

Itsukushima Shrine: *Eight Views of Itsukushima*

The “eight views of Itsukushima” depicted in this picture scroll were selected by the Buddhist priest Joshin of Miyajima’s Komyoin Temple in the early 1700s. The practice of choosing a number of iconic “views” to represent a place was introduced from mainland Asia, where it originated with the eight views of Xiaoxiang, a popular subject of poems, drawings, and paintings in Song China (960–1279). Xiaoxiang is a region in south-central China (present-day Hunan Province) famed for its natural beauty. The eight views concept was likely introduced to Japan in the late fourteenth century and inspired a great number of travelers, priests, and literati, who went on to pick out their own favorite views in various parts of the country. This tradition was later modified and expanded upon, as demonstrated by famous serial works such as *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* by Hokusai (1760–1849). The ink paintings in the *Eight Views of Itsukushima* scroll offer a highly stylized depiction of the island’s natural beauty.