TOMANA, Yu. Consideration on the Painter Myōjitsu and the Circumstance of Execution of Jōan Version of Gosannen Kassen Emaki

Gosannen Kassen Emaki (Illustrated Handscreen of the Later Three Years’ War) is a scroll depicting the war called Gosannen Kassen, which occurred in Ōshū in the latter half of the eleventh century. It is known from historical records that Jōken, who was ordered by Cloistered Emperor Go-Shirakawa to produce Gosannen Kassen Emaki (Jōan-bon), instructed Myōjitsu to paint it, and that the oldest existing version, which contained three volumes (referred to as the Jōwa-bon), was made in 1347. It is thought that Jōan-bon is important for investigation of the production of emaki and the situation of painters around Go-Shirakawa, although there has been no art historical study analyzing it to date. We can trace the pictorial representation of Jōan-bon back through Jōwa-bon, since it appears to inherit the motifs and style of Jōan-bon. From this point of view, I analyze some pictorial representations in Jōwa-bon that follow Jōan-bon, and compare them with existing works produced during the reign of Go-Shirakawa. Based on this, the character of the painter Myōjitsu and the circumstances in which Jōan-bon was produced are analyzed.

First, the principal previous studies, made by Fujihiko Takasaki, Tsugio Miya, and Akira Takagishi, will be examined. All agree that Jōan-bon is the original form of Jōwa-bon, but differ in how closely it follows the original.

Next, I distill some pictorial representations in Jōwa-bon that follow Jōan-bon in order to reconstruct its iconography and style. I consider existing works produced during the reign of Go-Shirakawa that resemble them. The pictorial representations analyzed here are facial depictions, figures of men falling from forts, muscular depictions, seppuku with bowels exposed, and violence against women.

On the basis of the above, the character of the painter Myōjitsu and the circumstances in which Jōan-bon was produced are analyzed. Although no records concerning Myōjitsu are known apart from the execution of Jōan-bon, partial resemblances between Jōwa-bon and Yamai-no-Šōshi and Jigoku Šōshi were shown in the previous section. This demonstrates the possibility of Myōjitsu having been involved in the execution of the series of Rokudō-e. It is probable that some differences existed between the style of Myōjitsu and that of illustrated hand scrolls attributed to Mitsunaga, such as Nenjūgyōji Emaki and Ban Dainagon Emaki, while some of the pictorial representations in Rokudō-e resemble those of the illustrated handscrolls attributed to Mitsunaga. Moreover, based on the presumption that a nise-e painter participated in the implementation of Jōan-bon, I propose the possibility that this nise-e painter and Myōjitsu with his workshop painters were the producers of Jōan-bon.