fusuma, bearing the same seals as some of those used by Rosetsu whilst in the Province were painted during his tour of the area.

Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-1799). Maruyama School painter. Rosetsu was born and raised in the family of

a low-ranking samurai of the Yoda clan in Yamashiro. While still young, he went to Kyoto to study with Maruyama Ōkyo, the founder of the Maruyama School of Painting, where he learned the fundamentals of drawing. He was not satisfied with the well-balanced, classical approach of his master and created his own style, resulting in a large number of bold, idiosyncratic works. On Ōkyo's recommendation Rosetsu left for southern Kii Province (now Wakayama Prefecture) in 1786 and stayed for a year at the Muryōji, Sōdōji and Jōjuji temples of the Zen Buddhist sect. Rosetsu created over 140 wall and screen paintings during this short period of time, most of which have been designated Important Cultural Properties. He was in his mid-thirties when he executed these works yet they survive in these temples to this day, they are, without exception, very ambitious paintings.

He was an extraordinarily versatile artist, at times close to the *suiboku* (literally; water and ink) style of the Muromachi school of painting, and at others borrowing themes from Ukiyo-e masters and painting famous beauties. He often combined the bold composition of the Rimpa School with the humour of Zen-ga (Zen painting), frequently using a flat brush, or holding the brush in a slanting position, using different tones of ink in the same broad stroke. Occasionally he worked in a sort of Western technique called *doro-e*, a thick paint mixed with Chinese white.

For a similar set of four fusuma in the collection of Mr & Mrs C.D. Carter, U.S.A. see: Maruyama, *Seventy Years*, Volume Two, p.248, pl. 464; a set of fusuma featuring puppies see: Exhibition Nagasawa Rosetsu: The 200th Anniversary of His Death. Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc 2000. Pp. 58 & 59, and a furosaki screen in the collection of Edo Sen-ke Kawakami Sosetsu, Tokyo, see: Nagasawa Rosetsu *The Fanciful Painter*, Miho Museum, pp. 96 & 97, pl. 40.

Works by the artist can be found in the collections of: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey; British Museum, London; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Daijo-ji Kasumi-mura, Hyogo-ken; Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, California; Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Itsukushima Shrine Treasure House, Miyajima, Hiroshima-ken; Itsuo Art Museum, Osaka; Joju-ji, Wakayama-ken; Kotohira Shrine Museum, Kagawa-ken; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; Muryo-ji, Wakayama-ken; Nezu Art Museum, Tokyo; Sodo-ji, Wakayama-ken; Stanford University Art Gallery and

Museum, California; Tokyo National Museum; University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor;  
Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts.





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