



THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

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Japanese Paintings and Prints
of the Sixteenth through Nineteenth Centuries

Louisa Cunningham

Yale University Art Gallery

New Haven · 1984

Cover: *Biography of Priest Saigyō*, detail of screen, catalogue no. 2
(Otto Nelson, Photographer)

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PREFACE

The Spirit of Place was conceived and organized by Louisa Cunningham when she was the curatorial assistant in the Oriental department of the Yale University Art Gallery. It is an extremely beautiful exhibition which offers many insights into Japanese landscape paintings of the 16th to the 19th centuries, fulfilling the requirements of all exhibitions to delight and instruct. Traditionally, our Oriental department has emphasized Chinese art, not surprising given Yale's long-term involvement in Chinese studies. This exhibition represents a step towards a broader program in Oriental Art at the Gallery, and is due to the initiative of Mary Gardner Neill, Curator.

This show could not have been realized without the encouragement of Mary Burke and the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation, which provided a grant to cover the cost of producing this catalogue, and of Mr. Richard M. Danziger, LL.B. 1963, and Mrs. Danziger, who supported the cost of assembling and mounting the exhibition. We are deeply grateful to them and to the lenders for making this exhibition possible.

Alan Shestack
The Henry J. Heinz II Director



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I am also extremely grateful to the lenders, who have made this exhibition possible, and to their curatorial staffs: The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection; The Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation; The Fogg Art Museum and The Houghton Library, Harvard University; H. Christopher Luce; and The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection. I would especially like to thank Andrew Pekarik for his invaluable assistance.

John Gambell is responsible for the handsome design of this catalogue, Robert Soule and his staff for the beautiful installation, and Sarah Cash for the efficient handling of the arrangements for this loan exhibition. The photographs were expertly produced by Otto Nelson, Joseph Szaszfai, Geri Mancini, and Philip Pocock. Finally, I owe special thanks to my husband William Kelly for his wide range of reading suggestions, his text revisions, and his general forbearance during the course of this project.

Louisa Cunningham

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CHRONOLOGY

Nara Period
710-794

Heian Period
794-1185

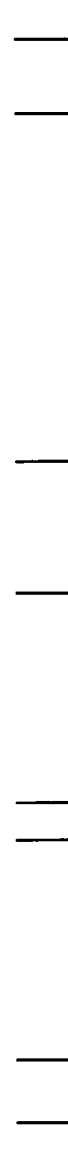
Kamakura Period
1185-1333

Muromachi Period
1336-1573

Momoyama Period
1573-1615

Edo (Tokugawa) Period
1615-1868

Meiji Period
1868-1912



INTRODUCTION

Izanagi and Izanami stood on the floating bridge of Heaven, and held counsel together, saying: "Is there not a country beneath?" Thereupon they thrust down the jewel-spear of Heaven, and groping about therewith found the ocean. The brine which dripped from the point of the spear coagulated and became a island which received the name of Ono-goro-jima. The two Deities thereupon descended and dwelt in this island.¹

Thus, according to legend, did the two gods, Izanami and Izanagi, create the green and misty islands of Japan. And thus for the Japanese was the sacred infused in all life. This sanctity found form in nature, and it was especially revealed in places of quiet beauty or stunning grandeur.

A selection from the earliest anthology of Japanese poetry, the *Man'yōshū*, compiled in the middle of the eighth century, articulates this spirit of place:

*Countless are the mountains in Yamato,
But perfect is the heavenly hill of Kagu;
When I climb it and survey my realm,
Over the wide plain the smoke-wreaths rise and rise,
Over the wide lake the gulls are on the wing;
A beautiful land it is, the Land of Yamato.*

— Emperor Jomei (593–641)²

This spiritual force was everywhere, and Japanese reverence for nature was universal. But its celebration was specific, moments of meaning and events of importance always situated in the familiar. Thus, places became inhabited by the full panoply of Buddhist and Shintō deities; places became the subject of literature and song. In effect, the affirmation of Japan, its varied and awe-inspiring landscape, was equivalent to the affirmation of life.

The earliest Japanese painting to be preserved is found on the Tamamushi Zushi at Hōryū-ji Temple in Nara. Dating from the seventh century, the base of this small shrine is partially decorated with narrative scenes of the Buddhist Jataka tales and of Mount Sumeru, the sacred mountain which supports the universe. In this first Japanese painting may be seen the four important themes that are the concern of this exhibition: first, place viewed as setting for literary text; second, place viewed as setting for religious event; third, place as icon or metaphor; and fourth, place as subject for evolving artistic technique and interpreta-

tion. Specifically, the exhibition gathers together Japanese works of art illustrative of these themes from the late sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, renderings of place which suggest the diversity of coexisting styles and the richness of artistic traditions in the Edo period (1615–1868).

Renditions of place in *yamato-e*, indigenous painting which evolved during the Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods, took two basic forms: *meisho-e*, pictures of renowned places, and *tsukinami-e*, chronicles of important monthly events. Patrons for such works were primarily court and religious figures, and subjects for the paintings were drawn almost exclusively from the past, from the sacred, literary, and historical traditions. Artistic treatment of such subjects was rich and varied, reflecting the characteristics of the *yamato-e* style—rich color and a combination of the representational and decorative as evidenced by the *emakimono* handscrolls of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.



By 1600, then, literature and legend had charged particular locales with particular imagery and strong association. The Hozu River and Nachi Waterfall, Musashi Plain and Mount Yoshino, Ise Shrine and Shitenno-ji Temple, these and many others elicited instant recognition both as place and as setting for familiar events. Whether scenes from *The Tale of Genji*, the conflict of warring clans, or the lives of itinerate monks, these paintings were verbal and visual cartographies, representing and connecting places in webs of meaning.

But Japan was a society in the throes of political turbulence and social change. It was at this time that the first Tokugawa Shoguns began to consolidate power and to establish a new political hegemony and social order. It was at this time that traditional patterns of wealth began to break down and that a new mercantile middle class began to emerge. The old order was weakened, not overthrown; the new order was prominent, not omnipotent. The religious, literary, and artistic traditions were strong, and thus continued; but the societal transformations that were occurring were equally strong, and inevitably, new traditions were born.

It was a time of vibrant artistic activity and creative fervor, and, while traditional patronage and aesthetic conventions endured, they were augmented by new subjects, new patrons, new formats, new techniques, and new styles. The fascination for place remained; however, it now extended to new “places” in which the tastes of the emerging classes and the ideas of emerging artists found expression.

Several of the works in this exhibition draw upon the earlier conceptions of place whose legitimacy as artistic subjects is derived from past associations with a literary work, a deity, a religious event, or a political personage. For example, *Records of Wayfaring Saints* (no. 3) portrays events from the life of the monk Taa, including a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine; it is a painting full of historical and religious reference and resonance. An unknown sixteenth century artist rendered Uji Bridge (no. 1) as a symbolic motif. A stylized image extracted from its lovely natural surroundings near Kyoto, it stands as a metaphor of the Heian period

novel, *The Tale of Genji*. The artist of the screen depicting episodes from the life of the monk Saigyō (no. 2) was equally unconcerned with a faithful portrayal of the mountain shrine, Yagami Oji. The setting only comes alive when the viewer recalls Saigyō's poem about the blossoming cherry trees at this site.

Such artists were not trying to capture an objective, locational view, but rather to evoke, as Jack Hillier has written, "the spirit of the place, or even more, the spirit of the literature of the place."³ Conversely, of course, places without a special past were unworthy of artistic memorialization, a view clearly expressed in the following passage from a diary written during the middle ages (1185–1600):

*Here too the pine forest stretches out into the distance, and though it does not at all seem inferior to that of Hakozaki and both are unsurpassed, this place is of no special renown and therefore I am not much attracted to it.*⁴

In the sixteenth century, new military and mercantile elites rose to power. They patronized an art that revealed a fascination with the present, an interest exemplified by the Rakuchū Rakugai screen panoramas (no. 4) of the Imperial capital, Kyoto, and its environs. The anonymous artists who painted these screens did not dwell on sacred or secular associations with the past but painted the current realities of the city. They heightened their portrayal by depiction of specific architectural monuments and by focus on the everyday life of the townspeople. The Rakuchū Rakugai scenes of urban activity included such events as the Gion Festival (no. 4, detail) and the Kamo Horse Race (no. 7) that once were associated with the court nobility and were now appropriated by popular culture. These events and new forms of urban culture, particularly the archery contest at Sanjūsangen-dō (no. 5) and the Kabuki theater (no. 6), also merited independent treatment in hanging scrolls and handscrolls. The painting of *The Hozu and Kamo Rivers* (no. 8) reveals how places heretofore associated with the gentry now took as their subject the recreational activity of the emerging classes.



Metropolitan life also captured the imagination of country people. In discussing spring rice-transplanting songs, Frank Hoff writes that:

*the city dynamic, the general pulse of teeming life, and the variety of experiences found in the metropolis gave it a unique and commanding place in poetry where verbal imagery was at the same time an expression of the singers' hopes and prayers. Farmers wished for an abundant crop, so they sang of a dense, a teeming and thriving city.*⁵

Hoff also observes,

*The city was a theme for song in part because of the fascination its material products exerted over country people: the wares of its merchants excited the imagination; mention of its legendary sights kindled the anticipation of prospective travelers and revived memories long afterward.*⁶

Travel by vast numbers of nobles and commoners was to be an important feature of Tokugawa Japan and to have profound consequences for people's conception of place and for artists' renderings of activities and locales. Earlier in Japanese history, people traveled considerably less. Priests wandered, armies moved, and messengers were dispatched, but travel was often arduous and dangerous, complicated by poor roads, constant toll barriers, and marauding bands. But in Tokugawa Japan, political stability, burgeoning cities, improved highways, expanding markets all drew people on to the roads for profit and pleasure.

As evidenced by Moronobu's *Famous Scenes Along the Tōkaidō* (no. 13), domain lords were common sights on the major highways, moving in enormous processions on their mandatory journeys to and from the Shogunate at Edo. Among their hundreds of servants and attendants were many who did not return to their home provinces, lured like moths to the lanterns of the capital. Both urban demand and rural production continued to grow, and traders, artisans, and laborers moved back and forth from Edo and Osaka to the provinces in search of employment.

Rural prosperity brought with it a boom in pilgrimages; peasants streamed to major religious sites and representatives of village devotional cults traveled to Ise, Mount Fuji, and other sacred places. For many, a pilgrimage was an excuse to travel, and to enjoy the sights and amusements along the way. The roads were lined with the temptations of puppet theater, Kabuki plays, eating houses, souvenir shops, and brothels.

Travelers surely felt some release, a greater sense of freedom on the road than in their more restrictive social environments at home. Jippensha Ikku (1765–1831) captured this feeling in his humorous account, *Shank's Mare*:

The proverb says that shame is thrown aside when one travels, and names and addresses are left scrawled on every railing . . . On the road, also, one has no trouble from bill-collectors at the end of the month, nor is there any rice-box on the shoulder for rats to get at. The Edo man can make acquaintance with the Satsuma sweet-potato, and the flower-like Kyoto woman can scratch her head with the skewer from the dumpling. If you are running away for the sake of the fire of love in your heart, you can go as if you were taking part in a picnic, enjoying all the delights of the road. You can sit down in the shadow of the trees and open your little tub of sake, and you can watch the pilgrims going by ringing their bells. Truly traveling means cleaning the life of care. With your straw sandals and your leggings you can wander wherever you like and enjoy the indescribable pleasures of sea and sky.⁷

This explosion of Tokugawa travel in the mid-1600s was accompanied by the appearance of numerous inexpensive illustrated travel guides (*meisho-ki*) which exploited the growing obsession with travel and served as souvenirs of sites and temples for the many pilgrims and travelers on the road. The *meisho-ki* in the exhibit (nos. 9 and 10) exemplify their range in content and conventions.

Significantly, in subject and technique, *meisho-ki* are considered to be precursors of *ukiyo-e*, the “floating world” genre of woodblock prints that depicted the pleasures and performers of the entertainment district. The nineteenth century woodblock print artists Hokusai and Hiroshige also produced series related in content to the *meisho-ki*, for instance, Hiroshige’s prints of Edo or of the Tōkaidō road (nos. 14 and 15). Jack Hillier, in discussing prints of the nineteenth century, points out:

*Landscape in the ukiyo-e artists’ hands was a development from these meisho-ki rather than the imaginative and usually unidentifiable landscapes painted by artists of the established schools. It was the expression of the people’s aspirations to travel, which itself was the outcome of a reverence for places.*⁸

Hokusai’s *Thirty-six Views of Fuji* (no. 11) is a variation of the travel guide theme, exploring the many aspects of Mount Fuji, one of the most renowned places of Japan. Fuji is seen towering over bustling Edo, reflected in a placid lake, and as the focus of a popular religion. Here, as in Hiroshige’s *Mount Fuji and Enoshima* (no. 12) and many other examples, the mountain becomes a national icon, a symbol of Japan’s cultural continuity.

Tani Bunchō, the nineteenth century artist who was instrumental in establishing the Chinese influenced Nanga school of painting in Edo, was also captivated by the character and moods of mountains. His illustrated book of Japan’s famous mountains (no. 22), like Kawamura Bumpō’s guide to Kyoto (no. 21), demonstrates the rich interaction between stylistic schools. Their format and purpose are similar to the guides of the *ukiyo-e* artists, while their manner of expression reflects the refinement and emphasis on calligraphic line derived from the Nanga school. Kinkoku’s *Mount Fuji* (no. 19) is an example of even greater contrast; the style is pure Nanga, the Chinese influence inescapable, while the subject remains Fuji with all its compelling associations.

The literati artists’ interest in landscape was also philosophical. The objective of the Nanga artist was to capture the underlying spirit of nature by the act of painting. Direct observation was encouraged as the source of artistic inspiration. But this fascination was not simply with realism; the process permitted the passage of nature through the artist’s sensibility, resulting in an idealized vision wherein the artist, the place, and the painting were symbiotically linked. Beisanjin’s *Shōrinji* (no. 20) is an excellent example of this “life force” seen in nature and transmitted to the viewer through the brush.

As Sherman Lee has eloquently shown in his many writings, there have always been several distinguishable, yet mutually interacting styles of art in Japan. The dynamic interplay is in particular evidence during the Edo period. Hiroshige’s *Eight Views of Ōmi* (no. 16) applies *ukiyo-e* technique to a subject inspired by Chinese painting. In his *Mount Matsuchi* (no. 17), he evokes this same lyrical mood in a Japanese setting usually rendered as frenetic and worldly. Buson also demonstrates this interaction of style and content within the work of

a single artist. A Nanga painter, he incorporates both literary and visual reference as a way to impart meaning. In *The Chestnut Tree at Sukagawa* (no. 18), he calls forth the past through both inscription and rendition of place, setting up a series of associations between himself and the poet, Bashō, as well as between them and the monks, Gyōgi and Saigyō, of several centuries earlier. The theme of the painting and the text is the renunciation of worldliness, in effect, the very content that had been the primary subject matter of the emerging *ukiyo-e* artists. Bunchō's *Illustrations of Japan's Famous Mountains* (no. 22) expands the dynamic further. The artist utilizes the *meisho-ki* format, but he interprets place by combining the Chinese inspired literati style with newly arrived *Western* techniques, adding yet another level of complexity to the treatment.

One of the most famous places in all Japan is the Nachi Waterfall in Wakayama Prefecture, a sacred Shintō site and therefore a popular subject of Japanese landscape painting. This setting is treated in Noro Kaiseki's *Nachi Waterfall* (no. 23), wherein the thematic concerns of this exhibition come together. In this painting, the many factors influencing the artists of the late Edo period may be seen at work: past and present, changing class structure and taste, realism and subjective interpretation, literary, religious, and visual association, nature as icon or metaphor, and the multiple artistic influences of Japan and China—all serve art, all serve to invoke the gods that created Japan, all serve to evoke in the viewer understanding of the shape, the meaning, and the spirit of place.

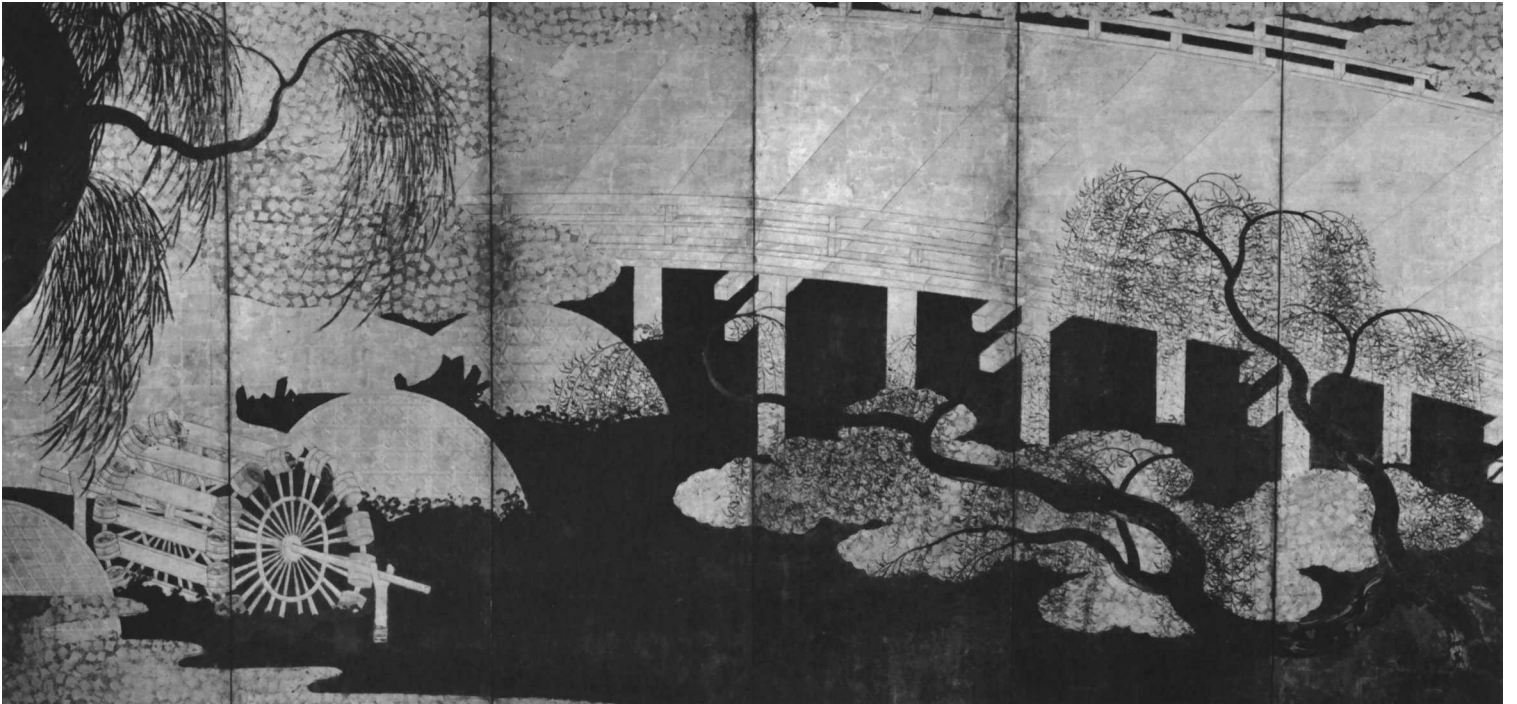


Notes

- 1 William Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 25.
- 2 Donald Keene, ed., *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), p. 34.
- 3 Jack Hillier, *The Japanese Print: A New Approach* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle Co., 1975), p. 150.
- 4 Herbert Plutschow and Hideichi Fukuda, *Four Japanese Travel Diaries of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1981), p. 5.
- 5 Frank Hoff, "City and Country: Song and the Performing Arts in Sixteenth Century Japan," *Warlords, Artists and Commoners*, eds. George Elison and Bardwell L. Smith (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii, 1981), p. 149.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- 7 Quoted in Stephen Addiss, ed., *Tōkaidō: Adventures on the Road in Old Japan* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Printing Service, 1980), p. 21.
- 8 Jack Hillier, *The Japanese Print*, p. 419.

LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS

I



I *Uji Bridge*

Anonymous

Momoyama period (1573–1615)

Pair of six-fold screens, color and gold on paper

Each screen: H. 5 1/2' (170.1 cm.), W. 11 1/3' (345.3 cm.)

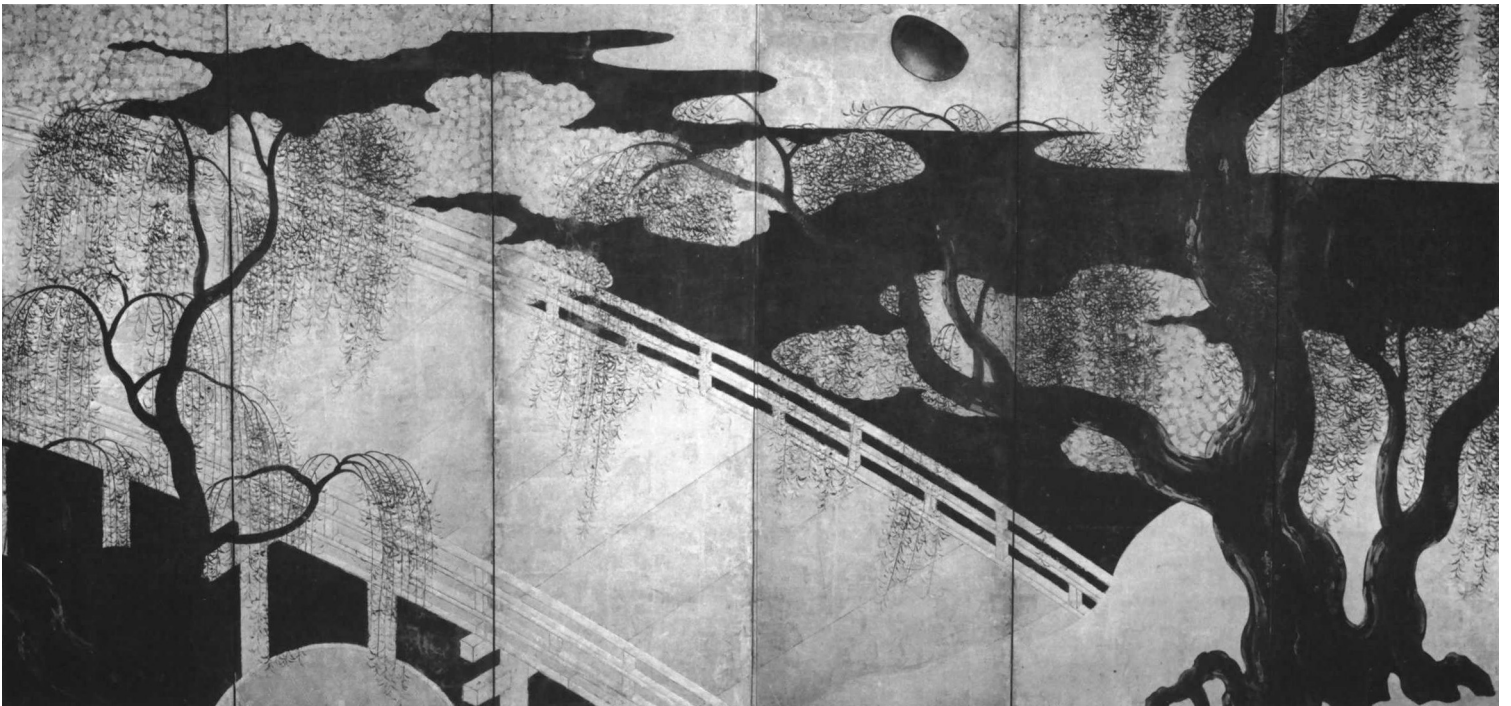
The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection

The Uji Bridge has long inspired Japanese poets. Verses from as early as the eighth century celebrate its enchanting beauty:

*Serene and crystalline
the Uji waters flow,
and fascinated travelers
are loath to go.¹*

Similarly, Uji was an important theme in the last ten chapters of Lady Murasaki's early eleventh century novel, *The Tale of Genji*, a setting generally evoking pathos. The willows in the foreground of these screens suggest this passage from the novel:

The high sky with fingers of mist trailing across it, the cherries coming into bloom and already shedding their blossoms, "the willows by the river," their



*reflections now bowing and now soaring as the wind caught them—it was a novel sight for the visitor from the city, and one he was reluctant to leave.*²

Lady Murasaki is referring here to the following poem from the eighth century work, the *Nihon Shoki*:

*The willows by the river, they bow, they soar,
As the waters pass; and still their roots are firm.*³

In this splendid pair of Momoyama period screens, the anonymous artist has created a visual symbol, a metaphor that plays upon various layers of literary reference familiar to the viewer. The physical structure is emphasized, spanning the river in a bold, diagonal sweep. On the left, circular shapes of fishing baskets and a turning water wheel complement this central form. Bands of gold lightened by white paint rhythmically accent the land forms and the planks of the bridge. Stark willows dominate the right. The scene is flooded with moonlight; the moon, made of copper and attached to the screen by pegs, stands out in relief and illuminates the texture of the leaves, the raised latticing in the fishing baskets, and the large and small squares of gold in the overhanging clouds.

The artist has denied the physical reality of the place in favor of an expression of feeling amplified by literary association. The effect is both opulent and evocative.

Notes

¹ H. H. Honda, trans. *The Manyōshū* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1967), p. 97.

² Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*. Translated by Edward Seidensticker (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976), p. 801.

³ *Ibid.*

Published

Miyeko Murase, *Byōbu: Japanese Screens from New York Collections* (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1971), no. 18.

Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), no. 46.

2 *Biography of Priest Saigyō*

Anonymous

Momoyama period (late sixteenth century)

Pair of six-fold screens, color and gold on paper

Each screen: H. 5 1/2' (168.9 cm), W. 12 1/4' (373.4 cm)

The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection

Episodes from the life of the beloved monk-poet Saigyō (1118–90) are the subject of this exquisite pair of late sixteenth century screens. Saigyō resigned his court post as a junior officer at the age of twenty-six; leaving his wife and young daughter behind, he embarked on a life of constant travel. The following poem reflects his thoughts at this decisive moment:

*So loath to lose
What really should be loathed:
One's vain place in life,
We maybe rescue best the self
Just by throwing it away.'*

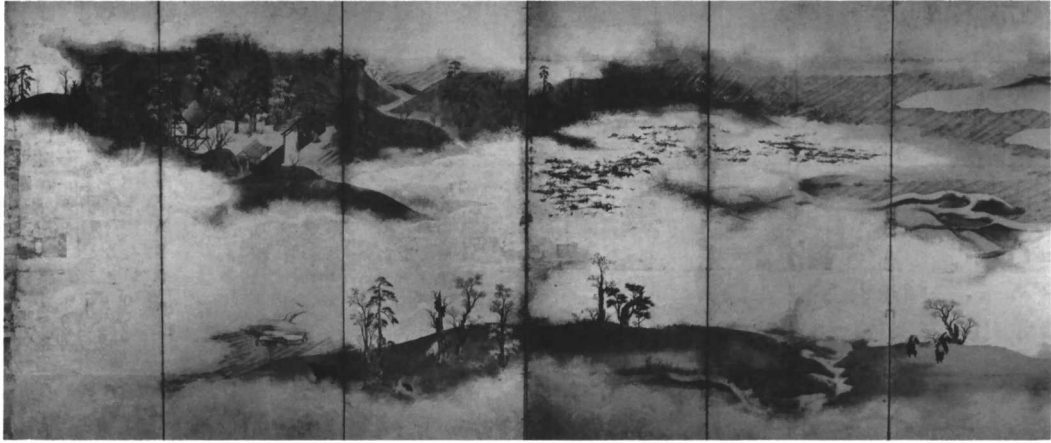
Saigyō was admired during the medieval period for this act of renunciation and for the poetry inspired by his contemplation of nature during his travels.

The upper left corner of the left screen exemplifies the role of literature in endowing specific places with meaningful associations. Saigyō is revealed wandering through the area south of the ancient capital, Nara. At a mountain shrine, Yagami Ōji, he finds cherry blossoms, and overjoyed with the discovery at this remote site, composes a poem which he writes on the fence by the entrance:

*Long-awaited cherries of Yagami are finally in bloom,
Oh, the wind and breezes over the mountains and pine trees,
Do not come down hard on these fragile flowers.²*

By this verse, Yagami Ōji is made significant through identification with an important poetic moment in a biographical narrative. It is forevermore linked with feelings of transience and vulnerability.

The artist reiterates this sentiment in other, more subtle ways. In the lower right section of the same screen is a touching yet humorous scene: Saigyō is seen parting with mendicant monks, one of whom blows his nose, overcome by sorrow. The right screen conveys Saigyō's loneliness on his first New Year's Day away from home. Saigyō gazes out at white plum blossoms, the first promise of spring, while children and priests celebrate the holiday playing games and reading sutras in another wing of the building. In both scenes, Saigyō is depicted as a solitary figure, isolated from human contact and alone against an immense landscape.



Soft-edged clouds of gold unify the composition while separating the different episodes of Saigyō's life. The land forms are also sensitively conceived. The harshness of the shrine's mountainside location, which causes Saigyō to fear for the fate of the fragile cherry blossoms, is created by a brush that carefully delineates the contours of the rocks and the lichen-covered trees. As with the Uji Bridge, the subject of these screens is drawn from literary sources, in this case, however, the written biography of an itinerant monk. Thus, two sources—secular and religious—provide content for artistic interpretations of place.

Notes

1 Translation by William R. LaFleur in *The Karma of Words* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 160.

2 Miyeko Murase, *Byōbu*, p. 108.

Published

Miyeko Murase, *Byōbu*, no. 21.

Shirahata Yoshi, "Saigyō Monogatari Byōbu," *Kobijutsu* no. 5 (August 1964), pp. 103–107.

3 *Records of Wayfaring Saints (Yūgyō Shōnin Engi)*

Artist unknown

Edo period (seventeenth century)

Handscroll, ink and light color on paper

H. 11 3/4" (30 cm), L. 25 1/2' (780 cm)

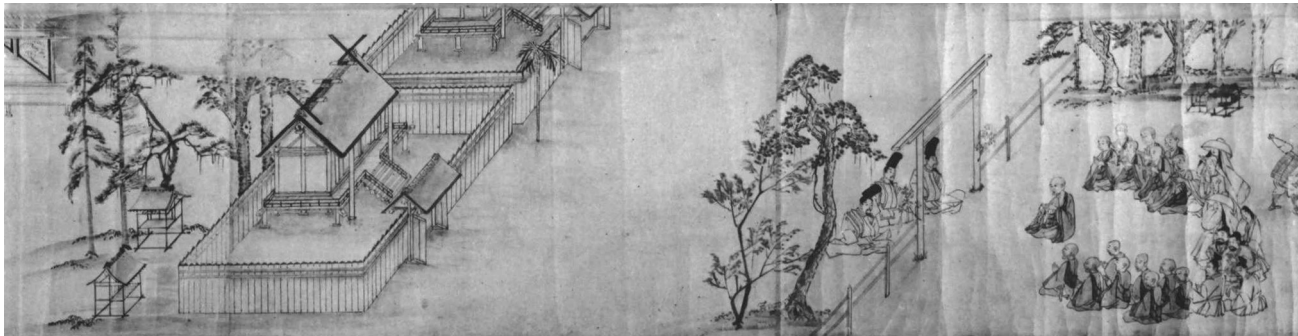
Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library,

Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

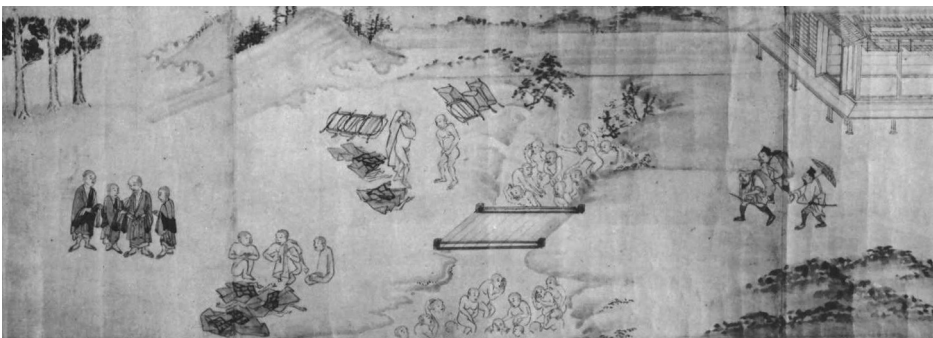
A classic example of religious biography may be found in this seventeenth century copy of a fourteenth century painting, one of ten scrolls referred to as *Records of Wayfaring Saints*, or *Yūgyō Shōnin Engi*. The narrative recounts the early history and general character of the Jishū sect of Buddhism. The first four scrolls describe the life of Ippen, founder of the sect; the remaining six focus on Taa, the second patriarch. As this ratio suggests, a primary purpose of the work was to legitimize Taa's succession to the position of sect leader.¹

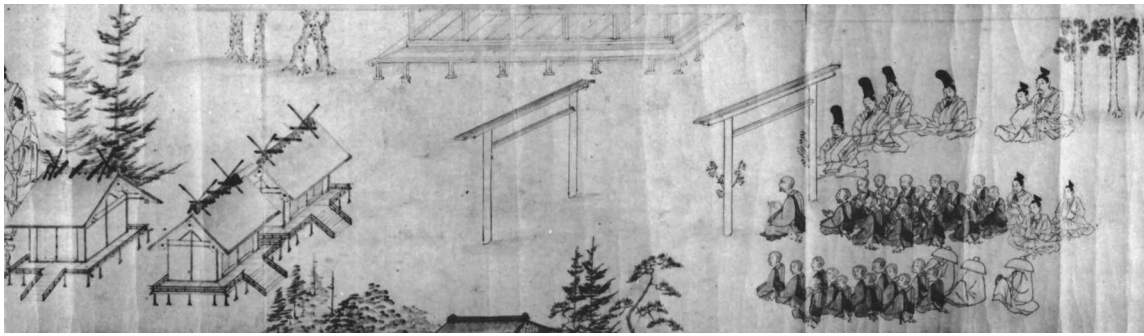
Records of Wayfaring Saints incorporates many scenes of specific locale. Ippen's fifty years of travel included visits to famous places frequently evoked in poetry and painting.² In religious narrative scrolls, familiar places provide an accessible context in which the central figure moves. The specific places not only provide a setting for key moments in the life of the spiritual leader but also, in some instances, reinforce their teachings. In this scroll, for ex-

3a



3b





30

ample, the Buddhist priest Taa is seen visiting the great Shintō shrines at Ise. By this visit, Taa dramatizes a principal tenet of the Jishū sect—tolerance for all kinds of worship, including Shintō, in the belief that all deities are manifestations of Amida Buddha.³ After paying homage at Ise’s Outer Shrine (Gekū), Taa and his followers proceed to the Inner Shrine (Naikū) where they purify themselves in the sacred Isuzu River. The monks bathe upstream, the nuns downstream, a segregation which Taa, unlike Ippen, encouraged.⁴ Next, the group moves to the gate (*torii*) of the Inner Shrine where they invoke Amida’s name.

Today, as in Taa’s time, Ise is known for its soaring stands of cryptomeria trees, clear streams, and the extraordinary beauty of the shrine buildings. The architecture is derived from a primitive storehouse design and is remarkable for its simple, forceful lines, the attractive contrast of natural wood surfaces and metal fittings, and the thatched roofs embellished by extended rafters and billets originally intended as weights to protect the roof against the wind. Whether inspired by literary or religious themes, these early evocations of place were based on historical association, events taken from the past with the accumulated weight of tradition and rendered by artists well aware of the resonance such subjects brought to their work. With the seventeenth century, new preoccupations were to emerge.

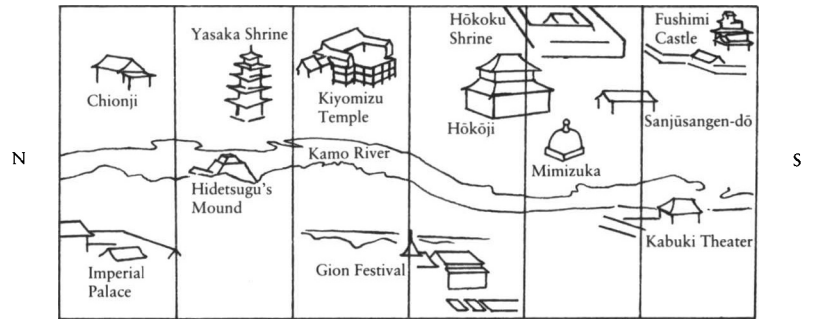
Notes

- 1 In contrast, all twelve scrolls of the renowned *Life of Saint Ippen (Ippen Hijiri-e)*, painted a decade earlier in 1299, are devoted to the founder Ippen’s life. The original *Records of Wayfaring Saints* was edited by a disciple of Taa’s named Shōshun during the first decade of the fourteenth century. The final section of this copy resembles late seventeenth and early eighteenth century woodblock prints in the treatment of line and bold areas of dark ink.
- 2 For further discussion of these famous places, see Laura Kaufman, “Ippen Hijiri-e: Artistic and Literary Sources in a Buddhist Handscroll Painting of Thirteenth-century Japan” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980), pp. 178–81.
- 3 Ippen’s enlightenment reflects this doctrine in that it was prompted by a Shintō god who was thought to be a manifestation of Amida Buddha.
- 4 James Harland Foard, “Ippen Shōnin and Popular Buddhism in Kamakura Japan” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1977), p. 81.

CITY SCAPES AND GENRE SCENES



4a



Gion Festival, detail of right screen



4 *In and Around the Capital (Rakuchū Rakugai)*

Anonymous

Momoyama period (early seventeenth century)

Pair of six-fold screens, color and gold on paper

Each screen: H. 5 1/2' (170.1 cm), W. 11 1/2' (352.2 cm)

The Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

Rakuchū Rakugai screens occupy a pivotal position between pre and post sixteenth century visions of place.¹ Traditional illustrations of famous scenic spots (*meisho-e*) and seasonal activities (*tsukinami-e*), associated with the capital and its nobility, were an integral part of early indigenous Japanese painting. Examples, for instance, can be found on fan paintings of the Muromachi period (1336–1573). This pair of screens, however, depicts a new Kyoto. The Imperial capital now bears the imposing presence of the warrior class which had returned to power in the sixteenth century. The streets of the city are filled with members of this new elite and with townspeople engaged in a wide variety of urban activities.

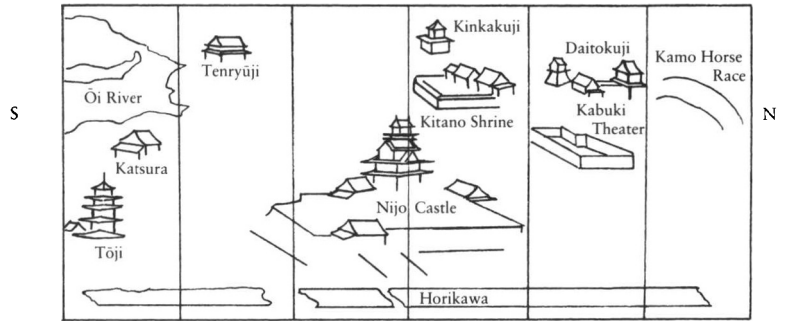
The Kamo Horse Race (in the left screen; for discussion see no. 7) and the Gion festival (in the right screen; see detail 4a) are examples of traditional events that were associated with a particular location and time of year. Both events were originally patronized by the court nobility; however, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these and other festivals became increasingly popular among the common people. The Gion Festival, a major summer attraction, is said to have originated in the ninth century as an effort by the Emperor to combat a virulent plague; under his orders, the Yasaka Shrine organized a procession of sacred floats. The festival became an annual observance of thanksgiving and placation. After the devastation of Kyoto in the Ōnin Wars (1467–1477), the festival was revived with support of commercial interests—the increasingly wealthy warehousemen, rice dealers, and moneylenders who sponsored the construction of the floats. The festival, now symbolic of the importance of the townspeople in the restoration of the capital, commands a dominant position in the right screen.

The Kabuki theaters found in these screens also underscore the growing importance of the townspeople and the entertainment that captured their interest (see no. 6). One appears on the banks of the Kamo River in the right screen and another is found in the left screen south of the Kamo Horse Race. Common people mill about these performances while dignified courtiers observe a classical Noh play in the Imperial palace compound.

The presence of the Toyotomi warrior family, which had recently gained power, is also highly visible. The Great Buddha Hall of Hōkōji, dedicated by the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1591, occupies a prominent position in the eastern or right screen. Its multi-tiered roof rises high above surrounding buildings.



4b



Nijo Castle, detail of left screen



Other monuments in this screen connected with the Toyotomi family are: the Hōkōku shrine, a mausoleum built for Hideyoshi, which appears as a rectangular compound behind the Great Buddha Hall; Fushimi Castle, in the upper right corner, built by Hideyoshi and destroyed in 1622; the Mimizuka mound in front of Hōkōji, built in connection with Hideyoshi's Korean expeditions; and the stepped pyramid near the bridge at the left end of the screen, constructed in memory of Hideyoshi's son, Hidetsugu.

The specificity of these screens is remarkable. For example, the relative position of the old and new ruling classes is contained within the composition of the screens. Nijo Castle, the Kyoto residence of the first Tokugawa Shogun Ieyasu, dominates the left screen, while the Imperial Palace is given marginal placement in the lower left corner of the right screen. The Imperial compound, however, is the destination of the official procession representing the Shogunate forming outside of Nijo Castle. Built in 1603, the castle is shown here prior to major restoration in 1626; thus the accuracy of the artist enables a firm dating of the screens to the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

Here place is no longer timeless, lyrical, and contemplative, imbued with reference to traditional literary and religious subjects. Here place is contemporary, complex, and active, enlivened by change and fascination with the present.

Notes

1 Rakuchū Rakugai screens were popular among residents of Kyoto and were produced in great numbers by anonymous town painters (*machi eshi*). The screens were also favored by wealthy visitors from the provinces who took them home as souvenirs.

Published

Narazaki Muneshige, "Newly-discovered Screen Paintings of Rakuchū Rakugai," *Kokka* 868 (July 1964): 11-17.

Tani Shin'ichi, "Screen Paintings of Rakuchū and Rakugai," *Nihon Rekishi* 191/192 (April/May 1964).

Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection*, no. 45.

5 *Sanjūsangen-dō and Other Famous Places in Kyoto*

Anonymous

Edo period (second half of the seventeenth century)

Handscroll, ink and color on paper

H. 13" (33 cm), L. 15 1/2' (472.5 cm)

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library,

Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Sanjūsangen-dō and Other Famous Places in Kyoto is a panorama of major monuments in the eastern hills of the ancient capital. In the portion of the handscroll exhibited here, the viewer moves north from Sanjūsangen-dō to Hōkōji and the Kiyomizu Temple. In effect, the work is a translation into handscroll format of the eastern part of the city—the equivalent of the right half of the Rakuchū Rakugai screens (see no. 4). Thus, the screen and handscroll can be seen as a similar treatment of subjects in significantly contrasting formats. The artist of this scroll was probably one of the many anonymous artists (*machi eshi*) who produced paintings for the growing number of wealthy urban residents.

5a. *Sanjūsangen-dō*

5b. *Kiyomizu Temple*



The unusually long and unobstructed veranda across the back of the first monument, Sanjūsangen-dō, or the Sacred Hall of Thirty-three Bays,¹ was the traditional site of archery contests. Each competitor shot arrows continuously for a twenty-four hour period, trying to place the greatest number in the target. These contests became very popular in the Momoyama and early Edo periods.² The handscroll opens with a brief explanation of the event's origins and a list of champions through 1669, thus supporting a late seventeenth century date. The artist begins by placing Sanjūsangen-dō in a realistic frame, with reference to specific contests that occurred at the hall. He then depicts the festive atmosphere: one contestant shoots arrow after arrow toward the far end of the veranda; spectators picnic and engage in animated conversation; two contestants in the foreground carry arrow cases and await their turn to compete.

Sanjūsangen-dō is followed by Hōkōji's famous bell and Great Buddha Hall dedicated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1591. The scroll then moves on to another major monument in the eastern hill region of Kyoto, Kiyomizu Temple, notable for the panoramic view of Kyoto obtained from its terrace raised on wooden pilings high above a gorge. The awesome height of the terrace and its association with suicidal lovers gave rise to the saying "to leap from the platform of Kiyomizu" as an idiomatic expression for an irrevocable decision.³

The temple is filled with visitors. At the main entrance, a samurai assists his companion with customary purification by pouring water over his hands, while behind them two figures rush up the steep stairs. On the veranda above, several people gaze at spring blossoms and the dramatic gorge below. Inside the building, a child playfully wraps himself around a pillar; to his left, a woman pulls on a white cord, presumably attached to a temple bell. The overall animation of these scenes is emphasized by the colorful pigments and the use of gold to enrich the garments.

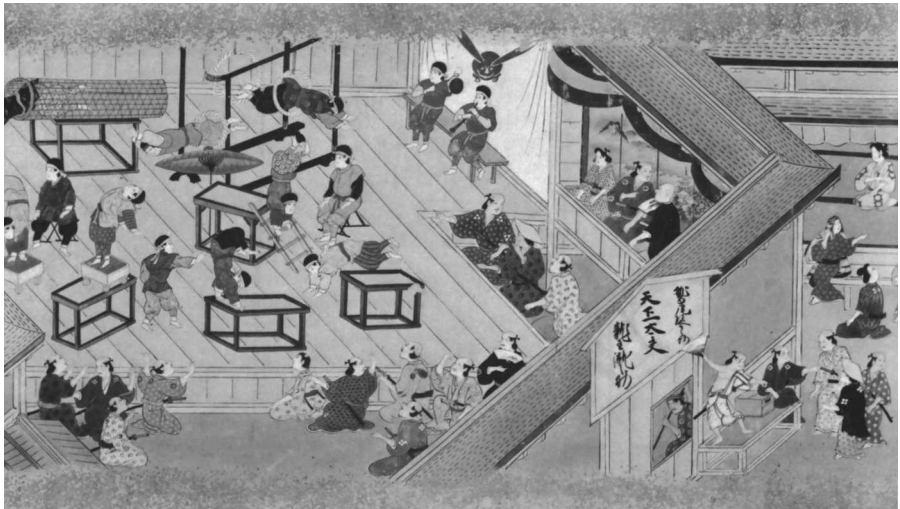
Notes

1 The number of bays between pillars was symbolic of the thirty-three forms of the hall's central deity, The One Hundred Thousand Arm Kannon.

2 Okada Jō, *Genre Screens from the Suntory Museum of Art*, trans. Emily J. Sano (New York: Japan Society, 1978), no. 13. Only in 1965 did a score of 8,153 arrows break the previous record of 8,133 that had stood since 1687.

3 Harold Stern, *Master Prints of Japan* (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1969), p. 146.

- 6a. Theater Five
- 6b. Theater Six
- 6c. Theater Seven



6 *Theaters Along Shijo Avenue (Shijogawara Emaki)*

Anonymous

Edo period (second half of the seventeenth century)

Handscroll, ink and color on paper

H. 13 1/8" (33.3 cm), L. 23 1/2' (716 cm)

The Houghton Library, Harvard University, Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Gift of Philip Hofer

Kabuki theater is said to have originated in 1603 in Kyoto with the dance performance of a young woman named Okuni. Her bawdy theatrics, which drew on popular festival dance styles, were enthusiastically received. During the course of the following century, a series of governmental restrictions drastically changed the character of Kabuki. In 1629, women were banned from the stage because authorities were disturbed by connections between the theater and prostitution. The resulting “Young Man’s Kabuki” was also short-lived due to similar charges of immorality. Following censorship decrees in 1652, theater managers began to use older men as actors, establishing *Yaro* or “Men’s Kabuki,” the basic form still prevalent today. Continued restrictions during the seventeenth century encouraged the older male actors to refine the aesthetic elements of theatrical performance—make-up, gestures and vocal techniques suitable to their male and female disguises.¹ It was during this phase of Kabuki development that *Theaters Along Shijo Avenue* was produced.

The painting draws the eye eastward along the Kamo River area of Kyoto’s Shijo Avenue where seven theaters are playing simultaneously.² The artist’s recording of the following specific performances and the actors or narrators they featured makes it possible to date the scroll to the Empō period (1673–1681): the marionette play of “The Life of Emperor Shotoku Taishi,” with Fujiwara Yoshikatsu narrating (theater two); the play, “Heianjō Tosen,” involving Saint Rengyō’s visit to the Emperor, with the Empress, her three ladies-in-waiting, and the Imperial Prince on stage (theater five, detail 6a); and the play “Tamuramaru” with an amusing scene in the bathhouse (theater seven, detail 6c).³ The handscroll also features actors applying make-up and arranging their hair in dressing rooms between the first two theaters; teashops providing theatergoers refreshments and the opportunity to stretch outside the theaters; and an acrobatic show in which the company’s crest, a rabbit, may be seen on the curtain behind the musicians (theater six, detail 6b).

The Shijo theater district also appears frequently in Rakuchū Rakugai panoramas (see no. 4); here, however, it receives independent treatment, indicative of its burgeoning popularity as contemporary entertainment.⁴ The focus of such paintings was soon to narrow even further, to leading Kabuki actors and famous geisha of the gay quarters. Thus, *Theaters Along Shijo Avenue* stands as a beau-

tiful rendition from an important formative period, both in the world of Kabuki and in the depiction of entertainment. The painting represents the emergence of a new place in which to depict subjects of increasing public interest.

Notes

- 1 Faubion Bowers, *Japanese Theatre* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle, Co., 1974), pp. 39–51.
- 2 Narazaki Muneshige points out that the scroll ends rather abruptly without an interlude equivalent to the stretch of shops before the theaters at the beginning of the scroll. For this reason, it seems likely that the scroll originally was longer. See Narazaki Muneshige, “Shijogawara Shibai Kabuki Emaki,” *Kokka* 1004 (1977), p. 27.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 24–33.
- 4 Kōno Motoaki speculates that the “Shijo Riverbed” theme appeared independently in painting almost simultaneous to its depiction in Rakuchū Rakugai screens. See Kōno Motoaki, “Shijogawara-zu no Seiritsu to Tenkan,” *Kinsei Fuzoku Zufu*, no. 5 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1982), pp. 106–107.

Published

Narazaki Muneshige, “Shijogawara Shibai Kabuki Emaki,” *Kokka* 1004 (1977), pp. 24–33.

7c



7 *The Kamo Horse Race*

Sumiyoshi Hiromori (1705–1777)

Handscroll, color on paper

H. 13 1/2" (34.2 cm), L. 12' (366 cm)

Signed: *Sumiyoshi Naiki Hiromori*

Seal

The Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

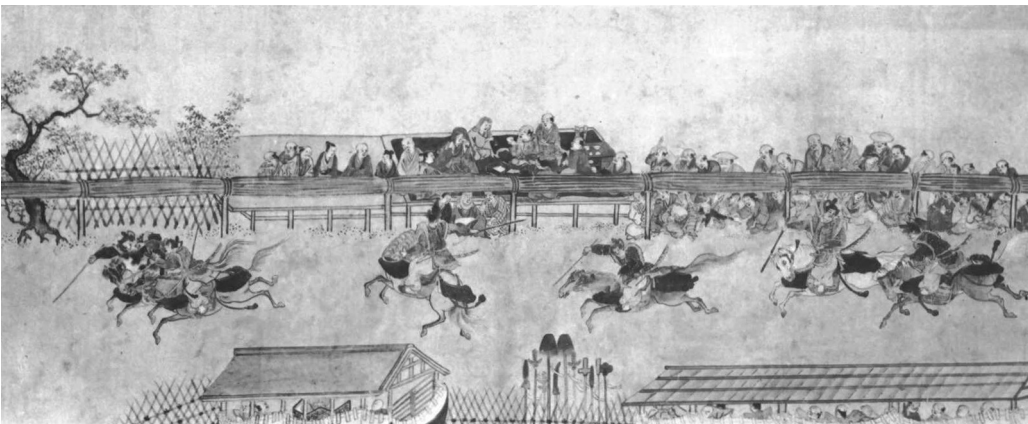
In 1093, the Emperor Horikawa established a horse race at Kamo Shrine as part of a court festival.¹ Ten pairs of equestrian contestants, dressed in court costume, still compete every year on the fifth day of the fifth month. Despite its origins, the event became popular among townspeople during the late Momoyama and early Edo periods² and was incorporated into the panorama of Kyoto events depicted in *Rakuchū Rakugai* screens (see no. 4). As with the Kabuki theater, the race was treated independently thereafter in paintings.

The first part of this handscroll is a catalogue of activity associated with the preparation of the event. Two contestants pass through a *torii*, or shrine gate, dressed in red and blue, the colors of the two opposing teams. Next, a man

7a



7b



appears to offer the viewer a horse as if inviting participation in the race. A cheering party encourages a contestant as he mounts his excited steed. A small boy dressed in bright red sits in a tree looking over the judges' platform. The direction of his gaze provides a subtle transition to the second part of the scroll, the race itself.

Commoners line the course intently watching the action. A half-dressed child takes advantage of his distracted mother and tries to break free. To her right, a man peers from behind his fan as if shielding himself from the flying dust. The group of wealthy samurai sitting on a platform appear more interested in their tea than in the contest. In the stretch, a piebald and a bay fight neck and neck. After the race, the contestants are faced with the difficulty of dismounting their spirited charges: one horse has unceremoniously dumped his rider. The excitement of the race contrasts with the tranquility that surrounds the buildings at the end of the handscroll. In the midst of the delicate spring foliage, the Kamigamo Shrine stands undisturbed by the intensity of the annual festival.

Sumiyoshi Hiromori was the great grandson of Jokei, the founder of the Sumiyoshi school, an offshoot of the court-affiliated Tosa school which was patronized primarily by the Shogunate. Many of their works reflect the immediate interests of their patrons,³ while others, this scroll for example, may be seen to represent the appropriation of a traditional, courtly subject by the emerging classes.

Notes

1 Hayami Shungyōsai, *Shokoku Zue Nenjū Gyōji Taisei* (Tokyo: Ōfusha, 1978).

2 Okada Jō, *Genre Screens*, no. 14, p. 67.

3 For example, see the discussion of paintings, such as the mortuary shrine of Tokugawa Ieyasu, in John Rosenfield, Fumiko Cranston and Edwin Cranston, *The Courty Tradition in Japanese Art and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1973), p. 252.

8 *Scenes from Four Seasons: The Hozu and Kamo Rivers*

Komai Ki (1747–1797)

Handscroll, color on silk

H. 12 13/16" (32.5 cm), L. 17' (518.2 cm)

Signed: Section 1, *Genki*. Section 2, *Genki*; [inscribed] “a winter day toward the end of the seventh year of the An’ei era (1778)”

Seals: *Genki no In*, two seals, one on each section

The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection

Scenes from Four Seasons exemplifies the post-sixteenth century approach to traditional scenic places. The first two subjects in the scroll, the Hozu and Kamo Rivers, had been depicted as *meisho*, or places of renown, for centuries. Similarly, the second half of the scroll, which is not illustrated here, dwells on seasonal activities, the autumn Bon festival and preparations for the New Year, themes derived from traditional pictures of monthly events, or *tsukinami-e*. Yet the characters occupying the stage have changed significantly. While the traditional subject remains, it is now seen through the eyes of the common people rather than the nobility. Previous treatments of this theme had focused upon the activities of the patricians—religious worship, court life and festivities. Here, however, the activity of the common people becomes the central focus; indeed, no patricians even appear.

Arashiyama, an area along the turbulent Hozu River northwest of Kyoto, is delightful for its blossoming cherry trees. Here people are seen on springtime outings, some partaking of the scenery as they float down the river in pleasure boats. Others sit under the flowering trees and enjoy a variety of pastimes: eating, listening to music, watching the fishing and other river activities. The viewer then moves to a second scene, the Kamo River in Kyoto at midsummer. Seeking cool breezes along the shore, commoners stroll by refreshment stands or relax on platforms placed in the shallows by the restaurants and teashops. Some who find such luxuries unaffordable gather on the opposite bank and enjoy a refresh-

8a. *The Hozu River*



ing swim. The first two sections are separated from the second two by the artist's signature *Genki*, and seal *Genki no In*, an interesting compositional device.

Komai Ki heightens the sense of reality in these scenes by lightly employing shading techniques he learned from his teacher, Maruyama Ōkyo, a student of Western art and founder of the Maruyama school, a school which combined the decorative in Japanese landscape painting with the naturalism found in Western art and late Chinese bird and flower painting. *Scenes of the Four Seasons* closely imitates a pair of handscrolls by Ōkyo. Komai Ki has combined this dual portrayal into a continuous painting, substituting his signature for the physical separation between the two scrolls.¹

Notes

1 Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art*, p. 226

Published

Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection*, no. 63.

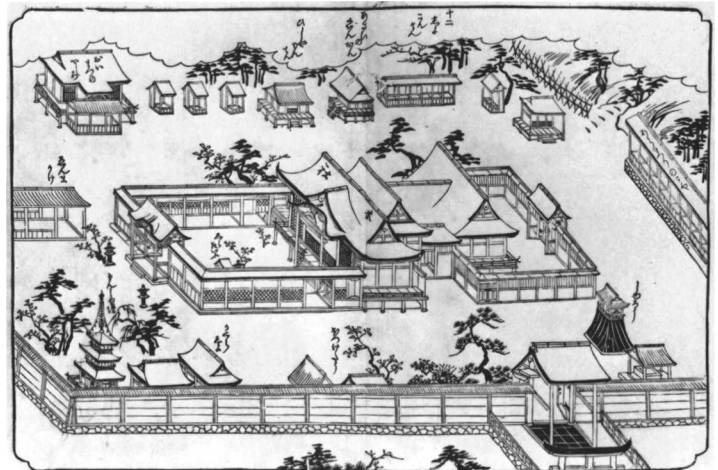
8b. *The Kamo River*



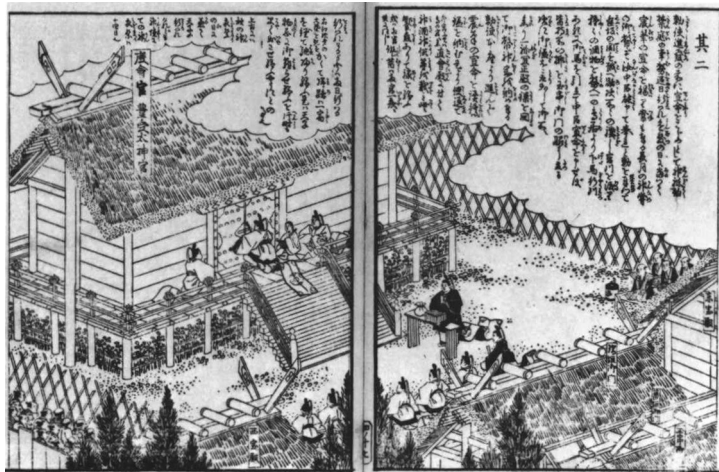
TRAVEL PRINTS AND GUIDES



9a. Guide to the Flourishing Capital



9b. Guide to the Flourishing Capital



9c. Illustrations of Famous Places on the Pilgrim Route to Ise



9d. Illustrations of Famous Places on the Pilgrim Route to Ise

9 *Guide to the Flourishing Capital (Karaku Saiken Zu)*

Anonymous

Dated: 1704

Monochrome illustrated book, fifteen volumes

H. 10" (25.4 cm), W. 7" (17.8 cm)

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library,

Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Illustrations of Famous Places on the Pilgrim Route to Ise (Ise Sangu Meisho Zue)

Shitomi Kangetsu (1747–1797)

Dated: 1797

Monochrome illustrated book, seven of eight volumes

H. 10 3/8" (26.4 cm), W. 7 1/4" (18.1 cm)

Anonymous loan, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Travel guides, or *meisho-ki*, began to appear in the mid-seventeenth century, providing a wealth of visual and written information about sights, customs, and activities in major cities and along main pilgrimage routes. They were not only useful as guides but were also valued as souvenirs of journeys. They may be seen as monochrome printed versions of the Rakuchū Rakugai screens (see no. 4), making such scenes available in a smaller format and in greatly increased numbers. Furthermore, in their varied depictions of contemporary life, they were important as part of the nascent stage of *ukiyo-e* prints.¹

The *Karaku Saiken Zu* is typical of early travel guides. The date of publication is recorded as 1704, although the artist is not identified. The illustrations include the names of many temple and shrine buildings in Kyoto. Stories from their history are often found along the upper border of the page. Events for which some of the places are famous are also portrayed; for instance, the page exhibited here depicts the Jishu spring festival at Kiyomizu Temple (see no. 5), with an exuberant group of people accompanying a sacred palanquin to its destination at Kyōkaku Hall.

By contrast, *Illustrations of Famous Places on the Pilgrim Route to Ise*, which was produced during the golden age of *meisho-ki* in the late eighteenth century, is much more fully developed. It records every conceivable landmark along the ancient pilgrimage route to the Imperial family's shrine at Ise (see no. 3)—the shrines, temples, rivers, and towns, and the legends and festivals associated with each place on the road. It is a far more sophisticated publication, both as art and as a comprehensive guide.

The artist here is known. While still printed in monochrome, more attention is paid to the landscapes and settings than in the earlier *Karaku Saiken Zu*. The occasional appearance of mounted samurai may be due to the influence of Kangetsu's teacher Tsukioka Settei who specialized in warrior illustrations that appealed to samurai clientele.² Kangetsu was one of thirty artists involved in the six volume work *Illustrations of Famous Places on the Tōkaidō* (*Tōkaidō Meisho-zue*), one of many guides on the Tōkaidō highway which presaged the great print series produced by Hiroshige a few decades later (see nos. 14 and 15).

Notes

1 David Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustrations* (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1977), p. 128.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

10a. Daimonji



10b. Kinkaku-ji Temple



10 *Picture Book of the Imperial Capital*
(*Ehon Miyako no Nishiki*)

Kitao Masayoshi (1764–1824)

Date: 1787

Polychrome illustrated book, one volume

H. 12" (30.5 cm), W. 8 5/8" (22 cm)

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library,
Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The preface to the *Picture Book of the Capital* explains that it is intended as a guide to Kyoto for those who have never seen the city.¹ The single volume surveys about a dozen of the capital's major sights with brief descriptions of the landmarks and their origins, among them several places discussed in previous entries: the Kamo Shrine, sponsor of the horse race; Arashiyama, famous for its spring and autumn scenery; the Shijogawara Kabuki theaters; the Kiyomizu Temple; Sanjūsangen-dō, with its famous archery contest; and the Great Buddha Hall, Hōkōji. Two other renowned sights in Kyoto shown here are Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion) and Daimonji on Nyoigadake hill.

Kinkaku-ji remains today one of Kyoto's major tourist attractions. The celebrated pavilion and the beautiful spacious garden were commissioned by the Ashikaga Shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358–1408). After his death, the villa was made a Buddhist temple and renamed Rokuonji. The gilding on the ceiling of the upper story inspired the name Kinkaku-ji, the "Temple of the Golden Pavilion." Destroyed by an arsonist in 1950, an exact replica was constructed with gold covering the exterior of the upper two stories in keeping with the building's name.²

The grounds and scenic lake around the Golden Pavilion are equally famous. The lake was carefully planned to appear larger than its actual size, with that part closest to the pavilion busy with variously shaped rocks and islands in contrast with the relatively empty outer part and opposite shore. The design creates an illusion of distance and perspective.³ While focusing on the pavilion, Masayoshi's illustration includes a generalized view of the lake.

Nyoigadake, a hill high above the city, is the center of attention during Kyoto's summer festival of *obon*. On the evening of August sixteenth, a bonfire in the shape of the character of *dai* is lit on the hill.⁴ The text at the top of the page in Masayoshi's book explains the legendary origin of this custom. When a temple at the base of the hill caught on fire, the central image, Amida Buddha, was said to have flown to safety at the top of the hill in a blaze of light. The image was brought back to its original location, and, thereafter, a fire was set each August sixteenth to commemorate the miracle. The great sage, Kobo Daishi, whose name is written with the same character for *dai*, established the shape of the bonfire.

A single volume, *Picture Book of the Capital* is necessarily limited to certain of Kyoto's major monuments many of which also appear in the Rakuchū Rakugai screens (see no. 4). The book was produced in 1768, a year after the artist, Kitao Masayoshi, a native of Edo, had visited the Kyoto area. He had been trained in *ukiyo-e* design under Kitao Shigemasa (1739–1820); however, after this pivotal journey, and possibly after contact with leading Kyoto artists of the realistic Maruyama and Shijo schools, he began to explore other stylistic possibilities. In this respect, Masayoshi's artistic development took an opposite course from the many artists who became *ukiyo-e* print designers after a period of training in the traditional Tosa and Kanō painting schools. The figures in *Picture Book of the Capital*, such as in the foreground of the Daimonji scene, however, indicate that Masayoshi had not forsaken altogether his *ukiyo-e* background when these illustrations were made.

Notes

- 1 The Japanese title of this work is inspired by a poem, no. 56, in the early tenth century anthology, *Kokin Wakashū*, which likens Kyoto's springtime scenery with its mixture of light green willows and pink cherry blossoms to a brocade (*nishiki*).
- 2 The fire was set by a novice priest and became the subject of Yukio Mishima's famous novel, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, trans. by Ivan Morris (Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle Co., 1959).
- 3 Loraine Kuck, *The World of the Japanese Garden* (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1968), p. 130.
- 4 According to the text, this character for *dai*, which to western eyes resembles a stick man with outstretched arms, is 550 feet at its widest point.

I I *Thirty-Six Views of Fuji*

Katsushika Hokusai, 1760–1849

Polychrome woodblock prints

a. *The Lake at Misaka, Kō Province*

The Frances Gaylord Smith Collection

b. *Nihonbashi Bridge, Edo*

The Frances Gaylord Smith Collection

c. *Ascending the Mountain*

Gift of Mrs. Thomas D. Goodell

Ōban H. 10" (25.5 cm), W. 15" (38 cm)

Signed: *Zen Hokusai iitsu hitsu*

Publisher: Hōeidō and Eikyūdō

Yale University Art Gallery

Given the reverence for mountains in Japanese folk religion, it is no surprise that Mount Fuji has been a center of worship for centuries. Its divine nature was celebrated as early as the ninth century in the *Fujisan-ki*, and it is likely that the mountain was worshipped even earlier. Pilgrimages became especially popular during the Edo period with the founding of the Fujisan-kō by Hasegawa Kakugyō. Followers of this cult, primarily merchants, farmers, and craftsmen, who believed Fuji to be the center of creation and abode of the three founding deities of Japan, flocked to the mountain in great numbers.¹

Mount Fuji is best known in the West through Katsushika Hokusai's series of woodblock prints, *The Thirty-six Views of Fuji*, produced between 1823 and 1829 at the height of his career. Ten supplementary views from districts beyond Edo on the opposite side of Fuji were also included to make a total of forty-six views. Prior to this Fuji series, pure landscape was rarely a subject for woodblock prints. Setting was primarily a stage for figures and events. These prints found antecedents in Hokusai's earlier treatment of landscape in his books illustrating well-known places, such as *Fine Views of the Eastern Capital*, *Range Upon Range of Mountains* and *Both Banks of the Sumida River*.²

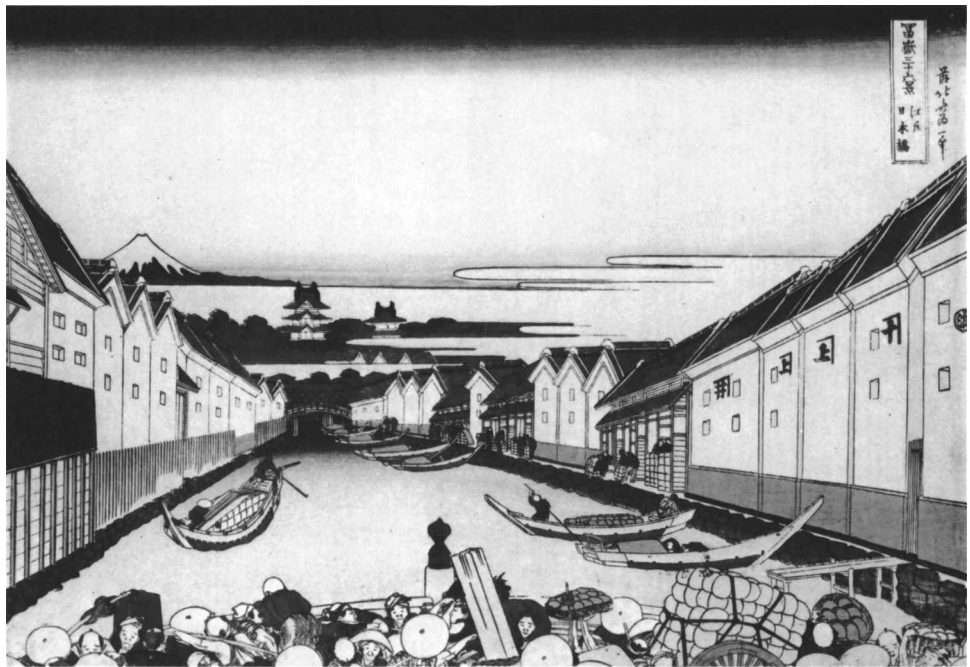
In *The Lake at Misaka in Kō Province*, Fuji towers over a placid lake. It is the view one might see from Misaka Pass, having traveled up the rugged Isawa road that branches off the main road to Edo.³ On gaining the pass, the traveler is suddenly confronted by the mountain. While Fuji is not snowcapped in the print, its reflection is, a curious artistic liberty for which there is no explanation.

Nihonbashi (literally, Japan Bridge) was well-known throughout the country as the center of Edo, the beginning of the Tōkaidō highway, and the point from which all distances in Japan were measured. Hokusai's print of Nihonbashi teems with life, as people carrying their goods to market jostle each other on the congested bridge. The intensity of the activity in the foreground is heightened by

11a. *The Lake at Misaka,*
Kō Province



11b. *Nihonbashi Bridge,*
Edo



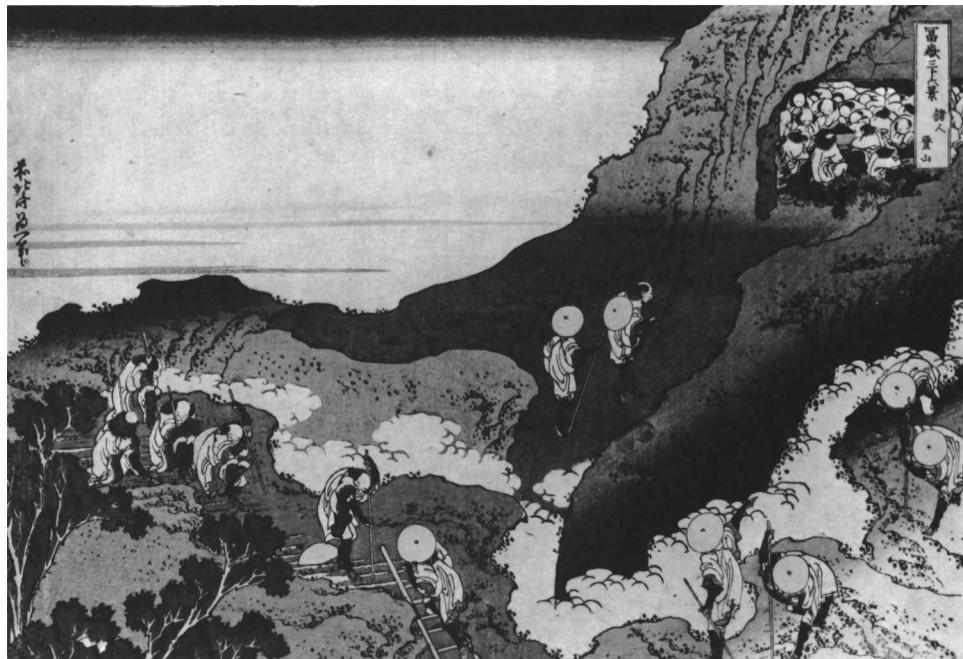
the static, architectonic forms of Chiyoda castle in the center background and the storehouses neatly arrayed along either side of the river. In the distance, Mount Fuji rises above this world of human industriousness. Hokusai uses an exaggerated Western perspective to integrate these diverse compositional elements.

Ascending the Mountain is the one print in the series in which the familiar conical form of Mount Fuji does not appear. Here Fuji is portrayed as the center of religious worship. In the lower right, pilgrims, possibly of the Fujisan-kō cult, struggle to secure footing as they work their way up the mountain. On the left, others climb a ladder and pause to catch their breath. Such pilgrimages continue their popularity even in contemporary Japan where the beauty of the mountain affects Japanese and Westerners alike.

Notes

- 1 John Rosenfield and Shūjiro Shimada, *Traditions of Japanese Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1970), p. 212.
- 2 Jack Hillier, *Hokusai* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978), p. 62.
- 3 Kobayashi Tadashi, *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei*, Ukiyo-e Taikai, vol. 13 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1975), p. 121.

11c. *Ascending the Mountain*





12a. *Enoshima*



12b. *Mount Fuji*

12 *Mount Fuji, Enoshima*

Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Pair of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk

H. 36 1/2" (92.7 cm), W. 13" (33 cm)

Signed: *Ryūsai*

Seal: *Hiroshige*

The Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

One of the most famous views of Mount Fuji is that from Enoshima.¹ A rocky island covered with pines, Enoshima is situated in Sagami Bay near Kamakura, only ninety minutes from modern Tokyo. It is still famous for both its splendid view of Mount Fuji and for having one of the three major Japanese shrines dedicated to Benten, the goddess of music, learning, and longevity. A pleasure resort as early as the thirteenth century, Enoshima became immensely popular in the Edo period with travelers on the Tōkaidō road, pilgrims to Mount Fuji, and Edo townsmen. Hiroshige included Enoshima in several print series, possibly in response to the popularity of this island among his Edo clientele.

The inscription on this painting of Mount Fuji reads *Kamakura Shichirigahama*. Shichiriga Beach is noted for its length, extending for two and a half miles from Kamakura to Enoshima. With the scrolls properly arranged, Mount Fuji is seen off to the right, from the Enoshima end of the beach. Standing on the same spot and turning slightly left, Enoshima beckons, the sandbar passageway revealed at ebb tide.² Hiroshige masterfully unifies the two paintings with bands of mist, capturing the interplay of sultry seaside air with distant landforms through a combination of subtle tonal variations and areas of untouched silk.³ This pair of landscape paintings clearly demonstrates that Hiroshige's genius extended beyond the role of print designer.

Notes

¹ One of the creation myths of Mount Fuji held that another great scenic spot in Japan, Lake Biwa (see no. 16) was formed when the gods removed the earth to create Mount Fuji.

² The inscription on *Enoshima* reads *Sōshū Enoshima Fūkei* (Enoshima Landscape, Sō Province). Today Enoshima is permanently attached to the mainland by Benten Bridge.

³ The painting, seals, and signatures of these scrolls are closely related to a painting combining Mount Fuji and Enoshima which Tamba Tsuneo, an expert on Hiroshige, dates to the mid to late 1840s. See Tamba Tsuneo, *Hiroshige Ichidai* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1965), fig. 518, p. 213.

13 *Famous Scenes Along the Tōkaidō*

Attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694)

Handscroll, ink, color and gold on silk

H. 19" (48.2 cm), L. 51 1/2' (1560 cm)

The Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation

As early as the seventh century, Kyoto court officials traveled to and from the eastern provinces by way of the Tōkaidō Highway on the Pacific coast of Japan. A thousand years later, in 1603, the first Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu, established his political center at Edo (present-day Tokyo), the eastern terminus of the Tōkaidō. Concerned with national stability, the Shogunate recognized the importance of the highway as a link with the western provinces. The road was well-maintained and travel was strictly regulated. Fifty-three stations were designated in the 307 miles between Edo, the first station, and Kyoto, the imperial capital and western terminus.¹ Prices for services such as horses and porters were standardized, and checkpoints along the road allowed the government to keep close watch over travelers.

Among the common sights on the Tōkaidō were the long processions of the domain lords (*daimyō*), traveling back and forth to the capital. The lords were required to maintain a mansion in Edo in addition to a castle in their home domain and they had to divide their residency between them. To ensure their return to the capital, their wives and children were left behind as hostages. The number of attendants required to accompany a lord was determined by the official value of his fief and major figures had retinues numbering in the thousands. Scholars speculate that the expense of maintaining two households and a large staff was intended by the government to check the wealth of the *daimyō*, with the added benefit of keeping the powerful lords within easy surveillance for at least part of each year. It also enhanced the prestige of the central government, at whose mandate the lords made their journeys. A *daimyō* procession composed of porters, pole bearers, foot soldiers, and servants, appears at the left end of the handscroll section reproduced here.

The stations along the Tōkaidō in this painting are labeled in gold and each is represented by characteristic features: the well-known castle at Yoshida, (station 35) appears on the far right; Goyu and Akasaka (stations 36 and 37), famous for their pleasure houses and beautiful women, are also easily identified. The artist separates these two nearby towns with an amusing event—a horse is startled by a brawl and unseats its rider. Beyond Hirakawa lies Okazaki (station 39) with its castle and bridge. At the next station, Chiryu, peasants are seen plowing the fields and planting rice. Finally, at Narumi (station 41), we overtake the *daimyō* procession.

Handscrolls of the Tōkaidō were quite popular among the feudal lords who employed professional artists to produce them. Consequently, it is often difficult

to identify the artist of a specific work. This scroll is attributed to the great pioneer of *ukiyo-e*, Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694). According to documentation accompanying the scroll, the wooden roller on which the scroll was originally mounted was inscribed “third [year of the] Tenna era” (1683). While the attribution to Moronobu is not certain, the date coincides with his, and the painting’s considerable skill and charm are consistent with his style.

Notes

1 Stephen Addiss, ed., *Tōkaidō: Adventures on the Road in Old Japan* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Printing Service, 1980), p. 4.

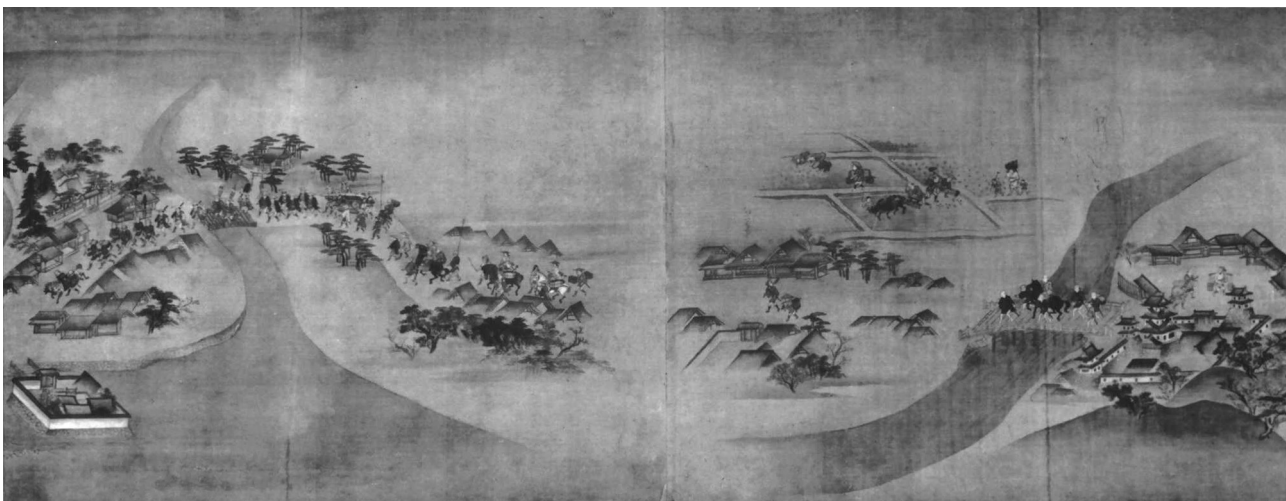
Published

Richard Lane, *Masters of the Japanese Print* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 47.

13a



13b





14 *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*

Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Polychrome woodblock prints

a. *Mariko* (station 21)

Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore

b. *Fujikawa* (station no. 38)

Anonymous gift

c. *Odawara* (station 10)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Olsen, Mr. and Mrs. Laurens Hammond,
and Mr. and Mrs. Knight Wooley, B.A. 1917

Ōban H. 10" (25.5 cm), W. 15" (38 cm)

Signed: *Hiroshige-ga*

Publisher: Hōeidō

Yale University Art Gallery

The introduction by the poet, Yomo no Takisui, on the cover sheet of this print series states:

Hiroshige has sketched in detail not only incidents that he witnessed at the various stations along the way but also famous buildings, mountains, rivers, and trees, nor has he omitted the travelers whom he encountered. So vivid are his sketches that anyone who views the prints, even though he may never have seen the Tōkaidō, will feel that he is actually on the road. Hōeidō has published the prints that they may be preserved for posterity.¹

Indeed, Hiroshige's ability to bring the Tōkaidō alive in these full-fledged landscapes distinguishes this series from the many previous guidebooks on the same subject. Produced between 1833 and 1834, it brought him instant fame, challenging the popularity of Hokusai, his senior by thirty-seven years.

Hiroshige traveled the Tōkaidō road for the first time in the summer of 1832 when he accompanied a ceremonial procession escorting the Shogun's annual gift of horses to the Emperor in Kyoto. The procession set out from Edo each year on the first day of the eighth lunar month. The horses decorated with white paper ornaments in *Fujikawa* (station 38) probably commemorate this journey.

Mariko (station 21) and *Odawara* (station 10) also exemplify the sights and activities along the Tōkaidō. *Mariko* is known for *tororojiru*, a thick gruel made from grated yams; a signboard announcing this local speciality stands propped against a tea shop. Inside, customers are being served the yam porridge, or perhaps *ochazuke*, a more common dish of tea and rice which is advertised on the post underneath the eaves. Today, *Mariko* has a tea shop that claims to be the one that appears in Hiroshige's print. The shop boldly advertises its ancestry with a large reproduction of this work hanging outside. The shop stands at the



14c. Odawara

foot of the bridge spanning the Mariko River; as in the print, a mountain dominates the background.²

A dozen stations beyond Mariko, the traveler reaches Odawara, a town which became an important commercial and cultural center when the feudal lord Hōjō Sōun built his castle there in the late fifteenth century. The Hakone range beyond was considered nearly impregnable because of its treacherous heights and the bandits who preyed there on travelers.

In addition to the inscription, at least three elements of the Odawara print identify the setting: the distant Hakone Mountains, the castle nestled up against them, and the river ford. In the foreground, travelers dwarfed by the expansive plain and towering mountains employ various means to cross the Sakawa River. One traveler rides in an enclosed palanquin supported by a platform; an attendant, who follows him with a banner, fords the river on the shoulders of a porter. The porters' fees at the river crossings were strictly regulated by the Shogunate and were allowed to fluctuate with the height of the water which was measured by a pole.³

Notes

1 Narazaki Muneshige, *Hiroshige: The 53 Stations of the Tōkaidō*, trans. Gordon Sager (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1969), p. 11.

2 Yoshida Susugu, *Tōkaidō Gojūsan Tsugi*, Ukiyo-e Taikei, vol. 14, p. 105.

3 Stephen Addiss, ed., *Tōkaidō: Adventures on the Road in Old Japan*, p. 38.

15 *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*

Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Polychrome woodblock prints

a. *Shōnō* (station 46)

Anonymous gift

b. *Kambara* (station 16)

The Frances Gaylord Smith Collection

Ōban H. 10" (25.5 cm), W. 15" (38 cm)

Signed: *Hiroshige-ga*

Publisher: Hōeidō

Yale University Art Gallery

Hiroshige produced nearly forty different series on the Tōkaidō road, reflecting the extraordinary demand for his prints of the subject. Although he usually composed his travel prints around features specific to each station, his two most highly praised landscapes bear little relation to the actual sites.

Shōnō demonstrates Hiroshige's genius for capturing the changing moods of weather. The suddenness of an evening shower is conveyed by the hurried pace of the figures—the bearers who have tossed their straw cloaks over the palanquin and the farmer who shoulders his hoe and hurries home to the village. The compositional tension created by the sharp diagonal of the foreground, the slanting sheets of rain, and the bending waves of bamboo, heightens the drama.

15a. *Shōnō*





15b. Kambara

The umbrella in the foreground of the Shōno print bears two inscriptions: *Take no uchi*, the publisher's family name, and *Gojūsan-tsugi*, "Fifty-three Stations" [of the Tōkaidō]. Because they were omitted from the second printing, we know that this fine impression belongs to the first edition.¹ Unlike inferior versions, the houses in the foreground are more prominent. The sharp distinctions between the three planes of bamboo create a greater sense of depth. Spatial clarity is further enhanced by the tonal gradations within each stand of bamboo.

The print of Kambara superbly evokes a sense of winter. Hunched over from the cold, three figures trudge along the mountain path, seemingly weighted down by the snow on their shoulders. In the distance, a village is blanketed with snow and enveloped by dark, ominous clouds. Yet this is an imaginary scene. There is no specific reference to Kambara. Furthermore, not only does snow rarely fall on the town, but Hiroshige, traveling the Tōkaidō during the summer months, could not have witnessed Kambara as a winter scene.²

Perhaps lacking a memorable reference to Kambara and Shōno, Hiroshige chose instead to make them poignant studies in mood. To do so, he drew upon his artistic heritage, combining contemporary fascination with a popular site and an artistic treatment derived from the traditional concern with the seasons.

Notes

¹ Yoshida Susugu, *Tōkaidō Gojūsan Tsugi*, no. 46.

² Kondo Ichitaro, *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Hiroshige*, trans. Charles S. Terry (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960), no. 16.

16 *Eight Views of Ōmi*

Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Polychrome woodblock prints

a. *Evening Bell at Mii Temple*

Gift of Mrs. William H. Moore

b. *Geese Descending at Katada*

The Frances Gaylord Smith Collection

Ōban H. 10" (25.5 cm), W. 15" (38 cm)

Signed: *Hiroshige-ga*

Publisher: Eikyūdō

Yale University Art Gallery

The theme of *Eight Views of Ōmi* echoes the popular Chinese painting subject *The Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang*. The Hsiao and Hsiang rivers in southern China flow into Tung-t'ing lake in Hunan province. Famous for their beauty, the eight scenic spots depicted by Chinese artists included such poetic views as sailboats returning from a distant shore, sunset over a fishing village, evening bell from a distant temple, and wild geese alighting on sandbanks.

The *Eight Views* were among the earliest subjects based on Chinese models to appear in Japanese ink paintings. A painting by the Japanese artist, Shikan, created sometime before 1317, bears a colophon identifying it as geese landing

16a. *Mii Temple*



on a sandbar. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the *Eight Views* had become a standard ink painting theme, often presented in a uniquely Japanese fashion as part of a four-seasons composition.¹ *The Eight Views of Ōmi* can be seen as a further stage in assimilation.² That is, the general characteristics of the eight Chinese views were applied to specific places along the shores of Lake Biwa, an area also noted for its beauty near the ancient capital Kyoto. Thus, evening bell from a distant temple was transformed into the evening bell at Mii Temple, and sunset over a fishing village, to the sunset over the Seta River.³

This series of the *Eight Views* was produced by Hiroshige in 1830, three years before his famous *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. Katada, the subject of one of the two prints seen here, is a point of land jutting into Lake Biwa on its western shore. Mii Temple, long known for the particularly melodious tone of the bell in its main hall, lies on the southwestern shore of the lake near the city of Ōtsu. Given the specificity of each location, one might expect to find the *Eight Views of Ōmi* to be treated realistically; however, Hiroshige presents the views in a lyrical style characteristic of the Chinese prototypes. The soft evening skies of these two prints envelop ancient, almost timeless mountain forms and create a meditative, poetic mood.

Notes

- 1 Yoshiaki Shimizu and Carolyn Wheelwright, eds., *Japanese Ink Paintings* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 134.
- 2 Credit is usually given to Konoe Masaie for establishing the poetic theme of the *Eight Views of Ōmi* in the late fifteenth century. Louise Cort, *Shigaraki, Potters' Valley* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), p. 113.
- 3 The Seta River at the south end of Lake Biwa becomes the Uji River in its lower reaches (see no. 1).

16b. *Katada*



17 *Mount Matsuchi*

Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk

H. 16 3/8" (41.6 cm), W. 22 5/8" (57.5 cm)

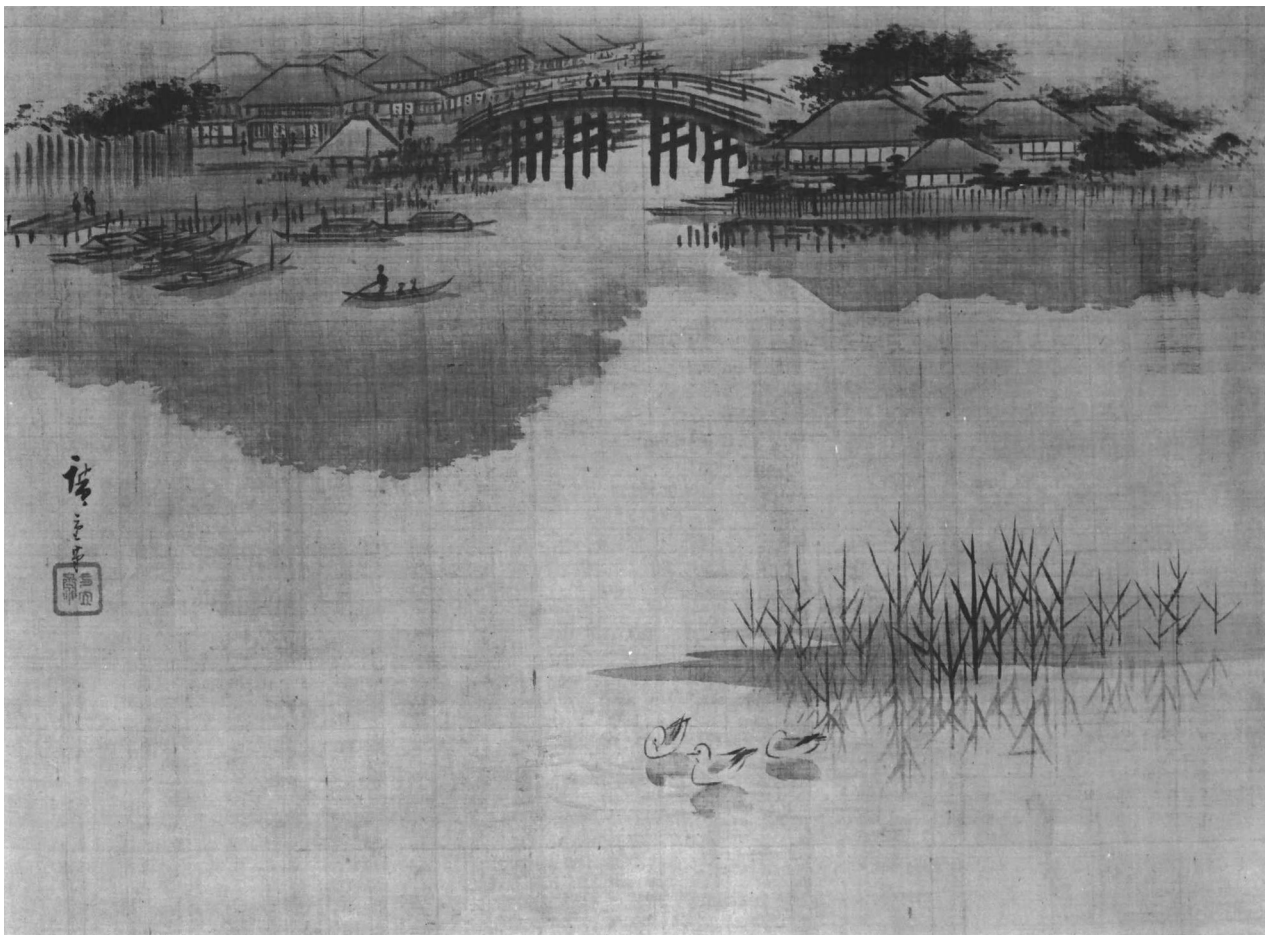
Signed: *Hiroshige hitsu*¹

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest and The Annenberg Fund, Inc. Gift, 1975.

Edo was established by Tokugawa Ieyasu as his Shogunate capital two centuries before Hiroshige's time. By 1800, it was the largest city in the world. The bustle of the city, its splendor, beauty, and sundry entertainments fascinated not only its residents but also people throughout the country. Hiroshige had an abiding affection for his home; he designed between twelve and thirteen hundred prints of the many sights and activities in Edo. The city was one of his first subjects: his 1831 series of *Famous Places of the Eastern Capital* established him as a land-

17. *Mount Matsuchi*



scape artist. Fittingly, it was also his last subject: he was working on *One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo* when he died twenty-seven years later at the age of fifty-three.²

Within the Edo environs, one of Hiroshige's favorite subjects was the Sumida River which flowed through the eastern part of the city. Crowded with commercial boats by day and pleasure boats by night, the river reflected the very spirit of Edo. It bordered Yoshiwara, the licensed pleasure quarter, and the *funayado*, or "boating inns" depicted in this painting, carried customers from the downtown to the teahouses of the entertainment district. These elegant boats, the eaves of which were decoratively strung at night with lanterns, often carried accomplished entertainers, thus serving as an extension of the pleasure quarters. In the spring, crowds flocked to view the blossoming cherry trees along the Sumida's left bank. In the summer, the river was the setting for a spectacular fireworks show, and, in the fall, it was a favorite spot for moon viewing. The river and its environs were charged with life at all times and in all seasons.

But here Hiroshige portrays the Sumida in quite a different mood. In the shimmering, midday heat, movement on the river has ceased. The calm water reflects Mount Matsuchi, the only noticeable elevation in the Asakusa area. The gulls floating peacefully in the foreground suggest a famous passage from the ninth century travel diary, *The Tales of Ise*. While traveling through the then desolate eastern provinces, the hero is reminded of his home and loved ones in Kyoto by a bird called the "capital gull" which he sees on the Sumida River:

*If you are what your name implies,
Let me ask you,
Capital-bird,
Does all go well
With my beloved?*³

Notes

1 The signature indicates that this is a painting from the early 1850s. See Shimada Shūjirō, *Zaigai Hihō* (Tokyo: Gakken, 1969), p. 100.

2 Narazaki Muneshige, *Hiroshige: Famous Views*, trans. Richard L. Gage (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1968), pp. 19–22.

3 Helen Craig McCullough, *Tales of Ise* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 76.

Published

Shimada Shūjirō, *Zaigai Hihō*, p. 100.

Uchida Minoru, *Hiroshige* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1932), p. 380.

LITERATI LANDSCAPES

18 *The Chestnut Tree at Sukagawa*

Yosa Buson (1716–1783)

Folding fan mounted as a hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper

H. 7 1/16" (18 cm), W. 19 1/16" (48.4 cm)

Signed: *Buson*

Seals: *Chōkō, Shunsei*

The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection

In this deceptively simple scene, a man gazes out of a thatched hut, sheltered from the outside world by a fence and large tree. The surrounding text is rich with literary and religious allusions that inform the pictorial image. The verse is drawn from one of Japan's most popular literary works, Bashō's *Oku no Hosomichi* [Narrow Road to the Deep North], a travel diary written by the poet during his journey to northern Japan in 1689. Bashō reached Sukagawa, the subject of this painting, about a month after leaving Edo. There he stayed with a local monk who reminded him of the great poet-priest of the twelfth century, Saigyō. Makoto Ueda has translated the section of Bashō's writings inscribed on this small fan:

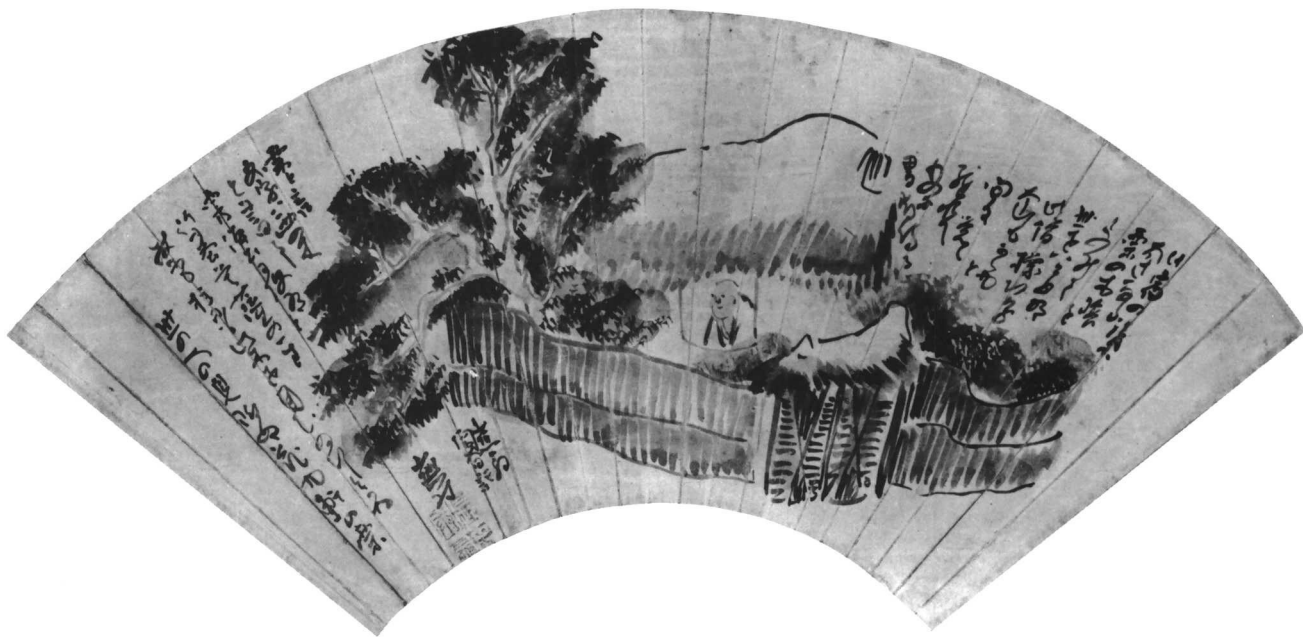
In the shade of a large chestnut tree near this post town, a Buddhist monk was living a secluded life. It seemed a quiet life, indeed, like that of an ancient poet-recluse who picked horse chestnuts in the depths of the mountains. I wrote down on a piece of paper: "The Chinese ideogram Chestnut consists of two letters that signify West and Tree respectively. Hence Bodhisattva Gyōki is said to have associated a chestnut tree with Western Paradise and used it both for his cane and for the pillars of his house."

Few in this world

Notice those blossoms:

Chestnut by the eaves.¹

The primary theme of the text is rejection of the world, conveyed in part by the veiled references to Saigyō, the reclusive poet-monk whom Bashō greatly admired and sought to emulate. The chestnut tree by the hut in remote Sukagawa reminds Bashō of a Saigyō poem about gathering horse-chestnuts. Bashō enriches this imagery by drawing attention to the components of the ideograph for chestnut—"west" and "tree." This, he explains, evokes release from earthly existence and transport to Amida's Western Paradise. Mention of "west" is also a further reference to Saigyō, whose name is written with the two characters, "west" and "going."² The walking stick symbolizes the ambulatory life of the Buddhist monk, Gyōgi (670–749), who in his peregrinations may be seen as the precursor of Saigyō, Bashō, and now the artist Buson. The concluding *haiku* returns to the original theme, that is, the ability to renounce worldliness and



18. *Chestnut Tree at
Sukagawa*

thereby to respond more fully to the simplicity and beauty of nature. This painting may be seen to contain, then, a complex system of interlocking references, poetic, philosophical, and visual.

While in his twenties, Yosa Buson studied under the famous Bashō disciple, Hagano Hajin (1677–1742) and was greatly influenced by Bashō’s *haiku* poetry. He followed Bashō’s basic itinerary in the northeast and, during the last few years of his life, painted several versions of Bashō’s *Narrow Road to the Deep North*.³ His special genius was for *haiga*, which combines the poetic text of a haiku with a pictorial image. The interdependence of these two elements is clearly evident in this fan; together, they infuse the work with spiritual significance.

Notes

1 Makoto Ueda, *Matsuo Bashō* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), pp. 137–138.

2 For further discussion of this text, see William LaFleur, “The Poet as Seer: Bashō Looks Back,” *The Karma of Words*, pp. 149–164.

3 Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art*, p. 261.

Published

Miyeko Murase, *Japanese Art: Selections from the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection*, no. 74.

19 *Mount Fuji*

Yokoi Kinkoku (1761–1832)

Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper

H. 31 1/4" (79.4 cm), W. 59" (149.8 cm)

Signed: *Kinkoku dōjin*

Seals: *Ware gojūgo ni shite gaku o kokorozasu;*

Komuri dōjin

The Mary and Jackson Burke Collection

*Fuji is a mountain
That knows no seasons.
What time does it take this for,
That it should be dappled
With fallen snow?*

—From the ninth century work *The Tales of Ise*¹

The Edo artist Kinkoku revered Mount Fuji. At the age of forty, he became a devotee of Shugendō, a syncretic religion based on arduous ascetic practices and alpine climbing along sacred routes. In this religious sect, an offshoot of Esoteric Buddhism, the ascent of a mountain was symbolic of progression toward enlightenment. As a literati artist, Kinkoku strove to capture the inner essence of nature rather than its external reality in his paintings. Thus, both religious experience and aesthetic concerns informed the mountain landscapes which are among Kinkoku's finest works.

Kinkoku's *Mount Fuji* conveys the awesome force of this mountain. Clouds rise from its slopes as a storm approaches. The turbulent mood is underscored by the staccato brushstrokes of the pines in the foreground. Restless dots accent the surface of the rock forms which are created with a bold, sweeping brush. Although this work is a personalized interpretation of the Chinese literati painting style, the small pavilion placed high on the platform in front of Fuji serves as a reminder that, despite the choice of subject matter, certain motifs as well as the brush style are borrowed from the mainland.

Many of Kinkoku's landscape paintings reveal stylistic similarities with the works of Yosa Buson. The calligraphic treatment of the boulders in *Mount Fuji*, for instance, displays close examination of Buson's mountain landscapes. Although Kinkoku apparently never studied directly under the great Nanga master, he is considered a follower of Buson. It has been noted that Kinkoku's brush is a dynamic transformation of Buson's.² Here he applies it to an ancient Japanese theme to produce an energetic view of Fuji's grandeur. Like many other artists of the Nanga school, he adapts this foreign style to create a Japanese vision of place.



19. Mount Fuji

Notes

- 1 Helen McCullough, *Tales of Ise*, p. 76. Fuji also appears in such medieval paintings as the late thirteenth century handscroll *The Life of Saint Ippen*, see Sherman Lee, *Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Art Museum, 1983), color plate VI, and no. 28.
- 2 Calvin French, *The Poet-Painters: Buson and His Followers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1974), pp. 34-37.



20. *Shōrinji*

20 *Shōrinji*

Okada Beisanjin (1744–1820)

Dated: 1817

Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper

H. 70 1/8" (178.1 cm), W. 35 5/8" (90.5 cm)

Signed: *Beisanjin*

Seals: *Shigen*; *Dakoku no In*; *Beisanjin*

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest and The Annenberg Fund, Inc. Gift, 1975.

Okada Beisanjin was a central figure in the Osaka circle of literati painters. His occupation as rice merchant may have inspired his adopted name Beisanjin, or “rice-mountain-man.” His choice of the character for rice may also be related to his affinity for the work of the great Chinese literatus, Mi Fu (1051–1107). In works such as this hanging scroll, Beisanjin used the short, horizontal strokes characteristic of Mi Fu’s painting style.¹

Like many artists of the Nanga school, the aspect of the Chinese literati style Beisanjin found most appealing was its encouragement of individualized expression. Under his brush, landscapes turned into essays in texture. In this painting, wet, horizontal strokes of varying tonality suggest clustered tree tops on the surface of a mountain landscape. Long “hemp-fiber” lines, such as those found in the upper right corner of this painting, accent the verticality of the rocks. In the foreground, a scholar sits on a platform by a stream peacefully enjoying the view. His attendant fans a fire while preparing tea. Beisanjin has reinterpreted the Chinese literati brushwork and composition to suite his personality and style. He consciously avoids the polish and detail of the professional; like Mi Fu and others, he strives instead to reflect the greater inspiration and spontaneity of the amateur.

Outings into nature were an important part of the life style of the literati artist. The two great Nanga masters, Ike no Taiga and Yosa Buson (see no. 18), for instance, traveled extensively, as did many of their followers. Such excursions provided the first hand observation of nature crucial to understanding the “life-force” Nanga artists sought to capture in their landscapes. *Shōrinji* records a sojourn late in Beisanjin’s life at a mountain temple. The painting’s inscription explains Beisanjin’s thoughts about the revitalizing force of nature and the interrelationship of place, art, and freedom:

*I've grown old and am given to poetry and wine, one crazy immortal am I.
Once again I visit the priests in the mountain monastery to enjoy the Zen spirit
of painting.*

The clouds and the mist of ink paintings alone capture my feelings.

Many little Mi dots of ink criss-cross to form rain which fills the heavens.²

Notes

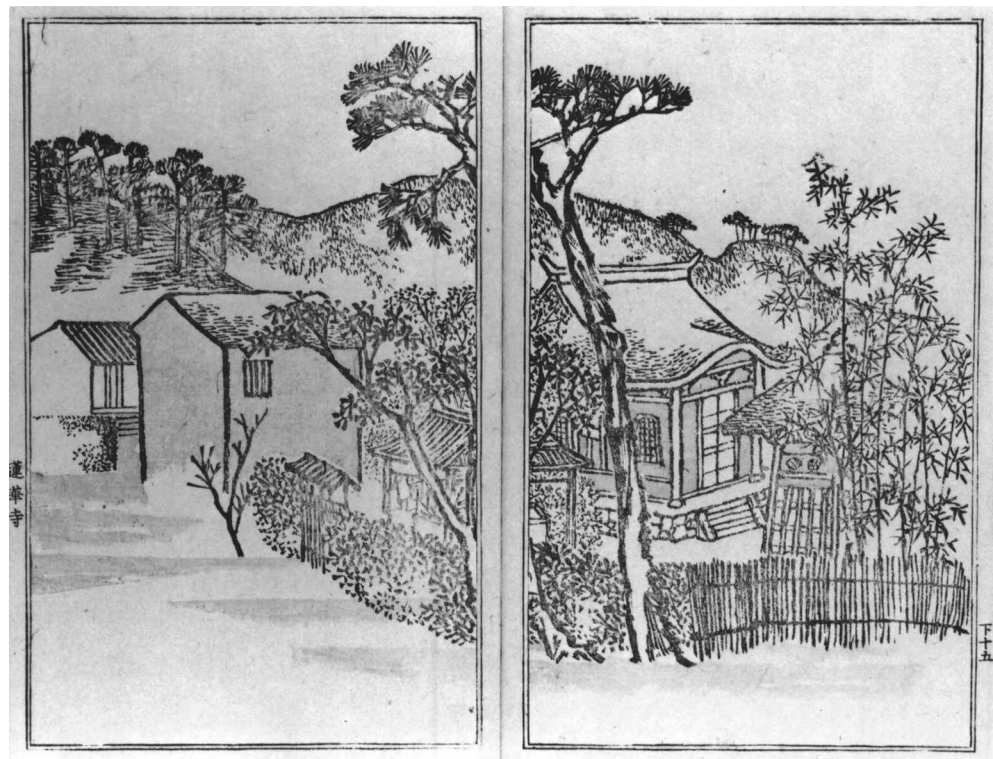
¹ James Cahill, *Scholar Painters of Japan: The Nanga School* (New York: Asia Society, 1972), p. 107.

² Translation kindly provided by Professors Judith Rabinovitch and Kang-i Chang, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Yale University.

Published

Shūjirō Shimada, ed., *Zaigai Hibō*, p. 118.

21a. Renge Temple



21 *Elegant Sites in the Imperial Capital
in a Single Viewing (Teito Gakei Ichiran)*

Kawamura Bumpō (1779–1821)

Illustrated book, four volumes, with light color

Dated: 1809–1816

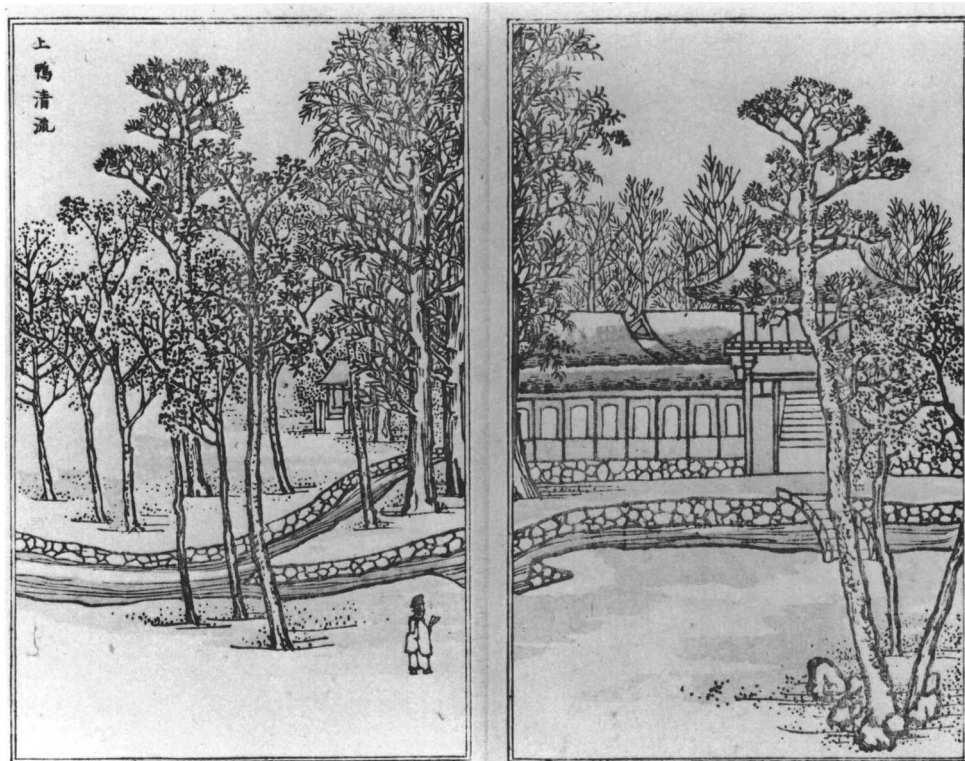
H. 10 1/2" (26.7 cm), W. 6 5/8" (16.8 cm)

Anonymous loan, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge,
Massachusetts

The four volumes of this illustrated book of Kyoto appeared in two installments: the eastern and western volumes in 1809, the northern and southern volumes in 1816. The illustrator, Kawamura Bumpō, often worked in a modified Nanga style.¹ The publisher therefore selected Rai Sanyō (1780–1832), leader of the Kyoto literary circle, to write the preface and occasional poems found in these volumes. Known for his poetry and calligraphy, Sanyō was the friend of numerous important Nanga artists, such as the talented Aoki Mokubei (1767–1833) and Tanomura Chikuden (1777–1835).

In his preface to the southern volume, Sanyō relates a conversation with the publisher during which he asks the difference between elegant views and worldly scenes.² The publisher explains to him that those places along the Kamo River and at the foot of Higashiyama (Eastern Mountain), where geisha houses and

21b. Kamigamo Shrine



restaurants are built side by side, are worldly scenes. Elegant views are the shrines and temples nestled among the wooded hills with songbirds and blossoming flowers. A brief look is enough for the worldly places he states, but one has to wear out many pairs of sandals to visit all of the elegant spots. The publisher continues that now, with the book's publication, Kyoto's elegant places can be surveyed in a single viewing.

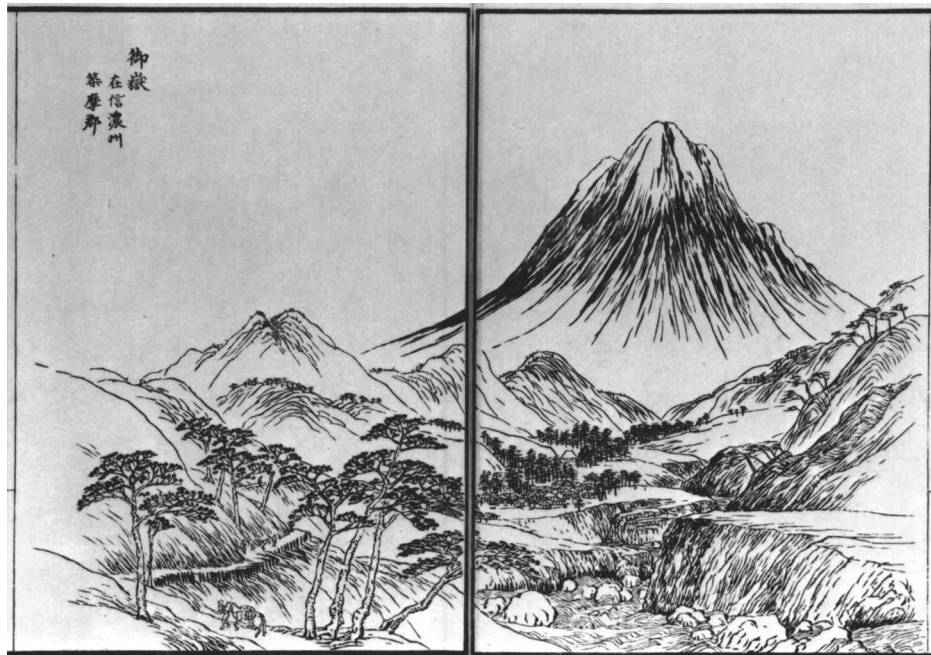
Sanyō's preface clearly expresses his disdain for common or "worldly" views; as a scholar-painter, he aspired to loftier visions. But Bumpō's illustrations reflect both the refined and the prosaic. The sparse lines and light application of color are typical of the understated literati style; however, *Elegant Sites in the Imperial Capital* remains basically an adaptation of the travel guides that gave prominence to the mundane scenes the literati found contemptible. Despite the pretentiousness of the preface, it is essentially a delightful variation of Kitao Masayoshi's *Picture Book of the Imperial Capital* (see no. 10) which has close ties to *ukiyo-e*.

Notes

¹ David Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration*, p. 222.

² This preface and similar volumes have been reproduced in *Nihon Meisho Fuzoku Zue*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1981), p. 401.

22a. Mitake



22 *Illustrations of Japan's Famous Mountains (Meizan Zufu)*

Tani Bunchō (1763–1840)

Monochrome illustrated book, three volumes

Dated: 1804

H. 11 3/4" (29.8 cm), W. 7 3/4" (19.6 cm)

Anonymous loan, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

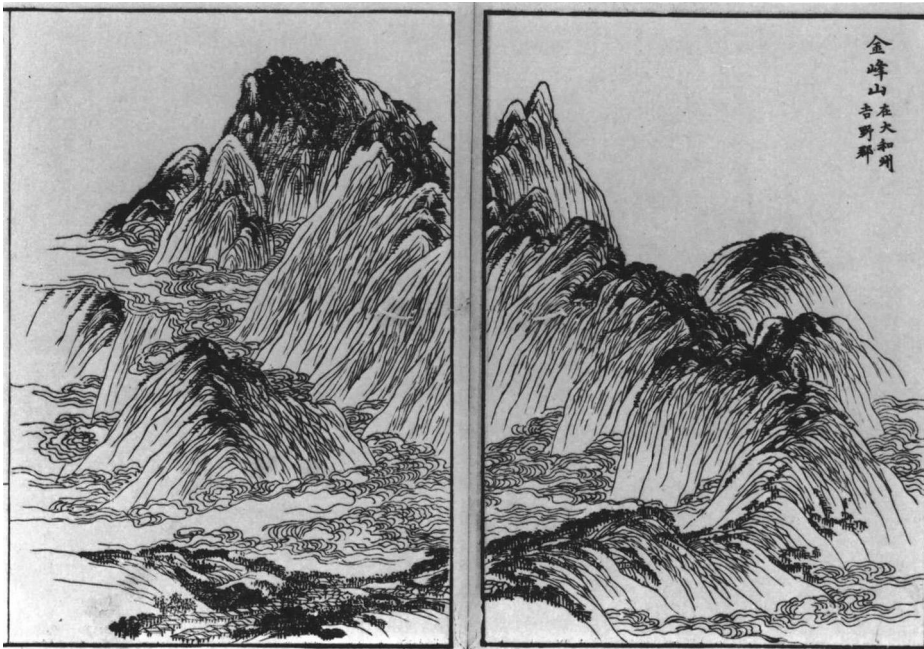
The most celebrated Edo artist of his day, Tani Bunchō is credited with introducing the Nanga literati painting style to the capital. It is surprising, therefore, to find that he was equally as capable of working in indigenous as well as Western painting styles. Indeed, it is thought that the general eclecticism of Edo Nanga was in part due to Bunchō's influence.

Bunchō excelled at landscapes. More than most Nanga painters, he made a special effort to observe and record mountain scenery firsthand. In this respect, he recalls the comment by the great Chinese literati artist, Huang Kung-wang (1269–1354):

*You should always carry some drawing-brushes in your leather bag, so that when you perceive some extraordinary trees at a beautiful spot you can at once make sketches of them as records. They will add life to some pictures . . .*¹

Illustrations of Japan's Famous Mountains is the result of Bunchō's observations during his extensive travels throughout Japan. The three volumes display

22b. Mount Kinpō



considerable variety. The scenes range from rolling hills with cultivated fields and hamlets in the foreground to a rushing mountain stream below a soaring volcanic cone. Bunchō's mountain views are remarkably accurate, as exemplified by Mount Kinpō (Nara Prefecture), one of the most powerful images in the series.² It is surprising, therefore, to find Bunchō drawing on the literati style which is often quite idealistic. To those unfamiliar with Mount Kinpō, the mountain ridge seen here rising above swirling clouds might appear closely related to the "dragon vein" mountains depicted in Chinese literati landscapes. But Bunchō has applied his Chinese models to produce an image remarkably similar to the actual place. He achieves, thereby, a balance between visual verisimilitude and the spiritual likeness that was the aspiration of the Nanga artist. He combines two seemingly disparate approaches to painting—Western and Chinese—to create a delightful combination of the expressive and real.

Illustrations of Japan's Famous Mountains was in considerable demand. It first appeared in 1804 and was republished during the following two years. In 1812, it appeared again under a new title, *Nihon Meizan Zue*; this later edition was produced from recut blocks and included the preface and epilogue of the original.³

Notes

1 Oswald Siren, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958), p. 68.

2 The discussion concerning this work in *Nihon Meisho Fuzoku Zue* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1981, pp. 421–23) notes Bunchō's success in faithfully reproducing these mountains.

3 *Nihon Meisho Fuzoku Zue*, p. 421–23.

23 *Nachi Waterfall*

Noro Kaiseki (1747–1828)

Hanging scroll, ink on silk

H. 57 1/4" (145.4 cm), W. 20 1/4" (51.4 cm)

Signed: *Kaiseki Chinjin*

Seal: *Kaiseki*

Collection of H. Christopher Luce

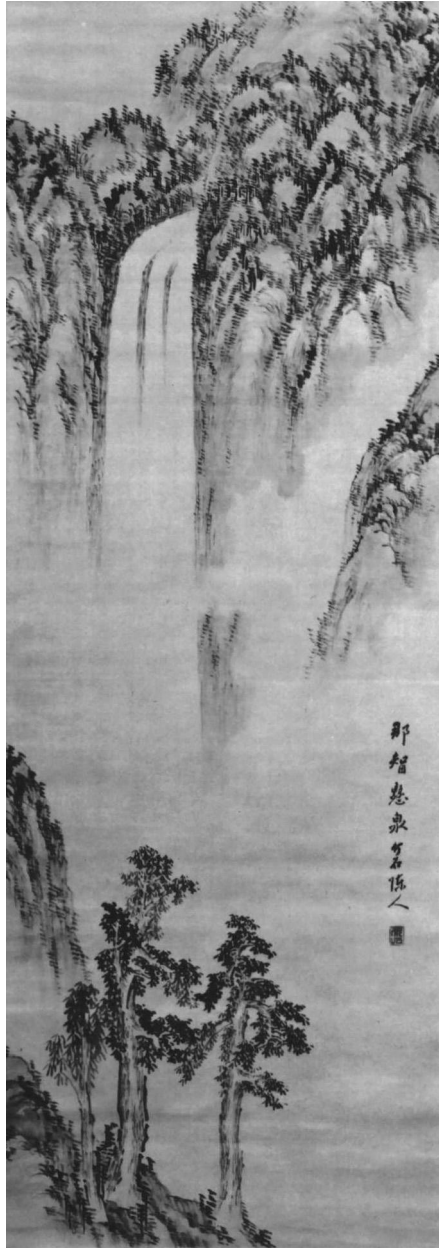
Considered the residence of a Shintō god, the Nachi Waterfall epitomizes the manifestation of the divine in Japanese landscape. As one of the landmarks along the Kumano pilgrimage route in Wakayama Prefecture near Kyoto, it has been the focus of worship for centuries. Its awesome beauty is heightened at night under the glow of moonlight when the deification of the waterfall by the Japanese is easily understood.¹

At least as early as the thirteenth century, religious ascetics were drawn to the waterfall for ritual purification (*misogi*) and to increase their spiritual powers of endurance. Carmen Blacker describes this practice in the following passage:

*the Nachi waterfall at Kumano was . . . considered a powerful means of accumulating power. This celebrated waterfall is now, especially after heavy rain, of such weight and force that to stand beneath it is a scarcely credible feat. The Heike Monogatari tells us, however, that Mongaku Shōnin vowed to remain up to his neck in the icy pool beneath the torrent for thirty-seven days. Before a week was out, however, he lost consciousness and was washed downstream. At once from the top of the waterfall two divine boys descended and revived him by rubbing him all over with their warm and scented hands. Thus strengthened, Mongaku completed his vow of thirty-seven days without difficulty.*²

Priest Mongaku's feat may be legendary, but even today worshipers stand under Nachi's icy cascade to fortify and purify their souls.

The Nachi Waterfall is located in Noro Kaiseki's home province. He brought to this familiar subject the Nanga sensibility, capturing the inner mystery of nature that the literati artists sought in their paintings. Here, the waterfall pours forth from the heart of the mountain and the landscape seems to tremble from its power. Kaiseki's expressive brush energizes the mountainous growth and the trees at the foot of the torrent. The waterfall is emphasized as a decisive interruption between foreground and background by an area of unpainted silk suggestive of mist. The numinous quality of the scene is apparent, its strength, its beauty, its fascination. Again, place is transformed into metaphor, the tools of the Nanga painter utilized to capture its vitality and spirit.



23

Notes

- 1 Kageyama Haruki, *The Arts of Shintō*, trans. by Christine Guth (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), p. 131.
- 2 Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975), p. 91.

Published

- Martie W. Young, *Asian Art: A Collector's Selection* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1973), no. 5.
- Celeste Adams and Kwan S. Wong, *In the Way of the Master* (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1981).

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