



7558                      A two-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a gold ground depicting hagi (bush clover)

Seal: Inen

Japan 18th-19th century Edo period

Dimensions: H. 124.5cm x W. 168cm (49¼" x 66¼")

The 'Inen' seal is regarded as a trademark of the Tawaraya workshop, led by Tawaraya Sōtatsu (died ca.1640), who co-founded the Rimpa school with Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558-1637). Sōtatsu is known to have used the 'Inen' seal himself, although only until he was granted the honorary title of Hokkyō in or around 1624. Hokkyō literally 'Bridge of the Law', is the third highest honorary title, initially bestowed upon priests and then from the 11th century on Buddhist sculptors. From the 15th century the title was also given to artists. Around 1620 the leading pupil of the Tawaraya workshop was given the "Inen" seal by Sōtatsu and is referred to as the 'Painter of the Inen seal'.

The flower depicted on this screen belongs to the famous grouping of aki no nanakusa (seven grasses of autumn). The aki no nanakusa theme is native to Japan and is referred to in the Manyōshū (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry, compiled in the Nara period sometime after 759 AD. As established in the Manyōshū the seven grasses consisted of hagi (bush

clover), susuki or obana (pampas grass), kuzu (arrowroot), nadeshiko (fringed pink), ominaeshi (patrinia scabiosaefolia), fujibakama (mistflower) and kikyō (bellflower) or asagao (morning glory).

Aki no no ni

sakitaru hana o

yubi orite

kaki kazoueba

nana kusa no hana.

Hagi ga hana

obana, kuzubana

nadeshiko no hana

ominaeshi

mata fujibakama

asagao no hana.

Flowers blossoming

in autumn fields

when I count them

on my fingers

they, then number seven.

The flowers of bush clover,

eulalia, arrowroot,

pink,

patrinia

also mistflower,

and morning glory.

Yamanoue Okura (C. 660 - 733)

Manyōshū: 8:1537-8

