

RISD MUSEUM

Meisho: Depictions of Famous Places in Japan, June 4, 2004-August 29, 2004

Meisho (“famous places”) are locations celebrated for their natural beauty and rich religious and literary associations. The tradition of painting such sites — originally in and around the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Nara — is known from as early as the Heian period (794-1185). By the Edo period (1603-1867), the term *meisho* was used popularly to refer to locales visited for relaxation and pleasure. City dwellers flocked to suburban areas for restful outings, while the practice of traveling through Japan’s most spectacular scenery also became widespread. The early 19th century saw the proliferation of landscape and cityscape subjects within traditional woodblock printing (*ukiyo-e*).

Two great printmakers are associated with the rising landscape genre: Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). Hokusai’s *Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji* (actually 46 in number) was the groundbreaking series (ca. 1829-33). The Japanese have always regarded Mt. Fuji as most sacred. This volcanic mountain with its characteristic conical form is still classified as active. Hiroshige’s *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* followed in about 1833-34. The Tōkaidō (Eastern Sea Route) connected Edo (modern Tokyo), the seat of the shōgun (military dictator) with the ancient capital of Kyoto, where the emperor continued to reside. Tradition has it that Hiroshige traveled the Tōkaidō in 1832 with the delegation bringing the shōgun’s annual spring tribute to the emperor.

In this exhibition, prints from sets by Hokusai and Hiroshige may stand independently or may be contrasted with various renditions of the same or similar subjects. These engaging images and the printed books in the case at the center of the room illustrate the popularity of landscapes and cityscapes in 19th-century Japan.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kawaguchiya Shozo, Japanese
Cherry trees in full bloom, Arashiyama (Arashiyama manka), Famous places of Kyoto, ca. 1834
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1285



In the Kyoto vicinity, cherry-blossom viewing was considered to be at its best at Arashiyama, west of the city. Hiroshige conveys the exuberance of spring through this striking bird’s-eye view of the Hosu River lined with blossoming trees.

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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Kajikazawa in Kai Province (Koshu kajikazawa), Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1206



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Fine wind, clear weather ["Red Fuji"] (Gaifu kaisei), Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1185



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Toto sundai (Surugadai in the eastern capital), Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1212



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Ejiri, Suruga Province (Shunshu ejiri), Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1179



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Sadahiro Utagawa, Japanese
Kinkado of Edo, Japanese
Yokkaichi, The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, late 1830s
Polychrome wood block print
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1363

This print is made after Hiroshige's famous scene to the right. Sadahiro compresses Hiroshige's composition into a vertical format and enlarges the figure of the man chasing his hat, creating a powerful new image dominated by figures rather than landscape features.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Mie River, Yokkaichi (Yokkaichi miegawa), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.44

Hiroshige's inspired composition of a man chasing his hat near the bank of the Mie River was the source for the Sadahiro print to the left. Hiroshige was known for his sensitivity in depicting climatic and seasonal conditions.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Toyokawa Bridge, Yoshida (Yoshida toyokawabashi), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.35

Hiroshige's sweeping view of the Yoshida station on the Tōkaidō (Eastern Sea Route) focuses on the Toyokawa Bridge and the castle on the right. The panoramic view of the river over which the bridge passes is in stark contrast to Hokusai's print of Yoshida to the right.



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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Yoshida on the Tokaido (Tokaido Yoshida), Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1197

In the Mt. Fuji Viewing Teahouse depicted here, travelers rest and admire the landscape with the great mountain in the distance. The only interior in Hokusai's Mt. Fuji series, this print presents a very different image of the Yoshida station than Hiroshige's work to the left.



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese
Under the well of the great wave off Kanagawa (Kanagawa oki nami ura), from the series Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, ca. 1829-1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1195



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Uoya Eikichi, Japanese, 19th century
Sakasai Ferry (Sakasai no watashi), Meisho Edo hyakkei, 1857.2
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.293.2

This swampy delta area, which could only be crossed by ferry in Hiroshige's time, was located on the Nakagawa River east of the city of Edo (modern Tokyo).



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Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849

Asakusa-an Ichindo, Japanese

Tsutaya Jūzaburō, Japanese, 1750 - 1797

Matsuchizan, from *Picture Book of Amusements of the East (Ehon Azuma asobi)*, vol. 1, spring 1802

Polychrome woodblock-printed book

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.395.1

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Uoya Eikichi, Japanese, 19th century

Yabukoji at the foot of Atago (Atagoshita Yabukoji), from the series *One hundred views of famous places (Meisho Edo hyakkei)*, 1857.12

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1292

This lovely snow scene is set within a district of Edo adjacent to the Atago Shrine and filled with the mansions of the feudal lords (daimyō) serving the shogun (military dictator), who in fact ruled Japan and was more powerful than the emperor.



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

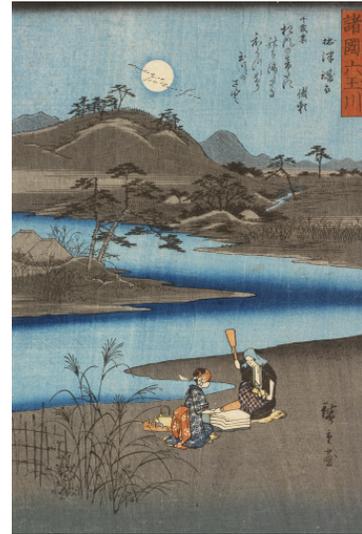
Maruya Kyushiro, Japanese

Toi Jewel River, Settsu Province, The six jewel rivers of the various provinces, 1857

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.293.7

This moonlit scene demonstrates again Hiroshige's skill in creating mood-filled landscapes through the use of seasonal and climatic elements.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Utagawa Kunisada, Japanese, 1786-1865

Maruya Kyushiro, Japanese

Yokogawa Horitake, Japanese

Kawasaki; subtitled Ferry, Rokugo River (Kawasaki; rokugogawa funawatashi), The fifty-three stations [of the Tokaido] by twin brushes, 1854.7

Polychrome wood block print

Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.2326

Kunisada drew the figures and Hiroshige drew the inset landscapes for this set of prints. The same ferry seen approaching the Kawasaki station in the Hiroshige print to the right is visible in the inset landscape in this later rendition of the Tōkaidō series.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century

Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century

Rokugo Ferry, Kawasaki (Kawasaki rokugo watashibune), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.3



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Shinmachi Bridge, Hodogaya (Hodogaya shinmachibashi), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.5



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Utagawa Kunisada, Japanese, 1786-1865
Maruya Kyushiro, Japanese
Yokogawa Horitake, Japanese
Hodogaya: Field and mountain scenery on the Kanazawa Road (Hodogaya kanazawa kaido sanya fukei) (Sohitsu gojusan tsugi), The fifty-three stations [of the Tokaido] by twin brushes, 1854.7
Polychrome woodblock print
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.2324

Kunisada drew the figures and Hiroshige drew the inset landscapes for this set of prints. The retinue of travelers in the inset in this later version of the Tōkaidō series is seen crossing the Shinmachi Bridge in Hiroshige's original composition to the left.



Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese, 1760-1849
Tōshirō Katano, Japanese
Mt. Fuji with a Belt, from *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji Vol. 1*, 1875
woodblock printed book with embossed paper covers, sewn
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1280

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kōzaburō Kikuya, Japanese
Kawaguchi Ferry: Zenkō Temple, from *Souvenir of Edo (Edo miyage)*
vol. 4, 1850
Polychrome woodblock-printed book
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 14.025



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kichizō Tsutaya, Japanese
The sea at Satta, Suruga Province, Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, 1858
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.293.5

